INITIATIVE ON CATHOLIC SOCIAL THOUGHT AND PUBLIC LIFE

2017–2018 ANNUAL REPORT

Promoting Civil Dialogue in Polarized Times
ABOUT THE INITIATIVE ON CATHOLIC SOCIAL THOUGHT AND PUBLIC LIFE

The Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life is a unique effort to promote dialogue on Catholic Social Thought and national and global issues; build bridges across political, religious, and ideological lines; and encourage a new generation of Catholic lay leaders to see their faith as assets in pursuing the common good.

ABOUT GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

Established in 1789, Georgetown is the oldest Catholic and Jesuit university in the United States. One of the world’s leading academic and research institutions, Georgetown enrolls more than 17,000 undergraduate, graduate, and professional students across nine schools. A global institution, Georgetown provides a unique educational experience that prepares the next generation of global citizens to lead and make a difference in the world. The university’s educational mission and international partnerships seek to advance the global common good.
2018 marks five years since the founding of the Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life. Since the Initiative began, it has organized more than 40 gatherings attended by more than 18,000 people, demonstrating there is a hunger for civil dialogue and moral conversation in public life, for the values of Catholic social teaching, and for the message of Pope Francis.

This past year the Initiative:

• Hosted an unprecedented national Convening on Overcoming Polarization Through Catholic Social Thought and invited 100 emerging and established leaders, including Cardinal Blase Cupich and Archbishop José Gómez, to assess and help overcome harmful polarization within the Catholic community and beyond;
• Launched with Mission and Ministry a new series of Dahlgren Dialogues which filled Georgetown’s Dahlgren Chapel;
• Organized three Roundtables on Faith and the Faithful in U.S. Politics, exploring the impacts and future of religious voters and communities in current politics;
• Conducted four major Public Dialogues;
• Hosted a Salt and Light Gathering in the U.S. Capitol for young public policy leaders in Washington, bringing together senators and representatives from across the aisle;
• Engaged the campus community with three Catholic Social Thought Fellows; assisted the university and its board to adopt and apply socially responsible investing policies; held a student session on faith, work, and life after Georgetown; and taught undergraduates in a seminar on Catholic social teaching.

Over the years, the Initiative has grown from a promising idea to a respected place of civil dialogue in a divided Capital; a place for leaders to come together across political, ideological, and ecclesial lines to build bridges and advance common principles; and a unique source of encouragement and formation for young Catholic public policy and Latino leaders in Washington.

This past year has demonstrated that the Initiative’s distinctive mission of civil dialogue, encouragement of young leaders, and principled participation in public life is more important than ever. We are very grateful.

Sincerely,

John L. Carr, Director
CONVENING ON OVERCOMING POLARIZATION THROUGH CATHOLIC SOCIAL THOUGHT

The Initiative organized a historic “Convening on Overcoming Polarization through Catholic Social Thought,” which brought 100 emerging and established leaders with diverse backgrounds and differing political, ideological, and ecclesial perspectives to Georgetown. Cardinal Blase Cupich and Archbishop José Gómez led off three days of listening and learning, dialogue and bridge-building, and prayer and reflection. Diverse voices in plenary panels, small group discussions, and individual conversations focused on overcoming harmful polarization within the Catholic community to make a principled, faithful, and more effective contribution to the common good in a divided nation.

This three-day gathering on polarization was the third Initiative Convening. The first in 2014 was the “Catholic-Evangelical Convening on Overcoming Poverty” which drew President Obama, Senators Tim Scott and Cory Booker, and 150 other policymakers, experts, and religious and community leaders to work across partisan, ideological, and religious lines to make overcoming poverty a moral imperative and national priority.

The second in 2017 brought Cardinal Peter Turkson and Archbishop Silvano Tomasi from the Vatican and 35 leaders of U.S. academic centers on Catholic social teaching to Georgetown to explore how to share Catholic social teaching more broadly and deeply.

LESSONS LEARNED, CONTINUING CHALLENGES, NEXT STEPS

Alejandro Aguilara-Titus, John Carr, Kim Daniels, Kathryn Lopez, Rev. James Martin, S.J.
PUBLIC DIALOGUE: OVERCOMING POLARIZATION THROUGH CATHOLIC SOCIAL THOUGHT

“[The Convening was] the most serious effort to address divisions in the American Church in a long time—certainly in the five-year era of Pope Francis.” – John Allen

June 4, 2018 - Cardinal Blaise Cupich of Chicago, Archbishop José Gómez of Los Angeles, Helen Alvare of George Mason University’s Scalia Law School, and Sister Teresa Maya, the president of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, came together to explore the causes of polarization, ways to address fear and anger in our nation, and how the Catholic community can use its social teaching to bring people together and advance the common good. This Public Dialogue linked to the Convening filled Gaston Hall. President DeGioia opened the session and John Carr moderated the lively conversation.

“What does Catholicism and Catholic social teaching bring to us? One, it is the primary moral and intellectual system to oppose autonomy. It’s basically all we got. It is the ethos of community in this country and the dominant and most developed intellectual tradition of community.” – David Brooks

TOP LEFT
Washington Post columnist E.J. Dionne and Professor Robert George of Princeton discuss shared Catholic principles at the Polarization Convening.

TOP RIGHT
Christine Emba of the Washington Post speaks on the panel “How Do Principles of Catholic Social Thought Bring Us Together?”

BOTTOM LEFT
Co-convener Kim Daniels welcomes guests to the Convening.

OPPOSITE PAGE
Panelists, including Sr. Teresa Maya and Archbishop José Gómez (far right), discuss bringing the joy of the Gospel to our divided nation.
MORAL AND POLICY QUESTIONS ON NUCLEAR ARMS AND NORTH KOREA

November 2, 2017 - Former defense secretary Chuck Hagel, USCCB International Policy Director Dr. Stephen Colecchi, and Catholic University of America’s Dr. Maryann Cusimano Love examined the moral, human, and policy questions surrounding the conflict with North Korea over nuclear weapons. They examined the policy dimensions and moral dangers of the crisis and called for the pursuit of dialogue.

CONFRONTING RACISM IN OUR HEARTS AND IN OUR NATION

November 13, 2017 - Civil rights icon Representative John Lewis; Archbishop Wilton Gregory of Atlanta; Professor Dr. Marcia Chatelain, a leader in Georgetown’s response to slavery; and Sojourners President Jim Wallis drew a standing-room-only crowd to Dahlgren Chapel for a powerful conversation on the moral imperative of resisting racism in our hearts and society. In the context of prayer and song, these leaders explored the role of religious faith in resisting racism in the aftermath of the events in Charlottesville and discussed where we need to go as a nation and as people of faith in combating racism, bigotry, and privilege. President DeGioia opened the Dialogue and John Carr moderated the discussion, which was broadcast by C-SPAN.

SHARING THE JOURNEY WITH IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

February 5, 2018 - Cardinal Joseph Tobin of Newark led off a conversation on why and how we are called to defend the lives, dignity, and rights of immigrants and refugees in light of Pope Francis’ call to “share the journey.” Georgetown President John DeGioia opened the conversation that included two Georgetown students, Mizriam Belman Guerrero and Habon Ali, as they shared their experiences with DACA and explored the religious, moral, and human obligations to “welcome the stranger” in these difficult days.
FAITH AND THE FAITHFUL IN U.S. POLITICS

March 26, 2018 - Washington Post columnist E.J. Dionne, Obama White House faith leader Joshua Dubois, Pew Associate Research Director Jocelyn Kiley, and Bush White House advisor Peter Wehner offered an overview of changing religious dimensions of political life, including the elections of President Trump and Pope Francis. A standing-room-only crowd at Holy Trinity Parish heard them assess the roles of religious voters, evangelicals, and Catholics in a divided nation and polarized politics.

FAITH AND THE FAITHFUL IN THE REPUBLICAN PARTY

May 14, 2018 - Emily Ekins, director of polling at the Cato Institute; Michael Gerson, columnist at the Washington Post; Rev. Johnnie Moore, informal advisor to the Trump administration; Ramesh Ponnuru, senior editor for National Review; and Julie Zauzmer, religion reporter at the Washington Post, focused on the roles of religious voters and communities in the Republican Party. They examined religious elements of the Republican coalitions and agenda, and the impact of President Trump on evangelical, Catholic, and other religious communities within the GOP.

FAITH AND THE FAITHFUL IN THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY

June 18, 2018 - Justin Giboney, president of the AND Campaign; Cecil Roberts, president of the United Mine Workers of America; Elizabeth Podrebarac Scupac, research associate at Pew Research Center; and Michael Wear, founder of Public Square Strategies, offered an analysis of the “religion problem” facing the Democratic Party. They discussed the role of evangelical, Catholic, African-American, and Latino religious communities in the Democratic coalition and its future policies and directions.

PUBLIC DIALOGUES

The Initiative organizes and hosts civil and substantive Dialogues on the implications of Catholic Social Thought in public life and on key domestic and international policy issues. The events involve respected policymakers, journalists, scholars, religious leaders, and other experts. This year, the Initiative hosted a three-part series on “Faith and the Faithful in U.S. Politics.” Initiative Director John Carr moderated lively and candid roundtable discussions with diverse political and religious leaders, and experts from polling and media organizations. They explored the often misunderstood religious dimensions of faith in public life, addressing confusion and conflict and how these factors are changing and challenging both religious and political leaders. This timely series was co-sponsored by the Georgetown Institute of Politics and Public Service and supported by the Democracy Fund.
OTHER PUBLIC DIALOGUES

A CONVERSATION ON THE MESSAGE OF DISARMING BEAUTY AND THE MISSION OF POPE FRANCIS

November 13, 2017 - Archbishop Christophe Pierre, papal nuncio to the United States, and Father Julián Carrón, the global leader of the Catholic movement Communion and Liberation, explored how faith is more relationship and encounter than a body of thought and what freedom means in our Church, our society, and our lives. They explored how the countercultural message of Fr. Carrón’s book Disarming Beauty and the compelling mission of Pope Francis challenge America’s assumptions, ideologies, and politics.

This Dialogue was made possible by the support of the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation and the Crossroads Cultural Center.

THE FRANCIS FACTOR AT FIVE YEARS: REFLECTION AND DIALOGUE

February 13, 2018 - Father Antonio Spadaro, S.J., editor in chief of La Civiltà Cattolica and key advisor and ally of Pope Francis, outlined the Pope’s geopolitical vision and diplomacy in these dangerous times. Sister Norma Pimentel, executive director of Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande; Kirsten Powers, political commentator at CNN; and Greg Erlandson, editor in chief of Catholic News Service, explored the “Francis factor” five years after his election, including his current impact and future challenges on issues of immigration, clerical sexual abuse, and women. President DeGioia opened the evening and John Carr moderated the discussion.

December 16, 2017 - Fifty years after the death of Father John Courtney Murray, Bishop Robert McElroy of San Diego; Melissa Rogers, former executive director of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships; and Richard Garnett, professor of law and associate dean at the University of Notre Dame, explored the legacy and lessons of Murray’s groundbreaking work on faith and democracy. Panelists discussed current opportunities and obstacles for religious freedom and the common good. Initiative Director John Carr moderated the conversation, which was supported by the Democracy Fund.

FAITH, COMMON GOOD, AND DEMOCRACY IN A TIME OF POPE FRANCIS AND PRESIDENT TRUMP

November 16, 2017 - Public dialogue participants discuss the impact of faith, the faithful, and Pope Francis at Initiative Public Dialogues this year.
SHAPING A NEW GENERATION OF LEADERS

The Initiative regularly brings together young Catholics in Washington to explore links between faith, Catholic Social Thought, and their lives and work, especially on public policy. These unique Salt and Light Gatherings are for Catholics under 40 who work on Capitol Hill, in the administration, government, or other public policy organizations. They are held in the Capitol or the Georgetown School of Continuing Studies with presentations and discussion on a critical topic, networking opportunities, and a reception. The Initiative also organizes regular dialogues and receptions for young Latino leaders in Washington to explore connections between their faith, Catholic social teaching, and their professional lives.

SALT AND LIGHT GATHERINGS

PURSUING CIVILITY, THE COMMON GOOD, AND BIPARTISAN PROGRESS IN A DIVIDED NATION

January 29, 2018 - In the U.S. Capitol, Senator Tim Scott (R-SC), Representative John Delaney (D-MD), and Representative Debbie Dingell (D-IL) shared the urgency and opportunities to work together in principled and productive ways in the current polarized political environment. John Carr moderated this timely discussion to encourage and enrich the work of young policy leaders on Capitol Hill and beyond. The event was broadcast by C-SPAN and supported by the Democracy Fund.

LATINO LEADERS PROGRAM

The Latino Leaders Program offers dialogues about key issues and personal stories about faith and public life from distinguished Latinos and other leaders. These events also offer valuable opportunities for reflection, networking, and community-building. Past topics include the impact of a pope from Latin America, immigration issues, and lay leadership in the Latino community.
STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Integrating Catholic Social Thought into the academic and community life of Georgetown University is a central dimension of the Initiative’s mission. The Initiative engages students through an academic seminar and extracurricular opportunities, and through collaboration and partnerships with a broad range of Georgetown structures and organizations, including the President’s Office; Mission and Ministry; the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs; the Institute for Politics and Public Service; and the Center for Social Justice, Research, Teaching, and Service.

CATHOLIC SOCIAL THOUGHT FELLOWS

The Initiative selects several undergraduate students to serve as Catholic Social Thought Fellows, offering academic enrichment, professional development, leadership opportunities, and opportunities to contribute to substantive discussions online, all of which broadens their knowledge and enhances their communication skills. This past year, three fellows worked to advance the Initiative’s mission of sharing Catholic social teaching and reaching young public policy professionals and lay leaders.

CATHOLIC SOCIAL THOUGHT SEMINAR

Initiative Director John Carr created and teaches the seminar “Pope Francis, Catholic Social Thought, and Public Life: Principles, Policies, and Politics.” As an adjunct professor in the Department of Theology, his seminar analyzes and discusses the messages and leadership of Pope Francis and the principal themes of Catholic social teaching, along with their applications to key issues in American public life. The seminar also examines and discusses the uses and misuses of Catholic Social Thought in U.S. politics.

From Pyeongchang to the Vatican

Hunter Estes (SFS’19)

...As we approached this year’s Winter Olympics, a nuclear fog hung over the Korean Peninsula.... The Olympics brought renewed tension to one of the most critical issues of our time.

...The conversation over nuclear policy which emerged during the last few weeks has brought to mind an opportunity which I had last November. I was blessed to have the chance to attend a conference on nuclear disarmament at the Vatican.

Catholic Social Thought offers the follower of international relations a foundation upon which to approach discussions over nuclear policy. In the past year, the Vatican has made its goal to eliminate nuclear weapons quite clear to the world. It has been one of the primary leaders of a bill in the United Nations calling for global nuclear disarmament. Hence the conference was a continuation of the Vatican’s global leadership on this issue.

...The highlight of the conference had to be when the Pope addressed us in the Vatican Palace.... He spoke to a vision of peace, hope, and optimism, which he hoped could take hold of the world.

...I left the meeting and the conference inspired and energized for further discussions on nuclear policy. The Catholic Church is attempting to continue its role as a global leader on this issue. It is attempting to hold true to the message of universal human dignity which lays the foundation for Catholic Social Thought.
SHARING CATHOLIC SOCIAL THOUGHT

The Initiative’s director, John Carr, spearheads many outreach efforts on campus and beyond. He’s deeply involved in Georgetown’s Socially Responsible Investment Policy and regularly offers informed analysis to journalists and news media. Catholic media also regularly cover Initiative programming, with articles appearing in Catholic News Service, National Catholic Reporter, National Catholic Register, Our Sunday Visitor, Crux, EWTN, Millennial, and the Catholic Standard.

INITIATIVE DIRECTOR JOHN CARR

John Carr is the founder and director of the Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life and an adjunct professor of theology at Georgetown University. Carr has been a leader at the intersection of faith and public life for four decades. He served as executive director of the Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops for more than 20 years. In 2017, he was elected chair of the board of Bread for the World and was a founder and leader of the Circle of Protection, an ecumenical coalition that seeks to defend the lives and dignity of the poor in the federal budget process. In 2016-2017, Carr was a Washington correspondent and columnist for America Magazine and in 2012 he served as a residential fellow at the Harvard Institute of Politics.

Over the years, Carr has been interviewed by a number of outlets including:

Washington Post       Politico
New York Times        Religion News Service
Wall Street Journal    ABC
Associated Press       CBS
Economist              NBC
USA Today             PBS
Boston Globe
Roll Call

“Since its founding in 2013, the Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life has brought together thousands of individuals in dialogue and reflection. It has enabled our community to engage the values that animate the mission of our university and to embrace the message of Pope Francis.”

– John J. DeGioia, President, Georgetown University

“John Carr...leads the Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life at Georgetown University. His team is helping to bridge divides in the capital of our national divisions—not easily done, but they are trying and largely succeeding.”

– America Magazine, May 28, 2018

GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE INVESTMENT POLICY

Initiative Director John Carr assists Georgetown leadership in the area of Socially Responsible Investment Policy in several ways. He serves as a presidential appointee to the Committee on Investments and Social Responsibility (CISR). He also assisted the Georgetown University Board Working Group which developed an overall policy on socially responsible investing that was adopted by the GU Board of Trustees in May 2017. In addition, Carr served on a task group for the Catholic Theological Society of America (CTSA) regarding investment in fossil fuels, making two presentations at the annual meeting of the CTSA. He also represented Georgetown at the “Vatican Conference on Impact Investing.”
INVESTING IN THE INITIATIVE

The Initiative’s remarkable progress in its first five years has been due to the leadership of President John DeGioia and the assistance of Chief of Staff Joe Ferrara and Vice President for Global Engagement Thomas Banchoff, along with many others in the President’s Office; at the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs; and in the Office of the Vice President for Global Engagement. The active support and participation of many other leaders and allies in the Catholic and Washington communities is essential to our success. None of this would have been possible without the investment, support, and leadership of Msgr. John Enzler, W. Shep Abell, Chris Dorment, Maury Devine, and so many other friends, donors, and allies, including:

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NEW INITIATIVE ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, KIM DANIELS

Kim Daniels served as a co-convener and key consultant to the Convening in June of 2018. In August of 2018, she became the new associate director, bringing her broad experience and connections, legal and policy expertise, and communication skills to the Initiative. She leads the Initiative’s Salt and Light and Latino Leaders Programs and plays a key role in other Initiative activities. A graduate of Princeton and the University of Chicago Law School, Kim has been a leader at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and a key advisor to Catholic leaders on immigration, religious liberty, and other issues. Kim was appointed by Pope Francis as a member of the Vatican Secretariat for Communication in 2016.

INITIATIVE STAFF

PROGRAM DIRECTOR ANGELA MILLER MCGRaw
Angela Miller McGraw concluded three years of service to the Initiative in June of 2018. She helped organize the Salt and Light Gatherings and the Latino Leaders Program, in addition to contributing to the Initiative’s other activities. Miller McGraw also helped connect the Initiative to other Georgetown activities, structures, and groups.

PROJECT MANAGER MONICA FINNEGAN
During the 2017-2018 academic year, Monica Finnegan coordinated the Initiative’s programs and convenings, including logistics and finances. She oversaw communication and promotion strategies and managed traditional, digital, and social media outreach for the Initiative. She played a key role in organizing the polarization Convening.
“An authentic faith—which is never comfortable or completely personal—always involves a deep desire to change the world, to transmit values, to leave this earth somehow better than we found it.”

–Pope Francis