



From the Director

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Welcome to the "Commencement Edition" of our newsletter, a celebration of the many kinds of dialogue that the Hank Center has facilitated this year. Beginning with our very successful ***There is no Catholic Vote and it's Important*** and ***Election 2020*** panels in the fall, to our excellent spring series on ***Catholic Social Thought in Catholic Higher Education***, and moving as we are presently into May with two big events upcoming (and please note that our Bernadin Lecture with Cardinal Tobin is tomorrow), I am happy to report that even with the convulsive effects of the coronavirus, we have had a most productive year.

For me, though, the most important group to think about today is our graduating seniors and graduate students, the Class of 2021. My time with students in the classroom is always a treat, both on campus and online; but this year my experience has been particularly nourishing and revelatory. Loyola students work through many obstacles in any season-- and this was true well before the arrival of Covid-19. But the pandemic has laid bare so much about our lives together, and the Class of 2021 has met the current crisis with grit, compassion, and good humor--whether as Loyolans, Americans, or global citizens.

The challenges (and the inequities) we face today are legion--especially for the poor and marginalized--and there are many dragons in our paths. We have students who moonlight as first responders, who work in grocery stores, who are caring for sick relatives, who lack the basic technological tools that they need to thrive, who are grieving the loss of academic ritual, who see now what a precious gift university life and learning is, who are anxious and fearful about an increasingly precarious future. They carry a lot on their shoulders; and we, who are (hopefully) in our maturity-- as parents, educators, and leaders-- can do better to lighten their load. Still, it is moving to see how students lighten *each other's* load-- how they support one another at every turn. They make the beautiful possibility of ***cura personalis***, an Ignatian hallmark so central to our educational mission, into something more than a slogan and I see it

every day. So, congratulations, Class of 2021, you have achieved proficiency in the kind of knowledge that truly lasts.

This edition of our newsletter highlights work by Loyola students and early career alumni scholars. The undergraduates of the Catholic Studies course, ***All Things Ignatian: Living and Learning in the Jesuit Tradition***, spent the spring semester working with the nonprofit Refugees in Schools Everywhere (RISE) to build friendship with refugees and to bring awareness to the lives of this vulnerable but resilient community. This work **culminated in a gala** event and featured remarks from Father James Martin, SJ, interviews with refugee students from around the world, a performance from the International Orchestra of Refugees, and a special Examen. The same week, graduate students in theology and early career alumni participated in the symposium ***Signs of the Times: Context, Contingency, Crisis***, a day-long event that provided insight and reflection on major events and current affairs impacting Catholics, the Church, and the study of theology and ethics today. This event was organized by our CCIH staff, Meghan Toomey and Kathleen McNutt (who are also doctoral candidates) and was a round success.

The success of these kinds of events makes the completion of degrees this year all the more meaningful; and, as we begin this too-distanced week of commencement, I turn back to the Class of 2021. While CCIH invites and engages all LUC students in conversation, the Catholic Studies minor--supported by CCIH, Theology, and the College of Arts and Sciences--is its primary student community. I can't tell you how proud I am of this year's graduating class and I look forward to a Zoom graduation banquet this Wednesday-- and to conferring the St. Ignatius Medals-- through the wonders of the US Postal Service, Door Dash, and digital technology. Huzzah, CS Minors!

And as I write "Huzzah," my mind and heart turn immediately to a cherished colleague and dear friend, Bren Ortega-Murphy, who died tragically last week. We in the Center are still reeling from this news and our hearts are broken. We join her spouse, Christopher, her children, Connor and Laurie, and her many friends in a prayer of thanksgiving for a woman who was superb scholar, teacher, and human being. Founding Director, Michael Schuck, captures our feelings beautifully: "Bren was and will forever be a lovely force of faith. 'Force' because she always moved forward, undeterred, in the Spirit of Vatican II. 'Faith' because she sang in a Catholic key the spiritual song of all religions and all peoples. 'Lovely' because she was and will forever be, simply lovely." Huzzah, Bren, and may God rest you in perfect peace.

As we close, I'd like thank **our dedicated staff and advisory board**-- particularly Center Manager, Meghan Toomey, Graduate Assistant (and Newsletter editor/Jeopardy Contestant), Kathleen McNutt, for all that they have done to contribute to the Center's flourishing during this very busy Zoom year. A special thanks to Kathleen who is concluding her three year tenure with the Hank Center. Profound gratitude for your superb work, Kathleen, and best of luck with your future ventures.

And thanks to you as well, dear reader, for your time and attention. We hope to dialogue with you next fall at our events-- and hopefully in person. Keep well and in good spirits and,

Warmest Regards,

Dr. Michael P. Murphy

**Hank Center
Highlights from
Spring 2021**

**Catholic Higher
Education in Light of
Catholic Social**

**TOMORROW (5/4)
The 2021 Cardinal Bernardin
Common Cause Lecture**

This daylong symposium brought together current Loyola graduate students and recent graduates in theology and ethics to offer reflections on major events current affairs in the Church and world.

Watch the symposium

Eyes on RISE: A Virtual Gala



FOR STUDENTS, WITH STUDENTS
**EYES ON RISE:
A VIRTUAL GALA**

Loyola's CATH 296 class organized a fundraiser for [Refugees In Schools Everywhere \(RISE\)](#).

The event featured remarks by Ann Strandoo of RISE, interviews with student refugees, both here and abroad, remarks from Fr. James Martin, SJ, a performance by the International Orchestra of Refugees (founded and directed by Loyola graduate Sebastian Agnoae), and an Examen prayer led by Jesuit Scholastics.

Watch video

rife with serious spiritual, social and ethical questions. Co-sponsored by America Media, the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics at Santa Clara University, and the Fordham Center on Religion and Culture.

May 12
11:30 AM CDT
Zoom Forum

This event is free and open to the public. [Registration required.](#)

Remembering Dr. Bren Adair Ortega-Murphy



We join the Loyola community in mourning the death of Dr. Bren Ortega-Murphy, Professor Emerita of Communications and Women's Studies and Gender Studies and a dear friend of the Center. Among her many contributions to our work, Bren was an instructor for the Faculty Seminar and a two-time Research Fellow. [Read Bren's full obituary and funeral information.](#)



Bren (center) presenting on her 2011 film "A Question of Habit"

RECOMMENDED READING



In the spirit of cultivating the Catholic intellectual and artistic tradition, CCIH recommends new and notable books several times a year that integrate, interrogate, and celebrate Catholicism in dialogue with the world.

[*Fragments: The Existential Situation of Our Time: Selected Essays, Volume 1*](#) (2020)

by David Tracy

David Tracy is widely considered one of the most important religious thinkers in North America, known for his pluralistic vision and disciplinary breadth. His first book in more than twenty years reflects Tracy's range and erudition, collecting essays from the 1980s to 2018 into a two-volume work that will be greeted with joy by his admirers and praise from new readers.

In the first volume, *Fragments*, Tracy gathers his most important essays on broad theological questions, beginning with the problem of suffering across Greek tragedy, Christianity, and Buddhism. The volume goes on to address the Infinite, and the many attempts to categorize and name it by Plato, Aristotle, Rilke, Heidegger, and others. In the remaining essays, he reflects on questions of the invisible, contemplation, hermeneutics, and public theology. Throughout, Tracy evokes the potential of fragments (understood both as concepts and events) to shatter closed systems and open us to difference and Infinity. Covering science, literature, philosophy, psychoanalysis, and non-Western religious traditions, Tracy provides in *Fragments* a guide for any open reader to rethink our fragmenting contemporary culture.

[*Tiny You: A Western History of the Anti-Abortion Movement*](#) (2020)

by Jennifer L. Holland

Tiny You tells the story of one of the most successful political movements of the twentieth century: the grassroots campaign against legalized abortion. While Americans have rapidly changed their minds about sex education, pornography, arts funding, gay teachers, and ultimately gay marriage, opposition to legalized abortion has only grown. As other socially conservative movements have lost young activists, the pro-life movement has successfully recruited more young people to its cause. Jennifer L. Holland explores why abortion dominates conservative politics like no other cultural issue. Looking at anti-abortion movements in four western states since the 1960s—turning to the fetal pins passed around church services, the graphic images exchanged between friends, and the fetus dolls given to children in school—she argues that activists made fetal life feel personal to many Americans. Pro-life activists persuaded people to see themselves in the pins, images, and dolls they held in their hands and made the fight against abortion the primary bread-and-butter issue for social conservatives. Holland ultimately demonstrates that the success of the pro-life movement lies in the borrowed logic and emotional power of leftist activism.

[*Unequal Partners: In Search of Transnational Catholic Sisterhood*](#) (2020)

by Casey Ritchie Clevenger

When we think of Catholicism, we think of Europe and the United States as the seats of its power. But while much of Catholicism remains headquartered in the West, the Church's center of gravity has shifted to Africa, Latin America, and developing Asia. Focused on the transnational Sisters of Notre Dame de

Namur, *Unequal Partners* explores the ways gender, race, economic inequality, and colonial history play out in religious organizations, revealing how their members are constantly negotiating and reworking the frameworks within which they operate.

Taking us from Belgium and the United States to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, sociologist Casey Clevenger offers rare insight into how the sisters of this order work across national boundaries, shedding light on the complex relationships among individuals, social groups, and formal organizations. Throughout, Clevenger skillfully weaves the sisters' own voices into her narrative, helping us understand how the order has remained whole over time. A thoughtful analysis of the ties that bind—and divide—the sisters, *Unequal Partners* is a rich look at transnationalism's ongoing impact on Catholicism.

[Radical Ambivalence: Race in Flannery O'Connor](#) (2020)

by Angela Alaimo O'Donnell

Radical Ambivalence is the first book-length study of Flannery O'Connor's attitude toward race in her fiction and correspondence. It is also the first study to include controversial material from unpublished letters that reveals the complex and troubling nature of O'Connor's thoughts on the subject. O'Connor lived and did most of her writing in her native Georgia during the tumultuous years of the civil rights movement. In one of her letters, O'Connor frankly expresses her double-mindedness regarding the social and political upheaval taking place in the United States with regard to race: "I hope that to be of two minds about some things is not to be neutral." *Radical Ambivalence* explores this double-mindedness and how it manifests itself in O'Connor's fiction.

[Visions of Amen: The Early Life and Music of Olivier Messiaen](#) (2014)

by Stephen Schloesser

Loyola University Chicago scholar, Stephen Schloesser, S.J. turns his attention to French composer Olivier Messiaen (1908- 1992). Messiaen is probably best known for his *Quartet for the End of Time*, premiered in a German prisoner-of-war camp in 1941. However, Messiaen was a remarkably complex, intelligent person with a sometimes tragic domestic life who composed a wide range of music. This book explores the enormous web of influences in the early part of Messiaen's long life.

The first section of the book provides an intellectual biography of Messiaen's early life in order to make his (difficult) music more accessible to the general listener. The second section offers an analysis of and thematic commentaries on Messiaen's pivotal work for two pianos, *Visions of Amen*, composed in 1943. Schloesser's analysis includes timing indications corresponding to a downloadable performance of the work by accomplished pianists Stéphane Lemelin and Hyesook Kim.

[Like the Dewfall](#) (2019)

By John F. Deane

Like the Dewfall is a stunning new sequence of poems by John F. Deane. It is written in seven sections, following the seven compositions that comprise Olivier Messiaen's *Visions de l'Amen* suite for two pianos, written during the Nazi occupation of Paris in 1943. This collection pairs well with Fr. Schloesser's book and was inspired by it, as Deane writes in the forward to his beautiful set poems.

Contact Us

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About the Center

The Joan and Bill Hank Center for the Catholic Intellectual Heritage exists to help faculty and students recognize and research Roman Catholic thought and its link to all academic disciplines in the university. It also seeks to convey that thought to other audiences inside and outside Loyola University Chicago.



