



Editorial

Inside these subsequent pages, the fourth annual volume of *Theophilus: The Student Journal of Catholic Theological Union* features authors from a variety of constituencies, backgrounds, and communities. Each of them, unique in their approach and methodology to tend to the pastoral and intellectual, offers us a look at what catholic, theological, praxis-based, and Word-infused scholarship looks like in a world such as that of today.

Within the context of a year doused in repugnant rhetoric and teeming with historically-based racism, xenophobia, exclusion, and intolerance, these pieces of theological writing invite the labored mind into an exercise of solitude, one not fixed on relaxation and escape from an imperfect world, but one centered upon contemplative justice radiating toward visible and tangible action. This, of course, is at the heart of the Gospel message that Jesus so boldly preached and fulfilled, not to mention one of Pope Francis's most recurrent and significant exhortations to the global Church today.

In this year's volume, the article foci invite us to pray and reflect upon such difficult issues as domestic violence, its implications, and how Scripture, in rather surprising and equivocal ways, can offer us more than a few avenues of solace and comfort from such unspeakable pain and suffering. Similarly, we are thrown into the realm of the unfamiliar with two pieces that speak to the awesome and sometimes apprehensive area of interreligious dialogue. Utilizing historical bridge-builders between varying faith traditions and attempting to delve deeper into somewhat "forbidden" topics of theological discrepancy, these pieces allow the reader a taste of unifying foresight that only a gracious and loving God could excite. With the fourth article, we are again thrown into the world of Scripture and its linguistic tendencies. In doing so, we discover and simultaneously explore a world oft-forgotten by our habitual Lectionary guidelines—one steeped with the deepest and most genuine depictions of God's absolute and loving solidarity to be with those who suffer the most. Finally, our selection of articles closes with a somewhat mystical experience. The fifth piece jostles the "normalcy" of our theological language, relying on Julian of Norwich and her intra/interrelational theology to demonstrate and exhibit the feminine/maternal image as something quite authentic, accessible, and wholeheartedly divine.

In addition to our article entries for the 2017 volume of *Theophilus*, we introduce three distinctly-positioned, yet collectively-aligned special topic pieces or fora, all focusing on the pertinent, and recently vitriolic, intersection of religion and politics. Fueled by the anterior election cycle, all the while entangled and absorbed within an international landscape of violence, terror, and animosity, these three authors utilize a variety of theological tools to continue the ever-salient struggle for justice and peace, equally contingent upon our efforts in both the public and private spheres of life.

Consequently, we hope that in the pages ahead you will find something of what you are desiring most these days, or more aptly that you encounter what God has laid in store for you. Whether that pertains to "breaking the cycle of violence"¹ in our world today, or engaging in the rich, yet humbling "kenotic dialogic praxis"² that

1 Michael J. Brennan, "Matthew's Fifth Antithesis and Domestic Violence," *Theophilus: The Student Journal of Catholic Theological Union* 4, no. 1 (May 2017): 4, 6.

2 Mary Jo Curtsinger, "Kenotic and Trinitarian Theology in Interreligious Dialogue," *Theophilus: The Student Journal of Catholic Theological Union* 4,

comes from working with those with whom we are different, let us be mindful that God's call is one of love and forgiveness. And so similarly it is "Jesus [who] calls us to emulate that love"³ and mercy for the sake of humanity and all of creation, in order that we may reach "a richer level of understanding"⁴ with each other and ourselves. Moreover, may we always keep in mind that radically intrinsic connection between ourselves and the Creator, the one who is constantly "pushing us beyond our comfort zones and deeper into the divine mystery"⁵ that is God's self.

In the peace of Christ,

Andrew Nicholas Cirillo and Jason D. Graves, O.F.M. Cap.

Co-Editors

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no. 1 (May 2017): 24.

3 Gerald E. Nora, "Moved from His Inward Parts: Jesus's Human and Divine Compassion in the Gospel of Luke," *Theophilus: The Student Journal of Catholic Theological Union* 4, no. 1 (May 2017): 43.

4 Donald H. J. Hermann, "Understanding Mary in Muslim-Christian Dialogue in Relation to Muslim Missionary Instruction and Christian Proclamation," *Theophilus: The Student Journal of Catholic Theological Union* 4, no. 1 (May 2017): 25.

5 Esther Sanborn, "The Comfort and Challenge of Julian of Norwich's *Showings* for Contemporary Catholic Spirituality," *Theophilus: The Student Journal of Catholic Theological Union* 4, no. 1 (May 2017): 54.