

The background is a detailed mosaic. At the top center is a golden crown with intricate details and a blue and white ribbon draped across it. On either side of the crown are two golden keys with red and white striped ribbons. Below the crown and keys are two large, colorful flowers, one on the left and one on the right, with purple, blue, and yellow petals. The entire scene is set against a white mosaic background with a gold border at the top.

ANNUAL REPORT

Academic Year
2024–2025



THE CATHOLIC
UNIVERSITY
OF AMERICA



COVER: *Stato della Città del Vaticano*

Detail of a Vatican mosaic showcasing
the papal tiara and keys, symbols of the papacy



ANNUAL REPORT 2024–2025 ACADEMIC YEAR



Francis Russell Hittinger, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Institute for Human Ecology
Research Professor Ordinarius
School of Philosophy
The Catholic University of America



Stephen P. Higgins, J.D.
Managing Director
Institute for Human Ecology



WELCOME MESSAGE

Pilgrims of Hope

As one of the nation's leading Catholic academic institutes, the IHE is honored to magnify the efforts of the universal Church through the work of our Scholars and programs. For the 2024–2025 academic year, we oriented our programming around Pope Francis's Jubilee exhortation to become "Pilgrims of Hope."

During a year that saw IHE Scholars ascend the Scala Sancta on bended knee, tread in the footsteps of English martyrs in Oxford and London, venerate the relics of French martyrs in Paris, and enliven the campus that gave the world Venerable Fulton Sheen, Venerable Emil Kapaun, and Sister Thea Bowman, we had the "pilgrim" aspect well in hand.

But what about hope? After all, this year our Scholars tackled heavy topics like war, technological threats to humanity, declining birth rates, antisemitism, and political strife. Yet this is where the IHE's interdisciplinary approach, which integrates philosophical and theological truth with contemporary science, bears fruit.

Saint Thomas Aquinas describes "hope" not only as a theological virtue but also as a base passion: the urge to progress towards a challenging, but not impossible, goal. Often, the work of a Catholic scholar involves defining the proper aim of hope, avoiding utopias of social order and nihilistic outlooks that leave no room for the power of grace (as our Scholars brilliantly showcased at our Third Annual Lecture on Catholic Political Thought). Hope requires realism, and realism — for the Christian — requires a cosmic vision of Christ's eternal victory over sin and death.

We tread a fallen earth, striving toward and making present the eternal reality. In other words, hope for the IHE Scholar — and any pilgrim — is not only reaching the goal but sanctifying each step along the way. May our 2024–2025 Annual Report edify your endeavors and renew your hope.



MISSION STATEMENT

The Institute for Human Ecology (IHE) at The Catholic University of America is the nation’s leading academic institute committed to identifying the economic, cultural, and social conditions vital for human flourishing. Drawing on the Catholic intellectual tradition, the mission of the IHE is to educate students, sponsor multidisciplinary research, advise Church leadership, and organize symposia, conferences, and lectures for the academy and the public square. IHE programs challenge the materialistic and reductionist worldviews of institutions, policy-makers, and opinion-formers that stand in the way of prosperity and human dignity.

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OVERVIEW



In the 2024–2025 academic year, the Institute for Human Ecology strengthened its reputation as a trusted source of scholarship on pressing social, moral, and theological matters. Internationally known within the world of Catholic higher education and the intellectual community, the IHE continues to offer our popular public events and to deepen ties between academics and public thinkers through our Catholic Political Thought network. Graduate students at Catholic University and beyond flock to us for robust intellectual and spiritual formation as we continue to expand our programming in the United States and overseas.

The IHE's student cohorts continue to excel. Since our inception, we have educated dozens of students in our M.A. in Human Rights Program, formed over 280 Civitas Dei Fellows with the Thomistic Institute, and bolstered the intellectual, spiritual, and professional development of 37 Graduate Scholars. We led our fourth graduate student pilgrimage to England and our third annual Rome

Seminar, “The Vision of God,” at the Angelicum. We have expanded our network of Scholars and Fellows, forging new connections and longstanding friendships at Catholic University and beyond. The IHE draws the academic work of our Scholars into the public square to offer trusted counsel and corrective insight in the areas of religion, ethics, and political thought.

A keystone of the Institute's work is our Program in Catholic Political Thought, which aims to foster an outstanding academic community illuminated by sound Catholic reflections on politics and political theory. Through the Program, we offer the world's only interdisciplinary Ph.D. specialization in Catholic Political Thought, granting students the intellectual freedom and world-class faculty guidance to study core questions of human flourishing from the perspectives of theology, philosophy, and political theory — right here in Washington, DC. Under the leadership of Co-Directors Russell Hittinger, Joseph Capizzi, and V. Bradley Lewis, the PCPT is flourishing in scholarly and public pursuits.

The IHE enjoys thriving relationships with media and other institutions, including *The New York Times*, *The Pillar*, *Public Discourse*, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Thomistic Institute, the University of Notre Dame, the University of Dallas, the American Enterprise Institute, the Mercatus Center, the Catholic Information Center, National Review Institute,

the Ethics and Public Policy Center, the Pontifical University of Saint Thomas Aquinas (the Angelicum), and the Scala Foundation. Through partner networks, regular public programming, and strategic advertising, the IHE's social media presence has grown. Four of our Scholars host popular podcasts, and many others are regular guests on well-known outlets, including *Godsplaining*, *Pints with Aquinas*, and *EWTN*. Additionally, the IHE produces a monthly digital newsletter to share our activities and propagate the work of our Scholars. The IHE livestreams events and is active on X and Instagram, garnering thousands of followers for our events, feast day posts, and Scholars' updates.

Looking ahead to the upcoming academic year, we are working on a number of exciting projects, including hosting a panel on the future of the pro-life movement, expanding our media footprint, and welcoming a visiting scholar working on AI and human flourishing.

Thank you for joining the Institute on our ongoing pilgrimage of hope.

HIGHLIGHTS



The IHE in the Public Square

Many of our Scholars and Fellows draw on their academic work, writing, and deep formation in the Catholic tradition as voices of wisdom in public media. They model robust civic engagement, especially in conversations related to the health of the Church and society, the flourishing of families, and the truth that every human being is made in the image and likeness of God.

Ave Maria University, and Villanova University. Beyond their scholarship and teaching, Scholars assist the IHE in numerous ways, including generating ideas about programs and conferences, promoting partnerships with like-minded organizations, recommending faculty and graduate students, growing the IHE's networks with scholars in their fields, and raising the IHE's profile by participating in lectures, symposia, and conferences.

Faculty Scholars

The IHE has over 90 Faculty Scholars representing top universities throughout the world. In addition to 43 Scholars at Catholic University, other institutions include the University of Oxford, University of Notre Dame, University of Virginia, Pepperdine University, University of Michigan, Hillsdale College, Princeton Theological Seminary, Thomas Aquinas College,

Graduate Scholars

The IHE supports exceptional doctoral students, providing tuition and stipends in many cases. Our students represent (i) the School of Philosophy, (ii) the School of Theology and Religious Studies, and (iii) the School of Arts and Sciences (in particular, the departments of Psychology, English, History, and Politics). Any graduate student is welcome to apply to our Graduate Scholars program by submitting a curriculum vitae and a statement of purpose.

During the 2024–2025 academic year, the IHE hosted numerous events, featuring speakers such as:

- (1) **Bishop Edward K. Braxton**
Bishop Emeritus,
DIOCESE OF BELLEVILLE
- (2) **Michael D. Breidenbach**
Associate Professor of History,
AVE MARIA UNIVERSITY
- (3) **Jennifer S. Bryson**
Fellow, ETHICS AND PUBLIC POLICY CENTER
- (4) **Joseph Capizzi**
Ordinary Professor of Moral Theology,
Dean of the School of Theology and Religious Studies,
THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA
- (5) **Margarita Mooney Clayton**
Associate Professor of Practical Theology,
PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
- (6) **Honorable Robert J. Conrad**
Senior Judge,
UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE WESTERN
DISTRICT OF NORTH CAROLINA
- (7) **Ross Douthat**
Columnist, *THE NEW YORK TIMES*
- (8) **Amy Fahey**
Teaching Fellow,
SAINT THOMAS MORE COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS
- (9) **Sarah Gustafson**
Assistant Professor of Politics,
THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA
- (10) **Peter Harrison**
Emeritus Professor, THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND
- (11) **Peter Kreeft**
Professor, BOSTON COLLEGE
- (12) **Michael Lamb**
F.M. Kirby Foundation Chair of Leadership and Character,
WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY
- (13) **Volker Leppin**
Horace Tracy Pitkin Professor of Historical Theology,
YALE DIVINITY SCHOOL
- (14) **Catherine Ruth Pakaluk**
Associate Professor of Economics,
THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA
- (15) **Simone Rizkallah**
Director of Philos Catholic, PHILOS PROJECT
- (16) **Ari Schulman**
Editor, THE NEW ATLANTIS
- (17) **Emile Tardivel-Schick**
Professor of Moral Philosophy and Religious Anthropology,
UNIVERSITY OF STRASBOURG
- (18) **Matthew Walther**
Editor, *THE LAMP*
- (19) **W. Bradford Wilcox**
Professor of Sociology,
Director of the National Marriage Project,
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

What Does the IHE Do?

Drawing on the Catholic intellectual tradition, the best of contemporary science, and the witness of culture, the IHE forms academic community by sponsoring faculty and students, houses the world's leading program on Catholic Political Thought, and advances public conversation through events, videos, podcasts, and publications.

This graphic captures the fields of the IHE's interests and the primary means by which we advance good scholarship, formation, and conversation in those fields. Every program, event, and initiative can be matched to a specific place on the graphic (thematically — among the top petals — and programmatically — among the bottom petals).

The canopy of twelve stars serves as a double signifier: the peak of the “Catholic intellectual tradition” points to the heavens (all we do is ultimately aimed at the cultivation of divine wisdom), and the IHE operates under the auspices of Catholic University, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration within the twelve Schools comprising the University.



IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS

WHO WE ARE

 **91**

FACULTY SCHOLARS

43 at Catholic University
48 from other institutions

37  **GRADUATE SCHOLARS**
24 at Catholic University
13 from other institutions

 **9** **GRADUATE STUDENTS**
in the Master of Arts in
Human Rights Program

33  **PARTNER
ORGANIZATIONS**

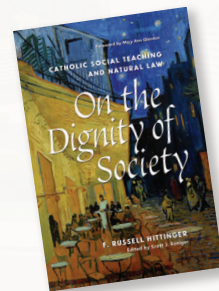
 **281** **CIVITAS DEI
ALUMNI**

5,700+ 
EMAIL SUBSCRIBERS

WHAT WE DO

27 

**IHE SCHOLARS & FELLOWS
APPEARED ON
PODCASTS**



50+
**PUBLICATIONS
BY IHE SCHOLARS
AND FELLOWS**

*Including books and monographs, book chapters,
scholarly and popular journal articles, book
reviews, and major news columns.*

22
PUBLIC EVENTS

15 
PRIVATE EVENTS
for the IHE network

  **3** **ONGOING
LECTURE SERIES**


150,000+
**ALL-TIME EVENT
VIEWS ON YOUTUBE**

PARTNERSHIPS



The Lamp

The IHE has formally partnered with *The Lamp*, a lay-edited, bimonthly Catholic magazine of literature, art, science, and politics, since 2021 (page 70).



The Thomistic Institute

In 2025, the IHE and the Thomistic Institute co-hosted our eighth annual Civitas Dei Summer Fellowship. This week-long conference, held at Catholic University and the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, DC, draws an international cohort of graduate students to attend seminars, liturgical opportunities, and cultural outings to explore questions at the heart of public life with faithful peers and expert faculty. In addition to our annual conference, the IHE and the TI regularly join forces on events in the DC area and encourage cross-pollination between our students and scholars, increasing the influence of Thomistic thought across academic disciplines (page 44).

Faith and Law

Faith and Law on Capitol Hill hosts Friday Forums for Hill staffers, forming their minds and hearts through weekly lectures that offer Christian perspectives on core political issues. The IHE serves as a key sponsor, regularly sending our Scholars to engage the staffers, answer their questions, and participate in the formation of government leaders (page 25).



National Catholic Partnership on Disability

Now in its seventh year, “Recognizing the Body of Christ,” is a joint initiative of the IHE and the National Catholic Partnership on Disability. The initiative hosts bi-annual expert discussions on the nature of disability from a theological perspective and the best methods for integrating people with disabilities and their families into the sacramental and communal life of the Church (page 24).



LEADERSHIP



F. Russell Hittinger, Ph.D.
Executive Director



Stephen P. Higgins, J.D.
Managing Director



Jeanne Marie Leo
Assistant Director



William L. Saunders, J.D.
Director of the Program
on Human Rights



Anthony Falcone
Program Coordinator
Faculty Support



Nathaniel Svogun
Program Coordinator
Student Support



John Henry Hobgood
Communications Specialist



*The IHE congratulates
our Executive Director, **Russell Hittinger**,
on receiving Notre Dame Law School's 2025 Religious Liberty Scholarship Award,
for his foundational contributions to religious freedom, natural law,
and Catholic Social Doctrine.*

The award honors a legal scholar for his or her accomplishments in law and religion, and for contributions to advancing the understanding of how law protects freedom of religion and belief.

Leadership Highlight



John Henry Hobgood

One of our longest-tenured team members, Communications Consultant John Henry Hobgood, is leaving the IHE to enter novitiate for the Society of Jesus in Denver, Colorado.

After earning his bachelor's degree in political science from Notre Dame in 2020, John Henry began full-time work at the IHE in 2021, bringing a sharp eye for graphic design and a keen handle of the written word to the Institute's communications.

Since then, the relationship has yielded tremendous fruit. John Henry credits mentor and IHE Executive Director Russell Hittinger as key in shaping his intellectual development — and his vocation.

“My time with the IHE has been truly inspiring and has enriched me as a person — spiritually, professionally, and intellectually,” John Henry says. “It has led to many wonderful opportunities, from pilgrimages to conferences to lectures and seminars.”

Most recently a 2025 Civitas Dei Fellow, John Henry has also served in a staff role on three England Pilgrimages, two Rome Seminars, and one Holy Land Pilgrimage, helping develop and hone each program for future cohorts.

For the past year, John Henry has served as a part-time Communications Consultant while pursuing an M.A. in Political Theory with a specialization in early modern political thought at Boston College. In addition to his work at the IHE, he has worked as an intern on Capitol Hill in the House of Representatives and as an assistant for EPPC Fellow Erika Bachiochi, assisting with research for her 2021 book, *The Rights of Women*.

“It truly has been a great four years,” John Henry says. “I look forward to staying in touch and being a Fellow.”

Thank you, John Henry! *Deus benedicat!*



“As a founding fellow, I’ve watched the IHE navigate extraordinary and rapid social and political change. The Institute has had to adapt itself continually to emergent conversations about the right ordering of our life together. It has been able to navigate uncertain waters successfully not because it has been guided by time, but because the Institute is guided by the perennial truths of the Catholic Church.”

Chad Pecknold
Professor of Systematic Theology
The Catholic University of America



“I’m closing in on a decade — the first of many, I hope — as an IHE Media Fellow, and I can honestly say that no other Catholic community has done so much to encourage lively and outward-facing intellectual debate, covering a remarkable range of topics. Only in my work with the IHE can I feel confident about following up a rigorous debate about U.S. foreign policy with a lively discussion with a seasoned exorcist — complete with suspicious feedback in our microphones. It’s a great honor to have a place in the conversations that the Institute encourages.”

Ross Douthat
Author and Columnist
The New York Times



BEARING LIGHT BY SPEAKING TRUTH

Known for sustaining a lively culture of on-campus programming and a panoply of virtual events, the IHE delivered a well-attended, richly structured year of events in 2024–2025. From engaging panel discussions to riveting lectures, IHE speakers cut through confusion and discord to present clear, compelling perspectives on timely topics.

A YEAR IN REVIEW

17 September
Can Humanity Survive the Digital Age?

8 October
Seventh Annual Human Rights Lecture: Ethics at the Edges of Humanity

22 October
Superhabits: The Universal System for a Successful Life

3 October
Third Annual Lecture on Catholic Political Thought: Hope and Salvation

14 October
Fostering Vocations: Autism and the Church's Call to Belonging

6 November
Does Everyone Go to Heaven?

21 November
The Innocence of Pontius Pilate: How the Roman Trial of Jesus Shaped History

13 November
Our Dear-Bought Liberty: Catholics and Religious Toleration in Early America

10 December
Debate: Federal Financial and Policy Support for Families

5 December
The Myth of the "Catholic Vote"?

30 January
The Troublemaker

17 January
The Only Way to Win the Abortion War

7 February
New Media and the Future of Religion

6 February
Is There a Religious Comeback?

10 February
Everyday Beauty Through the Benedictine Way of Life

6 March
Novelist of Mercy: The Life and Writing of Sigrid Undset

10 March
Catholics and Antisemitism — Facing the Past, Shaping the Future

20 March
The Legend of Saint Francis: Writing the Lives of the Saints

27 March
John Fisher and Thomas More: Keeping Their Souls While Losing Their Heads

28 March
A Bell for Nagasaki

2 April
The IHE at University Research Day

3 April
Be Good Bankers: The Economic Interpretation of Matthew's Gospel

22 April
A Commonwealth of Hope: Augustine's Political Thought

23 April
The Dignity of Society: Catholic Social Teaching and Natural Law

6 May
Some New World: Myths of Supernatural Belief in a Secular Age

14 May
Transhumanism: The Last Heresy?

30 April
John Henry Newman: A Life Sacrificed

FALL 2024

Annual Human Rights Lecture

O. Carter Snead, the Charles E. Rice Professor of Law at the University of Notre Dame, delivered the IHE's Seventh Annual Human Rights Lecture, "Ethics at the Edges of Humanity." Professor Snead spoke about the anthropology undergirding human rights and bioethics discourse today: expressive individualism. He argued that expressive individualism is inadequate to guide bioethics and social policy today, as it divorces the individual from familial and communal obligations, exalts the human will at the expense of the human body, and ignores the reality of interdependence in human life. William L. Saunders, J.D., Director of the Program in Human Rights, welcomed Professor Snead and introduced the lecture.



Select Events

The Closing of the American Heart

W. Bradford Wilcox, IHE Scholar and Director of the National Marriage Project at the University of Virginia, drew from his recent book, *Get Married: Why Americans Must Defy the Elites, Forge Strong Families, and Save Civilization*, to discuss America's cratering marriage and fertility rates.

Demonstrating the value of marriage and family life in the twenty-first century, he marshaled evidence to show that men, women, and children in married families are significantly more likely to thrive socially, emotionally, and financially than their peers who do not enjoy the safety and stability of a married family. The event was co-sponsored by Catholic University Campus Ministry, The Catholic Project, and the Center for Law and the Human Person.

Does Everyone Go to Heaven?

To kick off November, the month of the Holy Souls, His Excellency, The Most Reverend Edward K. Braxton, Ph.D., S.T.D., delivered a lecture on the prevailing secular worldview that rejects any possibility of "life after death," as well as the tension between popular, devotional beliefs about the "afterlife" and the actual teachings of the Catholic Church about Heaven, Hell, Purgatory, and Limbo.

Exploring misconceptions about the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body, Bishop Braxton laid forth the Church's position in a clear and engaging fashion, concluding with a message of hope for an eternal Easter after death for all who believe in Jesus Christ.

Select Events

Novelist of Mercy: The Life and Writing of Sigrid Undset

In March, the IHE presented a virtual event to honor Norwegian novelist, Catholic convert, and Nobel laureate Sigrid Undset on the 100th anniversary of the publication of the first two volumes of her tetralogy, *The Master of Hestviken*.

IHE Scholar Amy Fahey and moderator Dr. Elizabeth Clemmons (Assistant Research Professor in Biblical Studies at The Catholic University of America) engaged in a wide-ranging conversation of value to well-versed Undset readers and new fans alike. They focused on Undset's gift for gracefully articulating the movements of "God's spirit hovering over creation" in her fiction and her profound relationship with "God's friends," the saints.

Catholics and Antisemitism — Facing the Past, Shaping the Future

IHE Executive Director Russell Hittinger spoke on a panel at a one-day conference, "Catholics and Antisemitism — Facing the Past, Shaping the Future." The conference, organized by IHE Scholar Simone Rizkallah, was co-sponsored by the Catholic Information Center and the Philos Project.

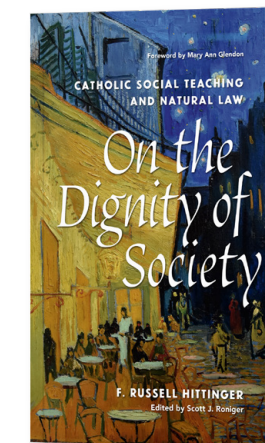
The conference explored the challenges and responsibilities of Catholics in addressing antisemitism in today's world. Dr. Hittinger spoke on a panel titled "A Historical Look at Catholics and Antisemitism" alongside Dr. Richard Crane of Benedictine College and Simone Rizkallah. The panelists examined the historical roots and evolution of Catholic antisemitism from past to present.

SPRING 2025

On the Dignity of Society: Catholic Social Teaching and Natural Law

The IHE hosted an event in honor of Executive Director F. Russell Hittinger's most recent book, *On the Dignity of Society: Catholic Social Teaching and Natural Law* (Catholic University of America Press, 2024). In it, Hittinger presents Catholic social teaching not only as a defense of the dignity of the human person (for which it is particularly well-known), but also as an elucidation of the dignity of human society. Human persons — as naturally familial, political, and ecclesial animals — seek their own perfection in communion. IHE Scholar Scott Roniger edited the book and introduced the lecture.

The event initiated a two-day colloquium on the book, featuring scholars from campus and around the world.



SPECIAL EVENTS

Ross Douthat

The IHE continues to partner with IHE Media Fellow and *New York Times* columnist Ross Douthat to discuss some of the most pressing issues of our time, drawing together media figures, IHE Scholars, and other Catholic intellectuals for a lively conversation each semester at Catholic University.

In the fall, Douthat moderated a panel discussion with Jonathan Askonas (Assistant Professor of Politics, The Catholic University of America), Luke Burgis (Author and Entrepreneur-in-Residence at the Ciocca Center for Principled Entrepreneurship), and Ari Schulman (Editor, *The New Atlantis*) that asked, “Can Humanity Survive the Digital Age?” Panelists offered sober analysis of the dehumanizing tendencies of technology, along with practical advice on keeping one’s head and soul rightly ordered amidst the sea of screens that surrounds us.

Reacting to a growing movement back towards religious belief in Gen Z, Douthat participated in “Is There a Religious Comeback?”— a discussion with Spencer Klavan (Associate Editor, *Claremont Review of Books*), moderated by IHE Scholar Dr. Chad Pecknold (Professor of Historical and Systematic Theology in the School of Theology, The Catholic University of America). Douthat and Klavan each expounded upon their new books exploring grounds for faith in the twenty-first century, arguing that recent developments in the sciences and culture make the case for religious belief all the more persuasive.



National Catholic Partnership on Disability

The IHE continued its fruitful partnership with the National Catholic Partnership on Disability with an ongoing series entitled “Recognizing the Body of Christ.” In the fall, “Fostering Vocations: Autism and the Church’s Call to Belonging” offered a well-attended virtual panel discussion about the intersection of autism, faith, and vocation.

The panel explored how persons with autism can discern and live out their vocations within the Church. Panelists also shared their insights on how the Church can better promote a sense of belonging for persons with autism and how, in turn, faith communities are enriched by their unique gifts and perspectives.



The Lamp

The IHE presented two events with *The Lamp* this year. In December, Matthew Walther, IHE Media Fellow and Editor of *The Lamp*, joined IHE Scholar Stephen P. White for a virtual discussion titled “The Myth of the ‘Catholic Vote?’” The panelists shed light on the role of Catholics in American elections, focusing on the 2024 presidential election.

In the spring, Walther joined Professor Volker Leppin, the Horace Tracy Pitkin Professor of Historical Theology at Yale Divinity School, to host “The Legends of Saint Francis: Writing the Lives of the Saints.” Walther (who is preparing to publish his biography of Saint John Henry Newman with Yale University Press) and Leppin explored the difficulties inherent in writing about saints’ lives, and what distinguishes biography from hagiography.



Faith and Law

The IHE continued its collaboration with Faith and Law, a non-profit that forms Hill staffers in a Christian approach to political questions through Friday lunchtime lectures.

This year, IHE Scholar Joseph Capizzi (Dean of the School of Theology and Religious Studies, The Catholic University of America) and IHE Media Fellow Ross Douthat (Columnist, *The New York Times*) discussed “New Media and the Future of Religion” to a room packed with Hill staffers. The panelists discussed the “democratization of theology” facilitated by new media and parallel trends. Drawing from Douthat’s latest book, *Believe: Why Everyone Should be Religious*, the conversation highlighted new changes in the religious landscape and opportunities for a religious revival.





“The IHE has an incomparable role in the landscape of higher education: bringing together minds dedicated to the Catholic vision of human flourishing, and — through research, teaching, thoughtful conversation, and the bold witness such work provides — handing on that tradition in the academy and the wider public square. As a 2018 Civitas Dei Program Fellow and current IHE Scholar and Assistant Professor of Politics at the Catholic University of America, where I also teach students in the M.A. in Human Rights, the IHE has been an important part of my intellectual and professional development, as it is for many undergraduates, graduate students, and countless others through colloquia, seminars, and public events.”

Sarah Gustafson

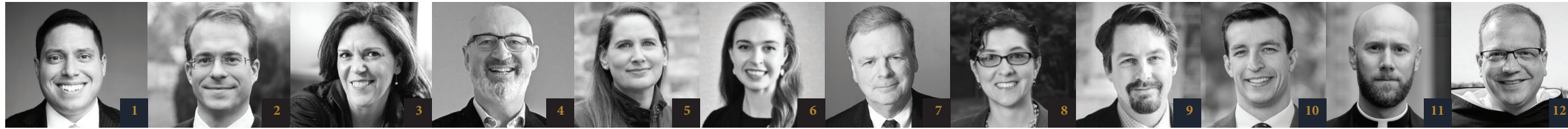
Assistant Professor of Politics
The Catholic University of America



SERVING THE COMMON GOOD THROUGH FAITHFUL SCHOLARSHIP

Representing a diverse range of academic disciplines and institutions, IHE Scholars are united by a shared passion for engaging contemporary questions in the light of faith. Their groundbreaking interdisciplinary work and devotion to forming the next generation through teaching, writing, and speaking manifests a commitment to and a talent for serving the common good through their scholarly vocation.

SELECT FACULTY SCHOLARS



(1) J. Joel Alicea, J.D.

Saint Robert Bellarmine Professor of Law
Director, Center for the Constitution and the Catholic Intellectual Tradition
The Catholic University of America Columbus School of Law
Expertise: Constitutional Theory, Thomistic Theory of Law

(2) Jan Bentz, Ph.D.

Lecturer and Tutor, Blackfriars Studium, Oxford
Expertise: Metaphysics, History of Philosophy, Thomism, Philosophy of Art

(3) Margarita Mooney Clayton, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Practical Theology
Princeton Theological Seminary
Expertise: The Human Person and the Social Sciences, Philosophy and Education, Aesthetics and Culture

(4) David Clayton

Provost and Dean of the Faculty of Sacred Arts, Pontifex University
Expertise: Beauty, Liturgy, Liberal Education

(5) Carrie Gress

Fellow, Ethics and Public Policy Center
Expertise: Theology of Home, Marriage, Family

(6) Sarah H. Gustafson, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Politics
The Catholic University of America
Expertise: American Political Thought, Political Theory

(7) V. Bradley Lewis, Ph.D.

Dean and Associate Professor of Philosophy
The Catholic University of America
Expertise: Political Philosophy, Jurisprudence, Ethics

(8) Melissa Moschella, Ph.D.

Professor of the Practice in the McGrath Institute for Church Life
University of Notre Dame
Expertise: Natural Law, Biomedical Ethics, the Moral and Political Status of the Family

(9) Chad C. Pecknold, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Systematic Theology
The Catholic University of America
Expertise: Fundamental Theology, Theological Anthropology, Theological Politics

(10) Michael E. Promisel, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Politics
The Catholic University of America
Expertise: Catholic Political Thought, Political Rule, the Virtues, Liberal Education

(11) Father Vincent L. Strand, S.J., Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Historical and Systematic Theology
The Catholic University of America
Expertise: Theology of Grace, Christology, Fundamental Theology, Christian Politics

(12) Father Thomas Joseph White, O.P., Ph.D.

Rector Magnificus
Pontifical University of Saint Thomas Aquinas (Angelicum)
Expertise: Christology, Metaphysics



Scan here to view
our full roster of
90+ Faculty Scholars.

IHE MEDIA FELLOWS



(1) **Beatriz Lopez Bonetti**

Associate Professor of Marketing
The Catholic University of America

(2) **Jack Butler**

Submissions Editor,
National Review Online

(3) **Ed Condon**

Co-Founder and Editor,
The Pillar

(4) **Ross Douthat**

Opinion Columnist,
The New York Times

(5) **Kathryn Jean Lopez**

Senior Fellow and Director
Center for Religion, Culture, and Civil Society
National Review Institute

(6) **Noelle Mering**

Editor,
Theology of Home
Fellow,
Ethics and Public Policy Center

(7) **Nic Rowan**

Managing Editor,
The Lamp
Robert Novak Journalism Fellow,
The Fund for American Studies

(8) **Stephanie Slade**

Senior Editor,
Reason Magazine
Fellow,
Acton Institute

(9) **Matthew Walther**

Editor,
The Lamp

IHE Scholar Highlights

Simone Rizkallah

Simone Rizkallah is the Director of Philos Catholic, a frequent guest on Catholic Answers Live, and a faculty member of the Avila Institute. She holds a graduate degree in Theological Studies with an emphasis in Systematic Theology from Christendom College.

Ms. Rizkallah has worked at the parish level for both youth and adult formation at Saint Ambrose parish in Annandale, VA, and taught moral theology and Church history and chaired the Theology Department at Saint Mary's Catholic High School in Phoenix, Arizona. She also served at Endow, an apostolate for women dedicated to cultivating a New Feminism according to the vision of Pope Saint John Paul II. You can find her thoughts on the prophetic value of Church documents on *The Endow Podcast* from 2020 to 2023.

As a first-generation American of Egyptian-Armenian descent, Ms. Rizkallah is particularly interested in matters of religious freedom, culture, and the Eastern roots of the Faith. She currently hosts the *Beyond Rome* podcast, which seeks to reconnect Catholics to their Hebrew and Near Eastern Christian Roots. You can find her talks and publications on culturalgypsy.com.



Steven Waldorf

Steven Waldorf is an Assistant Professor in the School of Philosophy at The Catholic University of America. His research and teaching focus on natural law, Church-state relations, religious freedom, and the virtues in medieval and early modern Scholasticism.

He has published articles in journals including *The Review of Politics*, *The Thomist*, and *The Political Science Reviewer*, as well as in edited volumes. Before joining the Catholic University faculty, Waldorf was the Donnelley Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the University of Chicago. He holds a Ph.D. and M.Phil. in Political Thought and Intellectual History from the University of Cambridge and an A.B. in Government from Georgetown University, where he graduated as valedictorian.





“The IHE fosters a reliable and vibrant network of Catholic scholars, grounded in fidelity to the Church and open to meaningful public discourse. Through its webinars and publications, I’ve felt supported and encouraged in my own academic work.”

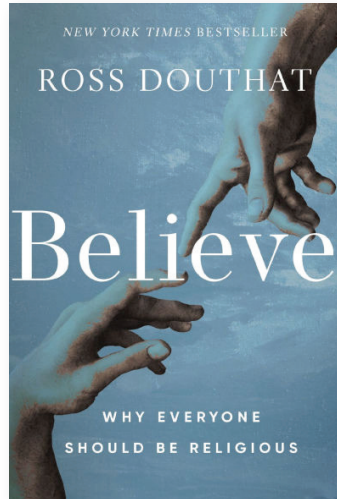
Jan Bentz
Lecturer and Tutor
Blackfriars Studium
University of Oxford



ADVANCING ANCIENT WISDOM THROUGH RESEARCH

The 2024–2025 academic year saw immense productivity for our Scholars, who published books, articles, and papers for public audiences and scholarly communities alike. Advancing research within their academic fields and communicating the consequences meaningfully to a lay audience is the true hallmark of an IHE Scholar.

SELECT PUBLICATIONS



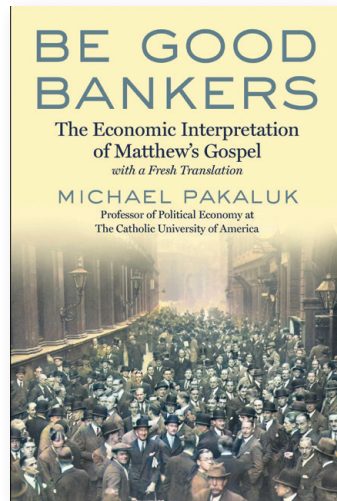
Believe: Why Everyone Should Be Religious

Ross Douthat

As a *New York Times* opinion columnist whose work includes engaging with spiritual topics for a skeptical audience, Ross Douthat understands that many want more faith than they have. Douthat argues that in light of contemporary knowledge, it should be harder not to have faith than to have it. With empathy, clarity, and rigor, Douthat explores:

- Why nonbelief requires ignoring what our reasoning faculties tell us about the world
- How modern scientific developments make a religious worldview more credible, not less
- Why it's entirely reasonable to believe in mystical and supernatural realities
- How an open-minded religious quest should proceed amid the diversity of religious faiths
- How Douthat's own Christianity is informed by his blueprint for belief

With clear and straightforward arguments, *Believe* shows how religious belief makes sense of the order of the cosmos and man's place within it, illuminates the mystery of consciousness, and explains the persistent reality of encounters with the supernatural. Highly relevant today, *Believe* offers a pathway for thinking from doubt into belief, and from uncertainty about one's place in the universe into a confidence that each person is here for a reason.



Be Good Bankers: The Economic Interpretation of Matthew's Gospel, with a Fresh Translation

Michael Pakaluk

In his original translation of Matthew's Gospel, Dr. Pakaluk supposes that Saint Matthew was a mid-level ambitious tax collector familiar with best practices of Roman banking, accounting, and contract law.

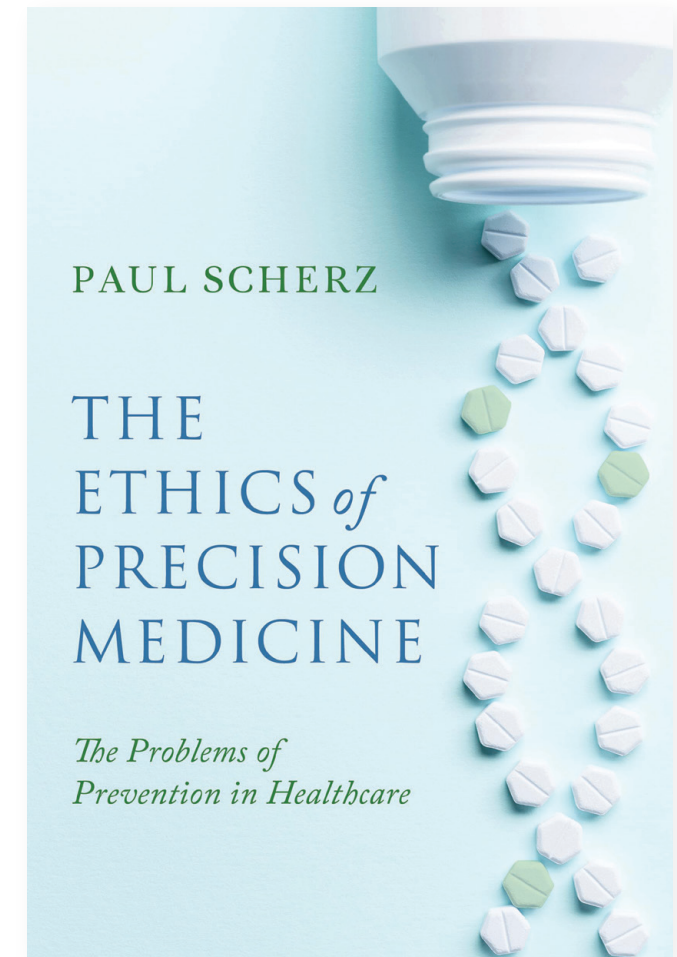
What difference might this make for how he conceived of and represented the Gospel? Pakaluk finds in Matthew's Gospel clues for interpreting a saying which various Fathers of the Church attributed to Jesus: "Be good bankers." The result is a marriage, not a divorce, between economic rationality and Christian discipleship.

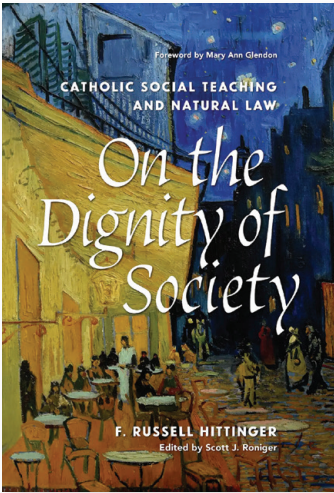
The Ethics of Precision Medicine: The Problems of Prevention in Healthcare

Paul Scherz

Genetic technologies and artificial intelligence are rapidly changing the landscape of medical practice and patient care. In the emerging field of precision medicine, a patient's risk factors — especially genetic risk factors — are incorporated into an all-encompassing plan to prevent future disease. But identifying at-risk individuals through technologies such as wearable devices and direct-to-consumer genetic sequencing can undermine the overall experience of health. The potential for overdiagnosis and overtreatment grows as patients are prescribed medications and receive prophylactic surgeries that carry inherent risks. Also, as the medical industry shifts its attention from individuals to trends in the general population, the one-to-one practitioner-patient relationship becomes strained.

Using the lens of virtue ethics and theological bioethics, *The Ethics of Precision Medicine* offers suggestions for better implementing precision medicine to treat those currently suffering from or at high risk of disease, while also recognizing that effectively preventing disease depends, ultimately, on addressing the social determinants of health. The book provides a new perspective on the problems of contemporary healthcare, proposing practical steps that individuals and institutions can take to ensure that the advanced technologies of precision medicine can be used to promote human flourishing.





On the Dignity of Society

F. Russell Hittinger

In this collection of essays, Hittinger shows that Catholic social teaching is not only an articulate defense of the dignity of the human person but, perhaps more fundamentally, an elucidation of the dignity of society. Hittinger enables us to see that one cannot properly defend the dignity of the person without also showing the dignity of societies in which human persons — as naturally familial, political, and ecclesial animals — seek their own perfection in communion with others. Hittinger has been a renowned scholar of Catholic social doctrine for some time now, and the essays presented here are the mature fruit of his thinking on the topic over the course of many years. The book demonstrates Hittinger’s important body of work on Catholic moral and social thought. It is rooted in natural law theory and Thomistic philosophy, but also animated by Saint Augustine’s thought. It is also consistently sensitive to historical contexts and arenas for moral and theological disputation. These magisterial essays integrate historical studies of the development of Catholic social teaching with systematic exposition of the theological coherence of that tradition, while also articulating the essential role of philosophy and natural law within both.

The volume is divided into three parts. The first part is comprised of six essays on Catholic social teaching, the second part is made up of six essays on natural law and its role in social doctrine, and the third part includes two essays discussing the first principles of the Church’s teaching on social issues. This collection is already considered a standard in the scholarly field of Catholic social teaching.

Ethics, Politics, and Natural Law: Principles for Human Flourishing

Melissa Moschella

The foundational principles of ethics and politics guide us to respect and promote human flourishing. In *Ethics, Politics, and Natural Law*, Moschella provides an accessible explanation and development of the new natural law’s account of these principles while clarifying common misconceptions.

As a commonsense ethical theory, natural law grounds ethics in the fundamental dimensions of human flourishing. Moschella lays out the basic principles of natural law, their relationship to the virtues, and their social and political implications. Highlighting the importance of communities for flourishing, Moschella explains how this should shape our understanding of justice and the common good, and shows how natural law principles support limited government and civil liberties. She also considers the relationship between morality and God, and how natural law relates to Christian revelation. For supporters and critics alike, this fresh and compelling account of new natural law is the go-to resource to understand this important and influential theory.



Get Married: Why Americans Must Defy the Elites, Forge Strong Families, and Save Civilization

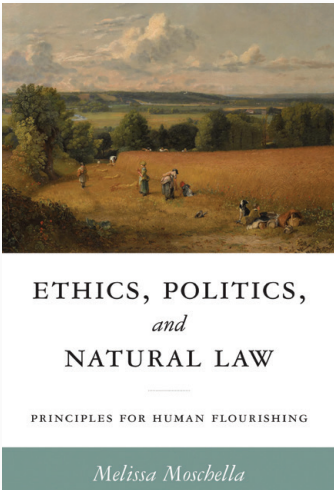
Brad Wilcox

According to new research by University of Virginia sociologist Brad Wilcox, our children and communities — not to mention our civilization as a whole — are much more likely to flourish when the state of our familial unions is strong. Despite this, record numbers of Americans are not succeeding in getting or staying married.

In this hard-hitting book, Wilcox reveals the anti-family messages and policies coming out of Hollywood, Washington, the media, academia, and corporate America that have weakened marriage. Along the way, he knocks down a number of myths they’ve propagated. He reveals:

- Both men and women who get and stay married accumulate much greater wealth than people who do not marry.
- Married men and women with families report more meaningful lives, compared with their single and childless peers.
- Couples who take a “we-before-me” approach to married life — by, for instance, sharing joint checking accounts — are happier and less divorce-prone than couples who do not.
- Couples who forge “family-first” marriages — characterized by frequent date nights, family fun time, and chores done with the kids — enjoy the happiest marriages.

Wilcox spotlights four groups — Asian American, Conservative, Faithful, and Strivers — who have built strong, stable marriages by defying the me-first messages of our elites in favor of a family-first way of life. This book is for anyone who wants to understand why, even as fewer men and women tie the knot, America’s most fundamental institution matters more than ever for our civilization. And for men and women looking to establish strong, stable, and happy unions for themselves and their children, *Get Married* reveals the road forward.





“The opportunity to share insights on beauty and Christian education with the IHE’s summer program in Oxford was a highlight of my year. The brightest young Catholic minds come together at IHE’s programs to rebuild a culture of beauty and faith.”

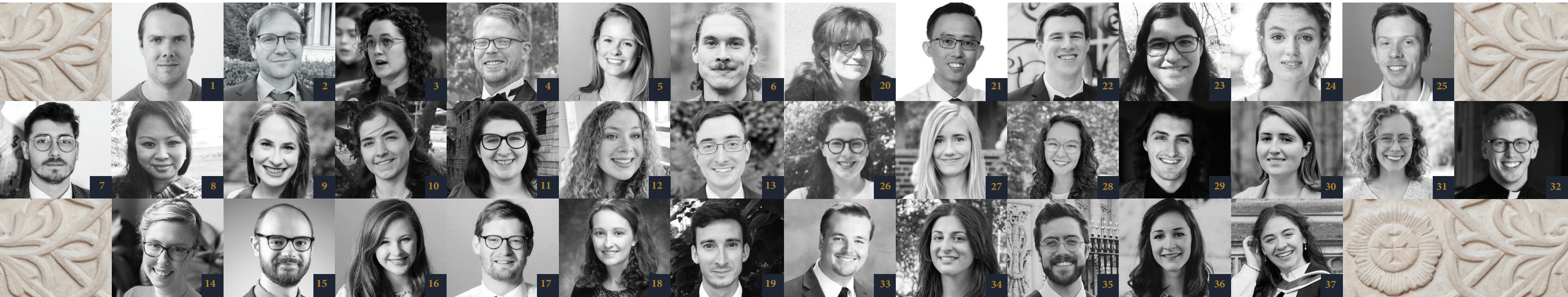
Margarita Mooney Clayton
Associate Professor of Congregational Studies
Department of Practical Theology
Princeton Theological Seminary



SHAPING THE FUTURE THROUGH OUR STUDENTS

Through seminars, pilgrimages, mentorship, and community, the IHE attracts top graduate students and offers them vocation-shaping intellectual, spiritual, and professional formation. From Oxford to Rome to Washington, DC, our Graduate Scholars connect their work to senior academics in their fields and to the lives of the Saints, developing an approach to study and career that sees authentic service to the common good as the overflow of a well-ordered, holy life.

GRADUATE SCHOLARS



- (1) **Matthew Advent**
Catholic University
Ph.D. in Philosophy
- (2) **Carl Allard**
Catholic University
Ph.D. in Politics
- (3) **Mary Biese**
University of Notre Dame
M.T.S. in Liturgical Studies
- (4) **Michael Bors**
Catholic University
Ph.D. in Philosophy
- (5) **Genevieve Buono**
Catholic University
Ph.D. in Philosophy

- (6) **Charles Carmen**
Catholic University
Ph.D. in Church History
- (7) **Dominic V. Cassella**
Catholic University
Ph.D. in Historical and Systematic Theology
- (8) **Jeanne-Michelle Datiles**
Catholic University
Ph.D. in History
- (9) **Sarah Dunford**
Catholic University
Ph.D. in Political Theory
- (10) **Marcela Duque**
Catholic University
Ph.D. in Philosophy

- (11) **Molly Egilsrud**
Catholic University
Ph.D. in Moral Theology
- (12) **Caitlin Anne Fitzgerald**
University of Notre Dame
Ph.D. in Sociology
- (13) **Joseph Gazaille**
Catholic University
Ph.D. in Philosophy
- (14) **Margaret Graves**
Catholic University
Ph.D. in Moral Theology and Ethics
- (15) **John-Paul Heil, Ph.D.**
Pontifical John Paul II Institute
M.T.S. in Marriage and Family Studies

- (16) **Monica Jeffrey**
Catholic University
Ph.D. in Philosophy
- (17) **Patrick Jones**
Catholic University
Ph.D. in Moral Theology
- (18) **Maria Keller**
University of Notre Dame
Ph.D. in Theology
- (19) **Philip Knuffke**
Catholic University
Ph.D. in Philosophy

- (20) **Camelia Lelesan**
Catholic University
Ph.D. in Political Theory
- (21) **Daryl Li**
Catholic University
Ph.D. in Philosophy
- (22) **Jonathan Lindley**
Catholic University
M.A. in Social Work
- (23) **Bridget Matz**
Catholic University
M.A. in English
- (24) **Elizabeth McCarthy**
Catholic University
M.A. in Architecture and Planning

- (25) **Reed W. Miller**
Catholic University
S.T.L. in Liturgy
- (26) **Quinn Moore**
University of North Carolina
Ph.D. in History
- (27) **Isabelle Ostertag**
University of Virginia
Ph.D. in Art and Architectural History
- (28) **Miriam Pritschet**
Catholic University
Ph.D. in Philosophy
- (29) **Samuel Roberts**
University of Notre Dame
Ph.D. in History

- (30) **Theresa Ryland**
Dominican House of Studies
S.T.L. in Systematic Theology
- (31) **Lauren Spohn**
University of Oxford
D.Phil. in Theology
- (32) **Father Gilbrian Stoy, C.S.C.**
Catholic University
Ph.D. in Moral Theology
- (33) **Nicholas Swanson**
George Mason University
Ph.D. in Economics
- (34) **Andrea Torres**
Universidad de Los Andes
Ph.D. in Philosophy

- (35) **Jonathan Wanner**
Catholic University
Ph.D. in Renaissance Literature
- (36) **Morgan Whitmer**
Catholic University
Ph.D. in Political Theory
- (37) **Clare Whitton**
University of Oxford
Ph.D. in Medieval History

Graduate Highlight



Bridget Safranek Knuffke

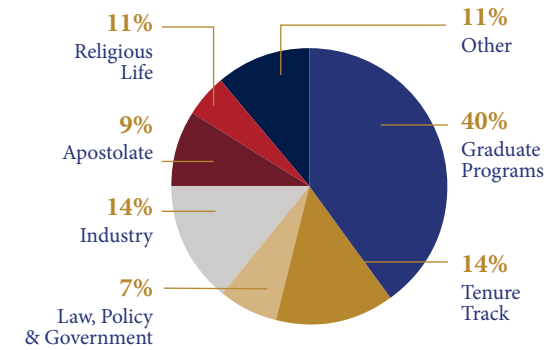
This year, IHE Scholar Bridget Knuffke completed her Ph.D. at The Catholic University of America's School of Philosophy under the direction of IHE Executive Director F. Russell Hittinger. She follows in the footsteps of her father, John Safranek, who was also mentored by Hittinger. Her dissertation, *Thomas Aquinas on Medicinal Punishment*, examines Aquinas's comparison of punishment to medicine and its implications for contemporary social theory. The dissertation earned a prestigious award from the Pontifical Academy of Saint Thomas Aquinas. Bridget will accept the award in Rome next summer.

Bridget holds a B.A. in philosophy from the University of Dallas and a Ph.L. in philosophy from The Catholic University of America. She has been involved with the IHE throughout her time at Catholic University, as an IHE Graduate Scholar and frequent participant in IHE programming, including the IHE's 2019 Holy Land pilgrimage. Her husband, Philip Knuffke, is a fellow IHE Scholar who also studied in the School of Philosophy at The Catholic University of America.

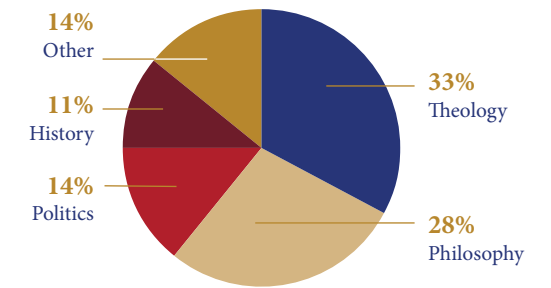
For the 2024-2025 academic year, Bridget served as a Postdoctoral Research Associate with the James Madison Program at Princeton University. Bridget will continue to write and research from Northfield, Massachusetts, where the Knuffkes and their one year old son now reside.

IHE PROGRAM ALUMNI OUTCOMES

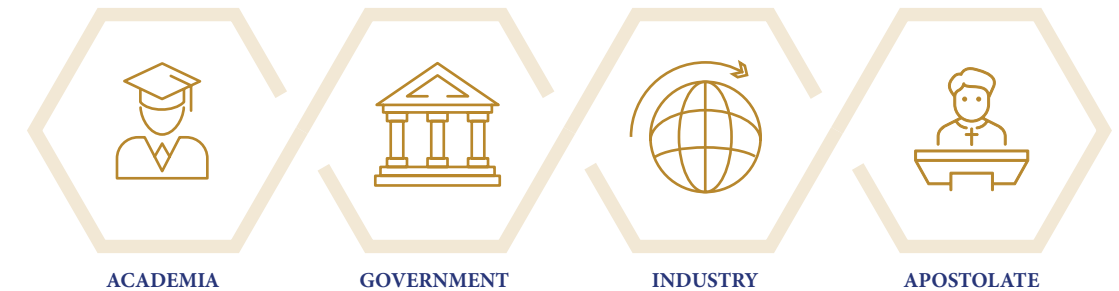
Alumni Placement



Graduate Scholar Academic Fields



Employers and Institutions



With over 280 Civitas Dei Fellows, 37 Graduate Scholars, and dozens of M.A. graduates, the IHE's alumni form a vibrant, faithful network committed to promoting human flourishing in diverse professional fields. From the academy to government, law, industry, and the Church, they carry the Catholic intellectual tradition into the heart of the public square.

JUBILEE YEAR

In 2025, we celebrate the Jubilee Year with the Catholic Church across the globe. Also known as a “Holy Year,” the Jubilee is a special period of forgiveness and reconciliation, observed every 25 years.

The Jubilee originates in the Old Law, which prescribed that every 50th year be observed as a period of restoration during which God poured out abundant graces on His people through their fidelity to acts of justice such as releasing slaves, forgiving debts, and returning bought or borrowed property to its original owners. In the Catholic Church, this tradition is reinterpreted spiritually as a designated time for growth in holiness. The Catholic Jubilee originated in 1300, when Pope Boniface VIII declared the first Holy Year.

The current ordinary Jubilee Year of Hope began on 24 December 2024, with the theme “Pilgrims of Hope.” Josef Pieper reminds us in *On Hope* that each person is fundamentally a pilgrim, a *viator*. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (No. 2691) explains, “Pilgrimages evoke our earthly journey toward heaven and are traditionally very special occasions for renewal in prayer.”

United in mind and heart, our pilgrim Scholars embarked to the Eternal City together (see Rome Seminar, page 50), abounding in hope. Pilgrims walked through the Holy Door of the Archbasilica of Saint John Lateran, opened only during Jubilee Years, gaining a special plenary indulgence. During the 2025 England Pilgrimage, pilgrims received Jubilee indulgences by attending Holy Mass at Westminster Cathedral, which is designated a sacred Jubilee site.





THE CIVITAS DEI SUMMER FELLOWSHIP

Emerging scholars from top doctoral and legal programs in the United States and abroad gathered for the eighth annual Civitas Dei Fellowship, co-sponsored by the Institute for Human Ecology and the Thomistic Institute.

The 2025 Civitas Dei Fellowship gathered 42 students hailing from institutions including Princeton, Yale, Notre Dame, Boston College, Hillsdale, Baylor, and University of Barcelona on the campuses of The Catholic University of America and the Dominican House of Studies. These students joined our network of nearly 300 Civitas Dei Alumni.

Examining “The Future of Personhood and the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence,” the program offered students an education on personhood in light of AI from different scholarly perspectives, drawing on ancient thought and the Church’s own patristic and scholastic sources to encourage critical thinking about the application of these principles in private and public life.

Civitas Dei Fellows include top graduate students, advanced undergraduates, and distinguished young professionals from around the world, selected from a competitive applicant pool to be formed through a week of seminars, discussions, and excursions in Washington, DC. They attended lectures under Father James Brent, O.P. (Dominican House of Studies), Father Anselm Ramelow, O.P. (Graduate Theological Union), and Dr. Jordan Wales (Hillsdale College).

In a special session, Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito addressed the participants in his private chambers. Civitas Dei Fellows also enjoyed private Masses, free-flowing evening conversation with faculty, and remarks from guests including Catholic University President Peter Kilpatrick and Father Gregory Pine, O.P. (Assistant Director of the Thomistic Institute).

This scholarly experience is a unique step in the lifelong journey of reflection and action inspired by the principles of the Catholic intellectual tradition at the heart of the IHE’s mission: freedom and human agency, political engagement for the common good, and the

pursuit of human flourishing ordered toward God. The program does not end with the final discussion session; our Civitas Dei Alumni form an extensive network of top graduate students and young professionals. (See page 46.)





CIVITAS DEI ALUMNI

The IHE maintains contact with the 281 Alumni of the Civitas Dei Summer Fellowship, connecting them with the wider IHE community for special events, collaboration opportunities, and career placements.

Alumnus Tom Shakely was recently named Chief Communications Officer of the Diocese of Arlington, where he serves as the senior communications advisor to the Bishop and oversees the Office of Communications, the *Arlington Catholic Herald*, media relations, publications, and digital and social media. Shakely, among several other Civitas Dei Alumni, is also a graduate of the IHE's M.A. in Human Rights (page 56).

Alumna Sarah Gustafson completed her first year

as an Assistant Professor of Politics at The Catholic University of America, while alumnus Paul Radich (Assistant Professor of Marketing, The Catholic University of America) led a wide-ranging research project examining the pedagogy of virtue and human flourishing in a business environment.

Alumnus Thomas Showalter was appointed Staff Editor of *Catholic University Law Review*, and IHE Graduate Scholars Morgan Whitmer and Thomas Holman earned their Ph.D.s in Politics from The Catholic University of America.

Civitas Dei Alumni are talented and faithful men and women who thrive in their fields. The IHE is pleased to incorporate them into the life of the Institute.

GRADUATE STUDENT ENGLAND PILGRIMAGE

Recusancy and Revival: The Persecution and Rebirth of Catholicism in Our Lady's Dowry

The IHE led our fourth pilgrimage to England, forming graduate students from universities across the United States and the world through a deep dive into the rich history of Catholic England, from conversion to persecution to the present day. Encounters with the glorious witness of the English saints and martyrs, daily Mass and opportunities for prayer, and rigorous seminars reinvigorated our students spiritually and intellectually for their ongoing academic work.



Students visited:

- Littlemore (where Saint John Henry Newman converted at the feet of Blessed Dominic Barberi)
- Harvington Hall (a recusant house with seven secret hiding places built by Saint Nicholas Owen, S.J.)
- The Oxford Oratory
- The cell of Saint Thomas More in the Tower of London
- The site of Tyburn Tree
- Westminster Cathedral
- Westminster Abbey
- Canterbury Cathedral



ROME SEMINAR

The Vision of God

In May, alongside the Pontifical University of Saint Thomas Aquinas (the Angelicum), the IHE hosted 14 students in Rome for a weeklong seminar on the beatific vision. Guided by Thomistic scholars during the Jubilee Year, our “pilgrims of hope” discussed topics including the three-fold perfection of the *Imago Dei*, the theological virtues and beatitude, and the natural desire to see God. The seminar discussions continued over family-style meals throughout the Eternal City. At the end of the week, students toured the Vatican Museums and several churches, including Saint Peter’s Basilica and the Archbasilica of Saint John Lateran, where they walked through the Jubilee doors.



Sessions included:

“Aristotle and Aquinas on Nous”

Sister Anna Wray, O.P.
The Catholic University of America

“Angelic Intellection”; “The Intellection of Separated Souls”; “Angelic Illumination”

Father Serge-Thomas Bonino, O.P.
The Angelicum

“Three-Fold Perfection of the Imago Dei”; “The Theological Virtues: Ordered to Beatitude”

Father Michael Sherwin, O.P.
The Angelicum

“Albert and Aquinas on Beatitude”

Meghan Duke, Ph.D.
Thomas Aquinas College

“Deification by Grace through the Divine Missions”; “Deiformity as Filial Participation in Divine Glory”

Daria Spezzano, Ph.D.
Providence College

“The Natural Desire to See God”

Father Thomas Joseph White, O.P.
The Angelicum



ACADEMIA TOCQUEVILLE

Seminar in French Political Thought

For the third consecutive summer, the IHE partnered with Academia Tocqueville, developed by IHE Civitas Dei alumnus Luke Foster, to provide students and young professionals with an intensive introduction to French political thought. This program examines the response of historically Catholic France to political and social change from the Revolution to the present. Intellectually and culturally rich, the Academia aims to build lasting bonds between young scholars on both sides of the Atlantic.

Through rigorous seminars and excursions to historical sites in Paris, participants considered a long succession of French political thinkers, including Montesquieu, Tocqueville, Maistre, Maritain, de Gaulle, and Weil. Participants also encountered the legacy of venerable Catholic saints and martyrs, such as the Holy Martyrs of September, the Martyrs of the Commune, Jacques Hamel, and Arnaud Beltrame. Reading formative works with expert faculty, Academia Tocqueville scholars studied key questions of constitutional order and fundamental themes in Catholic social teaching from a comparative perspective.



Faculty included:

Paul Yowell

Benn Fellow and Tutor, *Oriel College*

Françoise Melonio

Professor Emeritus, *Sorbonne Université*

Bishop Matthieu Rougé

Diocese of Nanterre, France

P. Bracy Bersnak

Associate Professor, *Christendom College*



Photos provided by Academia Tocqueville

SAINT JOHN HENRY NEWMAN

Undergraduate Program

The Saint John Henry Newman Undergraduate Program exists to integrate various facets of an undergraduate student's life — social, intellectual, and spiritual — as well as to bring the disciplines of the University into conversation with each other. The goal of the program, “to give the Republic her best citizens” (Pope Leo XIII), is accomplished by preparing students to complete their university studies with cultured minds, deepened faith, and civic virtue.

Reading Groups

Undergraduates enjoy reading groups led by our Graduate Scholars, weaving the two communities together in a mutually beneficial way. Graduate students augment their teaching experience, while creating opportunities for undergraduates to form an intellectual life and community beyond the classroom.

Reading group topics have included:

- Finding God in Nature
- Liberal Education
- Papal Encyclicals
- The Western Literary Tradition

The IHE Bookshelf

Newman Fellows enjoy access to a selection of volumes intended to nurture lifelong intellectual curiosity and grounded spirituality. The Bookshelf includes:

- *The Idea of a University* by Saint John Henry Newman
- *An Introduction to the Devout Life* by Saint Francis de Sales
- *Catherine of Siena* by Sigrid Undset
- *The Intellectual Life* by A.G. Sertillanges, O.P.



MASTER OF ARTS IN HUMAN RIGHTS

Sixth Class of M.A. Students Graduates

The IHE's Master of Arts in Human Rights offers an integrated, deeply Catholic approach to human rights grounded in the inviolable dignity of each and every human being. The students come from the United States and abroad, enriching the program through diverse cultural perspectives.

The innovative, interdisciplinary Master of Arts curriculum draws upon complementary academic offerings across The Catholic University of America. Its courses come not only from departments within Arts and Sciences but also from the Schools of Philosophy, Canon Law, Theology and Religious Studies, Business, and Law. In addition to the required coursework, students meet regularly with leaders from influential human rights organizations, including those led by members of the program's Advisory Board.



Program Director: William L. Saunders, J.D.
Leading human rights practitioner for over 30 years

Graduates complete the program with:

- (1) A Catholic vision of the nature of the human person
- (2) Knowledge of the international legal structure of human rights
- (3) The ability to analyze and discuss whether claimed "rights" are defensible as such
- (4) Connections with leading human rights advocates
- (5) A depth and breadth of understanding regarding the nature and origin of rights
- (6) The confidence and background to engage intellectually and practically in human rights policy-making and advocacy

Learning from Heroes in the Human Rights Field

Our students do not just study human rights in the classroom; they complete internships in the field, meet with leaders, and gain immersive exposure to the diverse world of human rights work.

A touchstone of the program is regular meetings with human rights leaders and heroes who offer personal reflections on their experiences and enliven theory with practical wisdom. Thanks to our limited class size, students enjoy intimate opportunities to build relationships with these experts.



In the 2024–2025 academic year, guest speakers included:

Ambassador Sam Brownback
Chairman, NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Jakub Grygiel
Professor and Chair of Politics, CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

Yuri Mantilla
Professor of Law, LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

Mark Rienzi
Senior Counsel, BECKET FUND FOR RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

Jennie Lichter
President, THE MARCH FOR LIFE

Dawn Hawkins
President, THE NATIONAL CENTER ON SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Pierro Tozzi and Mary Vigil
Office of Congressman Chris Smith, R-NJ

Robert Destro
Professor of Law, CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

Kent Hill
Co-Founder, RELIGIOUS FREEDOM INSTITUTE

Thomas Farr
President Emeritus, RELIGIOUS FREEDOM INSTITUTE

Nick Eberstadt
Henry Wendt Chair in Political Economy,
AMERICAN ENTERPRISE INSTITUTE

Peter Pin
Director,
WEST PAPUA HUMAN RIGHTS CENTER

Current & former Vatican diplomats such as
Monsignor Jose Serrano



MASTER OF ARTS IN HUMAN RIGHTS

Our Dedicated Advisory Board

At every step of its growth, our program has received guidance and support from our stellar Advisory Board. We are deeply grateful for their contribution to our program, the only Master of Arts in Human Rights in the United States taught from a Catholic perspective.



Helen Alvaré
Robert A. Levy Endowed Chair
in Law and Liberty
GEORGE MASON LAW SCHOOL



Robert P. George
McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY



John Dilulio
Frederic Fox Leadership Professor
of Politics, Religion, and Civil Society
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA



Mary Ann Glendon
Learned Hand Professor of Law Emerita
HARVARD LAW SCHOOL



Thomas Farr
President Emeritus
RELIGIOUS FREEDOM INSTITUTE



John Keown
Rose F. Kennedy Professor
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Monsignor Anthony Frontiero, S.T.D.
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ARCHDIOCESE FOR THE MILITARY SERVICES, USA



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Veronica Smaldone



Sarah Thomas



Ruth Velez



“The tradition of Catholic political thought is one of the undervalued resources of the Church. The IHE's Program on Catholic Political Thought aims to make it available to a culture that badly needs it. The Program's annual lecture and seminar is an opportunity for both scholars and the community at large to engage with this tradition; regular John Courtney Murray dinners are an opportunity for faculty and graduate students to come together to discuss it; and courses, especially graduate courses by our faculty, are an opportunity to pass this tradition along to the next generation.”

V. Bradley Lewis

IHE Scholar, Dean, and Associate Professor of Philosophy
The Catholic University of America



BUILDING AN INTERNATIONAL HUB FOR CATHOLIC POLITICAL THOUGHT

Unique in its kind, the IHE's Program on Catholic Political Thought unites Catholic scholars, lawyers, and public thinkers from around the world in a forum to discuss political thought from a Catholic perspective. With scholarship in this area contributing significantly to contemporary understanding of Church-state relations, human rights, and good governance, and growing public interest in Catholic Christian contributions to civil discourse, the PCPT is a timely addition to our Scholar network and public offerings.

Program on CATHOLIC POLITICAL THOUGHT

The crown jewel of the IHE's work, the Program on Catholic Political Thought, brings together scholars of Theology, Philosophy, and Politics in a forum where students can engage with the Catholic political thought tradition, scholars can extend and apply it, and the general public can learn from it. The Program aims to make core Catholic political principles — the centrality of conscience, the common good, subsidiarity, human dignity, human rights, and limited government — available to students through primary sources and with the aid of scholars committed to the truth.

The Program leverages existing resources at Catholic University to provide doctoral students with a unique opportunity: the means to acquire a comprehensive knowledge of the tradition of Catholic political thought. In addition, the Program sponsors lectures, colloquia, seminars, and courses and forging dedicated scholars into an international network of trusted, faithful academics, advancing an authentically Catholic vision of politics and the human person.

WE OFFER

Interdisciplinary Ph.D.

Through the Program, students in Theology, Philosophy, and Politics at The Catholic University of America can pursue interdisciplinary doctoral specializations in Catholic political theory.

Close Community, International Network

As a world leader in Catholic political thought, the PCPT organizes an international cohort of scholars, pairing bright young thinkers with sound Catholic mentors.

Events & Publications

Generating substantial content for the University and the public square, the PCPT disseminates the work of IHE scholars, students, and thought influencers through frequent events and contributions to major publications, both academic and popular.

Co-Directors of the Program: **Joseph E. Capizzi, F. Russell Hittinger, V. Bradley Lewis**



2024–2025 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

The PCPT enjoyed a robustly successful third year, marked by thoughtful engagement with the rich tradition of Catholic political thought:

- John Courtney Murray Dinner Seminar Series (page 68)
- A discussion with Professor David Dusenbury and IHE Scholar Steven Waldorf on Dusenbury's book *The Innocence of Pontius Pilate*
- Executive Director Russell Hittinger's direction of four Ph.D. dissertations
- A discussion with Professor Michael Breidenbach and IHE Scholar Sarah Gustafson on Professor Breidenbach's book *Our Dear-Bought Liberty: Catholics and Religious Toleration in Early America*
- Third Annual Lecture on Catholic Political Thought (page 65)



What Does Our Tradition Say?

The Catholic intellectual tradition contains a deep vein of political reflection. From the time of the Church Fathers to the present, leading Catholic thinkers have drawn upon the rich theology and history of the Church and the best of classical political thought. As a result, the Catholic tradition is uniquely capacious and historically informed in its approach to questions of political flourishing.

The PCPT challenges narrow understandings of political questions, especially regarding the common good and the role of the person in society. Our scholars model a cohesive and rigorous engagement with the Catholic political tradition, advancing civil discourse and fruitful academic contribution to the life of the polity.



HOPE AND SALVATION: FROM CHRISTIAN ESCHATOLOGY TO POLITICAL ETHICS

Third Annual Lecture on Catholic Political Thought

Following the success of its first two iterations, the IHE hosted its Third Annual Lecture on Catholic Political Thought in October 2024. Émilie Tardivel-Schick, Professor of Moral Philosophy and Religious Anthropology of the Catholic Theology Faculty at the University of Strasbourg, delivered a lecture entitled “Hope and Salvation: From Christian Eschatology to Political Ethics.” Professor Tardivel-Schick reflected on the possibility of the virtue of Christian hope as offering an antidote to contemporary political and social despair. To explore this topic, she posed the question: How can we still access this antidote in a world that has long since revoked the very object of hope: namely, salvation?

Professor Tardivel-Schick addressed this question in three parts with the help of great Christian authors, both ancient (Saint Augustine and Saint

Thomas Aquinas) and contemporary (Josef Pieper, Jürgen Moltmann, and Joseph Ratzinger). After recalling the Christian meaning of the virtue of hope and its relationship with the other theological virtues (faith and charity), her lecture deconstructed the modern impossibility of hope, which has its origins in both the suppression of its object (despair) and the focus on merit or grace alone (presumption). Professor Tardivel-Schick argued that a return to the Christian virtue of hope should not aim to found a utopia, nor an eschatology, but a political ethics.

The IHE hosted scholars for a symposium on Professor Tardivel-Schick’s talk the next day. Professors Peter Casarella (Duke University), David Dusenbury (University of Florida), and Father Vincent Strand, S.J. (The Catholic University of America) delivered formal responses to the lecture.

“Hope is the only answer that is in keeping with our status as pilgrims because it steers us resolutely towards our ultimate and infinite good without anticipating its fulfillment or non-fulfillment. It does not, therefore, conceal the irreducible uncertainty of our existence while giving us the ability to face up to this uncertainty and those that result from it today.”

Emilie Tardivel-Schick

Hope and Salvation: From Christian Eschatology to Political Ethics





“The Institute for Human Ecology provides an environment in Washington, DC, for young people to discuss their faith earnestly while pursuing their intellectual development. My conversations with students after our bi-annual events — about everything from the evolution of Syriac lectionaries to Saint Jerome and unicorns — have been one of the most rewarding parts of my involvement with the IHE.”

Matthew Walther

Editor
The Lamp



EXPANDING IMPACT BY FORMING COMMUNITY

As an academic institute based at the national University of the Catholic Church and built on the teachings of Jesus Christ, the IHE network is undergirded by a spiritual communion that runs deeper than any scholarly collaboration. We believe that our Scholars’ impactful contribution to the public conversation is strengthened by belonging to a community that worships in Spirit and in Truth (John 4:24).

JOHN COURTNEY MURRAY DINNERS

Drawing inspiration from a Washington institution inaugurated by the late Michael Novak, the IHE's Murray Dinners occasion conversation about the deepest challenges we face in life, society, and politics, drawing on the capacious engagement with modernity exemplified by John Courtney Murray, S.J.

IHE Executive Director Russell Hittinger joined IHE Scholar V. Bradley Lewis, Dean of the School of Philosophy at The Catholic University of America, to moderate two dinner seminars during the 2024–2025 academic year.

Fall

During the fall semester, professors and graduate students gathered to discuss a chapter on the Neo-Thomist revival from an upcoming work by Bradley Lewis. Centered around the Leonine Revolution and the work of Luigi Taparelli D'Azeglio, S.J., the conversation addressed the common good and the role of the state.

Spring

The spring Murray Dinner featured a chapter from *The Political Philosophy of Pierre Manent*, the latest book by Joseph R. Wood, Assistant Philosophy Professor at The Catholic University of America. The chapter “What Manent Taught Us — So Far” prompted a robust discussion on Manent's view of the intersection of theology, philosophy, and politics.



VARIOUS INITIATIVES

Community Masses

The IHE fosters vibrant spiritual life through its community Masses, which bring together students, faculty, and staff in shared faith and reflection. These Masses are typically held once a month, uniting the One Sacrifice of Christ on Calvary in pursuit of our mission to advance human flourishing from a thoroughly Catholic framework. Open to all members of the university community, each Mass is offered on the feast of a saint dear to the Institute.



Catholic Roundtable

In 2024, the IHE became a partner of Catholic Roundtable, a collaborative outreach organization with the mission to cultivate a strong Catholic presence within public policy on Capitol Hill. Catholic Roundtable assists Catholics in Washington, DC, and beyond to find success within the realms of politics, public policy, and issue advocacy while remaining faithful to Church teaching.

The IHE supports the work of Catholic Roundtable by promoting events that aid in intellectual formation and building lasting friendships and community for Catholics on Capitol Hill.



THE LAMP

A partnership in undiluted Catholic orthodoxy

In 2021, the IHE began our partnership with *The Lamp*, a lay-edited, bi-monthly Catholic literary journal. With in-depth reporting, incisive commentary, and coverage of books and the arts, it seeks to bring readers a perspective not offered by any other generally circulated magazine in the English-speaking world — namely, that of consistent, undiluted Catholic orthodoxy.



Together, the IHE and *The Lamp* serve Catholics and critical thinkers of all backgrounds. In the third year of this exciting partnership, we:

Hosted two large-scale public conversations at Catholic University
(page 35)

Helped publish contributions from leading public thinkers, including Zena Hitz, Leah Libresco Sargeant, and Stanley Fish

Provided free subscriptions of *The Lamp* to religious houses and seminaries worldwide

Reached the top 10% of downloads on our podcast, *The Lamplighters*



GRATITUDE

The IHE deeply appreciates our benefactors and everyone who supports our mission. Your generosity makes our work possible. Thank you!





THE CATHOLIC
UNIVERSITY
OF AMERICA 

“Human beings interpret and shape the natural environment through culture, which in turn is given direction by the responsible use of freedom, in accordance with the dictates of the moral law.”

Pope Benedict XVI
CARITAS IN VERITATE (2009)

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