



# THE BEACON

NEWSLETTER OF THE LUMEN CHRISTI INSTITUTE FOR CATHOLIC THOUGHT

SPRING 2020



*Orthodox Father John Behr lectures at the University of Chicago Oriental Institute.*

## FATHER BEHR LEADS THREE-DAY PROGRAM

The Lumen Christi Institute hosted world-renowned Orthodox theologian Father John Behr of St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary for a three-day ecumenical program that led into the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, observed each year from Jan. 18-25.

Father Behr is the director of the seminary's master of theology program and the Father Georges Florovsky Distinguished Professor of Patristics. However, he recently accepted an appointment by Queen Elizabeth II to the Regius Professor of Humanity at the University of Aberdeen in Scotland, where he will begin this summer.

The first day of Father Behr's program included a public lecture on the theme, "Becoming Human in the Light of the Gospel of John," attended by university students, clergy and laity from a number of Christian churches, including Bishop Paul Gassios of the Diocese of the Midwest of the Orthodox Church in America. The second day featured a master class on Maximus the Confessor for students and faculty. A colloquium for faculty on Father Behr's most recent book, *John the Theologian and his Paschal Gospel*, was held for faculty on the third day of the program.

*Read syntheses of Father Behr's presentations on pages 2-4.*

## JENNIFER FREY RETURNS TO CHICAGO

It was a homecoming for philosopher Jennifer Frey, who gave a downtown lecture and two campus presentations at the Lumen Christi Institute in mid-February. The assistant professor of philosophy at the University of South Carolina contributed to the mission of the Lumen Christi Institute as assistant director while completing her doctorate, from 2010 to 2012, and then, upon the completion of her studies, as a consultant for the next three years.

"Lumen Christi was an intellectual home for me," she said. "It connected me to so many scholars in my field. It was the source of so many deep friendships that I still maintain in my life. Its influence on me was both incalculably positive and impactful."

Frey noted the considerable number of local Catholics, outside of academia and from across Chicagoland, who attend Lumen Christi events, looking to deepen their faith and learn about the Catholic intellectual tradition. Their participation "gave me a sense of the value of the work that Lumen Christi is doing for the Church," she said.

*Read about her public lectures and her appreciation for the Lumen Christi Institute on pages 4-6.*



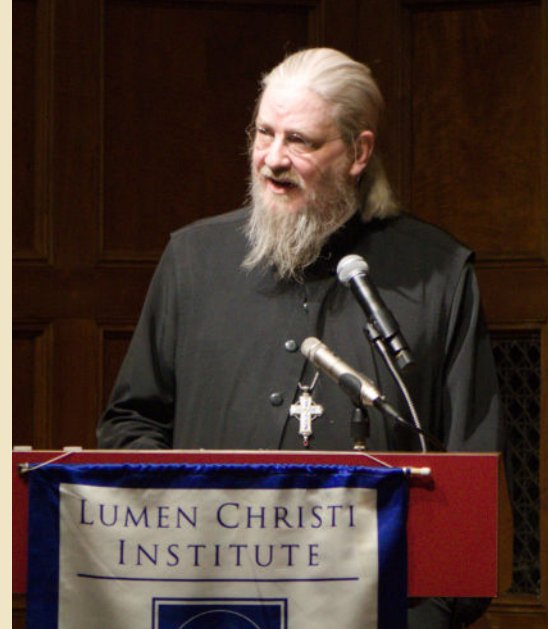
*Prof. Frey speaks at the Feb. 14 lunch discussion "Iris Murdoch on Philosophy and Literature."*

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## TO BE HUMAN IS TO TAKE UP THE CROSS, SAYS FATHER BEHR

Jesus Christ defines what it is to be human, so that being human is to voluntarily take up the cross and to live a life of voluntary self-sacrificial love for one's neighbor, said Father John Behr, a leading Orthodox theologian and the author of *Becoming Human: Meditations on Christian Anthropology in Word and Image* (2013).

Father Behr spoke on the theme, "Becoming Human in the Light of the Gospel of John," at Breasted Hall of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, Jan. 16. His one-hour lecture drew on themes in *Becoming Human* and in his most recent book, *John the Theologian and his Paschal Gospel* (2019).

In the Gospel of John, Christ depicts both what it is to be God and what it is to be human "by dying as a human being" on the cross, said Father Behr.

The patristics scholar began his lecture citing St. Ignatius of Antioch, who wrote in a letter to the Romans that they must not impede his martyrdom, for in his suffering and death, he "shall become a human being... (and) follow the example of the passion of my God." In this way, St. Ignatius says, he shall live.

The martyr, Father Behr explained, is the example of what it means to be fully human, as expressed by St. Ignatius, who merely echoes the message of the Gospel of John: that a human being finds his true perfection by participating in the paschal death of Christ.

Father Behr said the divine project of creating a perfect human being, which begins in Genesis, culminates in the words Jesus pronounces on the cross, "It is finished" (Jn 19:30). The Greek

word the evangelist uses, which has been translated into English as "finished," connotes completion or perfection.

Father Behr explained how these words of Christ in John's Gospel are in direct reference and response to the words God speaks in Genesis, "Let us make a human being" (Gn 1:26). The human being is the only aspect of creation that comes into existence with this subjunctive phrase, rather than with the imperative, "Let it be," which God speaks as regards the rest of creation.

**"Our becoming human is turning from the necessity and mortality in which we've come into existence ... by using that very mortality in the martyria of following Christ."**

Christ's words on the cross are not, as often interpreted, a reference to the completion of Jesus' earthly life or mission. Rather, they respond to the divine project of the human being, created in the beginning by the Father and accomplished by the Son through the crucifixion. Whereas Adam is the starting point of what it is to be human, Jesus Christ is the fullness of what it is to be human, Father Behr said.

He concluded by sharing his assertion, based on his account of the Gospel of John, that to participate in the paschal mystery is to become human.

"Our becoming human is turning from the necessity and mortality in which we've come into existence... and which necessarily culminates in death, whatever we do, turning from that, by using that very mortality in the martyria of following Christ," and giving our own fiat.

In one's voluntary self-sacrificial love for the other, "Christ is born, inviting all to come to the fullness of the stature of the humanity of Christ being his Body," he said.



## CHICAGO FACULTY ENGAGE NEW BOOK ON GOSPEL OF JOHN

Father John Behr's most recent book, *John the Theologian and his Paschal Gospel* (2019), was the subject of an engaging faculty colloquium hosted on the University of Chicago campus Jan. 18. Father Behr's work is broad in scope and engages the early reception of John in patristic literature, contemporary Johannine scholarship, and the phenomenology of Michel Henry, who used the Gospel of John as a source for his later philosophy. Participants included faculty from across the United States, including the University of Chicago, Fordham, Marquette, Villanova, and Notre Dame.



Margaret M. Mitchell, a professor in the University of Chicago Divinity School, offered an overwhelmingly positive review of the 416-page book, calling it “fantastic for its close reading of the Gospel according to John and its astoundingly broad purview and intent.” Mitchell is the Shailer Mathews Distinguished Service Professor of New Testament and Early Christian Literature.

Mitchell discussed at length Father Behr's continuing concern throughout the book that the Incarnation should not be considered simply as “an episode in the biography of the Word,” but rather that Christology must depart from the economy of Jesus' revelation as man.



A robust conversation ensued regarding Mitchell's questions, which included a questioning of Father Behr's heavy claim that John is the theologian of the Pascha of Christ. “Is not Paul the first theologian of the Pascha?” she asked.

Jean-Luc Marion, a professor and Catholic philosopher at the University of Chicago Divinity School, said Father Behr's volume has all the features of a great book. After positively evaluating the book's critical theological content, Marion then commented on Father Behr's use of the work of the late French philosopher Michel Henry, whom Marion considered a personal friend.



Marion disclosed how Henry converted to Christianity later in life, inspiring Henry to publish three books, drawing from the Gospel of John, *I am the Truth*, *Incarnation*, and *The Word of Christ*. Henry showed how the body and the flesh of the human being possess a phenomenality that has both invisible and visible characteristics, said Marion.

For Henry, when Christ says, “I am the way, the truth, and the life,” he is manifesting an internal, invisible, real truth about himself, and it is in the earthly life of Christ that the flesh of Jesus manifests the Word of God, explained Marion.

The faculty colloquium concluded with Vespers, led by St. Makarios Orthodox Mission in Hyde Park.

## GRADUATE STUDENTS GATHER FOR MASTER CLASS WITH FATHER BEHR

Questions of Christian anthropology and asceticism have directed Father John Behr's theological reflection since his doctoral work, when he labored over these topics in the writings of Irenaeus of Lyon and Clement of Alexandria. He engaged these topics energetically once again during a four-hour master class that he offered on Maximus the Confessor to about 20 graduate students and invited guests at Gavin House Jan. 17.

Using the texts of Gregory of Nyssa and Maximus the Confessor, Father Behr discussed the paradoxical question, "Why in Adam are we made male and female, and in Christ there is neither male nor female?"

Father Behr led participants through two patristic texts that deal specifically with this question. First, he shared passages from Gregory of Nyssa's *De hominiis opificio*, using a new translation that he is currently preparing for publication. He remarked that Gregory's text has been largely misunderstood as saying that the physical division of male and female was not intended from the beginning, but was a concession in light of the fall. In this way, sexual division functioned as a "Plan B" after the lapse of Adam and Eve. Father Behr contrasted this view with his own reading of the text. He divided *De hominiis opificio* into two parts: the first, he said, describes the glory and nature of the human being made in the image of God, and the second considers how humanity reflects this image of God as male and female.

Father Behr then referred to Maximus the Confessor's "Ambiguum 41" in trying to respond to the principle question of the master class. The text discusses a difficult passage from Gregory the Theologian's "Oration 39," in which Christ is said to "institute natures afresh." Maximus introduces five divisions of being in response to Gregory: created and uncreated nature; intelligible and perceptible nature; heaven and earth; paradise and the inhabited world; the division of male and female.

Maximus contends that the vocation of the human being is to unite these divisions, yet human beings have failed to do so. But Christ fulfills this vocation of "instituting natures afresh" by overcoming these divisions through his salvific activity as a human being.

Father Behr's close reading of the text showed how Maximus is working intentionally within the scriptural tradition and responding to *De hominiis opificio*. Father Behr discussed how Christ unites these divided realities in himself and effects the human person's eschatological refashioning. He advocated for a close reading of patristic texts as essential for contemporary theology—a trait much wanting in studies on Maximus.

## FREY REFLECTS ON 'ENORMOUS' IMPACT OF LUMEN CHRISTI

Jennifer Frey moved from Pittsburgh to Chicago in 2010, when her husband was hired as an assistant professor of philosophy at the University of Chicago. Frey, who was working toward her doctorate in philosophy at the time, began her own collaboration with Agnes Callard, a philosophy professor at the university, to develop an event on campus. Their search for an event co-sponsor led her to the Lumen Christi Institute. One conversation led to another, and Frey



was hired full time to coordinate Lumen Christi's events on campus and to develop its Summer Seminars program. By this time, Frey had been in Chicago only three weeks.

Now an assistant professor of philosophy at the University of South Carolina, Frey said the impact of the Lumen Christi Institute on her personal and professional development was "enormous."

From a practical point of view, the institute brought together her needs to complete her doctoral program and to earn a living "in an especially providential way," for which she said she will be "forever grateful." Lumen Christi's executive director, Thomas Levergood, was "especially supportive" of her academic work, she added.

The institute also enabled her to expand her academic horizons, in particular in the Catholic intellectual tradition. Frey, who was baptized in the Catholic Church at age 19, said she was largely self-taught in this regard.

While on campus for three years, Frey attended almost all of Lumen Christi's master classes, conferences and lectures, which introduced her to aspects of the Catholic intellectual tradition that she otherwise would not have encountered, including biblical scholarship and the mystical and contemplative traditions, she said.

Frey also expressed her appreciation of how the institute's public events help to correct the common misperception among Catholics "that the universities are totally against the Church."

"I think it's important for people outside the university to know, in case they didn't, that there are plenty of us Catholics in the academy," she said.

## COLLEGE STUDENTS PACK LECTURE HALL TO HEAR SCHOLARS DEBATE THE IMPORTANCE OF MORALITY IN THE HAPPY LIFE

Is happiness the result of a moral life or are morality and happiness distinct and unrelated? Jennifer Frey and Jonathan Masur debated the question during a public forum, hosted in the Ida Noyes Hall of the University of Chicago, Feb. 12.

Frey, an assistant professor of philosophy at the University of South Carolina, explained the claim that happiness is the highest good and the result of a good and moral life. She drew from the practical philosophy of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas, whose aims were to “make people be good and live well.”

Everyone wants to be happy, fulfilled, and satisfied with their lives, said Frey. To this end, people question what will make them happy, how they should live, and what kind of a person they want to be.

Aristotle and Aquinas’s view of happiness is concerned with self-transcendence, that is, the ability to go beyond one’s self-interest and to engage in loving, human relationships. Happiness, therefore, is not a private good, but a common good. This philosophical view also connects happiness to virtue, and the exercise of this virtue within the context of human friendship.

“I come to see my happiness as inextricably bound up with the happiness of my friends,” said Frey. “It is a vision of happiness in which we flourish together.”

Masur, a University of Chicago law professor, took a subjectivist approach and argued that happiness has nothing to do with morality, but with positive feelings that give people the sense that their “life is going better” and that they have a lot of personal wellbeing. The negative feelings are what people would call unhappiness, he said.

He made the important distinction that “living a life that is good for you” and that allows one to experience a lot of happiness and wellbeing, “is not the same as living a life that is good in a moral or virtuous sense.”

He agreed with Frey that one’s happiness is closely associated

with the happiness of others, but qualified that it is mostly intertwined with the happiness of those who are one’s closest relations, and much less so with the people outside of that immediate circle.

In the dialogue and engaging Q&A that followed the scholars’ individual presentations, Frey disputed the notion that happiness is “just a lump of positive experiences.”

“Happiness involves a sense of deep fulfillment... which is connected to your ability to make sense of your life as a whole and to see it as something valuable and noble,” she said.

Masur insisted that moral actions do not lead to happiness. Rather, it is entirely possible to do a morally good thing “that makes you less happy,” he said. Many people choose to act morally and well towards others for no other reason but the positive feelings it generates, he added.

At this point, the two scholars admitted to having a “deep conceptual disagreement” about the definition of happiness, how the concept should be reflected upon, and how it should be used.

In response to a question from the audience about the incidence of tragedy in the life of a virtuous person, Frey said “virtue is no guarantee to happiness.”

“Humans are very vulnerable creatures. Things can fall apart,” she said. “But I don’t think admitting that detracts from the claim that the goal of the moral life is to be happy and that virtue is necessary to attain it, because tragedy, as a genre, is all about pointing out the extent to which things aren’t up to us. The way things turn out are not totally in our control, and it’s important to be very aware of that.”

The forum, titled “What Good is Happiness?” was presented by the Veritas Forum, Cana, Cru, Graduate Christian Fellowship, Holy Trinity Church, Intervarsity, Living Hope Church, the Lumen Christi Institute, MakeNew and Calvert House Catholic Center.



Jennifer Frey and Jonathan Masur at the Feb. 12 discussion on happiness



## O'CONNOR'S REALISM ESSENTIAL FOR AUTHOR'S MORAL VISION

To understand American author Flannery O'Connor's fiction, one should take her at her word: "I am Catholic and at some point in my life I realized that not only was I Catholic but that this was all I was."

Jennifer Frey, assistant professor of philosophy at the University of South Carolina, spoke on "Flannery O'Connor and the Vision of Grace" at a luncheon lecture, Feb. 13, at the University Club of Chicago, sponsored by the Lumen Christi Institute.

O'Connor's Catholic vision of grace is understood in the particulars of her life, formation and education, said Frey, who traced the salient moments of O'Connor growing up Catholic in the post-War South. Her father's untimely death from lupus gave her a sense of God's grace working in the world, which she experienced as more dramatic and violent than gentle.

Regarding her father's death, she wrote: "The reality of death has come upon us and a consciousness of the power of God has broken our complacency like a bullet in the side. A sense of the dramatic, of the tragic, of the infinite, has descended upon us, filling us with grief, but even above grief, wonder."

Early in her career, O'Connor cemented her reputation for genius with the short story, "A Good Man is Hard to Find." Frey offered an analysis of this story, which like many of O'Connor's stories juxtaposes faith and violence.

O'Connor considered herself a "hillbilly Thomist," said Frey. She read Aquinas every night and claimed that theology made her writing "bolder." Frey said the Thomist influence in O'Connor's work is evident in its intense realism. Frey sees this Christian realism as essential for O'Connor's moral vision and aesthetic.

## GREAT ART AND LITERATURE POSSESS 'INCARNATIONAL ASPECT'

Philosopher Jennifer Frey's conviction that great literature can reveal a lot about the human being and the meaning of the moral life motivates her to regularly explore this topic in her podcast, "Sacred and Profane Love."

Frey discussed how British novelist and philosopher Iris Murdoch was a key influence on her philosophical interests in great works of literature during a luncheon seminar for students and faculty at Gavin House Feb. 14.

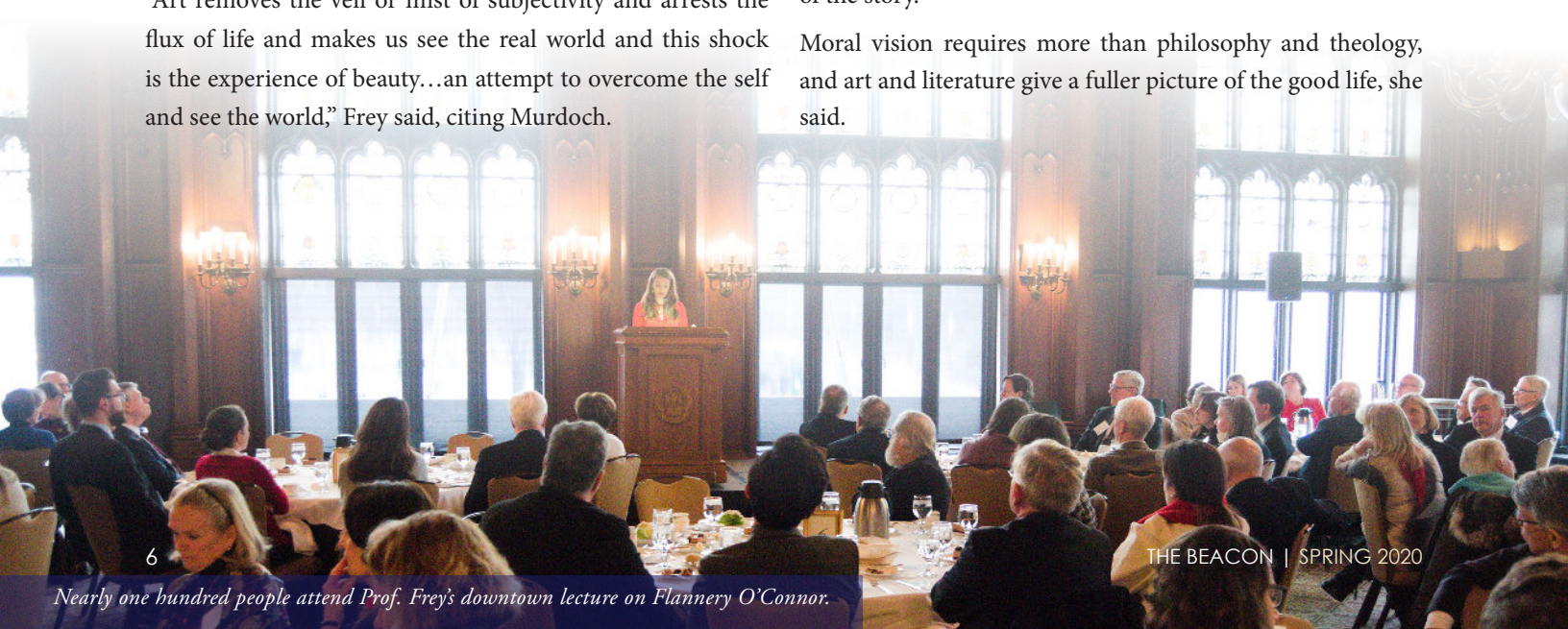
Murdoch understood that at the core of good fiction is the ability to see the world for what it really is, and then to look beyond it to the heart of things, said Frey.

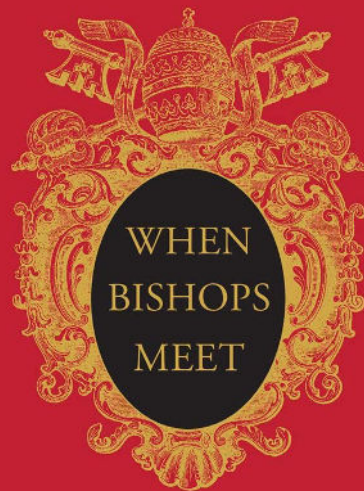
"Art removes the veil or mist of subjectivity and arrests the flux of life and makes us see the real world and this shock is the experience of beauty...an attempt to overcome the self and see the world," Frey said, citing Murdoch.

Good literature, distinct from philosophical analysis, contains truths about human beings and puts them on full display in the sensuous, fused, mysterious particularities of narration, said Frey. Its goal is not simply to convey ideals about the moral life; this would be a utilitarian and didactic view of the art form, said Frey. Rather, great literature has an "incarnational aspect."

"The truth of fiction is not given in abstract principles but in the experiential context of the material of the particular story," she said. "In the Incarnation, divine spirit becomes enmattered in human flesh; likewise, in fiction, divine truths become enmattered in the specific circumstances and material of the story."

Moral vision requires more than philosophy and theology, and art and literature give a fuller picture of the good life, she said.





## LECTURE CONSIDERS COMPLEXITY OF CHURCH GOVERNANCE

How should the Catholic Church be governed? Georgetown University theology professor Father John W. O'Malley, SJ, tried to respond to this question during a lecture at the University of Chicago, sponsored by the Lumen Christi Institute Dec. 4.

"As everybody knows, the pope runs the Church," he quipped at the beginning of his lecture, titled "The Open Question of Church Polity and Governance: Trent, Vatican I, Vatican II."

Father O'Malley admitted that the question is not so simple and proceeded to explain how governance is currently carried out in light of the conciliar tradition of the Catholic Church, particularly the Council of Trent, the First Vatican Council, and the Second Vatican Council.

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Father O'Malley gave reasons to consider differing strategies of governance for the Church, particularly in light of the ongoing sexual abuse crisis and the emerging instrument of synodality, both as a concept and as an organism for church governance that has been in use since the Second Vatican Council.

He spoke about how laity historically participated in Church governance: kingdoms appointed bishops; imperial authority was decisive at the Council of Nicaea in the person of Con-

stantine; and kingdoms and principalities sent legates to the Council of Trent to represent their concerns about the Church in the midst of the reformation. All of these were expressions of governance carried out by laity in the Church.

Historically, a synod was synonymous with a council; it was a group gathered in the name of Christ to provide governing resolutions for the Church, he explained. A significant shift took place at the Second Vatican Council, when Paul VI called for a regular synod of bishops that would be only advisory in nature. The shift from a legislative synod to an advisory synod is important, Father O'Malley said. However, he expressed hope in Pope Francis's recasting of the synods to have greater effect on Church governance through his emphasis on freedom of expression for the bishops, his inclusion of laity, and his insistence that the organism does not simply rubber stamp an already written document.

Russell Hittinger, senior fellow of the Lumen Christi Institute and visiting faculty at the Committee on Social Thought, responded to Father O'Malley, urging serious reflection about how to involve different representative bodies of the Catholic Church. This would include religious men and women, both active and contemplative, ecclesial movements, and laity.

He said the Protestant Reformation advocated a simplification of the Church's structure in an attempt to preserve what reformers thought was the core of the Gospel. While Trent created complications, and many today desire reform, Catholics should not expect reform to come so quickly.

"It will go slowly in inverse proportion to its urgency," he said. To attempt a quick fix, he added, would end in a deformation of the complex organism that is the Church, rather than a true reformation.



## NEWMAN FORUM DRAWS 80 TEENS FOR CREATION CONFERENCE

Eighty high school students, and a handful of eager eighth graders, gathered at Swift Hall of the University of Chicago Divinity School Feb. 15 to participate in the Newman Forum's third daylong conference.

Lumen Christi's Newman Forum is designed to introduce, familiarize, and enthrall Chicagoland teens with the Catholic intellectual tradition, supplementing and supporting their religious and theological formation. Hailing from public, private, and home schools, students alongside their teachers and parents were greeted warmly by Lumen Christi's eight graduate student leaders, all current students or affiliates of the University of Chicago.

The conference, titled "Creation: Artistic & Divine," featured two presentations from premiere scholars in the fields of science and aesthetics.

Professor Stephen M. Barr of the Department of Physics and Astronomy at the University of Delaware and president of the Society of Catholic Scientists spoke to the teens on the order of creation and about how this order—much like a well-crafted story—denotes a Creator/Author. Professor Barr did not shy away from the complexities of physics, guiding students through the history of scientific theory, from Kepler's Laws to Superstring Theory.

Student William S. of St. John Cantius Parish summarized Professor Barr's presentation: "You can't find God through an experiment. You can't detect him in a particle accelerator or what have you, because he is outside of all of that. He created it all."

Professor Jennifer Newsome Martin is assistant professor in the Program of Liberal Studies at the University of Notre Dame. She spoke of the encounter people have with what is beautiful, and how its contemplation can leave people in flux, somewhere between the subjective and the objective. She encouraged students to consider their own experiences with beauty, how it struck them, and how those feelings can lead to God, who is Beauty, and who invites us to sit in that in-between space.

Immediately following both talks, the teens asked the speakers questions.

Students then gathered in small groups for lunch. Each group was guided by a graduate student leader in a seminar-style discussion, the hallmark of a comprehensive liberal arts education in the Catholic tradition. Some teens expressed appreciation for this discussion style, which they do not commonly experience at school.

"Giving an open space for students, rather than asking specific questions, can feel (like) more of a collaboration than something that's set up," said Harlem H. from Gary Comer College Prep.

Grace L. of Father Gabriel Richard High School said the Newman Forum events have led her to "realize that there are opportunities for a pretty high level of intellectual discussion among younger people."

Eucharistic Adoration in the Bond Chapel followed after lunch. Father Tim Anastos, associate pastor at Mary, Seat of Wisdom Parish, gave a brief instruction on Adoration and encouraged the teens to bring everything they had learned during the day to God in prayer.

"What a gift it is that we can know the Lord not just with our hearts, but with our minds," he said.

Following Adoration, students had another opportunity to dialogue with our presenters during the concluding 45-minute Q&A. However, more than twenty students lingered far past the conference's designated ending time to discuss their ideas with Professors Barr and Martin.

Preparations are underway for our first weeklong Summer Institute for high school students at Mundelein Seminary. See more on page 9. The Newman Forum Writer's Prize will be awarded to the winner of the essay-writing contest. The next Saturday conference will be in the fall. **For more details on these programs, visit [www.lumenchristi.org/newman-forum](http://www.lumenchristi.org/newman-forum).**



## LUMEN CHRISTI WINS OSV INSTITUTE GRANT FOR TEEN PROGRAM

The Lumen Christi Institute has been awarded a \$30,000 grant from the OSV Institute for a program that will introduce teens in Chicagoland to the Catholic vision of intellectual life, culture, and liturgy.

Very few teens in the region have exposure to the Church's intellectual tradition, but the high school years are exactly when students begin to ask questions about the rationality of the faith, the relationship between science and religion, and the truth of the doctrines. By waiting until college to address these questions, Catholic ministries have by default ceded teenage intellectual formation to a secular culture. Moreover, since 90 percent of Catholic teens will attend non-Catholic colleges and universities, most young Catholics are deprived of any contact with the intellectual and spiritual resources of the faith.

To address this need, the Lumen Christi Institute, in partnership with Mundelein Seminary and the Archdiocese of Chicago Vocation Office, launched the Newman Forum for High School Students. Newman Forum events cover a range of topics from the Catholic intellectual tradition and respond to particular obstacles to the faith, lead students more deeply into the faith tradition, and correct common historical or cultural misunderstandings.

"We at Lumen Christi are deeply grateful to the OSV Institute for once again partnering with us to broaden the reach and exposure to Catholic intellectual tradition," said Thomas Lever-

good, executive director of the Lumen Christi Institute. "We are confident that this project will bear fruit for the Church as she witnesses significant cultural developments in the 21st century."



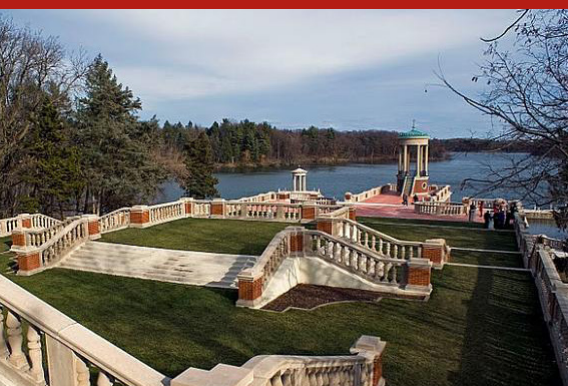
As part of its regular programming for 2019-2020, the Newman Forum hosted more than forty students and their parents for a daylong seminar on St. John Henry Newman at the University of Chicago Oct. 19. A second event that investigated creation from the perspectives of physics and aesthetics drew more than 110 students, parents, and teachers to the University of Chicago Feb. 15.

Two events for smaller groups were organized. The first, "How NOT to get away with murder," which was a close reading of Genesis 3 and 4, drew ten students to St. John Cantius Church Jan. 21. The date for the second event, "Answering your atheist philosophy professor: reading and responding to a New York Times editorial," is yet to be determined.

Planning for the Newman Forum's 2020 Summer Institute at Mundelein Seminary, July 28-Aug. 1, is underway. The program will offer forty-five students an introduction to college-level Catholic theology and philosophy, and opportunities for service projects.

**Questions about the Lumen Christi Institute's Newman Forum can be directed to Lumen Christi Assistant Director Austin Walker at [awalker@lumenchristi.org](mailto:awalker@lumenchristi.org).**

## REGISTRATION IS OPEN FOR NEWMAN FORUM'S SUMMER INSTITUTE



The Newman Forum will run a weeklong Summer Institute for high school students at Mundelein Seminary, July 28-Aug. 1. Mornings will be spent learning philosophy and theology from college professors, and afternoons will be spent going on fun excursions throughout Chicagoland. (And the rumors are true...we do go to Six Flags!)

Applications for the 2020 Summer Institute are due May 31, though priority will be given to students who submit their applications by May 1. The group will be capped at forty-five. The list of participants will be announced the first week of June.

**For more information, visit [www.lumenchristi.org/newman-forum](http://www.lumenchristi.org/newman-forum)**

## LUMEN CHRISTI BEGINS NEW ‘GREAT BOOKS’ SERIES IN 2020

Formative early president of the University of Chicago Robert Maynard Hutchins observed that the Christian intellectual tradition intertwines with the great tradition of liberal education.

“The Catholic Church has the longest intellectual tradition of any institution in the contemporary world, the only uninterrupted tradition and the only explicit tradition; that is, it is the only institution which is conscious of its tradition,” he wrote.

Hutchins was vital in the formation of the University of Chicago’s famous Core Education. The university had put the Core in place before Hutchins’s arrival, but Hutchins was concerned that it merely gushed information at students that they would soon forget. In partnership with Mortimer Adler, Hutchins made reforms to emphasize the Great Books of the past and championed seminar-style discussion courses, bringing students into conversation with the great authors and ideas of history.

Growing out of Christian scholarship at universities, and particularly the Christian scholarship of the University of Chicago, the Lumen Christi Institute continues to foster liberal education that encourages students to see and converse with the intellectual riches of history.

Liberal arts education is not alien to the Christian tradition. The early Church Fathers, including Clement of Alexandria, Justin Martyr, Origen, Ambrose of Milan, Basil of Caesarea, and Augustine of Hippo, considered the liberal arts and classic books to be useful in training servants and preachers of the Gospel. The Christian tradition of the liberal arts prizes not just the mind—the intellectual understanding of ideas and propositions—but also the heart—the emotions and one’s response to the truth. From the Catechetical School of Alexandria to monastic education, through medieval universities and Renaissance academies,

Christians have developed and evolved methods of binding the liberal arts and Great Books to form the minds and hearts of students.

In line with our other programming that fosters this education, the Lumen Christi Institute has started a new series called, “The Great Books and the Christian Tradition.” Many of the Great Books that students read in the Core are rooted in the Christian intellectual tradition. However, discussions held in secular classrooms often fail to mine the deep theological and existential themes that are explicitly a part of the text.

Our new series offers students a chance to discuss and fully appreciate the Great Books in their own context. We held four events in this series this past quarter. The first was a lively discussion with Professor Jared Ortiz, Jan. 18, on the topic, “Are the Great Books good for us? Liberal Education and the Christian Tradition.” Professor Elizabeth Corey led the second discussion, Jan. 21, on the theme, “Achievement and the Christian Life: What is Education For?” The series came to a peak as E. John Ellison, a graduate student in the University of Chicago’s Committee on Social Thought, led a crowded room in discussion over dinner

Feb. 8. This event examined Augustine of Hippo’s treatment of curiosity and the uses and abuses of the intellect in his *Confessions*. Dr. Jason Cather closed the series with a discussion on skeptical Enlightenment philosopher David Hume’s attempted refutation of belief in miracles and on how to view belief in miracles from a philosophical perspective.

“The Great Books and the Christian Tradition” has effectively introduced programming for undergraduates that complements the university’s commitment to the Great Books, while enriching students’ engagement with them.

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**From the Catechetical School of Alexandria to monastic education, through medieval universities and Renaissance academies, Christians have developed and evolved methods of binding the liberal arts and Great Books to form the minds and hearts of students.**

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THE BEACON | SPRING 2020



## SAVE THE DATE

### APRIL 16 SYMPOSIUM TO HONOR CARDINAL GEORGE, CONSIDER AMERICAN CONTRIBUTIONS TO CATHOLIC SOCIAL THOUGHT

April marks the fifth anniversary of the passing of Cardinal Francis George, OMI. While he was well-regarded as a shepherd to the Archdiocese of Chicago for seventeen years and president of the USCCB, his intellectual legacy remains unmined. On Thursday, April 16, at 5 p.m., the Lumen Christi Institute will hold a panel at the University of Chicago on American Contributions to Catholic Social Thought that will feature Cardinal George's social and political thought. The panel will address how Catholic social teaching is received and enacted in local contexts, and how new ways of envisioning the social order bubble up from below.

The panel will include Russell Hittinger, senior fellow of the Lumen Christi Institute and visiting professor at the Committee on Social Thought, Stephen Schneck, executive director of the Franciscan Action Network, and Teresa Smart, assistant professor in the School of Civic and Economic Thought at Arizona State University. Each will draw from their own expertise and entertain the question of what distinctly American contributions have been made to Catholic Social Thought, as well as how Cardinal George's work fits within this broader trajectory.



## WHAT WILL BE YOUR LEGACY?

As you reflect on ways that you can make a lasting impact in the Catholic Church, please consider including the Lumen Christi Institute in your estate plans. Planned gifts, such as leaving a bequest to Lumen Christi in your will, allow us to continue our mission of promoting Catholic intellectual life.

Gifts made through your will or trust can be restricted to funding a position or program or unrestricted, so that they are allocated to the area of greatest need. **Special naming opportunities are available for gifts that exceed \$25,000.**

Friends of the Lumen Christi Institute who choose planned giving are inducted into our St. Augustine Circle, where special benefits include:

- Customized engagement opportunities related to their interests.
- Annual personal briefing from the executive director.
- Free admission, reserved priority seating, and recognition at Lumen Christi events.
- The opportunity to host a speaker for a private lunch or dinner.
- Opportunities to attend private luncheons and dinners with visiting scholars.

Before making any changes to your estate plans, please consult your financial adviser. For more information on our planned giving program, please contact Julie Ryan at (773) 955-5887 or [julie.ryan@lumenchristi.org](mailto:julie.ryan@lumenchristi.org).



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During this holy season, please consider making a gift to support the important work of the Lumen Christi Institute. Return the enclosed gift envelope or donate online at [WWW.LUMENCHRISTI.ORG/DONATE](http://WWW.LUMENCHRISTI.ORG/DONATE)

**VIDEOS OF OUR EVENTS ARE AVAILABLE ON OUR WEBSITE**

## SAVE THE DATE

### MAY 8

Aristotle, Augustine,  
Bonaventure, and  
Aquinas on the Soul  
a symposium with  
Sean Kelsey, *Notre Dame*  
Gabriel Lear, *UChicago*  
Jean-Luc Marion, *UChicago*  
Timothy Noone, *CUA*

### MAY 14

*Faith and Science at  
Notre Dame: Father  
John Zahm, Evolution,  
and the Catholic Church*  
with  
John Slattery, *Notre Dame*



*More than 175 students attend the event with Profs. Jennifer Frey and Jonathan Masur on "What Good is Happiness?"*