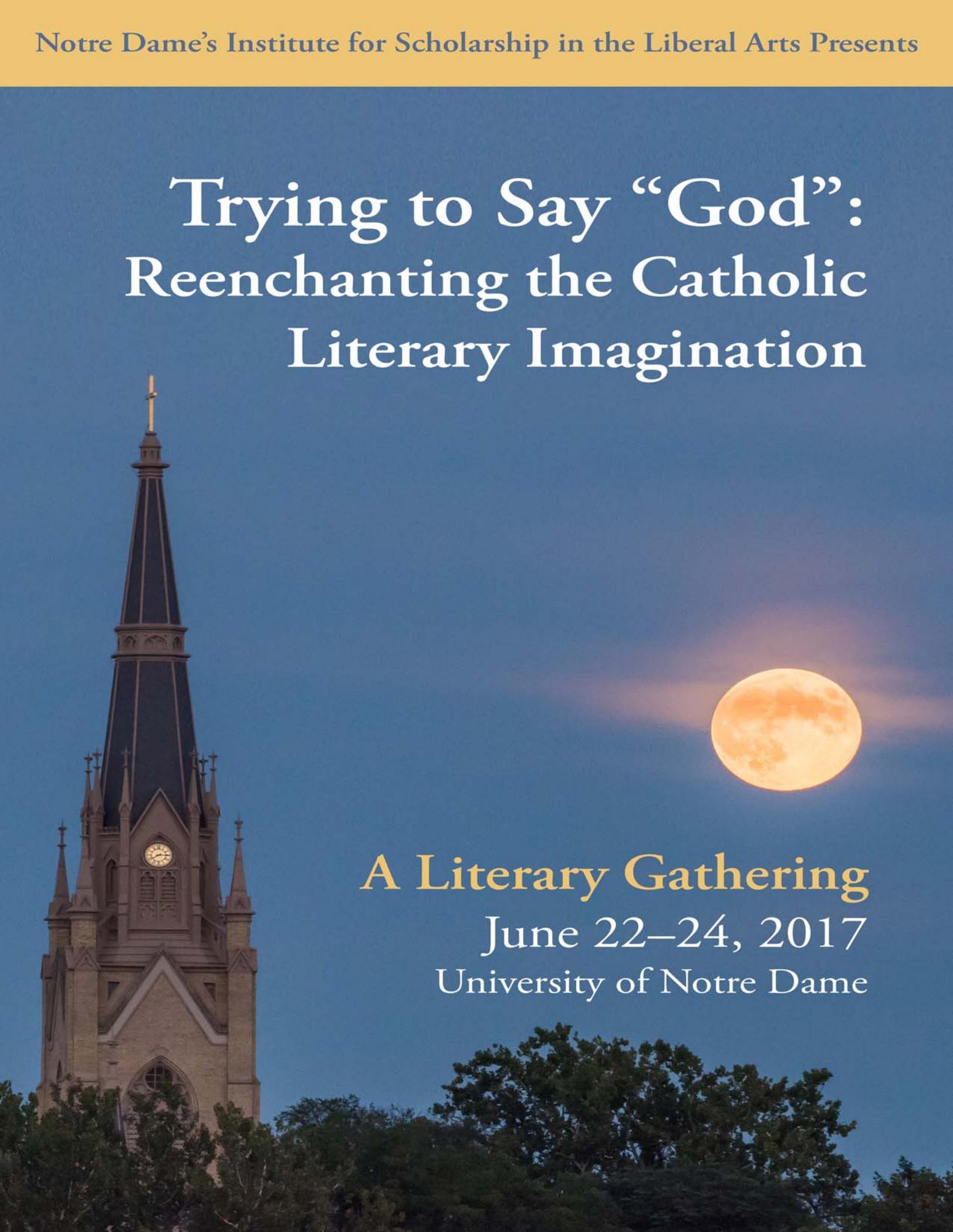


Notre Dame's Institute for Scholarship in the Liberal Arts Presents

Trying to Say "God": Reenchanting the Catholic Literary Imagination



A Literary Gathering

June 22–24, 2017

University of Notre Dame

Trying to Say ‘God’: Reenchanting Catholic Literature

Welcome writers, artists, and lovers of literature to the **2017 “Trying to Say ‘God’ Literary Gathering”**. We’ve added “2017” to the title because we plan to convene this gathering biennially as a way of featuring the art and writing of established, emerging, and aspiring artists of faith. The 2019 event will take place at St. Michael’s College of the University of Toronto, and will return to Notre Dame in 2021.

We are delighted to welcome over 200 guests to this first gathering. If anyone suggests that there are no excellent Catholic writers today, just show them the variety of sessions at this gathering and the varied backgrounds of our many presenters. They’ll find that Catholic literature is healthy and vigorous, with a promising future.

Thank you for joining us!

Planning and Organizing Committee:

Kenneth Garcia, University of Notre Dame

Dave Griffith, Interlochen Center for the Arts

Jessica Mesman Griffith, Sick Pilgrim

Sam Rocha, University of British Columbia

Jonathan Ryan, Sick Pilgrim

Trying to Say God

Introduction

In a time when traditional religion is viewed as suspect, passé, or offensive, many authors and artists are uncomfortable talking about their personal religion or spirituality, while others grope for new ways to say “God.” They attempt to articulate an amorphous truth in an “elsewhere beyond language,” in the words of Fanny Howe, but use language to explore their way toward it. The Institute for Scholarship in the Liberal Arts at the University of Notre Dame—together with Sick Pilgrim, Patheos, Image Journal, and St. Michael's College in Toronto will bring together both well-known and emerging writers, artists and musicians who are wrestling with religious experience and traditions in new ways. We will feature authors in all literary genres: poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction and memoir, fantasy, and science fiction.

For years the Catholic intelligentsia has debated the causes of a dearth of Catholic literature, lamenting the end of the "golden age" of Catholic writing and the days of O'Connor, Percy, Merton, et. al. "Catholic literary culture today might best be described as a funeral for multiple corpses. This, for living Catholic writers, makes for a rather depressing set of circumstances to enter into," wrote Kaya Oakes in an essay for *America Magazine* in 2014. We, the founders of the Trying to Say God Conference, agree that the problem isn't a lack of serious, talented, and faithful Catholic artists--it's that we lack a Catholic arts culture. We aren't the first people to say this, but we want to take a concrete step to change it.

So instead of "a funeral for multiple corpses," we envisioned this conference as a celebration of the contemporary writers, artists, and musicians who have emerged in a literary, religious and cultural milieu vastly different from that of our lionized predecessors. We want the adjuncts, freelancers, bloggers, poets, painters, singer-songwriters and genre fiction writers to come together and share the ways they're working within a tradition that may trouble them, challenge them, and inspire them all at the same time.

We want to create a community of support, encouraging each other in a world that is dismissive and outright hostile toward our faith to continue Trying to Say God in our own distinctive way.

In addition to readings and panel presentations, a sacred music performance featuring the work of living composers such as James McMillan and Arvo Pärt will be presented by musicians from Notre Dame's Sacred Music Program.

We invite writers and artists from all genres to participate. Our goal is to foster a new generation of Catholic writers (both capital “C” and small “c” catholic, by which we mean writers who draw on a sacramental vision of the world).

Conference Schedule

All sessions will be held in **DeBartolo Hall** except where otherwise noted.
(Note: **Not** DeBartolo Performing Arts Center)

Thursday, June 22, 2017

- 2:00 – 7:00** **Registration**
141 DeBartolo Hall (in corridor)
- 4:00** **Welcome and Introduction**
Kenneth Garcia, University of Notre Dame
141 DeBartolo
- 4:10 – 4:50** **Plenary One:**

The Role of Artists in the Church
Bishop Daniel Flores
Introduction by Jonathan Ryan
141 DeBartolo
- 5:15 p.m.** **Conference Mass, Rev. Daniel Flores, Presiding**
Basilica of the Sacred Heart
- 8:00 – 8:45** **Plenary Two:**

Poetry and Prayer: An Unlikely Catholic
Mary Karr
Introduction by Kenneth Garcia
Washington Hall Auditorium
- 8:50 – 9:15** **Book Signing with Mary Karr**
Washington Hall Auditorium Lobby
- 9:20 – 10:00** **Music concert with Jason Harrod**
Washington Hall Auditorium
- 10:15** **Rosary in Grotto** (behind main Basilica)

Friday, June 23, 2017

8:00 **Continental Breakfast**
DeBartolo

8:30 – 9:30 **Concurrent Sessions**

Trying to Say ‘God’ without Sounding like Marilynne Robinson

Randy Boyagoda
Moderator: Kenneth Garcia
136 DeBartolo

In this talk, novelist, critic and professor Randy Boyagoda explores the challenges of writing serious religious fiction in the context of present-day terms, sensibilities, and settings. Boyagoda will reflect on the success of Marilynne Robinson’s historical fiction, which takes religion seriously and has been well received by secular audiences. He will unpack what he learned in a way that will help writers seeking an audience for their work. Boyagoda will also discuss two examples of writers answering the challenge of writing about God in present-day terms - Mary McCarthy, with her 1963 novel, “The Group,” and David Constantin, with his short story “The Loss” (2015). And he will share how he follows these ideas in his own fiction, reading from his forthcoming novel, *Original Prin*.

The Body of the Ecstatic Beloved as the Every Body

Natalie Diaz
Moderator: Brian Collier
138 DeBartolo

What if every one we touch with language, with words, with ink and text, are treated as the body of the beloved? It is hard to love a body well, to love it beyond its limitations as lover, friend, sibling, family, enemy, stranger. Even harder to love those bodies beyond our own limitations in relationship to them. To truly honor the electric of life, each body on our page must be treated as the miracle it is--capable of tenderness and violence, at once a fragment and part of a whole. When dealing with the bodies most difficult to love, this type of intimate gaze, as well as our return to sensual language (which moves beyond the Western limitation of five senses) will move us to ecstasy and love in our writing processes. Diaz will share how she weaves these ideals into her own writing and poetry.

Pain, Affliction, and the Catholic Writer

Brian Volck, Laura Bramon, Jessica Wroblewski
140 DeBartolo

As Pope Francis repeatedly calls attention to the wounded peripheries of the world, how does one live with the heart in one place and body in another? Alternatively,

how does one live in a place so ravaged, exploited, or neglected that home ceases to be hospitable? Three authors – a Washington-based expert in international development and child trafficking issues, a pediatrician who works with Native American children, and a theological ethicist in Appalachia – reflect on how a “Catholic sensibility” regarding incarnation, vocation, the works of mercy, and care of the soul informs the way they write about embodiment, place, and suffering.

9:30 **Break**

10:00 – 11:00 **Concurrent Sessions**

The Virgin, the Annunciation, and the Artistic Imagination

Mary Szybist
Moderator: Joyelle McSweeney
136 DeBartolo

National Book Award winner Mary Szybist will offer some reflections on the way the Annunciation between Mary and the angel Gabriel has been imagined by several painters such as Fra Angelico, Sandro Botticelli, Simone Martini, and Henry Ossawa Tanner, and poets such as W. B. Yeats, Denise Levertov, and Jean Valentine. She will share some poems from her last poetry collection *Incarnadine*, which swirls around the Annunciation as its central image and grapples with its possible meanings.

Lectio Divina: How an Ancient Monastic Practice Can Revitalize Literature

Paula Huston
Moderator: Kenneth Garcia
138 DeBartolo

Reading is an act of contemplation. The problem is that we are anything but a contemplative society. Literature and lectio proposes the idea that we can recover our love of great writing through practicing a modified version of lectio divina, or holy reading, which has shaped the lives of contemplative monks for over 1,500 years.

Ever Ancient, Ever New: The Relevance of Icons in a Digital World

Joseph Malham
Moderator: Jonathan Ryan
140 DeBartolo

Since the ascendancy of Byzantium, icons have been an integral part of the culture, liturgy and personal prayer of Orthodox Christians. In the past several decades, Western Christians of all denominations have rediscovered the mystery and richness of icons along with the ancient and sacred art of creating them. Iconographer and author Joseph Malham will explore the history of icons, their mystical language and

the benefits of journeying with them in prayer. Centering on the icon of the Transfiguration, Malham will also talk about the potential for inner silence, conversion and transformation in an increasingly hurried, technological and virtual culture.

11:15 – 12:30 Concurrent Sessions

The Marian Effect: Building Strong Women in Writing and Life

Angela Doll Carlson, Suzanne Wolfe, Karen Beattie, Caroline Langston Jarboe, Kaye Park Hinckley, Karen Ullo
Moderator: Angela Cybulski
136 DeBartolo

In the Christian tradition, Mary is the key to strength in women--paradoxically, her surrender to God's will out of trust and love makes her strong. The world considers this sort of surrender weakness, but in saying "yes" to a calling, we find the strength to pursue that calling, no matter the obstacles. This panel brings together five women writers reflecting on their creative process and the daily practice of their art in light of faith. The panelists will discuss the unique role of the woman writer of faith in relationship to Mary, Mother of God and Word bearer, and how they see their role as artists uniquely charged with bringing God forth into the world. Finally, panelists will share personal experience of the strengths women writers possess, as well as the challenges and obstacles they encounter in still largely male-dominated fields of literary arts and publishing.

Finding the Sacred in the Profane: The Role of Vulgarity in Religious Art

Rebecca Bratten Weiss, John Farrell, Jonathan Ryan
138 DeBartolo

What does the profane have to do with the sacred? The ordinary impulse is to keep the one far from the other. But in art, it is often precisely through the profane, the vulgar, or the grotesque that the sacred is manifested. This discussion will consider how juxtapositions that would ordinarily be considered sacrilege become, in certain artistic contexts, strangely sacramental.

Percival vs. the Pale King: Walker Percy, David Foster Wallace and the Fight of Your Life

Matthew Lickona, Joseph O'Brien, Joshua Hren
140 DeBartolo

Both Walker Percy and David Foster Wallace - the first a convert to Catholicism, the second a brilliant writer fascinated with religion and a man who considered converting at least twice in his life - struggled with depression and the thought of suicide. Percy did not succumb; Wallace did. Both used their writing to take aim at

the existential alienation of modern man. The panel will explore the work of both men, considering where they diverged and where they met, centering on Wallace's use of Percy's novel *The Moviegoer* in his teaching. It will also consider writing and reading as life-or-death propositions: the act of a soul desperate to engage the world and connect with others.

12:45 – 2:00 **Lunch, Brown Bag Seminar for High School Teachers**
(lunch provided)

Teaching Theology, Critical Thinking, and Creativity through Catholic Literature

Dave Griffith, Director, Interlochen Creative Writing Program
330 Coleman-Morse

2:15 – 3:15 **Concurrent Sessions**

Fiction, Research, and Inspiration

Valerie Sayers
Moderator: Kenneth Garcia
136 DeBartolo

How much research is enough when it comes to fiction? When is it time to stop researching and start writing? With examples from her own research for *The Powers*, a novel set in 1941 that features Joe DiMaggio, Dorothy Day, Walker Evans, and photographs from the era, Sayers will explore the challenges and exhilaration of using deep research in fiction that grapples with faith.

Weird Fiction as Sacramental Practice

Jonathan Ryan
138 DeBartolo

How can the literary genres of science fiction, fantasy, horror, and paranormal act as sacramental literature? Ryan, who is a paranormal fiction novelist, will first explore the history of weird fiction, focusing on the work of Arthur Machen, Charles Williams, Ray Bradbury and Stephen King. And from their work, show how writers can use “weirdness” to strip off naturalistic blinders and invite us to “behold,” in the Old Testament sense, the unseen world around us.

In Praise of Indolence: Seasons of Discipline and Grace in the Writing Life

Brian G. Phipps
Moderator: Ann Lewis
140 DeBartolo

If you're discouraged because you just can't seem to discipline yourself to write when you don't feel like it, take heart. You can have a rich writing life without being prolific. For many writers, creativity is seasonal. Because we experience times when we don't feel like writing, as well as times when we do, grace plays just as important a role as discipline in our productivity and perseverance as writers. If you don't feel like writing, it's okay. Don't write. But be ruthless about writing when you do feel like it. This presentation suggests ways to make the most of your productive seasons.

3:15 – 3:45 Break

3:45 – 5:00 Concurrent Sessions

The Future of Catholic Literature in a Secular Age

Randy Boyagoda, Kaya Oakes, Joshua Hren, Lisa Ampleman
Moderator: Dave Griffith, Interlochen Center for the Creative Arts
136 DeBartolo

There has been considerable debate in recent years over how to re-invigorate and re-imagine Catholic literary culture in a secular culture that is often antithetical to Christian values. The "re-" in the verbs of the previous sentence assume, of course, that there was such a discernible literary culture at some time in the past, but has declined. Where might we go from here, and how do we get there? The panelists will discuss (debate?), the general topic of the future of Catholic literature in American culture.

Platform Building and the Foundations of Humility

Karen Beattie, Angela Doll Carlson, Becky Eldredge, Emily Miller
138 DeBartolo

Platform. The word is apt to strike fear into the heart of any writer interested in publishing. But how do we, as writers of faith, approach the idea of "platform building" while remaining true to our writing *and* listening for the deeper call toward humility? Is there a path through the jungle of self promotion and social media to the higher goal of producing enduring and life-giving work?

Pedagogy, Witness, and Literary Writing: Exploring Contemporary Memoirs and Essays in Sacramental Spirituality

Scott D. Moringello, Mary Juzwik
140 DeBartolo

According to Soren Kierkegaard, Christianity cannot be taught, but it can be witnessed. In this panel, we will discuss spiritual memoirs and personal essays, two forms such witnessing can take. Mary Juzwik will discuss the writings of early 20th century Christian mystical writers Simone Weil and Evelyn Underhill, and Scott D.

Moringiello will discuss the work of contemporary writers Mary Karr, Kaya Oakes, and Jessica Mesman Griffith and Amy Andrews. The panelists are especially interested in discussing the relationships among literary writing, witness, and pedagogy.

- 6:00 – 7:30** **Reception (wine and hors d'oeuvres)**
Eck Visitor Center Atrium
- 6:30 – 7:15** **Loyola Press Book Launch (concurrent with reception)**
Eck Visitor Center Auditorium
- 8:00–8:45** **Plenary Three:**
- A Portable Kingdom: Writing Our Lives**
 Heather King
 Introduction by Jessica Mesman Griffith
 Washington Hall Auditorium
- 8:50 – 9:15** **Heather King Book signing**
Washington Hall Auditorium Lobby
- 9:20 – 10:00** **Sacred Music Concert**
 A Mirror over Time: Self-reflecting Themes in the Catholic
 Musico-Poetic Imagination, Works by James MacMillan, Arvo
 Pärt, Josquin Desprez, Francisco Guerrero and Cary Boyce
 Notre Dame Vocale
 Prof. Carmen-Helena Tellez, Artistic and Music Director
 Washington Hall Auditorium
- 10:15 ish** **Open Mic** (5 minutes/person). Poetry or prose. Sign-up at
 registration table.
 Fireside Terrace (outdoor patio) at Morris Inn

June 24, 2017

8:00 **Continental Breakfast**

8:30 – 9:30 Concurrent Sessions

Devotional Literature with Teeth: Writing Complexity and Darkness in Modern Spiritual Writing

Karl Persson, Heather King, Anne Carpenter, Tim O'Malley, Malcolm Guite,
Vinita Hampton Wright
136 DeBartolo

Neatly framed and drowning in inspirational sweet-sickness, the concluding lines of the all-too-familiar “Footprints” are the kind of literature popularly associated with the term “devotional” – lines offering not even real comfort, but a bland imitation safety, spiritually pornographic kitsch valued more for its anesthetic than its aesthetic properties. However, given that Christians can claim a litany of strongly spirited devotional authors and numerous Biblical passages including the Psalms – such kitsch need not be the zenith of our practice as devotional writers and readers. Bringing together a diverse range of perspectives from theologians, publishers, and practicing writers of devotional material, this panel explores the problems of saccharine piety, and the ways we might address these problems and foster the writing, distribution, and reading of deeper, more complex, and more honest devotional material.

The Future of Catholic Publishing

Greg Wolfe, Joe Durepos, Meghan Murphy-Gill, Matthew Boudway
Moderator: Jonathan Ryan
140 DeBartolo

Do Catholic publishers, magazines and books have a place in the modern world? If so, what will that look like? How will the industry change and evolve and what can writers expect? This panel will discuss the future of Catholic Publishing from all angles and concerns. And maybe answer the question, does Catholic Publishing even relevant anymore?

Up Above My Head: Mysticism, Performance and Liberation Strategies in Black Sacred Song

Joseph A. Brown, S.J., University of Southern Illinois, Carbondale
Moderator: Mary Szybist
138 DeBartolo

As the founder of Sweet Honey in the Rock, Bernice Johnson Reagon said, “the song is way to get sound running through the body. The sound changes you.” By reflecting on the sophisticated compositional strategies employed by those who fashioned the body of music long known as “Negro Spirituals,” we may discover that the African cultural continuities that are present in the truly first American art form are still motivating artists in every conceivable medium from painting and sculpture to Black Gospel music to classic and contemporary poetry, fiction, drama and Hip Hop and “spoken word.”

9:30 – 10:00 Break

Saturday, June 24 (continued)

10:00 – 11:00 Concurrent Sessions

Writing Anew the Second Book of God: Nature as Sacramental, with a Theological Rhapsody

Kenneth Garcia, Jerry Harp
136 DeBartolo

The Catholic Tradition has traditionally held that there are two “Books of God”: Scripture, or Revelation, and Nature. Both point to and reveal something sacred beyond themselves. The Book of Nature has been largely forgotten and neglected in recent centuries, and this has had a profound impact on Catholic theology and our relationship to the natural world. The recovery of nature’s sacramentality has received increasing attention during recent decades in the face of environmental desecration. Ken Garcia will read from his forthcoming memoir *Pilgrim River* about his first encounters with God in the wilderness, while poet Jerry Harp will provide a “theological rhapsody” reflecting on how God appears through ordinary encounters within the world.

The Confessions of X

Suzanne Wolfe
Moderator: Valerie Sayers
138 DeBartolo

Suzanne M. Wolfe will be reading from her latest novel, *The Confessions of X*, winner of the 2017 *Christianity Today’s* Fiction Award. The novel tells the story, in her own voice, of the unnamed concubine in St. Augustine’s *Confessions*. Wolfe will also talk about how the historical fiction writer weaves historical fact with fiction and answer questions relating to historical research.

The New Abolitionists: Catholics Writing about Race

Karen Beattie, Jon Nilson, Christopher Pramuk, Marlena Graves
140 DeBartolo

From Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* to Ta-Nahisi Coates' *Between the World and Me*, throughout history literature has been a powerful force in shining a light on racial injustice, influencing public discussion and inciting change. As Catholics, we are called to be the light of the world. How can we as Catholic writers be the “new abolitionists” in illuminating racial injustice in today’s world, and standing by our black brothers and sisters to fight against the unjust systems that persist, even 153 years after the Emancipation Proclamation?

11:15 – 12:30 Concurrent Sessions

Imagining the Editor as Artist

Angela Cybulski, Jessica Wilson, Mary Ann Miller
136 DeBartolo

This panel features three editors – a book editor from Wiseblood Books, the editor of the newly formed poetry journal *Presence*, and a professor editing an unfinished novel by Flannery O’Connor – in discussion about the unique attitude with which they approach the craft of editing. The panel posits that writers of faith are in especial need of exceptional editors. Indeed, for the exceptional editor, editing itself is an art form. As “artist” herself, the editor must not only work in humble apprenticeship to her craft, but must also be a person of deep faith possessed of an awareness that the work she is about centers on assisting in the transfiguration of works of the imagination into highly refined sacramental objects that truly speak God.

Not Always Sweet: Beyond Liturgical Cupcakes in Catholic Women’s Writing

Colleen Mitchell, Kaya Oakes, Leticia Adams, Sonja Corbit, Rebecca Bratten Weiss, and Sarah Margaret Babbs
Moderator: Jessica Mesman Griffith
140 DeBartolo

In this panel, a diverse group of female writers will discuss the work of digging to a deeper level of truth, spirituality, and testimony as Catholic writers. They will discuss the unique experience of challenging the stereotypes and taboos that surround writing as a Catholic woman as well what inspires and excites them about this task.

“The Inner Room: Untrying to Say God, Allowing Silence to Speak God’s Name

Kevin M. Johnson and Cassidy Hall
138 DeBartolo

This panel will be a space of silence and engagement run by the Producer of a documentary film on Silence and the head of The Inner Room, which teaches the importance of silence. This session will include a guided exploration of silence and the ancient wisdom it hosts, a brief road map to engage the silence deeper, clips and notes from the documentary feature film *In Pursuit of Silence*, and an opportunity to discuss thoughts the audience raises. Silence teaches us to say God by reminding us to unsay God. The Inner Room will explore this paradox as we learn to pray in silence, allow silence to stir up our interior restlessness, and move towards a place of encounter.

12:45 – 2:00 **Lunch, Brown Bag Seminar** (lunch provided)
“The Art of Spiritual Writing” for High School Teachers and
Aspiring Writers
Vinita Hampton Wright, Loyola Press
330 Coleman-Morse

2:15 – 3:30 **Concurrent Sessions**

**Notes from a Contemplative: Thomas Merton on the Art of Writing as
Resistance and Protest**

Dave Griffith, Gordon Oyer, Kathleen Tarr, Cassidy Hall
138 DeBartolo

The contemplative life of Thomas Merton has proven to be fertile soil for activist-oriented writing. In “The New Man” Merton reminds us that “the true contemplative is not less interested than others in normal life” and what goes on in the world, but more interested, more concerned.” This panel will explore writing and the contemplative life as a form of resistance via political action and protest in the life of Thomas Merton, and the ways in which creative writing can delineate and open both the reader and writer’s minds to create, and hold questions open-handed.

**Make Believe: How Children’s and YA Literature Can Nurture
Curiosity about God and Keep Spiritual Imaginations Going for Life**

Caryn Rivadeneira, Amy Cattapan, Jennifer Grant
Moderator: Jonathan Ryan
136 DeBartolo

In this panel, children’s book authors explore what it means to write for kids and young adults in a way that encourages questions and curiosity and seeks to engage children in the faith in authentic ways. The panelists will discuss both fiction and nonfiction and point out ways that excellent “secular” children’s and YA books also help children *and* adults to enter into the mysteries of our faith.

Rendering the Body in Words

Brian Volck, Paula Huston, Martha Serpas, Ragan Sutterfield
140 DeBartolo

With its reverence for (and fascination with) relics, statues, pilgrimages, and shrines, Catholicism may be the most incarnational expression of Christianity. Catholic teaching also makes strong claims regarding fraught questions of embodiment, including gender, sexuality, life, and death. Four writers – poets, memoirists, and novelists – consider how this attention to the body influences the way they render bodies on the page and if there is an identifiable “Catholic sensibility” in their work.

3:30 – 4:00 **Break**

4:15 – 5:30

Concurrent Sessions

The Challenge of Catholic Science Writing

John Farrell, Br. Guy Consolmagno, and Rebecca Bratten Weiss
136 DeBartolo

Faith and Science being compatible sounds great in theory—but in practice, it can be a real challenge. Talk about evolution and someone always wants to know about Adam and Eve. Talk about physics and someone wants assurance we have free will. Talk about the Big Bang and people get confused about the very term ‘creation’. Join us for a chat about the challenges of Catholic science writing.

Rendering the World Strange: Folk Piety and Imagination

Kevin M. Johnson, Jessica Mesman Griffith, David Russell Mosley
140 DeBartolo

This panel composed of a Catholic “witch,” a Catholic mystic, and a Catholic theologian-poet will talk about how the practices of folk piety that may look strange, superstitious, and even possibly unfaithful to the Catholic Tradition as taught and expressed in everyday parishes actually may be more faithful than one realizes. In stirring up the Imagination and linking it to living the gospel, folk piety is not superstition but is the Catholic sacramental world view in action. The panel will explore the exotic world of New Orleans influences on Jessica, move to recover the Silent and Paradoxical in Mystical Theology, and will culminate in the Poetic nature of the artist that reveals the sacramental nature of the Cosmos.

Singing Between Doubt and Faith: Contemporary Music and Catholic Theology

James Cochran, Jason Harrod, Anna Keating, Azzan Yadin-Israel
131 DeBartolo

Rock music and religion have long had a tense and ambiguous relationship with each other. Elvis threatened social stability with his crooked smile, jet-black hair, and gyrating hips—even as he simultaneously drew from his rich Gospel music background. This panel considers how contemporary musicians, like Bruce Springsteen, the Hold Steady, and many others, rely on or subvert biblical narratives and the Catholic tradition. How are these musicians like Christ, as one who challenges social and cultural norms and points us to the divine.

Catholicism and Contemporary Crime Fiction

Joe Durepos, Samuel Martin, Jonathan Ryan
138 DeBartolo

Best-selling mystery writer Ian Rankin says that good crime fiction is anarchic: popular, page-turning satire that investigates the unjust systems that too often govern our lives. Catholicism, as a religion, is often seen as one of those unjust systems. But there's something uniquely anarchic about Catholicism, something voiced by the Virgin Mary in her Magnificat when she praises God for "casting the mighty down from their thrones." Join a practicing literary agent and two young writers - one big "C" Catholic, the other small "c" - for a wide-ranging discussion on how Catholicism in contemporary crime fiction can be a weird and mysterious anarchic force: one being reckoned with in new and creative ways. We'll highlight the different shapes that Catholicism takes in crime fiction sub-genres, like Urban Noirs, Village Cozies, and Supernatural Thrillers. And we'll discuss various systems critiqued by Catholic faith in the novels we've read and are writing: from eugenics to colonialism, capitalism to communism, human trafficking to heroin dealing.

5:30 – 7:30

Dinner

8:00 – 8:45

Plenary Four:

“Catholicism and the Rules of Fantasy”

Tim Powers

141 DeBartolo Classroom Building

8:45-9:15

Conversation with Tim Powers and Br. Guy Consolmagno

Introducer and Moderator: Jonathan Ryan

9:15 – 9:40

Book Signing with Tim Powers

Outside 141 DeBartolo

10:00

After-party hosted by the blog Sick Pilgrim

Featuring Music by Sister Sinjin’

LangLab

1302 High Street

South Bend. IN. 46601

Cash Bar

Speaker Bios

Leticia Adams is a Catholic convert raised between cultural Catholics and Baptists. After a life of sexual abuse, teen motherhood, a late miscarriage, divorce, and alcoholism, she walked into St. William Catholic Church and began RCIA. In 2010 she went to Rome, where Jesus proposed a life with Him and she said yes. It so happened that her boyfriend also proposed and they were married that October. She has 4 children and 3 step-sons. She is finishing a memoir and hopes to start a non-profit called The Red Door Foundation, with the mission of meeting people where they are and serving them in any way they may need. She blogs at “Through Broken Roses.”

Lisa Ampleman is the author of a book of poetry, *Full Cry* (NFSPS Press, 2013), and a chapbook, *I've Been Collecting This to Tell You* (Kent State University Press, 2012). Her poems have appeared in journals such as *Poetry*, *Image*, *Kenyon Review Online*, *Notre Dame Review*, *32 Poems*, *Poetry Daily*, and *Verse Daily*, and her reviews and prose in *Good Letters*, *Diagram*, *Pleades*, and *Southeast Review Online*. She was a Mullin Scholar at the Institute for Advanced Catholic Studies at USC from 2013-15 and is the Managing Editor for the *Cincinnati Review*.

Sarah Margaret Babbs, author of *Fumbling Toward Grace*, writes at the intersection of social justice and suffering. Having lost both parents by age 12, Sarah writes about navigating life as a motherless daughter and motherhood shaped by loss. She also explores suffering and what it means to hunger and thirst for justice. She is a graduate of Mount Saint Mary's University and holds an MA in Social Justice from Loyola University Chicago. She is a regular contributor to *Blessed Is She* and *Sick Pilgrim*. Her work has also appeared in *US Catholic*. Sarah lives in Carmel, Indiana with her husband and three children.

Carla Barnhill is a senior editor at SparkHouse, a division of Augsburg-Fortress Publishers. The former managing editor of *Christian Parenting Today* magazine, she's also the author of several books, including *Myth of the Perfect Mother* (Baker) and *Blessings Every Day* (Tyndale Kids). Carla lives with her husband and three children in Minneapolis, MN.

Karen Beattie is the author of two books: *Rock-Bottom Blessings* (Loyola Press 2013), which won an Excellence in Publishing Award from the Association of Catholic Publishers, and *A Book of Grace-Filled Days* (Loyola Press, forthcoming). She has an MA in Journalism and has been published in *America* magazine, *Patheos*, and *Christianity Today*, among others. She lives on the North side of Chicago with her husband, seven-year-old daughter, and geriatric cat.

Amy Julia Becker is the author of *Small Talk: Learning From My Children About What Matters Most* (Zondervan, 2014), *A Good and Perfect Gift: Faith, Expectations and a Little Girl Named Penny* (Bethany House), named one of the Top Books of 2011 by Publisher's Weekly, and *Penelope Ayers: A Memoir*. A graduate of Princeton University and Princeton Theological Seminary, her essays about faith, family, and disability have appeared on the Motherlode blog of The New York Times, USA Today, ABCNews.com, Theatlantic.com, The Washington Post Online, The Christian Century, Christianity Today, and The Huffington Post. She is a regular blogger at Parents.com. Amy Julia lives with her husband Peter and three children, Penny, William, and Marilee in western CT.

Matthew Boudway is senior editor at *Commonweal* magazine, where he writes editorials, essays, and reviews about politics, literature, and the arts. He grew up in Arizona, was educated at Yale, Oxford, and Boston University, and lives in New York City.

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Laura Bramon is a versatile and rigorous observer, implementer, and writer. She serves as a manager, writer/editor, and design, monitoring, and evaluation specialist for international development agencies, the U.S. Government, and media groups. Focus sectors include human trafficking, child protection, and gender protection. She has field experience in urban, rural, and non-secure areas of Africa, South Asia, South America, and Eastern Europe. Laura began her career at BBC-Cambridgeshire, NPR-Kansas City, and the television documentary production company of Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Hedrick Smith. She earned her MA from The Writing Seminars at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, MD, completing her thesis under novelist Alice McDermott. Her creative work appears in *The Best Creative Non-Fiction* (W.W. Norton), *IMAGE*, *Books & Culture*, *Featherproof Press*, and other outlets

Joseph A. Brown, S.J., is a Catholic priest with an extensive academic and pastoral career. He received a Master's Degree in Creative Writing from Johns Hopkins University. After his ordination to the priesthood (1972) he taught Theater and Poetry at Creighton University for several years (eventually becoming artist-in-residence in 1978). Later, after receiving both the Master's degree in Afro-American Studies and Ph.D. in American Studies from Yale University, Fr. Brown taught at the University of Virginia and at Xavier University in New Orleans. Presently he is a Professor and the Chair of the Department of Africana Studies at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.

Angela Doll Carlson is a poet, fiction writer, and essayist whose work has been published or is forthcoming in publications such as *Thin Air Magazine*, *Eastern Iowa Review*, *Apeiron Review*, *Relief Journal Magazine*, *St. Katherine Review*, *Rock & Sling*, *Bird's Thumb Magazine*, *Ruminate Magazine*, and *Art House America*. Her memoir, *Nearly Orthodox: On Being a Modern Woman in an Ancient Tradition* (Ancient Faith Publishers) was released July 2014. Her latest book, *Garden in the East: The Spiritual Life of the Body* is due out from Ancient Faith Publishers in 2016. Angela currently lives in Chicago with her husband, David, and her four outrageously spirited yet remarkably likable children.

Anne Michelle Carpenter is an assistant professor of Catholic systematic theology at Saint Mary's College of California. Her work focuses on theological aesthetics, metaphysics, liturgy, and Christology. She has written on Hans Urs von Balthasar - publishing a book, *Theo-Poetics: Hans Urs von Balthasar and the Risk of Art and Being* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2015) - and on liturgy, silence, and the Benedictine tradition. Her recent research has focused on the nature of memory as an analogue for sacred tradition.

Amy Cattapan is an award-winning author, speaker, and middle school English teacher living in the Chicago area. Her debut young adult novel, *Angelhood*, has been an Amazon bestseller in Christian teen fiction and won multiple awards, including a Moonbeam Children's

Book Award and the Catholic Writers Guild Seal of Approval. Her second novel, *Seven Riddles to Nowhere*, tells the story of a boy trying to save his Catholic school from closing. She has also been published in numerous children's magazines and *Chicken Soup for the Soul* books. In addition to teaching, writing, and speaking, Amy is also pursuing a doctorate in curriculum and instruction at Loyola University in Chicago. Much to her chagrin, she does not sleep much.

James Cochran is a doctoral student in the English Department at Baylor University, where he also teaches first-year writing. His current research centers on critical theory (especially ecocriticism and posthumanism) and twentieth-century and contemporary American literature, religion, and culture. His publications appear in *Label Me Latina/o*, *Word and Text*, and the *Journal of South Texas English Studies*, and his chapter on cute aesthetics is forthcoming in *The Retro-Futurism of Cuteness* (Punctum Books).

Brother Guy Consolmagno, S.J. is Director of the Vatican Observatory and a fan and reader of science fiction. He received his B.A. (1974) and M.A. (1975) degrees at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and his Ph.D. (1978) at the University of Arizona's Lunar and Planetary Laboratory, all in planetary science. Consolmagno is a popular speaker as well as a writer of popular science. He has been a guest of honor at several science fiction conventions, including DuckKon in 2000, ConFusion in Michigan in 2002, Boskone in 2007, and ConClave in 2009. In 2014, he was awarded the Carl Sagan Medal for outstanding communication by an active planetary scientist to the general public by the Division for Planetary Sciences of the American Astronomical Society.

Sonja Corbit, the "Bible Study Evangelista," is a popular Catholic speaker. She is a Scripture study teacher with a story-teller's gifts and a warrior's heart and a poet's pen. She is author of several books and Bible studies, including the recently released *Fearless*.

Angela Cybulski is currently the Managing Editor of Wiseblood Books. She studied British poetry and prose from the Romantic period through to the early Moderns during graduate school, with a particular focus on the Victorian novel and vampires. She left a lucrative career in academia to home school her son, during which time she worked as an editor, created and maintained two blogs on creativity, writing, and beauty in everyday life, and taught composition and literature for a private home school academy. She continues to write essays, is in the process of revising her first novel and has started work on her second. Angela has worked in publishing for many years and continues to freelance for private clients on a variety of projects.

Natalie Diaz is a Native American poet and author of *When My Brother Was an Aztec*. Her honors and awards include the Nimrod/Hardman Pablo Neruda Prize for Poetry, the Louis Untermeyer Scholarship in Poetry from Bread Loaf, the *Narrative Poetry Prize*, and a Lannan Literary Fellowship. Diaz currently lives in Mohave Valley, Arizona where she works with the last Elder speakers of the Mojave language on the revitalization of the language. She is a convert to the Catholic Church.

Becky Eldredge is a writer, spiritual director, and retreat facilitator. The author of [*Busy Lives & Restless Souls*](#), Becky holds Bachelors and Masters degrees in Education from Louisiana State University and a Masters in Pastoral Studies from Loyola University New Orleans. She has her Certificate in Spiritual Direction from Spring Hill College. Becky has been involved in ministry for more than 20 years, with the majority of her work in retreat ministry and adult faith formation. She lives in Baton Rouge, LA with her husband and three children.

Joseph Durepos is the executive editor for trade book acquisitions at Loyola Press, where he has worked since 2002. He's published over 300 books, including New York Times Best Selling authors Fr. James Martin (*My Life with the Saints*) and Joan Wester Anderson (*In the Arms of Angels*). Durepos has also worked as an independent literary agent specializing in religion and spirituality titles. Titles sold include *No Greater Love* by Mother Teresa and *The Invitation* by Oriah Mountain Dreamer both with worldwide sales of over 500,000 copies. As both an agent and editor, his books have been New York Times Best Sellers (*The Rhythm of Life* by Matthew Kelly) and Publishers Weekly Best Sellers (*The Invitation* by Oriah Mountain Dreamer and *I Like Being Catholic* by Michael Leach & Theresa Borchard); they have also won Publisher's Weekly's Best Books of the Year awards (*Prayer is A Place* by Phyllis Tickle and *My Life with the Saints* by James Martin, S.J.).

John Farrell is a writer and producer working in Boston. He is the author of *The Day Without Yesterday: Lemaître, Einstein and the Birth of Modern Cosmology* from Basic Books. A graduate of Harvard College with a B.A. in English and American Literature, Farrell has written for Skeptic, Cosmos Magazine, Aeon, New Scientist, The Wall Street Journal, The Manchester Guardian, The Boston Globe, Salon, National Review, Huffington Post, First Things and The Tablet of London, and he writes a science/tech blog for Forbes. He was a 2010 Templeton-Cambridge Journalism Fellow in Science and Religion. In 2009, he was a media consultant to the Academy Award nominated director Roland Joffe for the feature film, *There Be Dragons*, and has also written scripts, including a feature length adaptation of *Don Quixote*, for the late Sir Christopher Lee. His YouTube platform, myStanza, provides dramatic presentations of classic poems for students of literature and language.

Bishop Daniel Flores was appointed to the Brownsville, Texas Diocese in 2009. He was educated at the University of Texas, Austin, University of Dallas (BA and MDivinity), and Angelicum in Rome (STL, STD). His interests include baseball, soccer, dinosaurs, freshwater tropical fish, history, and reading good books, including Augustine's *Confessions*, Thomas Aquinas' *Summa*, Tolkien, and the works of Mario Vargas Llosa and Jim Butcher (*The Dresden Files*).

Kenneth Garcia, conference co-organizer, is Associate Director of the Institute for Scholarship in the Liberal Arts at the University of Notre Dame, where he received a PhD in Theology in 2008. His book *Academic Freedom and the Telos of the Catholic University* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), won the award for "Best Book Published in Theology in 2012" from the College Theology Society. His literary essays have been published in *The Gettysburg Review* (2014), *The Southwest Review* (2015), *Saint Katherine Review* (2015), *Notre Dame Magazine* (2015 and 2016), and *Hunger Mountain* (2015). His essay "The Hollow Places of the World" was runner up in the 2014 *Hunger Mountain* Nonfiction Essay contest, and a finalist for the Waterston Desert Writing Prize. Two of his recent essays have been noted in *Best American Essays* (2015 and 2016). His memoir *Pilgrim River* will be published by Angelico Press in early 2018.

Jennifer Grant is the author of five books, including *When Did Everybody Else Get So Old?*, praised as a "necessary, awakening memoir" by Jon M. Sweeney. Her first picture book for children is *Maybe God Is Like That Too*, a book about discerning God's spirit in the kind, gentle, and faithful acts of those around us. Grant has a Masters degree in creative writing/fiction, is an avid reader of literature for both children and adults (Proust! Kate Di Camillo!), and is mother to four book-loving young adult and adult fiction readers with whom she has lively discussions about the way stories affect culture.

Marlena Graves is the author of *A Beautiful Disaster: Finding Hope in the Midst of Brokenness* (Brazos Press 2014). Hearts and Minds Books awarded it the *Best Book on Spiritual Formation by a First Time Writer* (2014). Marlena is also a bylined writer for *Christianity Today* and *Our Daily Journey* (Our Daily Bread Ministries). Her pieces have also appeared in the *NIV Devotional Bible For Women* (Zondervan, 2015) and in many other venues. She is the Director of Discipleship at Maumee United Methodist Church and an adjunct professor at Winebrenner Seminary where she teaches Discipleship Ministries. She lives in Toledo, Ohio with her philosophy professor husband, Shawn, and three beautiful and precocious daughters.

David Griffith is Director of the Creative Writing at the Interlochen Center for the Arts in Michigan. He received his B.A. in English from the University of Notre Dame and his M.F.A. in fiction writing from the University of Pittsburgh. He is the author of the book of essays *A Good War is Hard to Find: The Art of Violence in America*. His essays and reviews have appeared in the *Utne Reader*, *The Normal School*, *IMAGE*, and *Creative Nonfiction*, and online at *The Paris Review* and the *Los Angeles Review of Books*. From 2013-15 he was a Mullin Scholar at the University of Southern California's Institute for Advanced Catholic Studies. In the fall he will begin work as Vice-President and Emily and Richard Smucker Chair of Education at the Chautauqua Institution.

Jessica Mesman Griffith, conference co-organizer, is the co-founder of Sick Pilgrim, a blog and online community for the spiritually challenged, and a widely published writer whose work has been noted in *Best American Essays*. Her memoir, *Love and Salt: A Spiritual Friendship in Letters*, co-authored with Amy Andrews, won the 2014 Christopher Award for "literature that affirms the highest values of the human spirit." A book written with her Sick Pilgrim co-founder, novelist Jonathan Ryan, is forthcoming this October. Griffith is cultural columnist for *US Catholic Magazine*, where she has written about Green Nuns, Stranger Things, and Princess Leia. She often writes about the intersections of faith and psychology and creativity. Her articles and essays have also appeared in *Elle*, *Image*, *America*, *Christianity Today*, *Notre Dame Magazine*, *Busted Halo*, and *Living Faith*, among others.

Malcolm Guite is a poet, priest, Chaplain of Girton College, Cambridge, and teaches at the Faculty of Divinity at the University of Cambridge. He lectures widely in England and North America on Theology and Literature. His books include: *Mariner, a Spiritual Biography of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (February 2017), *Parable and Paradox* (2016), *The Singing Bowl* (2013), *Sounding the Seasons* (2012), *Theology and the Poetic Imagination* (2010) and *Faith, Hope, and Poetry* (2006). Malcolm has edited two poetry anthologies for Lent and Advent: *The Word in the Wilderness* (2014) and *Waiting on the Word* (2015). He has a particular interest in the imagination as a truth-bearing faculty and continues to reflect deeply on how poetry can stimulate and re-awaken our prayer life.

Cassidy Hall is a filmmaker, writer, photographer, and artist. Inspired by Thomas Merton, in 2012 she traveled to the seventeen Trappist Monasteries of the US, writing and asking monks and nuns about silence, solitude, and contemplative life. For the past three years, she's been working on the production team of the documentary film, *In Pursuit of Silence* – a film that explores our relationship with silence, sound, and the impact of noise on our lives. She's a contributor for The Inner Room on Patheos Catholic, The Huffington Post Blog, Sick Pilgrim, and her own site - cassidyhall.com

Jerry Harp is the author of poetry books *Creature* (Salt Publishing 2003), *Gatherings* (Ashland Poetry Press 2004), and *Urban Flowers, Concrete Plains* (Salt 2006). With Jan Weissmiller he co-edited *A Poetry Criticism Reader* (U. of Iowa Press 2006). He has also

written *Constant Motion: Ongian Hermeneutics and the Shifting Ground of Early Modern Understanding* (Hampton Press 2010) and *For Us, What Music?: The Life and Poetry of Donald Justice* (U. of Iowa Press 2010). His degrees are from St. Meinrad College (BA 1983), St. Louis University (MA 1985), The University of Florida (MFA 1991), and The University of Iowa (PhD 2002). He is married to the poet Mary Szybist. They teach at Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Oregon.

Jason Harrod is a Brooklyn-based performing songwriter known for generous melodies and poetic, image-rich lyrics. He has been songwriting, recording, and performing for over 20 years, over which time he has built a loyal grassroots following. Harrod's songs are cinematic travelogues, filled with quirky narrative detail and propelled by a honey-dipped tenor. In addition to his fan following, Jason has earned the acclaim of industry leaders. In 2000, he won first place in the bluegrass category of MerleFest's Chris Austin Songwriting competition. The following year, he took first place in the North Carolina Songwriters Co-Op contest and followed that up with a 2002 appearance on Arthur Smith's Carolina Calling stage with Alison Krauss and Union Station. Jason was selected as a spotlight performer at the annual Healdsburg Guitar festival in 2009, sponsored by Acoustic Guitar Magazine, and in 2010 he was awarded a fellowship by the International Arts Movement in the prize's inaugural year. In 2012, Jason received a Fulbright grant to teach songwriting to students in Thessaloniki, Greece. He is currently the music director for a small church that meets in a black box theater on Manhattan's Lower East Side. He tours frequently throughout the US.

Kaye Park Hinckley is a graduate of Spring Hill College in Mobile, Alabama. She is the author of *A Hunger in the Heart*. Second Place winner for Novel, Florida's First Coast Writing Festival, 2007 for *The Wind That Shakes the Corn*. Finalist, Semi-finalist, and Honorable Mentions in The William Faulkner/William Wisdom Competition, Lorian Hemingway Short Story Competition, and Alabama Conclave of Writers Contest. Third-place winner, and Honorable Mention for Short Stories in 2012 Tuscany Prize Collection. Her *Birds of a Feather* was voted one of the six Best Fiction Books for the first half of 2014 by Englewood Review of Books.

Joshua Hren is Assistant Professor of English at Belmont Abbey College, teaching and working at the intersection of the ethical-political & literature and Christianity and culture. He also serves as editor of *Dappled Things: A Quarterly of Ideas, Art, and Faith*, and as Editor-in-Chief of Wiseblood Books. Joshua has published scholarly articles, poems, most recently "Gehenna" in *First Things*, and short stories, most recently "Sick at the Thought," in *Adelaide*. His first academic book, *Middle-earth and the Return of the Common Good: J.R.R. Tolkien and Political Philosophy*, is forthcoming in 2018, and his first collection of short stories, *This Our Exile*, is forthcoming through Angelico Press in Fall of 2017.

Paula Huston is the author of two novels and seven works of spiritual nonfiction. Her short stories and essays have appeared in numerous literary journals and magazines. A former writing and literature teacher in the California State University system, she currently mentors graduate students in creative nonfiction for the Seattle Pacific MFA program. A wife, mother, and grandmother, she is an oblate, or vowed lay member, of a Camaldolese Benedictine monastic community in Big Sur, California.

Caroline Langston Jarboe, a native of Yazoo City, Mississippi, is a convert to the Eastern Orthodox Church. She is a widely published writer and essayist, a winner of the Pushcart Prize and has been a commentator for NPR's "All Things Considered." She is a regular contributor to Image's Good Lettrs blog and is the director of strategy and planning for foundation

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Kevin M. Johnson is a contemplative scholar-practitioner who is the founder of a Roman Catholic lay association called The Inner Room, which focuses on teaching mystical theology and contemplative prayer. Also an adjunct professor, Kevin holds a Masters degree from Yale University and is currently writing his dissertation for Boston College in the area of comparative theology. He also is North American vice-president for the international Roman Catholic lay association Pax Romana which is a social movement for empowerment, advocacy and solidarity for a peaceful, equitable and sustainable world.

Mary M. Juzwik holds degrees in English from the University of Wisconsin, Madison (PhD), Middlebury College (MA), and Wheaton College (BA) -- in Illinois -- and now works as a professor in the departments of English and Teacher Education at Michigan State University, where she teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in English education, writing, literature, and religion. She previously taught middle and high school English in urban Chicago; in Ganado, Arizona (on the Navajo Nation); and in Boulder, Colorado. She currently serves as member of the adult spiritual formation committee at All Saints Episcopal Church, where she is a parishioner in East Lansing, Michigan. She writes about issues at the intersection of English education, literature, and spirituality. Mary's interdisciplinary work on these issues engages with scholarly and literary traditions including sacramental Christianity.

Mary Karr is Professor of English and Creative Writing at Syracuse University, and is the author of *NY Times* bestselling memoirs *The Liars' Club*, *Cherry*, and *Lit: A Memoir*. She is also the winner of Guggenheim, NEA, Radcliffe, and Whiting fellowships. She has won prizes from Best American Poetry as well as Pushcart Prizes for both poetry and essays. She has given distinguished talks at prestigious universities, libraries, and writers' festivals, including Harvard University, Oxford University, Princeton University, Brown University, Syracuse University ("On Salman Rushdie" with Salman Rushdie), the New York Public Library, the Los Angeles Public Library, the Folger Library (Poetry Society of America/Emily Dickinson Lecture), The New Yorker Literary Festival, PEN/Faulkner, and the Festival of Faith and Writing.

Anna Keating is the co-author of *The Catholic Catalogue: A Field Guide to the Daily Acts That Make Up A Catholic Life* (Random House). She runs the website by the same name (thecatholiccatalogue.com), and is the Coordinator of Catholic Life at Colorado College. She owns and lives above Keating Woodworks, a handmade furniture studio in Colorado. Her essays and interviews can be found in: *Church Life, America, First Things, US Catholic, Commonweal, Salon, Killing the Buddha, Notre Dame Magazine*, NPR and elsewhere. She is a graduate of The University of Notre Dame (2006) and serves on The Institute for Church Life and Center for Social Concerns Advisory Council. She is a married mother of two.

Heather King is a Catholic writer, ex-lawyer, and former barfly based in Los Angeles. Raised on the coast of New Hampshire, she struggled with alcoholism before getting sober in 1987. In 1996, she converted to Catholicism, receiving her first Communion and confirmation at Blessed Sacrament Jesuit parish in Hollywood, California. She is a graduate of the University of New Hampshire (1977) and Suffolk University Law School (1984). King is the author of numerous essays and memoirs, including *Parched*, *Redeemed*, and *Shirt of Flame: A Year with St. Therese of Lisieux*. She blogs at Heather King: Mystery, Smarts, Laughs. She speaks about spirituality at venues all over the country. She also writes a weekly column on arts and culture for *The Tidings*, the archdiocesan newspaper of Los Angeles, and is a regular contributor to *Magnificat* magazine. Her latest book, *Loaded: Money and the Spirituality of Enough*, is forthcoming from Franciscan Media.

Matthew Lickona is a staff writer and film critic for the San Diego Reader, a weekly newspaper. He holds a Top Critic status on the review aggregator RottenTomatoes.com. He is the author of the memoir *Swimming with Scapulars* (Loyola Press), the novella in script form *Surfing with Mel* (Korrektiv Press), the libretto for the oratorio *A Rose in Winter: The Life of Saint Rita of Cascia* (commissioned by St. Rita Parish, Dallas TX), and the graphic novel *Alphonse: A Monster for Our Time*. He twice presented at the Loyola University New Orleans Walker Percy conference.

Joseph Malham is an iconographer, writer, and speaker who studied art in Rome through Loyola University's Rome Center. He graduated with a BA in History from that same institution. Since 1999 Joseph has been artist-in-residence at St. Gregory the Great Church in Chicago. His panels and icon banners have been acquired by churches, institutions and individuals around the country. Joseph has lectured frequently—at the Art Institute of Chicago and various religious institutions—on the topics of iconography and religious art. His first book, *By Fire into Light: Four Catholic Martyrs of the Nazi Camps*, tells the stories of four heroic figures who transcended the horrors of persecution during the Second World War through their experiences of faith.

Samuel Martin is the author of the short story collection *This Ramshackle Tabernacle* (Breakwater 2010), a finalist for Canada's BMO Winterset Award, and the novel *A Blessed Snarl* (Breakwater 2012), nominated for the international IMPAC Dublin Literary Award. His new novel, a North Atlantic Noir, is being prepared for publication. Martin teaches creative writing at Northwestern College in Orange City, IA.

Emily McFarlan Miller is a national reporter for the Religion News Service based in Chicago. She covers evangelical and mainline Protestant Christianity. Before joining RNS in 2016, she won awards for her work as education reporter at The Courier-News in Elgin, Illinois, and social media manager at the Chicago Sun-Times. Her writing also has appeared in *Relevant Magazine*, *Her.meneutics*, *Acts of Faith*, *Crux* and more. She graduated with honors from the journalism department at New York University and is working toward a master's in intercultural studies from the North American Institute for Indigenous Theological Studies and Portland Seminary. Find her everywhere on social media as *emmillerwrites*.

Mary Ann Miller is a professor and chair of English at Caldwell University in Caldwell, NJ. She is editor of *St. Peter's B-list: Contemporary Poems Inspired by the Saints* (Ave Maria Press, 2014), a collection of over 100 poems, written by 70 poets from across the USA. She guest-edited the fall 2015 issue of the women's literary journal, *Adanna*, which is a specially-themed issue devoted to "women and spirituality." She frequently teaches an Introduction to Poetry course, in which she offers her students the opportunity to host public readings for local, published poets. She also teaches freshman writing, English Literature, Literature of the Victorian Age, Modern Poetry, and Catholic Writers, a core elective in an interdisciplinary cluster, and has created a class on journal editing to engage interested students in the process of reading submissions to *Presence*.

Colleen Mitchell is a Sick Pilgrim contributor and author of *Who Does He Say You Are?: Women Transformed by Christ in the Gospels* and the upcoming *Naked and Unashamed: The Blessing of the Female Body*. She desires deeply to do away with the distinction between memoir, Scripture study, and inspirational writing in Catholic women's literature and approach women with a concept of wholeness that honors that fullness of their spiritual experience as

women. a concept of wholeness that honors that fullness of their spiritual experience as women.

David Russell Mosley received his PhD in theology at the University of Nottingham. His PhD has been published under the title *Being Deified: Poetry and Fantasy on the Path to God*. During that time he also wrote his first novel, *On the Edges of Elfland*, which has been published with Wipf and Stock. His research spans everything from patristics to liturgy to deification and the place of the human creativity.

Scott D. Moringiello joined the Department of Catholic Studies at DePaul University in the fall of 2014. Before that he was a postdoctoral fellow in Villanova University's Augustine and Culture Seminar. He received the PhD in theology from the University of Notre Dame in 2009, and an MPhil in divinity from Emmanuel College, University of Cambridge (UK) in 2003. He studied philosophy and classics as an undergraduate at Williams College in Williamstown, Massachusetts.

Jon Nilson received his BA and STB degrees from the University of St. Mary of the Lake before earning his doctorate from the University of Notre Dame. He is theology professor emeritus at Loyola University, and author of *Hearing Past the Pain. Why White Catholic Theologians Need Black Theology*, (and numerous essays about racial justice). Before going to Loyola in 1975, he taught at Illinois Benedictine College and the University of Dallas. He was President of the Catholic Theological Society of America in 2002–2003.

Notre Dame Vocale was created in 2013 and is an advanced vocal ensemble for research and creative projects in sacred music composition and sacred music drama at Notre Dame. Its first performance took place at the inaugural concert of the Sacred Music Festival of Quito, Ecuador, in March 2013. Composed of graduate students and alumni in conducting and voice, Notre Dame Vocale is led by Artistic Director and Professor of Music Carmen-Helena Téllez. Recent projects of Notre Dame Vocale include a performance as the chamber chorus and solo ensembles in Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, with star baritone Nathan Gunn, and a new sacred music drama based on Dante's Divine Comedy with an oratorio by Robert Kyr. In October 2016 Notre Dame Vocale toured Mexico and Chile. Its first CD with the oratorio *Paradiso* will be issued later this year.

Kaya Oakes is the author of four books, including *Slanted and Enchanted: The Evolution of Indie Culture* (Henry Holt, 2009); *Radical Reinvention: An Unlikely Return to the Catholic Church* (Counterpoint Press, 2012); and the forthcoming *The Nones Are Alright: A New Generation of Seekers, Believers, and Those In Between* (Orbis Books, 2015). She is an editor and contributing writer at the website Killing the Buddha and on the editorial advisory board at the website Religion Dispatches. Oakes was the co-founder and senior editor of the Utne Independent Press award-winning arts and culture magazine Kitchen Sink. Her writing has appeared in *The Guardian* (UK), *Religion News Service*, *Cross Currents*, *America Magazine*, *Commonweal*, *National Catholic Reporter*, and many other publications. Since 1999, she has taught creative nonfiction, literary journalism, research and expository writing at the University of California, Berkeley.

Joseph O'Brien received a bachelor's and master's degrees in English Literature from the University of Dallas. He is chief correspondent for *Catholic Business Journal*, managing editor of *Adoremus Bulletin*, a short story editor for *Tuscany Press*, and editor and writer for *The San Diego Reader*. He hosted *Catholic Radio International's* "Cover to Cover," a program featuring readings of great Catholic writers such as Flannery O'Connor, J.F. Powers, and Ron Hansen. His poems have

appeared in *The Kickapoo Free Press*, *San Diego Reader*, *Dappled Things*, *Lyric*, *America*, and *Chronicles*. Mr. O'Brien is the recipient of the 2016 Leslie Mellichamp Prize sponsored by *Lyric*. His most recent work includes "The Whiskey Sonnets" published in *Dappled Things*. His forthcoming book *Groundwork* will appear in 2017. He lives on a homestead with his wife Cecilia and their nine children in rural Wisconsin.

Timothy O'Malley, Ph.D. is director of the Notre Dame Center for Liturgy in the McGrath Institute for Church Life. He holds a concurrent appointment in the Department of Theology, University of Notre Dame. He is the author of *Liturgy and the New Evangelization: Practicing the Art of Self-Giving Love* (Liturgical Press, 2014) and *Bored Again Catholic: How the Mass Will Save Your Life* (Our Sunday Visitor, 2017). He is presently writing three monographs: one on the sacrament of marriage as a medicine against the pornographic gaze, another on liturgical attunement in Saint Augustine, and the last on liturgy and secularization.

Gordon Oyer is the author of *Pursuing the Spiritual Roots of Protest*, which recounts the 1964 retreat that Thomas Merton hosted at Gethsemani Abbey for 13 peace and civil rights activists. Raised in the Anabaptist Mennonite tradition, Oyer's readings in nonviolence introduced him to the peace writings of Thomas Merton, which led him to also appreciate Merton's contemplative reflections and social critique. He holds an MA in history from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, is past editor of *Illinois Mennonite Heritage*, and recently retired from his professional career at the University of Illinois.

Karl Persson holds an MA in Early Modern literature from the University of Regina, and a Doctorate from the University of British Columbia in Old English literature. His work focuses on the intersection of literary and Biblical/theological material, with a particular interest in commentary on Job and Ecclesiastes and its role in shaping the literary reception of wisdom cultures. He has published on the final riddle in the Anglo-Saxon Exeter Book, and is a regular and active participant in the Early Proverb Society. In addition to formal scholarly writing, he also writes in the genres of poetry and spiritual reflection, and is currently contracted through Wipf and Stock to write a book introducing contemporary Christians to the beauty and depth of Old English spirituality. He teaches online classes for Signum University from the cold reaches of Winnipeg, Manitoba in Canada, where he lives with his wife and eight year old son.

Tim Powers is an American science fiction and fantasy author. Powers has won the World Fantasy Award twice for his critically acclaimed novels *Last Call* and *Declare*. Powers received a B.A. in English Literature at Cal State Fullerton. He now teaches part-time in his role as Writer in Residence for the Orange County High School of the Arts in the Creative Writing Conservatory, and Chapman University.

Brian G. Phipps is a poet and a senior editor at Zondervan. He has published poetry in several journals and magazines, including "Anglican Theological Review," "The Other Journal," "Relief," "Rock and Sling," and "St. Katherine Review." His first collection of poems, "Before the Burning Bush," will be published by St. Katherine College Press in 2017. In addition to writing, he enjoys playing ice hockey and serves as a chanter in his Greek Orthodox parish.

Christopher Pramuk is Associate Professor of Theology at Xavier University. His award-winning essays have appeared in *America*, *Theological Studies*, *Cross Currents*, and the prayer journal *Give Us This Day*. He is the author of five books, including *At Play in Creation: Merton's Awakening to the Feminine Divine* (2014), *Hope Sings, So Beautiful: Graced Encounters Across the Color Line* (2013), and *Sophia: The Hidden Christ of Thomas Merton* (2009), which was awarded the International Thomas Merton Society's 2011 "Thomas Merton

Award,” its highest honor. A lifelong musician and student of African American history and spirituality, he has led workshops on the healing of race relations in society and church as well as retreats on the life and writings of Thomas Merton. He received a PhD in Theology at the University of Notre Dame.

Caryn Rivandeneira is the author of seven books—for both children and adults. Her most recent titles include the forthcoming *Frankinschool* (publisher TBD), *Grit and Grace: Heroic Women of the Bible* (SparkHouse Family), and *The Story of Noah’s Ark* (SparkHouse Family). Caryn is a regular contributor to Aleteia’s *For Her*, an online lifestyle magazine for Catholic women and Christianity Today’s Women’s blog (formerly called Her.meneutics). When not writing, you can find Caryn at her church, where she works part-time on the worship staff or hanging out with her husband, Rafael, their three kids, and their beloved rescued pit bull.

Jonathan Ryan, conference co-organizer, co-founder of Sick Pilgrim and an author, columnist, and blogger. Library Journal called his debut paranormal thriller, *3 Gates of the Dead* (Open Road Media), “a real attraction for fans of *The Exorcist* and the darker fiction of C.S. Lewis and Charles Williams.” Along with his novel writing, Ryan has written for *Christianity Today*, *U.S. Catholic* and *Notre Dame Magazine*. Just recently, he was asked by the Charles Williams estate to write an introduction for the famous Inkling’s novels on e-book through Open Road, the first person since the renowned poet, T.S. Eliot, to introduce Williams’s work to the world. Jonathan received his Masters of Divinity from Covenant Seminary and was a Presbyterian minister for twelve years before he was confirmed in the Catholic Church. Along with the Sick Pilgrim book he co-authored with Jessica Mesman Griffith due out in Fall 2017, he has signed a deal with Month 9 books for his Young Adult series that he co-wrote with Jo Schaffer which will be out in the Spring of 2018. He has spoken to a wide variety of crowds about writing, faith, religion, and the weird. His audiences have included The CCO Jubilee conference, Salt Lake City Comic Con, Teen Author Boot Camp, Get Inked Writer’s conference, Women in Publishing (Chicago), and the Festival of Faith and Writing. Jonathan currently works at a parish in Indianapolis.

Valerie Sayers is the author of six novels, including her most recent, *The Powers*, which contemplates baseball, pacifism, and acts of witness in parallel narratives of prose and photography. Her novels *Who Do You Love* and *Brain Fever* were named *New York Times* “Notable Books of the Year,” and a film, “Due East,” was based on her novels *Due East* and *How I Got Him Back*. All six of her novels have been reprinted in uniform paperback editions from Northwestern University Press. Sayers’s stories, essays, and reviews have appeared widely, in such publications as the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Commonweal*, *Zoetrope*, *Ploughshares*, *Image*, *Witness*, and *Prairie Schooner*, and have been cited in *Best American Short Stories* and *Best American Essays*. Her literary prizes include a National Endowment for the Arts literature fellowship and Pushcart Prizes for fiction. She is a Professor of English and Creative Writing at the University of Notre Dame.

Martha Serpas is the author of three collections of poetry, *The Diener* (LSU); *The Dirty Side of the Storm* (Norton); and *Côte Blanche* (New Issues). Her work has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The Nation*, *Southwest Review*, and *Image: A Journal of the Arts and Religion*, as well as in a number of anthologies, including the Library of America’s *American Religious Poem* and *The Art of the Sonnet*. She holds degrees in English and creative writing from Louisiana State, New York University, and the University of Houston, and a master of divinity from Yale Divinity School. A native of south Louisiana, she remains active in efforts to restore Louisiana’s wetlands. Since 2006 she has worked as a trauma chaplain at Tampa

General Hospital. She teaches in the Creative Writing Program at The University of Houston.

Ragan Sutterfield is ordained in the Episcopal Church and serves a parish in his native Arkansas. His writing has appeared in *The Christian Century*, *Sojourners*, *The Oxford American*, *Men's Journal*, *Triathlete*, *Paste*, *Gourmet*, *Spin*, *Fast Company*, *Christianity Today* and *Books & Culture*. He contributes regularly to the *Englewood Review of Books* and is author of *This is My Body: From Obesity to Ironman, My Journey into the True Meaning of Flesh, Spirit and Deeper Faith* (Convergent/Random House 2015), *Cultivating Reality: How the Soil Might Save Us* (Cascade 2013), and the small collection of essays *Farming as a Spiritual Discipline*. He also contributed the opening chapter to the book *Sacred Acts: How Churches are Working to Protect the Earth's Climate*.

Mary Szybist is most recently the author of *Incarnadine*, winner of the 2013 National Book Award for Poetry. She is the recipient of fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Rona Jaffe Foundation, and the Witter Bynner Foundation in conjunction with the Library of Congress. Her work has been awarded two Pushcart Prizes and has been supported by residencies at the MacDowell Colony and the Rockefeller Foundation's Bellagio Center in Bellagio, Italy. Her first book *Granted* won the 2004 GLCA New Writers Award and was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award. A native of Williamsport, Pennsylvania, she now lives in Portland, Oregon where she teaches at Lewis & Clark College.

Kathleen Tarr is the author of the forthcoming *We Are All Poets Here* (2017), a blend of memoir and biography, a story about the struggle for spiritual clarity in confusing, chaotic times that involves Thomas Merton and his 1968 surprise sojourn to Alaska. In 2016, Kathleen was named a William Shannon Fellow by the International Thomas Merton Society (ITMS) and was a Mullin Scholar at USC's Institute for Advanced Catholic Studies (2011-2013). She is a contributor to the international anthology honoring Merton's legacy and centenary, *We Are Already One*, (1915-2015) Thomas Merton's *Message of Hope* (Fons Vitae Press). Kathleen served as the former program coordinator for the University of Alaska Anchorage's MFA Program in creative writing. She lives and writes in Anchorage under the shadow of the Chugach Mountains.

Carmen-Helena Téllez has been called a "quiet force behind contemporary music in the United States" by New York's new music journal *Sequenza/21*, while the Washington Post has referred to her concerts as "immersive and thrilling." She is currently Professor of Music, Head of the Conducting Studio and Director of Notre Dame Vocale at the University of Notre Dame, after 20 years as Tracy Sonneborn Professor of Choral Conducting, Director of the Contemporary Vocal Ensemble, and Director of the Latin American Music Center at Indiana University-Bloomington. She was previously the director of the National Chorus of Spain and resident conductor of The Contemporary Chamber Players at the University of Chicago. Carmen-Helena also continues to work with the independent professional groups she has co-founded, Aquava New Music Studio and Kosmologia Music and Intermedia, where she pursues her personal creative work as producer, conductor and interdisciplinary artist. Téllez is best-known for her promotion of living composers and new modes of presentation in dialogue with contemporary culture and society. Her most recent project at Notre Dame was a ritualized music drama on Dante's *Divina Commedia* with a libretto by Dante scholar Robin Kirkpatrick and original music by Robert Kyr, supported by the Mellon Foundation.

Karen Ullo is the author of *Jennifer the Damned* (Wiseblood Books 2015) and *Cinder Allia* (coming July 6, 2017.) She is a regular contributor to *Dappled Things* journal and also

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Brian Volck is a pediatrician who received his undergraduate degree in English Literature and his MD from Washington University in St. Louis and his MFA in creative writing from Seattle Pacific University. He is the author of a poetry collection, *Flesh Becomes Word*, and a memoir, *Attending Others: A Doctor's Education in Bodies and Words*, and co-author of *Reclaiming the Body: Christians and the Faithful Use of Modern Medicine*. His essays, poetry, and reviews have appeared in *The Christian Century*, *DoubleTake*, *Health Affairs*, and *Image*. He does his clinical work in Cincinnati and the Navajo Nation and teaches theology and medicine at St. Mary's Seminary and University in Baltimore.

Rebecca Bratten Weiss is a writer, farmer, and lecturer, residing in rural Ohio. She has taught literature, philosophy, and creative writing, and lectured on Christian feminism. Along with co-author Regina Doman, Bratten Weiss has published the first two novels in the Catholic Philosopher Chick series (*Catholic Philosopher Chick Makes her Debut*, and *Catholic Philosopher Chick Comes on Strong*). She has published poetry in several journals, and in a chapbook, *Palaces of Dust* (Franciscan University Press). She recently completed a neo-gothic novel about Catholic commune life, *The Serpent Motif*, and is working on a novel about curses and family secrets, set in Ohio blue-collar fracking country. She writes for *Catholic Exchange*, and blogs at Patheos Catholic on religion, culture, feminism, and environmentalism at *Suspended in her Jar*.

Jessica Wilson is Associate Professor of Creative Writing and Literature at John Brown University, as well as Associate Honors Director. Her undergraduate degree is in Creative Writing from Pepperdine University. She has written three books, one on Flannery O'Connor (Wipf&Stock 2017), the other two on Walker Percy to be published later this year with Ohio State UP and Louisiana State UP. In 2014 she hosted a regional conference under the Conference of Christianity and Literature, with Randy Boyagoda as keynote. In 2015 she attended Dana Gioia's The Future of the Catholic Literary Imagination Conference.

Gregory Wolfe is Senior Fellow at the Institute for Catholic Thought & Culture at Seattle University. He has been a pioneer in the resurgence of interest in the relationship between art and religion—a resurgence that has had widespread impact both on religious communities and the public square. As an advocate for the tradition of Christian Humanism, Wolfe has established a reputation as an independent, non-ideological thinker. From 2000-2016, he served as Writer in Residence at Seattle Pacific University, where he taught English literature and creative writing. He was the founding director of the Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing at SPU, the first program of its kind to integrate a studio writing degree with intensive reflection upon the literary and aesthetic riches of the Judeo-Christian tradition.

Suzanne Wolfe received her B.A. and M.A. in English language and literature from Oxford University. She is an Instructor in English and Creative Writing at Seattle Pacific University and executive editor of *Image* journal which she and her husband, Greg Wolfe, founded in 1989. Her first novel *Unveiling*, published in 2004 by Paraclete Press, received a *Christianity Today* Book Award. Her essay "This is My Body," a memoir of her grandfather and growing up with an eating disorder, was published in *Image* issue 64 and included in an anthology of essays entitled *The Spirit of Food* (Cascade Books, 2010). She has just published her second novel, *The Confessions of X* (Thomas Nelson, 2016), an historical novel based on the woman who was St. Augustine's

(unnamed) lover. *The Confessions of X* won first place for fiction in *Christianity Today's* "Best Books of 2016."

Vinita Hampton Wright is managing editor for Trade books at Loyola Press and has authored numerous books, both fiction and nonfiction, writes regularly for Ignatianspirituality.com, and leads retreats and workshops on writing, creativity, prayer, and Ignatian spirituality. Her books include *Days of Deepening Friendship*, *Simple Acts of Moving Forward*, and *The Art of Spiritual Writing: How to Craft Prose that Engages and Inspires Your Readers*. She has been practicing Ignatian spirituality for a decade and writing about it for nearly as long. Vinita lives in Chicago with her husband, Jim Wright.

Jessica Wroblewski is currently Assistant Professor of Religious Studies and Theology at Wheeling Jesuit University in her home state of West Virginia. She received her PhD from Yale University in 2009, focusing on theological ethics and taught for two years at St. Mary's College in Indiana before joining the faculty at Wheeling Jesuit. She has published two books, *The Limits of Hospitality* (2012) and *One Hope: Re-Membering the Body of Christ* (2015), both with Liturgical Press. She edited the recent Appalachian Catholic People's Pastoral, *The Telling Takes Us Home: Taking Our Place in the Stories that Shape Us*.

Azzan Yadin-Israel has a B.A. from the Hebrew University and Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley and Graduate Theological Union. A Professor of Jewish Studies and Classics at Rutgers, he teaches courses on rabbinic literature, classical Jewish philosophy, the history of Jewish mysticism, and Plato. His books include *The Grace of God and the Grace of Man: The Theologies of Bruce Springsteen*, *Scripture as Logos: Rabbi Ishmael and the Origins of Midrash and Scripture*, and *Tradition: Rabbi Akiva and the Triumph of Midrash* (both from the University of Pennsylvania Press), and *Intuitive Vocabulary: German*, the first of a planned series of volumes that uses cognates to facilitate the study of foreign vocabulary. His articles cover a wide range of topics: the relationship between Homer and the Hebrew Bible, the secularization of biblical and rabbinic terms in modern Hebrew, the role of tradition among the Apostolic Fathers, and variety of studies on biblical and rabbinic literature.

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