



# THE BEACON

NEWSLETTER OF THE LUMEN CHRISTI INSTITUTE FOR CATHOLIC THOUGHT

SPRING 2018

## Cardinal from the Peripheries Takes Center Stage in Chicago

After 20 years of living in a hermitage, Anders Arborelius' light is shining brightly



Lumen Christi welcomed Anders Cardinal Arborelius, OCD, Bishop of Stockholm, Sweden, to Chicago March 11-13 to deliver two addresses and celebrate a public Mass on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of Pope Francis' pontificate.

Arborelius' visit was an occasion for seeing old friends. The Cardinal previously had spoken at Lumen Christi programs in 2001 and 2005, and supported the founding, in 2001, of the Newman Institute, a Jesuit-run Catholic center founded at Uppsala University, Sweden's oldest institution of higher education. The Newman Institute was in part inspired by the Lumen Christi Institute.

Born in 1949 in Switzerland to Swedish parents, Arborelius was raised Lutheran but after a year-and-a-half long process of discernment was received into the Catholic Church at age 20.

Two years later, while intending to become a diocesan priest, he read Saint Thérèse of Lisieux's autobiography *The Story of a Soul*. That book changed his life, and he decided to become a Discalced Carmelite—the same contemplative religious order to which Thérèse had belonged.

He pursued studies in Lund, Brussels, and at the Carmelite college in Rome, taking his final religious vows in 1977 and being ordained to the priesthood in 1979. Then he spent twenty years living in a contemplative hermitage in southern Sweden, from which he would venture out to give talks and retreats. Until, that is, he received an extraordinary request.

*Continued on Page 2.*

### IN THIS ISSUE:

PAGE 2

STUDENT PROFILE

PAGE 4

TWELFTH NIGHT FESTIVAL

PAGE 8

ROSS DOUTHAT ON RELIGION AND PUBLIC LIFE

PAGE 8

PATRICK DENEEN ON THE END OF LIBERALISM

PAGE 10

DONOR PROFILE

PAGE 11

STUDENT READING GROUP

## 'The Pope's Theologian' Visits Lumen Christi

Father Wojciech Giertych, OP, shared his expertise and wisdom over the course of three days

Did you know that the office of the papacy has a personal theological consultant, always a Dominican? And that this office stretches back to St. Dominic himself, who was its first occupant in the early 13th century?

The present holder of this position, which is now titled the Theologian of the Pontifical Household, visited Lumen Christi in February for three events. Father Wojciech Giertych, OP, who was appointed to his current role in 2005 by Pope Benedict XVI and continues in it under Pope Francis, is since 1994 Professor of Moral Theology in the Angelicum in Rome and since 1981 a priest in the Polish Province of the Dominican Order. An expert in the moral theology of Thomas Aquinas, Giertych was put on Lumen Christi's radar by a University of Chicago graduate



who had studied with him in Rome.

On February 8, Giertych gave a public lecture at the University of Chicago Divinity School titled "The Moral Theology of Aquinas: Is It For Individuals?" Before his talk, he met with an invited group of Lumen Christi associates to discuss his role at the Vatican, his daily routines, and what it has been like working for two popes.

Giertych began his lecture by rehearsing the theology of accompaniment and discernment that Pope Francis commended in his 2016 apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*. In that document Francis en-

*Continued on page 5.*



# THE BEACON PROFILE



## Carter Hall

Fourth-year Physics and Classics Major, University of Chicago

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

I am an undergraduate student majoring in Physics and Classics. I am currently researching how the Protestant Reformation affected Catholic liturgical practices in the sixteenth century, with a focus on the divine office. In particular I am examining the reforms of the Roman Office by Cardinal Quinones and by Pius V.

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

The first LCI event I ever attended was a trip to the Monastery of the Holy Cross. We prayed Vespers and Compline with the monks, and Fr. Peter Funk, the prior, met with us for dinner. It really appealed to me to get a chance to see a very different way of life and learn about monastic spirituality from someone who actually lived it.

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

The Lumen Christi Institute has played a great role in my intellectual growth. By bringing in so many excellent scholars who have immersed themselves in the Catholic intellectual tradition, Lumen Christi's events have exposed me to a wide range of ideas within that tradition.

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

The trips to the monastery in particular have been helpful for my academic work. I write on the divine office, and so seeing how the office is lived today has offered a new perspective on my work.

### What do you plan to do after you have completed your degree from U Chicago?

I hope to go to law school and become an attorney.

### Please comment on the role you think the Institute plays for students at UC.

The Lumen Christi Institute serves a twofold role at the University of Chicago. First, it allows Catholics to learn a great deal more about their intellectual tradition. Second, it shows to secular and non-Catholic scholars just how much the Church has to offer.

## Arborelius Continued from front page.

In November 1998, John Paul II appointed Arborelius the Bishop of Stockholm, Sweden's single Catholic diocese that spans the country. Arborelius was the first ethnic Swede appointed to his homeland's see since the Reformation, in part because Sweden has since then produced so few Catholic priests.

In his capacity as shepherd of Sweden's roughly 115,000 Catholics—though he ventures that due to recent high-volume immigration, especially from eastern Europe and the Middle East, the official number may be less than half the real one—Arborelius is charged with steering the Church in one of Europe's most secular countries. According to some surveys, less than one third of Swedes describe themselves as religious, and even fewer participate regularly in liturgical services.

Twenty years after being named bishop, Arborelius received another

singular summons. Last summer, Pope Francis elevated him to the cardinalate, making him the first cardinal in Sweden's history, and also appointed him to the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. That appointment signaled the Vatican's recognition of Arborelius' committed ministry in Sweden's ecumenical milieu: nearly 60 percent of Sweden's population (of just under 10 million) are baptized Lutherans.

According to a transcript of a radio interview conducted by the Vatican shortly before this historic bestowal of the red hat, the Swedish Cardinal-designate said of its significance:

"It's really a historical event and I think it's typical of Pope Francis that he looks to those parts of the world that are far away ... so he wants to encourage those minorities scattered all over the world and show that they are important in God's eyes and in the eyes of the Church even if they are very small realities."

The ‘Cardinal from the peripheries’ who had dwelt in a contemplative hermitage for two decades had arrived. As if to punctuate this transition, Sweden’s leading news magazine *Fokus* even named Arborelius “Swede of the Year” for 2017—the first time a Catholic prelate had received the honor.

An audience of ninety was excited to see Arborelius take the podium on March 12 at the University Club of Chicago to deliver a talk on “Silence, Prayer, and Contemplation in a Secular Society” following a pre-event reception during which he mingled with attendees.

The Cardinal began by noting that our secular society does nothing to encourage us to discover God’s presence in our lives through silent reflection. To the contrary, the overload of media and noise discourages cultivating a habit of meditative prayer. Yet prayer of this kind, he argued, is essential if we are to recognize and accept God’s mercy and love acting in our lives. The theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity grow in us when we cooperate with the grace that enables us to pray contemplatively and so enter into a deeper communion with the God who is Love.

Arborelius explored these themes while placing them in conversation with the thought of Lawrence of the Resurrection, Elizabeth of the Trinity, Teresa of Ávila, and John of the Cross.

The next morning he celebrated a public Mass at St. Thomas the Apostle parish in Hyde Park for the fifth anniversary of Pope Francis’ election. After Mass a breakfast reception was held in his honor at the parish center. The Cardinal visited the tables of parishioners and posed for pictures with them, giving each person his full attention during their encounters.

Following a lunch with University of Chicago faculty and students at the Quadrangle Club in Hyde Park, Arborelius delivered a public lecture titled “The Witness of Contemplative Women in the Heart of the Church” in Swift Hall, home of the Divinity School. Drawing an impressive finals-week crowd of fifty, this talk explored the role contemplative women have occupied in the Church throughout the ages and reflected on the witness they can offer to today’s secular society. By discussing women ranging from Mary the Mother of God to Teresa of Ávila and the Little Flower, Arborelius contended that the characteristically feminine charism for contemplative prayer



Cardinal Arborelius chats with Fr. Andrew Liaugminas (Chaplain of Calvert House, the Catholic Center at the University of Chicago) after his lecture on March 13.

can beautifully illuminate each Christian’s mystical union with Christ the bridegroom. He also argued that the feminine gift for loving presence to the marginalized, modeled by Mother Theresa and St. Bridget of Sweden, uniquely builds up a more just, peaceful, and compassionate society.

Arborelius spoke on these subjects with authenticity and experience. He inhabits a religious tradition that has produced some of the Church’s most popular female saints and most influential thinkers and writers: the mystic and reformer Teresa of Ávila, the beloved Little Flower Thérèse, and Edith Stein.

Following the March 13 lecture, the Cardinal departed for a short visit to Los Angeles before returning to his homeland.

Arborelius’ Chicago trip was packed with action: he enjoyed dinner with Cardinal Cupich, visited the Carmelite monastery in Des Plaines, sat for a podcast interview at Gavin House, and even visited the Swedish American Museum in Chicago, where together with museum personnel and the Honorary Consul of Chicago’s Swedish Consulate General he enjoyed the traditional Swedish afternoon coffee leisure time, “fika.” But throughout the visit the Cardinal manifested the holiness and interior peace that are the fruits of his contemplative attentiveness to the Lord’s presence. Lumen Christi is excited to see the good work that Sweden’s ‘Cardinal from the peripheries’ will do for the Church in the years to come.

*Videos of the Cardinal’s talks are available at [www.lumenchristi.org](http://www.lumenchristi.org).*



Cardinal Arborelius speaks at the University Club of Chicago on March 12.



## Angels, Demons, and King Cake

### Lumen Christi celebrates Twelfth Night of Christmas

Lumen Christi hosted a traditional celebration of the Twelfth Night of Christmas on January 6 for the Solemnity of the Epiphany. Nearly 100 participants gathered in Swift Hall's Third Floor Lecture Hall to listen to a dialogue between Rachel Fulton Brown, Professor of History at the University of Chicago, and Father Peter Funk, OSB, Prior of the Monastery of the Holy Cross in Chicago. The discussion was moderated by PhD student and Lumen Christi graduate associate Luke Foster. Fulton Brown and Fr. Funk each read short prepared remarks before entering into a free-flowing discussion and fielding questions from the audience. The theme of their remarks was "Angels, Demons, Heaven, and Hell: On Christian 'Mythology' and the Spiritual Life."

Fulton Brown began her paper by citing a lengthy excerpt from mid-twentieth century German biblical scholar Rudolf Bultmann's essay "New Testament and Mythology: The Problem of Demythologizing the New Testament Proclamation." Bultmann is famous for having advocated a contemporary Christianity detached from the putatively mythological world-picture prevalent in first-century Palestine. The language of a three-story cosmological structure, comprising heaven, earth, and hell; the language of angels and demons; of miracles; of cosmic catastrophe; of Jesus' resurrection and ascension into heaven—all these elements should, Bultmann argued, be peeled away from Christianity and discarded, the better to reveal the kerygmatic kernel of existentially loaded Christian proclamation. Bultmann concluded that the task of modern theology was to "demythologize" the Christian narrative of its "incredible" elements, and to bring to the fore those elements that are essential to the gospel.

Fulton Brown countered Bultmann's claim that mythology is incredible to modern society. Pointing to the popularity of superhero movies, she argued that interest in mythology and in mythological narratives is alive and well. She contended that Bultmann's demythologized Christianity has emptied churches and left people hungry for a more exciting, interesting Christianity, and she appealed to Dorothy Sayers' play *The Zeal of Thy House*, first performed in 1937, as a compelling instance of a mythologically grounded presentation of the dramatic attractive-

ness of Christian dogma.

Fr. Funk observed in his remarks that the drive to demythologize the Gospel is, ironically, itself naïve because what this drive in fact proposes is not an *elimination* of mythology but the *substitution* of modern myths (which may be false) for ancient ones (which may be true). Arguing that a myth is a governing story that aids our interpretation of the variety of human experiences, Funk maintained that the question for today's Christians is not whether to commit to a mythological Christianity but rather which myths are, as C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien said of the Gospel, "true myths." He concluded that those elements of the New Testament Bultmann considered fungible to Christianity are actually intrinsic to the revelation whereby God invites us into communion with him.

Following the symposium, attendees moved downstairs to Swift's Common Room for a reception complete with champagne and king cake, a traditional Epiphany dessert.

Artur Rosman, managing editor of *Church Life*, the journal of the McGrath Institute for Church Life at the University of Notre Dame, attended the event with a colleague. Afterward he said of the discussion between Fulton Brown and Funk: "These are topics contemporary Catholics tend to slide under the rug in shame. The discussion convincingly demonstrated why emptying Christianity out of these dramatic elements empties it out of the drama necessary to both attract converts and retain those already in the pews."

Rosman concluded that "the meticulous refutation of the spurious categories Bultmann used in his demythologization project was a delicious cherry on top."

Lauren Franzen, a neighborhood resident who attended the event, praised the evening as "a lively conversation about an aspect of our faith that is rarely examined in academic contexts."

"I enjoyed hearing the perspective of a priest who has a close relationship with helping people consider these parts of our faith, and also an academic who has a more theoretical approach," she concluded.

couraged individuals and their spiritual guides to prayerfully consider the concrete circumstances framing the lives of the faithful. He urged pastors and spiritual directors to accompany the faithful with a view toward discovering how to take steps toward moral maturity while at the same time avoiding a serious error: lapsing into a relativistic ethics according to which each person claims as right whatever course of action is the path of least resistance.

Giertych asked how the moral theology of Aquinas relates to this pastoral strategy. The question, he said, occurs to him (and others) because Aquinas' theological method and conclusions are sometimes seen as avoiding consideration of concrete, individual lives in his effort to arrive at a robust, abstract intelligibility.

Giertych argued to the contrary that when one appreciates the centrality of virtue in Aquinas' moral theology, and understands the second part of his master work (the *Summa Theologiae*) as a treatment of how the infused theological virtues and the gifts of the Holy Spirit enable the mature Christian to live a robustly creative moral life, this objection surrenders its power.

Giertych explained that for Aquinas the cardinal virtue of *prudentia* governs the whole of the Christian's moral life, and that *prudentia* is best understood as a kind of "creative resourcefulness," exercised through free choice in pursuit of the good as one understands it in one's concrete circumstances. The person who has been sanctified by the Holy Spirit and whose faith is animated by living charity becomes a resplendent icon of divine love. For such a person the moral life is not primarily about dutifully obeying commands of God but rather is about creative fidelity to the demands of the new law whose primary prescriptive expression is the Sermon on the Mount. This is not, Giertych stressed, to do away with objective moral norms. Rather it is to insist that conforming one's will and affections to those norms has to be a matter

of free choice, and so requires personal discernment and action, not just obedience to an external authority.

The next day, February 9, Giertych visited with the Auxiliary Bishop and Episcopal Vicar of the Archdiocese of Chicago, the Polish-born Most Rev. Andrew Wypych. Then he returned to Gavin House and led an afternoon master class on "Grace, Free Choice, and the Virtues." For the seminar, Giertych worked slowly through the Latin and English of key texts of the *Summa* dealing with the same themes he had addressed the previous afternoon.

**"I HAVE LONG ENJOYED READING AQUINAS, AND HAVING A CHANCE TO DO SO WITH THE PAPAL THEOLOGIAN WAS AN HONOR AND A PLEASURE ... IT WAS HUMBLING TO FIND FR. GIERTYCH SO WILLING TO ENGAGE AND INVESTIGATE THE MEANING OF THE TEXTS WITH US."**

Quitterie Gounot, a fourth-year PhD student in the Sage School of Philosophy at Cornell who studies ethics and is spending an exchange year at Chicago, commented on how she enjoyed the master class.

"I have long enjoyed reading Aquinas, and having a chance to do so with the papal theologian was an honor and a pleasure," she said. "It was humbling to find Fr. Giertych so willing to engage and investigate the meaning of the texts with us." She added that the readings and discussion "shed light on the origin of ideas I had been operating on without necessarily having thought much about the alternatives."

Finally, on February 10 Giertych and John Cavadini, Professor of Theology and Director of the McGrath Institute for Church Life at the University of Notre Dame, led a discussion on "The Role and Future of Theology." Attended

by fifteen theologians, this was an opportunity for the papal theologian to share the insights his office and work afford him with a group of American professors, and to discuss together how theologians working at Catholic universities can better serve the Church.

**To view the video of Fr. Giertych's February 8 lecture, visit [www.lumenchristi.org](http://www.lumenchristi.org).**



[LEFT] Fr. Giertych enjoys conversation with attendees after his February 8 lecture. [TOP RIGHT] Faculty gather at Gavin House for a discussion with Fr. Giertych and Prof. John Cavadini of Notre Dame. [BOTTOM RIGHT] Professor Emeritus of the University of Chicago Divinity School and frequent Lumen Christi Institute collaborator Bernard McGinn introduces Fr. Giertych before his lecture.

# Ross Douthat Visits Chicago

The *New York Times*' youngest ever columnist draws two huge crowds



At the invitation of the Lumen Christi Institute, nationally renowned *New York Times* Catholic columnist Ross Douthat visited Chicago in January for two major events.

Douthat, who in 2009 became the youngest op-ed columnist in the history of the *Times*, is widely acclaimed for his commentary on politics, religion, moral values, and higher education. He is author or co-author of three books, including *Bad Religion: How We Became a Nation of Heretics* (2012) and *Privilege: Harvard and the Education of the Ruling Class*—an incisive critique, based on Douthat's undergraduate years at Harvard, of elite universities and the culture of privilege they perpetuate. A fourth book, *To Change the Church: Pope Francis and the Future of Catholicism*, hit shelves March 27.

With *Bad Religion*, Douthat cemented himself as a leading cultural critic. The book's thesis is that while religiosity and self-professed spirituality are not on decline in America, "orthodox" Christian belief and practice are. Americans today are a "nation of heretics," professing and practicing faiths inflected by modern elements that distort Christianity into warped expressions. *Bad Religion* is about "the slow motion collapse of traditional Christianity and the rise of a variety of destructive pseudo-Christianities in its place," Douthat writes.

Those "destructive pseudo-Christianities" are instances of a "spiritual" outlook, one of the three worldviews that Douthat sees dominating contemporary American life. In a popular 2013 column he described these as the biblical, the spiritual, and the secular. Christian proponents of the biblical worldview take the New Testament to be factually true, believe that God became flesh in Jesus, and profess creeds that explain how and why this happened—and this category also encompasses, by analogy, traditional Jews and Muslims. Proponents of the spiritual worldview believe in God but not in historical doctrinal commitments; Douthat describes them as "Christian-ish but syncretistic; adaptable, easygoing and egalitarian." Finally, proponents of the secular worldview deny God, miracles, and the Incarnation, but espouse the egalitarian message with its

doctrines of liberty, fraternity, and human rights.

Douthat revisited these themes in a January 10 column, published just before his Chicago trip. In it he wrote:

"In between secularism and traditionalism [the biblical worldview] lies the most American approach to matters of faith: a religious individualism that blurs the line between the God out there and the God Within, a gnostic spirituality that constantly promises access to a secret and personalized wisdom, a gospel of health and wealth that insists that the true spiritual adept will find both happiness and money, a do-it-yourself form of faith that encourages syncretism and relativism and the pursuit of 'your truth' (to borrow one of Oprah's Golden Globes phrases) in defiance of the dogmatic and the skeptical alike."

Douthat took up these same questions during his visit. On January 17 Lumen Christi partnered with the Martin Marty Center for the Public

Understanding of Religion at the Divinity School, the Institute of Politics, and the International House Global Voices Program to host the panel discussion "Religion and Religious Expression in the Academy and Public Life" at the International House. Moderated by Marty Center director Willemien Otten, the panel drew well over 200 people and featured Douthat and four scholars: Geoffrey Stone (Edward H. Levi Distinguished Service Professor at the University of Chicago Law School), Laurie Zoloth (Margaret E. Burton Professor and Dean of the University of Chicago Divinity School), William Schweiker (Edward L. Ryerson Distinguished Service Professor of Theological Ethics at the University of Chicago Divinity School), and William Cavanaugh (Professor of Catholic Studies and Director of

the Center for World Catholicism and Intercultural Theology at DePaul University).

Douthat delivered opening remarks, to which Stone and Zoloth each responded. Douthat responded to them, Schweiker and Cavanaugh each offered remarks, and Douthat answered them in turn. Then the panel

**"OUR AMERICAN CIVIC RELIGION IS CHRISTIAN-ISH BUT SYNCRETISTIC; ADAPTABLE, EASYGOING AND EGALITARIAN. IT DOESN'T CARE WHETHER THE ANGEL REALLY APPEARED TO MARY: THE IMPORTANT THING IS THAT A SPIRITUAL VERSION OF THAT VISITATION COULD HAPPEN TO ANYONE — INCLUDING YOU."**

opened up to a lively discussion.

Douthat argued that while certain traditional religious and moral convictions and metaphysical commitments are routinely excluded from campus discourse at colleges and universities, contemporary campus activism, both by students and administrators, actually imports and expresses religious energy—often in implicitly religious terms. This energy, which Douthat summarized as “left-wing political activism and protest,” substitutes liberal political and moral commitments for the religious confessionism that previously animated higher education. Douthat even contended that students are yearning for moral and metaphysical authority, such as the teaching office of the Church exercises, and expect administrators to level that authority with a heavy-handed moral code, including with respect to sexual procedural norms.

In short, Douthat argued that religious categories, concepts, and dynamics are prevalent across left-leaning higher education, albeit in transmuted ways.

Prior to the panel, Douthat met with an invited group of Lumen Christi graduate and undergraduate associates to field their questions. The opportunity to meet privately with visiting scholars and speakers is a feature of the Associates Program.

Patrick Kearney, who is working toward his M.A. in political philosophy at the University of Chicago, attended the pre-event meeting. “Having the opportunity to speak with Ross Douthat on the place of religion in our public life was an enlightening experience,” Kearney said. “As a political philosopher, it was inspiring to hear such a respected journalist call on our field for imagination and vision in a time of deep uncertainty.”

Tom Hellenbrand, a fourth-year History major in the College, said of the program that he “greatly enjoyed the thoughtful discussion of eminent panelists, especially Ross Douthat, who provided a witty yet urgent case for the importance of religious voices in the academy.”

“In challenging modern universities’ insistence upon neutrality, Douthat encouraged a renewed commitment to freedom of religious expression in academic and social discourse,” Hellenbrand told *The Beacon*.

After the panel, Douthat enjoyed dinner at Gavin House with faculty and friends of Lumen Christi.

The next day, Douthat addressed a crowd of 125 professionals, faculty, and students at the University Club of Chicago. Speaking from the podium in the beautiful Cathedral Hall, Douthat addressed “The State of Religion in America,” channeling his thoughts from the 2013 and January 2018



Douthat discusses his career as a journalist and writer with a group of students before the January 17 symposium.

columns on the three worldviews vying for dominance in American public life. He proposed this tripartite schema as more helpful and accurate than a left-right divide between religious traditionalists on the right and religious progressives on the left. The ubiquitous “spiritual” worldview is bipartisan, Douthat argued, and transcends political commitments.

Stuart Dykstra, a Chicago-based hydrogeologist who was invited by a friend to attend the luncheon, enjoyed the talk. “Douthat was a highly enjoyable speaker, and he gave an articulate description of the spectrum of spirituality in the U.S. today,” he said.

“This luncheon was my first exposure to Lumen Christi,” Dykstra continued, “and I’m very happy to learn of an active organization near the University of Chicago campus that engages not only its students, but all of us with very interesting speakers from the Catholic intellectual community.”

Sean and Rozann Lee, who work for Bishop Robert Barron’s Word on Fire ministry as its operations director and creative director, respectively, also encountered Lumen Christi for the first time at the event.

Saying she “thoroughly enjoyed” the talk, Rozann Lee appreciated Douthat’s analysis and the opportunities it invites Catholics to consider.

“Douthat’s explanation of the trajectory of the role of faith in the lives of Americans was eye-opening,” she said. “But most importantly, it was an implicit call-to-action for the faithful to live lives of attractive joy, to become well-versed in the reasons for belief, and to introduce an increasingly secular culture to Christ at every opportunity.”

**Videos of both events are available on [www.lumenchristi.org](http://www.lumenchristi.org).**



Ross Douthat addresses the topic of “Religion and Religious Expression in the Academy and Public Life” at the January 17 event.

# Is Liberalism a Failed Project?

Patrick Deneen delivers first public lecture on bestselling cultural diagnosis



Political theorist Patrick Deneen has for years been mounting a sustained argument about the unsustainability of classical liberalism as a set of doctrines and commitments capable of animating a flourishing polity. Deneen, the David A. Potenzi Memorial Associate Professor of Constitutional Studies at the University of Notre Dame, delivered what some are touting as a knockout punch to classical liberalism in his recent release *Why Liberalism Failed*, which quickly sold out across the country and was for months Amazon's #1 new release in political philosophy.

On February 1, Deneen delivered a standing-room only evening lecture at Swift Hall on the book, his first public engagement since it hit shelves. The lecture was sponsored by the John U. Nef Committee on Social Thought (in which Deneen studied for the first year of his doctorate, before continuing at Rutgers), the Theology Club at the Divinity School, and the Seminary Coop Bookstore.

In *Why Liberalism Failed*, Deneen argues that liberalism—a complex of views and arguments owing much to figures like John Locke and Thomas Hobbes—has failed America precisely because it has succeeded. He contends that liberalism's operating logic—atomistic, individualistic, and metaphysically shy and confused—is acidic to the very pre-political virtues that any healthy polity needs the majority of its citizens to possess: a robust sense of common goods, a sound understanding of virtue, a realistic outlook about unchosen obligations, and a conceptualization of freedom as the capacity for moral excellence rather than untrammelled autonomy.

Deneen's diagnosis of contemporary American life is that what we today are experiencing as the disintegration of the social fabric is simply the organic outplaying of theoretical com-

mitments whose seeds were sown before and in the American Founding. The increasingly insistent encroachment by the federal government and social elites into the domains of civic life formerly sustained by institutions like churches, families, and fraternal organizations has engendered an "illiberal liberalism": a scenario in which dissidents are forced to accept the ruling elite's imposition of liberty and its fruits. During the Q and A session, Deneen also highlighted the forms of "illiberal illiberalism" that, he argued, are in some ways a response to illiberal liberalism.

Integral to the recovery of practices and institutions capable of better ordering our political common life is the recovery of the classical distinction between liberty and license, he contended. Whereas license is the power to do what one wants, "doing whatever one wants" is what the ancients understood as tyranny, not freedom, Deneen noted that when he asks his undergraduate students to define liberty, nearly all of them give this definition. True liberty, he countered, is the capacity to recognize and choose the good and to integrate one's emotions and passions with one's understanding of the good. The libertine paradigm of "liberty" that classical liberals tout is, Deneen said, actually a form of self-enslavement.

Deneen clarified that the legacy of classical liberalism was mixed, not wholly negative. He said that he is not opposed in principle to the state or to markets and is not calling for their abolition. He advocated for a convergence of capital and labor, citing the distributivism of twentieth-century Catholic thinkers Hillaire Belloc and G.K. Chesterton as a model that could be adapted, and stressed the need to form intentional communities in which virtuous practices and traditions could be learned and transmitted within local cultures.

**DENEEN'S UNDERGRADUATES, WHEN ASKED TO DEFINE LIBERTY, NEARLY ALWAYS REPLY: "BEING ABLE TO DO WHATEVER I WANT TO." DENEEN COUNTERS THAT THIS IS HOW THE ANCIENTS WOULD DESCRIBE TYRANNY, AND THAT TRUE LIBERTY IS THE CAPACITY TO RECOGNIZE AND CHOOSE THE GOOD.**



The lecture provoked a lively Q and A session, and conversation in the Lecture Hall continued long after the event concluded while Deneen signed copies of his books available for sale by the Seminary Coop Bookstore.

Joseph Rubinelli, a retired attorney, attended the event with friends and was impressed both by Deneen's prepared remarks and his off-the-cuff reflections.

"Professor Deneen's presentation was clear, original, and timely," Rubinelli said. "He drew a large, engaged audience, and I was especially impressed with both the questions and insightful answers during the Q and A session."

The next day, Deneen led an afternoon master class on French political theorist Alexis de Tocqueville's magnum opus, the classic work of political theory *Democracy in America*, which

Tocqueville wrote after having toured America in 1831 and observed its developing democratic machinery and customs.

James Mitchell, an M.A. student studying the relationship between religion and politics at the University of Chicago, said that "the opportunity to participate in the master class taught by Professor Deneen was a rewarding experience."

"I was thrilled to hear his thoughts on *Democracy in America*," he continued. "Coincidentally, I had just reread a few major sections of the work as part of a graduate seminar I was taking at the time, but the master class reframed the text in rewarding ways. It was a well spent afternoon indeed."

***To watch the video of Deneen's lecture, visit [www.lumenchristi.org](http://www.lumenchristi.org).***





## Father Brian Paulson, SJ

Jesuit Provincial of the Midwest Province-USA  
& former Lumen Christi Institute Board Member

### Why is Lumen Christi (LCI)'s work personally meaningful for you? How were you first drawn to it, or heard about it?

In the 1990s I was Director of Vocations for the Jesuits in Chicago, and Thomas Levergood, then a graduate student at the University of Chicago, sought me out for counsel. At the time, Thomas was Episcopalian and was considering being received into the Roman Catholic Church. Thomas told me about his efforts to begin Lumen Christi, working alongside Dr. Paul Griffiths, then a professor of divinity at the University of Chicago. I offered support to Thomas and Paul as they put together the initial board of directors and drafted the initial by-laws for the Institute. Incidentally, my good friend, Fr. Paul Mueller, SJ, who was at that time a graduate student at the university, soon received Thomas into the Church at Calvert House.

### What sorts of benefits does facilitating LCI's mission and work have for the academy? For the Church? For the world?

LCI offers students and faculty at the University of Chicago and beyond an opportunity to deepen their knowledge of the richness of the Catholic tradition in theology, philosophy, spirituality, history, and the arts, as well as other spheres of thought. I am impressed that LCI carries out some of its programming allied with opportunities for prayer and worship, which enriches and contextualizes the intellectual experience. Catholic theology is classically understood as faith seeking understanding. All too often in the academy, including at some Catholic universities, religious studies has replaced theology in the curriculum. LCI is supportive of intellectuals who desire to pursue theology as faith seeking understanding, in communion with the magisterium.

### Can you speak to your tenure as president at Saint Ignatius College Prep? What sorts of activities were routine?

As president of Saint Ignatius College Prep, my daily activities involved forming a team with the principal, the Vice-President of Advancement, the Vice-President of Finance, and the superior of the Jesuit community in order to lead the school. About half of my time was devoted to advancement activities and fundraising. I also made it a priority to participate in the Kairos retreat program for seniors, and to go on a five-day service trip each summer with rising seniors, often to somewhere in Appalachia, working on affordable housing initiatives.

### What led you to pursue studies at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service?

I went to Georgetown's School of Foreign Service because I was interested in history, political science, and foreign languages in high school. That program is distinguished as an interdisciplinary approach to those subjects, along with economics. I was also open to learning about economics, which ultimately became my major. Of course, the fact that Georgetown is a Jesuit university was also part of the attraction, as Jesuit mentors of mine in high school pointed me in that direction. I am deeply grateful for my Georgetown education.

### Can you talk about what has been most rewarding or enjoyable about your involvement with LCI?

Seeing Thomas' dream become more and more "institutionalized" is the most rewarding and satisfying aspect of my association with LCI. The purchase of what we now call the Gavin House as a home for the Institute was particularly consoling for me. Jesuits have been institution-builders; we pay a lot of attention to real estate, and location is key in real estate. The board and key benefactors supported the Institute in an exemplary way when this opportunity presented itself. Of course, Gavin House is simply the platform for the Institute's excellent programming. Together, the people, the programs, and Gavin House all contribute to the effectiveness of the mission.

### Would you speak to your own journey of faith and/or your discernment of religious priesthood?

I was blessed to attend Catholic grade school at St. Anastasia in Waukegan with the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus. They had a vibrant vision of Catholic education in the spirit of Vatican II. We were taught that the Church is the People of God, that we are the Church, and

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that we had responsibility for the Church. I was an altar boy and later played guitar at folk Masses in middle school and, later at Campion Jesuit High School, Loyola Academy, and Georgetown. Over time, my tastes in liturgical music evolved, but I give credit to this active involvement in liturgy from a young age as sowing the seeds of my future vocation. It also goes without saying that the Holy Child sisters and the Jesuits in each of my schools contributed greatly to my vocation.

### Can you say a bit about your work leading the USA Midwest Jesuit Province?

I tell people that in secular terms, my mission as provincial is three-quarters HR and one-quarter brand-management. Of course, my work is the ministry of leadership and administration in the context of a Catholic religious order, the Jesuits. Most of my time is spent receiving the “account of conscience” from the Jesuits in our province. This colloquy is a sacred cornerstone of Jesuit governance during which a Jesuit shares with his provincial his consolations and desolations in prayer, ministry, community, and the life of the vows. It is a great privilege for me to come to know my brother Jesuits on this deeply personal level. My care for individual Jesuits and Jesuit apostolates flows out of these conversations.

## Lumen Christi Sponsors New Reading Group

### Students explore how to integrate their faith and citizenship

Since summer quarter, Lumen Christi has sponsored a graduate student reading group that meets weekly at Gavin House to discuss classic works in a friendly and informal setting. (The winter 2018 issue of *The Beacon* featured this group.) This winter and spring Lumen Christi is jointly sponsoring, with Calvert House Catholic Chaplaincy, a second reading group founded by three Lumen Christi student associates.

“Imagining Economics and Politics Through the Catholic Tradition” is a reading group for undergraduate and graduate students who want to mine the Catholic intellectual tradition for resources that can help them live better as Catholic citizens of the United States. With a syllabus spanning scripture, the Church Fathers, medieval and Reformation thought, and contemporary political theory and magisterial teaching, the group meets at Gavin House to discuss assigned readings. Scholars are invited to help navigate particularly challenging texts, such as Thomas Aquinas’ treatise on governance *De Regno* (Fr. Stephen Brock, the 2017 Visiting Scholar with the Virtue, Happiness, & the Meaning of Life Project at the University of Chicago) and Pseudo-Dionysius’ *Celestial Hierarchy* (Rachel Fulton Brown, Professor of History at the University of Chicago). Abbot Austin Murphy, OSB, of St. Procopius Abbey guided a discussion on lay and monastic ethics based on John Chrysostom’s *On Wealth and Poverty*.

Luke Foster, a second-year Committee on Social Thought doctoral student and leader of the group, explained that the impetus for creating it was a personal concern on the part of its organizers to ground their reflection on American political thought in the Catholic tradition.

“Often in our experience American Catholicism has avoided politics altogether or spoken in reactive ways to the concerns of the moment,” said Foster, who researches educational philosophy’s relationship to political philosophy. “Our hope for the reading group is that we might better understand what the Church of-

fers to the world on political questions and return at the end to our present moment better equipped to engage prophetically and prudently.”

Carter Hall, a fourth-year Physics and Classics major in the College and a leader of the group, further noted how current events shaped the reading group.

“It seems to me that the longstanding alliance between social conservatism and a belief in a relatively libertarian fiscal policy in American politics had begun breaking down,” he said, “and topics such as economic inequality and what seems to some like the breakdown of liberalism have become more and more discussed.”

The third leader, Daniel Ortiz, a fourth-year English and Fundamentals: Texts and Issues double-major in the College, registered the hope that participants in the group might “return edified enough” by their discussions to “approach contemporary events with greater charity and stoicism.”

Ortiz also noted that the inclusion of the word “imagining” in the group’s title was not accidental.

“We’ve included many ‘non-political’ readings because the type of aesthetic imagination cultivated by these readings does much to counteract our particular political disorders,” he reflected.

The leaders worked together to select texts that were both relevant and light enough to interest students without unduly burdening them, explained Foster, who framed the majority of the syllabus. Ortiz added that the syllabus tracks conversations that some of the group’s participants had already been having.

“We had a sense that the conversations we were interested in having through this reading group were actually ones we already were having—but in an ad hoc, unorganized way,” he explained. “We wanted a place to meet, some degree of publicity, and patronage from an established organization. Lumen Christi sprang to mind.”



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