



**“You Have Put All Things Under Our Feet: Dominion and Stewardship”**

Friday, November 11, 9:00-10:15 a.m. | ROOM 202 | Chair: Fr. Henry Stephan, OP  
(University of Notre Dame)

**“The Things Wilderness Can Do For Us: Magnanimity and the Sublime American West”  
Justin Hawkins (Yale University)**

This paper takes as its point of departure the fact of many outdoor explorers report that the austere and expansive landscapes, mountains, and deserts of the West make them feel “small and elevated at the same time.” This phenomenology echoes two philosophers only infrequently compared, rather than contrasted: Kant’s Dynamic Sublime, and Aquinas’s combination of humility and magnanimity. The American West, then, is a frontier of humility and magnanimity – it is one of the many places where a strange combination of American decay and grandeur grow up side by side.

**Bio:** Justin R. Hawkins is a PhD Candidate in Religious Ethics and Political Theory at Yale University. He holds an MAR in the Philosophy of Religion from Yale Divinity School, and a BA in Government from Georgetown University. His dissertation at Yale is titled “Crowned with Glory and Honor: The Virtue of Magnanimity, and its Discontents.”

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**“Love of Soil, Love of Souls: How Stewardship of the Created Order is a Tutorial for Love of Neighbor”**

**Michael Stevens (Cornerstone University)**

This presentation is an attempt to distill the notions of how Wendell Berry’s stirring and compelling writings on ecological revival give a strong analogical glimpse at what healthy human relationships might look like.

**Bio:** Michael Stevens is a Professor of English at Cornerstone University in Grand Rapids, Michigan, where he has taught since 1997. He and his farmer-philosopher colleague Matt Bonzo are the authors of *Wendell Berry and the Cultivation of Life* (Brazos, 2008).

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**“Environmental Justice in the 12th Century Hagiography of St. Norbert of Xanten”  
Patrick LaPacz, O. Praem. and Matthew Dougherty, O.Praem. (St. Norbert College)**

Lynn White Jr.’s 1965 article in *Science* magazine blamed the Christian worldview for the modern environmental crisis. The medieval hagiography of St. Francis of Assisi and his taming of the Wolf of Gubbio is often cited as an exception to medieval Christianity’s disregard for the natural world. This paper raises up another medieval hagiography, the *Vita Norberti B*, and the story of the Wolf of Prémontré to offer a stronger example of medieval Christian concern for the environment. This paper refutes Lynn White Jr.’s caricature of medieval Christianity and the exceptionalism of the hagiography of St. Francis.

**Bio:** Fr. Patrick LaPacz, O. Praem. is a Norbertine priest from St. Norbert Abbey in De Pere, Wisconsin. Fr. Patrick graduated with a B.A. in History from St. Norbert College in 2009, a Bachelor of Philosophical and Theological Studies from Conception Seminary College in 2011, and an M. Div. from Catholic Theological Union in 2018. Later this year, he will complete an M.A. in History at Marquette University. He currently serves as Program Coordinator of the Center for Norbertine Studies at St. Norbert College.

**Bio:** Fr. Matthew M. Dougherty, O. Praem. is a Norbertine priest from St. Norbert Abbey in De Pere, Wisconsin. Fr. Matthew graduated with a B.S. in Organismal Biology from St. Norbert College in 2009, and an M. Div. and M.A. in Systematic Theology from Catholic Theological Union in 2015. After ordination to the priesthood that same year, Fr. Matthew pursued graduate studies in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at Yale University, where he earned his M.S. in 2021 and where he will be finishing his PhD later this year on eco-evolutionary feedbacks in alewives. He currently serves as a teaching fellow in the Natural Sciences division at St. Norbert College.

## **“Strategies for Building the Common Good”**

**Friday, November 11, 9:00-10:15 a.m. | ROOM 205 | Chair: Craig Iffland (University of Notre Dame)**

### **“Understanding the Past, Present and Future of International Environmental Law from the Perspective of the Global Common Good: Insights from Recent Catholic Social Doctrine”**

**Javier de Cendra de Larragan (University Francisco de Vitoria)**

The last three popes have shown how love builds the foundations of politics, law, and economics and directs them towards the (global) common good. The common good is at the basis of the American and the European legal and political traditions since their inception, and also of international law. While this link has fallen into near oblivion, some authors have recently shown how our legal frameworks can be much better understood when analyzed from the perspective of the common good (e.g. Adrian Vermeule in his book *Common Good Constitutionalism*). This article will seek inspiration on these efforts to reinterpret the origins, structure, developments, applications and impacts of international environmental law, in order to show that it can only be properly understood if examined through the global common good concept. This approach will be contrasted to the dominant approaches, in particular anthropocentrism, ecocentrism and sustainable development. The article will then show how chapters 5 of *Laudato Si* and *Fratelli Tutti* can, in light of previous analysis, offer powerful insights that can guide future developments in international environmental law. It will look at climate change and the evolving international plastics pollution regime to illustrate the point.

**Bio:** Prof. Dr. Javier de Cendra de Larragán is the Dean Faculty of Law, Business and Government, at the Universidad Francisco de Vitoria, Spain. He holds a Ph.D. in international and European climate change law, a Master of Laws (LL.M) in International, European and Comparative Energy and Environmental Law, and a Master of Economics.

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### **“The Good Steward: are Accountants called to save the world?”**

**Marc Neri, Texas Christian University**

At the 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio, the president of the World



Business Council for Sustainable Development, surprised many by claiming that “accountants will save the world.” And regulation from standard setters around the world is placing greater responsibility for environmental reporting and control on accountants. This paper considers the historical role of accountants as stewards of creation in the light of *Laudato Si* and *Centesimus Annus*. Hopefully, it will inspire others to consider their profession’s calling to resist the domination of nature by unnatural means.

**Bio:** Marc Neri is a Chartered Management Accountant. He worked as an auditor, financial analyst, controller, and CFO for various organizations in the UK and the USA. Marc has a degree in physics from Durham University, a diploma in historical studies from Oxford University, a master’s degree in Humanities from the University of Dallas, and a PhD in business from North Texas. While at the University of Dallas, Marc developed his interest in ethics, leading to a sabbatical at the Angelicum in Rome followed by a doctoral dissertation on the morals of accountants. Marc and his wife, Lara, have four children.

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### “Using Catholic Social Teaching to Create Virtuous Social Technologies”

**Louisa Conwill, University of Notre Dame**

I propose a software engineering framework based on Catholic Social Teaching to help analyze current social technologies and guide the creation of new ones. The act of creation is part of human nature, and if we develop social technologies with a CST-based framework, we can limit their alienating effects and use them to promote human flourishing. I will use papal documents, virtue ethics, and computer science research to contextualize the proposed framework. Then I will map the principles of CST to software design principles. Finally, I will describe a case study involving a chat platform designed to foster constructive dialogue.

**Bio:** Louisa is a second year PhD student in Computer Science and Engineering at the University of Notre Dame. Her research focuses include computer vision, human-computer interaction, and technology ethics, and she has a particular interest in how the teachings of the Catholic Church can inform technology ethics. A graduate of Brown University, Louisa worked as a software engineer for Amazon Alexa and served as a campus missionary with the Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS) before starting her graduate studies at Notre Dame.

## “Defining the Image of God”

Friday, November 11, 9:00-10:15 a.m. | ROOM 206/207 | Chair: Michael Giles (Great Lakes Christian College)

### “Let Us Make Man’: Creation and Human Exceptionalism in the Thought of John Paul II”

Thomas D. Williams (St. John’s University)

The notion of human exceptionalism — that human beings are different from animals and the rest of creation in kind and not merely in degree — has become the minority view among professional academics. Unguided, chance-based evolution has slowly replaced creation as the core axiom undergirding the dominant scientific worldview. This paradigm shift, which has made possible the deconstruction of binary sexuality as well as relativization of human worth was vigorously and persuasively answered by Pope John Paul II both through his creation-based Theology of the Body and his Thomistic Personalism.

**Bio:** Thomas Williams teaches theology and ethics at St. John’s University Rome Campus and was a 2018 research fellow at Notre Dame’s de Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture. Williams has written widely on theology, philosophy, bioethics, Catholic social thought, and spirituality, and his hundreds of published articles have appeared in journals such as *First Things*, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, *Alpha Omega*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Angelus*, *Inside the Vatican*, *The Human Life Review*, *Ecclesia*, *Logos*, *Sapientia*, and *Catholic Dossier*. His 18 published books include *Who Is My Neighbor? Personalism and the Foundations of Human Rights* (Catholic University of America Press, 2004) and *The World as It Could Be: Catholic Social Thought for a New Generation* (Crossroads, 2009). In 2010, Williams became a founding member of the Society of Thomistic Personalism and in 2016 acquired certification as a wine sommelier. Williams has worked as Vatican analyst for several television networks, including NBC, CBS, and Sky News in the UK and has covered two papal conclaves as well as providing commentary on matters of religion and ethics. He was appointed by the Holy See as spokesman for the Synod of Bishops in 1997 and again in 2001. Williams made his professional acting debut in 2020 with a role in the Netflix film, *The Two Popes*.

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### “Contemplative Affirmation: On Coming to See Life as Good in the Face of Evil and Suffering”

David McPherson (Creighton University)



This paper discusses how God’s contemplative affirmation of creation in general and human life in particular as very good—as described in Genesis 1:31—is for us a spiritual task. This is so because of *the problem of cosmodicy*, which is the problem of justifying life in the world as worthwhile in the face of evil and suffering. This is a problem for theists and non-theists alike—unlike the problem of theodicy—and this paper will seek to show the difference a theistic worldview can make for our capacity for contemplative affirmation, focusing on how it enables us to see the created world as a gift and human life as made in the image of God.

**Bio:** David McPherson is Associate Professor of Philosophy at Creighton University. For the academic year 2021-2022 he was a Visiting Research Professor at the University of Colorado Boulder. He works in the areas of ethics (esp. virtue ethics), political philosophy, meaning in life, and philosophy of religion. He is the author of *The Virtues of Limits* (Oxford University Press, 2022) and *Virtue and Meaning: A Neo-Aristotelian Perspective* (Cambridge University Press, 2020), as well as the editor of *Spirituality and the Good Life: Philosophical Approaches* (Cambridge University Press, 2017). He is currently working on his third book monograph, which is titled *Spiritual Alienation and the Quest for God*. David is a past President of Philosophers in Jesuit Education, and he is also a founding member of The Heartland Virtue Ethics Network and a member of the Mellon Philosophy as a Way of Life Network. David and his wife Kirstin enjoy playing traditional folk music together and spending time with their four children, Clare, John, Peter, and Andrew. David is originally from Minneapolis. He earned his Ph.D. in Philosophy from Marquette University.



## **“Fulfilling the Law of Love: Practicing Bioethics”**

**Friday, November 11, 9:00-10:15 a.m. | ROOM 215 | Chair: Monique Wubbenhorst (de Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture)**

### **“Bioethics and the Imago Dei: ‘Reproductive Autonomy’ and its Eugenic Impulses”**

**Mark Cherry (St. Edward’s University)**

Within medicine the *Imago Dei* calls Christians to recognize that interventions cannot be sufficiently evaluated if one only regards bodily functions, pain, and suffering within an immanent horizon of human interests; a transcendent focus is essential. Christians appreciate that medicine is permissible if it does not involve sinful actions or impede one’s relationship with God. Yet, human passions often lead medical decision-making astray. This presentation considers the eugenic impulses that underlie common reproductive medical practices, such as selective killing in utero of children with disabilities, chromosomal abnormalities, or an undesired sex. Here, the child is presented as a commodity, with parental love conditioned upon successful production. Lost is any recognition of each child’s intrinsic goodness as having been created in the image of God.

**Bio:** Mark J. Cherry is the Dr. Patricia A. Hayes Professor in Applied Ethics and Professor of Philosophy at St. Edward’s University, Austin, Texas. His research compasses ethics and bioethics, together with social and political philosophy. He is Editor of *The Journal of Medicine and Philosophy* (Oxford University Press), Senior Editor of *Christian Bioethics* (Oxford University Press), and Editor-in-Chief of *HealthCare Ethics Committee Forum* (Springer); he is Co-editor of the book series *The Annals of Bioethics* (Routledge) and Editor of the book series *Philosophical Studies in Contemporary Culture* (Springer).

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### **“Bioethics in the Light of Christ Work in Creation and New Creation”**

**Andrew Moeller (University of Oxford)**

Written from an Evangelical perspective, this paper interrogates the project of radical life extension in the light of the New Testament’s teachings on the interrelated roles of Christ as the agent of both creation and new creation (the latter inaugurated by His incarnation, death, burial, and resurrection). Given that Jesus was God the Father’s agent in the creation of the universe, Jesus is rightly described as



Lord and Creator, and so all bioethical reflections and prescriptions must be in accord with His life, teachings, and work. Moreover, as Lord, Creator, and the Second Person of the Trinity, the divine appointment of the limited human lifespan (while a consequence for human sin and not a “good” part of creation) can be understood as in accord with the will of Jesus.

**Bio:** Andrew Moeller is a DPhil student working on the history of eugenics at the University of Oxford. He also works for the Boundaries of Humanity project based at Stanford, and previously served as a Christian minister for nearly a decade.

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**“Bioethics as Therapy: Toward a New Acceptance of Nature and the Human Condition”  
Xavier Symons (The Australian Catholic University)**

Descartes famously defined the human subject as a *res cogito*; or thinking thing, and Francis Bacon argued in *Novum Organon* that man’s salvation lay partly in exercising scientific control over the natural world. This paper aims to advance a different perspective on the relationship between the human person and nature – an alternative bioethics. Rather than adopting an Enlightenment perspective according to which we have a divinely-ordained vocation to bring nature, and, indeed, the human body, under human control (something akin to a God-like dominion over nature), this paper will adopt a broadly Aristotelian perspective – an observational approach – which instead argues that human beings ought to see themselves as creatures that are part of nature and use this perspective as a guide for how we ought to think about the human condition.

**Bio:** Xavier is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Human Flourishing Program at Harvard's Institute for Quantitative Social Science. Xavier’s research interests include ethical issues at the beginning and end of life, conscientious objection, ethical issues in aged care, and pandemic ethics. His recently completed PhD thesis focused on the allocation of lifesaving healthcare resources. Xavier has taught bioethics for several years, and has worked with the Catholic healthcare sector on several projects related to ethics education. In 2020, Xavier was awarded a Fulbright Future Postdoctoral Scholarship, and he was a scholar in residence at Georgetown University's Kennedy Institute of Ethics from September 2021 to March 2022.





## **“Literature as Co-Creation”**

**Friday, November 11, 9:00-10:15 a.m. | ROOM 216 Chair: Anthony Monta (Holy Cross College)**

### **“C.S. Lewis and Harold Bloom on J.R.R. Tolkien’s Theory of Sub-Creation”**

**Jake Grefenstette (University of Cambridge)**

On several occasions in the spring of 1955, Harold Bloom and C.S. Lewis met for pints at a pair of pubs outside Magdalene College, Cambridge. Things ended poorly. In the final months of his life, Lewis publicly excoriated Bloom’s reading of the Romantics; Bloom responded by calling Lewis “the most dogmatic and aggressive person I have ever met.” In my paper, the first critical account of this curious episode, I demonstrate how Lewis and Bloom’s disagreement turns on competing interpretations of J.R.R. Tolkien’s idea of “sub-creation,” a participatory conception of the poet’s relationship to the divine act of creation.

**Bio:** Jake Grefenstette works on S.T. Coleridge’s literary and theological legacy from John Henry Newman to Geoffrey Hill. Originally from Pittsburgh, PA, Jake has studied theology, philosophy, and literature at Notre Dame, UChicago, Peking University, Oxford, and Cambridge. He has just completed his doctoral dissertation in the Faculty of Divinity at King’s College, Cambridge.

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### **“Personifying the World: The Human Vocation to Participate in Creation”**

**Dwight Lindley (Hillsdale College)**

We humans are called to participate in the divine creation, though how this is to happen is not well understood. I propose to clarify the mode of our participation in creation by reframing it in terms of a literary figure: personification. The world is filled with logos, and thus our own words befit and extend what other creatures are always silently saying. We do so by personifying the things around us, reading them as analogous to us, and thus calling them out into the fullness of being. In so doing, we ourselves are also made more complete.

**Bio:** Dwight Lindley is the Barbara Longway Briggs Chair in English Literature at Hillsdale College, where he teaches courses in Great Books, and in nineteenth- and twentieth-century British literature.



He has published articles on Austen, Newman, Hopkins, Dickens, Virginia Woolf, and others, and is completing a book that gives a philosophical and theological account of the literary act. He lives with his wife and nine children in southern Michigan.

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### **“Fiction and the Spiritualization of Matter”**

**Jonathan Geltner (Eastern Michigan University)**

In this paper, I triangulate the thought of the Russian philosophers Vladimir Solovyov and Sergei Bulgakov, and J R R Tolkien’s seminal essay “On Fairy-Stories.” I then apply this synthesized idea of how writers interact through fiction with the natural world by looking at significant passages in the work of two great Catholic authors of fiction, Adalbert Stifter and Jon Fosse. I will conclude by looking briefly at the close connection between the sacraments and the natural world in my own novel *Absolute Music* (Slant Books 2022).

**Bio:** Jonathan Geltner studied English, Classics, and French at the University of Cincinnati, pursued graduate work in English at the University of Chicago, and earned an MFA in fiction from Warren Wilson College. He published a translation of Paul Claudel’s Five Great Odes with Angelico Press in 2020. *Absolute Music* (Slant Books 2022) is his first novel. Jonathan teaches creative writing at Eastern Michigan University and is fiction editor for Slant Books. His current project, *Romance and Apocalypse*, is concerned with the quest for re-enchantment among a variety of authors and places.



## **“Everything to the Glory of God: Participating in Creation”**

**Friday, November 11, 9:00-10:15 a.m. | ROOM B01| Chair: Ricardo Calleja (University of Navarre)**

### **“Creation and Expulsion: Toil, Labor, and the Genesis of Our Disordered Relationship to ‘Work’”**

**Paul Blaschko (University of Notre Dame)**

Work belongs to a primitive class of human activity. In this paper, I want to explore the genesis of work by examining the work in Genesis. The most important moment, though, is one that often goes unremarked when contemporary philosophers have considered Christian philosophies of work, i.e. creation itself. The paper will conclude by identifying three of these obstacles characteristic of modern work, burnout, bullshit jobs, and so-called “dis-integrated” work, and suggest that the model of good work we find in Genesis can be revived to help us construct a more complete Christian philosophy of work.

**Bio:** Paul Blaschko is an assistant teaching professor of philosophy at the University of Notre Dame, where he teaches courses he’s designed on big questions and the philosophy of work. He recently co-authored a book published by Penguin Press about how philosophy can help us live better lives. He now directs a program in Notre Dame’s College of Arts and Letters devoted to exploring how the humanities can help us find meaning in work. Paul consults with professors across the country about how to create better, more innovative philosophy courses. Embarrassingly, perhaps, he also does quite a bit of philosophy on TikTok. His favorite philosopher is Elizabeth Anscombe.

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### **“Craft Beer, Monasticism, and Co-Creation”**

**Todd Hartch (Eastern Kentucky University)**

This paper examines the role of medieval European monasteries in the development of beer and brewing, the negative aspects of industrial brewing, and the recovery of a more humanistic approach in the contemporary craft beer movement. The sterility of standardized and commodified production does not fit well with the deep-seated human desire to cooperate with God in creation.



**Bio:** Todd Hartch teaches Latin American history and the history of Christianity at Eastern Kentucky University. He is the author of *A Time to Build Anew: How to Find the True, the Good and the Beautiful in America* (Angelico 2021) and several works on Christianity in Latin America. When his university was planning a Fermentation concentration for its Chemistry major, he was asked to prepare a beer history course for that program. The concentration is long gone, but the course remains.

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### **“Christ as Tekton and Master Craftsman”**

**Lauren Fink (Independent Scholar)**

God is the master craftsman of Creation. David writes, “When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place” (Psalm 8:3). And, “The heavens proclaim the glory of God. The skies display his craftsmanship” (Psalm 19:1). And yet, “Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made,” writes John (1:3), referring to Jesus, who is described in Greek as a tekton. Tekton is translated as a builder, an architect, and a craftsman. When scripture urges us time and time again – Look, Behold, Consider, Meditate, Ponder – it implies a Creation of incredible, subtle, hidden, deep detail and meaning, complex and infinite, Work only the finest, greatest Craftsman could design. For this paper, I’m going to meld two of my vocations to explore: 1. Christ as Master Craftsman, 2. His design of humans as artists and craftsmen, 3. Where three master craftsmen have found God through the highest forms of their craft.

**Bio:** Lauren Fink is a student of literature, a professional journalist, a small business owner (and one of the 3% of women in the trades), paint contractor, devout Lutheran (Missouri-Synod), mother of five dynamic children, and wife of a State Representative in Michigan’s legislature. She finds God is deeply present in each of my distinct and varied vocations, and that He calls me to explore Him in all I do.

**“The Difference Creation Makes: Catholic Art and Creative Imagination”****Friday, November 11, 9:00-10:15 a.m. | ROOM B02 | Chair: Michael Murphy (Loyola University Chicago)**

What difference does Creation make for artists? How does the practice of writing, musical composition, or visual art change when an artist understands her work as a participation in Divine Creation? *The Difference Creation Makes*, a roundtable discussion, will address these questions through the work of artists who draw on a Catholic theology of creation in sacred music, ink drawing, poetry, and fiction. Each panelist on *The Difference Creation Makes* will explore an artistic technique or approach that is grounded in the Church’s teaching about God and creation. *The Difference Creation Makes* began as a conversation among participants at the inaugural Graduate Summer Institute on the Catholic Imagination, hosted by the Hank Center. This roundtable will enable presenters to share that conversation with attendees at the de Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture. We’ve chosen a roundtable format to enable cross-panel conversation and to involve de Nicola Center participants. Each panelist will speak for eight minutes; after the presentations, Dr. Murphy will facilitate a conversation among panelists about the implications of their talks for Catholic art and creativity.

**Katie Broussard (Independent Scholar)**

Katie Broussard is currently creating a series of infographics and watercolor paintings about the Vatican Observatory, inspired by the writings of Brother Guy Consolmagno on Creation and cosmology. She will share these artworks and describe how the Vatican’s role in the search for the origins of the universe informs her creative activity.

**Bio:** Katie Broussard (ND ‘04, M.Ed ‘06) is an artist and the award-winning illustrator of *Sorin Starts a School*, *Audacious Ignatius*, *The Examen Book*, and *I’m a Saint in the Making*. You can see more of her work at [katiebroussard.com](http://katiebroussard.com).

**Rachel Nozicka (Southern Illinois University)**

Rachel Nozicka will examine the Augustan poet Anne Finch, who develops a style of poetry that explores naming the essences of created things through the inspiration of Adam in the Garden. Finch extends Adam’s work to the naming of essential human relations, especially friendship.



**Bio:** Rachel Nozicka is a Ph.D. candidate at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. She studies 18th-century British literature with a particular focus on the intersections of poetry, ethics, and religion.

**Nathan Bradford Williams (University of Toronto)**

Nathan Bradford Williams will reflect on ‘logogenesis’ of creation arising from word, both as a theological concept and in the compositional technique of Estonian composer Arvo Pärt.

**Bio:** Nathan Bradford Williams is a doctoral candidate in theological studies at the University of Toronto, where his research considers theological aesthetics as a site for ecumenical dialogue. A resident of Nashville, he also serves as campus minister at Middle Tennessee State University.

**William Gonch (Catholic University of America)**

William Gonch will propose that Erich Auerbach’s concept of *figura*, a style of medieval writing that emphasizes the transcendent meanings of people and actions, provides a guiding framework for a rising generation of Catholic writers that includes Phil Klay, Katy Carl, Kirstin Valdez Quade, and others.

**Bio:** William Gonch, Ph.D., is a writer, editor, and teacher based in New Jersey. He received his doctorate in English from the University of Maryland, College Park; his scholarship focuses on the creative adaptation of religious experience in twentieth-century American fiction.