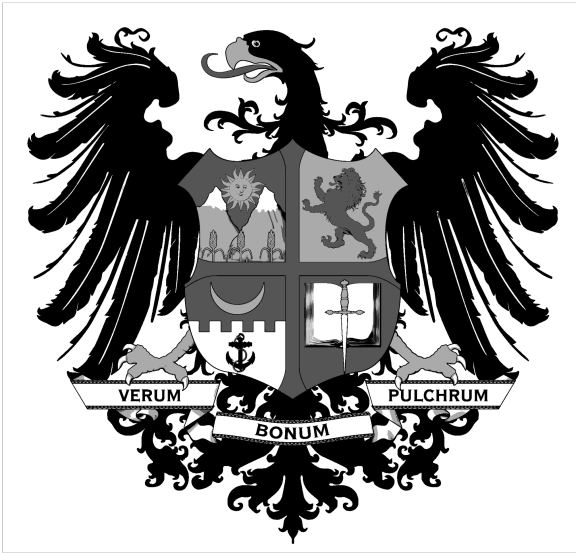


Senior Thesis Orations



Wyoming Catholic College
Spring 2023

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Spring 2023

Dear friends,

When Plato is not denigrating rhetoric, he instead portrays it as a religious event, done under divine inspiration, a sacred act of dedication and praise to a god. Later Hellenic culture wholeheartedly accepted this latter view, and at sacred festal times the city's celebrations would always include the crowd gathering to hear amazing oratorical feats. At its best, such epideictic oratory would invite the crowd to contemplate the true meaning of the festival and usher the city into an immersive experience of festal leisure and cultural formation. The Church Fathers took up the pagan festal culture and elevated it to new Christian heights. The Christian feasts were celebrated with prodigious works of oratory that continue to form the Christian imagination: polished phrases, well-balanced schemes and tropes, and vivid images, all put together to lead the congregation to both contemplate and embody the sacred mysteries being commemorated.

It is in the spirit of this Christian festal oratory that WCC gathers as a community during these five days of senior orations. The oldest Marian feast on the Church calendar is February 2, where Mary is shown to be the angelic throne, the new ark of the covenant, bearing her Son into the Temple. Thus, Mary is the Seat of Wisdom most properly in the Feast of the Presentation, a feast which we as a college extend to a votive Mass in her honor as *Sedes Sapientiae* on February 4, and further into our communal celebration of the senior orations. Like our patronal feast, these orations carry the final echo of Christmas some forty days later, and give us a last moment of festivity before the turn into the penitential forty days of Lent. These senior orations can be heard as closing festal paeans to our heavenly patroness.

At the same time, these orations help embody the very festival they celebrate, revealing just why the College has taken the Seat of Wisdom as her patroness. For while Mary is most clearly the

Seat of Wisdom as she presents her Son in the Temple, in that same moment she recedes into the background as she gives Jesus to Simeon, and through Simeon to the world. So too in one of the greatest moments of the school year, the College, as *alma mater*, puts her seniors on center stage; the faculty recede into the background, and the seniors, in anticipation of their graduation, are publicly presented as those appointed to serve as lights to the wider culture.

In their orations, the seniors share with us the fruits of their leisurely study: the depth and breadth of their relevant knowledge, their careful and nuanced consideration of ideas, their argumentative rigor, confident organization, and rhetorically effective style. The orations are the culminating effort of the seniors' training in the trivial arts, with each senior presiding over an hour of speech-making and question and answer, without a manuscript, on a topic they have been considering for at least the last six months. At the same time, we hope, this culmination also is a foreshadowing of the way our seniors will share with the world at large the common goods of truth and beauty in which they have immersed themselves these last four years.

In that spirit, as Academic Dean, I gladly welcome you to the Senior Orations of the Wyoming Catholic College Class of 2023. This booklet contains the title and abstract of each oration, along with a schedule for the coming days. Enjoy these next five days, and make sure to thank our seniors for the great service they provide in helping us celebrate in such grand style.

Academic Dean Kyle Washut



TUESDAY, JANUARY 31

- 8:30 AM** Lauds (Immaculate Conception Oratory)
- 9:30 AM** *The Age of Gnosticism: Transgenderism, Transhumanism, and Human Identity in the Digital Age*
Abigail O'Brien, p. 29, Augur 113
Panel: Papadopoulos, Tonkowich, Dziad
- Compete for the Imperishable Wreath: A Practical Exploration of Sports in Catholic Education*
Charles Renouard, p. 33, Augur 114
Panel: Zimmer, Hamilton, Giesting
- 10:45 AM** *Binary is Better: Why Intersex as a Third Sex is Biologically Unnecessary and Inaccurate*
Jill Cook, p. 14, Augur 113
Panel: Zepeda, Grove, Dziad
- The Journey to Consciousness through Chaos*
Ryan Milligan, p. 28, Augur 114
Panel: Cooper, Zimmer, Lasnoski
- 12:00 PM** Mass (Immaculate Conception Oratory)
- 12:30 PM** Lunch (Frassati)
- 2:00 PM** *Is Christ Divided? Liturgy Wars and Evangelization*
Frances Urbancic, p. 37, Augur 113
Panel: Holmes, Zimmer, Shields

TUESDAY, JANUARY 31

2:00 PM *Opening Our Hearts to the Divine through Hospitality*

Bernadette Aguirre, p. 11, Augur 114

Panel: Papadopoulos, Hill, Hodkinson

3:15 PM *She Shall Be Called Woman: A Scriptural Account of Marriage and the Critical Feminine Role*

Elizabeth Shephard, p. 34, Augur 113

Panel: Lasnoski, Washut, Schubert

Communal Memory: The Importance of Land and Mythos in the Identity of a People

Michael Dolson, p. 17, Augur 114

Panel: V. Arbery, Hamilton, Tonkowich

4:30 PM *The Underappreciated Virtue of Hope?*

Braden Licciardi, p. 25, Augur 113

Panel: Bolin, Giesting, Zepeda

5:30 PM Vespers (Immaculate Conception Oratory)

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY I

8:30 AM Lauds (Immaculate Conception Oratory)

9:30 AM *The World's a Game and We're the Players: An Exploration of The Virginian's Theme of Gamesmanship*

Maggie Duffy, p. 18, Augur 113

Panel: Grove, Giesting, Zepeda

"The Prudish Man Will Know . . . Or Will He?": In Defense of Explicit Sexuality in Literature

Andrea Callaway, p. 13, Augur 114

Panel: Holmes, Bolin, Dziad

10:45 AM *"Naked and Unashamed": Vulnerability as a Movement towards Edenic Relationship*

Sarah Fojtik, p. 19, Augur 113

Panel: Schubert, Tonkowich, Cooper

Listening with Beethoven to Some Variations on Nothing: A Look at the Relationship between Composers, Listeners, Music, and Silence

Peter Gedicks, p. 21, Augur 114

Panel: Hodgkinson, Hamilton, Olsson

12:00 PM Mass (Immaculate Conception Oratory)

12:30 PM Lunch (Frassati)

2:00 PM *Dante's Musical Understanding of Salvation and Damnation*

Jacinta St. Pierre, p. 35, Augur 113

Panel: G. Arbery, Hodgkinson, Tonkowich

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 1

2:00 PM *The Answer to the Die Hard Email Chain: How to Watch Movies and Stay Catholic*

Joseph Alvarez, p. 12, Augur 114

Panel: Lasnoski, Hill, Bolin

3:15 PM *“Living Life with an Open Hand”: The Universal Christian Call to Poverty*

Cecilia Wiesner, p. 38, Augur 113

Panel: Dziad, Bolin, Olsson

“Mysticism Keeps Men Sane”: The Intellectual Food of Man and His Natural Desire for the Unknown

Alyssa Malo, p. 27, Augur 114

Panel: Holmes, Hodgkinson, Hill

5:30 PM Vespers (Immaculate Conception Oratory)

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 2

- 8:00 AM** Byzantine Festal Matins and Divine Liturgy (Byzantine chapel)
- 8:30 AM** Lauds and candle procession (Immaculate Conception Oratory)
- 9:00 AM** Mass of the Presentation (Immaculate Conception Oratory)
- 12:30 PM** Lunch (Frassati)
- 2:00 PM** *Manliness 101: How to Throw a Punch*
Matthew Curley, p. 15, Augur 113
Panel: Olsson, Giesting, Grove
- So, You're Gonna Die*
Blaise Galbraith, p. 20, Augur 114
Panel: Schubert, Zepeda, G. Arbery
- 3:15 PM** *Submission: The Sign of a Thriving Wife*
Anna Klein, p. 24, Augur 113
Panel: Shields, Zepeda, Schubert
- Ambition: A Catholic Defense of Worldly Success*
Nathan Licciardi, p. 26, Augur 114
Panel: Dziad, Giesting, V. Arbery
- 5:00 PM** Vespers (Immaculate Conception Oratory)
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FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 3

- 8:30 AM** Lauds (Immaculate Conception Oratory)
- 9:30 AM** *A Poet: Philosopher or Prophet?*
Theresa Ramsay, p. 32, Augur 113
Panel: Papadopoulos, Tonkowich, V. Arbery
- Unearthing Purgatory: Our Christian Duty to Save Souls*
Megan Thorseth, p. 36, Augur 114
Panel: Lasnoski, Grove, Bolin
- 10:45 AM** *Dumb but Disciplined: Why You Should Wake Up to Your Alarm*
Aidan Wood, p. 39, Augur 113
Panel: Papadopoulos, Hamilton, Grove
- Heidegger and Arendt: How to Be Authentic*
Tobias Propst, p. 31, Augur 114
Panel: Shields, Washut, V. Arbery
- 12:00 PM** Mass (1962 *missale*, Immaculate Conception Oratory)
- 12:30 PM** Lunch (Frassati)
- 2:00 PM** *Ugliness Will Save the World: Grotesque Literature and the God-Man*
Emma Hermanson, p. 23, Augur 113
Panel: Cooper, Hill, Washut

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 3

- 2:00 PM** *“Beauty Plus Pity”: The Key to Vladimir Nabokov’s Lolita*
Grace Dennett, p. 16, Augur 114
Panel: G. Arbery, Olsson, Schubert
- 3:15 PM** *To Love a Dream and Debase Your Brother:
Encountering God in a Godless World through Poetic Vision*
Hiram Gleason, p. 22, Augur 113
Panel: Cooper, Olsson, Shields
- The Artist’s Call to a Labor of Gratitude*
Sofia Piliero, p. 30, Augur 114
Panel: V. Arbery, Hill, Hodkinson
- 4:30 PM** Vespers (Immaculate Conception Oratory)
- 6:00 PM** Patronal Feast (Lander Community Center)
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SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 4

10:00 AM Patronal Mass (Holy Rosary)

7:00 PM Quis Quid (Bosco)

Miss Bernadette Aguirre

Opening Our Hearts to the Divine through Hospitality

Tuesday, January 31, 2:00 PM

Augur 114

In Greek hospitality, the host never lets the guest linger at the threshold of the home but rushes to invite and entertain the guest even before inquiring about the identity of the guest. The prominence that hospitality has in Homer's *Odyssey* stirs our imagination and gives us lessons that point to the inherent value of hospitality for mankind. We cannot get through life alone; hospitality alleviates our burdens and restores our spirit to resume our journey. Odysseus would never have reached rocky Ithaca without the hospitality of others, and yet seeking hospitality has its dangers. Homer shows us, nonetheless, that even with the possibility of suffering violence when seeking hospitality, hospitality is worth seeking as it is likewise worth bestowing on the stranger who comes to our door:

For the gods do take on all sorts of transformations,
appearing as strangers from elsewhere,
and thus they range at large through the cities,
watching to see which men keep the laws,
and which are violent.

In my oration, I will explore accounts of divine visitation and its connotations from the *Odyssey*. In the second part of my oration, I will present a case for Homeric hospitality being harmonious with Christianity, in particular, the exhortation "Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it" (Hebrews 13:2).

Thesis: Encountering Hospitality within the Epic: Understanding the *Odyssey* as a Story Depicting the Sacredness of Hospitality

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Pavlos Papadopoulos

Second Panelist: Mr. Stephen Hill

Third Panelist: Mr. Christopher Hodkinson

Mr. Joseph Alvarez

The Answer to the Die Hard Email Chain: How to Watch Movies and Stay Catholic

Wednesday, February 1, 2:00 PM

August 114

We commonly experience doubt about movies in the present age, and how they will affect our souls, either in displays of immoral content or a generally sinful story. How ought we to discern which movies we may watch and which we should avoid? I will apply principles drawn from Aristotle's *On Poetics* and Pope Pius XII's Letter to the Cinematograph Industry, "The Ideal Film," in order to explain how one might derive a system of properly criticizing movies on the moral level.

Thesis: Sin and Cinema: A Study of the Relationship between Morality and Film

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Kent Lasnoski

Second Panelist: Mr. Stephen Hill

Third Panelist: Dr. Michael Bolin

Miss Andrea Callaway

“The Prudish Man Will Know . . . Or Will He?”: In Defense of Explicit Sexuality in Literature

Wednesday, February 1, 9:30 AM

Augur II4

Fiction is no stranger to fornication.

The question of the content of books has always been disputed, from Flaubert’s *Madame Bovary* to Milton’s *Paradise Lost* to James Joyce’s *Ulysses*. What is acceptable to include in literature? Ought the author to exclude content to protect the reader? Are there certain themes, such as sexuality, that should never be written about in detail? In the 21st century, we face these questions more urgently than any previous age. We are bombarded on all sides by our radically sexualized society, wherein authors peddle sexuality to their audience in order to titillate them. These types of books tend to make us think that the division between a “good book” and a “dirty book” is easy to discern.

In this oration, I will present the case against this mindset. Drawing from Flannery O’Connor and C. S. Lewis, I will examine the role of the fiction writer and the disposition of the reader to show that we ought not to be scandalized by all books with explicit sexuality. Rather, when these books are approached discerningly, the reader who encounters explicit sexuality encounters both truth and our modern age.

Thesis: “The Prudish Man Will Know . . . Or Will He?”: An Exploration of Explicit Content in the Modern Catholic Novel

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Jeremy Holmes

Second Panelist: Dr. Michael Bolin

Third Panelist: Dr. Travis Dziad

Miss Jill Cook

Binary is Better: Why Intersex as a Third Sex is Biologically Unnecessary and Inaccurate

Tuesday, January 31, 10:45 AM

Augur 113

Most human beings develop along the typical sex binary; some, however, do not. Individuals with atypical sexual development are often labeled as “intersex” – a third sex between male and female. With a foundation in biological sex determination, we will discover the flaws in the intersex paradigm, which are fundamentally rooted in a misunderstanding of what it means to be a sexed person. By exploring and refining already proposed definitions of male and female, we will discover that the sex binary can be retained for every human individual, regardless of atypical development.

Thesis: Sex Determination and Disorders of Sexual Development: A Philosophical and Biological Analysis of Human Sexuality

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Henry Zepeda

Second Panelist: Dr. Stanley Grove

Third Panelist: Dr. Travis Dziad

Mr. Matthew Curley

Manliness 101: How to Throw a Punch

Thursday, February 2, 2:00 PM

Augur 113

What is a good man? A man can either suppress his natural male traits and inclinations, or he can harness them and put them to use. In my oration, I will argue that it is characteristic of the good man to intentionally develop his male traits and use them moderately. Using Aristotle's definitions of nature and virtue, I will show that authentic manliness is a virtue that lies between the extremes of effeminacy and brutishness and how effective training in this virtue can be achieved through boxing.

Thesis: Manliness: Reclaiming the Virtue of the Male Stereotype

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Scott Olsson

Second Panelist: Dr. Paul Giesting

Third Panelist: Dr. Stanley Grove

Miss Grace Dennett

“Beauty Plus Pity”: The Key to Vladimir Nabokov’s Lolita

Friday, February 3, 2:00 PM

Augur 114

In 1955, Vladimir Nabokov published his controversial novel *Lolita*, which depicts the heartbreaking story of a twelve-year-old girl, Lolita, who is kidnapped by a man, Humbert Humbert, so that he might subject her to regular violation. The story is narrated by Humbert himself, placing *Lolita*’s readers into the mind of a pedophile and requiring them to experience the world through the eyes of a character unthinkably perverse. For many readers, this novel’s plot may seem unbearably obscene and its narrator too perverse to be entertained. Many deem this book unworthy of reading, no matter how beautifully it is written and no matter how highly it is praised. In my oration, I will be explaining Nabokov’s instructions for reading *Lolita*, arguing that it has redemptive and cathartic elements. Nabokov defines art as “beauty plus pity”; together each form the lens through which a reader must view this tragedy. Readers must see beauty and give pity not only to Lolita, but also to a character as vile as Humbert.

Thesis: Nabokov’s *Lolita*: A Satirical Tragedy of the Myth of Eros and Death

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Glenn Arbery

Second Panelist: Dr. Scott Olsson

Third Panelist: Dr. Tiffany Schubert

Mr. Michael Dolson

Communal Memory: The Importance of Land and Mythos in the Identity of a People

Tuesday, January 31, 3:15 PM

Augur 114

How does a community or a people know its own identity? For an individual person, this question of identity is shaped by the memory. In this oration, it will be shown how a community, too, can properly be said to have a memory of its own. This communal memory will be examined in light of the importance of rootedness in the land in passing this memory on, as well as the mode of story, or *mythos*, in which communal memory takes shape.

Thesis: Orphans in Individualism: The Danger of a Rootless Society

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Virginia Arbery

Second Panelist: Mr. Eugene Hamilton

Third Panelist: Dr. James Tonkovich

Miss Maggie Duffy

The World's a Game and We're the Players: An Exploration of The Virginian's Theme of Gamesmanship

Wednesday, February 1, 9:30 AM

August 113

In this oration I will analyze Owen Wister's work, *The Virginian*, and how it portrays the maturation of a man. I claim that the game is any interaction a man has in the world of men, animals, and God. It is therefore by observing and exploring this threefold play that I hope to show that it is only by playing this game that any man matures.

Thesis: *The Virginian*: A Story of the Quality and Maturation of a Man Made Apparent by Means of "The Game"

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Stanley Grove

Second Panelist: Dr. Paul Giesting

Third Panelist: Dr. Henry Zepeda

Miss Sarah Fojtik

“Naked and Unashamed”: Vulnerability as a Movement towards Edenic Relationship

Wednesday, February 1, 10:45 AM

Augur 113

Vulnerability is rarely comfortable. It demands that we reveal our “nakedness” to another, granting them access into our innermost thoughts, emotions, and desires. While we can choose to reject vulnerability, emotionally isolating ourselves from others, this choice denies a deep need of the human heart: authentic and intimate relationships. After all, it is “not good for man to be alone.” The book of Genesis reveals that Adam and Eve’s pre-fallen intimacy depended on being “naked and unashamed.” Yet, we are left today with the shame and fear of exposure that came after the Fall. Adam and Eve became aware that “they were naked” and chose to hide from the other, thereby losing the intimacy of their relationship. If we are ever to recover a kind of relationship like the one in which man first lived, this shame and fear must be overcome through an active choice for vulnerability. For vulnerable sharing allows us to live a life defined by more than mere avoidance of risk. To be vulnerable is to do the “human thing.” Naked vulnerability allows us to take a step back towards Edenic relationships, thereby moving towards our God-given being and purpose.

Thesis: The Art of Authentic Connection: An Examination of Vulnerability through the Lens of Genesis and *Crime and Punishment*

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Tiffany Schubert

Second Panelist: Dr. James Tonkowich

Third Panelist: Mr. Adam Cooper

Mr. Blaise Galbraith

So, You're Gonna Die

Thursday, February 2, 2:00 PM

Augur 114

Violence is perhaps the most paradoxical and shocking phenomenon of human life, yet it can be found throughout the entirety of human history. What causes violence to be so universal? How should one respond to its inescapable presence in the world? The tradition of western literature looks closely at the doing of violence, and the suffering of it, through the Pagan and Christian traditions. The *Iliad* and the Gospels show the heroic response to violence as seen in western history.

Thesis: Mere Humanity: The Transformation of Violence

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Tiffany Schubert

Second Panelist: Dr. Henry Zepeda

Third Panelist: Dr. Glenn Arbery

Mr. Peter Gedicks

Listening with Beethoven to Some Variations on Nothing: A Look at the Relationship between Composers, Listeners, Music, and Silence

Wednesday, February 1, 10:45 AM

August 114

The 20th-century literary theorist Roland Barthes, in his essay “Musica Practica,” attempts to restore the relationship of the amateur musician to what he describes as the music of the “technician” (the highly complex works of the serious contemporary music scene as well as the rise of recorded music), by outlining a new musical practice. The goal of this practice is to allow the listener to be no longer a passive receiver of the music, but an active collaborator in the creation and playing of the music. This practice is an attempt to return to a time when the primary means of experiencing music was through playing it yourself or among friends, outside of concert halls or without the use of recordings. Quite ironically, Barthes directs our attention to Beethoven as an example of this new practice. This oration will look to discover what Barthes means concretely in examining Beethoven’s *Diabelli Variations*. Following the thought of 20th and 21st-century composers and theorists such as Arvo Pärt, Theodor Adorno, and James MacMillan to name a few, this oration will strive to uncover what Beethoven, viewed through this lens, can reveal about music itself.

Thesis: Essays on a Thesis: Urmusik and Operation: the Unity of Music

Thesis Advisor: Mr. Christopher Hodkinson

Second Panelist: Mr. Eugene Hamilton

Third Panelist: Dr. Scott Olsson

Mr. Hiram Gleason

*To Love a Dream and Debase Your Brother:
Encountering God in a Godless World through Poetic
Vision*

Friday, February 3, 3:15 PM

Augur 113

What is the relationship between faith, poetic vision, and fraternal love within the context of Dostoyevsky's *Brothers Karamazov*? Analyzing the central conflict of the novel between faith and a rejection of God's world, I will attempt to prove that faith is necessary for a person to love fraternally. This will be done by looking into the lives of two brothers – Ivan and Alyosha – who contrast each other greatly in their attempts to love their fellow man: one attempting with faith, the other without it. I will draw out the contrasting attempts by asserting that poetic vision is dependent upon faith and that without poetic vision a person is unable to love fraternally. The exploration of the two brothers' ability to love will draw out a counterargument to Ivan's rejection of God, an answer I believe is found within the narrative itself – Alyosha's fraternal love.

Thesis: Poetic Vision, Faith, and Fraternal Love in Dostoyevsky's *Brothers Karamazov*

Thesis Advisor: Mr. Adam Cooper

Second Panelist: Dr. Scott Olsson

Third Panelist: Dr. Daniel Shields

Miss Emma Hermanson

Ugliness Will Save the World: Grotesque Literature and the God-Man

Friday, February 3, 2:00 PM

Augur 113

The world is dirty, brilliant, repulsive, and heartbreakingly lovely all at the same time. Faced with this muddled reality in which beauty and ugliness are so often rendered inseparable, man's discernment of the good and holy is faltering at best and fatal at worst. In such a world, what is a soul in pursuit of God to do?

It seems at first that there are two paths that man may follow as he makes his way on the broken earth. He may reject all possibility of beauty, declaiming loveliness and embracing the ugly. Alternatively, he may scorn ugliness, living for perfect beauty alone. However, I propose that there is a third way, illuminated in the story of Alyosha of Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, which is ultimately more in accord with his humanity and with the humanity of the enfleshed Word. He may tread the middle road, regarding his rent world as the wound of Christ, through which he may put his hand and know the heart of God. I name this middle way the *iconographic vision*, and claim that it is the most proper attitude for the human soul towards the broken world in the context of the Incarnation.

Thesis: "Glory from Their Tombs": Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* and the Aesthetics of Redemption

Thesis Advisor: Mr. Adam Cooper

Second Panelist: Mr. Stephen Hill

Third Panelist: Mr. Kyle Washut

Miss Anna Klein

Submission: The Sign of a Thriving Wife

Thursday, February 2, 3:15 PM

Augur 113

Since the advent of second-wave feminism, a dramatic upheaval in the traditional roles of men and women has altered the idea of marriage in our society. Our modern culture disregards the idea that equality can still include hierarchy. I believe that society has ignored the true nature of women as wife and mother, and teaches them to stifle that part of their nature instead of embracing it. Yet, nature is the very thing we must understand and address in order to know the role in which women will thrive. I will first look to Aristotle for a general definition of nature and from there, with the help of other authors I will explore the biology and psychology of men and women to better understand their natures. Through this lens we will be able to understand what roles in marriage are most natural to women and to men. In this oration, I would like to show women that to be submissive in this sense is not a radical idea, but is actually inherent in their nature – that a wife’s submissiveness to her husband is a role that her very nature demands.

Thesis: Submission: The Sign of a Thriving Wife

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Daniel Shields

Second Panelist: Dr. Henry Zepeda

Third Panelist: Dr. Tiffany Schubert

Mr. Braden Licciardi

The Underappreciated Virtue of Hope?

Tuesday, January 31, 4:30 PM

Augur 113

The virtue of hope is one of the three theological virtues that are gifted to man. But do we really understand what hope is? This essential virtue for mankind is commonly taken for granted because charity takes precedence in the discussion while faith is the necessary trust and reliance on God. Hope, however, directly addresses the fallen human condition. In this oration, I will define hope in accordance with Saint Thomas Aquinas's definition and pair it with what the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches. I will then illustrate the human condition and ultimately come to the conclusion of whether mankind can cultivate the virtue of hope or if it is merely a gift given by God.

Thesis: How Man Ought to Hope: Through Suffering

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Michael Bolin

Second Panelist: Dr. Paul Giesting

Third Panelist: Dr. Henry Zepeda

Mr. Nathan Licciardi

Ambition: A Catholic Defense of Worldly Success

Thursday, February 2, 3:15 PM

Augur II4

What are the worldly and Christian definitions of success? Are they compatible in any way? Can we as Christians really be ambitious in pursuing worldly success? Should we? In my oration, I will answer all of these questions by articulating a Christian understanding of Aristotelian magnanimity. By engaging in Thomistic theology and reasoning, I will show the compatibility of the worldly and Catholic understandings of success through Christian magnanimity and how ambition is necessary for attaining this virtue. Moreover, I will explain the complementarity of humility and magnanimity in accomplishing great tasks and ultimately reaching eternal salvation. Finally, I will look to saints and contemporary examples of magnanimity as well as briefly explore encyclicals echoing this call to greatness.

Thesis: Man Was Created for Greatness – for God Himself: Success and Magnanimity Properly Understood

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Travis Dziad

Second Panelist: Dr. Paul Giesting

Third Panelist: Dr. Virginia Arbery

Miss Alyssa Malo

“Mysticism Keeps Men Sane”: The Intellectual Food of Man and His Natural Desire for the Unknown

Wednesday, February 1, 3:15 PM

Augur II4

The intellectual desire in man ever propels him further and further into his discovery of the real. No matter his degree of knowledge or wisdom, the question “why” will be painfully relevant. In this oration, I will give an argument that the fulfillment of this desire on a natural level will inevitably lead to the apprehension of the mysterious and unknown first cause, which is the source and end of all created being. In order to do so, I will employ Aristotelian and Thomistic philosophy to expound on the nature of human intellectuality, the difference between logic and intuition, and the goal of the metaphysician to explain all of reality through one cause, and its failure to do so adequately. I will show how the highest degree of human knowledge will allow the metaphysician to know *what* the first cause is, but not *who*, leaving him at the summit of natural wisdom, staring into darkness once more.

Thesis: Mystery and Metaphysics: The Intellectual Food of Man and His Natural Desire for the Unknown

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Jeremy Holmes

Second Panelist: Mr. Christopher Hodkinson

Third Panelist: Mr. Stephen Hill

Mr. Ryan Milligan

The Journey to Consciousness through Chaos

Tuesday, January 31, 10:45 AM

Augur 114

In this lecture I aim to connect psychology as put forward by Carl Jung to man's heritage of myth and story, particularly in the retelling of the creation narrative offered by Milton's *Paradise Lost*. I hope to illustrate that Milton was drawing in his poetry, consciously or not, the image of a mind's journey to understanding itself and coming to terms with consciousness as we know it.

Thesis: *Animus* and *Anima* in *Paradise Lost*

Thesis Advisor: Mr. Adam Cooper

Second Panelist: Dr. Tom Zimmer

Third Panelist: Dr. Kent Lasnoski

Miss Abigail O'Brien

The Age of Gnosticism: Transgenderism, Transhumanism, and Human Identity in the Digital Age

Tuesday, January 31, 9:30 AM

Augur 113

What happens when man's gnostic temptation to break limits meets today's digital technology? Transgenderism and its progression into transhumanism are contemporary manifestations of man's desire to transcend physical limits and exist as disembodied mind. This oration will elucidate the relationship between digital technology and transgenderism, specifically how the former enabled the latter. What is the solution? To what must we return to rediscover human identity?

Thesis: The Digital Age: Transgenderism and Human Identity

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Pavlos Papadopoulos

Second Panelist: Dr. James Tonkowich

Third Panelist: Dr. Travis Dziad

Miss Sofia Piliero

The Artist's Call to a Labor of Gratitude

Friday, February 3, 3:15 PM

Augur 114

How should you respond to a work of art? Art is evocative in intensely personal and complex ways, yet, through Fra Angelico's San Marco frescoes, two aspects of his work guide our reception of art: gift and beauty.

Exploring the nature of gift and beauty brings the beholder to a new understanding of Fra Angelico's *Annunciation*, *Presentation*, and *Lamentation over the Dead Christ*, as well as providing a lens through which to encounter all art. Through Fra Angelico's luminous frescoes, the beholder is invited to receive a transformative gift. The fifteenth-century artist presents an interpretation of the salvific mysteries emphasizing the cycle of gift and gratitude which suffuses all artistic endeavors.

Thesis: "Earth but Cloaks Your Heaven": A Narrative of Gift Through the Artist, the Story, the Beholder

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Virginia Arbery

Second Panelist: Mr. Stephen Hill

Third Panelist: Mr. Christopher Hodkinson

Mr. Tobias Propst

Heidegger and Arendt: How to Be Authentic

Friday, February 3, 10:45 AM

Augur 114

Heidegger's portrayal of authenticity detailed in *Being and Time* has often been critiqued as unrealistic, unobtainable, and even elitist. Heidegger himself calls authenticity only a "temporary state" that has no real practical benefits to acquiring. Essentially the argument against Heidegger's authenticity is "Why should I become who I am, when what I am now is good enough?" However, could it be that Heidegger's authenticity is actually worth all the hardship to obtain, is a claim based on realism and not idealism?

This claim can be supported by a thorough analysis of *Being and Time* and subsequent writings from Heidegger, as well as backed up by his protégé, Hannah Arendt, in *The Human Condition* and *The Banality of Evil*. Using Hannah Arendt's works one can refute the claim that Heidegger's authenticity is unrealistic, while maintaining that authenticity is needed for the good life. This comparison between the two thinkers' works must show that Hannah Arendt's political philosophy complements Heidegger's metaphysics, as well as show where they diverge.

Thesis: The Art of Authenticity: The Legacy of Heidegger and Arendt

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Daniel Shields

Second Panelist: Mr. Kyle Washut

Third Panelist: Dr. Virginia Arbery

Miss Theresa Ramsay

A Poet: Philosopher or Prophet?

Friday, February 3, 9:30 AM

Augur 113

Machiavelli concludes *The Prince* by quoting a portion of one of Francesco Petrarca's sonnets from his *Rime Sparse*:

Virtue against the fury
will take arms and make the battle short;
for the ancient valor
in Italian hearts is not dead.

Though this quotation supports the book's overall mission, its use would not be supported by Petrarch. In *The Prince*, we see language presented as a means to power and the role of a poet blending with that of a prophet. Such a presentation is opposed to Petrarch's understanding of language as tied to reality, and a poet holding a role similar to that of a philosopher. Utilizing this juxtaposition, this oration will explore Machiavelli's understanding of prophetic power.

Thesis: Machiavelli's Ornamented Arms: Propaganda

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Pavlos Papadopoulos

Second Panelist: Dr. James Tonkowich

Third Panelist: Dr. Virginia Arbery

Mr. Charles Renouard

Compete for the Imperishable Wreath: A Practical Exploration of Sports in Catholic Education

Tuesday, January 31, 9:30 AM

Augur 114

As budgets become increasingly tight, many schools are re-assessing the need for sports in education. A number of these schools have dropped these activities, reasoning that they do not contribute to the goal of education, happiness. However, Catholics hold a different outlook on happiness than these schools. They believe that true happiness is found in Heaven. With this in mind, should Catholic schools follow in the footsteps of other schools and drop these activities? Or do sports play a crucial role in the attainment of eternal happiness in Heaven?

Thesis: Sports in Education: An Exploration of the Role of Sports in Human Formation

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Tom Zimmer

Second Panelist: Mr. Eugene Hamilton

Third Panelist: Dr. Paul Giesting

Miss Elizabeth Shephard

She Shall Be Called Woman: A Scriptural Account of Marriage and the Critical Feminine Role

Tuesday, January 31, 3:15 PM

Augur 113

Ephesians 5:22: “Wives, *be subject* to your husbands.” If you, like me, used to brush past this command of St. Paul with discomfort or even slightly gritted teeth, or wondered how it possibly fit with our Christian teachings of basic human equality, you may enjoy my oration! Passages like this one can really make it seem as though Scripture, one of the most basic sources of our faith, advocates for an excessive subjection of women within marriage. However, by carefully exploring the accounts of marriage given in both Genesis and Ephesians, I hope to emphasize that, in reality, the Bible acknowledges and protects the dignity of woman and her “critical feminine role.” Upon examination, Christian marriage reveals itself to be a beautiful and fulfilling vocation for women.

Thesis: *She Shall Be Called Woman: A Scriptural Account of Marriage and the Critical Feminine Role*

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Kent Lasnoski

Second Panelist: Mr. Kyle Washut

Third Panelist: Dr. Tiffany Schubert

Miss Jacinta St. Pierre

Dante's Musical Understanding of Salvation and Damnation

Wednesday, February 1, 2:00 PM

Augur 113

Is there more to musical harmony and discord than just audible pleasure in this world? Could there be some deeper meaning in the secrets of music that actually reveal God's creative design of such a mysterious mode of communication to man? Woven throughout Dante's *Commedia* is a musical understanding of the cosmos through which we can more clearly understand the reality of what it means to be separated from God through sin or to be united to him in perfect love. Musical harmony and discord are uniquely the best way to understand the relationship between God and man. As Dante journeys through the realms of Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven, he writes about his different audible experiences, and the reader discovers that the nature of the sound reflects three different states of man's soul in relation to God. As music itself yearns for harmony, unity, and resolution, so too does the soul yearn for that peace and resolution which only finds itself in the city of God.

Thesis: Harmony and Discord within the Human Soul

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Glenn Arbery

Second Panelist: Mr. Christopher Hodkinson

Third Panelist: Dr. James Tonkowich

Miss Megan Thorseth

Unearthing Purgatory: Our Christian Duty to Save Souls

Friday, February 3, 9:30 AM

Augur 114

As loud wailing, burdensome chains, and scorching fires fill the abyss of Purgatory, it is easy to forget the mercy of God. Still, these purgatorial punishments are necessary and in accord with God's Justice. So, why is it important to "save" the Souls in Purgatory if they are already on the path to Heaven? In this oration, I will present the Catholic doctrine and Scripture which serve as the foundation for Purgatory and offer accounts of private revelation of the saints in order to reveal the wondrous marriage of God's mercy and justice.

Thesis: Unearthing Purgatory: Our Christian Duty to Save Souls

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Kent Lasnoski

Second Panelist: Dr. Stanley Grove

Third Panelist: Dr. Michael Bolin

Miss Frances Urbancic

Is Christ Divided? Liturgy Wars and Evangelization

Tuesday, January 31, 2:00 PM

Augur 113

“It is the whole Church that receives the mission to evangelize,” emphasized Pope St. Paul VI. With the liturgy – the Eucharist – as the *anima* of evangelization, what does this mission look like in the Roman rite today? Currently, we find two liturgical forms in the Roman rite: the Extraordinary Form and the *Novus Ordo*. Often, these two forms do not live in harmony with one another. In fact, there is frequent discord and quarreling about the superiority of one form over the other. How does this disunity affect our efforts to evangelize? Is there a solution to these disagreements about liturgical forms in the Roman rite? If so, how will it affect our mission to lead others to Christ?

In this oration, I will examine the nature of the Church, the Second Vatican Council, Church development, and proper unity in the Church. In the end, I will conclude that for the sake of evangelization, we must set aside our personal liturgical preferences and, out of obedience, adhere to the Pope’s guidance.

Thesis: Evangelization in the Roman Rite: Whether Having Two Forms in the Roman Rite Is Beneficial or Detrimental to Our Mission to Evangelize

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Jeremy Holmes

Second Panelist: Dr. Tom Zimmer

Third Panelist: Dr. Daniel Shields

Miss Cecilia Wiesner

“Living Life with an Open Hand”: The Universal Christian Call to Poverty

Wednesday, February 1, 3:15 PM

Augur 113

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5:3). What does it mean to be poor in spirit? Often, Christians minimize this first of the beatitudes to be of merely internal significance. By examining the Church’s tradition of poverty of spirit and multiple examples from Holy Scripture and the lives of the saints, it becomes clear that poverty of spirit is not merely an internal reality. Rather, Christ has called all of his followers to a life of tangibly lived-out poverty, for the sake of deeper relationship with him.

Thesis: Living Life with an Open Hand: The Happiness and Freedom Attained through a Lifestyle of Voluntary Poverty

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Travis Dziad

Second Panelist: Dr. Michael Bolin

Third Panelist: Dr. Scott Olsson

Mr. Aidan Wood

Dumb but Disciplined: Why You Should Wake Up to Your Alarm

Friday, February 3, 10:45 AM

Augur 113

Being disciplined is unpleasant at best. It makes you boring in society, your friends will start thinking you're obsessed, and your significant other will think you're selfish and sadistic. In fact, if you think my oration will turn you into an alpha male or instantly motivate you to become a cold-hearted stoic, I will answer that now. It won't. But is it really worth the pain to be disciplined? In this oration, I will give a preliminary and practical answer to why discipline is actually worth pursuing. In order to do so, I will engage with the soldier and intellectual Xenophon, the philosopher Antonin-Gilbert Sertillanges, the navy seal Jocko Willink, and the clinical psychologist Jordan Peterson. I will explore three types of discipline which I deem necessary to acquire as humans: martial discipline, mental discipline, and self-discipline. I will also give an explanation as to why the truly disciplined man is fundamentally in tune with his emotions and passions.

Thesis: Disciplined but Dangerous: A Practical Exploration of Discipline for the Modern Man

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Pavlos Papadopoulos

Second Panelist: Mr. Eugene Hamilton

Third Panelist: Dr. Stanley Grove

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