

REPORT OF THE COLLEGE THEOLOGY SOCIETY

2014 Convention Summary

NEARLY 275 members of the College Theology Society gathered for the Sixtieth Annual Convention from May 28 to June 1 at Saint Vincent College in Latrobe, Pennsylvania. The theme, “God Has Begun a Great Work in Us: The Embodiment of Love in Consecrated Life and New Ecclesial Movements,” was developed in consultation with Annual Volume editors Shannon Schrein and Jason King and generated 108 papers and panel presentations in the twenty-one sections of the meeting. The three plenaries featured biblical scholar Sandra Schneiders (“Catholic Women’s Religious Life: Renewal or Demise?”), the Most Reverend Joseph W. Tobin, Archbishop of Indianapolis (“A Great History Still to Be Accomplished? Prospects for the Future of Consecrated Life in the Church-Communio”), and systematic theologian Dennis Doyle (“Extraordinary Love in the Lives of Lay People”). Other highlights of the convention included the screening of two films, *We Shall Not Be Moved: The Catholic Sisters of New Orleans* and *Interrupted Lives: Catholic Sisters under European Communism*, with a “talk back” with the producer of the latter, as well as preconvention guided tours of two points of interest affiliated with Saint Vincent: the Fred Rogers Museum and a local wildlife preserve and water reclamation project. As in 2013, Boston College and Fordham University sponsored a Saturday evening wine and dessert reception for roughly forty members of the Women’s Caucus.

Brian Doyle, Chair of the Awards Committee, announced Christina Astorga of the University of Portland as the recipient of the 2013 Book of the Year Award for her work entitled *Catholic Moral Theology and Social Ethics: A New Method* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2014). The Best Article Award went to Elizabeth Gandolfo of Furman University for her essay titled “Mary Kept These Things, Pondering Them in Her Heart: Breastfeeding as Contemplative Practice and Sources for Theology,” which appeared in the Fall 2013 issue of *Spiritus: A Journal of Christian Spirituality*. The Susan Perry Graduate Student Essay Award went to Rachele Barina of Saint Louis University for “Sacramental Practice and the Practice of Medicine: The Importance of Formation for the Clinical Encounter.”

At the business meeting, outgoing President Sandra Yocum thanked outgoing board members Christopher Denny and Tobias Winright for their service, and welcomed the new President, Bill Portier, along with incoming board members Susie Babka and Andrew Getz. Yocum also discussed the challenges of the society's website, particularly in the areas of membership renewals and convention registration, as well as temporary and long-term solutions. The former involves contracting with a web designer to fill in the gaps, while the Technology Task Force will address the latter by identifying a more permanent company to handle all of the society's web and social media needs. Secretary Nicholas Rademacher shared membership levels: 359 total active members as of May 28, 2014 (down from 467 as of November 2013, and 390 in May 2013). Treasurer Brian Flanagan indicated that the recent dues increase has assisted in stabilizing the financial situation and will continue to do so as we maintain our membership more skillfully. The society continues to operate with a deficit, in part because of increased technology costs, and the shortfall has been met through the small yet consistent surplus funds from annual conventions. Vice President Maureen O'Connell thanked Brian Doyle, Jason King, and Stephen Casey for their service on the Awards Committee, and noted that Tim Brunk and Alice Laffey would replace Mary Doak and Bill Portier on the Nominations Committee. She also reported that regional meetings were held in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and New York during the 2013–14 academic year. Director of Annual Conventions David Gentry Akins praised local coordinators Chris McMahan and Jason King for their efforts in supporting a successful 2014 convention. He also announced the theme and location for the 2015 gathering: "An Unexpected Wilderness: Seeking God on a Changing Planet" at the University of Portland. Venues beyond 2015 include Rockhurst University in Kansas City, Missouri (2016); Salve Regina University in Newport, Rhode Island (2017); and St. Catherine University in St. Paul, Minnesota (2018). Anthony Godzieba, Editor of *Horizons*, reported on the advantages of the society's recently established partnership with Cambridge University Press, including increased web access for articles, and promotional materials for both the journal and the society at the CUP booth at AAR/SBL. William Collinge, Director of Publications, discussed the success of the 2013 annual volume (*Handing on the Faith*, College Theology Society Annual Volume 59 [Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books]), as well as the progress he and a committee on the board have made toward revising the board policy manual.

The business meeting also featured updates on the progress of various task forces created by the board at the May 2013 meeting. Yocum outlined the strategies of the Technology Task Force, chaired by board member Reid Locklin, including identifying a new web design and maintenance contractor,

and developing an ex officio board position focused on social media and web presence to be vetted by the full membership in 2015. Brian Flanagan spoke for outgoing board members and the Chair of the Membership Task Force Chris Denny, and discussed various strategies for bolstering membership, including targeted outreach to members who have not renewed because of complications with the website, a letter campaign to directors of graduate programs outlining the benefits of CTS for graduate students, and promotion of a worship service and panel discussion on water issues in Southern California to be held during the AAR in San Diego. Flanagan also outlined the plans for the Development Task Force, primarily an Annual Fund appeal to existing members to support the work of the society. The Program Task Force, chaired by Maureen O'Connell, reported on the successful panel discussion on Pope Francis executed at AAR in 2013 by Chris Denny, and the similar event planned for AAR in November 2014.

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