



THE BEACON

NEWSLETTER OF THE LUMEN CHRISTI INSTITUTE FOR CATHOLIC THOUGHT

SPRING 2015

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**Requiescat in pace,
Cardinal George**

Debunking the Arguments of the New Atheists

Sam Harris, Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens, Daniel Dennett—the twentieth-century “four-horsemen of new atheism” as described by Georgetown theologian John Haught—are (were) confident and self-assured, certain that believers (and the unfortunate beliefs they espouse) will eventually disappear.

It’s a reasonable assumption in their view.

But in his downtown luncheon lecture, “Science, Faith, and the New Atheism” (February 19), John Haught—Professor Emeritus of Theology at Georgetown

“To be human means to be already engaged in a life of faith.”

University—described the ideas put forth by Harris, Dawkins, Hitchens, and Dennett as “soft-core atheism.” He prefers engaging the “hard-core atheists” (Nietzsche, Freud, and Marx) whose arguments

he presents in the classes he teaches at Georgetown and finds “much more challenging.”



Haught lectures on “Science, Faith, and the New Atheism” (February 19th) at the University Club in downtown Chicago

John Haught,
Georgetown University

Nonetheless the new atheists have been successful in captivating public interest.

“Faith is belief without evidence. Every instance of faith is dangerous,” says the neuroscientist Sam Harris. He argues that all the unnecessary suffering and violence in the world originates from religious belief. The evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins, famous for his *The God Delusion*, adds that religion is supposed to make us moral but doesn’t. The late writer and literary critic Christopher Hitchens, author of the caustically witty *God Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything*, claimed (in one of his nicer statements) that religion is an “intellectually indefensible idea.” The philosopher Daniel Dennett wonders why religion is still

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The Interior Life, the True Self, and God

Our culture’s many distractions can prevent us from looking inward, from taking the time to heed the Ancient Greek aphorism “know thyself” and embark on a path of inner growth and flourishing.

With this in mind, the Lumen Christi Institute organized a symposium entitled “The Interior Life: Literary, Psychoanalytic, and Spiritual Perspectives” (January 28), featuring presentations by University of Chicago professors Bernard McGinn, Jonathan Lear, Lisa Ruddick, and Rosanna Warren.

Bernard McGinn—Naomi Shenstone Donnelley Professor Emeritus of Historical Theology and of the History of Christianity in the Divinity School and the Committees on Medieval Studies and on General Studies—made the case for a proper understanding of the inner life from the Christian perspective, titling his talk “The Promise and Perils of Introspection.”

The Christian mystics, McGinn explained, believed there were good forms of cultivating the interior life as well as bad ones.



From left to right, Jonathan Lear, Bernard McGinn, Rosanna Warren, Lisa Ruddick, and Thomas Pavel

“To go within is to be drawn above.”

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FROM THE DIRECTOR



Thomas Levergood,
Executive Director

AN INTELLECTUAL FRIENDSHIP: *REQUIESCAT IN PACE* FRANCIS CARDINAL GEORGE, O.M.I.

The death of Cardinal Francis George, though expected, came as a surprise. A future newsletter will provide a fuller celebration of the Cardinal's participation in the life of the Lumen Christi Institute. Our collaboration with the Cardinal began several months into his term of service as archbishop of Chicago, and it continues today, as the Institute is involved in seeing through the publication of his latest book. The Cardinal continued to make changes to the manuscript during his last hospitalization and finished his revisions roughly nine days before he died. In late February, he said about the book, "This will probably be the last thing I do." He turned out to be right, alas.

Like nearly everyone, in 1997 we learned with surprise of his appointment as archbishop of Chicago. But we knew that he'd be at home at the University of Chicago, for not only did he have a doctorate in philosophy from a leading private secular research university (Tulane), but his dissertation focused on the thought of pragmatist philosopher George Herbert Mead, a leading member of the Department of Philosophy at the University of Chicago from 1894 to 1931.

We also learned that the Cardinal had served on the editorial board of the international theological journal *Communio*, a journal founded by Hans Urs von Balthasar, Joseph Ratzinger (the future Pope Benedict XVI), Karol Wojtyla (the future Pope Saint John Paul II), and Henri de Lubac, SJ. The effort that led to the founding of the Lumen Christi Institute developed originally as a *Communio* discussion group and a series of "Christian Wellsprings Lectures," named after the celebrated *Sources Chrétiennes* series of classic texts of the Church Fathers and medieval theologians. This series was founded by de Lubac and his fellow Jesuit, Jean Daniélou, as part of the theological movement of *ressourcement* or return to the wellsprings of Christian thought.

While the *Communio* tradition was something we shared with the new archbishop of Chicago, we were not strangers to thinkers from its "rival" journal, *Concilium*. A condition of the success of the Institute was the friendship between philosopher Jean-Luc Marion (co-founder of the French edition of *Communio*) and theologian David Tracy (member of the editorial board of *Concilium*), who, when they met and became friends, said, "What? One of us is *Concilium* and one of us is *Communio*, and yet we both get along." This put us in sync with the Catholic Common Ground Initiative founded by the late Cardinal Bernardin. It was very fitting that the first event organized by the Lumen Christi Institute in which Cardinal George participated was a conference organized with the Catholic Common Ground Initiative on "Catholic Faith and the Secular Academy."

As we mourn the Cardinal's death, we look forward to the upcoming Lumen Christi Institute's seventh annual conference on Economics and Catholic Social Thought on "The Family in the Changing Economy." These conferences originated in a conversation in March 2008 between Cardinal George and Joseph Kaboski, who was part of a group of Catholic economists who did their doctorates at the University of Chicago. The Cardinal welcomed Joe's idea of bringing economists together with bishops and theologians to discuss economic issues and Catholic Social Thought. By the fall of 2008, when the Cardinal wrote to bishops to invite them to the conference, the world economy had tanked, unfortunately making the conference more relevant than we intended. Among the bishops who accepted the Cardinal's invitation to join us for our 2012 conference was the Bishop of Spokane, Blase Cupich. Archbishop Cupich will deliver opening remarks at the conference next week. In a sense, Cardinal George helped to prepare the occasion when we will officially welcome his successor at one of our events.

The Cardinal liked a good exchange. In November, when we hosted philosopher Rémi Brague on campus, Cardinal George, despite his illness, invited him to morning Mass and breakfast. The Cardinal said that he had good days and bad days, and that this was one of his bad days. Conversation brought more life in him. Someone (I won't say who) said something provocative, and soon the Cardinal was in a lively argument. As we were leaving, I said, "You feel better now that you've had a good argument, don't you?" He replied, "Yes I do."

We'll miss the Cardinal for both the friendship and the intellectual debate.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Thomas Levergood".

LUMEN CHRISTI INSTITUTE

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Thomas Levergood

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Francis Cardinal George, O.M.I.,
Archbishop Emeritus
of Chicago †

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Debunking the Arguments of the New Atheists

around. Dennett turns to evolutionary theory to explain that religion has helped our species adapt and survive, and it lingers in our consciousness still because it is “in our genes.”

According to Haught, what the “new atheists” are saying isn’t new at all. Their arguments—rooted in 17th century scientism (the view that science alone can render truth about reality)—have in fact been articulated better by other thinkers.



Many believers nonetheless feel intimidated by the arguments of the new atheists.

Haven’t monstrous atrocities been committed by people in Christ’s name (i.e. The

Crusades, The Inquisition)? Debating morality—as people often find—doesn’t get very far. Atheists express their disgust with religious hypocrisy, with religion’s bloodstained history; believers fight back with examples of atheist tyrants (Mao, Stalin, Hitler, Pol Pot). It’s an inconclusive effort. Each side can always make one more point, offer one more example.

Haught prefers a different approach, that of examining the intellectual assumptions made by the new atheists. They say to take nothing on faith, and yet it takes faith to accept scientism. The bottom line is that when you get to the essence of its philosophy, new atheism is “self-refuting, self-contradictory, built on sandy soil.”

The main point of his lecture, Haught said, was that human beings,

scientists included, “cannot help but having a faith, a trust.” They have a faith that the universe is intelligible, a belief that truth is worth seeking, a belief in the rightness of honesty (of sharing their data and research), and a belief in the capacity of their minds to make judgments. All this reveals just how intrinsic faith is to everything they do. To say that faith is irrational is to disregard the most fundamental aspect of our humanity. “To be human,” Haught argued, “means to be already engaged in a life of faith.”

New atheists ignore another deep truth about the human experience. It is our awe before the mystical and sublime. Scientists, if they are honest with themselves, experience this just like everyone else. “Something like a surrender is going on tacitly in the minds of all good scientists,” said Haught.

This surrender, Haught explains, is at the heart of what it means to be human. We surrender, become vulnerable, when we love someone; we

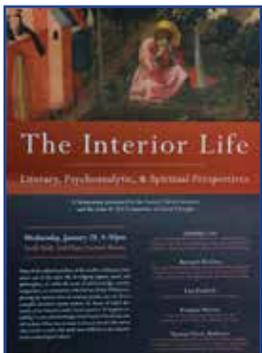
surrender when we are carried away by beauty. New atheists, in their crusade against faith, are somehow blinded to an essential truth. That is that much of life—what is tender and beautiful in it—defies experimental control.



These photos were taken at the John Haught luncheon

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The Interior Life, the True Self, and God



“True introspection is not finding ourselves, in a sense of who we are on our own, but should rather be an exercise in finding who we might be, especially in the eyes of God,” said McGinn, describing the aim of interiority in the mystical tradition. Ultimately, the interior life is a relational life, a dialogue between the self and God. If approached the wrong way, self-reflection can turn into self-absorption, which in essence imperils the soul.

The Confessions of Saint Augustine, though a classic example of inward reflection, are not the whiny writings of a self-interested soul. “Augustine, by going within, is not interested in getting to know himself,” argued McGinn, that is, in focusing on “this one-time oversexed proud ambitious North African lower middle-class kid on the make.”

On the contrary, Augustine desired not to know himself, but to know himself in relation to God. “He wants to know who he can be under divine guidance as his life goes on.” In *The Confessions*, Augustine recognized the limits of reason in his life. He discovered that one cannot know oneself by one’s own efforts but only by the exercise of *confessio*, a threefold dialogue with God which involves admission of helplessness in the face of evil, a grateful praise to God for rescuing us from

our faults, and finally admission that it is not our own reason that can save us but only the truth of faith as revealed in Christ. “For Augustine, to become a true self—the self that we are meant to be—is not to strengthen our inner autonomy or to realize individuality, whatever that might be—but rather to strive for a deeper appropriation to the soul’s nature as made in the image and likeness of God.”

As Augustine famously declared, “God is deeper within me than my inmost being and higher than my highest point.” This signifies that “to go within is to be drawn above,” to allow the transcendent source to take us up, to elevate our souls.

McGinn then presented on two figures deeply influenced by the Bishop of Hippo’s search for the true self in God: the 14th century Flemish mystic Jan van Ruysbroeck and the 16th century Spanish mystic Teresa of Ávila. Van Ruysbroeck, for example, claimed that if inner consciousness is enjoyed only for itself, that is, apart from the gift of charity, it becomes sinful and destructive. “In other words, introspection can be



An attendee asks a probing question following the symposium

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Two-Fold Vocation

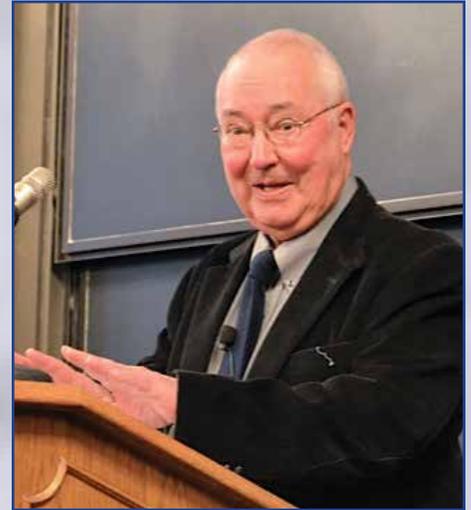
Notre Dame Professor Lectures on Thomas Merton's Spiritual Growth as both a Monk and Writer

This past January, Catholics celebrated the centennial of Thomas Merton's birth. "On the last day of January 1915, under the sign of the Water Bearer, in a year of a great war, and down in the shadow of some French mountains on the borders of Spain, I came into the world," Merton famously wrote in his autobiography *The Seven Storey Mountain*.

Merton would not have written this book—written anything at all—once he entered the Trappist monastic community at the Abbey of Gethsemani. But a wise abbot convinced him that writing was not in conflict with his vocation, that he could perhaps share with other the fruits of his contemplation if he noted the experiences of his inner life.

It is thanks to this abbot that we have Merton's *The Seven Storey Mountain*, but also his spiritual insights shaped by living in a monastic milieu, i.e. *Thoughts in Solitude* and *New Seeds of Contemplation*.

On January 16—in the lecture "Thomas Merton: The Writing Life & The Contemplative Life" given for the Lumen Christi Institute to mark the occasion of Merton's birth—



Lawrence Cunningham, University of Notre Dame



Lawrence S. Cunningham, the John A. O'Brien Emeritus Professor of Theology at the University of Notre Dame, shared how Merton's spiritual understanding developed over time and how he was able to fuse his dual vocations of writing and the monastic life.

Upon his conversion, Merton struggled with what God was expecting of him. In 1947, five years into his monastic vocation, Merton expressed serious doubts about whether he should continue writing. He published an essay in *Commonweal* about how poetry expresses that "primordial sense of wonder." But, he argued, one should leave poetry behind for "self-denial was the path to God."

Eleven years later, Merton matured in his spiritual understanding. He repudiated his earlier position, and claimed that asceticism (severe self-discipline) was not the goal of the contemplative life but rather a means to make it flourish. In light of this, Merton found that he didn't have to tear certain good things out of his life in order to draw closer to God.

What happened that Merton suddenly found writing as a way to foster a deeper communion with the Divine?

Prof. Cunningham explained that Merton had—in those intervening years—engaged in a deep reading of the French Catholic philosopher Jacques Maritain on contemplation. He had also encountered personalism, a twentieth-century school of philosophy which regards the person as the ultimate principle of all reality. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, he read the writings of the Cistercian abbot Bernard of Clairvaux and the mystic poetry of Saint John of the Cross. Consequently, he discovered that contemplation was "not a rarified life for a graced few but the goal of every Christian life."

John of the Cross in particular was a profound inspiration. Merton was especially fond of John's dense aphoristic sayings. The mystic had shared them with people who came to him for spiritual guidance, and these beautiful reflections have been preserved in *The Sayings of Light and Love*, the best known of which is "in the evening, you will be examined in love."

This being seized by the beauty of an overpowering love—this fruit of contemplation—was meant to be shared. Merton was no longer tormented. For he saw how he could harmonize his deep thirst for contemplative prayer with his desire to be a writer.

Merton, who also loved Pascal's *Pensées*, considered publishing his own collection of aphorisms. His own maxims were powerfully poetic in their own right: "The solitude of the poor person rests in the power of the Almighty;" "Silence is the fountain of life in the heart of darkness;" "Love brings up my name out of the depths;" and "The silence of the skies is for me a law and my life is an image of light."

Instead of turning his collection of twenty or thirty maxims into a monastic book, Merton poured the musings of his rich inner life into the books *Thoughts in Solitude* (1958) and *New Seeds of Contemplation* (1961). His *New Seeds of Contemplation* was deeply theological. It revealed the ripened thought of a man who was able to contemplate God's goodness and truth without clinging to an ascetic discipline that distracted from the true aim of his vocation.

Interestingly, not all of Merton's books spring from an interior focus. He wrote countless poems, reviews, and essays, which if collected run just under 800 pages, said Cunningham. Though not everything he wrote was contemplative, it nonetheless came from a monastic milieu. "Not to understand him as a monk is not to understand him at all," Cunningham argued. In the end, "his writings are in service to the contemplative life."

"His writings are in service to the contemplative life."

Continued from page 3.

The Interior Life, the True Self, and God

perilous.” Teresa of Ávila had a similar perspective on interior reflection. Rejoicing that she had turned away from her days as a self-serving nun and finally found her true self as a result of God’s action in her life, Teresa incisively remarked: “May the Lord be praised who freed me from myself.”

Rosanna Warren—poet and the Hanna Holborn Gray Distinguished Professor in the John U. Nef Committee on Social Thought at the University of Chicago—explored the positive sides of interiority. There is a basic human impulse to seek solitude and silence for the sake of contemplation and exploring the mysteries within. A reason that human beings withdraw, Warren said, is that “the vision of God calls for attention.” As the 14th century Renaissance poet Petrarch found, “it is difficult to see Jesus in a crowd.”

“My experience of contemplation as it is undertaken in the artistic life is that it is not solipsistic,” Warren remarked. “It requires discipline, practice, and form, and it often involves an erotic impulse, redirected from tangible objects to spiritualized ones.”

Another method of going within—not for communion with God or cultivating artistic creativity but rather for healing—is psychoanalysis, created in the late 19th century by the Austrian neurologist Sigmund Freud.

Jonathan Lear—the John U. Nef Distinguished Service Professor at the Committee on Social Thought and in the Department of Philosophy and the Roman Family Director of the Neubauer Collegium for Culture and Society at the University of Chicago—shared his experiences as a psychoanalyst to reveal the difficulties involved in the introspective process. While we may be tempted to get lost inside, it is difficult to discover what exactly lies within.

“Freud hit upon the fundamental rule,” said Lear, “try, if you can, to say whatever it is that comes into your mind without any censorship.’ That’s it.” Though the rule is so elegant and simple, “nobody can follow it,” Lear said. “What is quite astonishing is that as people try to speak their minds, they can’t do it. They fall silent. Often things break into their minds, they get interrupted.” What one discovers is that “a lot of interiority isn’t available to consciousness.”

Paying attention to one’s interior life can be a deeply transformative experience.

But, as Lisa Ruddick—Associate Professor of English at the University of Chicago—has found over the course of her academic career, we aren’t always encouraged to look within. The modern university is filled with professors who are like “rolling tanks of knowledge,” who don’t speak from a place of authenticity, who develop defensiveness against vulnerability and spirituality. Though Ruddick is a Buddhist practitioner, she encounters many students who approach her and say: “don’t tell anybody, but I pray.”

To Ruddick, it seems that academia has unfortunately created an environment that corrupts and inhibits the interior life—leading students away from their “true selves.” What students need is “encouragement and nourishment” to that vulnerable part of their souls. They should not feel ashamed for seeking psychotherapy, for praying—for choosing to look within. What worries Ruddick is that intellectual discourse cannot distinguish “between selfish introspection and an amplifying introspection that brings you closer to wisdom.”



Attentive audience at symposium



Fr. Stephen L. Brock, Professor of Medieval Philosophy at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross

a conversation with...

Soul Searching

Aquinas Scholar and U of C Alum Stephen L. Brock Helps Students Transcend Their Diminished Views of the Soul

American philosopher Allan Bloom received wide recognition for his 1987 book *The Closing of the American Mind*—a scathing critique of culture and contemporary American higher education. What most people don't know is that he intended to title the book, *Souls Without Longing*. But his publisher—worried about the practical aspect of selling books—suggested he rethink it: “our public doesn't know what a soul is and what longing is.”

It has been 28 years since Bloom exposed the hollowness at the heart of an American culture so open to relativism that it was closed to truth. And there still is a metaphysical void—especially on college campuses where students inquire but doubt their ability to know.

Desiring that students regain confidence in their ability to talk about life's important questions, Stephen L. Brock—Professor of Medieval Philosophy at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross in Rome—will be leading Lumen Christi's seminar for graduate students this summer (June 19-24, 2015) on “Metaphysics and the Soul in Thomas Aquinas.” Brock has been leading LCI seminars in Rome for the past several years and thinks the Institute is providing an invaluable service, one that is unrivaled in the academic world. “I don't know where else you get this,” he says, amazed by the high caliber of students from elite universities (i.e. Harvard, Princeton, Oxford) that attend the seminars preparing themselves to teach texts from the Catholic intellectual tradition.

Like Bloom, Brock is a graduate of the University of Chicago.

When he arrived on campus, he was—as many undergrads—aimless. He had no idea what he was going to study, to do with his life. A class in the Common Core proved life-changing as it introduced him to the thought of the towering eighteenth-century philosopher Immanuel Kant. “I didn't understand Kant at all; I still don't,” laughs Brock. Nonetheless, Kant “made me want to do philosophy.”

“Why bother inquiring if you will never know?”

Fr. Stephen L. Brock

Brock has nothing but praise and admiration for his alma mater. “There is no place like it,” he says. “The University of Chicago taught me how to read a book, how to listen,” he explains. Students are privileged to study with “big name” professors who are passionate about what they do in the classroom. “I never had a teaching assistant; that is really special,” he says. What is even more valuable is the environment of intellectual honesty on campus. “U of C professors would never force their own views, which is kind of rare,” Brock says.

The University of Chicago—with its reputation for intellectual excellence—can be a demanding place. He recalls trudging back from the Regenstein Library in the dark after a painful day feeling completely overwhelmed by all the reading and writing that was assigned. “It’s not exactly a party school.” When you look around, “students have that tired look,” he laughs. Sometimes it seemed a sense of melancholy pervaded the campus. But it was because students felt like they were doing something serious.

Today, Brock—having been infected with an enthusiasm for the life of the mind—is doing serious work in philosophy. Though he converted from Methodism to Catholicism while at the U of C, he didn’t think about entering the priesthood until he had almost finished his dissertation on “The Legal Character of Natural Law According to St. Thomas Aquinas” at the University of Toronto.

Brock is now not only a priest, but one of the leading experts on the thought of Thomas Aquinas.

When he was a student, he was blissfully unaware of the controversies surrounding Thomas. He is no longer that naïve. Aquinas, he laments, has a lot of baggage attached to him. Church politics, polemics, disputes, the length of the *Summa* have all unfortunately distracted many from engaging with the thought of one of the Church’s greatest thinkers, he says. Even Thomists—by treating Aquinas as the “only thinker”—do a disservice to his reputation.

It is a shame because Aquinas is a phenomenal teacher; he really knows how to explain things and is extremely sensitive to the way the brain works. He knows how to help his students avoid dead ends. “He puts to lie the idea that if you make a strong claim to know something that it kills the life of the mind.” It’s very common, Brock says, for students nowadays to inquire. But they are told to question their ability to truly know. “Why bother inquiring if you will never know?”

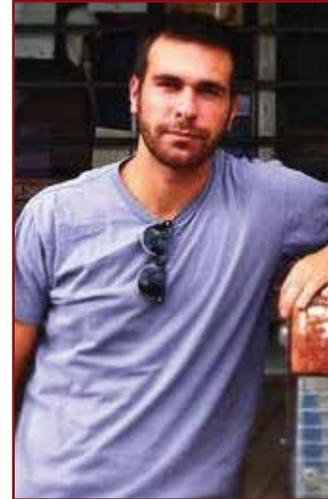
Aquinas’ view of the soul, for example, challenges our incomplete modern sensibility. “According to Aquinas, animals and plants have souls. Even a rock has something similar to a soul.” All of creation comes forth from God. We are all related in a cosmic hierarchy of being with “the person as what is most perfect in all of nature.” The idea that the soul is, in a way, in all things “is pretty darn big,” says Brock. He is looking forward to engaging graduate students on this topic during the 5-day seminar in June. For Aquinas’ perspective transforms our modern vision of the world that—since Descartes—has become so limited, so diminished—to the point where, as Bloom discovered, we are unable to refer to the soul, even when discussing the human person.

THE BEACON PROFILE

LUMEN
CHRISTI
INSTITUTE
GRADUATE
ASSOCIATE

Austin Walker

PH.D. STUDENT,
JOHN U. NEF COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL THOUGHT



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

I am a student in the Committee on Social Thought, where I study the political philosophy of John Henry Newman and the relationship between liberal education, religion, and liberalism.

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

I was late to the party, having been at UChicago for three years before I discovered Lumen Christi. But in April of 2014, I noticed that Social Thought and Lumen Christi were sponsoring a conference on “The Human Person, Economics, and Catholic Social Thought.” If you remember, by 2014, the nation had been forced to endure not only a presidential election but also a debate about the government shutdown, where the only thing more dispiriting than the arguments for “the economic position” had been the arguments against it. I attended the Lumen Christi conference in the (as it turns out, justified) hope that the Catholic position might be more thoughtful than that of either major political party.

How has your participation in Institute lectures, conferences, and seminars contributed to your growth as a scholar?

Political philosophy, as a discipline, is on uncertain terms with religion. It is willing, of course, to investigate the “utility” of religion, but it almost by necessity avoids the question of whether or not a certain religion might be true. Lumen Christi has helped me to move from arguments about utility to arguments about truth.

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

Ian Ker’s 2014 summer seminar on the thought of John Henry Newman. Newman’s *Idea of a University* had a small part in my Masters’ exams, but it wasn’t until I attended the Lumen Christi Institute seminar in Oxford that I was able to study the entirety of Newman’s thought. Father Ker showed me the necessity of situating Newman’s university writings within his works as a whole in order to best appreciate Newman’s arguments about the relationship between Christianity and liberal education.

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

I came to Chicago after four years as a high school teacher in Mississippi, wanting eventually to be a high school principal but believing I didn’t yet know enough about philosophy, history, or human nature to be a good one. Somewhere along the way, I was seduced by the idea of the academic life. To be fair, though, the prospect of being an administrator is never so attractive as when I’m trying to write my dissertation.

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

As I understand it, the medieval university believed all knowledge to be ultimately inner-connected and part of a larger whole. There seems to be something fundamentally right about this belief, even if the modern university—with all its emphasis on specialization and ostensible “value neutrality”—is unable to see it. To that end, Lumen Christi keeps alive the possibility of a harmonization (or at least a productive tension) between humanistic and scientific inquiry in the modern university.

“Lumen Christi keeps alive the possibility of a harmonization (or at least a productive tension) between humanistic and scientific inquiry in the modern university.”



CHRISTINE KIETA

The Need for Meaningful Relationships

Young Donor Shares How Lumen Christi Not Only Educates But Also Provides Community for High-Stressed Professionals

Philosophers have hailed virtuous friendship as one of life's most precious—yet rarest—gifts. Cicero was of the conviction that “friendship cannot exist except among good men.” Voltaire expressed it more forcibly: “the wicked have only accomplices; voluptuaries have companions in debauch, self-seekers have partners, politicians get partisans; the generality of idle men have attachments; princes have courtiers; virtuous men alone have friends.”

As a successful young attorney who has co-founded her own practice, Christine Kieta finds the reality of interactions in her profession crushing. Since she deals primarily with litigation cases, she is continually dealing with people who don't have a problem with lying or stealing. “I spend a lot of time with people who are criminal or who are hurting others,” she explains.

With such a demanding and stressful job, it's often hard to take the time to develop good relationships. She admits her day-to-day routine can be demoralizing. “If I didn't have my faith, I don't think I'd be able to be an attorney,” she admits.

The Church has been a continual source of solace and support for her. Kieta graduated from law school in 2009—at the height of the financial meltdown. The timing was awful; it was impossible to find a job.

During this period of soul-searching and uncertainty, Kieta got involved in her home parish, Our Lady of Mercy in Aurora. The community she found there helped her to think about creative ways

DONOR PROFILE

she could build her own practice. But most importantly, the faithful Catholics she met altered her entire outlook on life and relationships. Instead of being mainly business-oriented, Kieta started thinking compassionately about the people she was hoping to serve.

It was through her growing network of young Catholic professionals that she first learned about the Lumen Christi Institute. When a friend of hers invited her to an LCI event and dinner at the Quadrangle Club at the University of Chicago, she had no idea what to expect. She thought it was going to be a casual and academic function, possibly held in a cafeteria—something catering to “starving students,” she laughs. She dressed in jeans, and was later horrified to find Francis Cardinal George in attendance. “Are you a student?” he asked. She turned crimson; “No, I'm a professional,” she replied.

Since attending “*Pacem in Terris After 50 Years*” (April 3, 2013), she has also attended “The Human Person, Economics, & Catholic Social Thought” (April 3, 2014) and most recently a downtown lecture with Georgetown theologian John Haught on “Science, Faith, and the New Atheism” (February 19, 2015). She is impressed by how Lumen Christi invites so many distinguished thinkers to present on such a variety of interesting topics. But mostly, she is inspired by the “good quality people” who attend these events, people “with a great moral fabric.”

When she discerns how to spend the fleeting moments of her free time, she asks: “What kind of people do I want to spend my time with?”

Kieta has observed that “people who are around me affect me in every way.” They can either depress her, dishearten her—or elevate her and provide her with an uplifting moral example. When she discerns how to spend the fleeting moments of her free time, she asks: “What kind of people do I want to spend my time with?”

In her dealings with people who are calculating and contentious, she turns to prayer, to guidance from the Holy Spirit. “I weave my relationship with a higher power into what I do,” she says.

Her most cherished relationships however are within the Church. The Lumen Christi Institute, in particular, has reaffirmed her belief in meaningful relationships—maybe not of the rare sort that Cicero and Voltaire lauded—but relationships nonetheless precious since rooted in virtue and seeking after the Good. “That's the most endearing part of Lumen Christi,” she says.



Steve Nache Joins LCI as Development Officer

The Lumen Christi Institute welcomes its newest staff member, Steve Nache, as Development Officer. Steve grew up in Arizona, receiving a B.A. in English Literature from Arizona State University before attending the American College Seminary in Belgium, where he completed an S.T.B. at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven. Steve brings with him a background in Catholic secondary education and parish initiation ministry, as well as 10 years of sales/sales management experience, most recently with a national Catholic publisher. Steve enjoys biking, guitar, and volunteer work with the local food co-op in Oak Park, where he resides with his wife Michelle and their two daughters.

WINTER QUARTER 2015



January 6th

Aaron Canty presents on “Geert Grote and Devotio Moderna” in the winter quarter non-credit course on “Figures of Renaissance, Reform, and Renewal”



January 30th

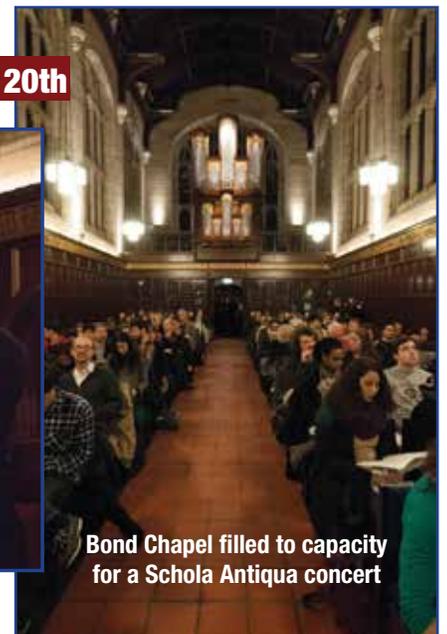
Bernard McGinn leads a master class on Teresa of Ávila’s *The Interior Castle*, a masterpiece of Christian mysticism

February 20th



February 20th

Schola Antiqua performs “The Lion’s Ear: Music for Leo X” at Bond Chapel



Bond Chapel filled to capacity for a Schola Antiqua concert

January 16th

Absorbed by Cunningham's presentation on "Thomas Merton: The Writing Life and the Contemplative Life"



January 21st



Jon D. Levenson, Harvard University, lectures on "Abraham and the Absoluteness of God"



January 28th

Taking notes at symposium on "The Interior Life: Literary, Psychoanalytic, & Spiritual Perspectives"

At Stephen L. Brock's lecture titled "Aquinas's Third Way of Proving a God"

February 20th



Reception following "The Lion's Ear: Music for Leo X" in Swift Hall

February 5th



Upcoming Events

All events are at the University of Chicago unless otherwise noted.

April

24 Friday, 5:30pm
"Amor Vincit Omnia: Love as a Destructive Force in Italian Arts and Literature"
 Giuseppe Mazzotta, *Yale University*

30 Thursday, 4-6:00pm
 A symposium on **"The Family in the Changing Economy"**
 opening remarks by Blase J. Cupich, *Archbishop of Chicago*
 keynote address by Oscar Cantú, *Bishop of Las Cruces, NM*
 presentations by Pierre-André Chiappori, *Columbia University*
 William Evans, *University of Notre Dame*
 Christine Firer Hinze, *Fordham University*
 Valerie Ramey, *University of California, San Diego*



May

6 Wednesday, 4:30pm
"On a Possible Epistemology of Revelation"
 Jean-Luc Marion, *University of Chicago*

7 Thursday, 5:00pm
"Jewish and Catholic Concepts of Charity"
 Gary A. Anderson, *University of Notre Dame*
 Jenner & Block
 353 N. Clark Street



Register online at: lumenchristi.org



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Along with so many throughout the Archdiocese of Chicago, we were saddened to learn of the passing of Francis Cardinal George, O.M.I. We are deeply grateful to God for his courageous and inspiring life, his service to the Church in Chicago and throughout the world, and for his generous solicitude for the work of the Lumen Christi Institute. As our Episcopal Moderator, he was an active intellectual presence and collaborator in our programs. In recent months, the Institute was assisting the Cardinal in his work preparing his forthcoming book.

On our website and in a future newsletter, we will devote more attention to the Cardinal's collaboration with the Institute and his intellectual legacy.

Requiescat in pace.

WE DEPEND ON THE GENEROSITY OF OUR FRIENDS AND BENEFACTORS. PLEASE CONSIDER SUPPORTING THE WORK OF THE LUMEN CHRISTI INSTITUTE TODAY.
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**Cardinal George at
symposium on the
occasion of the publication
of his book *God in Action*
(October 6, 2011)**