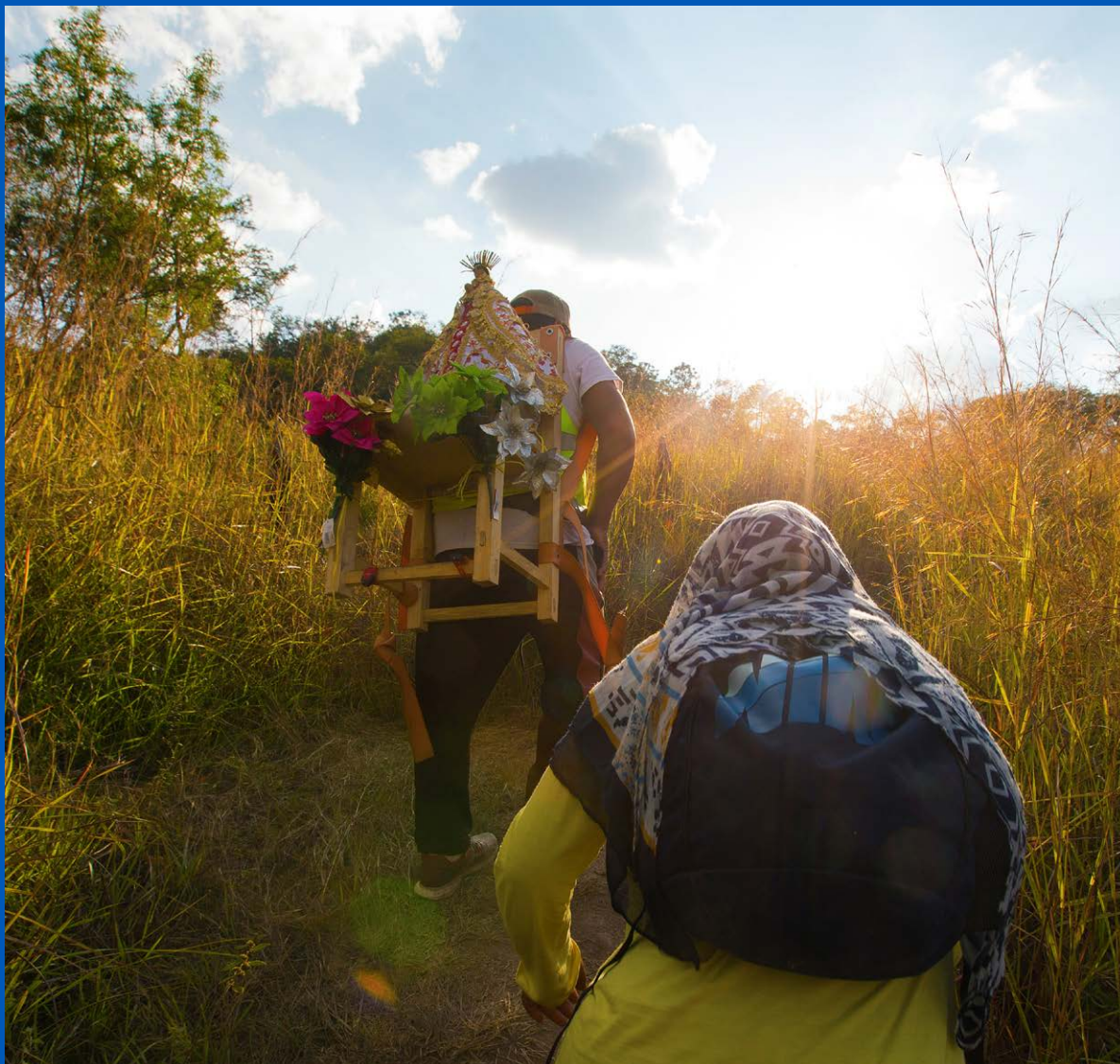


American Catholic Studies Newsletter

Spring 2026



Cushwa Center
for the Study of American Catholicism

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The University of Notre Dame's Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism seeks to promote and encourage the scholarly study of the American Catholic tradition through instruction, research, publication, and the collection of historical materials. Named for its benefactors, Charles and Margaret Hall Cushwa of Youngstown, Ohio, the center strives to deepen understanding of the historical role and contemporary expressions of the Catholic religious tradition in the United States.

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Darren Dochuk

From the Director

In our moment of heightened partisan tensions, it is little surprise that our email inboxes at the Cushwa Center populate quickly with requests from journalists and press outlets for help explaining the latest trends in Catholic political engagement. Still, the recent (and ongoing) back-and-forth between President Donald Trump and Pope Leo XIV has generated more than the usual stream of inquiries, and more pointed inquiries as well: Will the president's brouhaha with the pontiff break his Catholic support in the midterms? Does the sparring between the White House and Vatican hurt (or help) J.D. Vance's chances in 2028? Trump's prodding is standard practice, but should Pope Leo speak with such an edge?

The blitz has served as a reminder of the Cushwa Center's vital role in providing critical commentary for news reporting on Catholicism's sustained presence in contemporary American life. Although it may have taken time, and some coaxing, for Cushwa founding director Jay P. Dolan to embrace a public relations mission, in this regard, since the 1990s directorship of Scott Appleby (Dolan's successor, and the man doing the coaxing), Cushwa leaders have done their part to provide informed and accessible analysis that can assist a wider public's grappling with the times.

It has rarely been an easy task. Mass media has always insisted on brevity and punch on the part of its analysts, and in this current TikTok age of algorithmic filters, catchy soundbites are not simply the currency but the demand of a sprawling culture industry that shifts gears in a second. For scholars who embrace the slow burn approach to information gathering and dissemination, such expectations for instant impact can be intimidating as well as disquieting, and overall difficult to navigate. How can one be expected to trim years of research on U.S. Catholic-Vatican relations to a tagline or distill the Church's social teaching down to catchphrase or sound grab?

continued on next page

ON THE COVER

A pilgrim carries "Juquilita," as devotees affectionately call the Virgin of Juquila, en route to her shrine in Oaxaca, Mexico. The pilgrimage is the focus of Edward Wright-Ríos's new book, *Devotion in Motion* (2025), reviewed in this issue by Sadie Yates (p. 65). Photo by Mike DuBose.

Having plugged away, trying to make historical research on U.S. religion and politics matter for current conversations, I know the challenges of making academese digestible for public consumption. Which is why I am particularly impressed with the work Cushwa Co-Director David Lantigua has done lately to shed light on the “politics” of church and society through the prism of Catholic social teaching. While the soundbites have been forthcoming, his contributions to mainstream media (most recently, the *New York Times*) and the Catholic press (*Commonweal* and *National Catholic Reporter*, among others) have also demonstrated the power of the slow-burn approach—the pause for context and reflection that a professor of theology and history can encourage in a society dictated by speed. (For a running list of media hits, see cushwa.nd.edu/news/in-the-media.)

Besides promoting that method with the pen, David has also done so through community engagement, in settings where the heated issues of the day (White House vs. Vatican, immigration, labor, and justice) can be processed purposefully in a spirit of collective dialogue, with theological truths applied to the real world and the common good always in mind. If there is an answer to the frantic, hyper-politicization of our moment, and an antidote to the kneejerk partisanship of our doom-scrolling culture, it is the type of small-scale performances of civil society that David and the Cushwa Center have helped nurture through these grassroots encounters.

Strengthening civil society through patient analysis and application of Catholic social teaching is a goal the center has laid out for two other initiatives that loom large now, both of which reaffirm the potentials of faith-aware scholarship at different levels. During the first week of June, the Cushwa Center in conjunction with Notre Dame Rome will host a three-day symposium on “Modern Catholic Social Teaching in the American Anthropocene,” which will see more than a dozen historians, theologians, and political theorists engage in cross-disciplinary discussion about the “reception, contestation, and reinterpretation of modern Catholic social teaching on the American continents over the last two centuries.” Drawing inspiration from calls from Pope Francis and Pope Leo for Catholics and citizens of the world to address the “polycrisis” of the age (accumulating crises of the social, political, technological, and environmental sort) through rigorous interrogation of Catholic social thought and its application to matters of “labor and land,” those invested in the initiative will also be encouraged to ponder the potential impact of the Church on our current world, tested as it is by so many other concerns as well—those, for instance, related to artificial intelligence (AI) and energy. Coming on the heels of Pope Leo’s first encyclical on May 15, 2026—in which he is expected to address AI, peace, and global order, the symposium will surely be shot through with a fresh sense of urgency. One could hardly imagine a timelier gathering.

The Election of Pope Leo XIV

The Last Surprise of Pope Francis

Orbis Books, 2026

BOOK TALK

*and reception
with*



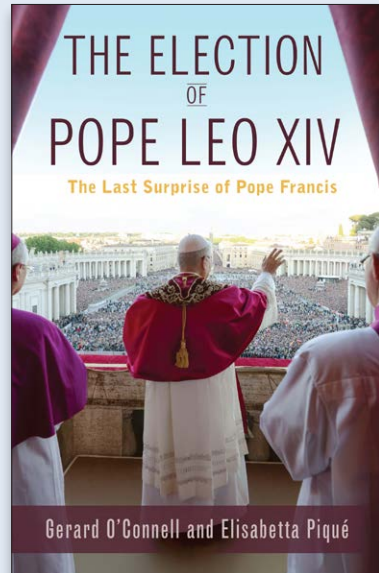
Gerard O'Connell

America Magazine



and **Elisabetta Piqué**

La Nación



Thursday, June 4, 2026

3:00 p.m.

Notre Dame Rome

Via Ostilia, 15 - 00184 Rome

The story behind the headlines, told by two
of the Vatican's most trusted correspondents

Gerard O'Connell, Vatican correspondent for *America Magazine*, served as Vatican analyst for CTV (Canada) during the past three conclaves.

Elisabetta Piqué is a correspondent for *La Nación*, the Argentine daily published in Buenos Aires. During last year's conclave she served as Vatican analyst for CNN.



ROME

Free and open to all, but registration is required for both in-person attendees and livestream viewers. Register at cushwa.nd.edu/events



Meanwhile, while drafting this brief note, I have frequently stopped typing to read through the stack of undergraduate essays sitting next to my computer—essays submitted by undergraduate students at Notre Dame, Saint Mary's College, and Holy Cross College for the Cushwa Center's inaugural Undergraduate Research & Writing Prize. It is apparent that college students have much to say about the study of American Catholicism and its inherent value to understanding modern America as a whole. Among the almost three-dozen entries we have received are richly researched think pieces about Catholic social teaching and carbon energy, war, AI, healthcare, and the environment—and about the impact of rapid cultural change on the Church itself as it has piloted decades of societal transformation in the United States—decades of change often as polarizing and dividing as the one we now inhabit. If my initial glance at the papers is any indication, it seems that youth on these three campuses are eager to provide civil answers to the heated circumstances we now find ourselves in—circumstances their elders have helped create or simply found too vexing to fix.

As I finish my three-year term as co-director at the Cushwa Center and move into a new administrative role as chair of Notre Dame's Department of History, I am heartened by the enthusiasm these college students have shown, not just in response to a call for papers (and a prize), but in eager reply to the most daunting conundrums of the day. I look forward to seeing these students, and all those we have the privilege of teaching here, take the reins to guide us to a reimagined future. But that is in the long term; in the short term, I am most excited about witnessing (from striking distance in Decio Hall) the important work David, Shane, Madonna, and a new cohort of postdoctoral fellows will continue to carry out in order to guarantee that the Cushwa Center is always at the heart of—and generating—the hard and vital conversations that church and society—scholars and a general public—need to engage collectively, contemplatively, and for the common good.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Darren Dochuk". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Darren" and last name "Dochuk" clearly distinguishable.

Darren Dochuk

William W. and Anna Jean Cushwa Co-Director



Scholarly Seminars



Religion and Culture in the Americas Seminar

2026–2027 Call for Proposals
Submission Deadline: June 5, 2026

The Religion and Culture in the Americas Seminar explores topics in religion and culture broadly from interdisciplinary perspectives, including social history, biography, cultural studies, visual and material culture, urban studies, and the history of ideas. We are interested in how religious belief has affected society, rather than creedal or theological focused studies. The seminar provides an opportunity for scholars to share papers that use new methods, unveil archival discoveries, and offer new interpretations. Two scholars whose work enriches or complements their own may consider submitting proposals for a paired presentation. Papers are pre-circulated. Presenters make a 10-to-15-minute presentation followed by a short commentary by a scholar in the field and a discussion with seminar participants. The seminar typically meets on selected Fridays from 3:00–4:30 pm. In AY 2026–2027, all sessions will take place online via Zoom.

The seminar's organizers are Karen Johnson (Wheaton College), James Krippner (Haverford College), Malachy McCarthy (Archival Resources for Catholic Collections), Christopher Allison (Digital Spaces Chicago), and Kevin Schultz (University of Illinois Chicago). Please contact scholarlyseminars@newberry.org with questions.

To apply, please submit a one-page proposal and brief CV at
cushwa.nd.edu/newberry



Research and Education
The Newberry Library
60 W Walton Street | Chicago, IL 60610
scholarlyseminars@newberry.org



From left: Darren Dochuk, Grant Wacker, Jon Coleman, Katherine Carté, Thomas Tweed, Melissa Borja, and David Lantigua together at the fall 2025 Dolan Seminar.

In Review

Fall 2025 at the Cushwa Center

By Michael Skaggs

The Cushwa Center's 50th anniversary celebrations spanned the whole of 2025, beginning with the conference Catholic Modernity in the Americas. They continued in the fall as several new initiatives and gatherings highlighted core themes of the center's founding mission. The annual Hibernian Lecture in September evoked a key aspect of Jay Dolan's early vision, exploring the Irish American experience in relation to neighboring immigrant communities.

The Dolan Seminar weekend celebrated a landmark publication by one of Notre Dame's most distinguished scholars of American religion. The annual Cushwa Center Lecture considered the history of a Catholic publishing house founded five years before the Cushwa Center, similarly inspired to advance new research and writing animated by the Second Vatican Council. Finally, the center co-hosted a November symposium with the Hesburgh Libraries to honor the life and

Michael Skaggs (Notre Dame '13 and '17) is an independent historian and co-founder of Chaplaincy Innovation Lab, where he serves as director of programs.

work of Notre Dame theologian Father Gustavo Gutiérrez, O.P. The event marked the opening of a digital archive, the Gustavo Gutiérrez Merino, O.P., Collection, which preserves extensive theological conferences Gutiérrez convened over the course of 50 years in Lima, Peru. (Read about the new collection and its November launch starting on page 16.)

An Immigrant Alliance

In September, the Cushwa Center welcomed Hasia Diner to deliver the 2025 Hibernian Lecture, “How the Irish Taught the Jews to Become American.” Each year, with support from the Ancient Order of Hibernians and Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians, an invited speaker gives an address on some aspect of the Irish experience.¹ Recent lecturers include Frank Shovlin (“Like a Prayer: the Novels of John McGahern”), Julie Morrissy (“Revolutionary Traces: Radical Women, Commemoration, and Public Space”), Enda Delaney (“Faith and Fatherland: Belief and the Irish Catholic Experience”), and Declan Kiberd (“Ireland Now: Excavating the Present”).

Diner is the Paul and Sylvia Steinberg Professor of American Jewish History Emerita at New York University. At NYU, she directed the Goldstein-Goren Center for American Jewish History and served as interim director of the Glucksman Ireland House. She is a member of the American Academy of Jewish Research and the Society of American Historians as well as a Fulbright and Guggenheim recipient. Among her numerous books are *Hungering for America: Italian, Irish, and Jewish Foodways in the Age of Migration* (Harvard, 2003); *The Jews of the United States: 1654 to 2000* (University of California, 2006); *We Remember with Reverence and Love: American Jews and the Myth of Silence after the Holocaust* (NYU Press, 2009); and *Roads Taken: The Great Jewish Migration to the New World and the Peddlers Who Led the Way* (Yale, 2015).

Diner’s Hibernian Lecture drew on research for her most recent book, *Opening Doors: The Unlikely Alliance between the Irish and the Jews*

in America (St. Martin’s, 2024). In her telling, the interaction between the Irish and the Jews in the 19th century resulted in a sort of “alchemy” that “remade the nation.” She noted the importance of chronology; with Irish immigrants arriving in the United States well in advance of Jewish immigrants, it was the Irish who built enormous institutions, both literal and cultural, from which Jewish immigrants could learn to “become American.” The Irish had succeeded so well in building thriving communities that by the time Jewish immigrants arrived, they could benefit from the Irish as both guides and exemplars of success in the still-young United States. While acknowledging the historical reality of some expressions of antisemitism among Irish Americans, including religious preaching and popular publications, Diner insisted that these were outliers. The productive relationship between the Irish and the Jews was far more formative.

The interaction between the Irish and the Jews in the 19th century resulted in a sort of ‘alchemy’ that ‘remade the nation.’

Diner structured her lecture around the four ways in which the Irish contributed to Jewish success in the United States: vocal defense, embrace of political power, labor activism, and education. Irish defense of Jewish immigrants and American Jews spanned the 19th and 20th centuries, beginning at least as early as articles in the *Boston Pilot*—significantly, a publication of the Archdiocese of Boston—decrying antisemitism in the 1870s and 1880s. Immigrant and American Jews also sought the academic attention of former state assemblyman and New York judge Charles Daly, who published the laudatory history *The Settlement of the Jews in North America* in 1893. The Knights of Columbus, emblematic of patriotic Irish Americans, defended Jews in the face

of the Klan, recognizing the commonality of religious and ethnic discrimination leveled by the terror organization after the turn of the century.

Diner then detailed the second way the Irish assisted Jews in integrating into American society: pragmatic assistance in return for political support. She quoted the long-serving Massachusetts politician James Michael Curley on the source of his appreciation for Jewish constituents: “They vote.” Irish politicians could award contracts, assign jobs, and assist with other political-legal matters and ask for strong Jewish support to continue such patronage. In this the Irish addressed some of the most practical needs facing new and recent immigrants to the United States, removing logistical barriers to Jews “becoming American” as the Irish had.

Third, Diner noted Irish mentorship of nascent Jewish labor leaders. She described how poor working conditions often offended Jewish immigrants’ sense of why they had even come to the United States. Having no previous organizing experience, Jews seeking better conditions necessarily turned to those who had already achieved great success in labor. Diner mentioned the specific contribution of women to this process, with female Irish American labor leaders like Mary Kenney O’Sullivan training both Jewish women and men to create powerful organizations to advocate for workers’ rights.

Finally, Diner pointed to the service of Irish Americans in the classroom. As with labor, it was often women helping Jews “become American.” Under the tutelage of Irish American teachers—whose jobs were not uncommonly secured through Tammany Hall dealings—Jews learned English and saw models of middle-class American life to emulate. This educational influence continued past the secondary level as Jewish students enrolled in Catholic professional schools offering law, pharmacy, medicine, and dentistry, which solved problems for each community: financially precarious Catholic schools found students willing to pay tuition, and Jewish students received an education denied them by



Hasia Diner

other institutions with antisemitic admissions policies. Diner offered the example of Fordham’s law school, which by 1930 counted Jews as half its student body.

During the Q&A session, Diner delved into the workings of Tammany Hall for the lecture’s undergraduate attendees. Patrick Griffin (History, Notre Dame) mentioned Irish-Jewish collaboration to promote contemporary athletics, as well as periodic joint undertakings in organized crime. Diner thanked the Ancient Order of Hibernians and Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians for their support of this lecture series. She delivered this year’s lecture with verve and wit, interspersing her research on Irish-Jewish collaboration with contemporary songs from Tin Pan Alley and demonstrating her mastery of storytelling. As one such song ends,

There’s a sympathetic feeling
Between the Blooms and McAdoods
Why, Tammany would surely fall and really be
no hall at all
If it wasn’t for the Irish and the Jews.

Seeking the Sustainable Sacred

On September 27, the fall 2025 Jay P. Dolan Seminar in American Religion featured Thomas Tweed, Professor Emeritus of American Studies and History at Notre Dame. Prior to retirement, Tweed held the Harold and Martha Welch Professorship of American Studies. Among Tweed's publications are *Our Lady of the Exile: Diasporic Religion at a Cuban Catholic Shrine in Miami* (Oxford, 1997); *Crossing and Dwelling: A Theory of Religion* (Harvard, 2008); and *America's Church: The National Shrine and Catholic Presence in the Nation's Capital* (Oxford, 2011).

Prior to the Saturday morning seminar itself, Tweed delivered a Friday afternoon lecture, "The Sustainable Sacred," offering an overview of the argument in his latest book, *Religion in the Lands That Became America: A New History* (Yale, 2025). Tweed began by noting just how fraught at present are conversations about America's past, as well as his wish for the lecture to contribute to the 2025–26 Notre Dame Forum theme of "Cultivating Hope." He continued by describing the extraordinarily long gestation of the book, beginning with his own reading of Sydney Ahlstrom's *A Religious History of the American People* (Yale, 1972) as a graduate student. Tweed immediately noticed what Ahlstrom had missed: "There were no Puritans on my [childhood] street in Philadelphia." In other words, who counted as "the American people" in Ahlstrom's work, which quickly became magisterial, clearly excluded those outside of certain traditions and certain parts of the country. Tweed recalled airing this concern at a conference in 1988, launching nearly four decades of work to expand on what Ahlstrom and others had missed.

After completing his own work on religion as a matrix of the processes of crossing and dwelling, Tweed became interested in religion as emplacement, but not one constrained by institutions—in other words, "places and processes over pastors and pulpits." Here, he draws on niche construction theory, "which posits multiple forms of

inheritance—not from genes"; Tweed counts genetic, cultural, and environmental inheritance all as part of humanity's process of niche construction.² This framework structures Tweed's new history of religion, "a story that begins with the notion that humans inherit, modify, and bequeath an *eco-cultural niche*, a lived world with shared symbols, communal ceremonies, special objects, and sacred landscapes."³ However, he also notes, niches may not necessarily persist once humans create them; niches can collapse in the absence of conditions required for their sustainability. Such conditions apply at the levels of the individual (safety, health, meaning, and belonging), the community (equity, productivity, freedom, participation, and peace), and the environment (optimal climate, renewable resources, integrity, and biodiversity).⁴

Tweed approaches religion as emplacement, focusing on 'places and processes over pastors and pulpits.'

A wide range of human activity today has contributed to the destabilization of niches, leading to their fundamental unsustainability due to loss of some of the conditions mentioned above. Tweed mentioned recent, economic examples—such as uranium mining and petroleum refining—that have negatively impacted not only our literal ecology but also the niche ecologies into which humans have organized their societies. On a larger scale, Tweed mentioned four basic stages of human activity around which niche construction has taken place: foraging, farming, factories, and fiber optics. Within these activities, the presence of religious ideas, practices, adherence, and leadership contributes to either promoting or hindering sustainability.

When considering the ultimate significance of the book—the "Who cares and so what?"—Tweed suggested three ways that looking at the history of religion through niche construction



Thomas A. Tweed

advances our understanding of history in the Americas. First, the timescale required necessarily recovers the pre-Columbian past of the lands that became America, expanding scholars' chronology to a starting point long before that of Ahlstrom and subsequent canonical historians. This approach also helps show how other communities and societies have addressed problems that we might encounter ourselves, including our current environmental crises. Finally, Tweed noted that the sheer diversity of human communities included in such a scale and scope further proves the impossibility of identifying any kind of superiority of one racial group over another.

An extended Q&A segment saw robust conversation between attendees and Tweed. Rev. Paul Kollman, C.S.C. (Theology, Notre Dame) asked about the relationship between the material and immaterial (i.e., the essential elements of religion) in niche construction theory: Where do non-material resources fit in? Tweed responded that he sees value in expanding the "things" that comprise a niche, including cultural practices, genetics, symbolic objects, worldview assumptions, and received narratives. Many of these things, or their meanings, are visible only through what

material evidence has been left behind, so there is no real reason not to include them in niche construction. Mahan Mirza (Keough School, Notre Dame) mentioned that the "Great Acceleration" described in Tweed's book depicts a world headed toward collapse and asked what Tweed thought future niches might look like.⁵ Tweed acknowledged again that niches can, and will, break when they become unsustainable. Niche disappearance is possible when the necessary conditions no longer obtain. However, the long-term perspective that informs the book also gives us in the present an opportunity to see what has worked in the past and attempt to apply it to our own conditions.

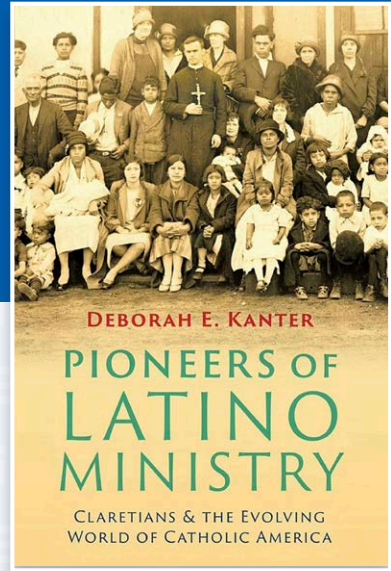
Saturday's Dolan Seminar took up Tweed's book itself, with opening commentaries from Melissa Borja (University of Michigan), Katherine Carté (Southern Methodist University), Jon Coleman (History, Notre Dame), and Grant Wacker (Duke Divinity School). Coleman began the session by highlighting the book's demonstration of how historians of religion and historians of the environment can productively overlap; for example, some causes driving ecological crises, like mass consumption and overconsumption, also drive dramatic shifts in religion. Coleman noted that the niches described in the book are hybrid creations of nature and humanity, which infuses a type of morality into the urgency of environmental crises; to Tweed, Coleman noted, nature includes humans, societies, politics, and the environment itself. He also observed that unlike animals, humans "hop" niches and can occupy more than one at once, with significant implications for their sustainability.

Carté pointed out that the concept of niche challenges the concept of the nation and its primacy in historical narratives. She noted that nations are political entities first and foremost, "expressions of power projected onto a map." But individuals and communities, inhabiting niches, can come and go, cross and dwell, across and irrespective of national lines. Furthermore, with the creation of an elite necessarily resulting from the

Dolan Seminar in American Religion Fall 2026

Pioneers of Latino Ministry *Claretians and the Evolving World* *of Catholic America*

New York University Press, 2025



AUTHOR



Deborah E. Kanter

Albion College



learn more at
cushwa.nd.edu/events

COMMENTATORS



Maggie Elmore

Baylor University



Ramón A. Gutiérrez

University of Chicago



Timothy Matovina

University of Notre Dame

Saturday, September 26 · 9:00 a.m. · 205–7 McKenna Hall

appearance of the nation, niches allow scholars to examine geographical areas without undue concern for social hierarchy.

Borja called attention to Tweed's book as a new grand narrative that in some way revives a tradition arguably bookended by Ahlstrom in 1972. *Religion in the Lands That Became America* has a broad geographic scope, an ambitious time-frame, and enters into dialogue between the past and the present. Uniquely, Borja argued, Tweed grounds the story of religion in the land and not the immaterial. A periodization not structured around political events also sets Tweed's narrative apart. She commended Tweed's disconnection of religion from traditional structures, focusing on concepts like digital, broadcast, and workplace religion over defined denominations.

Wacker praised the book enthusiastically, focusing on three signature accomplishments. First, he lauded Tweed's writing style, likening it to the polished skill of Francis Parkman and George Bancroft. In Wacker's telling, "deceptively simple sentences consisting of common words" mark the book's prose. Second, Wacker praised Tweed's inclusion both of those who played a role in so-called "pre-history" as well as those who rarely "make the cut" elsewhere in historiography. Finally, Wacker suggested *Religion in the Lands That Became America* may be a benchmark for defining a new canon in the history of American religion. It is not insignificant, he noted, that Yale University Press published both Sydney Ahlstrom's 1972 history and Tweed's in 2025.

In his response to the commentators, Tweed expressed gratitude for the seriousness with which they considered the book. Among his thoughts about the commentators' various points was a clarification of his book being a "grand narrative" and thus ostensibly standing apart from other, more narrowly focused works. Tweed noted that, for example, every educator's classroom syllabus will reveal a narrative being told. The task of the historian is to be conscious of a book's narrative and tell it better rather than worry over whether the narrative is too strong.

The Q&A segment ranged widely over American religion, writing style, and more. Candy Gunther Brown (Indiana University Bloomington) asked about the disparity that can arise when strong figures in history may act in ways that are selfish and harmful, sustaining a niche in some sense but running counter to the moral and religious systems in which they operate. Tweed acknowledged such a historical reality but responded that he simply tries to describe processes as faithfully as possible, without overtly criticizing anyone; readers might come to their own judgments. Peter Thuesen (Indiana University Indianapolis) continued Grant Wacker's praise of Tweed's prose, commenting on the deft use of less formal phrasing from time to time. Tweed's response included both the stylistic and the strategic; some statements simply work better in a vernacular voice and reaching the widest possible range of readers means using whatever prose is most effective for the audience the author imagines. He also acknowledged, however, that doing so may require sensitive negotiation with editors. Finally, the Cushwa Center's Darren Dochuk asked Tweed what is next on his scholarly agenda. Tweed declared his intent to encourage everyone who's trying to write the next Great Book to simply go and do it.

A Half Century of Catholic Publishing

Robert Ellsberg delivered the 2025 Cushwa Center Lecture on November 6, titled "Publishing in Service to the World Church: My Life at Orbis Books." The Cushwa Center Lecture series began in 1984 and, while initially an occasional event, now occurs annually "for Notre Dame students, faculty, and community members beyond the University to hear from distinguished scholars and writers about the relationship between religion and public life."⁶ Recent lecturers include Candy Gunther Brown ("Francis S. MacNutt and the Globalization of Charismatic Christianity"); Garry Sparks ("Five Hundred Years of Mayanized Christianity"); and Maureen H. O'Connell ("Finding Mom in a St. Patrick's Day Minstrel

Show”). Ellsberg serves as publisher, executive director, and editor-in-chief of Orbis Books. Ellsberg began his editorial career working alongside Dorothy Day at *The Catholic Worker*. His many authored or edited books with Orbis include *All Saints: Daily Reflections on Saints, Prophets, and Witnesses for Our Time* (1997); *Blessed Among All Women: Reflections on Women Saints, Prophets, and Witnesses for Our Time* (2006); and Pope Francis’s *A Stranger and You Welcomed Me: A Call to Mercy and Solidarity with Migrants and Refugees* (2018). His most recent book, from Liturgical Press in October 2025, is *Blessed Among Us: Day by Day with Saintly Witnesses, Volume 2*.

Orbis Books began calling attention less to theology coming from the Church’s Roman center and more to the theology of the ‘world church.’

Ellsberg recounted the history of Orbis Books, which the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers founded in 1970 under the leadership of Fr. Miguel d’Escoto to platform theologians from the global South. In this, Ellsberg said, the history of Orbis is in some ways indicative of the history of the Church in the second half of the 20th century. The new publishing house called attention less to abstract theology emanating from the Church’s Roman center and more to the theology of the “world church” (an idea often attributed to Karl Rahner in the wake of the Second Vatican Council). Ellsberg described this mission as living out an open image of the Church arising from the Council Fathers at Vatican II. Yet as Ellsberg noted, the Council itself responded to questions that Western societies of the global North had posed to the Church. Thus the early work of Orbis also entailed expanding beyond the specifics of the Council—here, he cited the 1968 gathering of Latin American bishops in Medellín, Colombia, as a specific catalyst—and exploring the concerns of those societies which, in the 1970s



Robert Ellsberg

and 1980s, were undergoing massive change (and often suffering).

Liberation theology played an essential role in this exploration and in the Orbis catalog. In 1973 Orbis published *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation*, an English translation of Gustavo Gutiérrez’s landmark 1971 text, *Teología de la liberación: Perspectivas*. The press published 15th and 50th anniversary editions in 1988 and 2023, and multiple additional volumes and compilations by or involving the Peruvian theologian. Giving a visible platform to liberation theology of course brought Orbis into one of the most contentious theological debates of the 20th century. Ellsberg described the involvement of Orbis Books with several controversies—not limited to liberation theology—over the course of his editorship. These moments highlight the tension that sometimes arises between publishing in theology and the presence of a centralized theological authority. Ellsberg mentioned, for example, Orbis’s publication of titles by Brazilian theologian Leonardo Boff, whose book *Church: Charism and Power* came under Vatican censure

in 1985.⁷ Orbis also published the Jesuit Jacques Dupuis's *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* in 1997; this book, too, was the subject of a "Notification" from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.⁸ The CDF issued the same against *Jesus Symbol of God*, by Roger Haight, S.J., published in 2004.⁹ Ellsberg also provided the example of Jon Sobrino, S.J., and the "Notification" issued by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in 2007 regarding his books *Jesus the Liberator* and *Christ the Liberator*.¹⁰ While in some ways these events ultimately called far more non-specialist attention to these theologians than they may have otherwise received, they illustrate well the ongoing struggle of making theological sense, from within well-defined intellectual boundaries, of a world increasingly defined by religious pluralism, societal suffering, and international discord.

More recent Orbis publications, Ellsberg said, suggest what could be the priorities of theology today. He noted greater emphasis on a theology informed by the real experience of individuals and communities, as well as the greater visibility of religious pluralism in some parts of the world—challenging the centuries-old primacy of Greek philosophy as a precursor to Catholic theology. He also pointed to Orbis's growing list in Black Christianity dating to the 1980s, which directly addresses one of the American Church's longest standing theological lacunae. Ellsberg also mentioned Orbis's publication of several works by Pope Francis, marking a significant and unique intervention in the development of Christian theology.

During the Q&A session, Daniel Horan (Saint Mary's College) asked about the future of Orbis publishing and the direction that Ellsberg sees theology moving. Ellsberg suggested that theology may become less academic, with a move toward narrative, affective, or activist theology. He also cited shifts in general interest in religion as an idea, acknowledging that publishing theology reflects, rather than creates, interest in religion. Another attendee asked about the challenges of

reaching new audiences. Ellsberg pointed to the need to enter into dialogue with a more secular audience—an essential process of moving beyond theologians talking amongst themselves and an acknowledgment of demographic reality today. ■

Notes

- 1 The Ancient Order of Hibernians was founded in 1836 and claims the mantle of "America's oldest Irish Catholic fraternal organization." While initially founded to provide practical support to newly arrived Irish immigrants, today the Order also provides "a continuing bridge with Ireland for those who are generations removed from our ancestral homeland." See "About the AOH," aoh.com/about-the-aoh. The Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians, founded as the Daughters of Erin, dates to 1894. See "National LAOH," www.laohmich.org/national-laoh.
- 2 Thomas A. Tweed, *Religion in the Lands That Became America: A New History* (Yale, 2025), 9.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Ibid., 12.
- 5 Ibid., 372. The "Great Acceleration" is one of four "Sustainability Crises" Tweed describes from the 12th century onward. On the Great Acceleration, beginning in the 1950s, Tweed notes "effects of global industrialization and urbanization sharply accelerate. Onset of the period when human intervention in natural systems is predominant. Abrupt rise in carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrates in polar ice levels. Ecological damage intensified by religious, economic and political divides."
- 6 "The Cushwa Center Lecture," cushwa.nd.edu/events/the-cushwa-center-lecture.
- 7 Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, "Notification on the book 'Church: Charism and Power' by Father Leonardo Boff OFM," Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, March 11, 1985, vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19850311_notif-boff_en.html.
- 8 Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, "Notification on the book *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* (Orbis Books: Maryknoll, New York 1997) by Father Jacques Dupuis, S.J.," Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, January 24, 2001, vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20010124_dupuis_en.html.
- 9 Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, "Notification on the book 'Jesus Symbol of God' by Father Roger Haight S.J.," Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, December 13, 2004, vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20041213_notification-fr-haight_en.html.
- 10 Cardinal William Levada, "Notification on the works of Father Jon SOBRINO, SJ," Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, November 26, 2006, vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20061126_notification-sobrino_en.html.

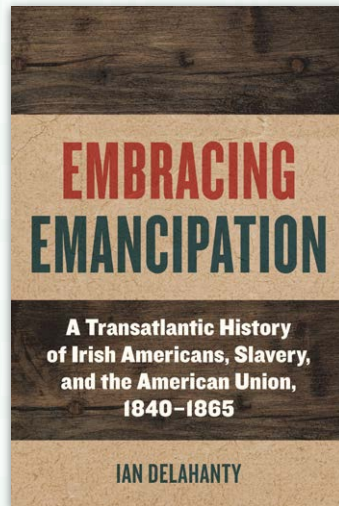
HIBERNIAN

LECTURE

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Ian Delahanty
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Preserving a Theological Voice

Notre Dame and Partners Open the Gustavo Gutiérrez Merino, O.P., Collection

By Heather Grennan Gary

Every year for five decades, Gustavo Gutiérrez scheduled a week or two for study and theological reflection. This was no silent retreat, however. He welcomed hundreds—sometimes thousands—of others to join him. Pastoral ministers, priests and nuns, lay men and women, students, teachers, and leaders of social organizations came together in Lima, Peru, to listen to lectures, do small-group Bible study, and reflect on pastoral practices.

Gutiérrez started the gatherings in 1971, the same year his groundbreaking book *Teología de la liberación: Perspectivas* was published. They continued until 2020. Known until 2000 as *Jornadas de Reflexión Teológica* (JRT, or Theological Reflection Journeys) and afterward as the *Curso de Teología* (Theology Course), these gatherings ran parallel with a tumultuous period in Peru's history and Gutiérrez's own long career as a priest, scholar, and theologian.

Gutiérrez died in 2024 at the age of 96, after 65 years as a priest, 23 years as a Dominican, and 17 years as the John Cardinal O'Hara Professor of Theology at the University of Notre Dame, a position from which he retired in 2018.

In 2018, Timothy Matovina, then chair of the theology department, organized a reunion of

Gutiérrez's former graduate students. Gutiérrez had returned to Peru full time in his retirement, so they traveled to see him, his parish, and places important to his work. During a visit to his archive in Lima, the group saw a collection of tapes and CDs—audio recordings from the *Jornadas* and the *Curso de Teología*. It reminded Matovina of how Gutiérrez's last teaching assistant at Notre Dame, Leo Guardado, had asked him why they weren't doing something with Gutiérrez's archive. Suddenly, Matovina knew what they could do. "I remember thinking, 'There are many treasures here, but this is the gold mine,'" he said.

Fast-forward to today. Through the painstaking and years-long work of a devoted team, many of those recordings have been digitized, transcribed, and compiled into what is now the Gustavo Gutiérrez Merino, O.P., Collection. This significant contribution to global scholarship was made possible by a years-long collaboration between the University of Notre Dame and the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru (PUCP), which sponsored the *Jornadas* between 1971 and 2000, and the Instituto Bartolomé de Las Casas (IBC), which sponsored the *Curso de Teología* after 2000.

Heather Grennan Gary is a writer and editor based in Hillsdale, Michigan.



Participants at the *Jornadas de Reflexión Teológica*, c. 1995, fill an auditorium to hear lectures now preserved in the Gustavo Gutiérrez Merino, O.P., Collection. Photo courtesy of the Department of Theology, Pontifical Catholic University of Peru.

Witnessing to Hope

The collection and the collaboration behind it were celebrated at a symposium held at Hesburgh Library on November 14, 2025. “Reasons for Our Hope: Honoring the Theological Legacy of Gustavo Gutiérrez, O.P.,” drew graduate students, faculty members, Dominicans, community members, and members of the project team. Some traveled from as far as Lima; others joined from just down the hall.

The first session of the afternoon focused on the new archival collection, and the second delved into *Vivir y pensar el Dios de los pobres*, Gutiérrez’s new book, published posthumously (Centro de Estudios y Publicaciones, 2025) with Guardado as editor and an English translation forthcoming from Orbis Books. The Hesburgh Libraries, University of Notre Dame Archives, Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism, Department of Theology, and Kellogg Institute for International Studies cosponsored the event.

In his opening remarks, David Lantigua, associate professor of theology and the William W. and

Anna Jean Cushwa Co-Director of the Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism, shared a translated line from Gutiérrez’s new book: “The double eruption of God and the poor in our lives is the source of a spirituality that summons us to give reasons for our hope.” He paused before adding a personal note: “I can speak for myself and for many others—some gathered in this room today—about a third eruption. That is the eruption of Father Gustavo in our lives, whether knowing him personally or through his writings.”

As one of Gutiérrez’s graduate students, Lantigua said that Gutiérrez had opened up for him the role of faith and theology within history. “He did it with tremendous intellectual force as a teacher, yet with the most profound spiritual subtlety.” Lantigua shared how Gutiérrez had given him “hope and courage to see a path in my own intellectual life”—a theme that was echoed by others at the symposium.

In the first session, a panel of project team members introduced themselves and provided

Gutiérrez created a space for people without systematic training in theology to study and do theological reflection. He presented ideas he was developing and heard from participants about their experiences.

context about the collection and its development. The panel included Erika Hosselkus, associate dean of the Hesburgh Libraries and former curator of Latin American and Iberian studies, who co-directed Notre Dame's part of the project alongside Matovina; longtime Gutiérrez colleague Carmen Lora of IBC who supervised the team in Lima charged with preparing the collection; and Juan Miguel Espinoza Portocarrero, associate professor in the theology department at PUCP, who has studied and written about the first 30 years of these courses.

Espinoza provided an overview of the importance of these gatherings within Peruvian society and how they responded to political, social, and economic realities in the country. He called them an “intellectual laboratory” where Gutiérrez was able to present ideas he was developing and hear from participants about their experiences in the field. Gutiérrez's objective with these events was

to create a space for people without systematic training in theology to study and do theological reflection. About 300 people attended the first Jornada in 1971—so many that they had to move their meetings to Catholic high schools in Lima that had enough space to host them. What started as one week in February expanded in 1983 to include a second week in August. It reached peak attendance in 1986 with 2,500 participants; gatherings after the year 2000 were much smaller due to a change in focus. Taken as a whole, Espinoza said the gatherings “significantly contributed to theological formation in the Church in Peru and to the dissemination of liberation theology.”

Carmen Lora first met Gutiérrez in 1963, when he was teaching the basic required theology course at PUCP. In 1971 she was working with the Centro de Estudios y Publicaciones (CEP), which published his *Teología de la liberación*. Lora, who went on to become the editorial director at CEP, continued working with him for the next 50 years. She attended almost all of the Jornadas between 1971 and 1999, as well as some of the later Curso meetings, when she was invited to give talks about her own work. Lora remembers especially the Jornada in 1978, a particularly unstable year for Peru—their gathering took place at the same time that the country's school teachers were on strike—and the Curso of 2004, when they considered the new Truth and Reconciliation Commission report, which documented the atrocities committed by the Shining Path and Peru's military forces, and reflected on what social gaps and conflict meant to the faith and engagement of Christians.



Carmen Lora. Photo courtesy of Becky Malewitz, Hesburgh Libraries.



In response to the murder of María Elias Huapaya by the terrorist organization Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) on October 10, 1989, the Jesuit parish in El Agustino mobilizes a local demonstration under the motto, "You Shall Not Kill, Neither with Hunger nor with Bullets." Photo by Servicios Educativos El Agustino, reproduced with permission of the Archivo Histórico de la Compañía de Jesús del Perú.

Labor of Love

Because she knew the timeline of Gutiérrez's work, Lora coordinated with others who knew Gutiérrez's voice well. They took on the massive task of listening to the recordings, deciphering garbled audio, and producing accurate transcriptions. Lora then sifted through Gutiérrez's notes, outlines, and schemas from the gatherings, matching them to the corresponding audio files. All told, the collection includes 400 hours of Gutiérrez speaking at these events. (Only his talks have been included in the collection, although programs in the supplementary materials include the names of other presenters and their topics.)

"Carmen was the manager of the project. She bought all the equipment, hired the transcribers, did all the work. It was an absolute labor of love. If there's one hero in this whole process, it's Carmen Lora," Matovina said. "Without her, this would not have happened."

Speaking at the symposium, Lora acknowledged the transitional space the project had reached. "On the one hand, this ceremony is

a final step in a work process. On the other, it's the beginning of making available an archive that we know will be valuable to many researchers and people interested in the work of Gustavo Gutiérrez."

"There are leading scholars of Gustavo Gutiérrez's theology who don't even know these tapes exist," Matovina said before the symposium, noting the freshness of the material. "Gustavo said—it's the title of the first session of the symposium—*más que la palabra escrita*, [my theology is] more than the written word. Theology is a spoken act. It's done in dialogue with the community. Of course he did write some great books, but this is a chance to hear his theological voice, to hear the crowd interacting with him—even in their laughter or their applause, you're getting a sense that this is an oral theological event, not a written one."

The audio recordings provide additional information about how the talks may have been received by the audience, but the project team had researchers in mind when they decided to



Left: Participants gather at registration and book tables at the *Jornadas de Reflexión Teológica*, c. 1995. Photo courtesy of the Department of Theology, Pontifical Catholic University of Peru.

Right: A *comisión* or small-group discussion at the *Jornadas de Reflexión Teológica*, c. 1995. Participants reflect on pastoral experiences and the day's lectures. Photo courtesy of the Department of Theology, Pontifical Catholic University of Peru.



transcribe them all. “Research with audio files can be challenging,” Hosselkus said. “Audio quality and volume vary significantly and researchers may listen to hours of recordings without encountering relevant content. To facilitate use of this collection, we committed to professional transcription of all files. In addition to listening to the recordings, researchers can read transcripts and perform keyword searches to locate content about specific topics or themes. The transcripts also function as a data set that can be analyzed in many different ways, vastly increasing the usability of these rich materials.”

A Post-Custodial Approach

From the beginning, Hosselkus and Matovina knew they wanted to support IBC and PUCP in maintaining their collections and making the material more accessible to researchers. They were implementing an approach referred to as post-custodial collecting, where archivists support record creators in managing their own materials rather than acquire physical materials and then sever the relationship.

For Hosselkus, the project exemplifies a model she hopes to see adopted more widely. “The model that we’re using here is something that we want and need to be doing more. Other

parts of the world have important and potentially endangered collections, and we can partner to preserve them in unique ways—preserve the physical collection in its place of origin, and then take these digital copies and make them accessible to a much broader audience.”

‘The model that we’re using here is something that we want and need to be doing more.’

Erika Hosselkus

In this case, Notre Dame, PUCP, and IBC developed a memorandum of understanding to guide their collaboration. Notre Dame Research provided the project with two library acquisitions grants, and Hesburgh Libraries, Notre Dame’s Department of Theology, Institute for Latino Studies, and Office of Mission Engagement and Church Affairs also provided support. Funds covered the cost of digitization, description, transcription, archival supplies, and equipment like humidifiers, dehumidifiers, and a copier.

The original recordings and supplemental documents remain in the archives in Lima, which was an intentional decision of the project

directors. “We didn’t want to be in a position of removing this really important legacy from Peru, where Gustavo was from, and taking it to a North American archive,” Hosselkus said. Instead, they wanted to increase access to the materials, which was done by making the full collection available in the form of digital surrogates at each of the three cooperating institutions. And the Hesburgh Libraries’ commitment to preserve and secure these materials is an investment in the collection. “This is beyond just access,” Hosselkus said. “The focus on long-term preservation of these materials acknowledges the importance of this collection as well.”

Jason Kauffman, an archives specialist at the University Archives, created the bilingual finding aid for the collection. Once the partners in Lima completed a batch of materials, usually every five or six months, Lora would load everything onto a flash drive and mail it to Hosselkus, who would pass it along to Kauffman. He’d transfer the files to his storage system and start inventorying them. All told, it’s just over 35 gigabytes of material—546 audio files, 723 image files, and 1,355 documents. Kauffman said the Gutiérrez collection complements several other collections at the University of Notre Dame Archives, including the Conferencia General del Episcopado Latinoamericano (also a digital surrogate collection), as well as the Marcos McGrath Papers and the San Miguelito Mission Records.

While the Gutiérrez collection is completely digitized, it’s not available online—researchers must visit Notre Dame, IBC, or PUCP to access the material. This honors the wishes that Gutiérrez shared at one of the project team meetings for how the archives would be accessed. “A lot of these talks are not formal—there’s usually colloquial language and maybe a little joke or something,” Matovina said. “He didn’t want to be quoted out of context.”

In the days and weeks prior to the symposium, the project team was busy making final tweaks to the collection with the aim of all three institutions opening the collection simultaneously. Some

researchers are impatient—Hosselkus said they already had graduate students knocking down the door to get access to it. Others are expected to follow soon.

To help expand access to the collection and to foster the study of Gutiérrez more broadly, the Cushwa Center announced in August 2025 the Gutiérrez Research Awards, open to scholars pursuing research projects in theology, history, and the social sciences that engage or take inspiration from the work of Gutiérrez, especially his articulation of the preferential option for the poor. Inaugural award recipients were announced in March 2026.

Remembering Father Gustavo and Friends

The second session of the symposium focused on Gutiérrez’s book *Vivir y pensar el Dios de los pobres*. David Lantigua interviewed Leo Guardado, now an associate professor of theology at Fordham University, about his experience working as editor of the volume. Since both Lantigua and Guardado studied under Gutiérrez, the conversation veered into Gutiérrez’s teaching methods and his spirituality, as well as the themes of memory, poverty, and the incompleteness of theory without praxis. “I know it’s odd in a classroom, in a doctoral program, to ask students about the contemplative prayer dimension,” Guardado said, but otherwise, “I think we end up with the misunderstandings of liberation theology as a social philosophy or as some other thing, but not actually a theology. Deep theological, mystical, prayerful thinking is very different. It’s embodied and it’s incarnate. So that’s a challenge that I’ve set forth for [my students]. How that happens is through the communities that you accompany.”

The excitement around the new book and collection was punctuated with stories that presenters and attendees shared about personal interactions with Gutiérrez. Guardado detailed how his first encounter with Gutiérrez involved fixing his computer. Father Daniel Groody, C.S.C., now vice



Rev. Daniel G. Groody, C.S.C. Photo courtesy of Becky Malewitz, Hesburgh Libraries.

president and associate provost for undergraduate education at Notre Dame, remembered meeting Gutiérrez in person for the first time at a symposium in Paris in 2000. Rev. Virgilio Elizondo, who knew both Groody and Gutiérrez, invited the two of them to lunch. It was there that Elizondo, at the request of then-chair of theology John Cavadini, invited Gutiérrez to join the Notre Dame Department of Theology. “When he was asked, he actually started to cry. He said that he had never been asked to formally join any theology department before.” Groody added that Notre Dame held special meaning for Gutiérrez. “Father Hesburgh had invited him to come here in the late 1960s, right

after he had given some initial talks in Canada. It was here that he began formulating some of his ideas around the theology of liberation.” That connection continued to deepen after Gutiérrez joined the faculty in 2001.

“We’re really honored to be the North American outlet of the ongoing study of Gustavo through examination of his archives,” Matovina said, “and to be collaborating with our colleagues in Lima.”

But there was a great void felt at the symposium—not only with the loss of Gutiérrez himself, but also with the absence of a number of other collaborators. Both Espinoza and Lora mentioned Father Andrés Gallego, former chair of PUCP’s theology department, who had passed away just weeks earlier. Lora also acknowledged members of the project team in Peru who were unable to attend: Pilar Arroyo, Gutiérrez’s assistant, without whom much of the work would not have been possible; Mari Carmen Vallenás, who scanned the original documents; Blanca Cayo and Gustavo Álvarez, who transcribed the audio; and those who took care to record and save the documents from the Jornada and Curso gatherings. “Without their work,” Lora said, “it would not have been possible to have this valuable material now.” ■

Participants in pre-symposium discussions gather in front of Hesburgh Library on November 14, 2025. From left: Kelly Klee (Notre Dame Theology); Timothy Matovina (Notre Dame Theology); Payton Phillips Quintanilla (Hesburgh Libraries); Rolando Ames (IBC); Todd Walatka (Notre Dame Theology); Véronique Lecaros (PUCP); David Lantigua (Cushwa Center); Leo Guardado (Fordham University); Juan Miguel Espinoza Portocarrero (PUCP); Jason Kauffman (University Archives); Carmen Lora (IBC); Patrick Milhoan (University Archives); Erika Hosselkus (Hesburgh Libraries). Photo courtesy of Becky Malewitz, Hesburgh Libraries.





The Blessed Stanley Rother Shrine church as seen from the campus's pilgrim center. Photo by Katherine Mascari.

Where is Home?

Devotion, Solidarity, and Pilgrimage at the Shrine of Blessed Stanley Rother

By Katherine Mascari

On a Sunday morning in the summer of 2024, as I sat in a pew of the \$50 million shrine dedicated to the first U.S.-born martyr, an Oklahoman priest pithily recalled the origins of the stunning new devotional site: “If not for Blessed Stanley’s sacrifice, this would still be a golf course.”

The homily delivered on Blessed Stanley Rother’s feast day (July 28) reminded us that the pews and statues, the dome and high altar, the visitors center, gift shop, re-creation of Tepeyac Hill, and every other aspect of the pristinely manicured 53-acre property in South Oklahoma City exist today because a man lived with and died for a poor Indigenous community in a remote village of Guatemala. The priest explained that the erection of the shrine has turned a former golf course into a place of mercy and redemption through the sacraments of confession and the Eucharist. Those who have been lost return home to be reincorporated into the life of the Church, and all of this is made possible through Blessed Stanley’s witness.

Katherine Mascari is a student in the doctoral program in the Department of Theology at the University of Notre Dame and a graduate research assistant at the Cushwa Center.

The life of Blessed Stanley Rother exemplifies Pope Francis's turn to the peripheries, while also complicating the center-periphery relationship. His shrine has done the same.

In the four decades since his death in 1981, the story of Father Stanley Rother has prompted reflection on perennial questions of the Christian faith: *Who is lost? Where is home?* The missionary martyr's international story is now told through a markedly local shrine. The devotional site's brief history has already in unexpected ways raised the same questions within the context of Oklahoma City today.

Who is lost? Where is home? These questions encapsulate Pope Francis's apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, in which he urges the Church to embrace a "missionary option," going out from traditional ecclesial centers to evangelize and be evangelized by those on the margins of Church and society. The missionary church embraces the periphery, learning how the "center" might reform and renew its presentation of the Gospel in light of the situation of the excluded. The life of Blessed Stanley exemplifies this turn to the peripheries, while also complicating the center-periphery relationship. His Oklahoma shrine has done the same.

A series of field research trips in 2024 revealed that the site's staff are still making sense of this relationship between the martyr and his shrine. In what follows, I draw on interviews, archival research, and participant observation from July to October of 2024 as the shrine's popularity grew in unexpected ways, sparking deeper reflection on the Church in Oklahoma and beyond.

Home and Mission

Stanley Francis Rother was born in a dust storm in Okarche, Oklahoma, in 1935. He spent his teenage years behind the wheel of a tractor, plowing and harvesting. The Rother family and Okarche are deeply intertwined. Stanley's siblings, cousins, and classmates, many of whom still farm in Okarche, now make the hour-long drive to visit the shrine erected in his honor. "Stan Rother is one of us," the refrain goes. "I sat by him in our FFA meetings," they say, referring to the local chapter of Future Farmers of America.¹ And yet, Stanley's adult life looked radically different from the "us" who claim him.

After quietly discerning a call to the priesthood, "Stan," as he was known, was sent to seminary in San Antonio. Struggling to learn from the Latin textbooks he was provided, he failed his courses and was asked to leave. Thankfully, a persistent bishop petitioned the rector of Mount Saint Mary's Seminary in Maryland to welcome Stanley, keeping him on the track to priesthood. Stanley was ordained in 1963, and five years later was sent to Misión Católica de Oklahoma, abbreviated MICATOKLA, the diocese's mission in Santiago Atitlán, Guatemala. The

mission was a response to the call of Pope St. John XXIII, who in the 1960s urged bishops of the United States to provide pastoral assistance to Central America.² By 1975, Father Stan had become pastor of the mission, where he coordinated a farming co-op, oversaw a village hospital, maintained the mission's vehicles and completed various repairs and improvements on the mission-style church. Father Stanley was known as "Padre Aplá's," with a Tz'utujil term for "Francis," his middle name. The priest who struggled with Latin in seminary learned Spanish and practically mastered the native Tz'utujil language. He worked diligently for years to have the New Testament translated into the local Mayan tongue spoken by fewer than 100,000 people in the region today.

Father Stan wrote to his friends and sister about his growing love for the village and its people. "This kind of work, I hope, will be given special consideration for length of tenure. Maybe they'll let me retire here . . . I would stay if all support from Oklahoma were stopped. The farm may have to support me some day."³ Over the 13 years he spent in Santiago Atitlán, the little lake-side village became home.



Blessed Stanley Rother

Mission and Home

In the late 1970s and early '80s, the political situation in Guatemala intensified. Conflict over land reform turned hostile as *guerrilla* groups spread throughout the mountain highlands and the government responded with violent suppression. Religious leaders were particularly targeted. Catechists were kidnapped, their tortured bodies later found on roadsides. Others simply disappeared. The terror intensified throughout 1980, and in January 1981 after learning that his name was on a death list, Father Rother returned to Oklahoma.

During his three months in the United States, he took time to visit family members, old friends, and supporters of the mission. Many recall a Father Stanley who was distracted and who longed to return to Santiago Atitlán. While he asked friends, family members, and fellow priests whether they thought he should return, many recall sensing that Stan already knew what he was going to do, where he belonged. "It's hard to think of Stan without thinking of Guatemala," one fellow priest remarked of his last conversation with him. "To me, he is Guatemala."⁴

He returned to Santiago Atitlán in time for Holy Week in 1981, despite multiple warnings that the situation was unsafe. "The shepherd cannot run at the

first sign of danger,” he wrote to the people of the archdiocese.⁵ Three months after returning, in the early hours of July 28, 1981, three masked men entered the rectory and beat and shot Blessed Stanley. “Kill me here!” he yelled amid the chaos. He refused to be taken alive to be tortured for information that could place his parishioners in greater danger.

When morning came and word spread about Padre Aplá’s death, Tz’utujil parishioners gathered outside the doors of the church, mourning their beloved priest. While his body returned to Okarche to be laid to rest, the Tz’utujil people asked that his heart remain with them, and so it did, enshrined in Santiago Apostol Church. While he has long been considered a martyr and saint in Guatemala and to many in Oklahoma, the Vatican officially declared him a martyr in 2016, and he was beatified in Oklahoma City in 2017. He is not only the Catholic Church’s first martyr born in the United States but also the first U.S.-born priest to be beatified.

Peripheries and Centers

Father Rother’s ministry in Guatemala complicated his relationship to the centers and peripheries of his own life and the Church he served. If Okarche was the center of faith and family during the early, formative years of his life, it became something of a periphery during his tenure at Santiago Atitlán. His childhood parish and the archdiocese he faithfully served became a place of exile while he awaited his return to his beloved Tz’utujil people. His cousin and current rector of his shrine, Rev. Don Wolf, described Blessed Stanley’s decision to return to Guatemala as a recognition that he could not remain in the former “center” that had been so formative for his identity:

Why would he have chosen to jump back into the maelstrom of politics and bullets that now marked his ministry? People noticed his affection for the downtrodden Tz’utujils he served . . . But Stanley, in all his sanctity, went to Guatemala to live. To stay in Oklahoma was to die. He left home to go home and when he got home he was bound for home. He went to Guatemala to live.⁶

Father Rother saw that while Oklahoma was a place of protection, to remain would be to die in light of his priestly and missionary vocation: “A shepherd cannot run at the first sign of danger.” As Father Wolf summarized Blessed Stanley’s discernment, “I won’t be the same priest if I’m here [in Oklahoma], not there.”⁷

However, it would be too simple to say that his ministry entailed a simple “switch” between center and periphery, Oklahoma and Guatemala; that the two poles were swapped and suddenly Father Rother could simply live his life devoted to one and unconcerned with the other. As a missionary priest, he remained dedicated to keeping the people of Oklahoma informed and connected to the life of the mission. He wrote regular columns in the diocesan newspaper, the *Sooner Catholic*, and sent frequent letters and updates to people throughout the state and beyond. In many ways, he was devoted to the betterment of the archdiocese, working to broaden the vision of those at the ecclesial and social “center” by the

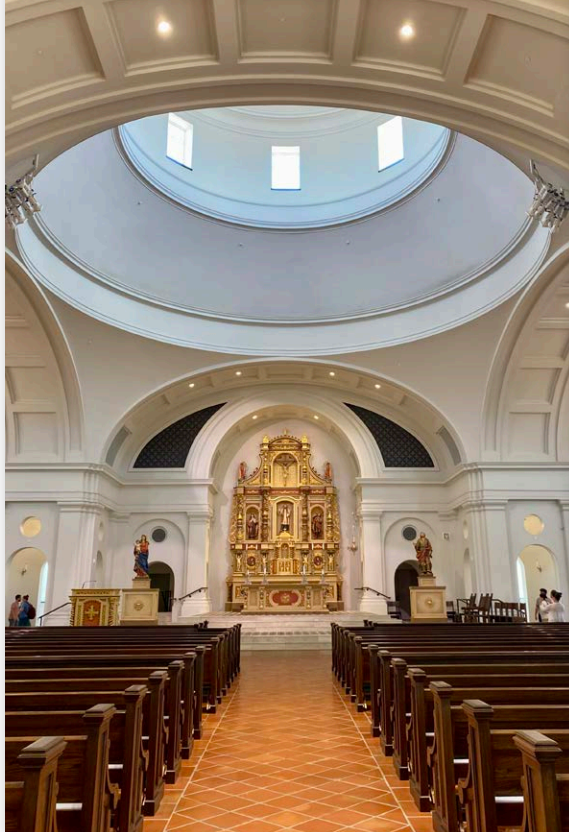
realities of this periphery. While Blessed Stanley in some sense would have “died” by remaining in Oklahoma, his communication with the people of the archdiocese through letters, newspaper columns, and parish appearances on his return visits evidences a belief that the Church in Oklahoma would be more alive—more itself—if attuned to the realities of the margins. He considered the profound faith of the Tz’utujil people amid poverty, violence, and death an important locus for reflection in a global Church. He felt he had a lot to learn from the community that passed on this faith without the consistent presence of a priest for four centuries. Tz’utujil commitment to liturgical and popular devotional practices amid their turmoil offered profound insight into what it means to embody the hope of the Christian faith.

Since the people of Oklahoma constructed a devotional site for their martyr priest, the complexity of Blessed Stanley’s life has been mirrored in the 53-acre former golf course that now bears his name. Soon after he was beatified, the archdiocese launched a \$65 million capital campaign that prioritized the construction of a shrine as a place “to honor Blessed Stanley Rother and to be inspired to live the way that he lived.”⁸ According to the campaign, the shrine’s primary purpose is to tell the story of Blessed Stanley to those who visit. Secondly, the new church would serve the booming Hispanic population in South Oklahoma City. Ultimately the shrine, visible from the interstate, would be a “beacon of Catholicism in Oklahoma.” The campaign made no mention of a re-creation of Tepeyac Hill, a later addition to the plans.

Shrine and Parish

While thousands of pilgrims come to visit the extraordinary church built for the ordinary martyr from Okarche, the site’s secondary uses have shed light on the needs of the Church in Oklahoma in unexpected ways. Since its dedication, Stanley Rother’s devotional site has served to highlight the depth of faith and complex experience of the Latino community in South Oklahoma City. The location of the shrine and size of its church were decided with this community in mind, to provide a long overdue solution to overcrowding at two area parishes. Before the shrine was built, nearby Sacred Heart Catholic Church held nine Spanish Masses in a school gymnasium each weekend to accommodate its nearly 5,000 registered families. When the shrine opened, the parishioners of Sacred Heart were told they would leave behind the makeshift gymnasium sanctuary where they had worshiped for 15 years. As part of the move, Sacred Heart was merged with nearby Holy Angels, another Hispanic parish of 1,500 families with a church that seated 235. While the parish retains its original campus five miles away, both communities now worship in the newest, largest, and most expensive Catholic church in the state on Sundays, regularly filling its 2,000 seats.

The archdiocese’s clear, practical solution has offered a seemingly enviable fix for a community for which building an adequate worship space appeared financially impossible. The plan to erect a shrine for the archdiocese’s very own martyr,



Left: The nave of the shrine's main church. Right: Pilgrims and locals pray in the shrine's chapel, whose altar holds Blessed Stanley's body underneath a mural depicting ancient, medieval, and contemporary martyrs. Photos by Katherine Mascari.

situated just off the interstate on a former golf course, seemed to offer the perfect opportunity to raise needed funds and solve a pastoral problem with a multi-use space. However, Father Wolf, who in 2022 was appointed both pastor of Sacred Heart Catholic Church and rector of the Blessed Stanley Rother Shrine, explained that while “this property kind of fell out of the heavens just for us right here,” the response hasn’t been unanimously positive. For parishioners “who are most intimately involved, they feel like, well, they kind of drug us over here.”

While moving worship from the undersized gymnasium seemed the obvious choice, congregants lament losing a sense of ownership over their place of worship. As Father Wolf explained, “we closed this shabby, tiny, undersized church [Holy Angels], at Northwest 3rd and Blackwelder . . . but it was theirs and *only* theirs.” He explained that Holy Angels parishioners are not merely possessive over their space. Instead, losing their church uprooted their sense of ownership and belonging in the parish, and communicated to them that their intimate relationship to the social and devotional life of their parish was not fully understood by church leaders. To many, it seemed that the two parishes’ ministries were hastily and “clumsily” merged, under the implicit assumption that a shared language, Spanish, was sufficient to facilitate a smooth transition.

Father Wolf described navigating the real concerns and motivations of arch-diocesan leaders at the “center” and the needs of the community that has long been on the periphery as an act of “juggling machetes.” As a pastor and rector, this pastoral juggling act involves bridging center and periphery by telling ecclesial

leaders about the faith of the booming community and showing that this vibrant life of faith and devotion has something to teach them. Stanley Rother's Shrine has facilitated this work for Father Wolf: "I tell people, come here Sunday and just decide to stay for a couple of hours because, I mean, it's staggering to see what goes on here. I'm really proud of that." When Sacred Heart parishioners overflow the pews of Oklahoma's largest and most impressive church for multiple Masses each Sunday, they draw the attention of visiting clergy and the archbishop, confirming that the Latino community in South Oklahoma City is itself a center of faith and devotion and a beacon of Catholicism for all of Oklahoma.

Shrine and Hill

Stanley Rother's ministry and martyrdom drew Oklahomans to learn from the resilient faith of a poor Indigenous community on the margins amid their complex social and political situation. Forty years later, his shrine has begun to magnify the experience of a historically underserved community as a source of inspiration for the local Church. Perhaps more effective than the full church pews, long lines at the recreation of Tepeyac Hill across the lawn have drawn curiosity and attention from clergy and shrine staff.

In the summer of 2024, the Tepeyac Hill recreation—a last-minute addition to the shrine's plans—went viral on TikTok, with hundreds of videos about the hill receiving millions of views collectively. Visitors' videos are captioned with their admiration for *La Virgen* or their personal motivation for visiting: "The feeling of going to visit the Virgin of Guadalupe in Oklahoma. I recommend not letting go of that feeling."⁹ Since its TikTok debut, a significant number of the shrine's visitors don't come for Blessed Stanley, haven't heard of him, and don't know why such a large church sits across the lawn from Tepeyac. On weekends, the sidewalk that climbs in a spiral toward the top of the artificial hill is filled with hundreds of devotees who have traveled from across the country to pray before *La Virgen*. Shrine staff report that visitors to the hill often have no plans of entering the church and leave after saying their prayers to Our Lady.

Through their devotional practices, the thousands of Tepeyac Hill visitors unwittingly shed light on the work that remains for the shrine's clergy and lay leaders as they respond to the hill's popularity. Staff expressed their surprise and delight at the hill's draw, and admitted that it has challenged their expectations of how visitors would interact with the site. As Father Wolf recalled, one Sunday morning he arrived for Mass, his mind occupied with an array of typical Sunday logistics—the number of lectors and Eucharistic ministers needed, the status of the choir that day, whether the classroom building would be unlocked for sacrament preparation—"and it all probably involves about \$8 million," he joked. His focus shifted, however, as he noticed a number of pickup trucks parked by the hill, leaving before Mass began. They had *only* come for the hill. He recalled his thoughts that morning:

My focus about what's a responsible spiritual response to the needs and hungers of the human heart in this community, it's all focused over here on this great big church. And those folks have walked up the hill, said their prayers, left their flowers and lit their candles in front of the statue of the Virgin, and now they're leaving.

He considered how engagement with the hill typifies the relationship of many Latino Catholics to the institutional Church. "Certainly," he says, "what they've done in order to satisfy the hungers of their hearts is unstructured, uninstitutional, it's non-demanding, and it's obviously fruitful."

For the shrine's leadership, eagerness to bring visitors into the church for Sunday Mass is coupled with a profound curiosity about the devotion that draws generations of Latino Catholics to the hill for its own sake, despite varying degrees of closeness to the institutional Church. For Father Wolf, the hill's popularity constitutes a call to reform his own vision of ministry and evangelization in light of what happens in front of *La Virgen* each weekend. Responding to the Latino church in Oklahoma "has everything to do with what happens on that hill" he explained, "and it's not that *statue*, it's what's in the hearts and the expectations and the experience of the people who make that little pathway up to the hill, and what they find fruitful there in their lives and in their prayer and in that



Left: Pilgrims stand in line to offer devotion at the statue of *La Virgen* atop the recreation of Tepeyac Hill on a July day.

Above: Devotees take photos and leave offerings for *La Virgen* on a Sunday in October.

Photos by Katherine Mascari.



Understanding the hearts of Latino Catholics
in Oklahoma requires a journey beyond the
doors of the church to the top of Tepeyac Hill.

encounter.” Understanding the hearts and expectations of Latino Catholics in Oklahoma requires a journey beyond the doors of the church and to the top of the hill. The lived popular devotion there reveals the heart of the Mexican people who have long found hope, comfort, and protection in Our Lady. A missionary church must seek to understand how and why this devotional site has become a locus of faith for so many Catholics. It requires a new look at non-traditional centers of Catholic life. “The Anglo church in the United States and the Anglo church I know of here in Oklahoma,” Father Wolf predicts, “are some day going to find out that there’s a whole church here that we all belong to, but we just didn’t know it was here.”

At Stanley Rother’s shrine, something remarkable has happened: Communities on the margins have become visible centers for ecclesial discernment. They are made up of those who journey to faithfully ascend Tepeyac Hill on a Sunday morning, yet do not approach the shrine church for Mass. Meanwhile, gathered inside for worship are parents who immigrated from Mexico, and for 15 years brought their children to Mass in a gym because their congregation was, in many ways, unseen.

Stanley Rother’s story is still being written, half a century after his vocation led him—who had once failed Latin—to learn two new languages so that he could truly listen to the Tz’utujil people and in turn share the Gospel in words that resonated with them. At the shrine that aims to be a “church for all,” a “beacon of faith,” and a “visible sign of the Church’s presence in Oklahoma,” the grammar of popular devotion and Latino Catholicism is on full display, already further enriching the Church’s traditional centers.¹⁰ For the shrine’s staff, Blessed Stanley’s story is the interpretive lens for these phenomena, particularly the hill’s popularity:

Unexpectedly, we just kind of fell into this, it was kind of a capricious thing . . . that this [hill] is there, and we thought it was kind of a minor sort of addition. It turns out to be this central “Wouldn’t you know,” the thing that none of us paid attention to becomes this gigantic moment. So I suppose it’s a real Stan Rother moment. If you just pause and think, “Hold on, wasn’t Stan just like that?”

The history of the shrine stands in striking parallel to the life of its namesake. Blessed Stanley’s life was poured out for a community that had long “suffered and rejoiced and lived and died in obscurity,” turning U.S. Catholic attention toward the faith of a forgotten people.¹¹ The shrine that bears his name and the devotional



The recreation of Tepeyac Hill was constructed in the later stages of the shrine's development. Photo by Katherine Mascari.

hill across the lawn have similarly shed light on local peripheries that merit the attention of a missionary church. Padre Aplá's life shows us that a Church fully alive is both at home among those on the margins and makes a home for the marginalized within the Body of Christ, whether in Santiago Atitlán or South Oklahoma City. ■

Notes

- 1 Participant observations and interviews took place in summer and fall of 2024. Interviews were held in person at the Shrine of Blessed Stanley Rother offices or over Zoom.
- 2 María Ruiz Scaperlanda, *The Shepherd Who Didn't Run: Fr. Stanley Rother, Martyr from Oklahoma* (Huntington: Our Sunday Visitor, 2015), 82.
- 3 Stanley Rother to Sr. Marita, May 20, 1973, Box 2, Father Stanley Rother Collection, Archdiocese of Oklahoma City Archives.
- 4 Scaperlanda, *The Shepherd*, 199.
- 5 Rother, Stanley. 1980 Christmas letter for *Sooner Catholic*, in David Monahan, *The Shepherd Cannot Run: Letters of Blessed Stanley Rother, Missionary and Martyr* (Archdiocese of Oklahoma City: 2023), 99.
- 6 Rev. Don Wolf, homily for the anniversary Mass of Stanley Rother's martyrdom, July 19, 2006, in David Monahan, *The Shepherd Cannot Run: Letters of Blessed Stanley Rother, Missionary and Martyr* (Archdiocese of Oklahoma City: 2023), 99.
- 7 Rev. Don Wolf, interview by Katherine Mascari at the Shrine of Blessed Stanley Rother, October 25, 2024. Henceforth, Father Wolf's words not otherwise cited are from the October 25 interview.
- 8 "Case for Support: One Church, Many Disciples Campaign," Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, 2019, accessed 2025, <https://archokc.org/campaign-case>.
- 9 @natalybin2, TikTok video, December 12, 2024, <https://www.tiktok.com/@natalybin2/video/7447407155407228203>.
- 10 "Case for Support," Archdiocese of Oklahoma City.
- 11 Wolf, homily for the anniversary, 96.



"God rays," or crepuscular rays, illuminate a shadowy western Ireland landscape, August 2, 2010.
Photo by Melissa Coles.

A People's Faith

Irish Pilgrimage During Crisis

By Melissa Coles

Clouds rolled in, and the emerald fields and mountains transformed into a land of shadows. Looking out the bus window, my thoughts matched the growing gloom. It was August 2010, and I was on my way to another pilgrimage. I had been living in Ireland since January—first to study abroad at University College Dublin and then as a pilgrimage researcher traveling throughout the country. Thinking about the wonderful aspects of my visit on the Emerald Isle—supportive friends, generative conversations, and delicious fish, to name a few—always brought a smile to my face. Staring at the darkened vista outside my window, though, my thoughts turned to another defining force of 2010—the abuse crisis. The Irish public's roiling disillusionment, rage, and grief over historic and contemporary abuse by Catholic leaders—and Catholic leaders' often harmful responses—shadowed the nation. During my time studying in the capital and pilgrimaging throughout the Republic, I had seen the cycle of harm firsthand.

My breath suddenly caught. Rays of sunshine broke through the cloud cover, returning light to a corner of the darkened western Irish landscape. Dazzled by the "God rays," I remembered the words of a Croagh Patrick pilgrim. Mary, an

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Irish woman in her sixties, had gestured to the crowds of pilgrims climbing up the mountain, smiled, and said, “This is the faith of the people of faith. Not of the institutional Church. . . . This is a people’s faith.”¹ In the midst of a reckoning about Catholic leaders’ crimes and the Catholic institutions that bolstered them, the people’s faith offered me a small measure of solace.

In the 2000s, Irish society’s understanding of the clerical abuse crisis shifted from a focus on individual criminals to an awareness of systemic rot. Cases of clerical abuse had horrified the Irish public since the early 1990s. In the 2000s, though, government investigations uncovered the system that perpetuated abuse throughout the Republic. In 2009, two long-awaited reports provided new proof of the pervasiveness of child abuse in public and Catholic institutions. First came the Ryan Report, the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse’s findings on public residential institutions across Ireland. During the commission’s decade-long investigation, 1,090 witnesses had given oral evidence about their experiences in 216 institutions managed by religious orders, religious congregations, or the State from 1914 to 2000. In May 2009, the commission published their damning conclusions in the Ryan Report: Physical abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect “were features” of both girls’ and boys’ institutions. In many institutions, religious and lay adults sexually abused children—and in institutions for boys, sexual abuse was “endemic.”² The public read the horrific accounts of this abuse and had an “immediate convulsive reaction . . . of shock, horror, anger, and blame.”³ The Ryan Report confirmed what survivors and activists had been shouting for decades—the root of the problem was the system, not “bad apples.”

While the country was still reeling, in November a second government commission provided more evidence of the Catholic Church’s perpetuation of abuse. Instead of a nationwide investigation like the Ryan Report, the Murphy Report focused on the Archdiocese of Dublin, analyzing how the archdiocese had handled sexual abuse cases from 1975 to 2004. The report concluded that archdiocesan and religious orders’ leaders prioritized secrecy, asset retention, and the reputation of the priests and the Church when managing clerical child sex abuse cases. Children’s welfare “was not even a factor to be considered.”⁴ With the Murphy Report, shock and outrage exploded anew. Responding to public pressure, four bishops named in the Murphy Report resigned in December 2009.⁵ Although a small victory, these individual resignations did not fix the systemic problem, and calls for accountability, reform, and ethical leadership continued to grow.

When I studied in Dublin in 2010, I experienced local expressions of the national turmoil. Marie Collins, a survivor of clerical child sexual abuse and an advocate for sexual abuse survivors, described the time to a reporter: “The people are very angry. The people have had their eyes opened.”⁶ I witnessed this myself. For example, during a Sunday Mass I attended at St. Teresa’s Church in Dublin, a middle-aged man grew more and more agitated during the Eucharistic Prayer. Suddenly, he began to shout, squeezing out from the pew and walking toward

the altar, crying, “How could you?! They were children!”⁷ Silence descended. The celebrant’s eyes darted to the man, around the church, and back to the man. Returning his gaze fixedly to the missal, the priest haltingly resumed the Eucharistic Prayer, barely heard over the distraught man’s appeals to the restless congregation. He asked us how we could stay silent “when you know?! We know!” Then, my fellow Mass-goers told me that a church official called the police. For generations, the Irish Church protected criminal priests from the police, but in 2010, the Garda were called on a wounded man in a church.

During my time in Dublin, I saw Church officials choose again and again to protect the Church’s institutional body over the people of the body of Christ. In March, Pope Benedict XVI wrote a pastoral letter “to the Catholics of Ireland.” Many welcomed his acknowledgment of the “grievous wound” caused by clerical child abuse. Instead of focusing on the institutional and particularly Catholic elements of the crisis, though, Benedict placed most of the blame at the feet of individual sinners, writing, “All of us are suffering as a result of the sins of our confreres who betrayed a sacred trust or failed to deal justly and responsibly with allegations of abuse.”⁸ Then, the Archdiocese of Dublin set up a public conversation about the abuse crisis at a parish church I attended. When I entered the downtown church for the session, quiet conversations and cautious hope filled the air. This began to change when the archdiocesan and Vatican officials entered, and they sat in the sanctuary—apart from and higher than the other attendees. Then, those men in front of the altar gave defensive and dismissive answers to the heartfelt questions of the people in the pews. These Catholic leaders came to meet anguished people as lawyers, not pastors. As in the church that night, Church officials across Ireland often chose institution over people and furthered the cycle of harm.

Against this fraught backdrop, I wasn’t sure what to expect during my summer 2010 pilgrimage research. It seemed that every Irish Catholic knew someone—themselves, a family member, a friend—affected by the abuse crisis, and so many Irish women and men knew someone who habitually pilgrimaged. Many shared these facts with me—the former with a grimace and the latter with a smile. Ireland, I heard repeatedly, was a close-knit country that prized community and connection. How would the abuse crisis affect the pilgrimage culture? Seeking to do no harm, I did not initiate conversations about abuse during my pilgrimage research, and international visitors rarely discussed the crisis. Instead, they regaled me with miraculous and humorous tales of their travels around a magical island. Irish pilgrims also brought me to tears and laughter with their pilgrimage stories—from praying for a medical miracle to seizing an excuse to take a day off work. Belief, tradition, exercise, the afterparty, a determined relative—all of these inspirations and more coaxed people from their homes to pilgrimages. In addition to such “traditional” pilgrimage topics, though, almost every Irish person whom I interviewed brought up the clerical abuse crisis. What I learned from these difficult conversations was that many Irish people who embarked on a pilgrimage in

2010 had lost faith in the institutional Church, and for some, the clerical abuse revelations caused this loss of faith. Still, most of these same Irish pilgrims retained faith in the people of faith, in lay leadership, and in particular priests or sisters. With this as the bedrock, they sought the beginning of a way forward for the Irish Church. Three of the pilgrimages that I studied illustrate the struggle taking place as a result of the abuse crisis in 2010 Irish pilgrimage communities—Croagh Patrick, a “wild” national pilgrimage site; Inis Caher, a local pilgrimage tradition; and Knock, a “modern” international shrine.

Croagh Patrick

Croagh Patrick seizes attention. Visually, the cone-shaped mountain dominates the Clew Bay landscape. Grey, scree-covered slopes draw eyes up and up—over 2,000 feet above vibrant western Irish hills. Culturally, the region and nation focus on “the Reek” every midsummer. Kevin, a historian who teaches in Dublin, explained that “Croagh Patrick looms in people’s imaginations,” and many aim to complete the pilgrimage at least once in their lifetimes.⁹ In the 20th century, between 15,000 and 100,000 people climbed “Ireland’s holy mountain” yearly on the last Sunday in July.¹⁰

Some came to the mountain to continue ancient, pre-Christian traditions. Teresa, a guide who lives near Croagh Patrick, explained to me that people on the isle have been pilgrimaging since “Neolithic times, 3000 BC,” and events like Reek Sunday continue that long-standing pilgrimage tradition. In particular, she said, journeying up the windswept mountainside helps people to grow closer to nature and God.¹¹ Other journeyers emphasized the connection between the annual Reek tradition and the harvest festival of Lughnasa, celebrated August 1. Some aimed to reclaim the mountain for Lughnasa and the Celtic deity Lugh—reversing the work of early Christian missionaries.¹²

The majority of pilgrims I met, though, still claimed Catholicism and Saint Patrick as their own. On Reek Sunday, I joined a group of several dozen on the Tóchar Phádraig (Patrick’s Causeway), a 23-mile path from Ballintubber Abbey to—and then up—Croagh Patrick.¹³ As we walked down roads and across pastures, we prayed for forgiveness, healing, and connection. We shared many laughs—including when a lost man described his location over the phone as, “I am in a green field. . . . I see . . . sheep and a fence!” We helped one another—distributing walking sticks, snacks, and water to those struggling. Through blasts of rain, we also shared stories. Paddy, a man in his fifties from County Westmeath, explained that when he reaches the top of Croagh Patrick every year, he picks up a stone to bring to his good friend—a priest who is physically unable to climb.¹⁴ Many talked about how we, especially those climbing “in their feet,” were walking in Patrick’s footsteps. During his evangelization of the area, the saint famously walked what is now called the Tóchar Phádraig and then climbed the mountain barefoot. In addition to Saint Patrick’s footsteps, almost every person I interviewed shared how they walked in their direct ancestors’ footsteps, noting how



A view across the lush County Mayo countryside toward Croagh Patrick, August 15, 2010. Photo by Melissa Coles.

proud they were to continue that tradition.¹⁵ During the 2010 pilgrimage, I saw how, visually and culturally, Ireland's holy mountain commands attention.

The 2010 pilgrimage aligned, in many ways, with recent years' precedent. Reporters estimated attendance on the low side of average. During the 1990s and 2000s, Reek Sunday regularly drew between 20,000 and 50,000 attendees. On July 25, 2010, about 20,000 ascended the mountain.¹⁶ Demographically, the event also aligned with recent years by attracting participants from across Ireland, Europe, and North America. At the turn of the century, larger numbers of international tourists and pilgrims joined Irish and Irish Traveller devotees on Croagh Patrick. As a local newspaper reported in 1995: "Croagh Patrick was simply rockin' with religion on Reek Sunday." Among the attendees, the journalist identified international visitors by their "foreign tongues," which she "heard in myriads along the mountain."¹⁷ By 2010, some of these visitors were repeat pilgrims, joining the Irish tradition of returning year after year. During my time in Westport, the main base for Croagh Patrick hikers, I met many repeat visitors. An extended Irish family was staying at the same bed and breakfast they had patronized for over a decade. Bronagh, a Northern Irish accountant, had first climbed the Reek with friends in his twenties, and 2010 marked his ninth annual ascent. Patrick, a Northern Irish lorry driver, was celebrating his 25th consecutive Croagh Patrick pilgrimage; such traditions, he explained, helped in "keeping up the faith."¹⁸ With such continuities with tradition, on the surface, all could be assumed to be well.

In important ways, though, the clerical abuse crisis changed the 2010 Croagh Patrick pilgrimage. Undoubtedly, some bypassed the pilgrimage altogether. For those who chose to participate, many avoided the “traditional” Catholic trappings of the event. They did not seek a plenary indulgence by completing the penitential stations—prayerful circumambulations of stone cairns, the mountaintop chapel, and a stone bed.¹⁹ They intentionally planned their climb to avoid the scheduled Masses and confession times held on top of the mountain.²⁰ Mary, a local woman in her sixties whom I mentioned earlier, was one of these pilgrims seeking to rub shoulders with lay people, not clergy. Her statement—“This is a people’s faith”—reflects a faith in God, faith in one another, not faith in the institutional Church. This faith of the people, Mary explained, flourishes on mountaintops and outside of church buildings.²¹ Emma, an office administrator in her fifties, described how “long ago when priests were fewer . . . holy wells and holy places provided a place of worship.” Maybe, Emma mused, we should return to lay-led Catholic practices.²² Others wanted to divorce the pilgrimage tradition from the Catholic faith entirely and suggested returning to “pre-Catholic” traditions like Lughnasa. I met many completing the arduous trek up Croagh Patrick for Reek Sunday 2010 who advocated for a shift in power, for less influence from the institutional Church

Left: With the blessing of Saint Patrick, pilgrims begin the *Tóchar Phádraig*, a 23-mile pilgrimage from Ballintubber Abbey to Croagh Patrick. Right: A *Tóchar Phádraig* way sign directing seekers toward the abbey or the mountain, July 25, 2010. Photos by Melissa Coles.





Left: Stiles and gate openings allow Tóchar Phádraig pilgrims to pass safely between working farms. Above: Having reached Croagh Patrick at last, Tóchar Phádraig participants begin the final phase of their journey, climbing the misty holy mountain, July 25, 2010. Photos by Melissa Coles.

and more leadership from the Irish people.²³ For these pilgrims, the revelations of the depth of religious abuses of power demanded radical change.

For those not ready for major change, the abuse crisis was still top of mind on Reek Sunday. Pilgrims did complete the stations, attend confession, and schedule their journey around Mass. Per the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, Archbishop of Tuam Michael Neary "led the 2010 National Pilgrimage to Croagh Patrick." At 10:30 a.m., Neary celebrated Mass on the misty mountaintop. In the beginning of his homily, he acknowledged "the storm and stress of current controversies," and "the struggles of the Church to adjust." He also acknowledged that "many have lost faith in the Church, in political promises, in the stable institutions of the past." Then, though, he warned listeners about "what some have called a 'culture of blame.'" Instead of participating and "seek[ing] out the negligence of doctors, the health service, bankers, the Church or the school," believers should follow Christ's message of forgiveness. For Christ, Neary proclaimed, "did not encourage us to imprison people by their human failings. Instead he taught us the way of forgiveness."²⁴ Perhaps this message of forgiveness offered a healing path forward for some of those listeners who still wished to embrace the "traditional" pilgrimage trappings. For others, certainly for those advocating for institutional reform, the homily deepened divides. Neary's message minimized the clerical abuse crisis by comparing it with other "controversies" in Irish society. Further, his call for forgiveness without mention of apology, restitution, or reform continued the intergenerational harm caused by Church leaders.



Anchored vessels, big and small, wait to ferry Inis Caher pilgrims back home, August 15, 2010. Photo by Melissa Coles.

Inis Caher

While carefully picking our way down Croagh Patrick's steep slopes, I learned about the connected Inis Caher pilgrimage from a friendly local. Pádraic, whom I met as we "leapfrogged" one another, asked if I planned to "complete" the pilgrimage on August 15. Traditionally, he explained, people from the area connected Croagh Patrick and Inis Caher on the spiritual landscape—and the full pilgrimage entailed first ascending the mountain and then praying on the small island, just as Saint Patrick did. "Would you like to come with us?" Pádraic invited, and a couple of weeks later, I hopped on a currach with him and his family on the Feast of the Assumption.²⁵

The pilgrimage was mostly lay-led, with a trusted priest coming in at the end to say Mass. As we approached the small, uninhabited island, vessels big and small steered toward the landing point. Once ashore, Pádraic explained, people would stretch in a line from the harbor toward the holy well, disappearing over a hill. I clambered up the rocky landing point and joined them, heading toward Tobar Mhuire (Mary's Well). At the well, a long and orderly line waited to remove their caps, clasp their crosses, offer prayers, and gather the healing water. Afterward, a festive spirit seized the crowd, and everyone scattered across the 128-acre island, exploring lakes and picnicking along the coastline. Slowly, we coalesced once more around Teampull Phadruig, an ancient monastic church, and its associated graveyard and leachta (small stone structures with crosses atop). While waiting



Left: One of several carved crosses atop leachta on Inis Caher. Right: Mary's Well during a short break in pilgrims' prayers. Below: Mass attendees at the remains of the island's early monastic church, August 15, 2010. Photos by Melissa Coles.



for the priest, many fellow pilgrims assured me that he's "a good one," not like some others. Several shared that they would attend Mass here, with this priest and on this holy island, but nowhere else. Those gathered around murmured their agreement. As time ticked by, the community considered reasons for the priest's lateness—he was probably helping a particular widow or caught with a well-known talker. Finally, a cheer from the crowd announced his arrival, and Mass began. After the final blessing, pilgrims prayed before and left offerings on the leachta, the Leabaidh Phadruig (a stone known for healing), and the Leac na Naomh (a cursing stone).²⁶ Then, everyone walked at speed to their boats—the pilgrimage afterparty on Inishturk was calling! A quick hop to the nearby inhabited island, and pilgrims and community members, including the priest, celebrated with food and drink and by plunging into the cold ocean waves. For some, this kind of lay-led, ground-up event represented what the Irish Church should become once more.

Knock

While pilgrims lauded their opportunity to reconnect with "nature" on Croagh Patrick and Inis Caher, "modern" pilgrimage opportunities also are scattered across Ireland. The most famous may be Knock. Like the Reek and Inis Caher, Knock is located in County Mayo in western Ireland, and like Croagh Patrick, Knock is a national pilgrimage site. Knock rose to prominence as a national—and then international—Marian shrine after an August 21, 1879, apparition. As described by the Knock Shrine Society: "At about eight o'clock on that evening (of course in daylight) an Apparition of Our Blessed Lady, crowned and clothed in white garments, was distinctly seen by some fifteen persons at the gable wall of the church."²⁷ Although Mary appeared with saints, a lamb, and angels on either side, Our Lady remained central for devotees who quickly began reporting healing miracles from Her. When I visited in 2010, I knelt before the recreated apparition scene: Our Lady of Knock's hands raised in prayer; St. Joseph and St. John the Evangelist flanking Her; and to the trio's left, a lamb and cross atop an altar, around which angels hovered. When they visited, Pope John Paul II and Pope Francis also prayed in the Apparition Chapel, the central feature of the Knock shrine.²⁸ Beyond the chapel, pilgrims could explore a massive, modern campus with paved pathways, maps, signs, and audio announcements directing visitors to prayer opportunities, as well as volunteers like the Handmaids and Stewards ready to help those in need.

Knock organizers focused on creating an accessible shrine for large crowds. As Lorna, a Knock Shrine Society Handmaid, explained, the shrine is a place of healing, and we should welcome all equally. As a child, Lorna's mother brought her to Knock in search of a miracle for her debilitating illness, and after praying in the church, Lorna walked. Back home, her doctors marveled at the new test results, and they could not explain how she regained her ability to walk. Now, Lorna served as a Handmaid to aid others, especially those with fragile medical

conditions, in search of their own miracles.²⁹ The Handmaids always were busy. As a Knock administrator told me, on a “slow day,” about 1,000 people visited the shrine, and annually, they clocked about 1.5 million visitors who came from around the world.³⁰ To care for this volume, the shrine relied on archdiocesan paid staff, volunteers like the Handmaids and Stewards, and communities like the Daughters of Charity. The shrine’s approximately 100-acre grounds also helped by spreading pilgrims out—inviting people to wheel through landscaped grounds, to receive the Anointing of the Sick, to pray the Stations of the Cross, to attend confession and Mass, to participate in a procession, to gather holy water from a row of fonts, to learn the site’s history at the museum, to buy a souvenir at the bookshop, and much more. Whatever a visitor’s level of disability, Knock administrators sought to provide a welcoming environment.



Top left: Signs direct Knock visitors to the many buildings and prayer opportunities on the shrine's campus. In the background is the basilica outside of which Pope John Paul II celebrated Mass with nearly a half-million people in 1979. Top right: Bullhorns throughout the grounds announce upcoming events. Lower right: People pray outside of the Apparition Chapel at Knock. Lower left: Inside the Apparition Chapel, a packed gathering kneels during the Eucharistic Prayer, July 30–31, 2010. The chapel was built around the original gable wall of the parish church where the apparition took place. Photos by Melissa Coles.

In 2010, shrine leaders also sought to address the individual and communal trauma of abuse. Every day, counselors and confessors were prepared to listen and offer support. During the national public novena commemorating the Knock apparition in August 2010, shrine organizers focused on finding a way forward. The novena's theme, "The Path to Repentance, Healing and Renewal," could be a lesson for those who wished to skip over repentance. Talk titles for the nine-day devotion attempted to draw in those hurt by clerical abuse. Featured talks included: "The Spirituality of Repentance and Healing" and "Child Safeguarding and Support for Victims of Abuse."³¹ I could not attend these novena talks; I pray that they were nourishing for attendees.

Although I do not know what the private counseling sessions or public novena conversations sounded like, I can share that many Irish pilgrims at Knock talked with me—a young, international researcher—about their rage, disgust, and sorrow over clerical abuse. They also focused on finding a way forward. For example, Rosalie, a Presentation sister in her seventies, explained that "the Church is the people of God," and the people's faith will "prevail over institutional churches." The priesthood of the laity, she suggested, was a path forward for the Church.³² Rosalie's words reminded me of sentiments from Croagh Patrick and Inis Caher devotees who also called for a shift in power as one way to help address historical and contemporary harms by the institutional Church.

At each pilgrimage, I witnessed Irish lay leadership and faith in action. Thousands walked or drove from their homes to Croagh Patrick, where they climbed the holy mountain, recited the prayers in their hearts, and lent a helping hand—or walking stick—to those in need. Long-time devotees invited family, friends, and strangers to hop in their currachs for the annual Inis Caher pilgrimage, and on the island, these repeat pilgrims guided newcomers between the sacred sites. Dedicated Handmaids and Stewards aided Knock's thousands of weekly visitors. These examples barely scratch the surface of the lay people shaping and leading the Croagh Patrick, Inis Caher, and Knock pilgrimages. In 2010, I witnessed a continuation of generations of lay Irish people shaping their religious landscape. The historical and contemporary nature of this leadership may be one reason why so many expressed that, when betrayed by the institutional Church, they felt confident that they could rely on the people's faith. The difference in 2010 was not lay leadership itself. It was a renewed call for a power shift, for lay believers to lead the Church.

There is no quick or easy solution to healing harm caused by religious abuse—in Ireland or anywhere else. What I experienced in Ireland in 2010 was a society grappling with acknowledging trauma and then seeking steps toward healing. In Dublin, I saw Catholic priests perpetuate harm, and I prayed with a community in turmoil. Then, on a mountaintop, beside a holy well, and at an apparition site in County Mayo, I met lay and religious pilgrims searching for a way forward. The resounding call I heard again and again from Irish pilgrims was to orient around the people of God. Hopefully, this people's faith can lead the way toward intergenerational healing in Ireland—and in the global Church. ■



A backlit leacht on Inis Caher, August 15, 2010. Photo by Melissa Coles.

Notes

- 1 Mary, interview with author, Croagh Patrick, Ireland, July 24, 2010. Note: Interviewees who agreed to be named are identified by their first names and personal details. Interviewees who wished to remain anonymous are identified by an anonymized name. Since the majority of people I interviewed claimed Irish nationality, going forward, I do not note Irish narrators' nationalities. I do note other interviewees' and pilgrims' nationalities or ethnicities.
- 2 The Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse investigated abuse at Irish institutions. "Institutions" included industrial and reformatory schools, schools for children with disabilities, hospitals, orphanages, foster care, residential laundries, hostels, novitiates, and other residential settings. Although the commission examined 216 public institutions, they excluded institutions deemed "private" at the time—such as the Magdalene laundries. In 2013, the "McAleese Report" confirmed state involvement with and abuse in the Magdalene laundries. The 2009 Ryan Report, which includes five volumes, and the 2013 McAleese Report are both publicly available online. *Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse: Report* ("Ryan Report"), vol. I, 2009, https://childabusecommission.ie/?page_id=241, 1–34. Ibid., vol. IV, 451–459. *Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee to Establish the Facts of State Involvement with the Magdalen Laundries* ("McAleese Report"), 2013, <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-justice-home-affairs-and-migration/collections/report-of-the-inter-departmental-committee-to-establish-the-facts-of-state-involvement-with-the-magdalen-laundries/>.
- 3 Willie Walsh, "Reflecting on the Ryan Report," *The Furrow* 60, no. 11 (November 2009): 579.
- 4 The Commission of Investigation examined a representative sample of cases in the Dublin archdiocese. The commission's conclusion that archdiocesan and other leaders prioritized perpetrator priests, the Church's reputation, and Church assets pertains to cases of child sexual abuse brought to the attention of the Dublin archdiocese until "at least" the mid-1990s. With the implementation of the Framework Document in 1996 and the establishment of the archdiocese's Child Protection Service in 2003, the Murphy Report notes that the archdiocese began to change how it handled abuse cases. The commission published their report in July

- 2009; it was publicly released in November 2009. Commission of Investigation, *Report into the Catholic Archdiocese of Dublin, July 2009* ("Murphy Report"), <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/243712-4-murphy-report-entire-ireland/>, 28.
- 5 Listed with the titles before their December 2009 resignations, these were Bishop of Limerick Donal Murray, Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin Jim Moriarty, Auxiliary Bishop of Dublin Éamonn Walsh, and Auxiliary Bishop of Dublin Raymond Field. Other Church leaders named in the Murphy Report—such as Bishop of Galway Martin Drennan—refused to resign. To the outrage of survivors, Pope Benedict XVI refused to accept Walsh and Field's resignations in August 2010. Walsh and Field continued their work as senior clerics until retiring quietly in 2019. "Abuse survivors disappointed as Dr Drennan refuses to quit," *Irish News* (Belfast, Northern Ireland), December 28, 2009. John Cooney, "Outrage as Pope allows two bishops to keep jobs: Shock Vatican decision deals major blow to the authority of archbishop," *Irish Independent* (Dublin, Ireland), August 12, 2010. Fergus Black, "Survivors are outraged at 'extraordinary move,'" *Irish Independent* (Dublin, Ireland), August 12, 2010. Aideen O'Flaherty, "Bishop Eamonn intends to help parishes: Well-known figure Eamonn Walsh to retire after 29 years as a bishop," *Echo* (Dublin, Ireland), October 3, 2019. David Cheney, "Bishop Raymond W. Field," Catholic Hierarchy, 2024, <https://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/bishop/bfieldr.html>.
- 6 Marie Collins has worked to protect children and help survivors receive justice since the 1980s. For example, in 1985, she helped found Aware, a depression support group. In 2003, she helped the Dublin archdiocese set up their Child Protection Service, and she became a trustee of One in Four (Ireland), an abuse survivors support group. From 2014 to 2017, Collins served on the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors. "Patron: Marie Collins," Marie Collins Foundation, 2026, <https://www.mariecollinsfoundation.org.uk/Who-We-Are/Patron>. Saul Gonzalez, "Catholic Ireland Struggles with Response to Child Sex Abuse Scandals," *PBS News Hour*, May 11, 2010, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/catholic-ireland-struggles-with-response-to-child-sex-abuse-scandals>.
- 7 At the time, I did not write his words in my notes. The quotes used in this article are some of what I remember him saying. He said much more.
- 8 When Benedict discussed larger factors that contributed to the abuse crisis, he devoted an entire paragraph to the "challenges to the faith arising from the rapid transformation and secularization of Irish society." Then he succinctly summarized other "contributing factors": "inadequate procedures for determining the suitability of candidates for the priesthood and the religious life; insufficient human, moral, intellectual and spiritual formation in seminaries and novitiates; a tendency in society to favour the clergy and other authority figures; and a misplaced concern for the reputation of the Church and the avoidance of scandal, resulting in failure to apply existing canonical penalties and to safeguard the dignity of every person." The space in the letter that Benedict devoted to exploring the results of societal transformation—in contrast to the pro forma way he listed several Catholic systemic causes for clerical abuse, which previously had been called out in Irish reports and by Irish reformers, reveals Benedict's analysis that Irish society, rather than Church structures, was the root problem. Benedict XVI, *Pastoral Letter of the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI to the Catholics of Ireland*, March 19, 2010.
- 9 Kevin, interview with author, Dublin, Ireland, July 14, 2010.
- 10 Numbers of pilgrims drawn from the *Mayo News* and the *Western People*, two local newspapers published in County Mayo, Ireland. A major numerical discrepancy that stands out: in 1950, these papers reported that between 60,000 and 100,000 devotees climbed Croagh Patrick for that year's pilgrimage. Whichever number is correct, two reasons for the largest Reek Sunday crowd in the 20th century were the Holy Year and direction from the Archbishop of Tuam for all to pray for "Peace and Concord among the Nations." Peter Gavin, "Reek Pilgrimage Down through the Centuries: Holy Year Expected to Bring Record-Breaking Crowd," *Mayo News* (Westport, Ireland), July 29, 1950. "Reek Pilgrimage Exceeds All Expectations," *Mayo News*, August 5, 1950. "Croagh Patrick Pilgrimage," *Western People* (Ballina, Ireland), August 5, 1950.
- 11 Teresa, interview with author, Croagh Patrick, Ireland, July 26, 2010.
- 12 Drawn from interviews with many Croagh Patrick pilgrims, Croagh Patrick, Westport, and Ballintubber, Ireland, July 23–28, 2010.
- 13 Some translate *Tóchar Phádraig* as "The Way of Saint Patrick." I use "Patrick's Causeway" because that is the translation utilized by Ballintubber Abbey. For example: *Tóchar Phádraig*:

- Patrick's Causeway from Ballintubber to Croagh Patrick: A Pilgrim's Progress* (Ireland: Ballintubber Abbey Publication, 2006).
- 14 Paddy, interview with author, Croagh Patrick, Ireland, July 25, 2010.
 - 15 Drawn from interviews with many Croagh Patrick pilgrims, Croagh Patrick, Westport, and Ballintubber, Ireland, July 23–28, 2010.
 - 16 Numbers of pilgrims drawn from *Mayo News* and *Western People*.
 - 17 A *Mayo News* journalist identified international tourists and pilgrims from Germany, France, the United States, and Britain who attended the 1995 pilgrimage after reading about it in guide books. Joan Tobin, "Foreign Tongues But No Miraculous Phenomenon," *Mayo News*, August 2, 1995.
 - 18 Mary, interview with author, Westport, Ireland, July 23, 2010. Bronagh, interview with author, Croagh Patrick, Ireland, July 25, 2010. Patrick, interview with author, Croagh Patrick, Ireland, July 25, 2010.
 - 19 The sign posted at the base of Croagh Patrick advised: "Every pilgrim who ascends the mountain on St. Patrick's Day or within the octave, or any time during the months of June, July, August & September, & PRAYS IN OR NEAR THE CHAPEL for the intentions of our Holy Father the Pope may gain a plenary indulgence on condition of going to Confession and Holy Communion on the Summit or within the week." Below this prescriptive statement, the sign then described each of three stations required of the pilgrimage. First, at Leacht Benain (Benignus was a disciple of Saint Patrick): The pilgrim walks around the stone cairn seven times saying seven Our Fathers, seven Hail Marys, and one Creed. Second, at the summit: The pilgrim kneels and recites seven Our Fathers, seven Hail Marys, and one Creed; she then recites the Pope's intention near the chapel and walks clockwise 15 times around the church reciting 15 Our Fathers, 15 Hail Marys, and one Creed; finally, she walks seven times around Leaba Phádraig (Patrick's Bed) while saying seven Our Fathers, seven Hail Marys, and one Creed. Third, at Roilig Mhuire (Virgin's Cemetery): the pilgrim walks seven times, while praying seven Our Fathers, seven Hail Marys, and one Creed, around each of three stone cairns; then finally, she walks around the entire enclosure while praying. This kind of ritualistic prayer is a core part of many Irish pilgrimage traditions.
 - 20 Drawn from interviews with many Croagh Patrick pilgrims.
 - 21 Mary, interview.
 - 22 Emma, interview with author, Croagh Patrick, Ireland, July 26, 2010.
 - 23 Drawn from interviews with many Croagh Patrick pilgrims.
 - 24 "National Pilgrimage to Croagh Patrick," Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, July 20, 2010, <https://www.catholicbishops.ie/2010/07/20/feature-national-pilgrimage-to-croagh-patrick-25-july-2010/>. Michael Neary, "Homily of Archbishop Neary for Reek Sunday Mass on Croagh Patrick," Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, July 23, 2010, <https://www.catholicbishops.ie/2010/07/23/homily-of-archbishop-neary-for-reek-sunday-mass-on-croagh-patrick/>.
 - 25 Pádraic, interview with author, Croagh Patrick, Ireland, July 25, 2010.
 - 26 Patrick Logan, *The Holy Wells of Ireland* (Gerrards Cross, UK: Colin Smythe, 1992), 73, 111–112, 146–147.
 - 27 Knock Shrine Society, associate member of the society card in author's personal archive, received August 1, 2010.
 - 28 John Paul II visited in 1979, and Francis visited in 2018. In 2021, the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization recognized Knock as an International Marian and Eucharistic Shrine.
 - 29 Lorna, interview with author, Knock, Ireland, July 31, 2010.
 - 30 Maureen, interview with author, Knock, Ireland, July 31, 2010.
 - 31 *National Public Novena in Honour of Our Lady of Knock*, August 14–22, 2010, pamphlet in author's personal archive.
 - 32 Rosalie, interview with author, Knock, Ireland, July 31, 2010.

In Memoriam

Gabriella Ferruggia Codignola, 1948–2026

By Luca Codignola



Gabriella Ferruggia Codignola with Luca Codignola, November 12, 2024.

Gabriella Ferruggia Codignola passed away on January 7, 2026, in Milan, Italy, where she had lived since 2016. Born in Catania, Sicily, in 1948—and a true Sicilian at heart—Gabriella studied at the Towers Convent School of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament in Upper Beeding, West Sussex, England, and at Università di Roma, where she specialized in classics. She then pursued studies as a Fulbright-Hays Scholar at Bowling Green State University, Ohio. She taught American literature at universities in Salerno, Pisa, Rome, and Genoa, and also held visiting fellowships at the Salzburg Seminar in American Studies, the University of Virginia, and the City University of New York. A wonderful yet unassuming teacher, she was loved by her students.

She began her career with an interest in Black theater and LeRoi Jones, and then moved on to so-called U.S. proletarian literature, including Michael Gold, proving, among other things, that American “proletarian” authors were far from adhering to Moscow directives. Finding much of their writing nonetheless constrained by ideology and therefore limited in literary quality, she later wrote on John Dos Passos and women authors such as Katherine Anne Porter, Grace Paley, Ann Petry, Anzia Yezierska, and Edith Wharton.

Gabriella loved classical music and had an uncommon passion for ballroom dancing and 20th-century composers. An opera buff, she held season tickets to Teatro dell’Opera in Rome, Teatro Carlo Felice in Genoa, and Teatro alla Scala in Milan—though she was unable to sing even a note of *Stille Nacht* or *Frère Jacques*. Friends and colleagues appreciated her refined intelligence, subtle irony, elegant deportment, and the softness of her voice.

She is survived by her husband of 53 years, Luca Codignola, a Cushwa Center senior fellow since 2016, and by her daughter Federica Codignola, professor of marketing at Università di Milano-Bicocca. ■

Luca Codignola is senior fellow at the Cushwa Center, where he chairs the center’s Rome Advisory Committee, and adjunct professor at Saint Mary’s University, Canada.

Friends of Cushwa News & Notes

The Academy of American Franciscan History offers grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$20,000 to scholars studying Franciscan history in the Americas. Visit aafh.org/grant for more information or contact Jeffrey M. Burns at acadafh@fst.edu.

Shaun Blanchard (University of Notre Dame Australia) serves as convenor of the new Global Catholic Studies group at the University of Notre Dame Australia. The group includes Stephen Bullivant, Annemarie McLaren, Father Benjamin Johnson, O.F.M. Cap., and Liam Temple. He also contributed, with 17 colleagues including Notre Dame's Jennifer Martin, an essay on John Henry Newman in the *positio* requested in 2024 by the Vatican's Dicastery for the Causes of Saints. Pope Leo XIV named Newman the 38th Doctor of the Church on All Saints' Day 2025, and Blanchard has engaged in a range of public-facing outreach, writing articles, offering lectures, and speaking with U.S. and Australian media as well as participating in online events on Newman and his legacy. Blanchard's recent publications include "The Catholic Enlightenment," in *T&T Clark Handbook of Modern Theology*, edited by R. David Nelson and Philip G. Ziegler (Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2026); "Catholic Enlightenment from *Catholicisme intransigent* to the Reception of Vatican II: Black Legend, Myth, or Historiographical Tool?" in *Debating Enlightenment: Scholarship, Historiography and the Transmission of Books and Ideas*, edited by Marco Barducci (Boydell and Brewer, 2025); "The Ghost of Modernism: Evocations of Anti-Modernist Doctrinal Documents at Vatican II," in *Theological Studies* (2025); and "Continuity and Discontinuity in Fruitful Tension," in *Embodying the Tradition: Essays in Memory of Joseph Mueller, S.J. (1960–2023)*, edited by Andrei Orlov (Gorgias, 2025).

Jeffrey M. Burns (University of San Diego) shares that the Academy of American Franciscan History has published *Building a House of Living Stones: Essays in Honor of Joseph P. Chinnici, OFM, Friar and Historian*. Distributed by the Catholic University of America Press, the volume is edited by Michael Blastic, O.F.M., Jeffrey M. Burns, and William J. Short, O.F.M. The Festschrift contains essays by leading scholars on three areas reflecting Chinnici's scholarship: the Franciscan intellectual tradition, the clerical abuse scandal, and U.S. Catholic history.

Valentina Ciciliot (Ca' Foscari University of Venice) published the article "U.S. Evangelicals, Race and Racism: The Viewpoint of Christianity Today (1950s–1990s)" in *Annali di Storia dell'Esgesi* (2025). She also contributed chapters in two new edited volumes: "L'approccio cattolico al problema ecologico: cenni sul magistero pontificio, le conferenze episcopali e l'attivismo sacerdotale" in *Dal Codice forestale camaldolese alla spiritualità della terra: Tracce di una storia*, edited by Claudio Ubaldo Cortoni (Camaldoli, 2025), and "Il laboratorio missionario del Pontificio istituto missioni estere 'Le Missioni Cattoliche' (1872–1968)" in *Laboratori della fede: Religione e cultura popolare in Italia dall'Unità al miracolo economico*, edited by Giovanni Vian (Carocci, 2026).

William S. Cossen (Gwinnett School) received the American Catholic Historical Association's inaugural Christopher J. Kauffman Prize in U.S. Catholic History at the association's 2026 annual meeting for his book *Making Catholic America: Religious Nationalism in the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* (Cornell, 2023). The Kauffman Prize honors the author of a monograph that provides new or challenging insight to the study of U.S. Catholic history.

Michele Dillon, dean of the College of Liberal Arts and professor of sociology at the University of New Hampshire, was awarded the 2025 Civitas Dei Medal from Villanova University in recognition of her exemplary contributions to the Catholic intellectual tradition.

Fidei Communio is a new biannual journal of theology and religious studies published by Nerbini. Open access and international in scope, it brings theology into conversation with philosophy, history, sociology, law, political science, literature, and the arts. The journal's second issue includes an article by Cushwa Center Rome Advisory Committee member Rev. Roberto Regoli titled "L'inutilità della storia della Chiesa. Ovvero la sua necessità" ("The uselessness of Church history. That is to say, its necessity"). Find the new journal at nerbiniscaffaleaperto.it.

Brian Heffernan (KU Leuven and UCLouvain) published with Messenger Publications in 2026 *Leo XIV: An Augustinian Life in Context*, a short biography of Robert Prevost through his election as pope that gives particular attention to his Augustinian background.

Ann Killian, O.P. (University of Notre Dame) published the chapter "Experiencing Theological Education in Vowed Religious Life" in *At This Time: Dialogues in Theological Education* (Eerdmans, 2026), a volume in the Theological Education Between the Times series. She also contributed to "Learning in Pieces," a feature on theological education in the February 2026 issue of the *Christian Century*.

Matías Maldonado Araya (Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile) is pleased to announce the publication of his article "Joaquín Larraín Gandarillas, navigating kinship and ecclesiastical agendas (1851–1853): a transnational agent of the Chilean Church" in the *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies*. The study sheds new light on the expansion of Chilean Catholic networks across the United States and Europe

in the mid-19th century, highlighting the role of Larraín Gandarillas as a key transnational actor. This research was supported by a postdoctoral fellowship at the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile and by a Research Travel Grant from the Cushwa Center.

Herbie Miller (independent scholar) published *The 1837 Debate on Roman Catholicism Between Bishop John Purcell and Alexander Campbell: The World Is Large Enough for Us All* with Bloomsbury Publishing in 2025. A revision of his dissertation, the book addresses early 19th-century U.S. history, American Catholicism, Protestantism, oral debate, and civility in American democracy. Miller received a Cushwa Research Travel Grant in 2013 to conduct research at the Notre Dame Archives while writing his dissertation at the University of Dayton.

Anthony Petro (University of Notre Dame) joined the Department of American Studies at Notre Dame in fall 2025. In April 2025, he published *Provoking Religion: Sex, Art, and the Culture Wars* with Oxford University Press. Since 2024, he has served as a series editor for New York University Press's North American Religions series.

Federico M. Requena (Pontificia Università della Santa Croce) published *L'Amour miséricordieux: Circulation d'une dévotion française dans le monde hispanique (1922–1936)* with Les Éditions L'Harmattan in December 2025. The book examines the Work of Merciful Love as a major religious phenomenon in early 20th-century Catholicism, tracing its spread from France to Spain, Italy, and Latin America before its marginalization in the early 1940s. Initiated by the French Visitation nun Marie-Thérèse Desandais, this devotion preceded the path of Saint Faustina Kowalska by 30 years and belonged to the period's mystical renewal at the intersection of the Sacred Heart devotion and transnational Catholic networks. This book sheds light on the origins, forms, and reception of this spirituality, drawing on the history of devotional literature, devotional circulation, and Catholic sociability between the two world wars.

Susan Ridgely (University of Wisconsin–Madison) published *One True Church: An American Story of Race, Family, and Religion* with the University of North Carolina Press in March 2026.

The Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word Archives (San Antonio) has published a new digital humanities exhibit to mark the 100th anniversary of the Cristero Rebellion. “The Sisters and the Mexican Revolutions” features primary sources that reveal the congregation’s cross-border connections and experiences during the Mexican Revolution (1910–20) and the Cristero Rebellion (1926–29 and 1932–41). Learn more by visiting ccviarchives.omeka.net.

Thomas A. Tweed (University of Notre Dame) spoke about *Religion in the Lands That Became America: A New History* (Yale, 2025) at Baylor, Princeton, and Colby. In addition, a Russian translation of Tweed’s *America’s Church* was published: *Церковь Америки* (Academic Studies Press, 2025). Tweed’s reflection on an earlier article appeared as “Documenting the Emergence of a White Male Protestant Establishment” in *American Religion* (2025). “How the Plymouth Pilgrims Took Over Thanksgiving—and Who History Left Behind” was published in English and in French by *The Conversation* and reprinted in national and international news outlets. See it at doi.org/10.64628/AAI.aqcs7gywp.

Whānau Mercy Ministries and Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington will host a symposium on Catherine McAuley in Wellington, New Zealand, on December 13–15, 2026. Inspired by the 200th anniversary of Catherine McAuley’s opening of the House of Mercy in Dublin in 1827, this three-day symposium will explore the impact of religion across education, healthcare, and social services, with a thematic lens grounded in Catherine McAuley’s own intention: “To serve God faithfully.” The symposium offers an opportunity for wider exploration of what it means to be a religious organization within the changing global environment.

There will be a particular emphasis on the significance and contribution of Indigenous perspectives to religious organizations. The symposium will gather academic experts, Mercy leaders, educators, healthcare professionals, and advocates from across Aotearoa, the Pacific, and beyond. The symposium website includes a call for papers and registration is now open. Learn more at whanaumercy.nz/catherine-mcauley-symposium.

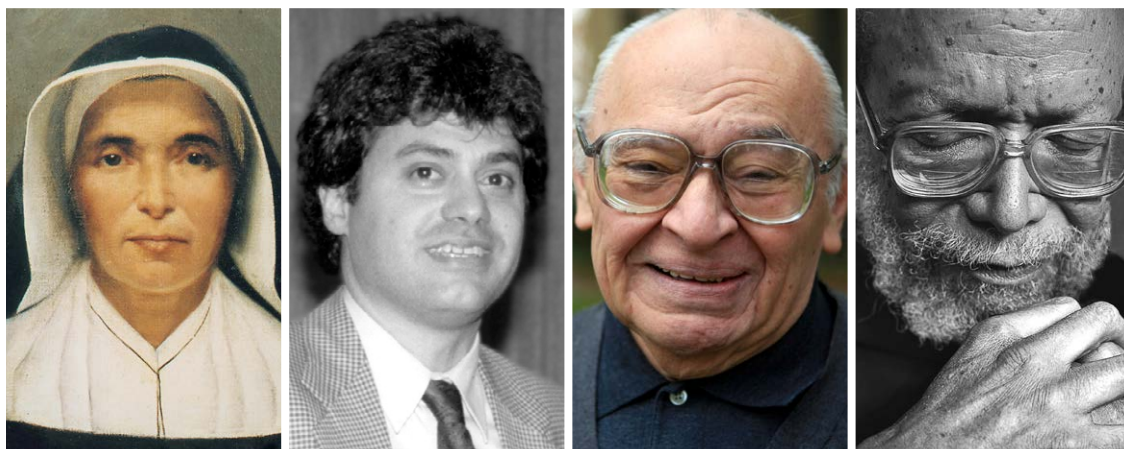
Dennis J. Wieboldt III (University of Notre Dame) shares three recent publications: “Ideas With(out) Consequences?: The Natural Law Institute and the Making of Conservative Constitutionalism During the Cold War, 1947–1951,” *Law and History Review* (2025); “The ‘Crusading Fanatics’ of American Law: American Jesuits and the Origins of the Neoscholastic Legal Revival, 1870–1960,” *Journal of Law and Religion* (2025); and “‘Shall We Settle for Anything Less Than Complete Equality?’ Catholic Power and the First National Fight for Parental Rights in Education, 1947–1962,” *Religion and American Culture* (2026).

Deanna Witkowski (Wheaton College) published the article “A Glorious Celebration: Mary Lou Williams’s *Mass for the Lenten Season*” in the fall 2025 issue of *Jazz and Culture*. Find the article at scholarlypublishingcollective.org. ■

Share Your News

Scholars, archivists, and friends of the Cushwa Center are invited to submit news and updates for sharing in future issues. We welcome brief personal and institutional updates—dissertations defended; new positions and publications; research or media projects launched or published; archival collections opened—as well as grant opportunities; calls for papers; and other relevant initiatives and developments.

Share your news:
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Cushwa Center grants and awards honor the legacies of Theodore Guerín, Peter D'Agostino, Gustavo Gutiérrez, and Cyprian Davis.

Cushwa Center Announces 2026 Research Funding, Including Five Inaugural Gutiérrez Awards

In early 2026, the Cushwa Center offered grants and awards to a record 39 scholars for a wide range of research projects.

Across the six programs administered by the center, research funds will support visits throughout this year to the University of Notre Dame Archives and to repositories in Boston, Chicago, Cincinnati, New York, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, and Washington, DC, as well as international destinations including Chiayi City, Dublin, Lima, London (Ontario), Madrid, Medellín, Oaxaca, Paris, Rome, Salamanca, Seville, and Western Batangas.

Included among this year's awardees are five inaugural recipients of Gutiérrez Research Awards. These awards honor Rev. Gustavo Gutiérrez, O.P. (1928–2024), the Peruvian priest and theologian widely recognized as the father of Latin American liberation theology.

"We are especially delighted to announce the first-time recipients of the new Gustavo Gutiérrez Research Awards," said David Lantigua, William W. and Anna Jean Cushwa Co-Director of the Cushwa Center. "This exciting group of scholars shows both the historic importance and enduring relevance of Gutiérrez's Latin American liberation theology as it pertains to disability, feminism, indigeneity, and integral ecology."

The next application deadline for each of the Cushwa Center's research funding programs is December 31, 2026. Learn more at cushwa.nd.edu.

Gustavo Gutiérrez Research Awards

Announced in 2025, Gustavo Gutiérrez Research Awards honor the life and legacy of Rev. Gustavo Gutiérrez, O.P., by supporting projects in theology, history, and the social sciences that engage or take inspiration from Gutiérrez's work on the preferential option for the poor.



Emma CW Ceruti

University of Toronto

“Doing and Undoing Disability Theology: A Mystical-Liberative Approach to the Cross”



Alejandro Guardado

Emory University

“Reimagining Community: Indigenous Organizing in Mexico’s Neoliberal Turn, 1968–2000”



Rolando Iberico-Ruiz

Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú

“Theology and Social Change in Contemporary Peru: The ONIS Priestly Movement and the Emergence of Liberation Theology, 1968–1971”



Paola Uparela

University of Florida

“‘Trabajo sobre trabajo’ [Labor While in Labor] and the Defense of Indigenous Women’s Reproductive and Labor Autonomy: Gustavo Gutiérrez’s Colonial Studies Legacy and the Preferential Option for the (Feminine) Poor”



Matthew Whelan

Duke University

“Sister Dorothy Stang and the Development of Catholic Integral Agroecology”

Cyprian Davis Award

Established in 2020 in partnership with the American Catholic Historical Association, this award recognizes outstanding research on the Black Catholic experience.



Maria Cecilia Ulrickson

Catholic University of America

“Dressing the Altars, Burying the Dead: Afro-Catholic Liturgy and Belief in the Atlantic World”

Mother Theodore Guerin Research Travel Grants

This program supports scholars whose research projects seek to feature Catholic women more prominently in modern history. Grants are made to scholars seeking to visit any repository in or outside the United States, or traveling to conduct oral history interviews, especially of women religious.



Azariah Alfante

University of Glasgow

“Seeking the Sisters: Individual and Communal Experiences of Exclaustrated Women Religious in Spain, 1836–1850”



Michael Connolly

Loyola University Chicago

“A ‘Painful’ and ‘Revolting’ Task: The Sisters of the Good Shepherd and the Reformation of Women in the Atlantic World, 1829–1917”



Elissa Cutter

Georgian Court University

“Searching for the Theologian: A Feminist Historical Theology of Port-Royal”



Sr. Ginger Downey, O.L.V.M.

Roman Catholic Diocese of Phoenix

“The History of Women Religious in the Diocese of Phoenix”



Margaret R. Frei

Boston University

“American Missionaries, Chinese Educators: The Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods in Central China, 1920–1949”



Daniella Kostroun

Indiana University Indianapolis

“A Mission Across the Sea: The Writings of Marie Tranchepain”



Laura Montoya Upegui

Universidad de los Andes (Colombia)

“Between Faith, Gender, and Power: The History of Women’s Religious and Lay Organizations in Antioquia, Colombia, 1880–1950”



Raffaella Perin

Catholic University of the Sacred Heart (Milan, Italy)

“The Catholic Daughters of the Americas, 1950s–1970s”



Leah Raidt and Margaret Whelan

Sisters of Loretto, Loretto Link

“A Memoir of Sister Agnes Ann Schum”



Jessica Reuther

Ball State University

“Taboos and Tribunals in the Atlantic World: African Bodies, Supernatural Authority, and Legal Power”



Hayley Maritza Serpa

Yale University

“Liberatory Science: Sisters, Social Workers, and Feminist Information Science in Peru, 1973–1993”



Lauren Tassone

Harvard University

“Post-Vatican II Legacies of Religious Sisters in Ohio and Kentucky”



Amy E. Traver

Queensborough Community College, CUNY

“In/Formation: A Historical-Sociological Study of Catholic Women Religious’ Formation in Context and Consolidated Archives”



Chia-An (Victor) Tung

Emmanuel College, University of Toronto

“Following the Footsteps of Love: Mission and Life of Sister Mary Paul Watts in Taiwan”

D'Agostino Research Travel Grants

Named in honor of the late Peter R. D'Agostino (1962–2005) and designed to facilitate the study of the American past from an international perspective, these grants support research in Roman archives for projects on U.S. Catholic history.



Anna Clara Lehmann Martins

Universidade Federal de Lavras (Brazil)

“The Holy See and the Governance of Ecclesiastical Migration between the 19th and 20th Centuries: The Case of the United States”



Rudolf Svoboda

University of South Bohemia (Czechia)

“St. John Nepomucene Neumann’s Letters, 1836–1852: A Path to Understanding between the Old and the New World”



Anna Vincenzi

Hillsdale College

“Luigi Sturzo in America, and Catholic Debates on Liberty, Democracy, and Fascism in the 1930s and 1940s”

Hibernian Research Awards

Funded by an endowment from the Ancient Order of Hibernians and Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians, Hibernian Research Awards support the scholarly study of Irish and Irish American history.



Filippo Barsi

Scuola Normale Superiore (Pisa, Italy)

“Labor, Syndicalism, and Industrial Democracy: Connolly, Larkin, and Transnational Radicalism in Ireland, 1907–1923”



Mary M. Burke

University of Connecticut

“The Shock of the All-Too-Familiar: Joseph McGarrity and the Philadelphia Playboy Disturbances (1912)”



Helen Hayes Sweeney

Queen's University Belfast

“Finding ‘Home’ in a Cultural Landscape of Migration and Belonging”



Samantha Haddad Prophet

The College of William & Mary

“Policing Paddies: Undocumented Irish Migration, Federalism, and the Jurisdictional Boundaries of American Policing Powers”

Notre Dame Research Travel Grants

Notre Dame Research Travel Grants assist scholars who wish to visit the University Archives and other collections at Notre Dame for research relating to the study of Catholics in America.



Bobby Cervantes

Harvard University

“Las Colonias: An American Century”



Philip Alexander Chivily

Baylor University

“Where the Mission Ended: Black Catholics and the Unfinished Work of the Mill Hill and Josephite Fathers in the Post-Civil War Chesapeake”



Agnès Desmazières

École des hautes études en sciences sociales (Paris)

“Lillian O’Connor and the Global Feminist Turn: Catholic Women’s Leadership in Transnational Advocacy”



Savannah Flanagan

Baylor University

“Women’s Health in Utopia: Religious Communities and the Reimagining of Women’s Healthcare in the United States, 1770–1880”



Courtney Irby

Illinois Wesleyan University

“Sacralizing Marriage Money: Negotiating Christian Values in Household Finances”



Henry Jacob

Yale University

“Religious Infrastructure: A History of the San Miguelito Mission”



Courtney Kealy

Wofford College

“Breaking Barriers and Building Legacies: Catholic Women in Higher Education Leadership, 1900–2000”



Sofia Maurette

Independent Scholar

“A Catholic Feminism? Uncovering the Intersection of Religion and Gender in 1900s Argentina”



Froilán Ramos

Universidad Católica de la Santísima Concepción (Chile)

“Alliance for Progress, Food for Peace, and the Catholic Church’s Cooperation in Chile and Venezuela, 1961–1970”



Joshua Wright

Hope College

“Modernism, Aesthetics, and American Christianity, 1925–1980”



Jackie Wu

Yale University

“Leprosy, Race, and Disease Containment in American Empire”

Research Grants & Awards



Apply by December 31, 2026, for research funds from the Cushwa Center.

Learn more at **cushwa.nd.edu/grants**.

Research Travel Grants support visits to the Notre Dame Archives.

Guerin Grants support projects featuring Catholic women in modern history.

D’Agostino Grants fund travel for research in Roman archives.

Hibernian Research Awards support the study of Irish and Irish American history.

The Davis Award recognizes outstanding projects on the Black Catholic experience.

Gutiérrez Research Awards support work in theology, history, and the social sciences that engage or take inspiration from Rev. Gustavo Gutiérrez, O.P. (1928–2024).

Sisters of the Holy Cross Partner with Other Midwest Congregations to Open New Research Center

By Barbara Gordon, Jennifer Head, and JA Pryse

On May 26, the Heritage and Research Center at Saint Mary's College (HARC) will mark an important milestone when Bishop Kevin Rhoades of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend blesses the new collaborative archive before an expected gathering of about 100 guests.

Though not yet open to the public, HARC began accessioning collections this spring, moving the long-planned center from vision into active stewardship. A sponsored ministry of the Sisters of the Holy Cross, HARC consists of ten congregations of Catholic sisters from the Midwestern United States:

Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters
Huntington, IN

Sisters of the Holy Cross
Notre Dame, IN

Sisters of St. Casimir
Chicago, IL

Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Dubuque, IA

Sisters of the Most Precious Blood
O'Fallon, MO

Sisters of St. Agnes
Fond du Lac, WI

Sisters of St. Francis of the Holy Cross
Green Bay, WI

Servants of Mary (Servite Sisters)
Ladysmith, WI

Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross
Merrill, WI

Sisters of the Divine Savior
Milwaukee, WI

How did they come together for this shared project? The first seeds for HARC were sown in April 2018 when 52 people representing 27 congregations of women religious gathered for a "Day of Dreaming" at the invitation of the Sisters of the Holy Cross at their motherhouse, Saint Mary's—which shares a campus with the women's college they founded, Saint Mary's College, in Notre Dame, Indiana—to gauge the interest of other congregations in joining in a collaborative project to house, care for, and make accessible their archives.

On this "Day of Dreaming," the Holy Cross Sisters shared their vision and invited others to participate. Together, they envisioned an archival center open to researchers and a heritage center not simply focused on the past but documenting that past and how that heritage lives into the future. Never intended to be merely a repository, HARC would be a living center of scholarship, storytelling, and encounter. Situated on the campus of Saint Mary's College and near the University of Notre Dame and Holy Cross College, HARC is uniquely positioned to serve as a regional and national hub for the study of Catholic women religious.

Barbara Gordon is the executive director of HARC, where **Jennifer Head** is congregational archivist and **JA Pryse** is lead archivist.

**Never intended to be merely a repository, HARC would be a
living center of scholarship, storytelling, and encounter.**

Beginnings

Following the initial meeting, a steering committee of representatives from four of the congregations was created to move the project forward. The steering committee focused on identifying the next steps to bring the collaborative to fruition, which included gathering preliminary information on the cost of renovating versus new construction, identifying existing buildings that could be renovated to house the archives, and identifying potential funding sources. Other steps included surveying interested congregations on the size, scope, and budget of their collections, as well as contacting archivists who were already engaged in forming a collaborative archive.

In April 2019, the Sisters of the Holy Cross hosted a follow-up meeting to the original Day of Dreaming. Representatives from ten congregations and Saint Mary's College attended. At this meeting, people shared information about their congregation and its history and mission. They also shared wants, needs, and hopes for the collaborative. Attendees committed to moving the project forward. In support of this, a representative from each congregation and the college was added to the steering committee.

The newly expanded steering committee met in fall 2019 to make the dream of 2018 a reality. At this meeting, the group developed a mission statement and named the endeavor "the Heritage and Research Center at Saint Mary's: A Collaborative Archive of Women Religious and Their Sponsored Ministries."

The steering committee also formed a seven-person board of directors, incorporated in Indiana, became a non-profit 501(c)3 organization, and was listed in the *Official Catholic Directory*. The committee also shared its vision

with Bishop Kevin Rhoades of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend.

HARC asked each congregation to conduct a space study of its archives. Congregations were asked to calculate how many linear feet of archival material made up their collection, what types of material made up the collection (manuscripts, bound materials, photographs, etc.), and how that material was stored (archival boxes, filing cabinets, flat files, etc.). Each congregation also determined how much space it would need for non-archival materials such as artwork, furniture, and textiles. While HARC did not place limits on the amount of non-archival material a congregation can include as part of its collection, HARC asked each congregation to carefully consider how this material contributed to its story and only send items that are important to that story. HARC also assisted congregations that did not have the ability to carry out a collection survey.

Building a Home

Once information about the size and scope of each archival collection was gathered, detailed planning for the archive and heritage center began. One early question was whether an existing building could be retrofitted or whether new construction would be more cost-effective. The initial thought was to renovate a building owned by the Holy Cross Sisters, but engineering studies demonstrated it was not structurally sound enough for HARC's needs. The organization was then offered land and the Welcome Center building at the corner of The Avenue and Madeleva Drive on the campus of Saint Mary's College. Kil Architecture and Planning was hired to design the new construction and renovations at the Welcome Center.

The Welcome Center provides office spaces for HARC staff, a meeting room, a kitchen, and several seating areas designed for connection and conversation. The new building was built to the construction standard approved by the Society of American Archivists and, in the spirit of *Laudato Si'*, as environmentally friendly as possible. The building includes a secure, climate-controlled archival storage vault, offices and workspace for employees, a room that can accommodate both classes and researchers, and two exhibition spaces.

The exhibition spaces will offer students and visitors a tangible encounter with the lived experience of women religious. One exhibition space will include permanent exhibits documenting the history and charism of the member congregations. The other will house rotating, temporary exhibits drawn from the collections.

A key issue for HARC was determining a sustainable funding model. Each member congregation made an initial deposit on an entrance fee to fund the planning process, which included legal fees, financial cost projections, engineers, and other consultations. In addition to the entrance fee, HARC asked each congregation for two additional contributions—one to fund the actual construction and one to set up an endowment for operational expenses. The amount of each contribution was based on the linear feet of each collection. HARC is also actively seeking out grants and donations to fund preservation activities and exhibitions.

In 2025, HARC moved from vision to implementation with the hiring of its founding executive director and professional archival staff, including a lead archivist and a congregational archivist. Barbara Gordon was hired as executive director of HARC, bringing leadership experience and non-profit expertise from her prior work as a library director in Michigan. Shortly thereafter, JA Pryse was hired as lead archivist. He previously served as curator at the Carl Albert Congressional Research and Studies Center at the University of Oklahoma and specializes in digital preservation and metadata design. Jennifer Head



Classroom space inside the new HARC building.

was hired as the congregational archivist. She previously served as congregational archivist for the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Dubuque, Iowa, and has consulted with several religious congregations. She has been involved with HARC since 2018.

What began as a collaborative dream among congregational leaders is now guided by trained professionals.

This transition marked a significant turning point: What began as a collaborative dream among congregational leaders is now guided by trained professionals who are overseeing the complex work of accessioning, preservation planning, policy development, and research services.

Throughout the remainder of the year, the HARC team will focus primarily on the coordinated delivery of collections from the ten member congregations. This represents a remarkable logistical undertaking. Decades, sometimes more than a century, of records, photographs, artifacts, textiles, and institutional memory are being carefully prepared, inventoried, and transported to their new, forever home.

**While HARC is building a facility, it is also building
a sense of trust among the member congregations.**

Exchange and Trust

HARC is not only a collaborative effort among its ten member congregations. It is also exploring ways to collaborate with other archives housing the collections of women religious. There are currently three other archives in the United States undertaking this work: the Catholic Religious Archives (CRA) at Boston College, Archives & Special Collections (A&SC) at Santa Clara University, and the Women Religious Archives Collaborative (WRAC) in Cleveland, Ohio. All four archives are part of the National Archives Project for Women Religious (NAPWR), which “provides a coordinated response to assist congregations in planning for their archives, amplifies the message of the urgent need to protect these collections, and increases access by digitally linking repositories” (napwr.org).

The stories preserved and shared at HARC are not limited to Catholic history. They document women’s history, revealing ordinary women doing extraordinary things and responding to the needs of the times. These stories include the history of education, health care, and social services. Catholic schools, hospitals, orphanages, and other such organizations were often the first to be established in cities and towns, shaping those local histories as well. The records in HARC also document the westward expansion and “Manifest Destiny” of America. HARC allows apostolic women religious to share their story, in their own words, and demonstrate how this story fits into larger historical narratives.

For students and scholars across the tri-campus community, HARC will provide experiential learning opportunities through archival internships, course-integrated research projects, public history initiatives, and digital

humanities collaborations. In this way, HARC functions not only as a guardian of memory but also as a cultural center, one that fosters dialogue across generations, between scholars and sisters, and between past and present. HARC seeks to create a space where the charism and courage of women religious continue to inspire new generations of students and supporters.

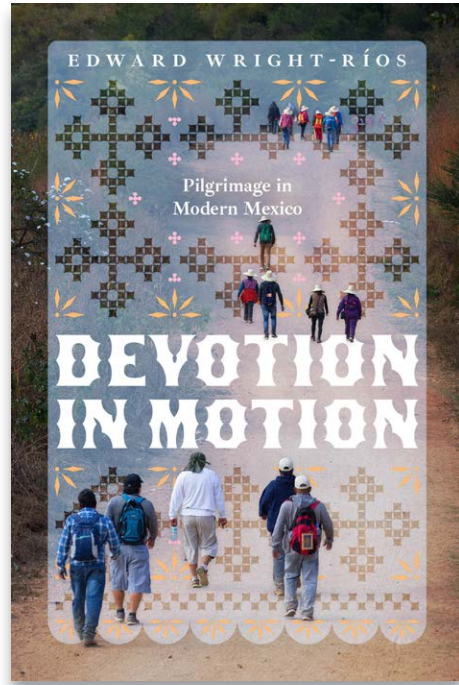
Most discussions about the future of congregational archives in America center on some form of collaborative model. These collaborations require careful planning and, more importantly, trust. While HARC is building a facility, it is also building a sense of trust among the member congregations. HARC members have worked together for over seven years. Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, this shared commitment has allowed the project to continue moving forward. As congregations across the United States face questions about aging membership and long-term stewardship of their archives, initiatives like HARC offer a hopeful path forward. By pooling resources while respecting congregational identity, HARC demonstrates that preservation and accessibility need not be mutually exclusive. Instead, shared commitment can strengthen both. ■

The mission of the Heritage and Research Center at Saint Mary’s is to preserve and honor the rich history of women religious and their sponsored ministries through the partnership and collaboration of congregations of women religious and Saint Mary’s College. For more information and to support the preservation activities, exhibitions, and ongoing mission of HARC, please visit harcsm.org or email info@harcsm.org.

Vital Tradition

A Review of Edward Wright-Ríos's *Devotion in Motion*

By Sadie Yates



In *Devotion in Motion: Pilgrimage in Modern Mexico* (University of Chicago Press, 2025), Edward Wright-Ríos invites readers into the “disorienting, unrelenting, and unforgettable ordeal” that is contemporary pilgrimage to the shrine of the Virgin of Juquila in Oaxaca, Mexico (3). Through historical analysis of this devotion, considerations of pilgrimage’s interactions with daily life and community, and rich narrations of both walking and biking pilgrimages to Juquila in which he participated as a researcher, Wright-Ríos has authored a book that is every bit as captivating, vivid, and intricate as its colorful, multilayered cover image would suggest.

Wright-Ríos posits that pilgrimage is a practice that centers around change and adaptation, not stable and unchanging tradition. In his own words,

Sadie Yates is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Theology at Fordham University focusing on pilgrimage studies and feminist theology. In her dissertation research, she employs ethnographic methods at three contemporary pilgrimage sites—the Camino de Santiago in Spain, women’s Guadalupe pilgrimage in Mexico, and the Migrant Trail along the Arizona-Mexico border—to construct a contemporary theology of pilgrimage.

Devotion in Motion offers both a descriptive and a visual testament of how a ‘tradition’ remains highly adaptable, flexible, and thus vital. It reveals that pilgrimage, in fact, isn’t old at all” (10). What an enormous claim! Modern imaginations often perceive pilgrimage as a stable practice, its ancientness part of its very appeal. Contemporary devotees may envision themselves sharing the same experience as pilgrims who journeyed centuries or millennia ago, steeping in the wisdom of well-trodden trails as they escape “normal” life, and praying at unchanged sites of past miracles. Yet Wright-Ríos holds that pilgrimage is constantly in flux, an event in which individuals and communities adopt and adapt past practices in ways they find meaningful. Pilgrimage for Wright-Ríos merits study precisely because of its elasticity and penchant for change. Dynamism, not stagnation, makes pilgrimage ever-interesting.

The book’s ten episodic chapters naturally fall into three groupings. The first three chapters provide a solid foundation for understanding contemporary devotion to the Virgin of Juquila. These chapters present personal stories of devotion from contemporary pilgrims, an overview of pilgrimage studies, and the origins and history of this devotion. Chapters 4 and 5 consider pilgrimage’s interactions with other facets of daily life, namely the market and social media. Chapters 6 through 10 bring to life the walking and biking pilgrimage journeys that the author joined as a participant-observer in 2016. The book concludes with a reflection on a devotional tattoo shared by a Juquila devotee on social media, bringing together many of the work’s themes.

This is a book that trusts pilgrims and views them as the authoritative experts on their own practices.

By beginning with vignettes of personal pilgrimage experiences in the introduction and chapter 1, Wright-Ríos sets the tone for the rest of the work. This is a book that trusts pilgrims

and views them as the authoritative experts on their own practices. In his overview of pilgrimage studies literature in chapter 1, Wright-Ríos commends and critiques scholarly theories based on how they correspond with real, lived pilgrimage practices. He establishes a posture of respect toward the Oaxacan pilgrims from the beginning, in contrast to the elitist attitudes some Juquila pilgrims report encountering, which cast them as backward or superstitious. He also is not afraid to laugh at himself, maintaining an attitude of both humor and humility. Given his first book, *Revolutions in Mexican Catholicism: Reform and Revelation in Oaxaca, 1887–1934* (Duke University Press, 2009), and his second, *Searching for Madre Matiana: Prophecy and Popular Culture in Modern Mexico* (University of New Mexico Press, 2014), Wright-Ríos has long been pondering Mexican religious practices with this posture of curiosity.

Chapter 2 examines the devotion’s origins and history through the early 20th century. Sources for this work are limited, insofar as we have almost no direct accounts of the experiences, thoughts, and feelings of historical pilgrims. In lieu of first-hand accounts, Wright-Ríos turns to census data, financial records at the shrine that track devotional offerings, receipts for building purchases or labor, newspaper articles, and letters. One of his most important sources is the 1791 guidebook *Memorias de la portentosa imagen de Nuestra Señora de Xuquila* by Father Joseph María Ruiz y Cervantes. This priest-authored text provides the most reliable history of Juquila’s devotion, despite being written 200 years after it began. Today, many pilgrims approaching the shrine still follow the route mapped by this colonial book.

Juquila’s origins remain contested; one local town asserts that the Virgin of Juquila miraculously appeared directly to its inhabitants, in contrast to the 1791 textual narrative of Spanish colonial missionaries bringing her statue to the region. Whatever the case, devotion to her ebbed and flowed—but never died—for centuries, affected greatly by politics, revolution, economic

recessions, and social forces. In chapter 3, Wright-Ríos chronicles the impact of Father Cornelio Bourguet, the shrine's controversial pastor from 1941 to 1980. Although entangled in financial, political, and romantic scandal, he also worked to revive pilgrimage practices that had waned leading up to the 1940s. Throughout both these chapters, Wright-Ríos emphasizes the role of intentional promotion in pilgrimage, reminding readers that devotional practices never function independently from practical realities.

Oaxaca's central market becomes a site where people make and share pilgrimage plans behind mountains of pineapples and other goods for sale.

The next two chapters move into thematic considerations of contemporary pilgrimage to Juquila. Chapter 4 examines the relationship between pilgrimage and market—both commerce in general and the marketplace as a specific location of pilgrimage activity. Wright-Ríos's research leads him deep into Oaxaca's Central de Abastos market, about 120 miles northeast of the shrine, winding through bustling rows of vendors and customers to find local expertise. Given their knowledge of routes, vehicles, and stories from faraway places, many vendors understand pilgrimage intimately. In fact, the walking pilgrimage group that Wright-Ríos joins and chronicles later in the book consists of market vendors from the Central de Abastos and their extended families and friends. Oaxaca's busy central market becomes a site where people make and share pilgrimage plans behind mountains of pineapples and other goods for sale. Commercial relationships have affected Juquila's pilgrimage from the beginning and continue to do so today.

After considering the market as part of pilgrimage's cartography, Wright-Ríos next turns to digital space. Chapter 5 considers pilgrims'

interactions with one another on social media, especially Facebook and YouTube. Online, pilgrims share memories, seek and offer advice, and ask others to intercede to the Virgin of Juquila for specific intentions. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the online space became an even more important part of the pilgrimage community, a virtual opportunity to offer prayers to the Virgin when offering them at the physical shrine was not possible. Chapters 4 and 5 are highlights of the book, expanding pilgrimage's sacred landscape to include seemingly mundane marketplaces and the digital space of social media.

Chapters 6 through 10 constitute the heart of *Devotion in Motion's* descriptive and ethnographic work, closely detailing the walking pilgrimage of the Oaxacan market vendors and the biking pilgrimage of a group from Acatzingo, both of which Wright-Ríos joined. The images painted in these chapters are striking: a statue of Mary carried on a decorated wooden chair worn as a backpack, cyclists with crucifixes strapped to their backs, trucks transporting gear and first aid equipment, fireworks acting as alarms at 4:00 a.m., eggs and steak cooked on griddles set up roadside. Along with the textual descriptions, these chapters feature a series of stunning color photographs taken by professional photographer Mike DuBose, who accompanied Wright-Ríos to Juquila twice. These photographs bring readers into pilgrimage more fully.

Participants represent many lifestyles and careers: accountants, shop owners, truckers, and medical workers.

The narratives in these chapters convey a world that is complex and varied. Participants represent many lifestyles and careers: accountants, shop owners, truckers, and medical workers. Thanks to the author's commitment to completing both walking and biking pilgrimages and engaging with bus pilgrims, the book highlights



Some pilgrims make their final approach to the shrine in Juquila on their knees. Men occasionally embrace this form of penance, but in Mexico it is more associated with women. Devotees describe it as a joyful, liberating experience. Among the pilgrims, Soledad, Lupe, and Kazy chose to *hacer penitencia* (do penance). Kazy leads their recitations of the rosary, while the men form a blanket brigade, making sure to cushion their progress all the way to the sanctuary. For shopkeepers and residents of Juquila, and even the shrine's clergy, such demonstrations of piety are routine. Photo by Mike DuBose.

some of the unique features that these different travel modalities offer. The slowness and difficulty of walking lends itself to increased camaraderie among pilgrims; the cyclists enjoy festive evenings with dancing and mariachis who travel with them; and the buses make pilgrimage destinations accessible for those who cannot otherwise make the journey. Additionally, gender affects how participants experience pilgrimage and interact with other pilgrims. Wright-Ríos includes fascinating reflections on masculinity and pilgrimage at the end of chapter 6, examining how the skills that many men have cultivated as vendors, laborers, and truckers enrich the pilgrimage and how these men display affection and tenderness before and during the journey.

Chapter 10 describes the Pedimento, a chapel that pilgrims reach a few miles before the main shrine in Juquila. This space is a perfect example of Wright-Ríos's claim that pilgrims adopt and adapt practices as they see fit. Although the shrine in Juquila is the destination of the pilgrimage, the Pedimento has arisen in recent decades as a place where many pilgrims offer their prayers to the Virgin as they approach the end of their journey. The Pedimento is a space overflowing with prayer. Papers with written intentions are hung from walls and wedged into corners, real and imitation money is pinned to a copy of Juquila's statue, and pilgrims even create small dioramas outside from the earth's clay to represent their prayers. Walking sticks, which pilgrims believe absorb their troubles

**Pilgrimage becomes a touchpoint in life that allows people
to understand and tell their own stories.**

and sins along the journey, are discarded here. From the Pedimento, pilgrims continue to the shrine, where they attend Mass before returning home. Interestingly, Wright-Ríos depicts shrine clergy as mostly out of touch with the pilgrim experience, reporting that homilies at the shrine emphasize personal commitment to conversion but ignore the real hardships and conditions that motivate many pilgrims as well as the concrete experiences of these journeys.

There were a few times when I wished to hear more from the pilgrims with whom Wright-Ríos journeyed. For example, given the book's emphasis on change in past and present iterations of Juquila's pilgrimage, I found myself wondering what these pilgrims hope and predict for the future of this devotion. I also wondered how age plays a role in pilgrims' experiences, a factor that was touched upon but less highlighted than gender and occupation.

Despite these minor questions, I found *Devotion in Motion* to be a truly excellent book. Wright-Ríos concretizes modern Mexican pilgrimage and expands readers' imaginations about where and how pilgrimage appears. As a fellow scholar of pilgrimage, I found myself captivated by the descriptions and images in this book and convinced by Wright-Ríos's claims about pilgrimage's dynamism and expansive cartography in places like the market and the internet. As a theologian, I find the adaptability of pilgrimage that Wright-Ríos emphasizes exciting. Pilgrimage brims with creative theological possibilities, precisely because of its constant newness. In my own ethnographic

work with women devotees to the Virgin of Guadalupe in Mexico City, I encountered the festiveness, fervent devotion, and intertwining with gender, politics, finances, and social factors that Wright-Ríos highlights in the Juquila pilgrimage. Moreover, like many Juquila pilgrims, many Guadalupan pilgrims I met re-make the journey over and over throughout their lives. Wright-Ríos reflects on these repeat pilgrims in his final pages:

Spending time with devotees and getting to know them gradually made me realize that for many of them it isn't a single year's journey to the shrine that matters as much as the ongoing relationship with Juquila sustained through serial pilgrimage. In other words, many devotees don't seek a simple personal transformation or expect a life-changing miracle after one trip to the shrine. They embrace process, although they would never say it that way. (171)

Year after year, these pilgrims deepen their understanding of themselves while building relationships with other pilgrims and with the Virgin of Juquila. Pilgrimage becomes an iterative framework, a grounding touchpoint in life that allows people to understand and tell their own stories. Perhaps this is pilgrimage's powerful invitation to us all, including those who will never get the chance to walk to a faraway shrine: build relationships, embrace process. What a privilege to step into this world of pilgrimage in *Devotion in Motion*. I would recommend this book to students, scholars, and casual readers interested in Mexican culture, history, and religiosity. ■

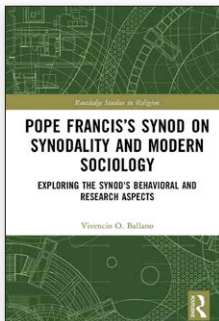
Of Interest

Recent Books

Book descriptions in this section originated with the publishers.
They have been edited for clarity and style.

Vivencio Ballano

Pope Francis's Synod on Synodality and Modern Sociology: Exploring the Synod's Behavioral and Research Aspects



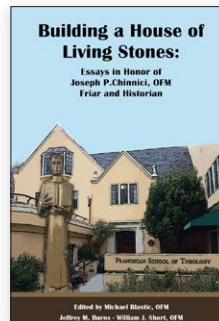
ROUTLEDGE 2025

This book focuses on the value and necessity of modern sociology to Pope Francis's church reform project known as the Synod on Synodality. It explores the behavioral and research aspects of this latest synod,

applying sociological perspectives and methods and drawing on secondary literature, media reports, and church documents. The author argues that sociology is crucial for translating the major theological concepts into behavioral and research indicators to empirically ground the overall theological framework of the synod as an ecclesial innovation rather than a revolution in the Catholic Church.

Michael Blastic, Jeffrey M. Burns, and William J. Short, eds.

Building a House of Living Stones: Essays in Honor of Joseph P. Chinnici, OFM, Friar and Historian



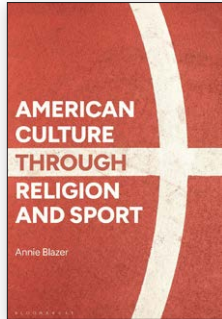
CUA 2025

Joseph P. Chinnici, O.F.M., is one of the leading lights in the study of U.S. Catholic history. He has also played a major role in the retrieval of the intellectual tradition inspired by St. Francis of

Assisi. He served as Provincial Minister of the St. Barbara Province of Franciscans amid the onset of the sexual abuse crisis that involved the Franciscan minor seminary. Eleven scholars contribute to this Festschrift on the occasion of Chinnici's 80th birthday: Steven Avella, Jeffrey Burns, Margaret Carney, O.S.F., Angelyn Dries, O.S.F., Mary Beth Ingham, C.S.J., Mary Lyons, James McCartin, James O'Toole, William Portier, William J. Short, O.F.M., and Leslie Tentler.

Annie Blazer

American Culture Through Religion and Sport

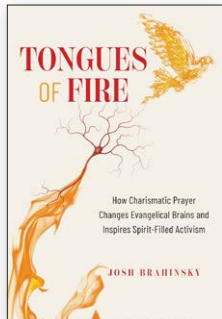


BLOOMSBURY 2026

This book shows how both sports and religion reflect realities far beyond the boundaries of stadiums and churches. Blazer explores how sports and religions are intertwined with American cultural elements of capitalism, race relations, gender relations, and nationalism. Each chapter includes a review of existing scholarship, case studies and examples, excerpts from primary sources, discussion questions, and suggested further resources. As such, it is an excellent resource for teaching.

Josh Brahinsky

Tongues of Fire: How Charismatic Prayer Changes Evangelical Brains and Inspires Spirit-Filled Activism

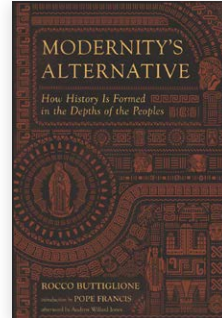


BLOOMSBURY 2026

Brahinsky embarks on an 18-year journey into charismatic evangelical practices of exuberant Christian worship and speaking in tongues. With nearly half a billion followers worldwide, this movement has profoundly shaped both spiritual and political landscapes. What compels believers to return to this ecstatic practice? How does an act of surrender that fosters a powerful sense of divine presence simultaneously drive political engagement? Through immersive fieldwork, Brahinsky investigates the deep pull of tongues prayer through interviews, participating in worship, and even scanning practitioners' brains, capturing the interplay of mind, body, and faith in real time.

Rocco Buttiglione

Modernity's Alternative: How History Is Formed in the Depths of the Peoples

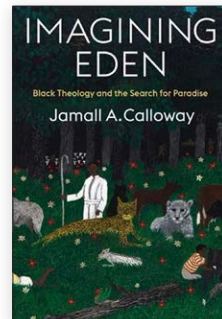


NEW POLITY 2025

A 20th-century movement of priests and laypeople sought a way past the clash of ideologies that wracked Latin America. This movement, called "theology of peoples," focuses on the reality known as "a people." Every people has a "world"—the way it makes sense out of life, work, love, and the uncertain future. Buttiglione ranges through history and philosophy to ask: How does a people find meaning? How does Christianity help a people's "world" develop? How can peoples actively shape history? With "theology of peoples," a way opens to a new and different modernity, founded on the transcendent human spirit.

Jamall A. Calloway

Imagining Eden: Black Theology and the Search for Paradise

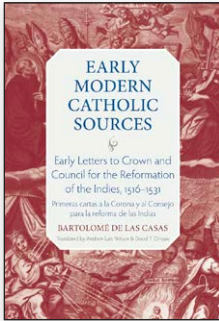


COLUMBIA 2025

A number of Black writers have drawn inspiration from the biblical expulsion from paradise. In this interdisciplinary and poetic book, Calloway explores the presence of Eden and the aftermath of the Fall in works by James Baldwin, Toni Morrison, Richard Wright, and Alice Walker. In reflecting on Eden, he contends, these writers rethought what paradise could mean in the face of the catastrophes of the Black experience. By placing key novels in conversation with major religious thinkers, Calloway shows how Black writers adopted Edenic motifs with striking theological implications.

Bartolomé de las Casas, Andrew Lars Wilson and David T. Orique, O.P., trans.

Early Letters to Crown and Council for the Reformation of the Indies, 1516–1531



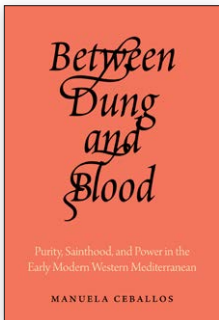
CUA 2026

Seven letters span the initial stage of Las Casas's career as "Protector of the Indians." He harangues corrupt officials, calls for direct control by the Spanish crown with moral oversight by mendicant

bishops, proposes alternatives to Indian labor, and demands restitution for stolen property. The letters led to legal changes and influenced later Jesuit *reducciones* in the Río de la Plata and Franciscan missions in California. They also show his shift from temporal reformer to eschatological prophet. The introduction and notes carefully situate Las Casas in context, including Europe's nascent religious reformations.

Manuela Ceballos

Between Dung and Blood: Purity, Sainthood, and Power in the Early Modern Western Mediterranean



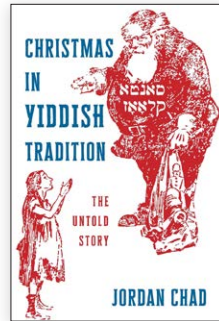
CALIFORNIA 2025

Through the 16th-century stories of the Spanish Christian Teresa de Jesús and the Moroccan Sufi Sidī Riḍwān al-Januwī, Ceballos reveals the roles played by blood and bodily pollution as substances and

symbols in the religious and political fabric of the early modern Western Mediterranean. Drawing on Arabic and Spanish sources, the author argues that in Morocco and Iberia, ideas about blood and bodily pollution helped shape processes of bodily differentiation and social hierarchies based on notions of ritual purity and impurity.

Jordan Chad

Christmas in Yiddish Tradition: The Untold Story



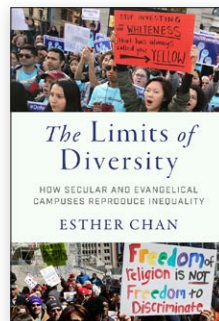
NYU 2025

Why were Christmas traditions once transmitted in Yiddish, a language exclusive to non-Christians? In Europe, Yiddish-speaking Jews traditionally let loose on Christmas Eve with

feasting, drinking, dancing, and gambling. Scholars saw this as an antagonistic counterculture to the Christian celebration. Drawing on a wealth of documents, Chad argues that before Jews migrated to the New World, Jewish midwinter traditions developed as variants of traditions widespread across neighboring European communities. Jews and Christians over the past millennium each awaited supernatural visits from diverse versions of Santa Claus. They came to fully Christianize their concept of midwinter in modern times, when the place of "Christmas" in Jewish memory evolved from jolly vacation to dangerous disturbance.

Esther Chan

The Limits of Diversity: How Secular and Evangelical Campuses Reproduce Inequality

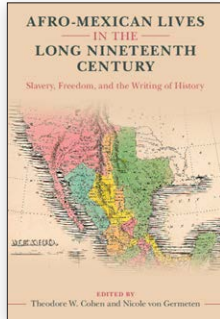


NYU 2025

In a post-affirmative action world, scholars and activists are tasked with reimagining diversity and creating alternatives to diversity that can lead to social equity. Chan compares perspectives among diversity student leaders, Asian Americans, and LGBTQ+ students at two college campuses, one secular and one evangelical, arguing that secular and religious universities reproduce inequality along multiple lines of social difference through well-intentioned language and practices of diversity.

Theodore W. Cohen and Nicole von Germeten, eds.

Afro-Mexican Lives in the Long Nineteenth Century: Slavery, Freedom, and the Writing of History

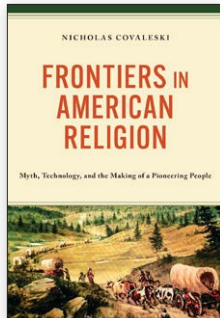


CAMBRIDGE 2025

An examination of abolition and its legacy in Mexico, this collection offers social, cultural, political, and intellectual approaches to Afro-Mexican history. It shows how Afro-Mexicans created their own archival legibility by continuing and modifying colonial-era forms of resistance, among other survival strategies. Chapters document lives and choices of Afro-descended peoples, both enslaved and free, over the course of two centuries, culminating in the Mexican Revolution of 1910. Afro-descended citizens responded to and, at times, resisted claims of racial disappearance to shape both local and national politics.

Nicholas Covalleski

Frontiers in American Religion: Myth, Technology, and the Making of a Pioneering People

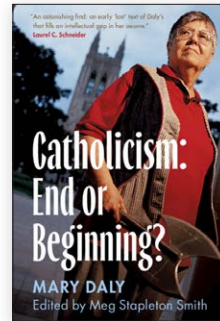


BLOOMSBURY 2026

Covalleski explores how religious dimensions of North America's settler colonial past, expressed in frontier religion, continue to affect the present, especially cultures of science and technology. He argues that the frontier myth functions as a sacred history of the creation of the United States and a distinctly "American people." The frontier, mythologically speaking, is a liminal zone in which hierarchies are dissolved and an egalitarian community of free and equal individuals emerges. In the 20th and 21st centuries, individuals, groups, and institutions engaged modern technologies to imitate the crossing of new frontiers.

Mary Daly; Meg Stapleton Smith, ed.

Catholicism: End or Beginning?

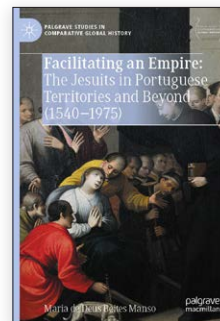


CAMBRIDGE 2026

Catholic feminist theologian Mary Daly drafted a book entitled *Catholicism: End or Beginning?* In the moment that she abandoned the text, she also seemingly renounced the institutional Roman Catholic Church. This volume comprises that lost, unfinished manuscript—remarkably rediscovered—augmented by complementary chapters from six preeminent feminist writers. Though partial, it completes the corpus of an iconic figure in radical liberationist and Catholic thought, delving deep into the mind of a woman who dared to leap into uncharted territories of faith and philosophical imagination.

Maria de Deus Beites Manso

Facilitating an Empire: The Jesuits in Portuguese Territories and Beyond (1540–1975)



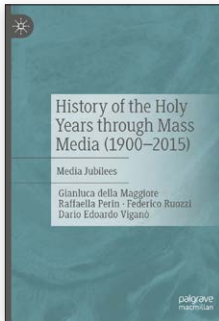
PALGRAVE

MACMILLAN 2025

This book explores the Jesuit order: its origins, historical evolution, missionary endeavors, and global dynamics, with a specific focus on Portugal and the challenges arising from changes in the former Portuguese Empire. Using a comparative and connected historical approach, the study analyzes missionary geography, identifying parallels and differences shaped by a "collective" dynamic involving the Society of Jesus, the crown, Rome, and diverse geographical dimensions. *Facilitating an Empire* offers a detailed examination of the Jesuit order's organizational structure and its impact on missionary activities both within Portugal and in regions with limited European presence.

**Gianluca della Maggiore, Raffaella Perin,
Federico Ruozzi, Dario Edoardo Viganò**

*History of the Holy Years through Mass Media
(1900–2015)*



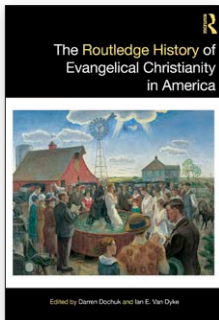
PALGRAVE
MACMILLAN 2025

When Jubilees, or Holy Years, appeared in the 14th century, they became the papal monarchy's most relevant political and economic instruments.

Since the 20th century, jubilee celebrations have also been key moments of confrontation, not always easy or unambiguous, between the papacy and rapidly developing mass media. This volume reconstructs this complex connection by drawing on sources from the Vatican archives and little-known audiovisual sources. Ordinary and extraordinary jubilees between 1900 and 2015 are analyzed from the perspective of audiovisual mass media.

Darren Dochuk and Ian E. Van Dyke, eds.

*The Routledge History of Evangelical Christianity
in America*



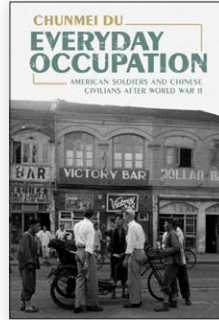
ROUTLEDGE 2026

Bringing together a diverse cross-section of established and emerging historians, this volume explores the broad and deep history of Bible-believing, born-again Protestantism and its impact on American

life and society. In part one, nine chronological chapters outline the history and historiography of evangelicalism in the lands that became the United States from the late 18th century on. In part two, 18 thematic chapters examine aspects of that history, including worship traditions (e.g., Anabaptism and Pentecostalism) and intersections with other aspects of U.S. history from consumer capitalism and pop culture to sexuality and foreign relations.

Chunmei Du

*Everyday Occupation: American Soldiers and
Chinese Civilians after World War II*



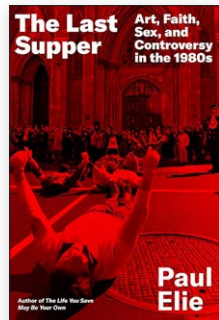
CAMBRIDGE 2025

Everyday Occupation offers a history of everyday encounters between U.S. soldiers and Chinese civilians from the end of World War II to the founding of the People's Republic of China.

Drawing upon official, popular, and personal accounts from both countries, Du examines the sensorial, material, and symbolic exchanges that took place between GIs and ordinary Chinese people—stall vendors, pedestrians, rickshaw pullers, “Jeep girls,” and suspected thieves. Through the conceptual lens of the everyday, this book reveals how interactions such as traffic accidents, sexual relations, theft, and black-market dealings impacted larger political dynamics during this pivotal era.

Paul Elie

*The Last Supper: Art, Faith, Sex, and Controversy
in the 1980s*



FARRAR, STRAUS
AND GIROUX 2025

In this cultural history of the 1980s, Paul Elie traces the “crypto-religious” imagination in popular art, music, film, and literature. Figures such as Leonard

Cohen, Andy Warhol, Prince, Toni Morrison, Patti Smith, Bruce Springsteen, Martin Scorsese, U2, and Sinéad O'Connor appear here as artists working at the fraught edge of belief, controversy, and public culture. Elie situates their work within an era shaped by renewed religious authority, widening moral conflict, and the early culture wars, showing how religious themes persisted, mutated, and resurfaced in unexpected forms.

Richard Kent Evans

MOVE: An American Religion

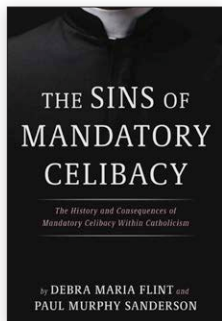


OXFORD 2025

What is a religion? Evans attempts to answer this question through the story of MOVE, a small, mostly African American group devoted to the teachings of John Africa that emerged in Philadelphia in the early 1970s. In 1985, the Philadelphia Police Department attacked a home that “MOVE people,” as they preferred to be known, shared in West Philadelphia. Many MOVE members thought of themselves as belonging to a religion, and they sought legal recognition. But to others, including other religious groups like the Quakers and, more importantly, the courts, MOVE was anything but a religion. Evans dives deep into how we decide what constitutes a genuine religious tradition, and the enormous consequences of that decision.

Debra Maria Flint and Paul Murphy Sanderson

The Sins of Mandatory Celibacy: The History and Consequences of Mandatory Celibacy Within Catholicism

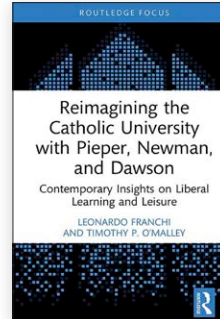


WIPF AND STOCK 2025

This book investigates the origins of the Catholic hierarchy’s decision to mandate celibacy and the effects this has had on Catholic culture and wider society. In part 1, Flint examines the history and theology of mandatory celibacy, discusses effects of celibacy, and illustrates how it cemented the creation of a patriarchal church. In part 2, Sanderson, a former Cistercian monk and priest, describes Catholic culture from within and gives a brave and harrowing account of the sexual abuse he experienced during his time as a member of the Catholic clergy.

Leonardo Franchi and Timothy P. O’Malley

Reimagining the Catholic University with Pieper, Newman, and Dawson: Contemporary Insights on Liberal Learning and Leisure

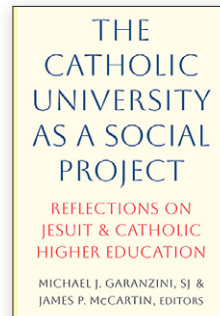


ROUTLEDGE 2026

This compact volume argues for a classical understanding of leisure within the context of Catholic higher education. Drawing on Josef Pieper, John Henry Newman, and Christopher Dawson, Franchi and O’Malley reconsider the purpose of the Catholic university amid increasingly utilitarian and market-driven models of academic life. The book presents leisure not as idleness but as a condition for liberal learning, contemplation, and integral human development, and it proposes a vision of Catholic higher education hospitable to diverse intellectual traditions while rooted in its own distinctive inheritance.

Michael J. Garanzini, S.J., and James P. McCartin, eds.

The Catholic University as a Social Project: Reflections on Jesuit and Catholic Higher Education

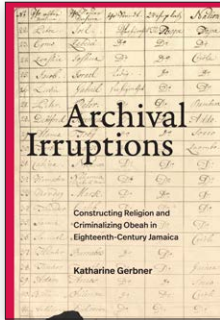


GEORGETOWN 2026

Essays reflect on an address given by Arturo Sosa, S.J., the current superior general of the Society of Jesus. The address, which opens the book, advocates that Jesuit institutions meet today’s challenges through Ignatian discernment—a commitment to reflection, innovation, and openness. Contributors explore themes such as intergenerational collaboration, intercultural dialogue, and the enduring relevance of Jesuit spiritual principles. This volume highlights the tension between tradition and transformation, calling on Jesuit institutions to approach the future with clear eyes on the world’s problems and injustices.

Katharine Gerbner

Archival Irruptions: Constructing Religion and Criminalizing Obeah in Eighteenth-Century Jamaica

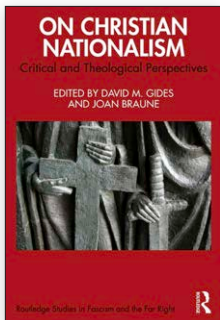


DUKE 2025

In 1760, after the largest slave revolt in the 18th-century British Empire, the Afro-Caribbean word “Obeah” first appeared in colonial law. Gerbner traces how British authorities in Jamaica criminalized Obeah, variously seen as a healing method, an Africana religion, a science, and witchcraft. In the years prior to its criminalization, for enslaved Africans and Maroons, Obeah was a prophetic practice tied to healing and death rites. Drawing on Moravian missionary archives, Gerbner theorizes these descriptions of African religious beliefs, rituals, and concepts as “irruptions”: moments when Africana epistemologies break the narrative of a European-authored archival document.

David M. Gides and Joan Braune, eds.

On Christian Nationalism: Critical and Theological Perspectives

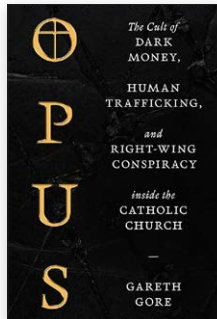


ROUTLEDGE 2025

Since the January 6, 2021, coup attempt at the U.S. Capitol, Christian nationalism has widely been called the “greatest threat to democracy in the United States.” Yet academics and activists present many conflicting definitions and solutions. This volume features an array of essays on Christian nationalism, exploring topics including definitions and historical context, current trends in the United States (including intersections with racism, sexism, antisemitism, and Islamophobia), comparative phenomena abroad, and practical ways to address the problem theologically or politically.

Gareth Gore

Opus: the Cult of Dark Money, Human Trafficking, and Right-Wing Conspiracy Inside the Catholic Church

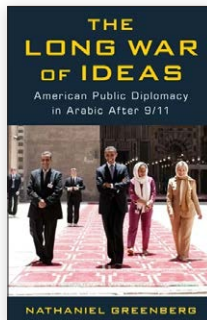


SIMON AND SCHUSTER 2025

For over half a century, Banco Popular was one of the most profitable banks in the world—until the Spanish bank suddenly collapsed overnight in 2017. Investigative journalist Gareth Gore has uncovered decades of deception that hid one of the most brazen cases of corporate pillaging in history, perpetrated by a group of men belonging to Opus Dei. Drawing on bank records, insider accounts, and exclusive interviews with whistleblowers, Gore reveals how money from the bank was used to lure unsuspecting recruits—some of them only children—into a life of servitude. He also tracks the ascent of Opus Dei within the United States.

Nathaniel Greenberg

The Long War of Ideas: American Public Diplomacy in Arabic After 9/11

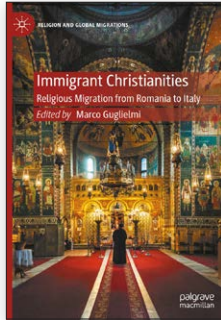


COLUMBIA 2026

This book tells the story of American propaganda campaigns in the Middle East after 9/11, drawing on interviews with key players and previously classified documents. Greenberg shows how the United States tried to control perceptions of its response to 9/11 through news and entertainment. Arab governments and unofficial actors were involved—knowingly or not—in distributing U.S. propaganda. He explores the institutions, strategy, and rhetoric deployed in the war on terror, placing them in the context of American and Soviet influence campaigns during the Cold War.

Marco Guglielmi

Immigrant Christianities: Religious Migration from Romania to Italy

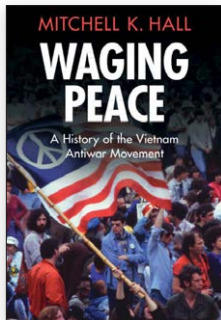


PALGRAVE
MACMILLAN 2025

Over the past two decades, Romanian immigration to the Italian Peninsula has grown to nearly a quarter of the country's foreign population, making it the largest Romanian diaspora in the world. This volume examines the religious dimension of this vast migratory phenomenon from multiple perspectives, including sociology, anthropology, ethnology, history, and theology. Chapters study the patterns and transformations of Romanian Churches and Christian movements in Italy, with particular attention to the Romanian Orthodox Church, the Romanian Roman Catholic Church, the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church, and the Romanian Pentecostal Church.

Mitchell K. Hall

Waging Peace: A History of the Vietnam Antiwar Movement

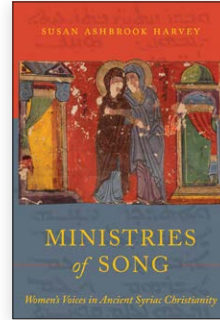


CAMBRIDGE 2026

Hall presents a broad peace movement built around a core of liberal and mainstream activists who challenged what they saw as a misguided and immoral national policy. Facing ongoing resistance from the government and its prowar supporters, demonstrators upheld First Amendment rights and effectively countered official rationales for the war. These dissenting patriots frequently appealed to traditional American principles and used the tools of democracy within conventional boundaries to align the nation's practice with its most righteous vision. This work also covers international, military, and cultural dissent.

Susan Ashbrook Harvey

Ministries of Song: Women's Voices in Ancient Syriac Christianity

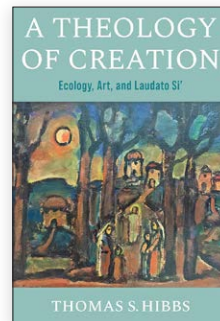


CALIFORNIA 2025

Harvey examines the power of women's ritual singing in late antique Syriac Christianity. Syriac churches cultivated a flourishing tradition of women's sacred song. She uncovers the ways these women performed a boldly sung teaching ministry and invited congregations to respond aloud. These choirs helped to shape the formative ethical and moral lives of their communities. Women's voices both real and imagined enriched the devotional lives of Syriac Christians daily, on ecclesial and civic special occasions, in sorrow or joy with theological authority and social and political resonance. Arguing for the importance of liturgy as social history, Harvey shows how women's voices mattered for ancient Syriac Christianity.

Thomas S. Hibbs

A Theology of Creation: Ecology, Art, and Laudato Si'

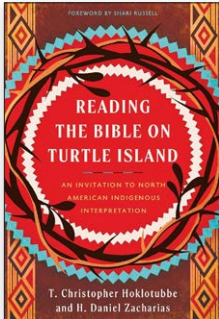


NOTRE DAME 2026

In the encyclical *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis discerns beneath the imminent threat of ecological catastrophe an existential affliction of the human person, who is lost in the cosmos, increasingly alienated from self, others, nature, and God. Pope Francis suggests that one must reimagine humanity's place in the created cosmos. Hibbs provides the basis for just such a recovery, working from *Laudato Si'* to develop a philosophical and theological diagnosis of our ecological dislocation, a narrative account of the sources of the crisis, and a vision of the way forward.

T. Christopher Hoklotubbe and H. Daniel Zacharias

Reading the Bible on Turtle Island: An Invitation to North American Indigenous Interpretation



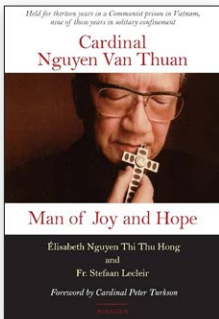
IVP ACADEMIC 2025

Indigenous scholars Chris Hoklotubbe and Danny Zacharias explore what it means to read the Bible through the lens of Indigenous peoples in North America.

Examining the intersection of scripture, cultural traditions, hearts and minds, and creation, they affirm the Creator's presence with Indigenous people since the beginning. By recovering these rich histories, *Reading the Bible on Turtle Island* offers a fresh reading of scripture that celebrates the assets, blessings, and insights of Indigenous interpretation.

Élisabeth Nguyen Thị Thu Hong and Fr. Stefaan Lecleir

Cardinal Nguyen Van Thuan: Man of Joy and Hope



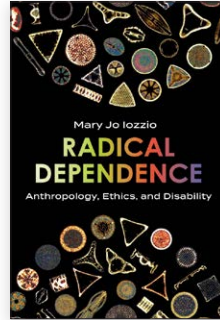
IGNATIUS 2025

This definitive biography of the life of Servant of God Cardinal Thuan is told by his sister Élisabeth, with Father Stefaan Lecleir, in the context of his family life, priesthood, and prison life, and the very

challenging times in which he lived. It focuses especially on his profound spiritual life, his great suffering during a thirteen-year imprisonment by the Communists, his strong capacity for friendship with his enemies, and his deep veneration for Christ in the Eucharist. Élisabeth also reveals moving miraculous events that she witnessed in his life.

Mary Jo Iozzio

Radical Dependence: Anthropology, Ethics, and Disability



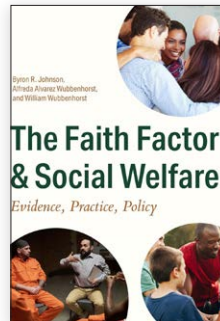
BAYLOR 2025

With *Radical Dependence*, Iozzio approaches concerns of and for disabled persons by presenting a Trinitarian theological anthropology of relationality and the radical dependence that such a reality presumes.

Iozzio demonstrates the influence such a theology can have on the ways that institutions—health care, schools, social services, civic organizations, and churches—can practice solidarity and subsidiarity alongside people with disability who have been too long oppressed, sequestered, and forgotten.

Byron R. Johnson, Alfreda Alvarez Wubbenhorst, and William Wubbenhorst

The Faith Factor and Social Welfare: Evidence, Practice, Policy



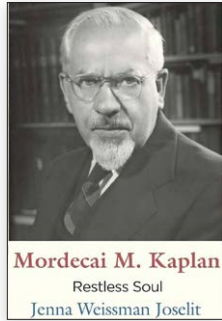
BAYLOR 2025

This book comprises case studies and impact evaluation on the important work done by faith-based organizations (FBOs) in the United States to address a wide range of issues, including

prisoner reentry, high-risk youth behaviors, family fragmentation, and homelessness. This textbook is designed as a learning tool and framework for understanding key components of FBO programs and ministries. The setting of each featured FBO initiative and social impact made within its community is examined, followed by a description of the organization, its collaborations with government agencies, and points of future discussion or research regarding the organization.

Jenna Weissman Joselit

Mordecai M. Kaplan: Restless Soul

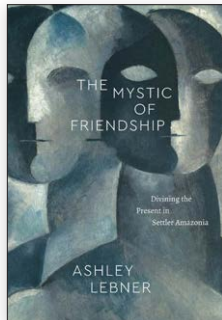


YALE 2026

Mordecai Kaplan (1881–1983) reshaped religious faith and practice and generated controversy at every turn. As founder of the Reconstructionist movement, he introduced new rituals and advocated for a Judaism that evolved with the times and fostered an inclusive community. Drawing from Kaplan's private diaries and correspondence with family and close friends, Joselit's portrait of this influential and iconoclastic rabbi sheds new light on the meaning of American Judaism, identity, the limits of belonging, and the role of faith in modern society.

Ashley Lebner

The Mystic of Friendship: Divining the Present in Settler Amazonia



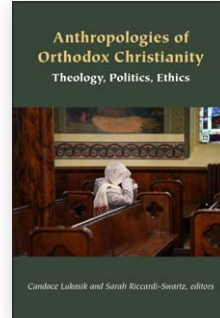
CHICAGO 2025

On Brazil's Amazonian frontier, settlers pursue land and opportunity and also gather for prayer and pilgrimage. Lebner examines how religious practices and feelings shape colonization in the Amazon.

On a stretch of highway in Pará, Brazil, violent colonization coexists with prophetic dreams, Afro-Brazilian prayers, and emerging evangelicalism. In exposing a longing for divinely infused friendship that animates colonization, Lebner offers perspective on the forces driving colonialism as much as religious and political expression.

Candace Lukasik and Sarah Riccardi-Swartz, eds.

Anthropologies of Orthodox Christianity: Theology, Politics, Ethics

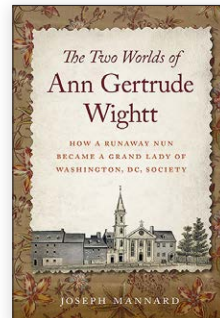


FORDHAM 2025

Anthropological literature on Christianity tends to concentrate on Protestants and Catholics in the Global South. Scholarly interest in such communities descends from histories of missionization and colonization of these regions and a sense of their kinship with secularized visions of Western political and social life. Orthodox Christianity has been marginalized in mainstream anthropology because of its theological and social alterity from Western traditions. As social, cultural, and geopolitical interest in Orthodox Christianity grows, this volume takes seriously the theopolitical aspects of Orthodox life through anthropological inquiry, moving beyond the tension between populist and institutional framing of religion and critically addressing the ontological gap in anthropology and theology.

Joseph Mannard

The Two Worlds of Ann Gertrude Wightt: How a Runaway Nun Became a Grand Lady of Washington, DC, Society

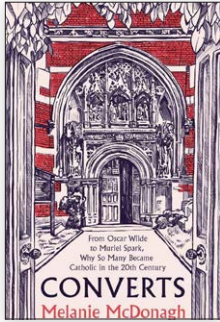


GEORGETOWN 2025

In 1831 Sister Gertrude Wightt abruptly left the academy and life as a nun. She soon became a fixture on the Washington social scene and an intimate of Dolley Madison. This is the first comprehensive biography of the enigmatic Wightt. Drawing from a rich cache of previously overlooked primary sources, the book explores Wightt's transformation from respected academy directress to celebrated "parlor politician" in the nation's capital.

Melanie McDonagh

Converts: From Oscar Wilde to Muriel Spark, Why So Many Became Catholic in the 20th Century

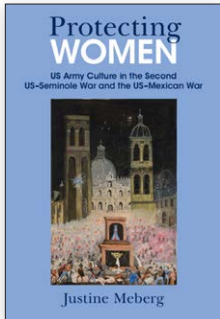


YALE 2026

In Britain between the 1890s and 1960s, Catholicism became an intellectual and spiritual fashion attracting more than half a million converts, including artists, writers, and thinkers. What drew them? What difference did conversion make? For the Decadent circle of Aubrey Beardsley and Oscar Wilde, artists such as Gwen John and David Jones, the philosopher Elizabeth Anscombe, and novelists including G. K. Chesterton, Graham Greene, Evelyn Waugh, and Muriel Spark, Catholicism offered stability in febrile times. McDonagh explores notable converts' lives and influences and the priests accompanying them.

Justine Meberg

Protecting Women: US Army Culture in the Second US-Seminole War and the US-Mexican War

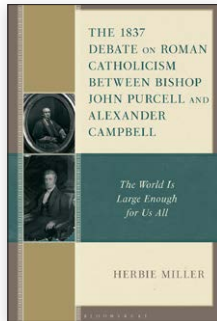


CAMBRIDGE 2025

Recovering the voices of immigrant soldiers, Indigenous women, and Mexican women alongside officers' narratives, this book portrays the U.S. Army at war in Florida and Mexico. By piecing together scattered mentions of women from personal writings, military and civilian news, court-martial proceedings, and official records, it shows the variety of Indigenous and Mexican women's wartime activities. Army authors obscured women's combatancy to bolster their status as women's protectors. Undoing this reveals that even in the most understudied conflicts, evidence exists to tell women's stories.

Herbie Miller

The 1837 Debate on Roman Catholicism Between Bishop John Purcell and Alexander Campbell: The World Is Large Enough for Us All

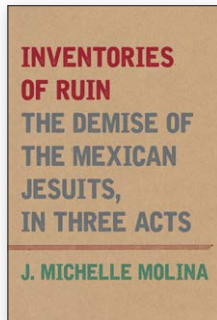


BLOOMSBURY 2025

In 1837 in Cincinnati, Catholic bishop John Purcell and Protestant minister Alexander Campbell engaged in a weeklong public debate that captivated the community. They carried out a civil yet passionate dialogue on theology and politics, dissecting contentious topics such as apostolic succession, Scriptural authority, and Catholicism's compatibility with republicanism. Miller tells the story of this unprecedented debate, its historical context, the lives of its participants, and its lasting impact. The debate became a space where religious and cultural boundaries were crossed, fostering mutual understanding.

J. Michelle Molina

Inventories of Ruin: The Demise of the Mexican Jesuits, in Three Acts

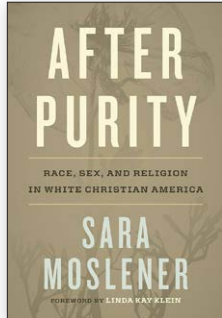


FORDHAM 2026

Molina dramatizes the ruination of the Mexican Province of the Society of Jesus in the 18th-century Spanish Atlantic world. Three "inventories" tell of the arrest, migration, and dissolution of these powerful missionaries. The first is composed by notaries, who record the objects left behind at a college in Puebla de Los Angeles when the Jesuits were arrested in 1767. The second is a narrative by a Swedish convert who encounters the Jesuit refugees on the Mediterranean. The last is a necrology by an exiled ex-Jesuit in Bologna, memorializing the defunct Mexican province. The book counters Jesuit historiography's framing of this period as a moment of "suppression."

Sara Moslener

After Purity: Race, Sex, and Religion in White Christian America



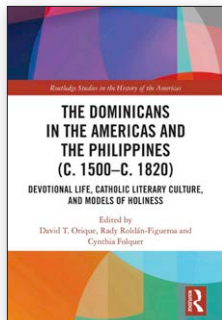
BEACON 2025

Moslener investigates purity culture in white evangelical Christianity, revealing its impact on gender, sexuality, race, and national identity in the United States. Moslener shares stories of

participants from her research on the After Purity Project to discuss how purity culture affected women—particularly women of color—in the evangelical church. These stories depict how white supremacy has a hand in constructing idealized “traditional” or “biblical” views of family, white racial identity, sexuality, gender expression, and religion, and how physical bodies are situated within systems of power and oppression.

David T. Orique, Rady Roldán-Figueroa, and Cynthia Folquer, eds.

The Dominicans in the Americas and the Philippines (c. 1500–c. 1820): Devotional Life, Catholic Literary Culture, and Models of Holiness



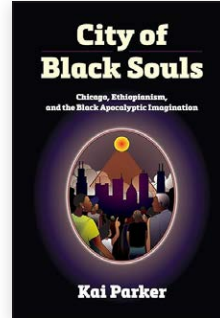
ROUTLEDGE 2024

This volume contributes to the global history of the Dominican Order with essays from the Third International Congress on the History of the Order of Preachers in the Americas, held July 2019 in

Providence, Rhode Island, following conferences in Mexico (2013) and Bogotá (2016). Covering from 1510 to the early 19th century, the book fills a gap in the historiography of the Order of Preachers in the Americas, especially in English-language scholarship. Essays contribute to Latin American history, the history of Christianity, and the history of global Catholicism.

Kai Parker

City of Black Souls: Chicago, Ethiopianism, and the Black Apocalyptic Imagination



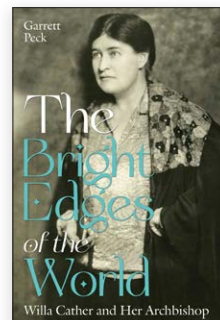
PENN 2025

Parker explores how, from the late 19th to the mid-20th century, Black Protestants in Chicago created Ethiopianism, a transnational religious movement for Black religious and political

independence that connected the Black struggle for freedom in the United States to the global Black fight against Western imperialism. Through Ethiopianism, Parker argues, Black Chicago Protestants drew from Coptic and Ethiopian Orthodox Christian traditions and worked with West African Christians to imagine that Afrodiasporic Christian faith heralded the apocalyptic end of imperialism and white supremacy.

Garrett Peck

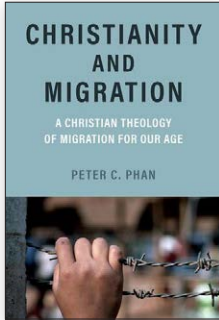
The Bright Edges of the World: Willa Cather and Her Archbishop



NEW MEXICO 2026

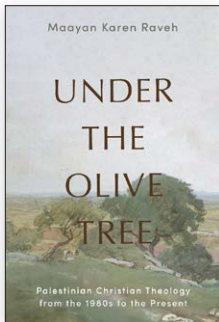
Willa Cather's 1927 novel *Death Comes for the Archbishop* tells an unusual story of two French priests and best friends serving on the American frontier before the arrival of the railroad. This Western

work of fiction is loosely based on two historical figures, Archbishop Jean-Baptiste Lamy and Bishop Joseph Machebeuf. In *The Bright Edges of the World*, Peck explores how Cather's travels to the Southwest inspired her writing. Through Cather's letters, postcards, articles, and interviews, Peck traces how integral travel was to Cather's imagination while highlighting the vital contribution that Cather's longtime partner, Edith Lewis, made to the story.

Peter C. Phan*Christianity and Migration: A Christian Theology of Migration for Our Age*

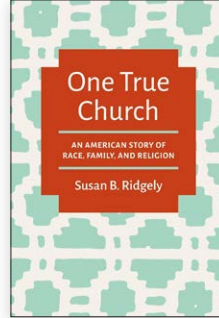
OXFORD 2025

Phan re-articulates fundamental Christian beliefs from the perspective of migration. He begins with the nature and method of Christian theology, mobility as a permanent feature of human existence, categories of migrants and types of migration, and the relations between migration and religion. The book's second part presents a trinitarian theology of God correlated to migrants and migration. Phan discusses the Church as an "institutional migrant," worship and popular devotions of migrants, the ethics of mutual hospitality, the theology of land, migrants' duty to remember where they come from, and the connection between migration and eschatology.

Maayan Karen Raveh*Under the Olive Tree: Palestinian Christian Theology from the 1980s to the Present*

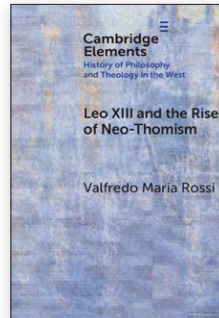
BAYLOR 2025

Palestinian Christian Theology (PCT) holds that Palestinians share with the Jewish people the Old Testament as an integral part of their heritage, and that Palestine has the same right to sovereignty as Israel. PCT invokes "witness" both as a theological reflection of suffering and as a historical presence: a community that has lived continuously in the land where Jesus lived, bearing witness not only through faith but also through place and memory. Raveh explores classic questions of divine election, the Promised Land, biblical history, faith, and contemporary identity.

Susan Ridgely*One True Church: An American Story of Race, Family, and Religion*

UNC 2026

In 1872, a white doctor and a formerly enslaved African American farmer walked through a field near Newton Grove, North Carolina, and mapped out a new clapboard church. The men, John Carr Monk and Solomon Monk, had been raised together on a nearby plantation. While neighbors attended newly segregated Protestant congregations, the Monks converted to Catholicism, which offered a framework of racial universalism. The church ran parochial schools for Black and white children long before state public schools existed and used theology and local history to navigate the nativism of the 1920s and the bishop's decision to segregate. Drawing from archives and ethnography, Ridgely explores the interplay of race, religion, and rural life in this parish.

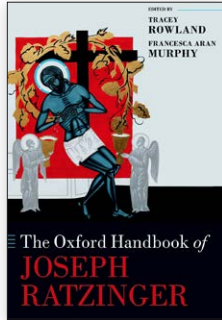
Valfredo Maria Rossi*Leo XIII and the Rise of Neo-Thomism*

CAMBRIDGE 2025

Rossi examines the context and implications of the Thomistic revival inaugurated by Pope Leo XIII's *Aeterni Patris*, a decisive turning point for Catholic philosophy and theology. The encyclical not only revitalized Thomism but also brought an end to 19th-century Catholicism's theological pluralism. The study argues that the Thomistic revival envisioned by Leo XIII was not merely an academic enterprise reengaging Aquinas, but rather an ideological initiative rooted in the framework of intransigent Catholicism, where the restoration of Thomism was instrumental to the formation of a new Christian worldview.

Tracey Rowland and Francesca Aran Murphy,
eds.

The Oxford Handbook of Joseph Ratzinger



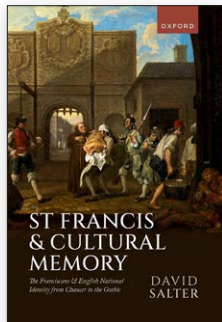
OXFORD 2026

The Oxford Handbook of Joseph Ratzinger brings together scholars from across the Anglosphere, Africa, and Europe. Contributors include theologians, journalists, and former colleagues

from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, offering perspectives on fundamental theology, moral theology, sacramental theology, scriptural exegesis, liturgical theology, theological anthropology, and ecclesiology. With chapters spanning a range of theological disciplines, this handbook offers a reference on the theological thought of Joseph Ratzinger, illuminating his enduring influence within the Catholic tradition.

David Salter

St. Francis and Cultural Memory: The Franciscans and English National Identity from Chaucer to the Gothic



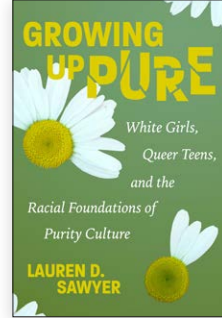
OXFORD 2025

Salter explores central aspects of English national, spiritual, and broader cultural identity through a detailed yet accessible analysis of a familiar figure: the Franciscan friar. Covering more than

400 years from the late 14th to the late 18th centuries, and taking in a wide variety of different literary and artistic forms, the book charts the changing face of the friar in the English literary imagination and examines how developments within this evolving tradition were both shaped by, and have helped to shape, wider debates within English culture about the relationship between religious and national identity, and the past and the present.

Lauren D. Sawyer

Growing Up Pure: White Girls, Queer Teens, and the Racial Foundations of Purity Culture



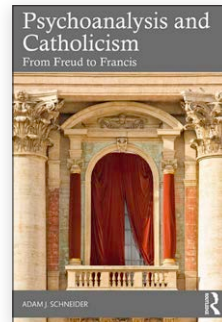
NYU 2025

This book examines purity culture in the United States, looking specifically at the experiences of white youth. Sawyer makes the case that white girls and white queer youth were vulnerable to the purity

movement, but that they were also complicit in its white supremacist oppressive structure, and that purity culture is very much tied to centuries of anti-Black racism and xenophobia in U.S. social history, seeing white youth as in need of protection, usually from a racialized, sexualized other. Closely reading adolescents' stories of growing up in purity culture, she uncovers youth as agents, participants, and beneficiaries of its white supremacist framing.

Adam J. Schneider

Psychoanalysis and Catholicism: From Freud to Francis



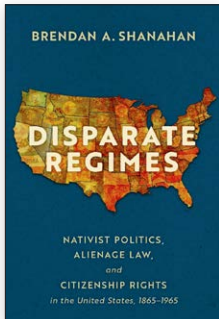
ROUTLEDGE 2026

Schneider explores the history of psychoanalysis by the Catholic Church, reopening dialogue on key overlapping concepts. He explores the historical relationship between psychoanalysis and the

Church through key figures such as Sigmund Freud and Pope Pius XII. He then brings into conversation significant theological doctrines and psychoanalytic concepts including censorship/repression, original sin/unconscious desire, and the power of speech as examples of fruitful dialogue. Finally, he applies theory and theology to contemporary issues like priestly and psychoanalytic formation and synodality within Lacan's four discourses.

Brendan A. Shanahan

Disparate Regimes: Nativist Politics, Alienage Law, and Citizenship Rights in the United States, 1865–1965



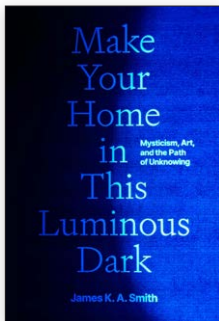
OXFORD 2025

Shanahan underscores the centrality of nativist state politics and alienage laws to American immigration and citizenship history from the late-19th to the mid-20th century. He argues that policies govern-

ing whether noncitizen immigrants could vote, be counted for legislative representation, work in public and publicly funded employment, and obtain professional licensure varied so greatly that they amounted to disparate regimes of citizenship rights. It likewise shows how these policies and politics sometimes aligned and sometimes clashed with efforts to expand rights to marginalized Americans, particularly U.S.-born women.

James K. A. Smith

Make Your Home in This Luminous Dark



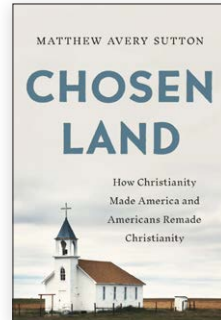
YALE 2026

How do we live when we don't know what or whom to believe? Smith explores how radical uncertainty can be liberating, using the mysticism of St. Teresa of Ávila, St. John of the Cross, and *The Cloud of*

Unknowing. Drawing on ancient contemplative traditions as well as contemporary novels, poetry, film, and paintings, Smith speaks to fundamental yearnings persisting in late modernity, including the philosophical quest for certain knowledge. He shows how contemplative and creative works embody a liberating spirituality that recovers the fullness of being human.

Matthew Avery Sutton

Chosen Land: How Christianity Made America and Americans Remade Christianity



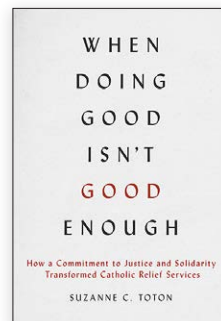
BASIC 2026

Sutton chronicles Christians' 500-year endeavor to turn North America into their version of the kingdom of God, revealing the dynamic entanglement between the histories of America and of

American Christianity. Colonizers and colonized from New England to Spanish California practiced many varieties of the faith. After the U.S. founding, the nation's lack of a state religion forced new and evolving strains of Christianity to battle for potential adherents, as they do today. As American Christianity has bent, fractured, and adapted to changing times, Christian belief has shaped everything from Manifest Destiny to Ronald Reagan's approach to the Cold War, the rise of the Southern Lost Cause narrative to the triumphs of the civil rights movement.

Suzanne C. Toton

When Doing Good Isn't Good Enough: How a Commitment to Justice and Solidarity Transformed Catholic Relief Services



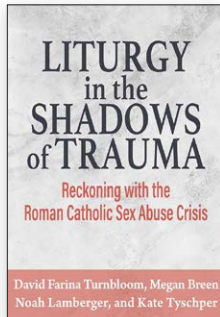
GEORGETOWN 2025

After the Rwandan genocide, humanitarian organizations faced a moral reckoning. The failure to address systemic social, economic, and political inequalities created fertile ground for mass atrocities

and exposed critical gaps in traditional aid. Toton shows the significance of Catholic social teaching for transforming Catholic Relief Services (CRS) in this context. She provides a window into CRS's commitments; the challenges of implementing right relationships in diverse contexts; lessons learned; and the institutional change catalyzed.

David Farina Turnbloom, Megan Breen, Noah Lamberger, and Kate Tyschper

Liturgy in the Shadows of Trauma: Reckoning with the Roman Catholic Sex Abuse Crisis



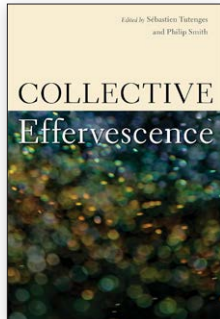
ORBIS 2025

Participation in liturgy is often described and prescribed as a source of comfort and healing for survivors of clergy-perpetrated sexual abuse (CPSA). However, as

Liturgy in the Shadows of Trauma demonstrates, the diverse forms of trauma inflicted by the sex abuse crisis threaten the ability of liturgical worship to function as the source of grace that it is meant to be. The authors frame this complex issue in a way that illuminates the Church's ongoing role in impeding the healing of survivors. In so doing, they lay important, constructive groundwork for how we can faithfully promote healing in liturgical life.

Sébastien Tutenges and Philip Smith, eds.

Collective Effervescence



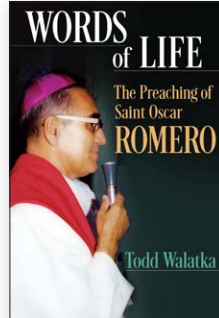
TEMPLE 2026

Durkheim's theory of collective effervescence describes an overwhelming sense of excitement, empowerment, and unity. While originally tailored to examine religious phenomena, the theory has

proven remarkably powerful in explaining secular experiences, from raves and military marches to sporting events and protests. The editors and contributors investigate solo experiences, virtual collectivities, low-intensity effervescence, and negative outcomes. Through studies of drug ceremonies, occupational subcultures, bookshops, online activities, and more, *Collective Effervescence* finds new potentials in a familiar theoretical resource.

Todd Walatka

Words of Life: The Preaching of Saint Oscar Romero



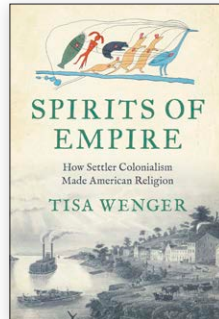
ORBIS 2026

St. Oscar Romero, the archbishop of San Salvador who was slain while saying Mass in 1980, is a towering figure of the modern church. His words and witness remain a source of challenge and inspiration.

His homilies arguably provide the best portrait of his testimony. Yet that message, in six volumes totaling more than 2,500 pages, has been hard to access. Walatka has selected a dozen of Romero's most iconic sermons, beginning with his homily following the assassination of his friend, Jesuit Father Rutilio Grande, in 1977, and concluding with his final homily on the day of his assassination three years later.

Tisa Wenger

Spirits of Empire: How Settler Colonialism Made American Religion



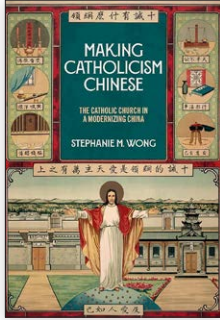
NORTH CAROLINA 2026

Wenger shows how the history of American religion unfolded on settler colonial foundations. The imperatives of U.S. empire, she argues, shaped the category and traditions of what we know as religion.

Wenger also introduces the concept of "settler secularism" to explain how white settlers defined and managed religion in their own image in order to facilitate their own rule. She shows how the concept of "religion"—whether as a special thing that requires protection or a mark of the primitive that must be transcended—has most often served the interests of those in power. Ultimately, settler colonialism organized American religion and created religious hierarchies that still influence the United States today.

Stephanie M. Wong

Making Catholicism Chinese: The Catholic Church in a Modernizing China



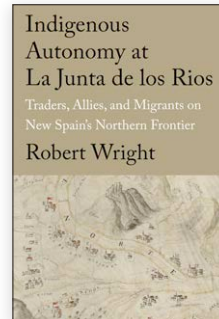
OXFORD 2026

In the first half of the 20th century, China transformed from a faltering, semi-colonized empire to a tentatively pluralistic republic to an increasingly militarized one-party state. Religious communities

were driven to “modernize” for the sake of the new nation. Wong presents a little-known chapter of Catholic life in China, when a coalition of foreign-born and Chinese Catholics strove to make the Church indigenously “Chinese.” She shows how the indigenization movement, begun as a bid to render Catholicism a Chinese religion, came to support Chinese state-building instead.

Robert Wright

Indigenous Autonomy at La Junta de los Rios: Traders, Allies, and Migrants on New Spain’s Northern Frontier



TEXAS TECH 2023

Wright presents the Indigenous nations of the valley of the Rio Grande (known in colonial times as La Junta valley) and their unique colonial-era history. Their valley was the initial route to New Mexico and

West Texas for Spanish conquistadors. In the mid-1600s, Juntans began engaging in long-distance migrant labor in Nueva Vizcaya. In the 1680s they began inviting Franciscan missionaries and serving as military allies to Hispanic troops. Yet for 75 years only the missionaries, without any Hispanic military or civilians, lived among them, due to the valley’s remoteness and the Juntans’ insistence on autonomy.

Recent Articles

Lloyd D. Barba, “An Historic and Hallowed Principle in Religious Life: The Usable Sacred Histories of the 1980s Sanctuary Movement,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 93, no. 1 (2025): 18–44.

Daniel R. Bare, “Baptist Identity and Elusive Interracialism in the Segregated South: D. V. Jemison, E. P. Alldredge, and the Work of a Black Baptist Seminary,” *Church History* 94, no. 1 (2025): 92–112.

Michael Baysa, “Protestant Hebrew: Performing Religious Authority through Eighteenth-Century Language Production,” *Religion and American Culture* 34, no. 2 (2024): 233–271.

Steven Bembridge, “Modernists and Muslims: E.J. Pace and His Islam-Inspired Cartoons,” *Journal of American Studies* 58, no. 5 (2024): 661–688.

James Patrick Breen, “A Menace to Free Labor: Anti-Catholicism, the American Protective Association, and Working-Class Formation in Gilded Age America,” *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 24, no. 4 (2025): 409–430.

Marina S. Brungardt, “Pilgrims Becoming Drifters: Catholic Nonversion and Faith Transmission in the Contemporary United States,” *Catholic Social Science Review* 30 (2025): 71–90.

Jeffrey M. Burns, “Catholic San Francisco in the 1960s: An Introduction,” *U.S. Catholic Historian* 43, no. 4 (2025): 1–10.

Jeffrey M. Burns, “San Francisco and the New Catholic Journalism in the 1960s,” *U.S. Catholic Historian* 43, no. 4 (2025): 43–61.

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