



FRANCIS *at* TEN

A PAPACY OF POSSIBILITIES



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St. Ambrose University is pleased to welcome you to its conference, *Francis at Ten: A Papacy of Possibilities*. Founded by Bishop John McMullen in 1882, St. Ambrose began with two humble rooms in parish grade school and has grown into an excellent coeducational Catholic university with nearly 2,700 students. With Catholic tradition at the core of the school's mission and vision, we are delighted to bring this international conference to campus to honor the papacy of Pope Francis. We expect this conference will foster discussion about life and ministry of the Church. We are excited to share some midwestern hospitality with you, and we look forward to an outstanding conference.

Welcome to the Quad Cities!



CONFERENCE SCHEDULE & OVERVIEW OF EVENTS

Thursday, March 16

3:00 pm Registration Desk Opens

SECOND FLOOR, ROGALSKI CENTER

5:00 – 6:15 pm Vespers

Presider: His Eminence Cardinal
Joseph W. Tobin, CSsR,
Archbishop of Newark

CHRIST THE KING CHAPEL

6:15 – 7:00 pm Opening Reception

ROGALSKI CENTER BALLROOM

7:00 – 9:00 pm Opening Dinner and Keynote
Address: *The Council, The Synod
and Pope Francis' Legacy*
Speaker: Tom Higgins '67

ROGALSKI CENTER BALLROOM

Friday, March 17

7:00 – 7:30 am Morning Prayer

CHRIST THE KING CHAPEL

7:00 – 8:15 am Breakfast

ROGALSKI CENTER BALLROOM

8:15 – 8:30 am Welcome

8:30 – 9:25 am Keynote: His Eminence Cardinal
Joseph W. Tobin, CSsR, Archbishop
of Newark

ROGALSKI CENTER BALLROOM

9:30 – 10:25 am Concurrent Sessions

SYNODALITY ROOM 1

*Bridging Academy and Church: Pope Francis'
Vision for Synodal Theologians*

Speaker: Megan Effron, University of Notre Dame

*Pope Francis and Bernard Lonergan SJ:
The Human Person and Holy Spirit in
Evangelization and Synodality*

Speaker: Patrick Schmadeke '13, Diocese of
Davenport

REACHING THE PERIPHERIES ROOM 2

Peace: A Journey of Hope and Reconciliation

Speaker: Mr. Brian McKee, M.A.(Theol) B.Ed(Hons)

*Promoting Integral Human Development:
From Cardijn to Pope Francis*

Speaker: Dr. Stefan Gigacz, Australian Cardijn
Institute

*ACT: Preach the Gospel at All Times and if
Necessary, Use Words*

Speakers: Ann S. Garton, DNP, RN, FPCC, CNE;
Melissa Sharer, PhD, MSW, MPH, St. Ambrose
University

BEING PASTORAL ROOM 3

*The Importance of Identity and Belonging in the
Church's Encounter with Young People*

Speaker: Dr. Emily Dykman, Viterbo University

*Pope Francis and Paul Ricoeur in Dialogue:
A Contemplative Pedagogy for Lifelong Formation*

Speaker: Michele Petersen, PhD, St. Ambrose
University

10:30 – 11:25 am Keynote Address: *Turning to the
Spirit and to the People: Francis'
'Great Reform' Ten Years On*
Speaker: Dr. Austen Ivereigh

ROGALSKI CENTER BALLROOM

11:30 – 12:30 pm Lunch and Keynote Address:
Covering the Pope of Surprises
Speaker: Joshua McElwee

ROGALSKI CENTER BALLROOM

12:30 – 1:00 pm Break

1:00 – 1:55 pm Keynote Address: *Catholic Social
Teaching, Synodality, and Women*
Speaker: Dr. Phyllis Zagano

ROGALSKI CENTER BALLROOM

2:00 – 2:30 pm Break

2:30 – 3:30 pm Keynote Address: *Pope Francis
and the Economy*

Speaker: Dr. Anthony Annett
Co-sponsored by the Academy for
the Study of Saint Ambrose of Milan

ROGALSKI CENTER BALLROOM

3:30 - 4:30 pm Concurrent Sessions

BEING PASTORAL ROOM 1

The “Wild Mystic” Angela Canonized by Francis

Speaker: Lisa Powell, PhD, St. Ambrose University

Pope Francis: A Global Model Of Servant Leadership

Speaker: Fr. Anthony Jeorge MI, Ministers of the Infirm St. Camillus

Fratelli Tutti and Interfaith Education

Speaker: Dr. Patricia Idoko, DeSales University

CREATION ROOM 2

TONOS: How Francis Stretches the Catholic Intellectual Tradition to Relate to God’s Creation

Speaker: Fr. Robert “Bud” Grant, PhD, St. Ambrose University

Pope Francis on the Spirituality of Ecological Trauma

Speaker: Dr. Kevin Mongrain, Duquesne University

The Birdbath and Beyond: Pope Francis and Franciscan Spirituality

Speaker: Mr. Gino Grivetti, Cardinal Stritch University

SYNODALITY ROOM 3

Journeying Together: Pope Francis’ Vision for a Synodal Church

Speaker: Dr. Alessandro Rovati, Belmont Abbey College

Karl Rahner’s Pastoral Writings as a Foundation for Synodality

Speaker: Mr. Michael Sherman, Carlow College

5:00 pm

Mass

Presider: Most Rev. Thomas Zinkula, JD, JCL, (Hon. '18), Bishop of Davenport Chair, Board of Trustees

CHRIST THE KING CHAPEL

Saturday, March 18

7:00 – 7:30 am Morning Prayer

CHRIST THE KING CHAPEL

7:00 – 8:15 am Breakfast

ROGALSKI CENTER BALLROOM

8:15 – 8:30 am Welcome

8:30 – 9:25 am Keynote Address: *Pope Francis and Co-Responsibility: Toward a New Culture of Leadership in the Church*

Speaker: Ms. Kerry Robinson

ROGALSKI CENTER BALLROOM

9:30 – 10:25 am Concurrent Sessions

SYNODALITY ROOM 1

“In an Unworthy Manner:” Amoris Laetitia, Scripture, and Communion

Speaker: Micah Kiel, PhD, St. Ambrose University

Protagonists for a Synodal Church: Embracing the Gifts of Women for Leadership, Preaching, and the Possibility of a Restored Diaconate

Speakers: Casey Stanton, co-director Discerning Deacons

Ellie Hidalgo, co-director Discerning Deacons

Synodality as a Path to a Healthier Church

Speaker: Ms. Christine Way Skinner, Toronto School of Theology

BEING PASTORAL ROOM 2

An Ecologically Attuned Church

Speaker: Nancy M. Rourke, PhD, Canisius College and St. John Fisher University

Pope Francis on Campus

Speaker: Patricia Pintado-Murphy, University of Saint Mary

REACHING THE PERIPHERIES ROOM 3

Pope Francis, the DEI Officer

Speaker: Fr. Kevin Nadolski, OSFS PhD, DeSales University

Historical Trauma, Apologies, and Healing: Pope Francis and North American Indigenous Communities

Speaker: Mara Adams, PhD, St. Ambrose University

10:30 – 11:25 am Keynote Address: *Synodality in a Local Church: “Enlarging the Tent” of the “Field Hospital”*

Speaker: Dr. Massimo Faggioli

ROGALSKI CENTER BALLROOM

11:30 am – 1:30 pm Lunch

ROGALSKI CENTER BALLROOM

1:30 – 2:25 pm Concurrent Sessions

VATICAN II ROOM 1

Pope Francis Gives New Life to the “Spirit of Vatican II”

Speaker: Martin Madar, PhD, Xavier University

Francis and the Conciliar Renewal of Moral Theology

Speaker: Dr. William (Bill) Murphy Jr., Pontifical College Josephinum

CREATION ROOM 2

Forging a Friendship with Nature: A Look at the Papal Shift From Ecological Awareness to Biophilia in Laudato si’

Speaker: Mr. William Kuncken, Villanova University

Not Living in God: Finding Friendship With Creation Beyond Biological Life and Laudato si’

Speaker: Jessica Pagan

The Love That Moves the Sun and Stars: An Analysis of Pope Francis' Reception of Dante in Laudato si’

Speaker: Trevor B. Williams

The Technocratic Paradigm and Technological “Process”

Speaker: Christopher Neyhart

REACHING THE PERIPHERIES ROOM 3

“Unbelievers Can Sometimes Put God’s Will Into Practice Better Than Believers:” Pope Francis and the Nonreligious

Speaker: Dr. Peter Huff, Benedictine University

From Theology of the People to Economics of the People: An African Perspective

Speaker: Father Fidelis Olokunboro PhD, Cabrini University, Radnor

Ecology and the Eucharist: Pope Francis’ Liturgical Theology of Caring for Our Common Home

Speaker: Christopher O’Brien, The Catholic University of America

2:30 - 3:00 pm Break

3:00 - 3:55 pm Keynote Panel: Reflection

ROGALSKI CENTER BALLROOM

4:00 – 4:30 pm Closing Comments

5:00 pm Closing Mass and Celebration

President: His Excellency Archbishop
Christophe Pierre, Papal Nuncio

CHRIST THE KING CHAPEL



The conference organizers would like to thank and acknowledge the following people and entities for their help and support with this project.

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Most Rev. Thomas Zinkula, JD, JCL, (Hon. '18)

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Frank Agnoli

APPENDIX



Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin

Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin is the son of the late Joseph W. Tobin and Marie Terese Kerwin. His Eminence, Joseph William Cardinal Tobin was born on May 3, 1952 in Detroit, Michigan. He is the oldest of 13 children.

Joseph Tobin attended Holy Redeemer Elementary School in Detroit, and then graduated from St. Joseph's Prep College, Edgerton, Wisconsin in 1970. He continued his education at Holy Redeemer College, Waterford, Wisconsin, receiving a Bachelor of Arts degree in Philosophy in 1975. From 1977 until 1979, he attended Mount Saint Alphonsus Seminary in Esopus, New York, earning Masters Degrees in Religious Education in 1977 and Divinity in 1979.

In 1973, Joseph Tobin professed vows as a member of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, the Redemptorists. In 1976, he professed perpetual vows with the Community. In 1978, he was ordained to both the diaconate and the priesthood. Between 1979 and 1984, Father Tobin served as associate pastor of Holy Redeemer Parish, Detroit, where he engaged in both pastoral ministry to the Hispanic community and youth ministry. In 1984, he was named pastor of Holy Redeemer Parish. He also served in a number of diocesan assignments within the Archdiocese of Detroit, including: Episcopal Vicar; member of the Presbyteral Council, and; official in the Metropolitan Tribunal.

From 1990 until 1991, he served as pastor of St. Alphonsus Parish in Chicago, a parish staffed in that Archdiocese by the Redemptorists.

Within the Redemptorist Community, Father Tobin served as a Provincial Consultor from 1984 until 1990, as General Consultor of the Community in Rome from 1991 until 1997, and as Superior General of the Redemptorists in Rome from 1997 until 2009.

On August 9, 2010, His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI, named Father Tobin to the Roman Curia post of Secretary of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (CICLSA), and titular Archbishop of Obba. On October 18, 2012, Pope Benedict appointed him to serve as the Sixth Archbishop of Indianapolis. He was installed as Archbishop of Indianapolis on December 3, 2012. His Holiness, Pope Francis, named him to the College of Cardinals on

October 9, 2016. He was created Cardinal on November 19, 2016. On November 7, 2016, His Holiness, Pope Francis named Joseph William Cardinal Tobin to serve as the Sixth Archbishop of Newark. Besides his responsibilities in the Archdiocese of Newark, Cardinal Tobin has been appointed by Pope Francis as a member of the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church, Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, Synod of Bishops, Congregation for Catholic Education, Pontifical Council for Culture, Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, Council for the Economy, Supremo Tribunale della Signatura Apostolica, and Congregation for Bishops.

Cardinal Tobin speaks English, Spanish, Italian, French and Portuguese, and reads several other languages. He has participated in five Synods of Bishops, and has been a member of the Canon Law Society of America since 1985.



Dr. Anthony Annett

Dr. Anthony Annett is a Senior Advisor at the Sustainable Development Solutions Network. He works at the intersection of economics, ethics, sustainable development, and Catholic

social teaching. He holds a B.A. and M.Litt. from Trinity College Dublin and a Ph.D. in economics from Columbia University.

Annett helped coordinate an initiative called Ethics in Action, which met at the Vatican and brought together religious leaders and scholars from the world's major religions as well as economists, philosophers, business and labor leaders, development experts, and activists to develop an ethical consensus on the need for sustainable development. He was an editor (alongside Jeffrey Sachs, Marcelo Sanchez Sorondo, Owen Flanagan, William Vendley, and Jesse Thorson) on a new book entitled *Ethics in Action for Sustainable Development* (Columbia University Press, 2022). The foreword was written by Pope Francis and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew.

Annett also recently published *Cathonomics: How Catholic Tradition Can Create a More Just Economy* (Georgetown University Press, 2022). In this book, he draws on economics, Catholic social thought, philosophy, climate science, and psychology to show how readers of all faiths and backgrounds can work together to create a more just economy.

Annett has acted as an informal consultant to the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, and co-authored the remarks delivered by Dr. Carolyn Woo at the launch of the encyclical, *Laudato si'*. Annett spent two decades at the International Monetary Fund in Washington DC. In this role, he served as a speechwriter to two successive Managing Directors, Dominique Strauss-Kahn, and Christine Lagarde.

Annett is currently writing a new principles of economics textbook with Jeffrey Sachs that would incorporate ethics and Catholic social teaching. This book is based on a course he taught at Fordham University.



Dr. Massimo Faggioli

Dr. Massimo Faggioli, a married lay Roman Catholic, is a full professor in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at Villanova University in Villanova, Pennsylvania. He worked in the “John XXIII

Foundation for Religious Studies” in Bologna between 1996 and 2008. He was co-chair of the study group “Vatican II Studies” for the American Academy of Religion between 2012 and 2017. He has a column in *La Croix International*, and is contributing writer for *Commonweal* magazine and for the Italian magazine *Il Regno*. His books and articles have been published in more than ten languages. His most recent publications include the books: *A Council for the Global Church*. *Receiving Vatican II in History* (Fortress, 2015); *The Rising Laity: Ecclesial Movements since Vatican II* (Paulist, 2016); *The Liminal Papacy of Pope Francis: Moving Toward Global Catholicity* (Orbis Books, 2020) and *Joe Biden and Catholicism in the United States* (Bayard 2021). He co-edited with Catherine Clifford *The Oxford Handbook of Vatican II* (Oxford University Press, 2022) and he is under contract with Oxford University Press for a book on the history of the Roman Curia. He lives in the Philadelphia area with his wife and their two children.



Thomas J. Higgins

Thomas J. Higgins is an active investor, social entrepreneur and philanthropist. He was the founding CEO (2003-2008) of Prosetta Biosciences, a drug discovery company, and is currently chairman of the board.

In addition, he is a long-time director and chair of Akonni Biosystems, a molecular diagnostics company. Prior to that, he was President and Chief Operating Officer of Business for Social Responsibility. BSR is the leading global resource

for businesses seeking to improve their performance in areas of corporate social responsibility.

Higgins served in the administration of President Jimmy Carter, beginning as a senior executive at the United States Department of Health and Human Services and later as Associate Commissioner of the Social Security Administration. He was then appointed by the President to the White House Senior Staff, where he served as Deputy Secretary to the Cabinet. Early in his public career, he was elected to the Iowa General Assembly at the age of 27, where he served three terms and was chairman of the Health and Human Services Committee. In the early 1980s he was the head of the Health and Social Services Department in Portland, Oregon. In 1983, he began his private sector career as founding Publisher and President of *The Business Journal* in Portland, Oregon.

Subsequently, Higgins became the co-founder and editor-in-chief of *HealthWeek*, a national newspaper covering health business news. In 1990, Higgins was recruited as a vice president of Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Maryland. He was subsequently elected a Senior Vice President of the company, with broad responsibilities for its staff and operations.

Higgins began his energy related career at Southern California Edison and Edison International in 1995, serving as a Senior Vice President. Edison is a \$15 billion electric utility company. During his career with the company, Higgins served on the management committee and helped to set overall strategy for the company. He co-founded Amber Kinetics in 2010, a leading energy storage company with offices in the U.S. and The Philippines, in 2010 and chaired the board for five years. He currently serves as a public member of the California Council on Environmental and Energy Balance (CCEEB).

For over 20 years, he served on the board of SCAN Health Plan, a \$2.5B, non-profit Medicare HMO. He also was founding chair of The SCAN Foundation, an independent philanthropy focused on improving senior care support and services in America. Higgins served on the US Committee of Human Rights Watch for 10 years. He is currently a member of the board of *Commonweal* magazine, an independent Catholic journal in the US. He is also a member of the Board of Trustees of St. Ambrose University, where he graduated cum laude in 1967.



Dr. Austen Ivereigh

Dr. Austen Ivereigh is a British writer and journalist known for his two biographies of Pope Francis: *The Great Reformer: Francis and the Making of a Radical Pope* (2014) and *Wounded Shepherd: Pope*

Francis and His Struggle to Convert the Catholic Church (2019). In 2020 he published a book with Pope Francis, on his vision for the post-Covid world: *Let Us Dream: The Path to a Better Future* (Simon & Schuster).

His 1993 doctoral study at St. Antony's College, Oxford, was of the Church in Argentina. He is currently Fellow in Contemporary Church History at the Jesuit-run Campion Hall, University of Oxford, where he runs a project to help deepen synodality in the Church. He was on the national synthesis team for the synod of England and Wales, and is on the continental synthesis team in Rome, where he also advises the synod secretariat on communications.

He writes regularly for *Commonweal* magazine and the *National Catholic Reporter* about Pope Francis, and for *The Tablet* in the UK. He talks, writes and broadcasts on the vision of the Francis pontificate, and heads a commission examining the pope's call for a universal basic income. His website is austeni.org and he tweets as @austeni.



Kerry Alys Robinson

Kerry Alys Robinson is Executive Partner for Global and National Initiatives at Leadership Roundtable and Executive Director of the Opus Prize Foundation.

Kerry has been with Leadership Roundtable since its inception serving first as its founding executive director for eleven years, then as its global ambassador for four years, and now as executive partner for global and national initiatives. Leadership Roundtable is dedicated to promoting excellence and best practices in the management, finances and human resource development of the Catholic Church by harnessing the managerial expertise and financial acumen of senior level lay executives. The Opus Prize Foundation, which Kerry has directed since 2021, is responsible for an annual international million-dollar prize honoring people of faith whose lives are dedicated to the alleviation of human suffering.

Kerry is a trustee of the Raskob Foundation for Catholic Activities and a member of FADICA (Foundations and Donors Interested in Catholic

Activities). She has been an advisor to grant making foundations, charitable nonprofits and family philanthropies since 1990.

Kerry has served as a trustee on the national and international boards of the Jesuit Volunteer Corps; the International Festival of Arts and Ideas; America Media; Education for Parish Service Foundation; the Gregorian University Foundation; the International Business Leadership Advisory Council (an initiative of the Secretariat for the Economy in Rome), the National Catholic AIDS Network; the Institute for Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry at Boston College; the Center of Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA); the Center for the Study of Church Management at Villanova University; Busted Halo: Paulist Young Adult Ministries; FADICA (Foundations and Donors Interested in Catholic Activities); and the National Pastoral Life Center. From 1995 to 2010 she served on the national committee for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Catholic Campaign for Human Development. She has served on the advisory boards of Voices of Faith, a global platform in the heart of the Vatican to celebrate the contribution of women to the Church and world; the Initiative of Catholic Social Thought and Public Life at Georgetown University; Catholic Women Preach, an online resource for ordained, religious and lay leaders responsible for excellence in preaching; Center for Faith Justice; the Center on Religion and Culture at Fordham University; and the Get in Touch Foundation, an international breast health advocacy organization. She is the co-chair of the Faith and Giving Task Force for the Generosity Commission. In addition to the Raskob Foundation for Catholic Activities, Kerry currently serves on the boards of Albertus Magnus College, Saint Thomas More Catholic Chapel and Center at Yale University, the Hartford Bishops Foundation, and the International Catholic Migration Commission.

Kerry is a frequent writer and speaker on the subjects of philanthropy, development and faith. She is the prize winning author of *Imagining Abundance: Fundraising, Philanthropy and a Spiritual Call to Service* and is the founding editor of *The Catholic Funding Guide: A Directory of Resources for Catholic Activities* first published by FADICA in 1998. Kerry has contributed chapters to five books, including *Leadership in A Pope Francis Lexicon*, edited by Cindy Wooden and Joshua McElwee. She has been a columnist for *Chicago Catholic* since 2017 and has a blog on spirituality called *Love in Ordinary Time*.

Kerry served as the director of development for Saint Thomas More Catholic Chapel and Center at Yale University and led a successful \$75 million dollar fundraising drive to expand and endow the

Chapel's intellectual and spiritual ministry and to construct a Catholic student center, designed by Cesar Pelli, on Yale's campus.

Kerry co-founded ESTEEM, a national Catholic young adult leadership formation program, with Yale Catholic Chaplain, Fr. Bob Beloin, and Leadership Roundtable Founder, Geoff Boisi.

She spent one year living in Dublin, Ireland and two years in London, England working at the Directory of Social Change, an organization dedicated to providing information and training for the nonprofit sector in the United Kingdom and Europe.

Kerry received a B.A. degree from Georgetown University, and an M.A.R. degree from Yale Divinity School, concentrating in ethics. As an undergraduate she studied at Trinity College in Dublin and L'Institut Catholique in Paris.

She is a recipient of seven honorary doctorates from Oblate School of Theology in Texas; Albertus Magnus College in Connecticut; Aquinas Institute of Theology in Missouri; Saint Anselm College in New Hampshire; Misericordia University in Pennsylvania; St. Joseph University in Connecticut; and the Jesuit School of Theology at Santa Clara University in California. She was honored with the Sapientia et Doctrina Award from the Graduate School of Religion and Religious Education at Fordham University; the Hearts of the Community Award from the Apostles of the Sacred Heart; the Madonna Della Strada Award from the Ignatian Volunteer Corps; the Cardinal Bernardin Award from Catholic Common Ground Initiative at Catholic Theological Union; the Loyola Medal from St. Ignatius Loyola in New York City; and the Catholic in the Public Square Award from *Commonweal*. Kerry was named the Lake Institute on Faith and Giving Distinguished Visitor at the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy and delivered the Bishop Dunn Memorial Lecture at Durham University in the UK and the commencement address at Emory & Henry in Virginia. She was the inaugural speaker for the Magdalene Circle at the Center for Faith Justice and for the Mary Field and Vincent DeP Goubeau Lecture on Women's Contributions to the Church and World at Saint Thomas More Catholic Chapel and Center at Yale. In 2015 the Catholic Press Association awarded her book, *Imagining Abundance*, a first place prize.

She and her husband, Dr. Michael Cappello, Professor of Medicine and Public Health at Yale University, have two children, Christopher and Sophie.



Phyllis Zagano

Phyllis Zagano is an internationally acclaimed Catholic scholar and lecturer on contemporary spirituality and women's issues in the church. Her award-winning books include *Holy Saturday: An*

Argument for the Restoration of the Female Diaconate in the Catholic Church (First Place, 2001 Catholic Press Association and 2002 College Theology Society), *Women & Catholicism: Gender, Communion, and Authority* (Second Place, 2012 Catholic Press Association), *Women Deacons? Essays with Answers* (First Place, 2017 Catholic Press Association), *Women: Icons of Christ* (Second Place, 2021 Catholic Media Association) and *Women Religious, Women Deacons: Questions and Answers* (Paulist Press, 2022).

Two new books will appear soon: *Elizabeth Visits the Abbey* (Clear Faith Publishing, 2022) is a novel for young people about a twelve-year-old girl whose aunt, the abbess of a large abbey in Ireland, tells her about the history of women in the Church; and *Just Church* (Paulist Press, 2023) reviews Catholic social teaching and modern synods in relation to current and prospective ministry by women.

Her writing is widely translated — her best-selling *On Prayer: A Letter for My Godchild* is in Indonesian, Spanish and Italian as well as English — and she edited the Liturgical Press' "Spirituality in History" series.

She belonged to the 2016-2018 Papal Commission for the Study of the Diaconate of Women. Winner of two Fulbright awards, her biographical listings include Marquis Who's Who. Her professional papers are held by the Women in Leadership Archives, Loyola University, Chicago. She holds a research appointment at Hofstra University, Hempstead, New York.



Joshua J. McElwee

Joshua J. McElwee is the news editor for the *National Catholic Reporter*, the world's premier independent Catholic news outlet.

Previously the *Reporter's* Vatican correspondent from 2013-21, McElwee's dispatches from Rome and during papal trips abroad were frequently cited by his peers, and broadly seen as a touchstone for nuanced Vatican and papal coverage.

McElwee has reported from 39 countries around the world and traveled in the press pool abroad with Pope Francis 24 times. He is the co-editor, alongside Cindy Wooden, of *A Pope Francis Lexicon*, a collection of 54 essays exploring the unique words Pope Francis has used in his ministry.

CONCURRENT SESSION DETAILS:

Peace: A Journey of Hope and Reconciliation

The address of Pope Francis on World Day of Peace 2020 was titled “Peace as a Journey of Peace: Dialogue, Reconciliation and Ecological Conversion.” 2023 marks the 25th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement that brought an end to violence after 30 years of conflict in the north of Ireland. However, the absence of violence is not peace, and the task of building reconciliation between and within communities that have been scarred by generations of violence remains a task taken up by the Passionist Peace and Reconciliation Office based in the parish of Holy Cross, Ardoyne. No community suffered more deaths in the long conflict than this parish cared for by the Passionist congregation.

Violence is based upon a dehumanising of those whom we perceive to be different, but reconciliation is only possible by recognising the shared dignity of those we see as our enemy. Peace is a heroic step that challenges us to look our enemy in the face and recognise them as our friend. In this session I will explore with practical examples how the message of Pope Francis speaks to the task of peace building in Ireland today? I will also suggest lessons learned through our experience in Belfast that may speak to what seem to be increasingly toxic political divisions in the United States.

I was 10 years of age when the conflict began in my parish in Belfast. In my career as a teacher, youth minister and for the past 12 years with the Passionist Peace and Reconciliation Office I have been committed to the challenge of building a new and a shared community in the north of Ireland. My primary commitment is working with young people at the margins of community life and in danger of being drawn to violence. In 2020 I published a book based upon the experiences of conflict and trauma of people living in the parish of Holy Cross, Ardoyne.

Promoting Integral Human Development: From Cardijn to Pope Francis

Joseph Cardijn's see-judge-act method of formation was formally adopted by Pope John XXIII in his 1961 encyclical, *Mater et Magistra*. Subsequently, the Second Vatican Council endorsed the see-judge-act in *Apostolicam Actuositatem* as a method of lay apostolate formation while the drafters of the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* utilised the method in its structuring.

The Latin American bishops also introduced the see-judge-act into their work at the CELAM conference at Medellin, Colombia in 1968. This decision was further confirmed under the leadership of Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio at Aparecida, Brazil in 2007, who has continued to apply the see-judge-act in his encyclicals as well as in the practice of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development. This accords with the vision of Cardijn himself who envisioned his movement, the Young Christian Workers as a "school of integral formation for young people and the working class."

The aim of this session is to explore how Cardijn, his colleagues and disciples worked to promote this integral human development in various ways and spheres ranging from the Specialised Catholic Action or lay apostolate movements (Young Christian Workers, Young Christian Students...), with poor and oppressed rural communities in Central America and in promoting worker alternatives, including Mondragon-style worker cooperatives.

Bridging Academy and Church: Pope Francis' Vision for Synodal Theologians

What is the theologian's role in the synodal process? While the ecclesial documents for the Synod on Synodality may not explicitly define the part played by theologians, a call to bridge the academy and the church undergirds Pope Francis' vision. Throughout his papacy, Francis has issued a clear call to theologians to connect their academic study with the experience of the people of God. In a letter to Cardinal Mario Aurelio Poli on the 100th anniversary of the Catholic University of Argentina, Francis wrote, "Do not settle for a desktop theology. Your place for reflection is the frontier.

Do not fall into the temptation to embellish, to add fragrance, to adjust them to some degree and domesticate them. Even good theologians, like good shepherds, have the odour of the people and of the street and, by their reflection, pour oil and wine onto the wounds of mankind.”

In addition to uplifting the experience of the people of God, Francis has also reminded professors and students that their theology is always a work in progress that must be rooted in prayer: “Philosophy and theology permit one to acquire the convictions that structure and strengthen the intelligence and illuminate the will ... but this is fruitful only if it is done with an open mind and on one’s knees. The theologian who is satisfied with his complete and conclusive thought is mediocre. The good theologian and philosopher has an open, that is, an incomplete, thought, always open to the maius of God and of the truth, always in development.”

This session seeks to further illuminate Francis’ vision for synodal theologians by placing Francis in dialogue with the theological method of Sarah Coakley. Coakley describes her theology as being *in via*, the same image Francis has continually invoked throughout the Synod to describe the church as a communion of members who journey together. Other hallmarks of Coakley’s theological method include privileging prayer and prioritizing experience; she grounds each of her systematic volumes in a concrete fieldwork context that serves as a primary source for theological reflection. I suggest that Coakley embodies Francis’ vision, offering us an example of how theologians might contribute to the synodality of our church.

Pope Francis and Bernard Lonergan SJ: The Human Person and Holy Spirit in Evangelization and Synodality

Evangelization and synodality have been hallmarks of Pope Francis’ papacy. *Evangelii Gaudium*, the International Theological Commissions document on Synodality, and now the Synod on Synodality are distinctive contribution to the life of the Church. Everything we do must be ordered by evangelization (our mission) and synodality (our mode).

But at first blush, it can be difficult to recognize the everyday significance of the concepts of evangelization and synodality. At the same time, misunderstandings of these concepts abound. Pope Francis' colloquial style has helped to bridge the gap between the conceptual and the concrete, but further clarifying work remains necessary. In this paper I will bring the work of theologian and philosopher Bernard Lonergan SJ to bear on evangelization and synodality. Lonergan's articulation of the human person, and specifically human consciousness, gives a framework in which authentic efforts of evangelization and synodality are rooted in the human person alive in the love of the Holy Spirit. Lonergan's work generates the space for creative collaboration which invites participation in the life of the Church grounded in humility and bringing the voice of the marginalized to the center.

The Importance of Identity and Belonging in the Church's Encounter with Young People

Throughout his papacy Pope Francis has surfaced the importance of encounter. This theme has deep roots in the Franciscan spiritual tradition and challenges the church to rethink how we engage our communities. For young people to be open to the kind of encounter that Pope Francis suggest they must first learn the language of identity and belonging within the church. In many instances, these young people have been searching for a place to belong within their established traditions but often have been considered "not-quite" or "second-tier" leaders. I found that these teens are inspired and ready to be empowered, to use their creativity and thoughtful experiences to work for the sake of the Kingdom. Unfortunately, it is not always the case that their church communities have recognized that readiness. Often, we restrict young people, mistakenly thinking they could not want to be involved in the mundane work of the church, and we do not usually take the time to invite them and then listen deeply to their experience. We are quick to assume a lack of preparation or a lack of understanding. Many teenagers already are deeply engaged in leadership in many other areas of their lives and are not only ready but interested in being engaged by the church.

Pope Francis and Paul Ricoeur in Dialogue: A Contemplative Pedagogy for Lifelong Formation

Pope Francis sends out an audacious invitation in “Gaudete et Exsultate.” We should not be content with a life of mediocrity but should aspire to nothing less than the path to sainthood. This call to be a contemplative in action imbibes all we do with evangelical meaning. Moreover, how we understand this truth necessarily requires a robust, loving response in everyday life: mercy and wisdom belong together such that works of mercy and devotion facilitate contemplation. Yet we must acknowledge human weakness and limitation such that humility grounds us in our situation that we might open to grace as a progressive reality in our history and ongoing transformation. Spiritual discernment necessitates generosity as we listen with freshness and newness today. When we learn to see in a new way we give living witness in one way or another to what is the very best and most personal of what God has placed in our hearts. Part 1 shall discuss the spirit and language of this Apostolic Exhortation. Part 2 shall focus on the thought of Paul Ricoeur whose work and influence shed light on this document and papacy. And finally, Part 3 shall elucidate a contemplative pedagogy in the spirit of both Francis and Ricoeur.

Pope Francis on Campus

This past fall semester I started teaching a course on the thought of Pope Francis in Mundelein Seminary. The goal was to unpack Pope Francis’ views of humanity (human dignity, need for accompaniment, mercy), of the Church’s mission (discernment, conversion, reaching out to the peripheries and synodality), and of her prophetic voice in the face of poverty, injustice, and the destruction of creation. The need for such a course is indeed great, particularly to address an audience of seminarians, who can sometimes be skeptical of him. The criticism of Pope Francis in some quarters is strong, and it is often the result of ignorance, and even hard-heartedness. It seems to me that there is much wisdom in the idea I once heard that we can understand Pope John Paul as more a philosopher, Pope Benedict a theologian, and Pope Francis a pastor. The mission of the Church requires all three dimensions, but ultimately everything authentically Christian is pastoral, because it relates to Christ the Good Shepherd. The understanding of a true pastor matures over

time and requires intimacy with Christ himself. It recognizes that human lives are full of nuances, and that clear-cut teachings always need careful application rather than harsh imposition.

Seminarians, of course, should be committed to learning the skills of a true pastor, which is why they are in the seminary! My hope is that as they come to better know and appreciate the message and example of Pope Francis. In coming to understand him and his pastoral emphases, they can also better understand the pastoral orientation of the Second Vatican Council and benefit from its wisdom.

The “Wild Mystic” Angela Canonized by Francis

In this session I will present on the Franciscan spirituality and mysticism of Angela of Foligno, canonized in 2013. How does the spirituality she represents serve to further Francis’ encouragement of the Church to listen to the “feminine genius,” as he said: “by virtue of their feminine genius, women theologians can take up, for the benefit of all, certain unexplored aspects of the unfathomable mystery of Christ.” How does Angela help the Church today to uncover these “aspects of the unfathomable mystery of Christ?”

Pope Francis: A Global Model Of Servant Leadership

Servant leadership has been researched internationally, and various types of favorable individual, team, and organizational outcomes have been linked to the construct. The theory of servant leadership, with its key concepts of servanthood and leadership, has emerged during the last few decades. Leadership has been an important area of study and research within the leadership ministry of the Church as well. The Catholic Church is a cradle of authentic servant leaders. These leaders are role models for leadership, and their outstanding qualities can be studied and practiced in these days of leadership crisis because of their impact on the global world through their leadership. However, there is a scarcity of research on servant leadership models in the Catholic Church, even though many outstanding women and men have embraced the ministry of loving service.

This study, therefore, explores the servant leadership qualities of Pope Francis in relation to

the charisma of loving service and highlights the importance of servant leadership qualities like service, self-sacrificial love, spirituality, integrity, simplicity, emphasizing members' needs, and modeling.

Francis, arguably one of the most admirable servants of the century, is praised as a “servant leader of the people of God.” Francis is an exemplary servant leader; he cares more for the people and creation than for himself. This characteristic of Francis defines the ultimate servant leader. He is a passionate leader who feels the pain of those living on society's margins. Francis is a servant leader who identifies with the homeless and tries to reduce their burdens.

It is a literary investigation of the life and leadership qualities of Pope Francis, based on various books, Letters, Messages, Encyclicals, and other papal documents, including leadership lessons for priests and seminarians. This research study demonstrates that Pope Francis personifies servant leadership in the manner of Jesus Christ and illustrates the Catholic Church's contribution to servant leadership. Francis, a pastoral leader with a heart for people who serves them while leading them, practices servant leadership. As a servant leader, he is not motivated by attaining higher power or popularity but by serving people. Furthermore, it elucidates the need to include the concept and models of servant leadership in the curriculum of Christian theology schools and advocates the practice of servant leadership in the Church's pastoral leadership positions. The results of this study might help pastoral leaders to cultivate servant leadership more effectively and assist organizations in developing a servant leadership culture within the pastoral ministry of the Church. Finally, limitations and future research needs are discussed.

Journeying Together: Pope Francis' Vision for a Synodal Church

The paper describes and reflects on Pope Francis' theology of synodality and his vision for a renewal of the Church's life and mission. Drawing on the scholars who have shaped the theology of synodality, the paper explores the main tenets of Francis' call for the creation of a synodal ethos and way of being Church. Furthermore, the paper

considers the fruits of the synodal process that Pope Francis has summoned the whole People of God as well as the challenges it has encountered. The paper relies upon upon a careful study of the official documents written by the Synod's Secretariat and the various episcopal conferences AND on my first-hand experience of the synodal journey, which I gained by serving as the Diocese of Charlotte's Synod Coordinator.

Karl Rahner's Pastoral Writings as a Foundation for Synodality

This paper will explore selected texts from Karl Rahner's pastoral writings as a Foundation for synodality. In addition, the paper will offer a Rahnerian reading of Vatican II's *Lumen Gentium* as a foundational text for both synodality and Francis' pontificate.

TONOS: How Francis Stretches the Catholic Intellectual Tradition to Relate to God's Creation

Through an examination of several concepts derived from *Laudato Si*, I would like to examine the creative way that Pope Francis applies 'tonos' to the Catholic Intellectual Tradition. Francis's environmental ethic of relationship binds together various sets of ideas that otherwise appear to be not just in tension with one another, but even competition. He derives these from classic sources while also stretching our thinking by including non-European and non-Christian sources. In so doing even the traditional concepts are pulled into a new shape. In the end, Pope Francis uses the web of these concepts to weave an environmental theology of relationship. Care for creation, the world's marginalized, and future generations are all one moral imperative. With this argument Francis supersedes the anthropocentrism of his predecessors, John Paul II and Benedict and qualifies ecocentrism by placing humans within the sphere of environmental moral consideration.

I will locate, define, and explain the dynamism among these concepts that Francis joins in a creative tension:

Diverse scriptural understandings of creation and the creation ethos of Francis of Assisi: beyond anthropocentrism

Scientific reasoning and Theological reasoning:
each add value to the other

Care for the marginalized and care for the earth:
not competing for limited resources

Creation and the Incarnation/Creation and the
Eucharist: the sacrality of creation

Quality of Life and Standard of Living: must be
measured in different ways

Individual rights and social responsibility:
fulfillment is discovered in service to the common
good redistributive suffering, eschatology, and
creation: redefines hope

Three different definitions of the “good” all of
which must be applied to environmental
questions.

Pope Francis on the Spirituality of Ecological Trauma

In his environmental writings, Francis argues that humanity still has an opportunity to prevent catastrophic climate change. However, his message is also about the transformations of the church that will occur through the myriad traumas caused by climate change. The plague of climate change is upon us and we cannot stop it now, even if we might be able to limit its destructiveness over time. Francis believes the crisis of climate change has deep roots in modern culture’s values, and hence there will be an “apocalypse” or an unveiling of these roots. This unveiling will then facilitate the long process of uprooting the poisonous weeds that led to the crisis and replanting, slowly, tediously, and conscientiously a new Christian ethos for the long emergency ahead. In this crucible, Christianity will be compelled to reform and find its identity again.

The Birdbath and Beyond: Pope Francis and Franciscan Spirituality

From the beginning of his pontificate, Pope Francis has emphasized the importance of the Franciscan tradition in the renewal of the Roman Catholic Church. St. Francis of Assisi has appeared as the inspiration for the vision of integral ecology and social fraternity in the encyclicals *Laudato si’* and *Fratelli Tutti*. Additionally, the *Document On*

Human Fraternity has also recalled the example of the interfaith encounter between the Saint and the Sultan Malik Al-Kamil. Less well-known texts inspired by the Franciscan tradition include the letter *Admirabile Signum*, “On the Meaning and Importance of the Nativity Scene,” and the documents related to the “Economy of Francesco” movement.

However, despite this increased awareness, engagement with the teachings of Pope Francis remains a challenge, especially in the connection between spirituality and social ministry. This interactive session will discuss the dynamic dialogue between Pope Francis and the Franciscan tradition and equip participants with practical insights for actualizing the spirituality of integral ecology and social fraternity.

“In an Unworthy Manner:” *Amoris Laetitia*, Scripture, and Communion

In this paper, I will analyze the use of Scripture in church debates and documents relating to the return to communion for those who have been divorced and remarried. Texts in the gospels and in 1 Corinthians are often used contrary to the literal sense of the text. Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians, in particular, puts a burden on the “strong” to help the “weak,” which will shed new light on how these discussions have been taking place in the church.

Protagonists for a Synodal Church: Embracing the Gifts of Women for Leadership, Preaching, and the Possibility of a Restored Diaconate

Under Pope Francis’s leadership there has been movement towards a greater receptivity to women’s vocational gifts for the flourishing of the Church and our evangelizing mission. Recent changes include reform of the curia, the installation of women as lectors and acolytes, and the creation of the lay ministry of catechists as a vocation. The synodal path has recently named women’s leadership as a shared concern by the people of God around the world. “Enlarge the space of your tent,” the document guiding the discernment for the next phase of the synod, identifies “rethinking women’s participation” as a critical and urgent priority, calling for discernment on women’s governance, preaching, and the ordained diaconate.

How can we, as baptized believers, participate in the Church's discernment on this theme without furthering the flames of division that are often stoked when the topic of women's leadership is raised?

In this session Discerning Deacons co-directors will share about their path and approach to growing a synodal conversation that seeks communion and consensus – not holding too fast to a given outcome, but trusting in a process that opens up space for discernment, learning, and bearing witness. They bring expertise at facilitating highly participatory workshops, trainings, and presentations.

Workshop presenters: Ellie Hidalgo & Casey Stanton, co-directors of Discerning Deacons, a project with the mission to serve a synodal church, and grow the engagement of Catholics in the active discernment around women and the diaconate. In 2021 they trained 125 synod animators across the US to engage nearly 9,000 people in the listening phase of the global synod. They have been walking with the women's leadership team of CEAMA, the new ecclesial conference for the Amazon region, where the call for recognition of women's ministries continues to be an urgent priority to meet the needs of the people of God in the Amazon. They both previously served in parish ministry with a strong emphasis on living the Church's social mission: Ellie as a pastoral associate for Dolores Mission Church, Los Angeles and Casey as a minister of discipleship and social action for Immaculate Conception Church, Durham.

Synodality as a Path to a Healthier Church

This session would explore how Pope Francis' vision of synodality has the potential to create a healthier church for the future. The synodal way is a way of openness, transparency and accountability which counters the secretive, defensive and clerical culture that has been the context for various forms of abuse. Walking together as a whole community - rich and poor, lay and ordained, young and old - prayerfully discerning and open to the direction of the Holy Spirit, we can be a beacon to a world desperately seeking Light.

Pope Francis, the DEI Officer

Diversity, equity, and inclusion challenge Catholic ministries, especially in higher education. Pope Francis' pastoral witness to the gospel offers a mission-forward approach to DEI that can untangle the knots, ease much resistance, and ground initiatives related to race, LGBTQ+, income equity, and gender. This paper will intersect current DEI efforts in Catholic higher education and the 10 years of the pope's ministry as the bishop of Rome. Specific attention will be given to the transition from a heretofore defensive and closed Catholic approach to one of encounter and openness with Pope Francis.

Historical Trauma, Apologies, & Healing: Pope Francis and North American Indigenous Communities

In his visit to Canada in July of 2022, Pope Francis asked for forgiveness from the Indigenous people of Canada for the trauma inflicted on people in the Catholic boarding schools. These schools were established by the United States government as part of an effort to gain control of Indigenous people through forced assimilation, and many religious orders and dioceses managed these schools in cooperation with the government. What role do apologies play in healing historical trauma, especially if Pope Francis himself noted that an apology is not enough to undo the damage? This presentation examines the ways in which theology can help us understand these difficult times in our history, how to respond to that history, and what we are called to do to bring about reconciliation and healing.

***Fratelli Tutti* and Interfaith Education**

Nigeria is a country with almost an equal population of Christians and Muslims. The relationship between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria is complex. The two religious traditions have had centuries of interaction but often have struggled to bring themselves into conversation with each other. The ongoing tensions between Muslims and Christians in Nigeria manifest inadequate progress on the need for peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims. The crisis between Christians and Muslims has continued to attract the attention of scholars. Scholars attribute the volatile situation to a failed government, politicians' inability to establish a civil

society, and a failed educational system, which does not sufficiently prepare Christian and Muslim students to live fraternally. Since education is key to shaping the attitudes and behavior of students, this paper proposes specific and practical steps that promote fraternity between Christians and Muslims by educating students in the light of *Fratelli Tutti*. I explore the concept of religious literacy and *Fratelli Tutti's* potential as a tool for fostering universal friendship. I pair this theoretical discussion with some specific implications for Nigerian educational settings and show the continuing relevance of *Fratelli Tutti* as a theological and philosophical basis for students' education today in Nigeria.

An Ecologically Attuned Church

This paper and the structured discussion that follows aims to inspire Catholic and other Christians to use virtue theories of morality to accept Pope Francis' invitation to shape an "integral ecology." The paper first introduces virtue theories of morality and describes traditional Roman Catholic models of moral character, particularly Thomistic models.

The paper then suggests an ecological model of moral character that develops Thomistic traditions about the virtues, the will, the passions and the intellect. Thinking ecologically we can re-imagine the interactions and the relationships between these elements of moral character. These systems of interaction are after all embedded within our worlds' ecological and social systems. The proposed model of moral character describes interactions between the virtues, vices, passions, etc., as ecological systems embedded within a moral character. An ecological model of moral character supposes the characteristics that are evident in ecological systems of creation. The boundaries between and within participants in ecosystems (including humans) are always porous, as are the boundaries between virtues, vices, and other inhabitants of moral character. The ecosystems of creation's life are always nested within one another, as are the virtues that comprise the cardinal virtues. The forms of causality that matter in ecosystems are reciprocal, indirect and often (apparently) weak, and the same is true in this model's view of the ways that virtues, passions, etc., affect and influence one another.

Finally, the interactions between participants in ecosystems create and inhabit niches (or behavioral “positions,” like ecological roles) within communities of life. These niches continually shape one another. Like niches, the virtues and vices that inhabit — and create — a moral character also interact, compete, cooperate and co-evolve together.

The structured discussion that follows then facilitates participants in re-imagining the meaning, shape and function of moral character and its inhabitant-parts, either of individuals or of parishes or dioceses or family groups (for example). In this way we can extend our tradition while re-imagining our moral characters as specifically embedded in our social, moral and ecological environments.

Pope Francis Gives New Life to the “Spirit of Vatican II”

During its implementation, especially from the mid-1980s onward, the notion of the “spirit of the council” became a contested issue. Several influential theologians (e.g., Joseph Ratzinger and Henri de Lubac) came to see it as a basis for exaggerated claims about the council that lacked support in its documents. In their view, what the council was and what it wanted should be determined based on its documents. Most historians and theologians of the council came to believe, however, that Vatican II should be known and understood both in its “letter” and “spirit.”

Pope Francis inaugurated a new stage in the reception of Vatican II. From his first encyclical (*Evangelii gaudium*) to the current preparations for the Synod of Synodality, it has been evident that he wishes to free the bold vision of the council from captivity. His defense of the liturgical reform and his promotion of the pastoral style of the magisterium are just two examples of his calling attention to the key points of the council for further reception.

This paper will argue that from the perspective of the continual reception of Vatican II, the “spirit of the council” is no less important than its “letter,” and that Pope Francis has brought “the spirit of the council” back to the center of current discourses about the council. The paper will define

the “spirit of the council” as an intellectual and spiritual impulse toward renewal that animated the work of the council and that emanates from it.

Francis and the Conciliar Renewal of Moral Theology

In this session, I will sketch an account of how the Second Vatican Council's call for a renewal of moral theology aligns with the Pontificate of Pope Francis and how the failure to realize that renewal helps to illumine the resistance to his efforts.

“Unbelievers Can Sometimes Put God's Will Into Practice Better Than Believers:” Pope Francis and the Nonreligious

Vatican II identified atheism as “one of the most serious of contemporary phenomena.” The council's landmark *Gaudium et Spes* called for “honest and prudent dialogue” with unbelievers in the age of secularism. Pope Paul VI, who led the church during three of the council's dramatic four sessions, endorsed dialogue with atheists in *Ecclesiam Suam* and established an unprecedented Vatican dicastery to oversee the dialogue: the Secretariat for Non-Believers. He also commissioned the Society of Jesus to make the study of atheism a priority for the order's intellectual apostolate. Sixty years after the council, however, Catholic-atheist dialogue remains part of Vatican II's unfinished agenda.

The 2013 papal election of the Jesuit Jorge Mario Bergoglio sparked new interest in dialogue between believers and unbelievers. A much-discussed “Francis Effect” has been observed in various areas of ecclesial and social life, from organizational reform in the Vatican curia and financial reform in the Vatican Bank to spirited public discourse on issues such as poverty, social justice, the environment, divorce, clerical abuse, and LGBTQ+ rights. Rarely does a weekly news cycle pass without scores of reports substantiating Francis's best deserved moniker: the “pope of surprises.”

This session investigates the impact of Pope Francis on the relationship of the Catholic church to nonbelievers, including the so-called “Nones” who are rapidly reshaping global religious and cultural experience. Drawing upon expanding interdisciplinary research in nonreligion, including

my Atheism and Agnosticism: Exploring the Issues (2021), the presentation traces the development of Francis's understanding of the phenomenon of contemporary unbelief and nonreligion from his writings as Jesuit educator and Archbishop of Buenos Aires to his principal papal messages to date, including *Lumen Fidei*, *Laudato si'*, and *Fratelli Tutti*. The presentation especially seeks to advance the following argument: As the church's first Jesuit and first American pope, Francis has brought to his office fresh resources and unexpected perspectives that promise to fulfill — and exceed—Vatican II's dream of “honest and prudent dialogue” between the international Catholic community and the growing secular and humanist world. Thanks to Francis, the moral obligation to engage and collaborate with the planet's growing nonreligious populations—and to respect their insights and experiences—is a vital part of official Catholic teaching.

From Theology of the People to Economics of the People: An African Perspective

Pope Francis's critique of capitalism/free market economy has not been fancied by some neo-liberal economists. His thoughts on free market/neo-liberal economics have been called weak and sometimes ignorant. Of particular interests among his neo-liberal critics is Acton Institute. Acton Institute is a Think Tank Institute interested in Catholic economic ideas and the free market. Acton Institute's critique is essential for many reasons.

First, it's intellectual narrative leans towards Catholic Intellectual tradition. As such, it is Catholic in a sense. Second, some aspects of its narrative of economic personalism align with Christian personalism and also provide some good insights for economic policy that may help Africa out of its poverty cauldron. Third, it trusts the economic proposals of John Paul II and Benedict XVI, which it reads through an interesting neo-liberal lens. Fourth, it distrusts Pope Francis's economic thoughts, and as such cast it as “averse” to that of the two former popes (<https://www.catholicworldreport.com/2020/10/05/fratelli-tutti-is-a-mixture-of-dubious-claims-strawmen-genuine-insights/>).

Pope Francis's so-called “weak/ignorant” economic

analysis should trigger some questions in anyone interested in Catholic economics and poverty in the world, especially in Africa. I mean questions like: are there some insights in Pope's Francis critique of neo-liberal economic analysis that may be relevant to Africa, where more than half of the population is immersed in debilitating poverty despite their embrace of the free market economy? Is it true that Francis's economic proposals are intrinsically different or "averse" to that of Benedict XVI and John Paul II, as some analyses of the Acton institute sometimes suggest?

To answer both questions, this paper will provide a general map of four ideas. First, it will attempt to provide a broad understanding of Francis's economics, which I will call the economics of the people through Francis's articulation of a theology of the people. Second, it will attempt to bridge the artificial gap between Francis's economic critique of the free market and those of John Paul II and Benedict XVI, with attention to John Paul II. Third, it will outline the value of Francis's economic proposal to Africa using Nigeria and Congo Democratic Republic as case studies. Fourth, it will draw from Francis's theology of the people some ideas and thoughts for African economics, which will be called AfroCathonomics.

Forging a Friendship with Nature: Francis' Language of Love in *Laudato si'*

On January 1st, 1990, Pope John Paul II issued a prescient exhortation. In an earnest appeal to the global population, he brought attention to what he referred to as, "the widespread destruction of the environment." With this appeal, John Paul II ushered the Church into a new era just two years following the establishment of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Anthropogenic ecological harm could now be brought into the spotlight as a leading moral and theological issue, which demanded precedence in concern. Nevertheless, in the three successive decades, the converging crises facing the planet have intensified. Today, the Earth is quickly hurtling towards an unfathomable degree of suffering in the form of catastrophic volatility in climate, exposure to environmental toxins, habitat destruction, and widespread resource disparity. Although thorough international reporting has

provided some consensus on the harrowing reality and the urgent need to take substantive action, when read alone, compelling scientific data has yet to incite meaningful collective behavioral modification. In recognition of this stagnation, Pope Francis has illuminated a path forward through the lens of friendship. In *Laudato si'*, Francis makes it clear that ecological awareness is ultimately inadequate. Alternatively, he contends that a deeper affectionate bond with nature is required for ecological conversion to take root in the heart. This session will explore Francis's vision of biophilic attachment, and the way *Laudato si'* extrapolates secular ecological theory and contemporary Catholic understandings of friendship focused on interpersonal human relationships so that the insight gained from this interdisciplinary conversation may serve as a guide for humanity's interactions with other members of the wider ecological community.

Panel Participants:

William G. Kuncken - PhD Student, Villanova University

Jessie Pagan - PhD Student, Villanova University

Ecology and the Eucharist: Pope Francis' Liturgical Theology of Caring for Our Common Home

This paper explores Pope Francis' concern for ecology and the environment in relation to the Church's liturgy and sacraments, especially the Eucharist. As Francis writes in *Laudato si'*, "the Eucharist is itself an act of cosmic love... The Eucharist joins heaven and earth; it embraces and penetrates all creation," and is thus "a source of light and motivation for our concerns for the environment, directing us to be stewards of all creation" (236). How Christians pray liturgically, especially at the Eucharist, should inform Christian ethics, including our care for our common home. Drawing from Francis' writings, with an emphasis on *Laudato si'*, as well as from various works by liturgical and sacramental theologian Kevin Irwin, this paper aims to demonstrate the close connection that exists in Francis' thought between the Church's liturgy and the Church's relationship with the natural world. Though it has been particularly emphasized in recent decades, care for creation can be grounded theologically in the

Church's tradition, especially in its liturgical prayer and sacramental theology. As Francis writes, "It is in the Eucharist that all that has been created finds its greatest exaltation" (*Laudato si'*, 236).

ACT: Preach the Gospel at All Times and if Necessary, Use Words

In 2013 Pope Francis said "If someone is gay and he searches for the Lord and has goodwill, who am I to judge?" In 2023 the pope acknowledged that Catholic bishops in some parts of the world support laws that criminalize or discriminate against homosexuality. He told the interviewer the church must work to put an end to anti-LGBTQ legislation. The Institute for Person-Centered Care (IPCC) aligns with this view and within our university we have worked to strengthen our collaboration with the community to better meet the health needs and access to person-centered health services for the LGBTQ+ community. LGBTQ+ report negative experiences such as abusive language, refusal of care, refusing to recognize family, and visibly biased due to actual or perceived sexual orientation (Chen & Penan, 2022) as a health service norm. As a result health outcomes for this population are negatively impacted. The IPCC worked with a Master of Public Health (MPH) student to create guidance to train health care providers in safe and respectful care for LGBTQ+ clients. In 2013, Pope Francis stated "but anyone who utters Christian words without putting them into practice hurts oneself and others." The IPCC is putting words into action by working to provide guidance and tools to educate healthcare professionals on the holistic needs of the LGBTQ+ population. The toolkit provides resources designed to improve care for this population. Through this important work we strive to enhance healthcare provider education to improve health equity, access, and quality of care for LGBTQ+ patients. We believe this project is an example of how a Catholic institution aligns with Pope Francis and puts social justice words into practice.

