



Aquinas College Catholic Studies

2022-23 YEAR IN REVIEW

The mission of Catholic Studies is to share "the rich experience of the Church's own culture"; assist students in their spiritual as well as their intellectual development, and establish Aquinas College as the regional center for Catholic intellectual and creative life (Ex Corde Ecclesiae, §43).

A Note from Our Director



Dr. Daniel Wagner

Dear Friends in Christ,

In the past year, thanks to the Grace of God, the charity of our Donors and the support and participation of our fine Students, Faculty, Staff, and Administration, our Aquinas College Catholic Studies Program truly embodied the Dominican charge *contemplare et contemplata aliis tradere*: "to contemplate and to hand the fruits of contemplation on to others." Our curriculum included courses treating the philosophy and theology of St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, Sister Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (Edith Stein), and the History of Christianity. Through the Aquinas Lecture Series, our minds were opened to the importance of a strong and faithful Mission and Identity for the Catholic University, and we learned about the profound significance of freedom of conscience, tolerance, and scientific and political progress in the Catholic Intellectual Tradition. At this year's Symposium on the True, Good, and Beautiful we were treated to a marvelous and splendid interdisciplinary bouquet of intellectual expression, with presentations in theology, philosophy, history, science, medicine, art, poetry, and music. Special thanks are due to our friends in Philosophy, Theology, Campus Ministry, and the Writing Center. We have been truly blessed with the rich and virtuous expression of Catholic culture and intellectual life. Let us offer thanks to our Lord for this blessing as we prepare for another year of contemplation and dialogue: *Deo gratias!*

A Thank You to Our Former Director and Founder



Dr. John Pinheiro

Dr. Pinheiro founded the Aquinas College Catholic Studies Program in 2008, creating a curriculum rich in the Catholic Intellectual Tradition; establishing the prestigious Aquinas Lecture Speaker Series; and developing our affiliated Rome Study Abroad Program, which has been life changing for Catholic Studies students. While our community was most saddened to see Dr. Pinheiro leave Aquinas College in 2022, we are also elated for him in his new role as Director of Research at the Acton Institute. Catholic Studies will continue to benefit from the care and wisdom of Dr. Pinheiro for many years to come, we have no doubt!

Thank you, Dr. Pinheiro, for you many years of service at Aquinas College and especially for your work in founding and sustaining the Catholic Studies program. We look forward, prayerfully and with much hope, to many great things to come!

Catholic Studies Speaker Series



For our Fall Aquinas Lecture event, November 3, Alicia R. Córdoba, D.M.A, the ninth President of Aquinas College, presented her work on "Mission and Identity at the Heart of Catholic Higher Education," at the Albertus Magnus Hall of Science, Aquinas College.



This Spring, we were most blessed to have Joseph T. Stuart, Ph.D. give our Annual Aquinas Lecture during Aquinas Week. Dr. Stuart presented his important and engaging work on "The Age of Enlightenment and Our Souls: Legacies of Cultural Conflict, Engagement, and Retreat."

Catholic Studies Sponsored Events

Aquinas College Symposium on the True, Good, and Beautiful, Spring 2023

The Symposium on the True, Good, and Beautiful offers presenters an opportunity to showcase work from all academic areas, highlighting, after our patron St. Thomas Aquinas, these transcendentals: Truth, Goodness, and Beauty.

Our student presenters this year were Margo Ardelean and Becca Joy Root, Christopher Curry, Renee Grant, Aiden McGavin, Summer Russman, and Darren Young.

Our plenary presenters included Julie Bevins, Laurel Dugan, Sr. Damien Marie Savino FSE, Ph. D., Dr. Jason Duncan, Dr. Daniel Wagner, Elizabeth Black, Dr. Ben Lockerd, and Dr. Alicia R. Córdoba, D.M.A.

This year's symposium was made possible by the sponsorship of the Aquinas College Philosophy Department, Writing Center, Catholic Studies Department, and History Department.



Catholic Studies Sponsored Events (cont.)

Aquinas College Gold Mass and Lecture, Fall 2022

Co-sponsored Holy Mass with His Excellency Bishop Walkowiak, Coffee and Hors d'oeuvres Reception, and Lecture by Sister Damien Marie Savino, FSE, Ph.D. on "Scientists Reading the Book of Creation" at the Albertus Magnus Hall of Science.

Acton Institute Annual Dinner, Fall 2022

Catholic Studies sponsored the purchase of a full table for Aquinas Students to attend the 2022 Acton Institute Dinner at the Amway Grand Hotel in downtown Grand Rapids.

SEEK 2023 FOCUS Catholic Conference, Winter 2023

In partnership with the on campus Registered Student Organization Catholic Student Fellowship, Catholic Studies funded the opportunity for 16 students to attend the 2023 SEEK Catholic Conference by FOCUS in St. Louis, Missouri.

"Monetary Policy in the Covid Era," Harry Veryser, Spring 2023

Catholic Studies co-sponsored the presentation by Professor Harry C. Veryser of the University of Detroit Mercy.



Students Margo Ardelean, Summer Russman, Faith Addington, Anna Comden, and Laura Krueger representing Aquinas College at the SEEK 2023 Focus Catholic Conference



Students had the opportunity to celebrate Mass with thousands of other young Catholics at the conference.

James Matthew Wilson, Catholic Studies Scholar in Residence



As of the Spring of 2023, Aquinas College Catholic Studies is blessed to have James Matthew Wilson as Catholic Studies Scholar in Residence. Dr. Wilson is the Cullen Foundation Chair in English Literature and the founding Director of the MFA program in Creative Writing at the University of Saint Thomas. The author of eleven books, his most recent collection of poems, *The Strangeness of the Good* (2020), won the poetry book of the year award from the Catholic Media Awards. The Dallas Institute of Humanities awarded him the Hiett Prize in 2017; Memoria College gave him the Parnassus Prize, in 2022; and the Conference on Christianity and Literature twice gave him the Lionel Basney Award. Dr. Wilson also serves as poet-in-residence of the Benedict XVI Institute, editor of Colosseum Books, and poetry editor of Modern Age magazine. His next book, *Catholic Modernism and the Irish "Avant-Garde,"* will be published in 2023. We look forward to great things, as Professor Wilson shares his wisdom on the True, Good, and Beautiful with our community.

Thank You to Theresa Marshall



As of the summer of 2023, Theresa Marshall, Assistant Director of Campus Ministry and Liturgist, will be retiring. We would like to thank Terry for her many years of service to the Church and Aquinas College's Catholic and Dominican Mission and Identity. Thank you, Terry! Your help and collaboration with Catholic Studies has been a great boon to our students and faculty at Aquinas College and you will be sorely missed. We wish you the best of success in your new adventures, and hope that you will visit us often!

Rest in Peace, Father Stan Drongowski, O.P. (1951-2023)



Our Aquinas College community suffered immense loss and sadness with the unexpected passing of Father Stanley Drongowski, O.P., on Sunday, July 9, 2023. For a decade, Fr. Stan was the acting Chaplain at Aquinas College. His warm and welcoming smiles, homilies rich in spiritual wisdom and guidance will be greatly missed. We are most thankful to Fr. Stan for his many, many blessings, words of wise advice, and service to the Church and College. We praise God for his beautiful life, and we offer our prayers for Fr. Stan, along with his family and friends in grieving.

Faculty Presentations and Accomplishments

Dr. Daniel Wagner

Dr. Daniel Wagner is the Associate Professor and Chair of the Philosophy Department, as well as the Director of Catholic Studies at Aquinas College. His works and presentations this year include:

- Plato and Aristotle on the Good and the Beautiful (τό καλόν/to kalon) as Nature (φύσις): The Foundation of Thomistic Ethics & Aesthetics," in *Thomism and Contemporary Ideologies* (CUA Press, 2023).
- Disputatio on the Distinction between the Human Person and Other Animals: The Human Person as Gardener," Co-authored with Sr. Damien Marie Savino, FSE, in *Studia Gilsoniana*, 11, no. 3 (July–September 2022): 471– 530.
- The Intelligibility of Nature: The Wallace Reader, Co-Editor with John P. Hittinger and Michael W. Tkacz (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2023).
- "Nature, Human Dignity and the Right to Life at Conception," a presentation for the Aquinas College Protect Life Student Group, Aquinas College, Spring 2023.
- "Reason, Nature, & the Human Good," Annual Meeting of the American Maritain Association, University of Dallas, TX, Spring 2023.
- "On the Profound Truth and Efficaciousness of the Sacrament of Penance," a presentation for the Aquinas College No Greater Love Retreat Camp Blodgett, MI, Spring 2023.
- "An Introduction to the True, the Good, and the Beautiful via St. Thomas Aquinas," the Second Annual Symposium on the True, Good, & Beautiful, at Brookby Mansion, Aquinas College, Spring 2023.
- "Being and Act," a sung philosophical poem for the Second Annual Symposium on the True, Good, & Beautiful, at Brookby Mansion, Aquinas College, Spring 2023.
- "Reason, Nature, & the Human Good: An Answer to the Call of Fides et Ratio," a presentation for the John Paul II Institute, at the National Meeting of the ACPA, New Orleans, LA, Fall 2022.
- "Principles for Revitalizing Catholic Culture in the Context of Cultural Pluralism and Diversity and Inclusion," a presentation for the Campus Ministry Speaker Series, Aquinas College, Grand Rapids, MI, November, 2022.

Fr. Robert Keller, O.P.

Fr. Robert Keller is an adjunct professor of Theology and Chaplain at Aquinas College. His works this semester include:

- *The Ten Commandments Leading to Love*. 2023. New Priory Press. (available through Amazon)
- *Sealed in the Spirit: The Splendor of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit*. 2023. New Priory Press. (available through Amazon)

Dr. Stephan Davis

Dr. Stephan Davis is the Chair and Associate Professor of Theology at Aquinas College. His works this semester include:

- "'A Prophet to the Nations I Appointed You' (Jer 1:4-9)." Presented at the Grand Rapids Diocesan Assembly 2022: Witness (September 24, 2022).
 - "Memory: God and His Chosen People." Presented at the Leadership Institute for Biblical Studies, Catholic Information Center (July 13, 2022).
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Faculty Presentations and Accomplishments (cont.)

Dr. Michael McDaniel

Dr. Michael McDaniel is a professor of Mathematics and faculty of Catholic Studies at Aquinas College. His works this semester include:

- Research on the relations of Mathematics and Theology, assisted by Mathematics student Kyle Cameon

Dr. Bethany Kilcrease

Dr. Bethany Kilcrease, professor of History and faculty of Catholic Studies at Aquinas College, taught on the History of Christianity, detailing the history of the Christian religion from the preachings of Jesus in its 1st century Jewish context through its battles to grapple with modernity. Her course takes a particular focus on the history of the dogmas and theology that has shaped and defined Christianity as well as those that keep it divided to this day whether in the East or the West.

Student Accomplishments

In the summer of 2022, Margo Ardelean completed her Summer Scholars Research program on "*Nature, Philosophy, and Latin in St. Thomas Aquinas' De Principiis Naturae*" under the Direction of Dr. Wagner.

In the Spring of 2023, Margo Ardelean and Becca-Joy Root completed their Senior Capstone courses in Philosophy on the thought of Edith Stein, or Sister Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, under the direction of Dr. Wagner. Ms. Ardelean's research focused on Stein's treatment of the problem of empathy, while Ms. Root turned her attention to Stein's philosophy of woman.

The department was pleased to present 2023 graduate Becca Joy root with the 2023 Catholic Studies Senior award.

This summer, in partnership with the Summer Scholars program, Matthew Stace will be studying Nature, Philosophy, Greek and Latin in Aristotle's Physics and St. Thomas Aquinas' De Principiis Naturae with Dr. Daniel Wagner.

Laura Krueger will additionally take part in the summer study of Greek and Latin as the first Catholic Studies Summer Scholar with Dr. Daniel Wagner.

Special Thanks

Catholic Studies would like to offer special thanks to the following persons, without whom our program could not function:

President Alicia Córdoba

Provost Stephen Germic

Julie Bevins, AQ Writing Center Coordinator/SSS TRIO Program Advisor, Center for Opportunities, Resources, and Excellence (CORE)

Mandee Matzke, Associate Vice President of Operations

Charles Hoven, Catering Manager

Our Catholic Studies Program Assistants: Matthew Stace, Margo Ardelean, Christopher Curry, and Laura Krueger
