

BOISI CENTER REPORT



VOL. 23 NO. 2 • MAY 2023

FROM THE DIRECTOR



The Boisi Center co-hosted the largest-ever meeting of bishops and theologians on a Catholic college campus on March 3-4. With Loyola University Chicago's Hank

Center for the Catholic Intellectual Heritage and Fordham University's Center on Religion and Culture, Boisi welcomed 32 cardinals, archbishops, and bishops—along with 38 theologians and journalists—for a two-day conference entitled, “The Way Forward: Pope Francis, Vatican II, and Synodality.” With generous support from the Owsley Brown II Family Foundation of Louisville, the GHR Foundation, Boston College, Loyola University Chicago, Fordham University, and others, the event was conceived as an intensive ongoing conversation about how synods (local communities of bishops, clergy, and lay people meeting together to discuss important issues) might contribute to the implementation of Pope Francis' call to overcome divisions within the church by “walking together.”

The meeting included four plenary addresses: Rafael Luciani (Boston College) on “Synodality: A New Phase in the Reception of the Council”; Robin Darling Young (Catholic University) on “Synodality in the Early Church”; Hossffman Ospino (Boston College) on “Synodality as an Expression of Practical and Pastoral Theology”; and Bishop Daniel Flores (Diocese of Brownsville) on “Collegiality, Synodality, and the Pastoral Vision of Pope Francis.” Interspersed throughout were panel discussions by participants

from the University of Notre Dame, Emory University, Boston College, Fordham University, among others. Cardinal Seán O'Malley presided at mass in St. Mary's Chapel on Friday, and Cardinal Donald Wuerl of Washington on Saturday. As a cardinal sitting at my table said to me during lunch on Saturday: “This is a good day for the American church.” And indeed, it was.

Preparation for that event in early March kept the Boisi Center's cracker jack team busy for many months, while also planning and hosting our regular round of events. Massimo Faggioli of Villanova University delivered our 20th Annual Prophetic Voices Lecture on February 15, “Prophets are Never Honored at Home,” while Kay Schlozman and David Hopkins (both of BC's Political Science Department) delivered the 4th Annual Wolfe Lecture on Religion and American Politics on February 1, “Parties in the Pews in a Divided Nation.” Erika Bachiochi of the Abigail Adams Institute spoke to a capacity crowd on March 21 on “The Contested Meaning of Women's Rights: Reclaiming a Lost Vision of Freedom,” to which former U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See Mary Ann Glendon offered a riveting response.

The Boisi Center also co-sponsored two events this spring: with BC's Clough Center for the Study of Constitutional Democracy, a conference on “Democracy and Journalism” on March 15-17, which drew journalists and newscasters from around the country. The second event was with BC's Center for Christian-Jewish Learning on April 18 with Dara Horn speaking on her new book

People Love Dead Jews to mark Holocaust Days of Remembrance. We also added a new podcast episode in which I interviewed Stuart Hobbs on “Art as Spiritual Practice.” He is an academic who paints powerful non-representational religious art, with his most recent work, entitled “Jesus' Seven Last Words,” displayed on the walls of his church in Columbus, Ohio. Links to his art can be viewed on the Boisi Center's website.

I was delighted to report to the Boisi Center's Board of Advisors, at our March meeting, that Mark Silk would join Boisi next fall as an affiliate. Mark is stepping down from a successful career as director of the Greenberg Center for the Study of Religion in Public Life at Trinity College, Hartford. They were as delighted by the announcement as I was. (You can find a list of the Board of Advisors on page 8.)

And last, but by no means least, the religion and public life minors who are graduating are going on to an impressive array of “next stops”: Harvard Law School, graduate work in philosophy at BC, working for a political strategy group helping women candidates for public office, and heading for work in the real world before continuing their education. Godspeed to all. It has been an honor working with them.

~Mark Massa, S.J.

SUMMER PLANS: UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH FELLOWS



This semester, Emily Caffrey received a grant from BC's Fellowship Office to attend a conference hosted by Brigham Young University that discussed strengthening democracy through religious literacy. There, she had the opportunity to converse with students, professors, and policymakers from across the country. This summer, Emily plans to move to New York to work as a summer analyst at cg42, a boutique management consulting company. She is excited for senior year, where she will continue working as an undergraduate research fellow (URF) for the Boisi Center and complete her degree in political science and a minor in religion and public life.

This summer, Fallon Jones plans to work as an administrative intern at Family Reach, a national cancer support non-profit. This semester, Fallon presented at the National Undergraduate Theology Research Conference. A senior this fall, she will return as one of the Boisi Center's URFs as she finishes her degree in theology with minors in studio art and religion and public life, driven by her exploration of theology's connection to service and non-profit organizations. She will also be captain of the Boston College Women's Club Water Polo team, which has become her favorite group of girls to spend time with on campus. But first, Fallon is excited to enjoy her first summer in Boston.



UPDATE: GRADUATE RESEARCH ASSISTANT

R. Zachary "Zac" Karanovich will be moving on to new opportunities!



In the fall of 2019, R. Zachary "Zac" Karanovich joined the Boisi Center as its graduate research assistant. His primary role at Boston College has been as a doctoral student in systematic theology in the Morrissey College of Arts and Sciences. Additionally, his family has served as resident ministers, living in the residence halls and supporting the undergraduate students and the residence hall staff.

During his time at the Boisi Center, Karanovich spearheaded two successful new initiatives. The first was the creation of the Graduate Student Conference, which has featured the research contributions of students from across the country. In 2021 the conference explored "Pandemic and Religion," and in 2022, "Religious Activism and Political Change; Political Activism and Religious Change"—both held online. This March, the conference was held in-person for the first time and explored "Race and Religion." The conference featured the work of graduate students from, among other institutions, Yale Divinity School, Virginia Union University, Howard University School of Divinity, and the University of Chicago. The conference was a wonderful success and has a bright future.

The second initiative was the creation of "The Religion and American Life Podcast." The podcast has expanded the Center's reach with regard to the guests it can invite and the audience it can engage. Examples of some episodes include the exploration of Catholic Nazis with Charles Gallagher, S.J.; sexuality and the church with James Martin, S.J. and Rev. Dr. Kelly Brown Douglas; the future of American religion with Pew Research Center's Stephanie Kramer; and art and spirituality with Stuart Hobbs. These have been interesting, insightful, and entertaining conversations.

This summer, Karanovich will defend his dissertation, entitled "Conversion in a World of Violence," and this fall will join the faculty of Mount Mary University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin as assistant professor of theology.

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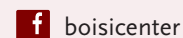
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The Religion and American Life Podcast

For complete information and resources on all of our events, including audio and video recordings, photos, videos, bibliographies, and more, visit our website: www.bc.edu/boisi.

Unless otherwise noted, all Boisi Center event photography by Christopher Soldt, BC Media Technology Services.

CHURCHES AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Former Boisi Center visiting scholar, Paulina Napierała, explored the parallels between Black churches and the Catholic Church in the Civil Rights and Polish Solidarity Movements.



Paulina Napierała offers a rich background to the Catholic Church's response to Polish "Solidarity."

Paulina Napierała, formerly a visiting scholar at the Boisi Center, shared an insightful presentation drawing connections between the roles and responses of Black churches during the American Civil Rights Movement and the Catholic Church during communist Poland. Napierała began by outlining the contexts of both relationships, particularly the historical church influences in Poland—informed by her own Polish heritage. The key aspects Napierała highlighted from Polish Catholic history were its geographic location and the resulting occupations that compromised Poland's government—and, therefore, its indepen-

dence—and required that the Church take up the role as keeper of Polish culture. She used this context to describe the Polish people's, the Catholic Church's, and Communism's relationship, particularly involving the Solidarity movement. As she illustrated, Catholic and the Catholic Church's responses were far from uniform toward their oppression, but rather were a plurality of responses—some more aggressively liberationist while others were more conciliatory or even complicit in the Communist regime.

Due to the similar social contexts—without ignoring important distinctions—Napierała presented the response to the Civil Rights Movement by the Black churches as similar to those of the Catholic Church and the Catholics of Poland. One distinction she noted was that the Catholic Church and Catholic Poles were a majority, while, in comparison, the Civil Rights Movement focused on a movement for the nation's minority. Rather than focus on this contextual difference, Napierała highlighted the similar response by Black churches; that is, some were militantly against the “rabble-rousing” they perceived Martin Luther King, Jr. and other movement leaders to be instigating, while others

were sympathetic to the cause and took extreme measures to risk their lives to accompany those activists in their efforts.

Napierała spent much time describing Poland and America's social, political, and historical contexts that informed their respective movements and the participation in and/or responses to them. One interesting conclusion she drew was that, despite this plurality of response and involvement by some churches to either the Solidarity Movement or the Civil Rights Movement, many of those communities now claim that they had a significant hand in those particular movements. Those Black churches that once disparaged King and his followers now claim to have played an outsized role in the Civil Rights Movement, and Catholic Poles now also claim to have been a unified anti-Communist voice during their own struggles. History, Napierała concluded, provides a significantly different view.

Audience questions followed Napierała's presentation, exploring King's studies and the impact of the concept of social/structural sin, Niebuhr's influence on King and the role of coercion for good, and Pope John Paul II's influence on Catholic Poland and its self-image.

PARTIES IN THE PEWS IN A DIVIDED NATION

Political scientists, David Hopkins and Kay Scholzman, offered the Wolfe Lecture on Religion and American Politics.

On February 1, Drs. David Hopkins and Kay Scholzman of Boston College's Political Science Department delivered the 4th Annual Wolfe Lecture on Religion and American Politics. This year's event, titled “Parties in the Pews in a Divided Nation,” discussed the role of religion in America's increasingly polarized political environment.

The event began with Scholzman introducing key statistics about the political affiliations of various religious groups. She noted how voting trends have

evolved in recent decades, as Catholics, for example, are no longer a consistent voting block. While white Catholics tend to vote Republican, Scholzman stated that Latino Catholics typically support Democrats. Scholzman further revealed the complexities and nuances of examining voting patterns of religious groups, stating that Catholics who are Cuban and Venezuelan immigrants tend to vote Republican in contrast to Catholic Mexican immigrants, whose loyalties lie with the Democratic Party. Consequently, Scholzman suggested that we cannot

infer peoples' political beliefs based solely on their religious identification; race, ethnicity, and nationality are also key influences.

Hopkins then presented additional takeaways based on the data presented by Scholzman. While many assume that one's religious beliefs shape their political beliefs, Hopkins contrastingly argued that peoples' political beliefs shape their religious identities and levels of religiosity. He explained how Americans often depart from religion in their teenage



Hopkins explaining politics' influence on religion.

years and remain relatively faithful until they have children—and then must confront the role they want religion to play in their childrens' lives. During this time apart from religion, Americans' political beliefs mold and take shape; ergo, when people reconsider their religious beliefs, their political beliefs are influencing them. Furthermore, Hopkins mentioned

how, today, many people do not have an issue with marrying people of different religious backgrounds; however, many do have a problem with marrying those of opposing political beliefs, revealing the extent of political polarization in America.

Following Schlozman and Hopkins' presentation, the event opened into a lively question-and-answer session. Mark Massa, S.J. initiated the conversation, asking why Hillary Clinton and Joe Biden—who are both very religious in their own lives—rarely engage in religious conversations during their campaigns compared to Trump—who infrequently attends church—but successfully cap-

tured the Evangelical vote. The question-and-answer segment also addressed whether political animosity has replaced religious animosity, which Hopkins believed to be true.

View the recorded Wolfe Lecture on the Boisi Center's YouTube channel.



Schlozman explains party affiliation by religious group.

PROPHECY AND SYNODALITY IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Massimo Faggioli offered the 20th Annual Prophetic Voices Lecture.



Faggioli described the prophetic future for the synodal Church.

On February 15, Massimo Faggioli, professor of theology and religious studies at Villanova University, offered the Boisi Center's 20th Prophetic Voices Lecture, "Prophets are Never Honored at Home': Prophecy and Synodality in the Catholic Church."

His presentation began with a recollection of Machiavelli's book *The Prince*, his inspiration for his talk, and a description of what Machiavelli coins "an unarmed prophet." He uses this example to explain the difficulty of a prophet's role while the power parallel to it is unstable. In this

case, the power is the hierarchy of the Catholic Church. Faggioli claims that the Church needs new ways to proclaim a renewal of the faith—the former job of the prophets. This renewal aims toward a power that is less in the hands of the hierarchy and more in the hands of the faithful. His point being that a synodal church—like the one envisioned by Francis—is where all the people of God have power and become the Church's prophets. Faggioli supported this claim by turning to his area of specialization: the Second Vatican Council. He sees in the conciliar documents the revealed intentions of the council fathers toward an intraecclesial identity characterized by what was later termed "synodality." The documents quoted describe a new ecclesiology with the participation of all God's people. Faggioli explained synodality as creating a new brand of prophets balancing out the apostolic power. To support that, Faggioli reminded the audience about Francis's emphasis that the prophetic function within the threefold office of Christ is the idea that all baptized peoples are prophets, even if they are not all magisterial.

Faggioli continued to talk about the leg-

acy and the limits of Vatican II and gave context to the instability of power within the Church. He described the abuse crisis as the foundation of the instability of legitimacy and the resulting lack of trust in the episcopacy. He called this "parasitic prophetism." Regarding Vatican II, he discussed how the abuse crisis was a sign of the Council's limits and how synodality should be the response. That task is not easy, as Faggioli laid the issues out on the table. He argued that, for this to be successful, the Church has to rethink its voice as a discerning Church. It cannot understand synodality as a second wave of Vatican II but rather as a part of the Council's ongoing reception.

To conclude, Faggioli reflected on how Catholics are often seen as followers of a God that stands against the men and women of today. In order to change that, Faggioli calls for a new prophetism to emerge to counter and transform the hierarchical/apostolic power he defined earlier. He called the Church to reorient its ecclesiology into something that is ultimately immeasurable. This conclusion led to a very interesting and insightful Q&A.

Watch Faggioli's Prophetic Voices Lecture on the Boisi Center's YouTube channel.

IN PICTURES

THE WAY FORWARD: POPE FRANCIS, VATICAN II, AND SYNODALITY



All photos by Lee Pellegrini, Boston College

SPRING FACULTY SEMINAR: RELIGIOUS NATIONALISM

This spring, the Boisi Center's interdisciplinary faculty seminar focused on "Religious Nationalism." It was a broad-ranging series of monthly discussions that read about Israeli settlement in the occupied territories as well as social scientific studies of Americans who join Christian nationalist groups. The rotating convener model worked superbly in getting members from various departments at BC to consider these issues from their own field of study (sociology, philosophy, history, nursing, theology, etc.). We were a smart but disparate group, but the point on which we all agreed was that the night we argued over ziti with chicken and asparagus was a high point for our dining experience.



THE CONTESTED MEANING OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Erika Bachiochi and Ambassador Mary Ann Glendon explored foundations for a new vision of women's rights.



Erika Bachiochi offers remarks with Emma McDonald (L) and Mary Ann Glendon (M).

On Tuesday, March 21, Emma McDonald, a doctoral candidate in theological ethics at Boston College, moderated a panel discussion between Erika Bachiochi, a senior fellow at the Abigail Adams Institute, and Mary Ann Glendon, former U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See and Learned Hand Professor of Law, emerita, at Harvard University. Bachiochi, Glendon, and McDonald discussed Bachiochi's recent book titled, *The Rights of Women: Reclaiming a Lost Vision* in relation to the Supreme Court's ruling in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organi-*

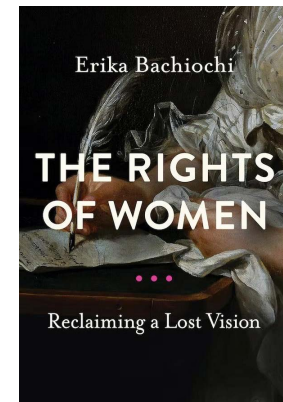
zation.

The conversation began by examining the Court's dissent in the *Dobbs* case and evaluating how American society defines "autonomous beings." Bachiochi explained how the modern understanding of an autonomous being incorporates a women's right to an elective abortion; however, she described how this was not always the case. Historically speaking, feminists viewed women's rights through the lens of an interdependent relationship between children and parents. In other words, equal rights were not based on autonomy from others but rather through the view that humans are inherently connected.

Glendon added to the conversation, suggesting that the modern perception of women's rights has not prevented the "Four Deadly Ds," which she defined as the increasing rate of divorce, disadvantage faced by women in the workplace when trying to balance the role of motherhood and their job, disrespect for

women who choose not to enter the workforce, and destitution that hurts many women-led families (as the highest rates of poverty are among single mothers with children).

Hence, Bachiochi and Glendon encouraged the audience to focus on how interdependent human beings are on one another. Rather than measuring our degrees of liberty based on our ability to leave others, we should refocus on how we have the right to rely upon and responsibility to support others.



3RD ANNUAL GRADUATE STUDENT CONFERENCE "RACE AND RELIGION"

On Saturday, March 25, the Boisi Center hosted its 3rd Annual Graduate Student Conference on the subject, "Race and Religion." For the first time since its inception, the conference was held in-person at Boston College. The conference replaced the Symposium on Religion and Politics.

The conference's topic attracted an interdisciplinary group of graduate students from across the country who presented on topics such as how responsibility and blame could be reconsidered in racial reconciliation, the history of Jesuit slaveholding and the Jesuit involvement in the Civil Rights Movement, the compromises made by Black clergypersons in Congress, and whiteness as an idol, among others.

The students represented Boston College, Howard Univer-



sity School of Divinity, Jesuit School of Theology, Loyola Marymount University, Loyola University Chicago, Princeton Theological Seminary, University of Chicago, Virginia Union University, and Yale Divinity School.

Responding to the papers were the featured respondents, Amey Victoria Adkins-Jones (Boston College), Jeannine Hill Fletcher (Fordham University), Daniel Joslyn-Siemiatkosti (Boston College), Elsa Mendoza (Middlebury College), James O'Toole (Boston College), and Matthew Vale (Boston College).

During the lunch plenary session, the conference was happy to feature the work of two young scholars, both of whom write at the intersection of race and religion. Nathan Wood-House (College of the Holy Cross) offered remarks and encouraged feedback on an article he was in the process of writing, and Byron Wratee (Boston College) shared his research trajectory, including work featured in his dissertation.

The conference concluded with the announcement of the winner of the Award for Best Student Paper, which went to Gabrielle Poma (Loyola Marymount University) for her paper, "'Redeeming the Religion' of the Colonizer: Exploring Filipino Worship in the U.S."

CAPITOL CONGREGATIONS

Retired Episcopal priest, Richard Burnett, offered some reflections on the role of the congregations in close proximity to the nation's statehouses.



Rev. Richard Burnett offers his remarks.

On March 29, the Boisi Center hosted Rev. Richard Burnett, the retired rector (1997-2021) of Trinity Episcopal Church, for an engaging lunch discussion. Trinity Episcopal Church is located on Capitol Square in Columbus, Ohio. Drawing from his experience at this “capitol congregation,” Burnett led an interesting conversation about the relationship

between the Church and State in faith communities in proximity to government centers.

The event began with an examination of the proximity between state houses and churches. In Columbus, Burnett described how politicians were active worshipers in his congregation. Similarly, the Massachusetts State House sits just across Boston Common from the Cathedral Church of Saint Paul. Burnett showed a video by St. Paul’s dean, Rev. Amy McCreath. McCreath discussed how one of the core missions of the diocese is to promote justice, and the cathedral’s location enables community programming to promote this value among those in need of justice as well as those who are charged with protecting justice, such as state legislators.

Burnett encouraged us to reflect on the location and local influence of our own churches. And he concluded that these congregations have choices as to how they will respond to their role as “capitol congregations.” The first is illegitimate: keep the doors closed and pretend the capitol is not there. But there are three legitimate responses too. First, the congregation can have its doors open and welcome people. Second, it can be a place of gathering and celebration, such as holding a liturgy for each new legislature. And third, it can be a place of protest, advocacy, and dissent. He believes that the more they do the third option, the less the congregation is able to do the second. However, the more they do the third option, the more easily they are able to open their doors to the community.

Listen to Burnett’s discussion on the event page at bc.edu/boisi.

UKRAINE AND RUSSIA ONE YEAR LATER

Elizabeth Prodromou offered insights into how Orthodox Christianity, geopolitics, and power are influencing both sides of the Ukraine-Russia war.



Elizabeth Prodromou offers her remarks to a full conference room.

Elizabeth Prodromou, a visiting scholar in Boston College’s International Studies Program, spoke at the Boisi Center, presenting on Orthodox Christianity, geopolitics, and the power that has influenced Russia’s war in Ukraine.

Prodromou looked at understanding and explaining geography by spheres of identity rather than physical territories. She analyzed how geopolitics focuses more on these identities—ethnicity, race,

civilization, language, culture, and religion—than on the arbitrary lines between nations. In the case of this discussion, Prodromou looked at religious spheres involved in Russia’s war in Ukraine. She described how these identities can work with or against the state, allowing non-state, though still authoritative, voices to emerge in geopolitical events. She considers this relationship as the “geopolitics of religion,” which is when religious actors utilize relationships with the state to

influence state identity among religious adherents toward a political end.

Discussing the geopolitical and religious impact within Russia and Ukraine, Prodromou emphasized the idea of a disruptive relationship within religious geopolitics, when states use religious power to buttress the rationales for their actions, and religions use state power for their own ends. She examined the Orthodox Christian traditions in Moscow and Kyiv to illustrate the power transfers and disputes between political and religious leaders, such as the dispute over religious property regarding ownership, access, and use of Caves Monastery in Kyiv.

Many students and faculty attended the event, leading to a great Q&A session. The questions led to discussions about just and holy wars, “Russian Nuclear Orthodoxy,” the relationship between Vladimir Putin and Patriarch Kirill, the religious freedom of enemy combatants, and liberation theology.

THE BOISI CENTER'S BOARD OF ADVISORS

The Boisi Center is lucky to have the creative input and insightful support of a Board of Advisors. The board consists of Nancy Ammerman, professor emerita at Boston University; Randall Balmer of Dartmouth College; Ben Birnbaum, legendary editor of *BC Magazine* for several decades; Susannah Heschel, director of the Jewish Studies Program at Dartmouth; Cathleen Kaveny of BC's Theology Department and

Law School; Ann McClenahan, the former executive director of the Boston Theological Interreligious Consortium; Dr. Vincent Rougeau, president of the College of the Holy Cross; Sam Sawyer, S.J., of America Media; Mark Silk, retired director of the Greenberg Center for the Study of Religion in Public Life at Trinity College, Hartford; and the Reverend Nancy Taylor, minister at Old South Church in Boston.

THE BOISI CENTER IS HARD AT WORK DEVELOPING OUR 2023-2024 PROGRAMMING. BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR AN ANNOUNCEMENT OF FALL EVENTS LATE THIS SUMMER!

IN PICTURES

3RD ANNUAL GRADUATE STUDENT CONFERENCE: "RACE AND RELIGION"

