

Senior Thesis Orations



Wyoming Catholic College
Spring 2022

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Spring 2022

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 four 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 2022. This booklet contains the title and abstract of each oration, along with a schedule for the coming days. Enjoy these next four 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, FEBRUARY I

- 8:00 AM** Little Office of Blessed Virgin Mary
- 8:30 AM** *Breathing Joy through Silver: Nature, Story, and Evangelium in the Writing of Lewis and Tolkien*
William Albers, p. 12, Augur 113
Panel: Baxter, Cooper, Hamilton
- “Take Me Out to the Ball Game”: Baseball, a Paradigm for America’s Loss of Leisure and a Restorative*
Felicity Amorose, p. 13, Augur 114
Panel: Tonkowich, Holmes, V. Arbery
- 9:45 AM** *The Begetter and Stronghold of Nations: Why Your Parents’ Marriage Is Not All about You*
Theodore Benz, p. 17, Augur 113
Panel: Mortensen, Olsson, Tonkowich
- Fasting and the Wedding Feast of the Lamb*
Peter Beckman, p. 16, Augur 114
Panel: Anderson, Hodkinson, Giesting
- 11:00 AM** *Thumos: The Most Overlooked Element in Education*
John Collins, p. 19, Augur 113
Panel: G. Arbery, Papadopoulos, Hill
- What Sort of a Creator Is This? Why God’s Creative Freedom Matters*
James Green, p. 26, Augur 114
Panel: Olsson, Zepeda, Holmes
- 12:05 PM** Mass (Downtown)

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY I

2:00 PM *Why Original Sin?*

Bernadette Holmes, p. 27, Augur 113

Panel: Dziad, Cooper, V. Arbery

This She'll Defend: A Catholic Approach to Integrated Combat Units

Ciely Daly, p. 20, Augur 114

Panel: Lasnoski, Zimmer, Bolin

3:15 PM *Art: Manipulative or Revelatory?*

Margaret Johnson, p. 29, Augur 113

Panel: Grove, Hamilton, Baxter

"Misbegotten Man": The Church Fathers' Puzzling Opinions on Women and What to Do with Them

Emily Gecosky, p. 25, Augur 114

Panel: Schubert, Hill, Washut

4:30 PM *To Die, Perchance to Live: Self-Fashioning, Suffering, and Salvation in Flannery O'Connor*

Brendan Floody, p. 24, Augur 113

Panel: G. Arbery, Hodgkinson, Papadopoulos

"The Lord gave; the Lord has taken away": God's Gift of Perfection in Job's Suffering

Rosemary Engles, p. 23, Augur 114

Panel: Anderson, Olsson, Hill

5:45 PM Marian Vespers (Immaculate Conception Oratory)

7:00 PM Byzantine Vespers (Byzantine Chapel)

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 2

8:00 AM Festal Matins and Divine Liturgy

9:00 AM Mass (Downtown)

11:30 AM *Why Women Should Wear Bikinis: A Thomistic Defense of the Virtue of Modesty*

Jeremiah Baur, p. 15, August 113

Panel: Bolin, Giesting, G. Arbery

2:00 PM *A Person's a Person No Matter How Guilty: A Catholic Case against the Death Penalty*

Camille Callaway, p. 18, August 113

Panel: Bolin, Shields, V. Arbery

Beet Greens, Rainbows, and Comprehending the Beautiful: Educating Children for Reality

Ruth Kress, p. 30, August 114

Panel: Zepeda, Hamilton, Zimmer

3:15 PM *My Rights, Your Health: An Examination into the Just Powers of Government Concerning Public Health*

Matthew Kubisch, p. 31, August 113

Panel: Papadopoulos, Zimmer, Zepeda

Love and "A Sword Will Pierce Your Heart": How Heroic Grief Leads to Compassionate Community

Hanna Massell, p. 33, August 114

Panel: Schubert, Grove, Hamilton

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 2

4:30 PM *Into the Jung-le: Exploring How Modern Psychological Methodology Relates to and Transforms the Classical Understanding of Man's Psyche*

John Malinoski, p. 32, Augur 113

Panel: Zepeda, Baxter, Shields

Craftsmanship: Understanding Why Work Properly Ordered Will Lead to a Self-Realization and Sanctification of Man

Andrew Matthews, p. 34, Augur 114

Panel: Dziad, Hamilton, Mortensen

5:45 PM Byzantine Vespers (Byzantine Chapel)

Marian Vespers (Immaculate Conception Oratory)

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 3

7:00 AM Divine Liturgy for St. Simeon and Anna

8:00 AM Little Office of Blessed Virgin Mary

8:30 AM *Eros as Incarnational Love*

Olivia de Laveaga, p. 21, Augur 113

Panel: Schubert, Baxter, Hodkinson

#SelfCare: Selfish or Selfless?

Louisa Whitmore, p. 46, Augur 114

Panel: Mortensen, Shields, Cooper

9:45 AM *Follow Your Heart: Emotions as the Key to Sanctity*

Janelle Baur, p. 14, Augur 113

Panel: Olsson, Giesting, Cooper

Ancient "Goodness" – Does God Hate It, Tolerate It, or Demand It? Nietzsche & Lewis on Good, Evil, and Spirited Christianity

MaryAnne Spiess, p. 39, Augur 114

Panel: Holmes, Hill, Papadopoulos

11:00 AM *Happily Ever After: An Echo of Eden*

Emma Jermann, p. 28, Augur 113

Panel: Holmes, Olsson, Tonkowich

"Let Them Have Dominion": Man's Responsibility to the Natural World

Bernadette Wall, p. 44, Augur 114

Panel: Grove, Zimmer, Hamilton

12:05 PM Mass (Downtown)

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 3

2:00 PM *How to Not Be a Pagan: A Patristic Understanding of the Liturgical Life*

Timothy Dominick, p. 22, Augur 113

Panel: Anderson, Hodkinson, G. Arbery

Hamlet Doesn't Pray to Shakespeare, So Why Should I? An Examination of Prayer as Secondary Causality and What This Tells Us about God

Kathy Swift, p. 41, Augur 114

Panel: Dziad, Bolin, Shields

3:15 PM *"Inner Beauty Is for Amateurs": An Exploration of the Integrated Dichotomy of Self and Appearance*

Bernadette Syversen, p. 43, Augur 113

Panel: Schubert, Giesting, V. Arbery

Boarding School to Counteract Modernity

Daniel Schreiber, p. 38, Augur 114

Panel: Papadopoulos, Zimmer, Dziad

4:30 PM *The Pagan and the Psychologist: An Exploration of Happiness and Flow Theory*

John Swindell, p. 42, Augur 113

Panel: Holmes, Dziad, Giesting

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 3

4:30 PM *Catholics in a Capitalist World: Understanding
Capitalism with Catholic Social Teaching*

Thomas Sponseller, p. 40, Augur 114

Panel: Lasnoski, Zimmer, Tonkowich

5:45 PM Byzantine Vespers (Byzantine Chapel)

7:00 PM Marian Devotion for Our Lady Seat of Wisdom

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 4

- 8:00 AM** Little Office of Blessed Virgin Mary
- 8:30 AM** *Technologically Advanced Motherhood: The Modern Woman's Call to Save the World*
Elaine White, p. 45, Augur 113
Panel: Mortensen, Hodkinson, Grove
- The Disease of Curiosity: Navigating Man's Desire for Knowledge in the Modern Age*
Joseph Nemec, p. 36, Augur 114
Panel: Washut, Cooper, Zepeda
- 9:45 AM** *Rectifying Empiricism: Answering the Problem of Induction with Probability Theory*
Andrew Russell, p. 37, Augur 113
Panel: Bolin, Baxter, Shields
- How to Be like God: Read Leviticus*
Anne Zelden, p. 47, Augur 114
Panel: Washut, Hill, Giesting
- 11:00 AM** *God, Man, or Beast? The Reformation of Achilles's Heart*
Emily Mistaleski, p. 35, Augur 113
Panel: Papadopoulos, Cooper, Schubert

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 4

11:00 AM *How Vatican II Didn't Destroy the Mass: A Historical and Dogmatical Inquiry into the Mass of the Roman Rite*

Jacob Zepp, p. 48, Augur 114

Panel: Grove, Hodkinson, Hill

12:05 PM Mass (Holy Rosary)

Mr. William Albers

Breathing Joy through Silver: Nature, Story, and Evangelium in the Writing of Lewis and Tolkien

Tuesday, February 1, 8:30 AM

August 113

In Lewis's account of his own conversion, he focuses on the role of "Joy" in leading him to a love of God. This "Joy" came to him through experiences of both nature and myth and is, in Lewis's words, "an unsatisfied desire which is itself more desirable than any satisfaction." In this oration, I will begin with Lewis's essay "Transposition" to examine how Joy is able to come to us through nature, and why it is essentially "an *unsatisfied* desire." Then, I will turn to Tolkien's essay "On Fairy Stories" to examine how Joy is able to come to us through story, particularly fairy-story or myth. Furthermore, these two sources of Joy are not alternatives to each other, but are instead complementary, as revealed in the Incarnation. Both nature and story come together in this greatest of all stories, whose rejection leads, in Tolkien's words, "to sadness or to wrath."

Thesis: To Satisfy a Restless Spirit: Transcendent Desire and Satisfaction in the Writing of Augustine, Wordsworth, and Lewis

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Jason Baxter

Second Panelist: Mr. Adam Cooper

Third Panelist: Mr. Eugene Hamilton

Miss Felicity Amorose

“Take Me Out to the Ball Game”: Baseball, a Paradigm for America’s Loss of Leisure and a Restorative

Tuesday, February 1, 8:30 AM

Augur 114

“You go not till I set you up a glass / Where you may see the inmost part of you.” What Hamlet does for his mother, baseball can do for us. America’s National Pastime is uniquely suited to help us examine the changes in our culture. Taking baseball as a model of our society, and using a philosophical mode, this oration will explore how the changes in baseball reflect America’s rejection of leisure. These recent changes all attack the leisure that is woven into the very fabric of the game’s rules.

However, since baseball is intrinsically leisurely, since any attempt to rid baseball of leisure would result in the destruction of basically every characteristic of the sport, baseball is able to offer opportunities for Americans to return to leisure. Thus, through participation in a baseball game, each man is immersed in an event that encourages contemplation, a sport that promotes leisure. If he achieves that leisure, even if it is only an imperfect form of leisure, he will be closer to the pinnacle of leisure: to the worship of God.

Thesis: “Take Me Out to the Ball Game”*: Baseball, a Paradigm for America’s Loss of Leisure and a Restorative*

Thesis Advisor: Dr. James Tonkowich

Second Panelist: Dr. Jeremy Holmes

Third Panelist: Dr. Virginia Arbery

Mrs. Janelle Baur

Follow Your Heart: Emotions as the Key to Sanctity

Thursday, February 3, 9:45 AM

Augur 113

We often hear that we shouldn't be swayed by what we feel when making choices. We must control our emotions, lest they control us. Crying is for the weak; anger signifies a lack of control; eros is merely lust. We feel a heavy emphasis on what we think and a dismissal of what we feel. Even if you feel in your gut something may be right or wrong, you shouldn't trust that feeling, should you?

Yes, you can trust your emotions and sometimes even should. Emotions do not merely hinder our reason and ability to attain holiness. On the contrary, they are good and necessary for sanctity. Without our emotions we cannot attain the perfection which God created us for. They just need to be governed by reason. This phrase is often where the confusion comes in.

This oration will cover three points: what it means to say that emotions should be governed by reason, that they are necessary for attaining virtue, and the critical aid emotions are in discernment.

Thesis: Listen to Your Heart: A Defense of Emotions and Their Necessity for Virtue

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Scott Olsson

Second Panelist: Dr. Paul Giesting

Third Panelist: Mr. Adam Cooper

Mr. Jeremiah Baur

Why Women Should Wear Bikinis: A Thomistic Defense of the Virtue of Modesty

Wednesday, February 2, 11:30 AM

August 113

What does it mean for a woman to dress modestly? Is it a simple set of standards such as a neckline that is not further than two fingerbreadths below the collarbone? In this oration, I will give an account of the virtue of modesty according to Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas. This account concludes with modesty being a virtue whose principles dictate that what is modest to wear is not determined by objective standards but is relative to the cultural context. I will conclude with the implication of this claim.

Thesis: The Virtue of Modesty

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Michael Bolin

Second Panelist: Dr. Paul Giesting

Third Panelist: Dr. Glenn Arbery

Mr. Peter Beckman

Fasting and the Wedding Feast of the Lamb

Tuesday, February 1, 9:45 AM

Augur 114

Saint Basil tells us that we should “run cheerfully to the gift of fasting,” and that “fasting is an ancient gift, not one antiquated and obsolete, but ever fresh and at the height of its vitality.” The practice of fasting has experienced a decline over the centuries. Now, many people fast only when absolutely necessary. Fasting is no longer seen as a gift and thus people do not run toward it cheerfully. This dislike and aversion to fasting stems from its almost exclusive association with words such as mortification, atonement, pain, penance, sin, and suffering. Through utilizing Sacred Scripture, we will explore a more positive aspect of fasting that does not focus on sin and penance but on fasting as a blessing given by God from the beginning.

Thesis: “Anticipating the Already and the Yet to Come”: Preparing to Eat from the Tree of Life

Thesis Advisor: Fr. David Anderson

Second Panelist: Mr. Christopher Hodkinson

Third Panelist: Dr. Paul Giesting

Mr. Theodore Benz

The Begetter and Stronghold of Nations: Why Your Parents' Marriage Is Not All about You

Tuesday, February 1, 9:45 AM

August 113

Marriage: Something so common that it at first appears easily explained, for “the world must be peopled.” But is this really the sole focus of marriage? Through the papal encyclicals *Casti Connubii* and *Familiaris Consortio*, it becomes clear that this view is not simply too narrow, but is not upheld by the Church. If marriage was simply for having children, why would Christ have raised it to the dignity of a sacrament? In order to understand this, one must understand the mission given to those who are married, so that it might be more clearly understood why marriage is so important for the world.

From this stems the pivotal question: Why can we say marriage is not simply the provider of people, but rather the begetter and stronghold of nations?

Thesis: Marriage and Grace: The Role that Marriage as a Sacrament Plays in the World

Thesis Advisor: Dr. John Mortensen

Second Panelist: Dr. Scott Olsson

Third Panelist: Dr. James Tonkowich

Miss Camille Callaway

A Person's a Person No Matter How Guilty: A Catholic Case against the Death Penalty

Wednesday, February 2, 2:00 PM

Augur 113

In the 1980s, David Gore raped and murdered four teenage girls and two women. His crimes were repulsive. Many vehemently called for Gore's death, which occurred twenty-eight years later on death row. Were they right? Should the state have sentenced David Gore to death?

In this oration, I will present a Catholic case against the death penalty. Using St. John Paul II's teaching in *Evangelium Vitae* as a guide, I will examine three 'guidelines' he gives us for thinking about the death penalty and show why he was opposed to it and maybe you should be too.

Thesis: A Person's a Person No Matter How Guilty: A Rejection of the Death Penalty

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Michael Bolin

Second Panelist: Dr. Daniel Shields

Third Panelist: Dr. Virginia Arbery

Mr. John Collins

Thumos: The Most Overlooked Element in Education

Tuesday, February 1, 11:00 AM

Augur 113

What is the most crucial element in the education of a young man? If one looks around him, he will not see many men with a true desire to grow and attain knowledge. The missing element in all this is the heart, or *thumos*, as the ancients called it. A man whose *thumos* has gone astray through corrupt education has lost a very important element of his being. I will begin by showing how *thumos* is an essential element in man's education through C. S. Lewis's *Men Without Chests*. By contrasting Plato's *Phaedrus* with Dickens's *Hard Times*, I will reveal how correct education comes through a virtuous teacher and beautiful surroundings which direct the natural *thumos* of students toward the good, rather than stifle it, just as a just charioteer directs his horses. I will proceed to offer a means to awaken and then direct a man's *thumos* through observing the upbringing of Abraham Lincoln, showing that man must find the proper balance between formal learning and immersing himself in the raw, natural experiences that his heart was made to thrive in.

Thesis: *Studere*, "To Be Eager": The *Thumos* Necessary for an Educated Man

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Glenn Arbery

Second Panelist: Dr. Pavlos Papadopoulos

Third Panelist: Mr. Stephen Hill

Miss Ciely Daly

This She'll Defend: A Catholic Approach to Integrated Combat Units

Tuesday, February 1, 2:00 PM

Augur 114

In modern culture women have gained and continue to gain unprecedented opportunities to pursue and fill roles unthinkable a scant hundred years ago. Among the institutions historically closed to women was the military, but in 2013 the United States lifted its ban on women in combat and pledged to integrate all military occupational specialties. This decision was motivated in part by feminist sentiment that ignored potential drawbacks of integration and the devastating effects of decreased readiness on a combat force. However, there has never been a universal or undisputed condemnation of female soldiers or combatants – theologically or politically. By analyzing the arguments against women in combat made by war hero Col. John W. Ripley, in light of traditional Catholic social teaching, I will present the strongest arguments against women in combat units. Following this, I will offer a refutation rooted in the historical existence of women warriors, the ferocious defensive instinct essential to the feminine/maternal nature, and the contributions of women on the modern battlefield. Lastly, I will present the practical concerns that both the institutional military and the modern woman must overcome in order to achieve successful integration and effectively deploy, fight, and win our nation's wars.

Thesis: *This She'll Defend: A Catholic Approach to Military Integration*

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Kent Lasnoski

Second Panelist: Dr. Tom Zimmer

Third Panelist: Dr. Michael Bolin

Miss Olivia de Laveaga

Eros as Incarnational Love

Thursday, February 3, 8:30 AM

Augur 113

Love. From there, your mind can wander toward “God is love” or to romantic escapades. However, in *The Four Loves*, C. S. Lewis wrote “Eros, honored without reservation and obeyed unconditionally, becomes a demon.” This suggests that romantic love and the essence of the Trinity, can be quite opposed. After all, what is more anti-Trinitarian than the demonic? If Eros flirts with the demonic, it flirts with darkness.

In light of the above, this oration asks, how does the essence of God which is Charity relate to the experience of falling in love? The question will be answered with the writings of C. S. Lewis and Dante Alighieri.

First, the oration will explore Lewis’s thoughts on the nature of Eros, as well as its positive and negative relationship with Charity. Second, Dante and Beatrice will enter onstage. How does the Christian apologist of the 20th century compare to the infamous love poet of the Middle Ages? While Dante gives rich, vibrant poetry unlike Lewis’s straight, simple prose, his thoughts both correspond to and correct *The Four Loves*. Ultimately, however, the Christian lover will require each author to understand how Eros and Charity unify within his bodily experience.

Thesis: Christian Eros: Flirting with Temptation or Approaching God?

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Tiffany Schubert

Second Panelist: Dr. Jason Baxter

Third Panelist: Mr. Christopher Hodkinson

Mr. Timothy Dominick

How to Not Be a Pagan: A Patristic Understanding of the Liturgical Life

Thursday, February 3, 2:00 PM

Augur 113

Many Christians in this age of pusillanimous democratic spirits have misunderstood and reduced the goal of the Christian life to merely “getting to heaven” and only having a “personal relationship with Christ.” While these are both good, they severely undercut the message that Christ proclaims and that the Fathers elucidate, becoming little different than pagans that happen to worship the same God as the Christians. What these two positions misunderstand is the radically communal and corporate nature of the Christian life. Rather than being a one-on-one religion wherein the individual alone approaches God, and any congregation is merely accidental to the worship, the Christian may only approach God through the person of Christ in His body the Church, which is realized in liturgical worship. From this point we must start anew. In order to better understand the Christian life through a Patristic lens, we must first understand what the liturgical cycle is, what the Fathers say about it, and what the Christian life truly looks like.

Thesis: “Come, Let Us Worship God Our King!”: On the Necessity of the Liturgical Life

Thesis Advisor: Fr. David Anderson

Second Panelist: Mr. Christopher Hodkinson

Third Panelist: Dr. Glenn Arbery

Miss Rosemary Engles

“The Lord gave; the Lord has taken away”: God’s Gift of Perfection in Job’s Suffering

Tuesday, February 1, 4:30 PM

Augur 114

Perhaps the biggest intellectual difficulty that people have with Christianity is the problem of suffering. Why does God allow the suffering of innocent people? This question is posed vividly in the book of Job. Job, who is a righteous man, receives enormous affliction that flows from Satan’s accusation of Job before God. Job’s three friends continue to accuse him and bring him even further pain. This leads to Job’s deep complaint and desire to question God. Despite Job’s extreme faithfulness, God answers Job with confusing words, only making the problem more inaccessible. Why does God answer Job in this way, and why would this be a fitting conclusion to Job’s pain? This can only be understood by examining Job’s suffering and the purpose of his affliction. His trials when seen from the divine perspective become a means to perfection and complete self-gift. Thus the Lord gave, and by taking away has given an even greater gift.

Thesis: Why? The Cry of Suffering Humanity

Thesis Advisor: Fr. David Anderson

Second Panelist: Dr. Scott Olsson

Third Panelist: Mr. Stephen Hill

Mr. Brendan Floody

To Die, Perchance to Live: Self-Fashioning, Suffering, and Salvation in Flannery O'Connor

Tuesday, February 1, 4:30 PM

Augur 113

Aristotle tells us that “art is identical with a state of capacity to make, involving a true course of reasoning.” What happens when this idea of artistic creation is applied to human identity? What happens when a man’s identity, his very reality, is whatever he decides to make it? In this oration, I will discuss the idea of creating one’s own identity, coined by Stephen Greenblatt as “self-fashioning,” and then analyze its presence, effects, and remedy in the short stories of Flannery O’Connor. From this, I will show that man’s act of self-fashioning inevitably causes suffering and loss of such an artificial identity and how such suffering leads to a receptivity to grace and the opportunity to re-fashion oneself in the image of Christ.

Thesis: “Purifying Terror”: Self-Fashioning, Suffering, and Salvation in Fyodor Dostoevsky and Flannery O’Connor

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Glenn Arbery

Second Panelist: Mr. Christopher Hodkinson

Third Panelist: Dr. Pavlos Papadopoulos

Miss Emily Gecosky

“Misbegotten Man”: The Church Fathers’ Puzzling Opinions on Women and What to Do with Them

Tuesday, February 1, 3:15 PM

Augur 114

The early Church Fathers are among the most venerable Christians to have walked the earth. They are revered for their orthodox teaching, having protected the Church from many heresies and heroically aided the faithful on the journey to eternal life. Their extraordinary love for Christ has been an endless source of inspiration throughout every age. However, their writings contain disturbing opinions about the nature of woman that seem contrary to reason and even Christian charity. For example, St. Jerome wrote, “As long as woman is for birth and children, she is different from men as body is from soul. But if she wishes to serve Christ more than the world, she will cease to be a woman and will be called man.” Tertullian even styled woman “the gate to hell.” How should a Christian woman deal with such disorienting words spoken by those she trusts and honors? How can we understand these words of the Fathers? In this oration, I will examine these opinions and their causes, and argue that the development of doctrine, along with a nuanced understanding of the Fathers’ authority, helps reorient the faithful toward a more authentic view of woman’s nature.

Thesis: “Misbegotten Man”: The Church Fathers’ Puzzling Opinions and Their Bearing on Woman’s Identity

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Tiffany Schubert

Second Panelist: Mr. Stephen Hill

Third Panelist: Mr. Kyle Washut

Mr. James Green

What Sort of a Creator Is This? Why God's Creative Freedom Matters

Tuesday, February 1, 11:00 AM

Augur 114

We all might agree that God created and sustains all creation *ex nihilo*, out of nothing. But in what sort of a Creator do we find ourselves believing? Does God create because He gains something from our homage and devotion? Or does God not care about the universe because it doesn't really affect Him at all? Did God have to create or create any particular type of world? In this oration, I will begin to answer these questions by providing a glimmer of the glory of God's creative freedom and how the world's meaning is contained in the fact that God didn't have to create it. From this, we will see why this conclusion matters for us even now, gaining practical lessons about our own lives by understanding why the "greatest gift that God in His largesse gave to creation" really is as great as Dante and C. S. Lewis claim it is.

Thesis: Sovereign of a Far Greater Realm: Exploring the Freedom and Necessity Involved in God's Choice to Create

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Scott Olsson

Second Panelist: Dr. Henry Zepeda

Third Panelist: Dr. Jeremy Holmes

Miss Bernadette Holmes

Why Original Sin?

Tuesday, February 1, 2:00 PM

Augur 113

Why did an all-loving God let us inherit original sin? Why do we have to deal with someone else's problems? The answer lies in the unity of the human race. St. Thomas Aquinas makes it clear that we inherit original sin through an extraordinary unity of the human race. Our capacity for that unity turns out to be fundamental to who we are and where we're going. We're not in the fight alone, and we were never meant to be self-sufficient, self-contained individuals. Our nature has always been intended for divinization, and original sin is merely the dark side of our capacity for union to each other and to God.

Thesis: We Were Never Meant to Be Self-Sufficient: The Justice of Our Fall and Redemption

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Travis Dziad

Second Panelist: Mr. Adam Cooper

Third Panelist: Dr. Virginia Arbery

Miss Emma Jermann

Happily Ever After: An Echo of Eden

Thursday, February 3, 11:00 AM

Augur 113

Happy endings are one of fiction's greatest clichés, and for good reason. J. R. R. Tolkien calls them “not only a consolation . . . but a satisfaction.” However, the more we “grow up” and experience the world, the more those fairy-tale endings seem childish, or worse, delusional: a fantastical lie for those who cannot face the harshness of reality.

But happy endings are not unrealistic: in fact, they are *more* realistic than what we see as reality. They give us a glimpse of what an unfallen world would look like; in shaping our natural yearnings and satisfying our innate desire for justice and happiness, they give us a taste for paradise.

Thesis: Man Subcreator: The Art of Fantasy

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Jeremy Holmes

Second Panelist: Dr. Scott Olsson

Third Panelist: Dr. James Tonkowich

Miss Margaret Johnson

Art: Manipulative or Revelatory?

Tuesday, February 1, 3:15 PM

Augur 113

Unless we intentionally try to avoid it, every one of us is constantly saturated with art. Every story, movie poster, sacred image in churches, and pop song shapes our imaginations, and through our imaginations, our wills, intellects, and characters, even without our realizing it. Therefore it is worth understanding what types of art there are and how each affects us. By understanding different types of art we come to see that a distinction between fine and useful art is essential, and not just when it comes to distinguishing the Mona Lisa from a well-designed chair. We come to see that the only art that properly ought to be defined as *fine* is that which fulfills human nature by drawing the whole person into the human end of contemplation.

Thesis: Poetry and Politics: Art as the Fulfillment of Human Nature

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Stanley Grove

Second Panelist: Mr. Eugene Hamilton

Third Panelist: Dr. Jason Baxter

Miss Ruth Kress

Beet Greens, Rainbows, and Comprehending the Beautiful: Educating Children for Reality

Wednesday, February 2, 2:00 PM

Augur 114

Sending ten-year-old Jane to a drab sterilized building for seven hours every day, where a desultory teacher attempts to cram facts into her little brain, is no way to prepare Jane for a zealous and fulfilled life in this ever more abstract and synthetic world we are living in. The educational model of the day – systematic instruction taking place in an institution – is not suited to children. Children cannot turn learning on and off. They are constantly learning, thus their education is simultaneous with their upbringing; children's education is a relationship. Everything they touch, feel, see, and experience in some way, forms their soul. Knowing is first through the senses before it is in the intellect. If we are to raise children that know and love the truth, they need to be given a firm foundation in meaningful reality, a foundation where beauty is not a mere accident of life, but life's very substance.

Thesis: Educating for Reality: The Importance of Integrated Experiential Learning for Children

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Henry Zepeda

Second Panelist: Mr. Eugene Hamilton

Third Panelist: Dr. Tom Zimmer

Mr. Matthew Kubisch

My Rights, Your Health: An Examination into the Just Powers of Government Concerning Public Health

Wednesday, February 2, 3:15 PM

Augur 113

Just how much power does the government have over me to protect public health? I know I have rights but why don't they seem to be respected? To unravel this mystery, this oration will first begin by examining the foundation of just government from the consent of the governed as seen in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution itself. Next, I will explore the judicial interpretation of traditional powers of the state in the sphere of public health culminating in a repudiation of the precedent set by *Jacobson v. Massachusetts*. Finally, replacing the rejected standard of the Supreme Court with a more fitting one, I will evaluate current vaccination policies and the Supreme Court's rulings regarding them.

Thesis: Are Vaccine Mandates Just? An Examination into the Nature of Liberty, the Just Powers of the Government in the Field of Public Health, and Application to Contemporary Times

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Pavlos Papadopoulos

Second Panelist: Dr. Tom Zimmer

Third Panelist: Dr. Henry Zepeda

Mr. John Malinoski

Into the Jung-le: Exploring How Modern Psychological Methodology Relates to and Transforms the Classical Understanding of Man's Psyche

Wednesday, February 2, 4:30 PM

Augur 113

“Is this really relevant and applicable to my life?” was the question that immediately jumped to mind as I finished my final examination for Ethics 301. Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*, despite touching on the major themes of humanity such as virtue, happiness, and the good life, was too abstract, seeming to focus more on the ideal rather than the real. I was unsuccessfully seeking concrete tangibles: the ancient equivalent to modern S.M.A.R.T goals and modes of therapy. Not finding this level of practicality within Aristotle’s pages, I looked to a modern psychologist: Carl Jung. My presentation will compare and contrast the methodology of the classical tradition to that of the modern mental health field, focusing specifically on the concepts found in Aristotle’s *Ethics* and Carl Jung’s *Psychological Types*. By looking at each author’s principles, mode of argumentation, and goals, I intend to deliver a clear and cohesive understanding of the roles of both ancient and modern methodology in a proper, well-formed conceptualization of the human psyche.

Thesis: Into the Jung-le: Exploring How Modern Psychological Methodology Relates to and Transforms the Classical Understanding of Man's Psyche

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Henry Zepeda

Second Panelist: Dr. Jason Baxter

Third Panelist: Dr. Daniel Shields

Miss Hanna Massell

Love and “A Sword Will Pierce Your Heart”: How Heroic Grief Leads to Compassionate Community

Wednesday, February 2, 3:15 PM

August 114

It is not good for man to be alone, so the natural need for community leads him to love. But through bereavement, he loses those he chose to love. Grief, that state of bereavement, is something inherently isolating. So if we don't choose to love, we are doomed to isolation, but if we do choose to love we will inevitably experience isolation in our grief. Are we doomed to isolation whether we love or not? People say that “grief is just love with no place to go.” Although grief leaves one isolated with immense love that feels directionless and frustrated, it can also cultivate communities rooted in compassion. By putting St. Augustine, C. S. Lewis, and personal experience into conversation, we will see that heroic submission to grief leads to cultivation of compassionate communities.

Thesis: “Bereavement Is Not a Truncation of the Process but One of Its Phases”: Grieving, the Phase Where Love Cultivates Community

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Tiffany Schubert

Second Panelist: Dr. Stanley Grove

Third Panelist: Mr. Eugene Hamilton

Mr. Andrew Matthews

Craftsmanship: Understanding Why Work Properly Ordered Will Lead to a Self-Realization and Sanctification of Man

Wednesday, February 2, 4:30 PM

August 114

The belief that skilled manual labor is outdated and unnecessary is becoming increasingly popular in our age. Modernity encourages a reliance on the machine of consumerism and mass production to fix our problems, and the working man is expected to become just a part of the process as his individual agency is taken from him. Without even realizing it, in man's relentless pursuit to make the world a better place, he gradually makes it more abstract and removed from himself. To address this, I propose we bring back the culture of manual competence to assist man in his knowledge of self, pursuit of artistic mastery, and perception of real things. Throughout this oration, we will explore and ultimately answer the question of how we should understand skilled labor as a part of man's nature. This will be done through a demonstration of man's calling to be a craftsman, and how fulfilling this calling will bring about man's imitation of and participation in God's creative work. Finally, it will be shown how man is able to find a fulfillment of self, ultimately leading to man finding sanctification and holiness through his work.

Thesis: Craftsmanship: Understanding Why Work Properly Ordered Will Lead to a Self-Realization and Sanctification of Man

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Travis Dziad

Second Panelist: Mr. Eugene Hamilton

Third Panelist: Dr. John Mortensen

Miss Emily Mistaleski

God, Man, or Beast? The Reformation of Achilles's Heart

Friday, February 4, 11:00 AM

Augur 113

Man is neither angel nor beast, and the misfortune is that he who would act the angel acts the beast. – Blaise Pascal

Do you despise mortality? When considering the nature of man, we tend to emphasize our more divine faculty, the intellect, and to shun or beat down our passions. In this way, the raging Greek hero of Homer's *Iliad* is a hyperbolic example of common man, who nevertheless is meant to return to his origin. Achilles yearns for divinity, and he hates his mortality with all his heart. However, as C. S. Lewis points out in his *Abolition of Man*, the intellect, or divinity, is not what makes man special. Rather, man's defining aspect is his heart, or *thumos* – a mysterious fusion of intellect and sensation. Although we are all given this power, it is malleable and requires formation. In my oration, I will briefly investigate the mysterious nature of the heart, and then dive into Homer's *Iliad* to explore the formation of Achilles's heart, which is reformed to more truly imitate the divine through first functioning as a more truly human heart.

Thesis: The Reformation of Achilles's Heart

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Pavlos Papadopoulos

Second Panelist: Mr. Adam Cooper

Third Panelist: Dr. Tiffany Schubert

Mr. Joseph Nemec

The Disease of Curiosity: Navigating Man's Desire for Knowledge in the Modern Age

Friday, February 4, 8:30 AM

Augur 114

A handful of favorite phrases and ideas of this modern era – ideas such as “open-mindedness” or “freedom of thought” – seem to be fundamentally misunderstood. All too often, these ideas seem to be used as arguments that we are entitled to whatever knowledge we may desire. This idea of entitlement to knowledge – a product of modernity – gives way to a certain lust for knowledge, considered a vice by the medievals. The purpose of this presentation will be to illustrate that while man's desire to know is inherently good, he often falls short of the greatness he is called to as a son of God by falling into curiosity; that is, being intemperate with respect to his desire for knowledge. In this slavish state, he is ultimately robbed of the opportunity to enjoy divine leisure, rendering him incapable of ever being at rest with his own person.

Thesis: *Curiositas* and the Seduction of Evil

Thesis Advisor: Mr. Kyle Washut

Second Panelist: Mr. Adam Cooper

Third Panelist: Dr. Henry Zepeda

Mr. Andrew Russell

Rectifying Empiricism: Answering the Problem of Induction with Probability Theory

Friday, February 4, 9:45 AM

Augur 113

Current thought rejects transcendental truth, either through popular relativism or more formidable and coherent ideologies like Nietzscheanism. The modus operandi of contemporary philosophy is to doubt any meaningful reality beyond bare sense experience and utility. In order to treat this plague of doubt, I address its source: skepticism. David Hume, a champion of empirical skepticism, presents a compelling logical dilemma that nullifies any understanding of the world around us. When his skepticism hit the nervous system of modern thought, it caused a systemic shutdown of meaningful inquiry. In this oration, I intend to address Hume's dilemma with Bayesian probability theory, an unlikely ally in the postmodern war on truth. Simple applications of probability theory will allow us to describe human epistemological processes as a rational system and justify our knowledge of reality.

Thesis: Escaping the Skeptic's Epistemological Suicide: Bertrand Russell's Response to the Problem of Induction

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Michael Bolin

Second Panelist: Dr. Jason Baxter

Third Panelist: Dr. Daniel Shields

Mr. Daniel Schreiber

Boarding School to Counteract Modernity

Thursday, February 3, 3:15 PM

Augur 114

Education is the process by which we come to know and understand the world around us as well as what it means to be human. Have schools compensated for the loss of experiences in the world due to the influx of technology? The free time that was once spent experiencing the world through nature, working on farms, working in factories, or self-entertaining outside is now simulated by phones, TV, and social media. Our technological advances, although not bad in themselves, have given an escape to an imitation of reality in which teenagers learn a fraction of what it is to be human. They no longer develop themselves as a whole in mind, body, and spirit because their lifestyle no longer requires it.

To counteract this lifestyle shift requires an education that fills in the holes that our technological advances have created. Schools that provide education must focus on how to live a well-balanced life developing mind, body, and spirit evenly. The only way to do this is through a boarding school. In this oration, I will seek to outline the practical structure, the philosophical vision of a school that develops the whole person, mind, body, spirit, so that students know how to live a happy full life.

Thesis: Education to Happiness: A Philosophical Vision Statement for a High School

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Pavlos Papadopoulos

Second Panelist: Dr. Tom Zimmer

Third Panelist: Dr. Travis Dziad

Miss MaryAnne Spiess

Ancient “Goodness” – Does God Hate It, Tolerate It, or Demand It? Nietzsche & Lewis on Good, Evil, and Spirited Christianity

Thursday, February 3, 9:45 AM

Augur 114

“Woe to you that call evil good, and good evil,” warns Isaiah. Yet are we really sure that Christians understand “good” correctly? It seems that a dichotomy arises when we pit the ancient “good” – a heroic spiritedness and desire for glory – against what Christians often call good: a pale, loving, affectionate, and gentle piety. The student of the liberal arts finds himself especially trapped between Biblical warnings like “whoever exults himself will be humbled” and the images of heroic greatness which fill his imagination through his studies.

This oration takes on the dilemma through the writings of two men on opposing sides, Friedrich Nietzsche and C. S. Lewis. Both loved the ancient heroic idea of goodness, but while Nietzsche saw it as entirely opposed to Christianity, Lewis saw it as fundamental to the Christian understanding of good. We will take a look at both opinions, then focus on how Lewis elevates spirited goodness within Christianity, and how best to communicate this elevated understanding.

“From things falsely good, there must in time eventually result a true evil,” warns Aristotle. Does Christian “good” mean what you think it means?

Thesis: Philology with a Hammer: Do We Even Want ‘Good’ Anymore? C. S. Lewis and Friedrich Nietzsche on Good, Evil, and Spirited Christianity

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Jeremy Holmes

Second Panelist: Mr. Stephen Hill

Third Panelist: Dr. Pavlos Papadopoulos

Mr. Thomas Sponseller

Catholics in a Capitalist World: Understanding Capitalism with Catholic Social Teaching

Thursday, February 3, 4:30 PM

Augur 114

Catholic social teaching is far from silent on the topic of economics. Many papal encyclicals were written to comment on the trend throughout the world toward the dominance of capitalism as a market system. The Church does not fully approve of capitalism but clearly delineates the benefits and downfalls of the system. In this oration, I will define capitalism using the classical economic thinker Adam Smith. Organizing the Church's critiques on capitalism and discussing the advice the Church gives Catholics in the working world will shed light on what one can do in his own life. Finally, I will take three examples of what Catholics have done to encourage a morally sound view of capitalism. I will take themes from distributism and the examples of the Mondragon Corporation and Economy of Communion.

Thesis: Catholics in a Capitalist World: Understanding the Way That Catholic Social Teaching Views Capitalism

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Kent Lasnoski

Second Panelist: Dr. Tom Zimmer

Third Panelist: Dr. James Tonkowich

Miss Kathy Swift

Hamlet Doesn't Pray to Shakespeare, So Why Should I? An Examination of Prayer as Secondary Causality and What This Tells Us about God

Thursday, February 3, 2:00 PM

Augur 114

Why should we pray? Doesn't God already know what we are going to say? What good does praying do, since we cannot change what God wills or does? You could answer these questions by saying that God likes to use men as secondary causes. This secondary causality is commonly explained through a metaphor casting God as an author of a novel, with man being his characters. But Hamlet never prays to Shakespeare, and it would make no sense if he did. So how are we to understand the role of prayer in our lives? In my oration, I will attempt to answer this question firstly by examining St. Thomas Aquinas's account of prayer in order to understand prayer's effects on both our interior lives and the world around us. Secondly, I will show how the application and subsequent breakdown of this metaphor sheds light on the differences between man's and God's abilities for relationship and modes of creation, and how God goes above and beyond our wildest dreams.

Thesis: Characters in God's Novel: An Examination of the Interplay between Divine Providence and Human Causality

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Travis Dziad

Second Panelist: Dr. Michael Bolin

Third Panelist: Dr. Daniel Shields

Mr. John Swindell

The Pagan and the Psychologist: An Exploration of Happiness and Flow Theory

Thursday, February 3, 4:30 PM

Augur 113

What is happiness and how does man find fulfillment? Writing more than two thousand years apart, Aristotle and 20th century psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi both present answers to these questions. Aristotle's comes in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, while Csikszentmihalyi's consists of flow theory, a research-based theory focused on order in consciousness. Not surprisingly, Csikszentmihalyi presents a very different explanation than Aristotle, yet much of what he says rings true with common experience. Is one of these two writers wrong, or are both somehow reconcilable around a common principle? In this oration I will first provide an explanation of flow theory, and then use the Thomistic concept of order to argue that flow theory and Aristotle's understanding of happiness are fundamentally reconcilable and complementary. Together, both theories provide a more complete explanation of happiness than either on its own, and allow us to resolve some of the issues that they present separately.

Thesis: Ordered Activity: An Aristotelian Account of Going with the Flow

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Jeremy Holmes

Second Panelist: Dr. Travis Dziad

Third Panelist: Dr. Paul Giesting

Miss Bernadette Syversen

“Inner Beauty Is for Amateurs”: An Exploration of the Integrated Dichotomy of Self and Appearance

Thursday, February 3, 3:15 PM

Augur 113

Appearance is powerful. Yet there seems to be a strong attitude of skepticism and almost fear toward care for appearance. Artistic expression through personal appearance is commonly frowned upon, especially in communities with traditional, conservative values. Fashion and the use of makeup or nail polish are often condemned as vain, superficial, deceitful, and a distraction from spiritual reality. But is this attitude sufficiently incarnational? Is it a denial of the materiality of our nature? Could it be that the spiritual reality of the individual is represented more accurately through intentional artistry of appearance than through careless unintentionality?

In this oration, through exploring the integrated dichotomy of self and appearance, I will conclude that artistry of appearance is not only justifiable, but is our most immediate form of communication, an actualizer of the self, and a way to more fully understand God’s love for the individual.

Thesis: “Inner Beauty Is for Amateurs”: An Exploration of the Integrated Dichotomy of Self and Appearance

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Tiffany Schubert

Second Panelist: Dr. Paul Giesting

Third Panelist: Dr. Virginia Arbery

Miss Bernadette Wall

“Let Them Have Dominion”: Man’s Responsibility to the Natural World

Thursday, February 3, 11:00 AM

Augur 114

The first time that man is acknowledged in Scripture, even before he comes into existence, God reveals two things about him. First, his relationship to the Father, and second, his relationship, not to his fellow man, nor to the angels, but to creation below him. At first it may seem that for man, who is able to contemplate the heavens and the highest beings, any activity such as planting tomatoes and studying fish is trivial and undignified. Yet stewardship is a duty given to man from the beginning of time. What exactly is meant by “man’s dominion . . . over all the earth?” Through a philosophical understanding of dominion this oration will maintain that man’s relationship to creation involves perfecting it by means of his knowledge, action, and virtue so that it may fulfill its end in God.

Thesis: The Steward: Mediator between God and Creation

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Stanley Grove

Second Panelist: Dr. Tom Zimmer

Third Panelist: Mr. Eugene Hamilton

Miss Elaine White

Technologically Advanced Motherhood: The Modern Woman's Call to Save the World

Friday, February 4, 8:30 AM

Augur 113

When traditional femininity has been outsourced by the blessings and benefits of the Industrial Revolution, it's time for a career change. Most of what used to manifest the value of a woman's life within the home became automated. With this change in circumstances, women turned their attention outside the home for a new project, a new area of life in which to bring their uniquely maternal attitude. This attitude is nurturing – often tender, though sometimes tough – and it translates across all borders, professions, and vocations. Being by nature “space-creators” or “home-makers” in every dimension of their existence, women take on the professional world like a young bride moving into a bachelor pad. Following along with John Paul II's observations of the 20th century, for human society to further perfect itself as an image of God, we require an ever-developing and deepening of the synergetic relationship between men and women. By choosing how she will balance her professional and personal life, the modern woman has the opportunity to bring her distinctly feminine trait of motherhood into the public sphere while creating new space for her husband within their home, hence further manifesting the presence of the Triune God to His Creation.

Thesis: An Image Imaging: A Study on the Nature and Vocation of Women

Thesis Advisor: Dr. John Mortensen

Second Panelist: Mr. Christopher Hodkinson

Third Panelist: Dr. Stanley Grove

Miss Louisa Whitmore

#SelfCare: Selfish or Selfless?

Thursday, February 3, 8:30 AM

Augur 114

“To love at all is to be vulnerable.” C. S. Lewis’s potent definition defies many misconceptions of love in general, but specifically love of oneself. Furthermore, it is blatantly contrary to the 21st-century ideals of self-love and self-care. Search ‘self-love’ on social media, and you will find sales on skin products and candles, as well as methods for finding your “safe space.”

Self-love is not about a safe space. Rather, Josef Pieper proposes that the purpose of selfless self-love is “to preserve, to make real, to fulfill.” In this oration, I will walk through the three steps of self-love using Pieper’s definition: first, man must know himself, recognizing his identity as a child of God. Then, he can actualize this through self-love, that is, vulnerability. Finally, he fulfills the purpose of self-love when he goes into the world and loves others.

Thesis: The Freedom of Rightly-Ordered Self-Love: Why Man Ought to Love Himself before Others

Thesis Advisor: Dr. John Mortensen

Second Panelist: Dr. Daniel Shields

Third Panelist: Mr. Adam Cooper

Miss Anne Zelden

How to Be like God: Read Leviticus

Friday, February 4, 9:45 AM

Augur 114

“The God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction: jealous and proud of it; a petty, unjust, unforgiving control-freak; a . . . megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully.” These acerbic words by Sir Richard Dawkins, famous critic of religion, sum up the contemporary attitude toward the God of ancient Israel. Leviticus, which looks so much like the worship given to Mesopotamian gods, has come to be nervously skated past by Christian apologists. However, the God of Leviticus, and thereby of the Old Testament, is not dictating arbitrary and uncivilized practices, but laying the foundation for a radically new way of life. Leviticus, then, is not a tedious manual for worshipping a bloodthirsty, primitive God, but an invitation to a relationship with a singular, moral, and holy God.

In my oration, I will first give a fair hearing to Leviticus’s detractors by comparing it to the religion of its Mesopotamian contemporaries. Then, I will examine these parallels in light of the differences between the two religions, and demonstrate why they show the parallels to be superficial. Finally, I will discuss how humans can imitate God, and why we should do so in the first place.

Thesis: שמע ישראל יי אלוהינו יי אחד: Hear, O Israel, the Lord Our God, the Lord Is One

Thesis Advisor: Mr. Kyle Washut

Second Panelist: Mr. Stephen Hill

Third Panelist: Dr. Paul Giesting

Mr. Jacob Zepp

How Vatican II Didn't Destroy the Mass: A Historical and Dogmatic Inquiry into the Mass of the Roman Rite

Friday, February 4, 11:00 AM

August 114

It has been said that Vatican II “instituted an equivocal, ambiguous Mass, the Catholic doctrine of which has been blurred.” In this oration I will show that the Mass proposed by Vatican II was the organic response to a hundred years of scholarly criticism embodied in the Liturgical Movement. Further, I will show that the proposed reform of Vatican II was doctrinally estranged neither from the Tridentine dogmas on the Mass nor from the historical progression of rite. Having properly defined the Mass, I will also explore the nature of the Sacrifice in light of the writings of Saint Thomas Aquinas and Saint Robert Bellarmine. I will also show that the earlier development of the Mass of the Roman Rite certainly allowed for the proposed changes of Vatican II.

Thesis: The Historical and Dogmatic Harmony of the Liturgical Reforms of Vatican II and the Pre-conciliar Liturgy

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Stanley Grove

Second Panelist: Mr. Christopher Hodkinson

Third Panelist: Mr. Stephen Hill

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