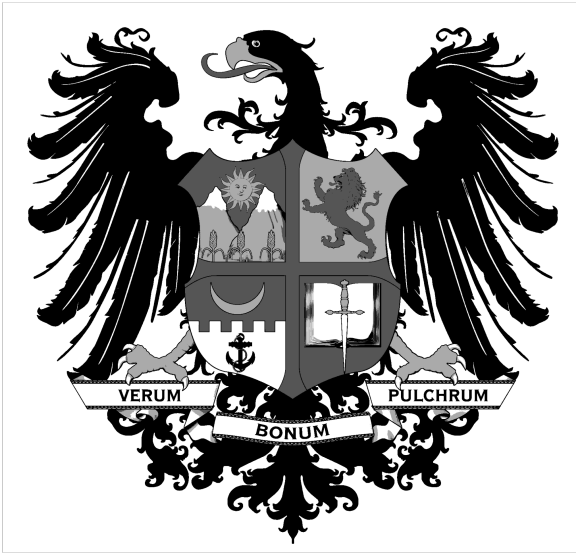


# Senior Thesis Orations



Wyoming Catholic College  
Spring 2024



# CONTENTS

Introduction .....	1
Wednesday schedule .....	3
Thursday schedule .....	6
Friday schedule .....	9
Abstracts (alphabetical by last name) .....	11
Index .....	53



Spring 2024

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 three 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 celebration in her honor as *Sedes Sapientiae* on February 4, to culminate the week of orations. Like our patronal feast, these orations carry the final echo of Christmas some forty days later, giving us a last moment of festivity before the turn into the penitential forty days of Lent.

At the same time, these orations help reveal 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 fac-

ultly 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 is also 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 President, I gladly welcome you to the Senior Orations of the Wyoming Catholic College Class of 2024. This booklet contains the title and abstract of each oration, along with a schedule for the coming days. Enjoy these next three days, and make sure to thank our seniors for the great service they provide in helping us celebrate in such grand style.

President Kyle Washut



# WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31

---

**9:30 AM** *Man's View of Nature in Moby Dick*  
Anne Baron, p. 12, Augur 113  
Panel: Papadopoulos, Cooper, Schubert

*Are Video Games Fine Art? What Is a Story (and What Is Not)?*

Gregory Bowman, p. 14, Augur 114  
Panel: Grove, Bolin, Hamilton

*No Pain, No Gain: The Radical Nature of Sacrificial Love*

Moira Milligan, p. 37, Orchard  
Panel: G. Arbery, Dziad, Lasnoski

**10:45 AM** *How to Be the Best: Morality and Success – Can I Have Both?*

Dominic Carstens, p. 15, Augur 113  
Panel: Papadopoulos, Schubert, Lasnoski

*Can You Eat Yogurt on Fridays? On the Animality (or Lack Thereof) of Bacteria*

Caleb Colton, p. 16, Augur 114  
Panel: Bolin, Olsson, Cooper

*Joyful Humor and Its True Purpose*

Claire Meyer, p. 36, Orchard  
Panel: Grove, V. Arbery, Zimmer

**12:15 PM** Mass (Immaculate Conception Oratory)

**12:30 PM** Lunch (Frassati)

# WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31

---

**2:00 PM** *“Do You Take Jesus the Christ as Your Lawfully Wedded Husband?”: How to Beget Spiritual Kids*

Thomas Curley, p. 17, Augur 113

Panel: Lasnoski, Hamilton, Holmes

*The Hidden God: Whether It Is Fitting that God Give Man Faith Rather than Sight*

Zachary Davis, p. 18, Augur 114

Panel: Dziad, Shields, Papadopoulos

*“Certus Amor Morum Est!”: Defending the Beauty and Depth of One Man’s Love for Another*

Jess Mohun, p. 38, Orchard

Panel: V. Arbery, Hill, Grove

**3:15 PM** *Muddy Toes, Grubby Faces, and Innocent Souls: Childlikeness as the Epitome of Christian Maturity*

Caitlin Duggan, p. 19, Augur 113

Panel: Dziad, Hill, Zimmer

*Self-fulfillment or Self-denial: The Ultimate Choice or a False Dichotomy?*

Peter Ellis, p. 20, Augur 114

Panel: Holmes, Grove, Bolin

*The Classroom Is Not Enough: “If You Want to Be a Philosopher, Go Milk Cows”*

Kate Wagner, p. 46, Orchard

Panel: Cooper, Schubert, Hamilton



# WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31

---

**4:30 PM** *Marcel Lefebvre and the Natural Right to Religious Liberty*

Louis Favorite, p. 21, Augur 113

Panel: Grove, Hamilton, Lasnoski

*Philosophy: The Salvation or Destruction of Cities?  
Or, How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love  
Wisdom*

William Briggs Fontenot, p. 22, Augur 114

Panel: Papadopoulos, Shields, Schubert

*A Defense of Intellectual Hand-Me-Downs*

Emma Vanderpol, p. 45, Orchard

Panel: Bolin, Olsson, Hill

---

# THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 1

---

**9:30 AM** *Deepening Students' Love of the World through Experiential Learning*

Emma Grayson, p. 25, Augur 113

Panel: Zimmer, G. Arbery, Zepeda

*Singing into Self: Why Everyone Must Sing*

Maureen Grimm, p. 26, Augur 114

Panel: Hamilton, Grove, Dziad

*Dignity at Work: How to Detect a Good Business*

Jonathan Allen, p. 11, Orchard

Panel: Lasnoski, Papadopoulos, Holmes

**10:45 AM** *"To See a World in a Grain of Sand": Poetry and Man's Experience of Happiness*

John Walsh, p. 48, Augur 113

Panel: Cooper, Zepeda, Shields

*"For the Husband Is the Head of the Wife as Christ Is the head of the Church": Does Male Headship Preclude Women from Being Like God?*

Patricia Janis, p. 28, Augur 114

Panel: Schubert, Lasnoski, Dziad

*Think You Can Be a Leader of Men? Try Leading a Horse First*

Margaret Wall, p. 47, Orchard

Panel: Papadopoulos, Zimmer, Hamilton

**12:15 PM** Mass (Immaculate Conception Oratory)

**12:30 PM** Lunch (Frassati)

# THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 1

---

**2:00 PM** *Wonder, Acedia, and Taming Foxes: How to Be a Child Again*

Genevieve Rose Kwasniewski, p. 29, Augur 113

Panel: Holmes, V. Arbery, Tonkowich

*How We Pray Matters: Why Attend the Extraordinary Form of the Mass?*

Benjamin Licciardi, p. 30, Augur 114

Panel: Anderson, Hamilton, Grove

*The Transformative Power of Code in William Faulkner's The Reivers*

Eva Welsh, p. 49, Orchard

Panel: G. Arbery, Zimmer, Cooper

**3:15 PM** *Transgenderism: The Solution to the Problem of Woman*

Sofia Lonnecker, p. 31, Augur 113

Panel: Dziad, Lasnoski, Schubert

*A New Monument: Movies as Part of the Artistic Tradition*

John Paul Mantyh, p. 32, Augur 114

Panel: G. Arbery, Bolin, Hill

*To Be a Person Is to Suffer: Unveiling the Role of Suffering in Human Nature through the Art of the Russian Novel*

Isabella Weslow, p. 50, Orchard

Panel: Cooper, V. Arbery, Shields

# THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 1

---

**4:30 PM** *Why Your Neighbor Comes before God*  
Ainsley Martignetti, p. 33, Augur 113  
Panel: Bolin, Dziad, Zepeda

*Creation, Man, and God*  
Kaitlin Melenchuk, p. 35, Augur 114  
Panel: Holmes, Olsson, Papadopoulos

*Preparing the Papal Mantle: How Virgil's Vision for Rome Enlightens Christians*  
Clare Gath, p. 24, Orchard  
Panel: Schubert, Hill, Cooper

---

# FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 2

---

**8:00 AM** Mass (Holy Rosary Catholic Church)

Divine Liturgy

**10:30 AM** Brunch (Frassati)

**12:45 PM** そして海のように神は沈黙した。その沈黙は続いた。  
(“*And like the sea, God was silent. His silence continued.*”)

Anna-Marie Schubert, p. 39, Augur 113

Panel: Schubert, G. Arbery, Giesting

*Physical, Mental, or Somewhere in Between? An*

*Inquiry into the Existence of Geometry*

Anthony Witzaney, p. 51, Orchard

Panel: Shields, Zepeda, Holmes

**2:00 PM** *Nature, Grace, and Your 21-day Expedition: A Closer  
Look at Identity*

Margaret Mary Serchen, p. 41, Augur 113

Panel: Holmes, Hill, Tonkowich

*How Not to Avoid Pregnancy: A Defense of Natural  
Family Planning*

Josephine Sederstrand, p. 40, Augur 114

Panel: Lasnoski, Olsson, Bolin

*The Philosophy of Biological Possession: Philosophical  
Issues Raised by a Fungus-Infected Ant*

John Gallaher, p. 23, Orchard

Panel: Shields, Zepeda, Giesting

## FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 2

---

**3:15 PM** *To Commit or Not to Commit: The Happiness and Perfection of Man*

Annmarie Hart, p. 27, Augur 113

Panel: Holmes, Shields, Giesting

*How the Male Gaze Restores Woman*

Catherine Sergeant, p. 42, Augur 114

Panel: Anderson, Zepeda, Hill

*Why Math Will Always Have Unanswered Questions: An Alternate Proof of Gödel's First Incompleteness Theorem*

Brian McNulty, p. 34, Orchard

Panel: Olsson, Cooper, Bolin

**4:30 PM** *"Stewards and Co-Creators": How Man Participates in the Divine through Entrepreneurship*

Juan Diego Torres, p. 43, Augur 113

Panel: Tonkowich, Hill, Shields

*Can Racial Prejudice Be Eliminated? Racism and the Cure*

James Urbancic, p. 44, Augur 114

Panel: V. Arbery, Hamilton, Papadopoulos

*Why You Should Buy the New Smartphone*

Benedict Blanchard, p. 13, Orchard

Panel: Holmes, Zepeda, Giesting

---

# Jonathan Allen

## *Dignity at Work: How to Detect a Good Business*

Thursday, February 1, 9:30 AM

Orchard

When it comes to looking for that first job out of college, a new graduate might tend to settle for the first job he finds. After all, beggars can't be choosers. The Catholic Church, however, has a centuries-long tradition on just relationships between employers and employees that complicates this picture. This oration offers a guide to analyzing how businesses fulfill their duty to honor human dignity with regards to employee remuneration, including wages, benefits, and corporate philosophy. A synopsis of the relevant moral principles of Catholic Social Teaching is followed by a case study of Catholic colleges from the Cardinal Newman Guide. The case study demonstrates how to assess any business's employee remuneration in terms of six principles developed from the Catholic Social Teaching tradition.

**Thesis:** Balancing Beliefs and Bottom Lines: Are Catholic Colleges in Compliance with Catholic Social Teaching?

**Thesis Advisor:** Dr. Kent Lasnoski

**Second Panelist:** Dr. Pavlos Papadopoulos

**Third Panelist:** Dr. Jeremy Holmes

# Anne Baron

## *Man's View of Nature in Moby Dick*

Wednesday, January 31, 9:30 AM

Augur 113

INJURED BY A WHALE?

CALL ME, ISHMAEL 1-800-WHALING

Imagine Captain Ahab chooses Ishmael as his personal injury lawyer. Ahab states his predicament: He is a whaler who on his previous voyage had his leg bit off by a whale. He is now seeking restitution. Ahab is convinced that this whale shows that nature is being used by God to inflict suffering on him. And so, he proposes that Ishmael represent him in his case, Ahab v. God.

Ishmael, as a good lawyer, looks into whether Ahab has the proper view of his situation for this case. Ishmael asks other whalers about their experience of whales. He draws on experts to determine the purpose of nature. He also looks at his own experiences of whaling to see how he personally relates to nature.

This oration will tackle Ahab's view of nature, examine what *Moby Dick* says about it, and ultimately reveal Ishmael's view of nature as the one to imitate.

**Thesis:** The Relation between Whaling and Man's View of Nature in *Moby Dick*

**Thesis Advisor:** Dr. Pavlos Papadopoulos

**Second Panelist:** Dr. Adam Cooper

**Third Panelist:** Dr. Tiffany Schubert



# Benedict Blanchard

## *Why You Should Buy the New Smartphone*

Friday, February 2, 4:30 PM

Orchard

Man is a maker. Irrefutably, he advances, and what he makes in each new age may be to some a portent of the fall of society, and to others an achievement, bringing nobility to man and to the world God placed him in. But what, in reality, are these advancements? In past ages, it was the plow or the awl; in our age, it is twofold: the smartphone and its artificial intelligence. Unlike in past ages, these complex tools have many applications, and in some of those applications there arise moral and philosophical questions. Because of their complexity, these instruments are difficult to use properly, but what can be gained by their use is undoubtedly a wonder of man's ability and a monument to his intellect.

**Thesis:** Artificial Morality: The Technological Nature of Man

**Thesis Advisor:** Dr. Jeremy Holmes

**Second Panelist:** Dr. Henry Zepeda

**Third Panelist:** Dr. Paul Giesting

# Gregory Bowman

*Are Video Games Fine Art? What Is a Story (and What Is Not)?*

Wednesday, January 31, 9:30 AM

Augur 114

With the advance of technology, new ways of telling stories have arisen, each with its unique method of conveying beauty to its audience (e.g. the invention of books giving rise to novels). Are video games one of these new art forms? After establishing the artistic validity of video games, I will address what makes something a (fictional) story, a question complicated by video games' widely ranging forms. If a game offers every player a different experience, are they all encountering the same story?

**Thesis:** How Do We Learn from Stories? – A Defense of Fiction through the Principles of Poetic Knowledge

**Thesis Advisor:** Dr. Stanley Grove

**Second Panelist:** Dr. Michael Bolin

**Third Panelist:** Mr. Eugene Hamilton

# Dominic Carstens

## *How to Be the Best: Morality and Success – Can I Have Both?*

Wednesday, January 31, 10:45 AM

Augur 113

As the world deteriorates around us and corruption runs rampant, how are lovers of truth able to maintain their moral standards and survive? Is it possible to be moral and successful? What does that even mean? Machiavelli, in his quintessential book *The Prince*, gives a new teleology and answer to these fundamental questions: “Go behind to the effectual truth.” Cicero, Rome’s renowned statesman and philosopher, does not relinquish the conception of truth; rather, he sees responsibility as the relief to the tension between morality and success. Cicero expounds his discoveries to his son in a letter appropriately named *De Officiis*, or *On Duties*, which I will share with you. Morality is the most effective means of success, and it is your duty.

**Thesis:** Morality: “Is It All That It Is Chalked up to Be?”

**Thesis Advisor:** Dr. Pavlos Papadopoulos

**Second Panelist:** Dr. Tiffany Schubert

**Third Panelist:** Dr. Kent Lasnoski

# Caleb Colton

## *Can You Eat Yogurt on Fridays? On the Animality (or Lack Thereof) of Bacteria*

Wednesday, January 31, 10:45 AM

Augur 114

If it walks like a duck and quacks like a duck, it is (the saying goes) a duck. If it moves like an animal and senses like an animal, is it an animal? Before you say yes, remember bacteria. Able to move and respond to stimuli, yet far simpler than even the simplest plants, bacteria present a conundrum to Aristotelian philosophy. Are they moving plants? Are they animals simpler (and therefore, seemingly, lower) than plants? Are they totally unique, possessing a fourth kind of soul unknown to Aristotle? In other words, what kind of soul does your yogurt have?

Using semiotics, the philosophy of signs, we will investigate how bacteria process information, and also investigate the nature of their ability to move. This will allow us to make a judgment as to whether they are plants or animals – or something else. We will then, at long last, know if you can eat yogurt on Fridays.

**Thesis:** De Plantis Signisque: Ad Difficultates Hodiernas Solvendas Quae ad Plantarum Actiones Pertinent

**Thesis Advisor:** Dr. Michael Bolin

**Second Panelist:** Dr. Scott Olsson

**Third Panelist:** Dr. Adam Cooper

# Thomas Curley

## *“Do You Take Jesus the Christ as Your Lawfully Wedded Husband?”: How to Beget Spiritual Kids*

Wednesday, January 31, 2:00 PM

Augur 113

We are children of God by virtue of our baptism. While we obey our Father’s rules, the precepts of the Church, and retain an implicit trust in our Father’s care, we are also reductionists. We see the Church as a rulebook which, if followed, ultimately gains our Father’s love, respect, and consequently, salvation. Yet this alone is a sad caricature of the Christian call to “Love one another as I have loved you.” We are welcomed into a greater paradigm in which we are both daughter *and* Bride! Our Bridegroom married us in a bloody consummation on the Cross, and we are called as Bride to consummate with him on the marriage bed of Eucharistic Sacrifice in every Mass that we attend.

Standing on a backdrop of Sacred Scripture and early Church Fathers, I will illustrate that we must approach our Eucharistic Bridegroom in a sense of erotic love, which, when we have achieved bodily union with him, will necessarily result in a spiritual fecundity of agapic love for neighbor. Lastly, I will show how this is *not* “sex with God.”

**Thesis:** “Be Fruitful and Multiply”: The Consummation of God and Man on the Marriage Bed of the Cross: How to Cultivate an Attitude Towards Spiritual Fecundity

**Thesis Advisor:** Dr. Kent Lasnoski

**Second Panelist:** Mr. Eugene Hamilton

**Third Panelist:** Dr. Jeremy Holmes

# Zachary Davis

## *The Hidden God: Whether It Is Fitting that God Give Man Faith Rather than Sight*

Wednesday, January 31, 2:00 PM

Augur 114

Why does God come to man in a hidden way? If God truly desires us to have friendship with Him in the deepest sense of the word, why does He hide His Face behind so many veils? Or more simply, why does it seem God never answers us when we pray? To answer these and similar questions, C. S. Lewis's *Till We Have Faces* will be considered, shedding light on the root of the difficulty, which is none other than a question of the fittingness of faith in man. This will be followed by a theological analysis rooted in the teachings of Thomas Aquinas, allowing us to see how man gaining knowledge of God through faith follows from man's own nature. But it not only follows from our nature; faith must also lead to charity in man. For faith, as an imperfect kind of knowledge, is good insofar as it is a means to the end of charity.

**Thesis:** The Hidden God: Whether It Is Fitting that God Give Man Faith Rather than Sight

**Thesis Advisor:** Dr. Travis Dziad

**Second Panelist:** Dr. Daniel Shields

**Third Panelist:** Dr. Pavlos Papadopoulos

# Caitlin Duggan

## *Muddy Toes, Grubby Faces, and Innocent Souls: Childlikeness as the Epitome of Christian Maturity*

Wednesday, January 31, 3:15 PM

Augur 113

To be a spiritual child of God our Father. Such a simple and yet seemingly unattainable reality for those doomed to live life in a rationalistic world, governed not by innocence and humility, but rather by man attempting to make himself a facsimile of God. Consequently, Christ's exhortation that we must "turn and become like children" if we hope to attain heaven can feel like the final nail in the coffin of our salvation. Universal experience of children seems to indicate that they are whiny, nagging, and needy little beings who contribute little of tangible value to our world. Thankfully, this childish reality is not what Christ is calling us to; rather, we are to embrace the childlike spirit of children. Using Augustine and Dr. Maria Montessori, I will explore the obligation we have of appreciating and imitating childhood. Then with Hans Urs von Balthasar I will illustrate more practically how we are to live out Christ's exhortation in our world today.

**Thesis:** *Let the Children Come unto Me: An Essay Exploring Natural and Spiritual Childhood*

**Thesis Advisor:** Dr. Travis Dziad

**Second Panelist:** Mr. Stephen Hill

**Third Panelist:** Dr. Tom Zimmer

# Peter Ellis

## *Self-fulfillment or Self-denial: The Ultimate Choice or a False Dichotomy?*

Wednesday, January 31, 3:15 PM

Augur 114

Since the time of the ancients, many have held man's own good and happiness to be the primary principle from which all his activity flows. Is man then irrevocably frozen within the narrow confines of his private good? Is he isolated and curved in upon himself? Is the conception of total self-gift nothing but a lie? This oration will demonstrate that the seeming contradiction between self-love and self-sacrifice arises from a superficial understanding of the problem. Understood in its true form, self-love leads directly into total self-gift. Founding our argument upon St. Thomas Aquinas's relational understanding of the good, we will use the mystical writings of St. Bernard, St. Teresa, and St. Thomas to reveal fully the radical extreme to which sacrificial love can reach.

**Thesis:** "For You Would I Sacrifice all!": The Cry of Ecstatic Charity

**Thesis Advisor:** Dr. Jeremy Holmes

**Second Panelist:** Dr. Stanley Grove

**Third Panelist:** Dr. Michael Bolin



# Louis Favorite

## *Marcel Lefebvre and the Natural Right to Religious Liberty*

Wednesday, January 31, 4:30 PM

Augur 113

In a world where the struggle between individual and institution is not the driving force of the plot, but hovers in the backdrop of a dissension on doctrine and tradition, one man must face the crossroads of obedience and . . . obedience. Traversing the tight-rope of schism, Marcel Lefebvre questions the continuity of the magisterium and finds himself at odds with a non-existent mutant. Dying before he could slay the apparent beast, he has left for us a record of his prowess by which to decimate the false creature of his errant mind and pave a road toward full union between the SSPX and the Catholic Church.

**Thesis:** The Errors of Lefebvre's Position: A Discourse on Religious Liberty, Collegiality, and the Liturgical Reform

**Thesis Advisor:** Dr. Stanley Grove

**Second Panelist:** Mr. Eugene Hamilton

**Third Panelist:** Dr. Kent Lasnoski

# William Briggs Fontenot

*Philosophy: The Salvation or Destruction of Cities? Or, How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Wisdom*

Wednesday, January 31, 4:30 PM

Augur 114

Is philosophy evil? This is a question rarely asked, and it is even more often ignored. We take it for granted that philosophy, that so-called love of wisdom, surely can have only good effects within a person and much more so in a society. If these prejudices are put aside, it is apparent that the good that philosophy offers and the goods which the city of man offers are often not only incongruent but in direct competition with one another. So, what role ought philosophy have in society? Should it be considered the jewel or capstone, both of man and of the city? Or ought it be cast into the shadows, only to be practiced by those capable of dabbling in such a dangerous science? By dissecting the mind of Plato and the writings of Cicero, I will once and for all answer the question, whether philosophy is a means of salvation or of destruction of the cities of men.

**Thesis:** The Tension between Philosophy and the City: A Development of Political Philosophy from Plato to Cicero

**Thesis Advisor:** Dr. Pavlos Papadopoulos

**Second Panelist:** Dr. Daniel Shields

**Third Panelist:** Dr. Tiffany Schubert

# John Gallaher

## *The Philosophy of Biological Possession: Philosophical Issues Raised by a Fungus-Infected Ant*

Friday, February 2, 2:00 PM

Orchard

In Dr. Michael Augros's article "Reconciling Science and Natural Philosophy," he argues that science must be integrated with natural philosophy so that people can become more well-informed individuals that have a true vision of the world. Dr. Augros's article is a thought-provoking piece of philosophical literature which leaves one hungering for an example of a true synthesis between science and philosophy. In this oration I will provide that example by examining the particular parasitic relationship between the fungus *Ophiocordyceps unilateralis* and its host ant *Camponotus castaneus*. Like other parasitic fungi, *Ophiocordyceps unilateralis* invades the host and then appears to control the ant's body, diverting it from its natural end so that the ant becomes an unwilling agent aiding the fungus in the pursuit of its end. This lifecycle raises many philosophical conundrums. One of the foremost of these is this: if the fungus can divert the ant from the pursuit of its natural end to the point that it simply becomes the instrument by which the fungus achieves its own end, is the ant's agency destroyed? If the ant's agency is eradicated, then the ant will, philosophically speaking, be dead, and there will only be the fungus remaining.

**Thesis:** The Philosophy of Biological Possession: Philosophical Issues Raised by a Fungus-Infected Ant

**Thesis Advisor:** Dr. Daniel Shields

**Second Panelist:** Dr. Henry Zepeda

**Third Panelist:** Dr. Paul Giesting

# Clare Gath

## *Preparing the Papal Mantle: How Virgil's Vision for Rome Enlightens Christians*

Thursday, February 1, 4:30 PM

Orchard

Dante's choice of Virgil, a pagan poet, as his guide for much of his journey to salvation is striking. Yet Virgil's role in the *Commedia* mirrors the historical influence Virgil had on Dante through his writings. Virgil prepared Dante to behold God by instructing him in many natural virtues, virtues for which early Rome was renowned. Further, Virgil, as the poet who articulates Rome's cosmic vision, represents to Dante the Roman mission which he sees as preparing the world to accept the Christian Faith. In this way, Virgil's relationship to Dante is a microcosm for the relationship of Rome to Christianity. This oration will examine how the Virgil-Dante relationship illuminates the positive influences of Rome on Christianity by exploring the first two cantos of the *Inferno* and the parallel passages in the *Aeneid*. It will first discuss the Roman virtues which led citizens to value honor and duty above personal gain, allowing the Romans to achieve their universal empire. It will then discover how the Roman vision paved the way for the Christian cosmic vision of a world united in Christ.

**Thesis:** A Pagan Light for Christians: Virgil's Guidance of Dante as a Paradigm for Rome's Influence on Christianity

**Thesis Advisor:** Dr. Tiffany Schubert

**Second Panelist:** Mr. Stephen Hill

**Third Panelist:** Dr. Adam Cooper

# Emma Grayson

## *Deepening Students' Love of the World through Experiential Learning*

Thursday, February 1, 9:30 AM

August 113

Society today seems confused about what education is for and about the best way to teach children. If we wish to make the process of education better in both its quality and its reputation, we need to have some idea of its proper ends and means. In order to better form education, we must learn from where we have been in the history of educational models. Thus, I will be observing the education presented by the ancient Greek philosophers, the post-Industrial Revolution educational system, and finally the modern Experiential Learning Theory. If, through learning experientially, students are taught how to properly gain information through their senses, they will have a good relationship with the learning process and come to love the world they are learning about.

**Thesis:** The Importance of Experiential Learning in Children's Education

**Thesis Advisor:** Dr. Tom Zimmer

**Second Panelist:** Dr. Glenn Arbery

**Third Panelist:** Dr. Henry Zepeda

# Maureen Grimm

## *Singing into Self: Why Everyone Must Sing*

Thursday, February 1, 9:30 AM

Augur 114

Man has been alienated from his birthright as a musical creature. The specialization of music has created a rift between man and his most essential activity. By investigating the current sociological attitude towards music, aligning it with the tradition of thought surrounding music, and coming to completion with a spiritual consideration of music, this oration will establish singing as an essential activity of man, bringing him to better contemplation of himself and God.

**Thesis:** *Homo Canticus*: Singing as Essential to Man

**Thesis Advisor:** Mr. Eugene Hamilton

**Second Panelist:** Dr. Stanley Grove

**Third Panelist:** Dr. Travis Dziad

# Annmarie Hart

## *To Commit or Not to Commit: The Happiness and Perfection of Man*

Friday, February 2, 3:15 PM

Augur 113

Why commit?

Our culture tries to convince us to avoid commitment at all costs. Hook-up culture, abortion, fatherless homes – there are many examples. But perhaps the cost of faithlessness is actually steeper than we should be willing to pay. Without commitment there can be no real fulfillment, true love, or lasting happiness – the very things all people seek. The cost of avoiding commitment is, ultimately, the loss of everything worth having.

In this oration, I will show that the practice of faithfulness is necessary for happiness and love. Further, I will show how God's grace works with man's commitment, increasing exponentially his ability to love and his capacity for joy. Ultimately, through total commitment to God man gains joy in this world and "the delights at your right hand forever."

**Thesis:** Commitment Is Happiness: How Vocation, as Commitment to God, Perfects Man

**Thesis Advisor:** Dr. Jeremy Holmes

**Second Panelist:** Dr. Daniel Shields

**Third Panelist:** Dr. Paul Giesting

# Patricia Janis

## *“For the Husband Is the Head of the Wife as Christ Is the head of the Church”: Does Male Headship Preclude Women from Being Like God?*

Thursday, February 1, 10:45 AM

Augur 114

“Wives, be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord” (Eph. 5:22). This and other similar verses are concerning not only because they have been used to excuse male abuse of power in marriage, but also because these verses do not support the idea of the equality of the sexes. Many earnest Christians have attempted to reclaim this traditional idea of marriage by pointing out that the husbands are commanded to love and die for their wives. While this addresses the problem of abuse, it does not remedy the problem of equality. Whether male headship is viewed as authority over the wife or as loving service to the wife, there is a kind of spiritual inequality in the marriage. I will use scripture and Aquinas to define what it means for a creature to be like God, and to show that the more like God a creature is, the more perfect it is. Spiritual inequality in marriage presents itself when these scriptural and Thomistic principles are applied to the traditional, Catholic marriage ideal. Whether the authoritative head or the loving head, the man has the Godlike role. Does male headship mean that married women are excluded from Godlike perfection?

**Thesis:** “For the Husband Is the Head of the Wife as Christ Is the Head of the Church”: Does Male Headship Preclude Women from Being Like God?

**Thesis Advisor:** Dr. Tiffany Schubert

**Second Panelist:** Dr. Kent Lasnoski

**Third Panelist:** Dr. Travis Dziad



# Genevieve Rose Kwasniewski

*Wonder, Acedia, and Taming Foxes: How to Be a Child Again*

Thursday, February 1, 2:00 PM

Augur 113

“Wonder is the loving gaze at the roots of things.” It is a phrase we are familiar and comfortable with. But as realities like jobs, taxes, and news events become more and more the stuff of our daily lives, wonder can become a nice, irrelevant idea or a nostalgic memory from a younger existence. Wonder is almost extinct in a world where frantic productivity and endless consumerism is the basis of culture. With it goes our sensitivity to the True, Good, and Beautiful and to Him who is these things most of all.

**Thesis:** Blessed Are the Young in Heart: How Not to Be a Boring Adult

**Thesis Advisor:** Dr. Jeremy Holmes

**Second Panelist:** Dr. Virginia Arbery

**Third Panelist:** Dr. James Tonkowich

# Benjamin Licciardi

## *How We Pray Matters: Why Attend the Extraordinary Form of the Mass?*

Thursday, February 1, 2:00 PM

Augur 114

The goal of this oration is to provide arguments for why the Tridentine Mass is still relevant in the modern Catholic world. Using the principle of *lex orandi, lex credendi* (the law of prayer governs the law of belief), and without negating the reality that an abundance of graces can be gained in the *Novus Ordo*, I aim to show how the Traditional Mass, because of its various orations, signs, and symbols instills the doctrines of the Church in the faithful most perfectly. In the process, I hope to provide answers to common questions or complaints raised against this ancient liturgy and inspire a greater love for Christ and His Church.

**Thesis:** *Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi*: An Argument for the Efficacy of the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite

**Thesis Advisor:** Fr. David Anderson

**Second Panelist:** Mr. Eugene Hamilton

**Third Panelist:** Dr. Stanley Grove

# Sofia Lonnecker

## *Transgenderism: The Solution to the Problem of Woman*

Thursday, February 1, 3:15 PM

Augur 113

Thousands of hurting, confused, and lost young women seeking hope and happiness have become victims of the transgender pandemic. For us, the transgender movement is the problem; for them, womanhood is the problem and transitioning is the solution. Most of us are quick to assume that we have the answer they so desperately seek in the wrong place. But do we? What if they are not the only ones misrepresenting women? Using the wisdom of Edith Stein and John Paul II, I will address how we can understand personhood, particularly female personhood, in the modern world in response to the transgender movement. There is a massive exodus occurring. Womanhood has become repulsive, and just because you do not experience it does not mean you can't do something about it.

**Thesis:** The Escape from Woman: Restoring Personhood and the Feminine in the Midst of Transgender Chaos

**Thesis Advisor:** Dr. Travis Dziad

**Second Panelist:** Dr. Kent Lasnoski

**Third Panelist:** Dr. Tiffany Schubert

# John Paul Mantyh

## *A New Monument: Movies as Part of the Artistic Tradition*

Thursday, February 1, 3:15 PM

Augur 114

Can the lover of great literature also love great movies? With so many artistic modes having existed for centuries and having come to be regarded as necessary staples of our culture, should any real value be given to an art form created so recently? In this oration, I would like to argue that movies should, in fact, be regarded as part of our artistic tradition, that the canon of great art was meant to grow and evolve, making way for new kinds of creations. I will show that movies are traditional, because, far from opposing the ends of the other poetics, movies seek to achieve those same ends through new and exciting methods.

**Thesis:** Movies: Modernity's Gift to the Poetic Tradition

**Thesis Advisor:** Dr. Glenn Arbery

**Second Panelist:** Dr. Michael Bolin

**Third Panelist:** Mr. Stephen Hill

# Ainsley Martignetti

## *Why Your Neighbor Comes before God*

Thursday, February 1, 4:30 PM

Augur 113

Thomas Aquinas defines charity as simply “friendship with God.” This is, of course, a true and good definition, but it seems to exclude an essential component of charity, that is, our love for our neighbor. While charity is composed of both love of God and love of neighbor, this definition is too open to misinterpretation. We might conclude that our relationship with God is entirely between ourselves and Him, that we need only focus on our spiritual life in order to nourish charity. This oration seeks to show that not only are both loves necessary for charity, but that the most natural and human way to nourish our friendship with God is by loving our neighbor.

**Thesis:** Getting Your Ass out of the Ditch: On Love of Neighbor as the Greatest Commandment

**Thesis Advisor:** Dr. Michael Bolin

**Second Panelist:** Dr. Travis Dziad

**Third Panelist:** Dr. Henry Zepeda

# Brian McNulty

## *Why Math Will Always Have Unanswered Questions: An Alternate Proof of Gödel's First Incompleteness Theorem*

Friday, February 2, 3:15 PM

Orchard

In 1931, Gödel published a dense and thoroughly revolutionary paper on formal systems of arithmetic and metamathematics, in which he demonstrates the unassailable limits of mathematical knowledge. Unfortunately, his work on formal systems is filled with legions of obscure concepts and jargon. This oration will present an alternate proof of his First Incompleteness Theorem, making real assent to his groundbreaking conclusion accessible for the mathematically challenged among us.

**Thesis:** *Ignoramus et Ignorabimus*: An Exposition of Gödel's First Incompleteness Theorem

**Thesis Advisor:** Dr. Scott Olsson

**Second Panelist:** Dr. Adam Cooper

**Third Panelist:** Dr. Michael Bolin

# Kaitlin Melenchuk

## *Creation, Man, and God*

Thursday, February 1, 4:30 PM

Augur 114

Why does Scripture speak about creation? Scripture speaks about creation because man comes to know God through creation, and a rightly ordered understanding of creation is essential to a rightly ordered knowledge of God. Man must know God in order to know how he relates to God and what this relationship demands of him. Man, then, is taught about creation that he may know God and himself, and through this knowledge act righteously before the Lord. We will examine the following books of Scripture: Genesis, Proverbs, and 2 Maccabees. In Genesis we will see that since man is made in the image of God, he has a surpassing royal dignity – and corresponding duties towards God and towards the creation entrusted to his care. Proverbs makes the bold claim that God’s own Wisdom, His Son, is to be with man to form him and make him pleasing to God. Finally, in the second book of Maccabees, we will see the cumulative effect of all the preceding knowledge in act as the Maccabean martyrs die for the law of God, full of confidence in the power of Him who made heaven and earth.

**Thesis:** Creation in Scripture: How Man Should Act in the Light of What and How God Created

**Thesis Advisor:** Dr. Jeremy Holmes

**Second Panelist:** Dr. Scott Olsson

**Third Panelist:** Dr. Pavlos Papadopoulos

# Claire Meyer

## *Joyful Humor and Its True Purpose*

Wednesday, January 31, 10:45 AM

Orchard

Many philosophers, such as Plato and Henri Bergson, view humor as a surprisingly negative concept. In their eyes, it is a corruption, a mockery motivated by envy or pride. However, this is only part of the truth when one considers how connected humor is to joy in everyday life. In my oration, I will speak about the disconnect between the negative motivation humor sometimes has and the apparent joy that appears with humor. Furthermore, I will discuss how humor alongside joy is cathartic. Not only can humor be uniquely positive, it also has the ability to reorient man towards a greater reality.

**Thesis:** Humor: An Everyday Window into Comic Catharsis

**Thesis Advisor:** Dr. Stanley Grove

**Second Panelist:** Dr. Virginia Arbery

**Third Panelist:** Dr. Tom Zimmer



# Moira Milligan

## *No Pain, No Gain: The Radical Nature of Sacrificial Love*

Wednesday, January 31, 9:30 AM

Orchard

The common saying, “love hurts,” is one that resonates with many of us based on personal or secondhand experience. C. S. Lewis comments on this universal experience, “To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything, and your heart will certainly be wrung and possibly be broken.” Is the pain we experience when loving others a good thing? When we address the practice of love through the lens of Christianity, our example is that of the crucified Christ and His command to love as He does. The love of Christ goes beyond simply selfless; it is completely self-giving. This call is not just for a select few of Christ’s followers but is a call to all Christians. In this oration I will address the radical nature of sacrificial love and expound on the words of Christ, “No greater love is there than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friend.”

**Thesis:** No Greater Love: The Transformation of Suffering

**Thesis Advisor:** Dr. Glenn Arbery

**Second Panelist:** Dr. Travis Dziad

**Third Panelist:** Dr. Kent Lasnoski

# Jess Mohun

## “*Certus Amor Morum Est!*”: *Defending the Beauty and Depth of One Man’s Love for Another*

Wednesday, January 31, 2:00 PM

Orchard

This oration delves into the rich tapestry of male friendships portrayed in literary works, challenging modern critics’ tendency to misconstrue these bonds as expressions of homosexuality. Focusing on exemplary friendships like Antonio and Bassanio in *The Merchant of Venice*, this oration undertakes a comprehensive exploration. The method involves debunking contemporary distortions by revisiting foundational literary pieces such as Aristotle’s *Ethics* and Cicero’s *De Amicitia*, unveiling the profound depth and validity of these friendships. Paralleling the journey of Antonio, who seeks to reinstate true friendship in a society that has lost its essence, this oration exposes the misconceptions surrounding not only friendship but also love, particularly in the context of *Philia* and *Eros*. Drawing insights from diverse literary works, including Homer’s *The Iliad*, Augustine’s *Confessions*, Melville’s *Moby Dick*, Twain’s *Huckleberry Finn*, and Faulkner’s *Go Down, Moses*, along with philosophical classics like Plato’s *Symposium* and C. S. Lewis’s *Four Loves*, this oration advocates for a nuanced understanding of friendship as a valid form of love with enduring significance.

**Thesis:** The Need for Friendship Within the Venetian Society: A Literary Examination of Male Friendship Disciplined by Aristotelian Friendship

**Thesis Advisor:** Dr. Virginia Arbery

**Second Panelist:** Mr. Stephen Hill

**Third Panelist:** Dr. Stanley Grove

# Anna-Marie Schubert

そして海のように神は沈黙した。その沈黙は続いた。  
(“*And like the sea, God was silent. His silence continued.*”)

Friday, February 2, 12:45 PM

Augur 113

For those who are unable to read the prior blank text, this oration seeks to inquire into a common experience beheld by humanity, the silence of God. This oration will not focus on the spiritual silences as experienced by St. John of the Cross or Mother Teresa of Calcutta nor on the crisis of noise as seen in Times Square. Rather, using the novel *Silence* by Shūsaku Endō, this oration will touch on a grimacing manifestation of God’s apathetic silence while also exploring how the entire novel itself, though controversial, is also an atypical reconciliation of the silence of God. This oration will put *Silence* in conversation with well-known German contemporary Josef Pieper and Russian mystic Catherine Doherty. Thus through the dual lens of the East and West, the crisis of silence will be mysteriously resolved through the silence itself.

**Thesis:** Is God a Sadist? An Inquiry into the Trauma of Silence, the Native Tongue of God

**Thesis Advisor:** Dr. Tiffany Schubert

**Second Panelist:** Dr. Glenn Arbery

**Third Panelist:** Dr. Paul Giesting

# Josephine Sederstrand

## *How Not to Avoid Pregnancy: A Defense of Natural Family Planning*

Friday, February 2, 2:00 PM

Augur 114

The drama of divorcing the marital act from procreation has stretched throughout the annals of history since man's corruption at the fall. This thesis explores that drama as it plays out since the advent of hormonal birth control. Since the Church restated her definitive teaching on contraception and Natural Family Planning in *Humanae Vitae*, she has suffered sixty-five years of civil war at the hands of varied dissenters. On one hand, a progressive supermajority proposes that contraception is acceptable, even good; on the other hand, a more traditional minority proclaims that NFP is wrong. Though these views seem contradictory, they in fact start from the same claim: NFP and contraception are equivalent. While their arguments and proposed solutions differ greatly, the prominence of ignorance makes their methods of avoiding conception end in similar effects on marriage. Both NFP and contraception, it would seem, harm marriage biologically, rationally, and spiritually. This oration defends NFP from these attacks and presents a possible solution as it relates to unmarried college students.

**Thesis:** A Defense of Natural Family Planning

**Thesis Advisor:** Dr. Kent Lasnoski

**Second Panelist:** Dr. Scott Olsson

**Third Panelist:** Dr. Michael Bolin

# Margaret Mary Serchen

## *Nature, Grace, and Your 21-day Expedition: A Closer Look at Identity*

Friday, February 2, 2:00 PM

Augur 113

On the 21-day expedition, we discuss our identity as sons of God. God is our loving Father, we are His sons, and we ought to live accordingly. But a closer examination of this reality presents a fundamental problem. Though we are created in the image and likeness of God, He is still utterly unlike His creatures; as we learn in sophomore theology, God is pure act, omnipotent, eternal, utterly simple, transcending any category of being we might dare to put Him in. Humans, on the other hand, are not. What could it possibly mean to say that we are sons of such a God? Is this merely a metaphor? This oration will offer a richer understanding of divine sonship, first explaining the natural difficulty which it poses and then exploring God's solution, the solution which radically elevates man and which has been called a greater act than God creating *ex nihilo*: grace, which makes us "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4).

**Thesis:** "Pray Always": A Philosophical and Scriptural Account of Ceaseless Prayer

**Thesis Advisor:** Dr. Jeremy Holmes

**Second Panelist:** Mr. Stephen Hill

**Third Panelist:** Dr. James Tonkowich

# Catherine Sergeant

## *How the Male Gaze Restores Woman*

Friday, February 2, 3:15 PM

Augur 114

As punishment for sin, woman must endure the agony of childbirth and the desire for her husband while man must toil and labor in the field. Christ seemingly does not respond to the punishments of woman; he does not come in the Gospels handing out epidurals and a five-step plan to get over a relationship. Rather than an overt teaching or parable, Christ's restoration of woman's identity from one who suffers under the curse of sin to her edenic identity is evidenced through his interactions with women in scripture. By examining Christ's relationships with the Samaritan woman at the well and Mary Magdalene in the garden, it is clear he responds to woman's curses by re-establishing the perfect and loving gaze that the first man and woman shared in the garden.

**Thesis:** The Edenic Gaze Restored: Christ's Ministry to Woman in the Gospel of John

**Thesis Advisor:** Fr. David Anderson

**Second Panelist:** Dr. Henry Zepeda

**Third Panelist:** Mr. Stephen Hill

# Juan Diego Torres

## *“Stewards and Co-Creators”: How Man Participates in the Divine through Entrepreneurship*

Friday, February 2, 4:30 PM

Augur 113

In the world of Liberal Arts, business is not emphasized. And rightly so, for we are here to study those ideas which serve goods higher than the pecuniary. However, God does call some to serve him in the world of business, and for these, and indeed all, it is essential to understand the spiritual side of everyday work. In his book *Principled Entrepreneurship*, Andreas Widmer argues that fulfillment in business is to be found not in pursuing profit but in helping employees and customers improve their lives. In my thesis, I explain his argument and further it by connecting it to the theological and the philosophical aspects of the Wyoming Catholic College curriculum. I tailor it to the classically educated man. I further Andreas Widmer’s argument by viewing alongside the everyday work of Christ in Scripture, Jacques Maritain’s discussion of art, and John Paul II’s *Laborem Exercens*. By studying these different sources I come to a deeper understanding of JPII’s words: “Man, created in the image of God, shares by his work in the activity of the Creator.”

**Thesis:** “Stewards and Co-Creators”: How Man Participates in the Divine through Entrepreneurship

**Thesis Advisor:** Dr. James Tonkowich

**Second Panelist:** Mr. Stephen Hill

**Third Panelist:** Dr. Daniel Shields

# James Urbancic

## *Can Racial Prejudice Be Eliminated? Racism and the Cure*

Friday, February 2, 4:30 PM

Augur 114

The wounds of racial tensions continue in evidence among American citizens. These scars are most acutely felt in the relationship between African Americans and white Americans. Since the end of slavery in 1865, countless efforts have been made to heal the resulting wounds, but all have ultimately failed. A hundred and fifty years could not produce a cure to America's racial issues. Is there, then, any hope for healing? Why have all efforts failed to end interracial tensions? Is there a cure that would actually work to bring peace and unity within our country?

This oration will explore the history and ideals of African-American activists in order to illuminate the issues and potential cures for racism. In conclusion, I will claim that this cure must primarily come through a reform of the educational system to incorporate manual labor with a classical education.

**Thesis:** Racism in America: Revising Education as a Cure

**Thesis Advisor:** Dr. Virginia Arbery

**Second Panelist:** Mr. Eugene Hamilton

**Third Panelist:** Dr. Pavlos Papadopoulos



# Emma Vanderpol

## *A Defense of Intellectual Hand-Me-Downs*

Wednesday, January 31, 4:30 PM

Orchard

At WCC, or in life generally, it can sometimes feel like there is a conflict between experiential learning and learning by communication. Since it is good to explore the mountains and directly learn about ourselves, God, and community, why should we read books, look at paintings, or otherwise learn from others? Shouldn't we figure things out on our own in order to have a deeper, more complete, and more trustworthy understanding of the world? A first answer is that it is not practical to learn much independently, so communicated learning is at least somewhat necessary. Yet it seems very unsatisfactory to defend the riches of the Western Tradition as merely a necessary substitute for better modes of learning, so we must ask whether communicating knowledge is good in itself. In this oration, therefore, I will use a philosophical framework provided by St. Thomas Aquinas's thoughts regarding secondary causality to examine the intrinsic good of learning by communication, examining how it is good for the one learning and the one teaching, and how, perhaps most importantly, communication of knowledge is good in creating intellectual community between teacher and learner.

**Thesis:** The Glories of Secondhand Knowledge: Why It Is Good to Learn from Others

**Thesis Advisor:** Dr. Michael Bolin

**Second Panelist:** Dr. Scott Olsson

**Third Panelist:** Mr. Stephen Hill

# Kate Wagner

*The Classroom Is Not Enough: “If You Want to Be a Philosopher, Go Milk Cows”*

Wednesday, January 31, 3:15 PM

Orchard

Maybe academia is not as important as we think it is. After all, God placed His rational creature in a garden rather than a school, and then commanded man to farm when He could have demanded he think. Wrong person, wrong job? Or is there an account of the intellectual life arising from a life on the land which is fulfilling? Using Genesis as a foundation, this oration will offer an explanation of such an intellectualism through Owen Wister’s *The Virginian* and the writings of Jacques Maritain, asserting that the garden is the proper environment for education and the classroom is the supplement, rather than the other way around.

**Thesis:** Given Not a School, but a Garden: The Intellectual Efficacy of a Life on the Land

**Thesis Advisor:** Dr. Adam Cooper

**Second Panelist:** Dr. Tiffany Schubert

**Third Panelist:** Mr. Eugene Hamilton

# Margaret Wall

## *Think You Can Be a Leader of Men? Try Leading a Horse First*

Thursday, February 1, 10:45 AM

Orchard

Statesmanship is not something to take lightly. There is a very serious and heavy responsibility that falls on the statesman to protect his people from the evils of the world and to lead them toward the common good. In its complex form, the art of political rule is often thought to be incomparable to the arts that fall below it, including horsemanship, which many would call a mere hobby or sport. Despite the seemingly insignificant reality of riding a horse around in an arena, there is a profound truth about the nature of leading a horse well that mirrors the momentous practice of a political ruler.

Through the lens of Xenophon's treatise *On Horsemanship*, as well as his work *Anabasis*, in this oration, I will delve into the intricate parallel between the art of horsemanship and the art of statesmanship. By unraveling the unique relationship between the two arts, I hope to provide a new perspective on horsemanship as a noble endeavor, in which a horseman comes to a deeper understanding of human nature, and how one ought to govern the spiritedness found in both man and horse.

**Thesis:** "Don't Give Your Sons Money. Give Them Horses": Whether Horsemanship Is Analogous to Statesmanship

**Thesis Advisor:** Dr. Pavlos Papadopoulos

**Second Panelist:** Dr. Tom Zimmer

**Third Panelist:** Mr. Eugene Hamilton

# John Walsh

## *“To See a World in a Grain of Sand”: Poetry and Man’s Experience of Happiness*

Thursday, February 1, 10:45 AM

Augur 113

What is happiness? As given to us by Aristotle, the answer to this timeless question about human fulfillment is largely found in the ideal of contemplation, which refers to the excellence of man’s intellectual soul. And yet, Aristotle himself leaves much to be said about the concrete character of this ideal. What does the “excellence of the intellect” actually entail? When are we truly engaging in contemplation? This oration will articulate a potentially surprising, yet crucially important interpretation of Aristotle’s views on happiness. Guided by the thought of Jacques Maritain, we will realize that poetry – or literature more generally – prompts an experience of intuitive knowing that constitutes the foundational essence of the contemplative vision. This claim will be illustrated and supported by discussions on the nature of the human intellect and of poetry, which will ultimately culminate in a consideration of the poet’s approach to beauty. The common idea of the poet as “he who speaks beautifully” contains far more truth than generally realized, and such an inherent connection between poetry and the beautiful furnishes the poet with his strongest claim to contemplation.

**Thesis:** Want to Be Happy? Read a Poem! Maritain’s Development of the Aristotelian Intellectual System

**Thesis Advisor:** Dr. Adam Cooper

**Second Panelist:** Dr. Henry Zepeda

**Third Panelist:** Dr. Daniel Shields

# Eva Welsh

## *The Transformative Power of Code in William Faulkner's The Reivers*

Thursday, February 1, 2:00 PM

Orchard

In William Faulkner's novel, *The Reivers*, eleven-year-old Lucius Priest travels to Memphis in a stolen car and gets involved with prostitutes and an illegal horse race. Amidst this chaos, Lucius ennobles the characters around him and prevents utter chaos through his code of manners. This dignified code, as understood by critic John Crowe Ransom, is the key to social order. In this oration I will explore how identity is realized through the redemptive force of code in *The Reivers*.

**Thesis:** Chivalry Lives: An Exploration of Code in *The Odyssey*, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and *The Reivers*

**Thesis Advisor:** Dr. Glenn Arbery

**Second Panelist:** Dr. Tom Zimmer

**Third Panelist:** Dr. Adam Cooper

# Isabella Weslow

## *To Be a Person Is to Suffer: Unveiling the Role of Suffering in Human Nature through the Art of the Russian Novel*

Thursday, February 1, 3:15 PM

Orchard

Many people have grown complacent in their overly comfortable lives; all too often they go out of their way to avoid adversity altogether. For many, their conception of suffering has become perverted, leading people to believe that suffering, in any capacity or variety, is disgraceful and has no place in the life of man. When taking this stance, however, one loses a fundamental part of what it means to be human. There is a necessity for suffering infused in the nature of man, by God, that is being forgotten. Society is trying to cover up the fact that to be a person means that we suffer.

The misconceptions surrounding the phenomenon of suffering are taken up in detail by the Russian authors, Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, whose characters challenge the necessity of suffering. When faced with pain and suffering, one must choose to confront it or push it away. If one chooses to accept suffering, one must then decipher how this seemingly negative occurrence is necessary to the human condition. What benefits does suffering bring and how should one live in the world when there is a constant presence of suffering?

**Thesis:** Beauty in Suffering; Knowledge through Hardship: Unveiling the Role of Suffering in Human Nature through the Art of the Russian Novel

**Thesis Advisor:** Dr. Adam Cooper

**Second Panelist:** Dr. Virginia Arbery

**Third Panelist:** Dr. Daniel Shields

# Anthony Witzaney

## *Physical, Mental, or Somewhere in Between? An Inquiry into the Existence of Geometry*

Friday, February 2, 12:45 PM

Orchard

Geometry has always been a matter for intense philosophical interest. From Pythagoras to Plato and Aristotle, the existence of geometry was a mystery which they struggled to unveil.

Paradoxically possessing physical likeness while also physically distinct, the world of geometricals, of shape and figure, things no doubt found in the real world, itself enigmatically functions distinct from it. Who has ever seen a straight line? Or with what magical instrument does one bisect a circle?

Where, then, do we find the geometrical? How shall we account for its seemingly physical but physically aloof character? Rooted both in Aristotle's metaphysics and Aquinas's clarifying thought, this oration will answer the question, "Where does the geometrical exist?"

Through a careful understanding of the physical and the mental, along with Thomas's critical insight into Aristotle's cryptic "intelligible matter," this oration will reveal the geometrical as neither physical nor mental, but somewhere in between.

**Thesis:** Physical, Mental, or Somewhere in Between? An Inquiry into the Existence of Geometry

**Thesis Advisor:** Dr. Daniel Shields

**Second Panelist:** Dr. Henry Zepeda

**Third Panelist:** Dr. Jeremy Holmes





# Index

- Aquinas, St. Thomas, 18, 20, 28,  
33, 37, 45, 51  
Aristotle, 16, 38, 48, 51  
art, 14, 32  
bacteria, nature of, 16  
Bernard, St., 20  
biology, 16, 23  
business, 11, 43  
Catholic Church, 21  
Catholic social teaching, 11  
Catholicism, 21, 30, 40  
charity, 18, 33  
childhood, 19  
childlikeness, 19  
Christianity, 24, 28  
Cicero, 15, 22  
*Commedia*, Dante's, 24  
commitment, 27  
community, intellectual, 45  
contraception, 40  
creation, 35  
Dante, 24  
*Divine Comedy*, *The*, 24  
divine hiddenness, 18, 39  
education, 25, 44, 45  
Endō, Shūsaku, 39  
experiential learning, 25  
faith, reasonableness of, 18  
Faulkner, William, 49  
feminism, 28  
fiction, 14  
friendship, 38  
geometry, philosophy of, 51  
God  
    as Father, 41  
    hiddenness of, 18, 39  
Gödel, Kurt, 34  
happiness, 27  
horsemanship, 47  
human dignity, 11  
*Humanae Vitae*, 40  
humor, 36  
identity, 41, 49  
incompleteness theorem,  
    Gödel's first, 34  
intellectual life, 46  
John Paul II, St., 31, 43  
just wage, 11  
Lefebvre, Marcel, 21  
Lewis, C. S., 18, 38  
literature, 12, 18, 24, 38, 48–50  
love  
    of God, 33  
    of neighbor, 33, 37

of self, 20  
 Machiavelli, 15  
 man  
   as child of God, 41  
   as male, headship of, 28  
   as musical, 26  
   as rooted in land, 46  
   nature of, 13, 27  
   personhood of, 31  
 Maritain, Jacques, 43, 46, 48  
 Mass, Extraordinary Form of, 30  
 mathematics, 34  
   philosophy of, 51  
 Melville, Herman, 12  
*Moby Dick*, 12  
 Montessori, Maria, 19  
 morality, 15, 40  
 movies, 32  
 music, 26  
  
 natural family planning, 40  
 nature, 12  
  
 obedience, 21  
  
 personhood, 50  
 philosophy, 15, 16, 20, 22, 23, 36,  
   46, 48, 51  
 Pieper, Josef, 39  
 plants, nature of, 16  
 Plato, 22  
 poetic knowledge, 14, 48  
 poetry, 48  
 political philosophy, 11, 15, 22, 43,  
   44, 47  
  
 racism, 44  
*Reivers, The*, 49  
  
 religious liberty, 21  
 Rome, influence on Christianity,  
   24  
  
 sacrifice, 20, 37  
 scripture, 35  
 self  
   gift of, 20, 37  
   identity, 41  
 self-love, 20  
 semiotics, 16  
 silence, of God, 39  
 singing, 26  
 sonship, divine, 41  
 spirituality, 17, 19  
 SSPX, 21  
 statesmanship, 47  
 success, human, 15  
 suffering, importance of, 50  
  
 technology, 13  
 Teresa, St., 20  
 theology, 17, 18, 20, 21, 28, 30, 33,  
   35, 40–42  
*Till We Have Faces*, 18  
 traditionalism, Catholic, 21, 30  
 transgenderism, 31  
  
 video games, 14  
 Virgil, 24  
 von Balthasar, Hans Urs, 19  
  
 woman  
   equality with man, 28  
   nature of, 28, 31, 42  
 wonder, 29  
 work, 43  
   importance of manual  
   labor, 44

**Notes:**





