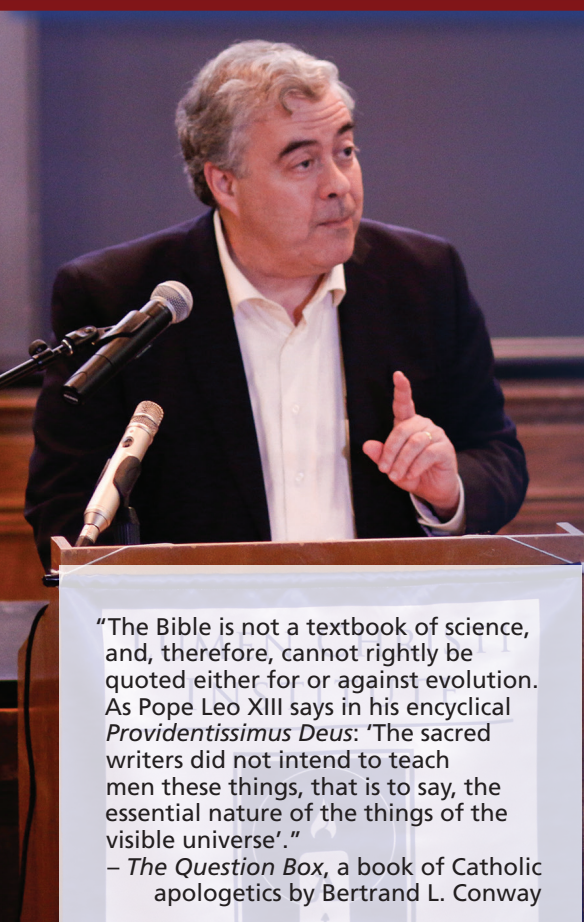




# THE BEACON

NEWSLETTER OF THE LUMEN CHRISTI INSTITUTE FOR CATHOLIC THOUGHT SPRING 2017



## “We came from dust.”

### Physicist Stephen M. Barr Invites People of Faith to More Seriously Examine the Theory of Evolution

Those who oppose the theory of evolution seem offended by the thought that human beings could have evolved from apes.

But the Genesis account of Creation, in which man was created from the dust of the earth, isn't really more dignified.

Interestingly, at its core, both science and theology agree that we originate from infinitesimal particles.

“As it happens, science agrees with the Bible that we came from dust. Billions of years ago there were just particles and dust from which condensed all stars and planets and living things. Whether we came from dust very quickly as portrayed in Genesis or through a slow process as described by science is really theologically irrelevant, as Chesterton observed,” remarked physicist Stephen M. Barr in his lecture titled “Evolution and the Catholic Faith” (February 2).

There are a host of arguments, however, that make it seem that science and theology are at odds, particularly when it comes to the theory of evolution and its relation to Christian belief.

Barr posits that this is the case because the discussion “has often been conducted by people holding extreme positions and reported on by journalists interested primarily in sensationalism.”

Continued on page 3.

#### HIGHLIGHTS

#### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

PAGE 4:  
SOCIETY OF CATHOLIC SCIENTISTS

PAGE 5:  
INFLUENCES ON AUGUSTINE'S THOUGHT

PAGE 6:  
A MONK AND MUSICIAN

PAGE 8:  
STUDENT PROFILE

PAGE 9:  
FACULTY PROFILE



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## Augustine: All Love is Ultimately Divine

### Fr. David Meconi, S.J., Shares How Human Love Helps Us Understand Divine Love & Embody It

In Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*, Catherine Earnshaw famously declares, “My love for Linton is like the foliage in the woods: time will change it, I'm well aware, as winter changes the trees. My love for Heathcliff resembles the eternal rocks beneath: a source of little visible delight, but necessary. Nelly, I am Heathcliff!” This stormy passion isn't mere saccharine literary sentimentality.

“Eros begins in ecstasy but leads to a transfiguration of the lover into the beloved,” said Fr. David Meconi, S.J. (Saint Louis University) in his lecture “Augustine's Theology of Love” (January 12) given for Lumen Christi this past quarter. Quoting Augustine in his early work *On Order*, Meconi emphasized the unitive aspect of love: “What is every love? Does it not

“What is every love? Does it not consist of the will to become one with the object it loves?”

– St. Augustine

consist of the will to become one with the object it loves?”

Ecstatic love—the kind that propels each of us out of ourselves and has us completely absorbed with another person—is enticing, gripping. It is what drives the human drama toward greater and ever more beautiful depths. When we love another creature with such abandon, such complete devotion, there is something divine in it.

Love seems to bind us tightly to those around us.

Meconi witnessed how powerful such ties are when his dying mother—a devout woman who went to daily Mass and seemed entirely in love with Christ—told her son that she didn't want to leave behind her

Continued on page 4.

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## THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO AND THE CATHOLIC TRADITION

The University of Chicago has been a place where many students and faculty have discovered or deepened a love of the Catholic intellectual tradition. Notable Catholic faculty have found a home here, from WWII refugees such as French Thomist philosopher Yves Simon or Catholic convert and expert on Gothic architecture Otto von Simson to—more recently—theologian David Tracy, historian of mysticism Bernard McGinn, philosopher Jean-Luc Marion, sociologist Han Joas, and social ethicist Jean Bethke Elshtain, who entered the Catholic Church as a faculty member.

Twenty years ago, as we were founding the Institute, I met with the Dominican Benedict Ashley, another University of Chicago alumnus. His lecture on “How the Liberal Arts Opened My American Mind” told of how his University education led him to become Catholic: arriving as an agnostic, Ashley promptly became a Trotskyite socialist, but was converted—first to theism and then to Catholicism—by reading Thomas Aquinas in the Great Books seminar of University President Robert Maynard Hutchins. Ashley writes of students’ encounter with the Bible in the seminar:

The question “What kind of a book is this?” received many answers from the participants, most of which amounted to saying the Bible is “great literature.”.... None, however, could give an answer that stood up to examination until, after long questioning, it somehow emerged that the Bible claims to be the Word of God. To most of us students, I think, the idea that God could reveal himself was so extravagant that it never occurred to us even to consider such a claim.... But our mentors forced us to at least consider whether this claim was a clue to understanding how to read this particular book....

Harvard Law Professor and former Ambassador to the Vatican Mary Ann Glendon describes how the University of Chicago proved to be an intellectual home for her as a Catholic:

... improbably as it may seem, the University of Chicago deserves a good deal of credit for “why I am still a Catholic.” Though Robert Maynard Hutchins was no longer its President when I entered, the core “great books” curriculum he had installed was still in place. Hutchins himself had a great respect for the Catholic Church, once referring to it ... as having “the longest intellectual tradition of any institution in the world.”.... Not only did Catholic students become acquainted with our own greatest thinkers, but we observed that those thinkers were honored by the best Chicago teachers.

A more recent testimony came this spring when Prof. Jared Ortiz of Hope College gave a lecture on “All Things Hold Together: A Great Books Education and the Catholic Tradition.” He told of how the University of Chicago’s tradition of general education and the close reading of great texts—especially as taught by Leon and Amy Kass—prepared him to take seriously the Church’s intellectual tradition and helped to lead him to return to the faith in which he had been baptized.

Ortiz mentioned his involvement as a college student with the Lumen Christi Institute and offered this advice to current students:


... very few universities will provide such an education. So, it is up to the student to do it through the guidance of sympathetic professors, the wise selection of courses, the reading of select theological literature, and, of course, regular attendance at Lumen Christi events.

But more than this educational dimension, the student who wants such an education must be deeply formed by prayer .... in *The Intellectual Life*, the Dominican A.G. Sertillanges says, “Study is a prayer to truth.”

Prayer is a lifting of the heart and mind up to God. Prayer ... is the disposition of receptivity that we need to hear God speaking to us. Our desk can be an altar and our study a prayer to truth.

For decades, the secular University of Chicago has been a place where Catholic thinking can find a home. Of course, not every student has had the experiences of Ashley, Glendon or Ortiz. Some no doubt have not found at the University the resources needed in order to develop a mature knowledge of the faith.

The work of the Lumen Christi Institute is to provide students and faculty an opportunity to experience the Catholic intellectual tradition not merely within the secular rationality of the University, but integrated with a life of prayer in a community of faith. We provide supplemental offerings in the Catholic tradition to students, complementing the secular education of the University. We also present the Catholic tradition as a path of wisdom, as part of a way of life including worship, prayer, and service to the poor, including the “privileged” in spiritual poverty around us. To return to Ortiz’s citation of Sertillanges, we invite students to discover how study can be “a prayer to truth.”



In his lecture, Barr described the reason people hold these extreme positions on evolution. He also systematically disproved numerous misconceptions surrounding the scientific hypothesis and argued that the Catholic Church has historically seen no conflict between evolution and faith.

Evolution, in a nutshell, is a theory of how atoms came to be assembled in certain ways to form biological organisms. At first glance, the theory doesn't appear very threatening.



Audience members ponder "Evolution and the Catholic Faith"

In fact, there were theologians and Catholic thinkers—such as John Henry Newman and G.K. Chesterton—who looked favorably upon Darwin's theory when it was published in 1859.

The Church, however, was more cautious in saying anything about it. And the first official pronouncement on the subject of evolution did not come until 1950 with Pope Pius XII's encyclical *Humani Generis*.

"His central point was that one must distinguish the origin of the human body and the origin of the human spiritual soul. The evolution of the spiritual soul, of course, he declared to be inconsistent with Catholic faith," says Barr. This is because the Church holds that the soul—being spiritual—cannot be reduced to matter.

But being about atoms, evolution is a theory about the material universe.

And fascinatingly, Darwin wasn't original in his conjecture that the human material body could evolve. An idea of this kind was actually proposed by St. Augustine in the fourth century.

Why, then, have we heard so much about the conflict between evolution and religion?

Barr clarifies that the conflict is between neo-atheists like Richard Dawkins and religious fundamentalists who believe in a literal interpretation of Scripture.

"The Catholic Church and the best Catholic thinkers have never been caught up in anti-evolutionism," Barr insists. "That has largely been a fundamentalist Protestant phenomenon."

What about those Catholics who have their suspicions about evolution?

Barr traces anti-evolutionism in Catholic circles to a weakened understanding by some Catholics of their own theological and

philosophical traditions. "It may also be a by-product of the fact that a significant number of evangelical Protestants have come into the Catholic Church in recent decades, and that many of them have brought anti-evolution attitudes with them," he adds.

For Catholics who want to have a more nuanced understanding of the debate, it is important to be aware that atheism has attached itself in particular to evolutionary biology.

Many modern scientists—especially in the fields of physics, astronomy, and chemistry—don't dismiss the idea of a divine mind that has orchestrated the beauty and elegance they discover in the natural laws of the universe.

One of the greatest mathematicians and mathematical physicists of the twentieth century, Hermann Weyl, observed in a lecture at Yale university in 1931 that a natural scientist might have an easier time believing in God than a social scientist: "Many people think that modern science is far removed from God. I find, on the contrary, that it is much more difficult today for the knowing person to approach God from history, from the spiritual side of the world, and from morals; for there we encounter the suffering and evil in the world, which is difficult to bring into harmony with an all-merciful and all-mighty God."

For those who don't have much of a background in the natural sciences, Barr helped explain why Catholics needn't be wary of natural selection, or the idea of chance in Darwinism, or the discoveries of paleontology and genetics. Also, just because organisms are evolving doesn't mean they don't have a "telos," or goal: "the universe itself seems to be ordered toward the possibility of life. . . . Since God knew and willed from all eternity the whole pattern of created reality and its development, one can still affirm that the finality we see in nature comes from the intention of an intelligent agent."

The most important philosophical tool Barr shared to ward off fears about evolution but also other scientific theories was the

distinction between primary and secondary causality. Basically, God is like Shakespeare. What happens in the play—Polonius dies because Hamlet stabs him—is "because the playwright ordained that it would." Thus, if the world evolves, it is because God ordained that it would. God is a primary cause; all other causes (be they the mechanism involved in evolution, the laws of gravity, or General Relativity) are secondary.

Barr ended with this simple yet important thought. As human beings gifted with reason, discoveries should fill us with awe rather than fear: "Catholics are free to follow the evidence wherever it may lead. That is what the Church has wisely taught and continues to teach."



children, and she found fault with herself in this. It prompted Meconi to think more deeply about human love.

Parents don't want to let go of their children; lovers are incomplete without their other half.

There are various kinds of love, said Meconi, but one source of it. "God is love and love is God," the mature Augustine discovered, especially after he overcame the shame of his lustful past and saw in the city of Hippo the poignant love of parents for their children and spouses for one another.

George Eliot in her first novel *Adam Bede* captured perfectly the kind of seamless charity Augustine himself wanted to advance.

"A love which a young man gives to a woman whom he feels to be greater and better than himself. Love of this sort is hardly distinguishable from religious feeling. What deep and worthy love is so, whether of woman or child, or art or music. Our caresses, our tender words, our still rapture under the influence of autumn sunsets, or pillared vistas, or calm majestic statues, or Beethoven symphonies all bring with them the consciousness that they are mere waves and ripples in an unfathomable ocean of love and beauty; our emotion in its keenest moment passes

from expression into silence, our love at its highest flood rushes beyond its object and loses itself in the sense of divine mystery."

Meconi, referring to Augustine and his wayward youth, confessed that "we can all be deluded—especially in our early years" and attracted by false loves, by love's artifice. But true love—whether it be amongst youthful lovers, a husband and wife, mother and child, grandfather and grandson, or two longtime friends—distinguishes itself in that it fills us with a pure and sublime rapture.

"From Emily Bronte to George Eliot... we see how so much of our understanding of love and human flourishing is anchored in the pastoral work of St. Augustine of Hippo," said Meconi—explaining that what makes Augustine special is that he is among "the first in our great tradition to realize that love is one and that all love is ultimately divine"—that we encounter God in the enfleshed reality of our simple lives.



Fr. David Meconi, S.J.

## LCI Assists First Meeting of **Society of Catholic Scientists**

Physicist Stephen Barr, who during the winter quarter gave a lecture and led a discussion with students for the Lumen Christi Institute, is the founder of the Society of Catholic Scientists—a group whose mission it is to "foster fellowship among Catholic scientists" and to "witness to the harmony between the vocation of science and the life of faith."

Unfortunately, in recent history, people of faith have, in general, been woefully uneducated on the relation of their faith to science. They lack even a basic understanding of how anthropology, evolution, or biology interact with their faith—nevermind a more nuanced, sophisticated one.



Celia Deane-Drummond

Barr attributes this failure of educating believers in the sciences to churches but also to schools and seminaries. "In the Catholic context, the problem is that there has been very little catechesis on modern science and its relation to faith at any level of education from grade schools

to seminaries – despite the great importance Pope Saint John Paul II placed on the subject," wrote Barr in a November 1, 2016 article in the *National Review*.

The Institute cosponsored the first conference of the Society of Catholic Scientists—"Origins"—which ran from April 21 to 23, 2017 in Chicago at the historic Millennium Knickerbocker Hotel.

In an effort to continue bridging the gap between faith and science, LCI has sponsored several Science & Religion events this year, among them a February 23rd lecture on "Evolutionary Anthropology and Theo-Drama"



Peter Harrison lectures on "Religious Origins of Modern Science?"

by Notre Dame theologian and natural scientist Celia Deane-Drummond, and an April 6th lecture on "Religious Origins of Modern Science?" by Peter Harrison, Australian Laureate Fellow and Director of the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities at the University of Queensland. Harrison

also led a discussion for students on "The Cosmos and the Religious Quest" on April 7th.

"The present antagonism between science and religion is related to a series of dramatic historical transformations that took place in the sixteenth and seventeenth

centuries," explained Harrison in an article titled "The Virtues of the Mind: Mapping the Territories of Science and Religion" on ABC's Ethics & Culture website, part of the Australian public broadcasting network.

LCI's Science & Religion programs seek to mitigate this antagonism through thoughtful inquiry and dialogue.



# A Scholar's Quest to Discover the Influences on Augustine's Thought

Boston College Philosopher Sarah Byers Investigates How Augustine May Have Been Influenced by Aristotle in his Understanding of Consubstantiality



How could Augustine of Hippo have been influenced by Aristotle if he never read him?

This is what intrigues Boston College philosopher Sarah Byers who in her Lumen Christi lecture “What Does it Mean to Say the Son of God is ‘Consubstantial’ with the Father? New Insights about Augustine’s Debt to Aristotle” (February 16) claimed that St. Augustine used Aristotelian philosophy to show in his *De Trinitate* (On the Trinity) how human beings are made in the image of a Trinitarian God.

Though it is commonly accepted that Aristotelian ideas did not inform Latin-language metaphysics until the translation of Aristotle in the 12th century (during the period of Scholasticism), Byers argued that this happened much earlier in the Church’s intellectual tradition.

The link between Augustine and Aristotle is a thinker that many people have never heard

of—Gaius Marius Victorinus: a Christian convert, an eminent rhetorician, and one of the last philosophers in the western Roman Empire who was fully bilingual in Greek and Latin.

Victorinus was familiar with Aristotelian thought and even gave an argument for the consubstantiality of the Trinity that contained core concepts from Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* and *On the Soul*, something which Augustine seems to have appropriated in his own philosophy.

Byers dissected Augustine’s own arguments for consubstantiality in *De Trinitate*, showing how similar they were to Victorinus’ who derived them ultimately from Aristotle.

What further confirms her suspicions is that Augustine expressed admiration for Victorinus in his *Confessions*. How could he admire his thought if he wasn’t familiar with it? Byers is convinced therefore that Augustine had to have read his metaphysical treatises.

“It takes work to demonstrate this because he doesn’t mention him [Victorinus] explicitly in *De Trinitate*,” said Byers.

Byers, whose research focuses on Augustine and the various influences on his philosophy, also led a master class for graduate students on “Augustine on Human Freedom and Divine Grace” on February 17.



Taking notes at philosopher Sarah Byers lecture on the influence of Aristotle on Saint Augustine.

# Don't Take Parking Laws for Granted

Legal Symposium at Cambridge Brings Scholars into a Robust Conversation on Natural Law

No one likes to come back from a brief errand to find a bright orange ticket slapped on their windshield.

While parking ordinances might seem to be purely arbitrary, legal scholars see a moral basis even to these laws.

“Parking laws could have originated from questions of justice and fairness. What do you do if there is a large population but not enough parking spaces? Or what do you do if someone ‘hogs’ a space?” asks James Murphy, Professor of Government at Dartmouth College.

On March 4, Murphy organized a symposium titled “Law as a Guide to Justice” at the Faculty of Law at the University of Cambridge, UK, in which participants discussed the philosophical underpinnings of numerous laws that we might accept without question.

Sponsored by the Lumen Christi Institute, the symposium attracted 55 registered attendees and another 20 participants, among them Fr. Nicholas Lombardo, O.P. (Catholic University

of America) and Nigel Simmonds (University of Cambridge).

The symposium honored the work of Amanda Perreau-Saussine Ezcurra, a Fellow and Lecturer in Law at Queens’ College at the University of Cambridge until her untimely death in 2012.

Perreau-Saussine Ezcurra—following the natural law tradition of Thomas Aquinas—tried to show the inadequacy of positive law (statutes that have been laid down by a legislature, court, or other human institution) and find alternative ways of identifying universal moral principles that did not resort to the guidance of man-made laws.

Topics addressed at the symposium included “The Natural Laws arising from our Sociable Nature” and “Positive State Law as a Guide to (Natural) Justice.”

Murphy hopes that a book on Natural Law and Justice will be assembled as a result of the lively conversation and debate in Cambridge.

## A Monk and Musician

An Interview with Benedictine Monk Prior Peter Funk

What is the difference between the noise made by cars on a busy street and Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony?

Prior Peter Funk—a native of Green Bay, Wisconsin, who had aspirations to be a composer before he entered the monastery—thinks profoundly about the nature of sound and what exactly happens when one listens to music.

Tall, thin, bearded—he seems the prototypical pensive monk who could very well have appeared in a Dostoevsky novel. His most striking features are his eyes, which are dark, lively, and penetrating. His personality, on the contrary, is calm and reflective, though he confesses to having a choleric temperament that he intentionally chooses to discipline.

Discipline is at the heart of his monastic life, but it is also part of what it means to compose music.

“Noise is random; music is order,” he explains, saying that even newborns gravitate toward music because there’s beauty in harmony. While we may be annoyed by the noise of traffic on a highway, we can be instantly soothed if we turn on the radio and listen to Beethoven.

As human beings, “we are drawn to order and to harmony,” he says. “This is a wonderful example of how music can be used to educate.”



Prior Peter Funk

How exactly music is the ordering of sound is a deep philosophical question.

Funk says that music is related to mathematics and acoustics—the branch of physics related to sound. In medieval learning, music belonged to the quadrivium—which was also comprised of arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy.

While people are drawn to harmony, modern music is filled with examples of dissonance for its own sake.

Traditionally, composers like Beethoven, Mozart, or Bach used dissonance to introduce tension into a piece. This tension would build up to a resolution—with beautifully charged climaxes as in the *Ode to Joy* in Beethoven’s 5th Symphony. This consonance was the resolution of the conflict. Funk says this approach is similar to the maturation of a person. When we are young and undisciplined, we may have a lot of tension in our lives. As we mature, hopefully we resolve that tension and become more harmonious, ordered souls.

So random sound... What does that reveal about us?

Funk speculates that today we experience—not just in music but in society more broadly—the “liberation of dissonance.” More specifically, the liberation of desire without moral bounds. “When dissonance is liberated, it has no goal. There is no resolution it is working toward.”

“Atonal music is famously difficult to write endings for. If every note is the same, how do listeners know when you end?” He laughs and says that composers usually just have to end abruptly. There is no other way to finish.

Funk is a nuanced thinker. He actually finds art of this kind important.

“I would defend composers who have used this technique because they are merely reflecting back at us the choices we have made. They help us understand the difficulties of modernism, and what happens with the normalization of all kinds of desire.”

With his love for music—from how it is composed to how it is played—it makes perfect sense that he was attracted to the asceticism of the monastery.

Instead of ordering sound, Funk spends his life ordering his soul. Out of the limelight in a hushed monastery on a simple street corner in the former blue-collar neighborhood of Bridgeport, he is absorbed in daily rituals and habits that hopefully vibrate outward and affect for the good those he meets in this city.

He says that discipline is a crucial part of spiritual growth—of becoming an excellent, or holy, person. Every person that aims for perfection in something needs discipline. A pianist, for example, has to discipline himself in order to improve. He has to learn from his teacher how not to round his fingers as he plays.

People, on their own however, are apt to follow their impulses and avoid things that require hard work. It's easy to be mediocre, to live aimlessly. But in the monastery, the men who enter learn that they can't do what they want. “They have to bridle some impulses, and channel others,” says Funk. “Breaking sleep, for example (the monks rise for 3:30am Vigils), produces a certain kind of character in a man. We free ourselves to hear the Holy Spirit and voice of Christ leading us to the Father.”

For people outside the monastery, life seems to offer a never-ending series of distractions. But Funk, who has nieces and nephews, offers these suggestions for families who want to advance together in the spiritual life.

He says good order in the home is essential. There should be a space for prayer, and a set time for eating. “Eating is a bigger deal than we realize,” says Funk. “It's good to eat healthy, and at the right time with the right people. Sitting down to eat is also important. It helps to define order. It seems obvious but parents take certain places. The youngest doesn't sit at the head of the table,” he laughs.

Funk is undoubtedly a critical thinker.

As a music major who just fell short of having a degree in Classics, he credits the University of Chicago for providing him with an outstanding intellectual foundation, one which he uses now in his life as a monk. He is especially grateful for his grounding in Greek philosophy and Roman religion. “I am indebted to the Common Core and the University's emphasis on critical thinking and on giving students an introduction to the great texts of the Western intellectual tradition.”

To go from the U of C to the monastery seems to have made perfect sense for Funk. At the Monastery of the Holy Cross, he is able to share his love of study and learning and contemplating a deeper meaning of things in his Sunday homilies as well as the blog he writes: *Et Incarnatus Est*. Some examples of recent topics he has tackled on his blog are: “Silence: Scorsese and Endo,” “The Presidency and the Will to Power,” and “On the Impermanence of Institutions and the Permanence of Virtue.”

What he's doing is merely carrying on the rich intellectual heritage of Catholicism. Though it may not seem to be the case to many Catholics today, the early Church was incredibly intellectually rigorous. “That's why it had so many converts at the beginning.”

Funk worries about the Church he has embraced so wholeheartedly.

“We are at a difficult time historically in the Church. We seem not to be able to deal with our difficulties in a rational way; I'm not sure we're good at critical thinking right now,” Funk says.

This is one of the reasons he believes the mission of the Lumen Christi Institute is so important.

He has a unique history with the Institute since he was friends with Thomas Levergood when they were both young U of C students still figuring out their vocations.

“We shared the same excitement about discovering the faith,” he says of their spiritual journey. Neither of them were on board with Catholic teaching when they arrived as freshmen in Hyde Park. “We both have an outsider's view of things which has made us entrepreneurs in a way.”

The two have a symbiotic relationship, of sorts. Funk learned about the Monastery of the Holy Cross through Levergood. And several times every academic year, the Institute takes a group of students to Bridgeport so they can experience for themselves the Church's monastic tradition.

Though living seemingly disparate lives, they are both involved in the same project, explains Funk. “Both projects are based in a common intuition that what would help the Church is a returning to a robust engagement with the truth.” This truth has been sought in the magnificent treasure of texts that has been passed down since the early centuries of Christianity. “We need a critical engagement with the Church Fathers, with the Scholastics, and with the twentieth century's *Nouvelle Théologie*,” says Funk.

Indeed, whether it be questioning the nature of sound or the meaning of discipline or how one lives in society, both Levergood and Funk are helping people see that the Church has a rich variety of Catholic thinkers that have asked profound questions of faith and existence.

Both men believe that the world isn't disordered; it is meaningful and ordered and in it dwell human beings that have the dignity of reason.

“The presence of the Logos at the heart of Catholicism means not only that there is Truth, but that it is communicable. We can know it, and in fact, when we know Christ, we know the Truth, and when we know the Truth, we know something about Christ,” says Funk.

**“We are drawn to order and to harmony.”**

**– Prior Peter Funk**

## William Kuehnle

4TH-YEAR HISTORY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES MAJOR IN THE COLLEGE

### What is your area of study and what is the focus of your current research?

I am a fourth year at the University of Chicago working simultaneously in the history and religious studies departments. My studies mainly concentrate on American Catholicism and the theological tradition of the Second Vatican Council. The early stages of my research have led me to focus specifically on Monsignor Ralph W. Beiting, whose ministry in Appalachia embodies the nobility and vitality of Vatican II.



### How did you first hear about Lumen Christi? Which event did you first attend, and why?

I first learned of Lumen Christi from a flyer posted on campus. The flyer was advertising a course taught by Father Paul Mankowski on the *Book of Isaiah*, which was of great interest to me at the time as I was weighing the cost of joining the Church as a convert and desired exposure to Catholic exposition of the Old Testament. The course was superb, and as providence would have it I am now a member of the Catholic Church.

### How has your participation in Institute lectures, conferences, and seminars contributed to your intellectual growth?

The lectures, conferences and seminars of Lumen Christi never fail to open my eyes to new insights into the Catholic intellectual tradition. Lumen Christi provides a space for students—even undergraduates—to learn from and discuss complex questions with some of the world's brightest philosophers, historians, and theologians. This opportunity alone—to mingle with these exceptional luminaries—is extraordinary as I mature as a scholar, but the material presented at every event is also invaluable. Being on the cusp of research, publication, and developments at the highest echelon of the Catholic intellectual world is an experience that I could not receive anywhere except from the Lumen Christi Institute.

### Is there a particular event (or encounter with a scholar) that has directly impacted the development of your academic work?

While this has not directly impacted my own academic work, Monsignor Michael Heintz's presentation last November still causes me to reflect more deeply on my Catholic faith. "Why the Fathers Still Matter" concluded the fall's course on the Church Fathers, and Monsignor Heintz's lecture elegantly wove together the intellectual questions of Christology, Trinitarianism, and ecclesiology with the present spiritual demands of the Gospel in the life of every Christian to create an utterly sublime evening. Monsignor Heintz's testimony to the weight of the Gospel even in high-voltage academic study of the Catholic intellectual tradition continues to shape my perspective on the Church Fathers, the Gospel, and the necessity of self-awareness rather than self-consciousness in my own interior life.

### What do you plan to do after you have completed your degree from the University of Chicago?

After I graduate in the spring of 2017, I hope to pursue graduate opportunities in the field of education. There are many similar programs at a variety of institutions that offer recent college graduates the opportunity to teach in Catholic schools across the country during the school year, while returning to the host university during each summer to take courses toward a Masters in Education. Primarily, I am interested in Notre Dame's version of this program, ACE; Creighton's program, Magis; and the University of Portland's program, PACE.

### Please comment on the role you think the Institute plays on the University of Chicago campus.

The Lumen Christi Institute represents a timeless, though threatened, agent in the intellectual tradition of the western world. Without a community of scholars devoted to the marriage of sincere theological commitment, genuine spiritual formation, and unparalleled intellectual rigor, the University of Chicago would be bereft of the unique dynamo that has driven universities from their inception.

**"Lumen Christi provides a space for students—even undergraduates—to learn from and discuss complex questions with some of the world's brightest philosophers, historians, and theologians. ...Being on the cusp of research, publication, and developments at the highest echelon of the Catholic intellectual world is an experience that I could not receive anywhere except from the Lumen Christi Institute."**



## Two Loves

Bernard McGinn spends most of his time with books. He rises at 7am, “not terribly early,” he says, works through the morning, and ends his scholarly research with a run to the library around 5pm. Before bed, he prefers reading books unrelated to his scholarship on mysticism. He enjoys reading novels or books on history. He has just finished reading a novel by the Irish writer Sebastian Barry and a historical account of railroad construction in the Florida Keys.

As the world’s leading expert on mysticism—and on those extraordinary souls on the fringes of society who have shared through their writings what it means to surrender oneself to the Divine—it should come as no surprise that his most cherished possession is his library. He is proud to own 70 antique books published before 1800, all of them related to his scholarship in some way. The oldest book in his collection is the 3rd printing of Peter Lombard’s *Sentences* in Latin dating from 1477.

To those students who would wish to emulate his trajectory to scholarly stardom, he offers this advice. “To be an expert at something, you need commitment, hard work, and a bit of luck.” He admits that he was lucky that his interest in mysticism became a popular subject matter at the university during the course of his career. There are times when someone could be interested in something but no one else cares about it. Or fifteen years later they care.

But he emphasizes how important it is to work hard. “You have to have a fire in your belly,” he says. “There’s no substitute for hard work no matter how clever or brilliant you are.”

His partner in his scholarly pursuits is his wife of 46 years, Pat.

“Pat and I have tried to learn to live and work as a team,” he says. “Pat has her own career as a Psychotherapist and has also been very active in Counselor Professional organizations, both on the state and the national level. But she also has a background in theology and philosophy and so has a great interest in the things that interest me.”

The McGinns are known and beloved in Hyde Park. One often sees them walking across campus together, and Pat sits near the front at almost all his public lectures and conferences. They relish helping one another achieve intellectual excellence. “For many years, she has edited almost everything I write,” says McGinn. “We even did a book together back in 2003, *Early Christian Mystics: The Divine Vision of the Spiritual Masters*, and are currently working on another joint volume to be called *Mystical Conversations*.”

They are as united in their intellectual interests as they are in their faith. They start and end their day with a wonderful ritual—praying the Divine Office together.



McGinn has now been at the University of Chicago for almost fifty years. He is a legend, the kind of person serious students get starry-eyed about. He seems to belong to another era as he came to the U of C just after Vatican II, when the Divinity School was looking to recruit Catholic scholars to its faculty.

For McGinn, these years have been an adventure. He admires the remarkable genius of the faculty members he is surrounded by, and he has loved engaging with each year’s cadre of bright students.



Of *Lumen Christi*, McGinn says that Thomas Levergood “blames me for getting it started.” He clarifies by sharing that in the 1990s, when Fr. Willard Jabusch—the Chaplain of the Calvert House Catholic Chaplaincy at the U of C—talked about having a Catholic Studies department on campus, McGinn opposed the idea. “I thought it would be good to have a center that offered lectures and courses and tapped into a whole range of people, not just the faculty at Chicago.”

It was Thomas Levergood and Paul J. Griffiths—now Warren Professor of Catholic Theology at Duke Divinity School—who started the Institute in 1997, and did “all the hard work,” says McGinn.

Today, practically twenty years later, the Institute has achieved what McGinn never thought would be possible. Not only does it offer lectures and events on campus, but also gives courses in Berkeley, Boston, and New York City—and now even in Europe. “It is beyond what I envisioned,” he admits.

This spring, McGinn was thrilled to be presenting yet another lecture for *Lumen Christi*. The topic—“Soul of Early Irish Monasticism”—is one especially dear to him. After all, he is three-quarters Irish, and one-quarter Scottish. He and Pat travel to Ireland as often as they can, and for the lecture, he presented a slide show of 80 photographs which he took himself as he traversed the country and visited its ancient centers of Irish monastic culture.

One way people show what they love is how much time they give to it. If that is true, then McGinn has two loves—his beloved wife Pat and other-worldly mystical types, especially those that hail from where his ancestors did, the Emerald Isle.



Audience members enjoy conversation at Fr. Meconi's lecture on "Augustine's Theology of Love"



**January 12**



**February 3**



Students listen attentively to Physicist Stephen Barr's lecture on "Evolution and the Catholic Faith"

**WINTER 2017 EVENTS**



**February 4**

Yale Theologian Denys Turner leads a master class for graduate students at Columbia University in New York



**February 16**

The audience attentively listens to Sarah Byers's lecture on Augustine



**March 31**

Brian FitzGerald (Harvard) lectures on "The Greek East and the Spiritual Franciscan View of History"

## SPRING 2017 EVENTS

April 6

Historian of science Peter Harrison (University of Queensland) speaks on "Religious Origins of Modern Science?" to a full room



French philosopher Jean-Luc Marion lectures on faith and reason from his recent book *Believing in Order to See*

April 27



May 5



Faculty members from around the country gathered to discuss Jean-Luc Marion's book *Givenness and Revelation* with responses from Notre Dame scholars Cyril O'Regan and David Bentley Hart



May 17



University of Chicago alum Jared Ortiz (Hope College) delivers a personal talk on "All Things Hold Together: The Great Books and the Catholic Tradition"

May 18



Distinguished law scholars gathered for a panel discussion of R.H. Helmholz's recent book *Natural Law in Court* at Loyola University Chicago Law School. [L to R] Helmholz, (University of Chicago), Jeffrey Pojanowski (Notre Dame), Adrian Vermeule (Harvard), & Michael Moreland (Villanova)



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"The Lumen Christi seminar at Berkeley was one of the milestones of my intellectual life...the wisdom of Prof. Hittinger and the shared knowledge of my colleagues helped me to reformulate things I have been thinking about for years...[this] pushed me to reconsider old ideas and to stretch out into new frontiers."

— PhD Student, UW Madison

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A packed Swift Lecture Hall for Fr. David Meconi's lecture on "Augustine's Theology of Love."