

Worldwide “Aquinas at 800” Conference Comes to Campus

Speakers explore thought of medieval theologian and Church doctor

CALEB VAUGHAN
Staff Writer

The Jacques Maritain Center, in partnership with 12 other institutes, offices, and departments at Notre Dame and Saint Mary’s College, hosted a conference entitled “Aquinas at 800: *Ad multos annos.*”

800 years after St. Thomas Aquinas’ birth (circa 1224), the conference explored the ongoing importance of his thought in contemporary cultural, philosophical, and theological discussions. The conference, which ran from September 22 to September 25, featured over 150 speakers from around the world. More than 580 people registered to attend the conference in person while more tuned in online.

The Jacques Maritain Center exists to foster intellectual reflection and discourse on philosophical and theological matters particularly in light of Aquinas and 20th century French theologian Jacques Maritain. Therese Cory, director of the center and John and Jean



Image by Jacques Maritain Center

Oesterle Associate Professor of Thomistic Studies, explained to the *Rover* that Aquinas remains relevant to this day because of “the systematicity of his thought” and his “commitment to integrating faith and reason.”

Following Sunday Mass, the conference kicked off with a keynote address by Jean Porter, John A. O’Brien Professor of Theology at Notre Dame. Porter’s talk reflected on the

juxtaposition of divine charity and justice, and how Aquinas’ thought can help rectify the two virtues. Following her address, professor of theology William Mattison presented a Festschrift, a tribute of academic essays written in honor of Porter’s distinguished career and retirement.

The conference continued over the next two days, featuring a series of talks

and presentations relating to the moral, philosophical, and theological works of St. Thomas Aquinas. In addition to Porter, keynote speakers included Doctor Rudi te Velde, professor of philosophy at Tilburg University in Holland, Father Serge-Thomas Bonino, O.P., Dean of Philosophy at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas (Angelicum), and Father Thomas Joseph

White, O.P., Rector Magnificus of the Angelicum.

Fr. White’s keynote address focused on Aquinas’ treatment of the atonement. Particularly, he described Christ’s crucifixion as an act of atonement, his dual natures as both God and man, and how his death leads to divine and human glory.

Reflecting on the conference as an “intellectual feast,” Fr. White told the *Rover*, “This is one of the largest conferences on Thomas Aquinas’ thought to take place anywhere in the world for the last 20 or 30 years, so it’s a very important event for encouraging a new, renewed interest in St. Thomas and his philosophy, his theology, his moral and political thinking.”

Fr. White is also a member of the Hillbilly Thomists, a bluegrass band of Dominican priests who performed at the DeBartolo Performing Arts Center (DPAC) on Tuesday as part of the conference.

A common theme among conference attendees was a delight at seeing so many

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Doug Thompson Hired as Inaugural Executive Director of Diversity and Engagement Administration, students speak on DEI at a Catholic university

CATALINA SCHEIDER GALIÑANES
Staff Writer

Doug Thompson joined Notre Dame as the inaugural Executive Director of Diversity and Engagement on July 1, 2024. Thompson’s position is a new addition to the Division of Student Affairs.

An announcement, released by the Division of Student Affairs on May 15, states that “Thompson will establish a sixth unit for Diversity and Engagement within the Division of Student Affairs to nurture belonging and inclusion among all students while further engaging underrepresented voices throughout the Notre Dame community.”

Thompson told the *Rover* that he is “dedicated to creating a welcoming environment where every student feels a true sense

of belonging and can experience meaningful connections with God and one another.”

The five existing units within the Division of Student Affairs are Residential Life, Student Health and Wellness, Student Development, Career and Professional Development, and Campus Ministry. Each of these areas is led by an Assistant Vice President, but Thompson’s role is unique as an “Executive Director.”

The new Diversity and Engagement unit encompasses the Center for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI), in addition to Multicultural Student Programs and Services, the Gender Relations Center, and the Office of Student Enrichment. The growth of the Division of Student Affairs is part of the Strategic Framework announced last academic year. One of the

plan’s objectives is to “enhance initiatives and practices that contribute to diversity, equity, and inclusion at Notre Dame.”

Thompson holds his doctoral degree in leadership for the advancement of learning and service from Cardinal Stritch University. He comes to Notre Dame from his previous role as inaugural Vice President for Equity and Inclusion at Gustavus Adolphus College. Thompson’s office at Gustavus was an addition to the President’s Cabinet and “focused specifically on diversity, equity, inclusion, and racial justice.”

Thompson’s Notre Dame biography also includes extensive experience in administrative roles, previously serving as Associate Dean of Students at the University of St. Thomas and Assistant Dean for Equity and

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Hillbilly Thomists Perform at Notre Dame

Dominican bluegrass band speaks with the Rover

DORA TOMKO
Staff Writer

The Hillbilly Thomists, a bluegrass band of Dominican friars, performed for a sold-out crowd at the DeBartolo Performing Arts Center on September 24. The concert was part of the “Aquinas at 800” conference and was sponsored by the de Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture (dCEC) and the Center for Citizenship and Constitutional Government (CCCCG).

Despite a tornado warning on campus earlier in the night, Leighton Concert Hall was filled with excited attendees. From the Thomists attending the conference, to Notre Dame students, to South Bend families, all were able to enjoy welcome relief from the storm outside through music.

The *Rover* had the opportunity to speak to Fr. Simon Teller, O.P., a vocalist and fiddler in the band, and current chaplain at Providence College. When asked what the most important message the band could bring to Catholic college students was, Fr. Simon answered: “I think a lot of our songs have a sort of optimism behind suffering, because after the Cross comes the Resurrection.”

Fr. Simon continued, “No matter how far we fall, no matter how much we sin, God’s mercy is great. ... He can bring you with Him from death to life.”

The band takes its name from a comment by the author Flannery O’Connor, a nineteenth century Catholic novelist and essayist from Georgia: “Everybody who has read *Wise Blood* thinks I’m a hillbilly nihilist, whereas I’m a

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THE FINE PRINT

Founded in 2003, the *Irish Rover* is an independent, Catholic newspaper published fortnightly by students of the University of Notre Dame du Lac, and, as such, it receives no funding or official recognition from the University. Indeed, the ideas presented herein are not necessarily those of the University, although they probably should be.

The *Rover* was established by Notre Dame students who desired a strong and organized conservative voice on campus with the primary purpose of keeping the University true to its founding mission as a Roman Catholic institution. The *Rover* seeks to facilitate part of what the University's mission statement desires in its community: "a forum where through free inquiry and open discussion the various lines of Catholic thought may intersect with all the forms of knowledge found in the arts, sciences, professions, and every other area of human scholarship and creativity." To provide this forum, the *Rover* offers a distinctive kind of coverage that includes campus news, religion, politics, culture, history, and humor.

Out of civility, the *Rover* will not critically mention names of students, professors, or administrators, unless the person is either a well-known member of the community, or he or she has openly sought publicity. Unsigned editorials represent the majority opinion of the *Rover's* Editorial Board, while content in individual columns represents the views of each respective author and should not be construed as representing the views of the entire staff. All comments and questions regarding the *Rover's* policies and editorial content, as well as Letters to the Editor, may be directed to the Editor-in-Chief, Michael Canady, at NDIrishRover@gmail.com or PO Box 46 Notre Dame IN 46556. These letters may be printed anonymously, upon request. Also, please visit our website www.irishrover.net, where you can peruse archives and subscribe to the paper.

“The true Christian is a warrior, not because he loves the fight, but because he loves the truth.” St. John Henry Cardinal Newman



Image by Matt Cashore

Notre Dame is Turning

MICHAEL CANADY
 Editor-In-Chief



Notre Dame is a microcosm of the Catholic Church in America. We too have our fair share of students who are “cafeteria Catholic,” “trad,” “creaster,” and “based.” But similar to the trend of American Catholicism, Notre Dame has shifted over the past decade. For the better.

During my time at Notre Dame, I’ve heard many harsh critiques of the university’s deviance from Catholic teaching, and I’ve made a lot of them as well. But what many onlookers don’t realize is that, despite—and often because of—challenges to the Catholic faith, campus life is bursting with opportunities for spiritual and intellectual growth.

First, several organizations on campus—all established relatively recently in the history of Notre Dame—have responded enthusiastically to Blessed Basil Moreau’s call to educate the “mind, body, and heart” of students in the true tradition of the faith.

One of these organizations is the Sorin Fellows Program, founded in 2014 as part of the de Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture. As a community of undergraduate, graduate, and professional students, the Sorin Fellows Program provides “integral student formation in the Catholic tradition,” according to their website. Programming includes

international pilgrimages, dinners with professors, stimulating lectures, and much more. The Sorin Fellows Program currently has close to 500 undergraduate members.

Another recently-founded organization is the Center for Citizenship and Constitutional Government (CCCCG), established in 2021 in conjunction with the minor in constitutional studies, itself created in 2012. Similar to the Sorin Fellows Program, the CCCC forms students in the intellectual tradition of America with classes in the undergraduate minor, notable speakers, and a flourishing community of students.

The CCCC explicitly supports the university’s mission to educate students in the Catholic faith. According to its website, “The Center aspires to further Notre Dame’s Catholic character and mission by providing a forum where, through free inquiry and reasoned discussion, the Catholic intellectual tradition is brought to bear on enduring and contemporary questions concerning a just constitutional order.”

Yet another organization that actively furthers the university’s Catholic character is the Business Honors Program (BHP), established in 2021 in the Mendoza College of Business. The BHP is a three-year course of study and programming that consists of classes, colloquia, networking opportunities, personal mentorship, and faith formation.

And like the Sorin Fellows Program and the CCCC, the BHP’s mission page also affirms its commitment to Catholicism: “While market trends come and go, we orient ourselves to the eternal. Our Catholic identity informs our approach to structuring a business education and to preparing our students for virtuous careers and lives.”

But even aside from these

recently-formed institutional organizations—and others that go unmentioned—the student population itself has also shown signs of a Catholic shift.

Every week, over 200 Masses are celebrated on campus, which many students attend daily. Adoration times amount to almost 50 hours combined. The basilica’s daily confession lines often stretch to over 30 students. Perhaps most significantly, a record number of 61 students are currently participating in Campus Ministry’s formation to receive Sacraments of Initiation this year, with 30 preparing to enter the Church. And if you ask Catholic professors, priests, and alumni of the university, they will tell you that Notre Dame students are more devout than ever.

This trend is mirrored by a more general return to conservative ideas and values. According to a recent *Irish Rover* poll, undergraduate students favor Donald Trump in the upcoming presidential race, 48 percent to Harris’ 46 percent. Compare that to 2020, when a different poll showed Biden ahead with 66 percent of the student body to Trump’s 29 percent. A decrease in support of the party of abortion, birth control, and LGBTQ+ rights is clearly a step in favor of Catholic principles.

Certainly, Notre Dame has its failings, and I write not to inspire a false security, but rather hope and action in the midst of adversity. Readers of the *Rover* need not look far beyond our website’s front page to find examples of scandal at Our Lady’s University. In accordance with the mission of the *Rover* itself, we conduct our reporting to draw attention to these failings, but more importantly to unite the university’s actions to her original mission and to the convictions of so many current students, faculty, and alumni.

But even the flaws—tragic,

to be sure—can nevertheless prompt students to grow in their faith while defending their beloved institution.

To name one example, a recent article in the *National Catholic Register* describes the conversion of one student’s entire family, in which his brother’s specific motivation for conversion was his participation in the protest of last year’s drag show. The student—a current senior at Notre Dame—explained his family’s conversion in a post on X, saying, “[I]t was really enemies of the Church who did the most to help them become Catholic.”

This story does not stand alone. The *Rover* itself attempts to bring its readers, writers, and staff closer to God through its work of upholding truth and combating the attacks on the university’s Catholic character.

Notre Dame is a battleground, and students should come ready to defend the faith with prudence, fortitude, and charity. Our Lady’s University has not forsaken her authentic mission like so many other formerly-Catholic institutions, and innumerable professors remain thoroughly devoted to Notre Dame’s tradition of academic excellence and formation of Catholic virtue. Through it all, Notre Dame still provides students with ever-growing resources—spiritual, intellectual, and communal—to fight the battle and emerge victorious.

Michael Canady is a junior studying classics from Falls Church, Virginia. He can be reached at mcanady@nd.edu.



Institute for Irish Studies Hosts Pro-Abortion Author

Clair Wills speaks on sexual secrecy and abortion access in Ireland

ABBY STRELOW
Staff Writer

The Keough-Naughton Institute for Irish Studies hosted author and Cambridge professor Clair Wills as part of its Fall 2024 speaker series. In her lecture on September 27, entitled “Making Sense of the Missing: the Family, the Church and ‘the Home’ in Twentieth-century Irish Society,” Wills discussed her book *Missing Persons, or My Grandmother’s Secrets*. Additionally, she spoke about the history of sexual secrecy, unwanted pregnancies, and homes for single mothers in Ireland.

Wills, who has authored several pro-abortion articles, including “Quickening, or How to Plot an Abortion,” is a public advocate for access to contraception and abortion. She told the *Rover*, “In [my] book, I write about deciding not to have an abortion when I was in my mid-twenties, and the great thing about that was I could decide. And I think if I had not had that choice, my history would have been extremely difficult.”

When asked by the *Rover* about her abortion stance conflicting with Catholic teaching, Wills responded, “My experience on this comes from doing this research into the way that Catholic institutions have looked after, or more likely not looked after, women and their children.”

In her lecture, Wills told the story of her own cousin, Mary, who was born out of wedlock in a home for unmarried women and their children. With her legitimacy rejected by the family, Mary’s life was kept a secret. By the time Wills knew of her cousin’s existence, it was too late to meet her—Mary had committed suicide.

As she searched for information about Mary, Wills investigated “Mother and Baby Homes,” Irish religious institutions for single mothers and their children. Alongside industrial workhouses and orphanages, “Mother and Baby Homes” were Ireland’s response to illegitimate pregnancies in the 1900s. According to Wills, families of single mothers often forced them to disappear from society and to enter these institutions.

Using her personal story to emphasize the tragedy and frequency of such occurrences in twentieth-century Ireland, Wills highlighted the institutional abuse that often occurred within Mother and Baby Homes, citing the discovery of a mass grave of nearly 800 children’s bodies in a septic tank in Galway.

Regarding the Catholic Church’s stance on abortion, Wills said to the *Rover*, “When you look at those 800 babies deposited in the septic tank, you have to question the extent to which the Catholic Church really does care about children.”

During the lecture, Wills also raised questions about sexual secrecy, familial violence, and the Church’s role in sending women into homes that, according to her, “governed and controlled Irish sexual and reproductive lives.”

After exploring why families may have consented to a system of “disappearing” mothers and their children, Wills finished her talk with an exhortation. Wills asked the audience to take accountability for society’s treatment of single mothers and their children and to bring issues of unwanted pregnancies and sexual shame to the light.

She told her listeners, “My family kept the secrets of sex and pregnancy and childbirth for a mixture of reasons, and some of them were good, but there is no sense in keeping those secrets anymore. We will never make sense of the missing if we don’t talk about them.”

Wills claimed that institutional abuses in Ireland and other countries are a result of limited access to contraception and abortion, saying, “Once reproductive rights are curtailed, then you end up having institutions to look after people who will be left without resources, and those institutions in themselves can [become] repressive.”

Abortion was banned in Ireland under the Eighth Amendment to the Irish Constitution until 2018, when the 36th Amendment allowed the Irish parliament to amend the country’s ban.

In a comment to the *Rover*, Wills called Ireland’s abortion legislation a lesson to the United States, saying, “Conservative Catholics were nervous that



Image by the Irish Rover

[legal contraception] would be a kind of open door ... to legalizing abortion. ... So they brought in the Eighth Amendment, which made abortion completely anti-constitutional. Not just illegal, but completely illegal. And that has caused untold deaths of parents, deaths of mothers, deaths of children.”

Freshman Deirdre Tomasek commented on Wills’ pro-abortion stance compared to the Catholic mission of the university, saying, “I think if she were trying to make people pro-abortion, then it would be contradictory to the mission. But if she’s sharing her story in such a way that we can learn things from it ... then it could still be a part of the mission.”

Tomasek continued, “If [Wills] was able to respect the pro-life stance and also ... bring to light the ways improvement is needed, then we can be united in our goal of better supporting expecting mothers, though maybe the way we seek to give that help takes different directions.”

Senior Kade Kruer shared

his impressions from the talk with the *Rover*, saying, “I’m not an Irish studies major, so it’s surprising to hear that Ireland had those institutions for women who got pregnant out of wedlock. It’s not surprising there was a lot of shame around it, given the Catholic culture, but to actually have state-run institutions for those women, it was quite shocking.”

Kruer continued, “Notre Dame is very Catholic, just like Ireland, so I think we can take a lot from it in terms of shame and guilt.”

In contrast, one junior minoring in Irish Studies expressed disappointment that Keough-Naughton invited Wills to speak. “As someone with Irish heritage, it’s a shame to see that Notre Dame is promoting pro-choice speakers under the Irish Studies banner.” She continued to the *Rover*, “I would love to see them host someone who embraces the Irish tradition of Catholicism and family life in the future.”

The Keough-Naughton

Institute hosts a series of speakers each semester to explore themes such as politics, migration, hunger, and religious issues in Ireland. According to its website, the Institute is “dedicated to the study and understanding of Irish culture ... in all its manifestations,” including literature, art, and music.

Since becoming part of the Keough School of Global Affairs in 2015, the Institute for Irish Studies has “sharpened its focus on policy and forces at work in Ireland today” by promoting research on a diverse range of topics and hosting speakers such as Clair Wills.

The Keough-Naughton Institute did not respond to requests for comment.

Abby Strelow is a freshman theology major who is currently drinking only chocolate milk in order to protest the gross South Bend drinking water. Send her encouragement at astrelow@nd.edu.



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Campus Ministry Holds Presidential Election Events

Series includes bipartisan discussions, lectures, debates

HALEY GARECHT

Campus Editor

Leading up to the U.S. presidential election, Notre Dame Campus Ministry is offering a series of events on faith and politics. According to the Campus Ministry website, the series seeks to “help everyone at Notre Dame engage [in the election] season with thoughtfulness and charity.”

In a comment to the *Rover*, Becky Czarnecki, Assistant Director of Faith and Justice in Campus Ministry, explained the purpose of the series: “We hope our series will facilitate meaningful conversation and help students engage with one another in thoughtful, charitable, and compassionate ways.”

Czarnecki continued, “Here in Campus Ministry, we want to create outlets for students to be guided by God’s voice with a posture of listening and respect as we approach this important election.”

On October 2, the series kicked off with a “Bipartisan Friendship Talk” in Duncan Student Center, led by Czarnecki. Attendees included students in a variety of disciplines from all four years. As students introduced themselves, many expressed their excitement about voting in an election for the first time and taking part in the democratic process.

Czarnecki began with a presentation on the Catholic Church’s teachings on politics, quoting the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ 2015 document “Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship.” “In the Catholic Tradition,” Czarnecki read, “responsible citizenship is a virtue, and participation in political life is a moral obligation.”

The presentation then addressed partisanship in the Church. “People don’t realize ... that the Church is not partisan. ... No one in the Catholic Church is supposed to tell you who to vote for.” Rather, Czarnecki asserted that Catholics “have to champion the marginalized and act for justice.” Because of the Church’s bipartisan nature, Czarnecki stated, “Two well-formed Catholics or Christian people can disagree on matters of prudential judgment.”

Czarnecki also presented an overview of Catholic Social Teaching, including principles of human dignity, the common good, solidarity, and subsidiarity. Specifically, Czarnecki focused



Image by Notre Dame Campus Ministry

on the Church’s call to a “consistent ethic of life,” citing a list of life-related issues, ranging from abortion to immigration. “This is really challenging for some people,” Czarnecki stated, “because if you try to pick [a] typical Democrat or typical Republican, you’re not going to fit on either side. ... There’s no perfect candidate in today’s U.S. election that ... champions all of these.”

Czarnecki’s statements mirrored similar comments made by Pope Francis earlier this year. During a press conference, the Holy Father spoke on the upcoming U.S. election, saying, “You have to vote, and you have to choose the lesser evil.” He continued, “What is the lesser evil? That woman, or that man? I don’t know. Each one, in his or her conscience, must think and do this.”

In the presentation’s second half, Czarnecki discussed polarization, following a framework created by Father Robert Aaron Wessman. Wessman describes polarization through three processes: sorting, homogenization, and intensification.

Czarnecki then opened the floor by asking students whether they experience any aspects of polarization at Notre Dame. Several students stated that they encounter a wide diversity of views in their conversations on campus, while others expressed disappointment that students often sorted into “groups” of those with similar opinions.

Czarnecki concluded the presentation with a video of

a TED talk on “bipartisan friendship” in action. The talk was given by Caitlin Quattromani and Laran Arledge, two lifelong friends with opposing political views. “For most of us, political conversations are a zero-sum game ...” Arledge says. “But what if we change the way we think about these conversations? What if, in these heated moments, we chose dialogue over debate?”

Following the video, Czarnecki led students in an exercise to practice bipartisan dialogue. Students were paired up and told to discuss the question, “Should there be a drag show at Notre Dame?”

After ten minutes of conversation, Czarnecki asked students to describe their experience discussing a “provocative” question. Students said that they enjoyed talking with people who weren’t necessarily their friends because it allowed them to be “upfront” about their views without fear of damaging relationships. Others said that they found the conversation easy because they were “indifferent” to the topic.

Following the event, Czarnecki spoke to the *Rover* about the importance of engaging in dialogue with others, saying, “These events, including my Bipartisan Friendship Talk, provide space for us all to engage in dialogue, rather than debate, and the opportunity to genuinely listen to one another with compassionate curiosity.” She continued, “Jesus tenderly listened to the needs of the people, with special attention for

the most marginalized, and he took time to reflect and pray.”

In a comment to the *Rover*, freshman Connor Savage praised the event: “I loved how the talk began with how we, as people of faith, should approach political discussion.” He also expressed appreciation for the event’s educational value, saying, “The talk supplied me with skills to have a productive dialogue with a friend I may not agree with politically. It was a great event to participate in during election season.”

Events concerning the election have an interested audience in the Notre Dame student body. A recent poll by the *Irish Rover* demonstrates that students are tuned-in to the election’s potential impact, with many stating strong opinions on the current administration’s policies. The poll shows strong division on campus, with former president Donald Trump favored by less than two percent.

Campus Ministry is not the only group leading student discussions on political discourse. BridgeND, Notre Dame’s chapter of BridgeUSA, offers students the opportunity to engage in political discussions year-round. According to the club’s website, BridgeND “[seeks] to engage students of all backgrounds and political ideologies to discuss public policy issues of national importance and encourage engagement with the political process.”

Junior Maddie Colbert, president of BridgeND, spoke on the importance of bipartisanship at Notre Dame in a comment

to the *Rover*. “As a Catholic, I think it is very important to show why civic engagement is a part of living out our faith, as we are called to promote the good of every person and the whole person,” she said.

Colbert added, “Being involved with BridgeND, I really enjoyed the event on bipartisan friendship, since learning how to have difficult conversations in a respectful way can deepen trust and understanding towards others.”

The series will continue on October 10 with Campus Ministry’s “Talk Justice, Eat Tacos” event, a “group discussion about living our faith as voters.” On October 28, Campus Ministry will host a “Restorative Justice Circle,” followed by “Mass for the Preservation of Peace and Justice” in the basilica on October 29. Finally, the series will conclude on Wednesday, November 6 with a “Post-Election Prayer Service” at the Our Lady of the Lake Peace Plaza.

Haley Garecht is a junior studying political science with a minor in constitutional studies. She is cautiously optimistic about the MLB playoffs after a Phillies walk-off win on Sunday. For play-by-play updates, please email her at hgarecht@nd.edu.



It behooves a watchdog to bark. Good, Rover.



Thompson Hiring *continued from front*

Diversity at the University of West Florida. While at Gustavus Adolphus, Thompson also led the Bias Response Team, which encouraged students to “Stop the Hate! Report Bias and Hate.”

Notre Dame’s current bias reporting system, known as Speak Up, is run by the Office of Community Standards and focuses on “all incidents of bias, discrimination, and/or harassment.” There is no guidance specifically concerning hate crimes, outside of usual reporting to the Notre Dame Police Department.

When asked about preserving the university’s Catholic mission, Father Gerry Olinger, C.S.C. told the *Rover*, “Our Catholic mission calls us to a profound sense of unity, and the addition of the Area of Diversity and Engagement—the sixth area in our Division—supports the university’s aspiration to build a more inclusive community that both recognizes and celebrates the God-given dignity of every member.”

He continued, “The work of



Image by Notre Dame Student Affairs

Diversity and Engagement aligns closely with our first goal of the Division’s Strategic Plan: Faith and Formation. It celebrates the richness of our community and reflects the values that shape our Catholic and Holy Cross identity.”

Fr. Olinger’s perspective that

DEI is a celebration of the faith exists alongside other Catholic perspectives on the topic. In a 2023 lecture at Notre Dame, Bishop Robert Barron directly addressed the question of DEI at a Catholic university. He explained, “My complaint with the diversity, equity, and

inclusion stuff is not that those are bad things; but they’re not absolute values; they’re relative values. When you absolutize them, then trouble emerges.”

Regarding the day-to-day work of the executive director position, Thompson said, “Every day, we strive to cultivate a beloved community where students can flourish and experience meaningful transformation.”

The center recently hosted a panel on men’s mental health, entitled “Men Talking.” Thompson served on the panel alongside Daniel Jung, senior and former student body president, and Zach Imfel, Residential Life Director of Recruitment, Hiring and Retention.

Jung explained, “My role as one of the panelists was to provide an authentic witness to the role that healthy masculinity can play in the formation of young men.”

Jung also emphasized the connection between the new Diversity and Engagement center and the Catholic faith. He told the *Rover* that the new unit “works hand-in-hand with Notre Dame’s ‘Spirit of Inclusion.’ Through the work

of this office, we can better recognize our universal call to holiness and duty to love both God and neighbor.”

Recent activity by centers within Thompson’s unit include the Gender Relations Center’s LGBTQ Welcome Back Picnic and LGBTQ History Month Trivia. Upcoming events include a discussion entitled “What We Owe Each Other: Catholic Social Thought in Practice for LGBTQ History Month.”

Catalina Galiñanes is a senior with majors in economics and political science and a minor in constitutional studies. If you are interested in discussing the synodal nature of the synod on synodality, why country music stereotypes are a social good, or tariff policy, reach out at cscheid2@nd.edu.

Right To Life Hosts Annual Respect Life Week *Programming includes lecture from former abortion worker*

WILL CARLSON
Staff Writer

Notre Dame Right to Life (RtL) hosted its annual Respect Life Week with the theme “*Vita, Dulcedo, Spes*: Building a Notre Dame Culture of Life.” The week, held September 30 to October 4, included Log Chapel Mass, a keynote address by Kelly Lester, and an all-club bonfire, among other activities.

Alejandra Ricardo, RtL Director of Service, told the *Rover* that Respect Life Week seeks to “highlight the culture of life that pervades the Notre Dame community through acts of service, prayer, and education.” She continued, “A successful Respect Life Week will celebrate life and strengthen the Fighting Irish in our fight for life.”

RtL president Jackie Nguyen explained the week in the context of RtL’s broader mission “to foster a culture of life at Notre Dame through prayer, service, education, and community.”

Respect Life Week embraced all four pillars of this mission through eight events. The week began with an informational all-club brunch, and educational events continued throughout the week with two tabling sessions.

Tommy Le, a sophomore member of RtL, commented to the *Rover*, “Respect Life Week provided me with insight into the lives of pregnant mothers, as well as how Christ’s Gospel of love and mercy remains prevalent with the issue of abortion. These events allowed me to be more involved in a movement that I

previously supported through words alone.”

The highlight of the week was a keynote address from former abortion worker Kelly Lester, who currently works in outreach for the non-profit organizations And Then There Were None and Pro-Love Ministries.

And Then There Were None aims to “help abortion workers quit their jobs in the abortion industry, and rediscover the peace, joy, and freedom they’ve been missing,” according to its mission statement.

Pro-Love Ministries’ stated mission is to “unify the pro-life movement, identify blind spots, and fill gaps through [their] comprehensive strategies, projects, and affiliations.”

Lester’s address, titled “Beauty from Ashes,” focused on her personal experiences with abortion and working in an abortion clinic, and how that involvement ultimately pushed her to become a pro-life advocate.

Lester began by discussing her own abortions and her time as a receptionist in a small abortion clinic. She detailed her specific tasks working in the clinic, including going through magazines in the clinic’s waiting room to cut out “anything that might cue the maternal instinct.”

Lester described further, “While the girls were in the back, we would turn the heat very hot, or the air conditioning very cold, so that the guys would get up and leave. And then when the girl would come out, we would say to her, ‘See sweetheart, if he won’t even support you for this

appointment, what makes you think he’ll support you for a child?’”

In addition to sharing her experiences on both sides of the abortion industry, Lester took time at the end of her talk to focus on the prevalence of chemical abortion on college campuses. She warned, “While [Indiana] is not performing abortions at brick and mortar buildings, abortions are still happening in this state, and abortions are still happening on your campus ... So, as students, it’s really important that you understand the [risks] of abortion pills.”

After the talk, Lester opened up the floor for questions. One attendee asked what “gaps” Lester identified in her pro-life outreach. In response, Lester said, “Childcare is a huge gap in our society. ... If you don’t have childcare, you can’t work, you can’t go to school, you can’t do those things.”

In a comment to the *Rover*, Lester expressed her appreciation for the opportunity to speak on a pro-life campus, saying, “On other campuses it can be very dangerous to be [outspokenly] pro-life. There certainly would have been counter-protesters here. ... if we’d been at a different university, so it was nice to not have that.”

Sophomore Georgia Blando said of the address, “After hearing [Lester’s] talk and speaking with her ... I realized that I really want to try to do something to promote awareness about chemical abortion on campus.”

In a final encouragement to attendees, Lester told students,



Image by Notre Dame Right to Life

“Educate yourself on the realities of abortion. So many people have no idea what is actually going on in an abortion facility. The moral aspect of [abortion] is important, and is definitely not something we want to remove, but you need to know what you’re talking about.”

Respect Life Week concluded with an all-club Mass in the basilica, followed by a bonfire dance, which was themed “God, Country, Notre Dame.” To encourage members to bring a date, RtL debuted “Life-Pact,” a program that paired members up by common interests. Looking ahead, the club will host lectures

and social events throughout the semester, culminating in their annual trip to the National March for Life in January.

Will Carlson is a sophomore in the Program of Liberal Studies with minors in theology and constitutional studies. He’s currently crying softly as he resignedly awaits yet another Dodgers’ postseason choke job. Send your condolences to wcarlso2@nd.edu.



Priest-Bioethicist Gives Talk on “AI, Transhumanism, and Human Flourishing”

Fr. Michael Baggot discusses the dangers and benefits of artificial intelligence

KATIEBELLE THOMPSON

Staff Writer

Father Michael Baggot, Assistant Professor of Bioethics at the Pontifical Athenaeum Regina Apostolorum, delivered a talk on September 26 titled: “AI, Transhumanism, and Human Flourishing.” His speech was hosted by the de Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture and addressed ethical concerns surrounding the emergence of artificial intelligence technology.

Fr. Baggot graduated from Christendom College, and has spoken on the popular podcast *Pints With Aquinas* and at the de Nicola Center’s Fall Conference.

The talk began with this question: “Do you know who this is?”

A picture of Pope Francis, wearing an enormous white coat like a marshmallow, appeared on the screen. Fr. Baggot explained that while the audience recognized the picture easily, they did not notice subtle rendering flaws: the glasses melded into his skin, the cross hanging unattached to the chain, and several other subtle defects in the picture.

The image, like many AI outputs, was generated so well it “blurred the boundary between perception and reality,” Fr. Baggot said.

He continued to explain the benefits and concerns of AI, particularly in the field of medicine. AI, used well, can lead to advances in “precision and prevention in the field of medicine.” On the other hand, according to Fr. Baggot, patients’ cognitive liberty may be diminished with the rise of AI. As systems collect information



Image by “Aquinas at 800” Conference

about brain activity and non-health related user information, companies may misuse the information to sell products. There are also concerns that AI, due to its complexity, will force patients to trust systems they do not understand, potentially causing patients to resist medical care.

Freshman David Keppel told the *Rover*, “I felt encouraged that the Catholic Church is putting time and thought into considering these seemingly ‘sci-fi’ questions, because it is becoming glaringly apparent that the day may come when we must confront a digital reality.”

Fr. Baggot also warned against the dangers of artificial intimacy.

After introducing several “AI-generated companions,” he explained that many of our relationships are now “digitally mediated,” and even more are affected by algorithms. With AI chatbots, society is moving from an attention economy to an affection economy, whose economic model uses our human desires to motivate us. Fr. Baggot offered the example of a digital lover who compliments you while simultaneously suggesting which candidate to vote for.

The talk concluded with a discussion of transhumanism, or the notion of artificially enhancing the human condition by way of new technologies, and considered whether such

practices are compatible with Catholic teaching. Fr. Baggot shared a quote from Dante: “To soar beyond the human cannot be described.” He also noted, however, that the saints are beyond-humans without any negation of their humanity; they are truly flourishing because by the gift of God’s grace they are beyond themselves.

Fr. Baggot did not condemn all the new technological developments that transhumanists welcome. Instead, he offered that we should try to show others how to use technological developments for true authentic growth. “I have hope above all,” he said, and encouraged the audience to

use the tools we have for human flourishing.

Another student attendee commented, “My main takeaway was that technology which can appear beneficial can also pose the risk of becoming anti-human. Transhumanism ... fails to acknowledge man’s true fallen nature.”

Katiebelle Thompson is an avid reader of technology-induced dystopias, and currently living in one. Her favorite question is, “What are you looking forward to?” Send her your answers at cthomp23@nd.edu.

Aquinas at 800

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young students present. Liam Farrer, director of the Newman Center at McGill University commented, “As a campus minister, I was very encouraged to see how many Notre Dame students were at the conference.”

Sister Albert Marie Surmanski, O.P., theology professor at University of St. Thomas in Houston, spoke with admiration about the conference. Many of the talks sparked her intellectual

curiosity, and she remarked to the *Rover*, “I have a whole list of books and articles to read now.”

Cory was very pleased with the conference’s success. In an interview with the *Rover*, she said, “It went beyond our wildest dreams. We really did not expect the enormous outpouring of interest from both the academic community and the community here at Notre Dame and the local community.”

Farrer, himself a Thomistic

scholar, told the *Rover*, “I also think Aquinas would be very happy that the conference culminated everyday in Mass because ultimately that was his focus—bringing people to Christ through his studies.” Farrer added that he was “very grateful that we got to have such a nice basilica and have our bishops and papal theologians every day.”

Farrer said this in reference to Masses celebrated by Bishop Kevin Rhoades of the

diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, and Gerhard Cardinal Müller, former Prefect of the Congregation (now Dicastery) for the Doctrine of the Faith.

During his visit, Cardinal Müller also delivered the Mind and Heart Lecture at Holy Cross College and spoke to undergraduate students in the Tocqueville Fellowship of the Center for Citizenship and Constitutional Government (CCCCG).

A full list of events and

sponsors for the conference can be found on its website.

Caleb Vaughan is a sophomore studying chemical engineering. If you are interested in signing a card for the birthday boy, St. Thomas, reach out to cvaugha2@nd.edu.





Fulton Sheen Documentary Screened at Notre Dame

Film followed by conversation about Sheen, canonization process

MARCELLE COUTO
Staff Writer

Follow *That Bishop*, a documentary exploring the life and legacy of Venerable Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen, was screened at Carey Auditorium on September 27 at an event sponsored by the Knights of Columbus (KofC). The film highlighted Archbishop Sheen's influential career as a Catholic bishop, Emmy award-winning TV personality, and vocal critic of communism. Following the screening, a panel discussion centered on Archbishop Sheen's path to canonization and the ongoing efforts to recognize his sainthood.

The film, which premiered in April 2023, was produced by *Rome Reports* TV News Agency. Directed by Antonio Olivie, the documentary emphasized Archbishop Sheen's dedication to the Gospel, his work ethic, and his humility, and it also featured commentary by Bishop Robert Barron of the Diocese of Winona-Rochester, Minnesota.

Past KofC Grand Knight Christopher Winter told the *Rover*, "The documentary provided a brief, yet sound, look at the life of Venerable Fulton Sheen. It was clearly well thought out, researched, and produced. The documentary really brought out the depth of Fulton Sheen's faith, his incredible discipline and work ethic, and his simple life that was devoted to spreading the Gospel."

Winter continued, "Even the FBI, who were investigating him due to comments he was making about communism ... recognized his saintliness, sincerity, and poverty of spirit.

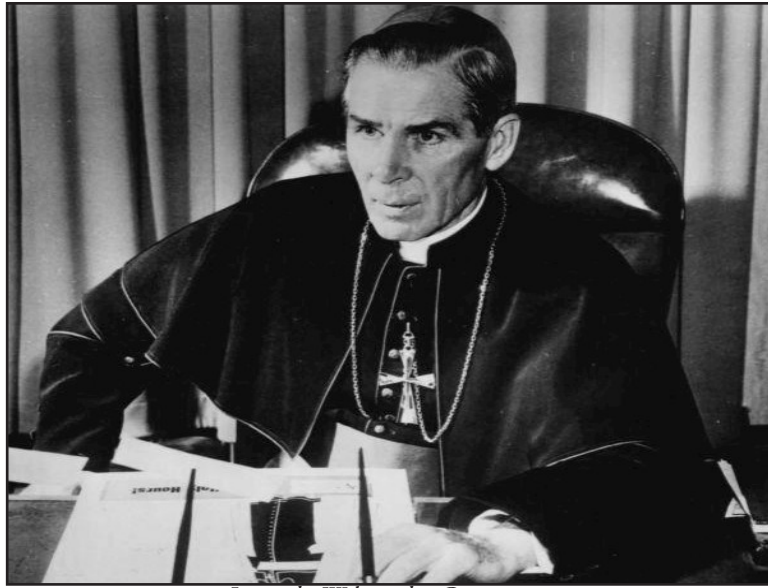


Image by Wikimedia Commons

The documentary did an excellent job in calling to attention these qualities of his."

Archbishop Sheen's public denunciations of the Soviet Union attracted the attention of the FBI before anti-communist sentiment became widespread in the U.S., but even those who were skeptical of Archbishop Sheen recognized his saintliness and integrity. FBI agents tasked with monitoring Archbishop Sheen quickly became intrigued by his sincerity and genuine character.

One striking moment in the documentary revealed that Archbishop Sheen was later invited to deliver a graduation speech at the FBI National Academy in Washington, D.C. His speech, described as one of the finest and most inspirational ever heard by the FBI, further demonstrated the respect he garnered even among those who once scrutinized him.

The documentary also resonated with students who found Archbishop Sheen's devotion relatable. One senior

from Baumer Hall shared with the *Rover*, "I really appreciated getting a chance to learn more about such a recent holy man. So often the saints can seem distant and ancient and impossible to follow in my own life today. But the documentary helped me to see what living out the faith well today can look like."

He commented on the documentary's focus on the role of the Eucharist in Archbishop Sheen's life: "It was a privilege to hear about Venerable Fulton Sheen's deep devotion to the Eucharist. He saw praying for an hour every day before the Blessed Sacrament absolutely indispensable to his priesthood, which has inspired me to value having adoration in [Coleman-Morse] for so long each day as a real privilege to take advantage of."

Also in attendance was Bishop Daniel Jenky, C.S.C., who initiated Archbishop Sheen's cause for canonization in Peoria, Illinois.

After the screening, a panel

discussion led by Monsignor Jason Gray, Executive Director of the Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen Foundation, addressed various questions from the audience, many of which focused on the delays in Archbishop Sheen's canonization.

In response to a question about the status of the canonization, Msgr. Gray explained the intricacies involved. "The cause itself has been through a lot of twists and turns," he noted, explaining that there had been significant legal and procedural delays, including disputes over the location of Archbishop Sheen's remains and last-minute concerns about his handling of clergy abuse cases.

Msgr. Gray emphasized that thorough investigations had cleared Archbishop Sheen of any mishandling, but the timing of the beatification was postponed due to sensitivities surrounding abuse scandals in the American Church. He reassured the audience that Archbishop Sheen's beatification will proceed when conditions are deemed appropriate.

Another question focused on the miracles attributed to Archbishop Sheen, especially the well-documented case of James Fulton, a child who revived after being pronounced dead for 61 minutes. Msgr. Gray provided insight into the investigative process for miracles, explaining that while Archbishop Sheen's beatification is approved, a second miracle is required for full sainthood.

Msgr. Gray explained, "Any miracle that comes forward after 2019 is good for canonization. ... So pray now, because we might actually have a case where we've

got the miracle for canonization before we've actually celebrated the beatification."

One audience member asked about the cultural impact Archbishop Sheen had beyond his religious influence. Msgr. Gray responded by recalling Archbishop Sheen's famous conversion of Bella Dodd, a prominent communist figure in the U.S.

"Sheen worked tirelessly to bring people back to the Church, even those deeply entrenched in communism," Msgr. Gray stated. "His ability to engage with people from all walks of life was remarkable."

Sophomore Lipe Fernandes commented on the presence of Msgr. Gray, saying to the *Rover*, "His perspective shed more light on the process of Sheen's canonization, as well as being able to share more detailed knowledge on his life."

As the panel concluded, there was a sense of hope for Archbishop Sheen's canonization. Many attendees expressed a deep appreciation for the documentary's insights into Archbishop Sheen's holiness and the ongoing process to have him officially recognized as a saint by the Church. One audience member summarized the sentiment, stating that she was eager to see "a man of such influence and devotion" recognized on the global stage.

Marcelle Couto is a senior studying theology and in the Program of Liberal Studies. She can be reached at mcouto@nd.edu.

Students React to Iranian Attacks On Israel

Escalating violence in the Middle East could lead to broader war

SAM MARCHAND
Staff Writer

Iran launched a missile attack against Israel on October 1, 2024, marking an escalation of tensions between the two nations. The Iranian military launched more than 180 missiles, targeting Israeli military bases and civilian areas in the largest attack by Iran against Israel in history.

This course of action signaled retaliation for Israel's assassination of Hassan Nazrallah, leader of the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah, on September 27. Iran dubbed the attack "Operation True Promise 2," referencing the previous barrage of missiles Iran fired at Israel in April.

Regional tension between Israel and Iran has increased rapidly over the past month. In Iran, the September assassination of Nasrallah was commemorated with a five-day national period

of mourning. Iranian Ayatollah Khomeini called for unity with their proxy in Lebanon, telling the Iranian people, "All of the forces in the resistance stand by Hezbollah." Khomeini continued, "It will be Hezbollah, at the helm of the resistance forces, that will determine the fate of the region."

The "Axis of Resistance," as Iran labels it, is composed of the governments of Iran, Syria, and Lebanon, as well as militant groups that are opposed to the Israeli government and the current status quo in Gaza and the West Bank. Per the U.S. Department of State, the majority of these groups are designated as terrorist organizations.

Tensions have further escalated because of Iran's continued progress towards nuclear proliferation. The Heritage Foundation reported on October 1 that Iran is on the cusp of possessing functional nuclear weapons,

which if realized could deal a massive blow to the strength of American foreign policy over the past decade. The Obama and Biden administrations in particular had aimed to slow Iran's development of such a device through sanctions and negotiation.

On October 2, following repeated UN calls for a ceasefire in Gaza and a deescalation with Lebanon, Israel Katz, the Israeli foreign minister, declared UN Secretary-General Antonio Gutierrez *persona non grata*, banning him from entering Israel.

U.S. Department of Defense spokesman Major General Patrick Ryder confirmed that the U.S. Navy intervened to defend Israel during the attack, firing roughly one dozen interceptors to assist Israeli air defenses. Though notable, this was not the first time the U.S. directly defended Israeli territory. The April 2024 missile and drone attack by Iran was

met with similar interception by American, Israeli, and Jordanian forces. It was also preceded by an Israeli strike on the Iranian embassy to Syria in Damascus, which killed two high-ranking Iranian generals.

Despite the extent of the attack, little actual damage was inflicted on Israeli territory. The death toll from the attack, as of October 7, 2024, stands at one. For its part, Israel has vowed "painful" retaliation against Iran for the attack, and on October 5 Israel launched further incursions in southern Lebanon that killed 25 people.

Reactions to recent events in the Middle East varied among Notre Dame students. Sophomore Alex Keaty emphasized the importance of the United States standing with Israel, asserting, "It's good that our military was able to assist Israel in defending themselves, that area of the world is in dire need of de-escalation."

Junior Harrison Orr echoed

a similar sentiment: "The last time Iran pulled this, it was very underwhelming, but now this newest attack shows their true commitment to resisting Israeli activity."

Freshman Nathan Ogden was similarly critical of Iran, citing its poor record on human rights: "The Iranian people have suffered oppression from the regime there, and it's our duty to stand up for their rights."

Some students held a different view on the attacks. Junior Nick Peterson told the *Rover*, "Iran could have nuclear weapons in a month if they wanted to." He continued, "I understand why Iran's doing this, the Middle East just isn't going to be peaceful for the time being."

Another student from Alumni Hall characterized the Iran attack as "their only choice to save face with their people and on the world stage after repeated aggression by Israel. The attack was not intended to inflict any

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Students React to Recent *Rover* Poll Trump favor on campus sparks mixed responses

RAYMOND WEBBER
Staff Writer

A recent *Irish Rover* poll found that Notre Dame students narrowly favor former President Donald Trump over Vice President Kamala Harris 48 to 46 percent in the upcoming 2024 presidential election. The poll received widespread attention both on Notre Dame's campus and beyond, eliciting a variety of reactions within the student body. The *Rover* followed up with students, who offered their opinions on their perception of Notre Dame's political environment and its impact on the future of the university.

The results of the poll indicated that political sentiments on campus have vastly changed since the 2020 election, when the student body favored Biden 66 percent, with only 29 percent supporting Trump. Moreover, given that nearly two-thirds of American college administrators self-identify as liberal, the fact that a majority of Notre Dame students support Donald Trump came as a surprise to some.

In contrast, most of the students interviewed did not find

these recent results to diverge from their perception of the Notre Dame political climate.

A freshman in Knott Hall told the *Rover*, "I thought the margin would be even more in favor of Trump because the Catholic influence on campus usually produces more conservative-leaning people." He further elaborated that he expected the poll to reflect the Catholic identity of the campus, and thus produce more widespread support for the Republican candidate.

The Knott Hall resident continued, "Notre Dame offers opportunities to have discussions and talk about political differences, so I believe the students will remain peaceful and aware of what is important in this election." He emphasized that he believed the political division indicated by the poll will not cause any "disputes detrimental to the [Notre Dame] campus environment."

A freshman in Dunne Hall expressed similar sentiments, explaining, "Notre Dame is more conservative in [her] religion and policies, so I would expect that Notre Dame students would reflect those values." He added,

"Because we are not like other college campuses, we are going to trend more conservative."

A freshman from Lewis Hall told the *Rover*, "Since Donald Trump was already president and is very popular, I am not surprised that students would support him." She revealed her belief that campus will "remain calm because many students already know who most people support."

All of these Notre Dame students also stated that they believed these results would not alter the campus environment due to the fact that "most students are already aware" of the political landscape depicted by the poll. The Dunne Hall resident specifically expressed the view that "Notre Dame students will remain civil and ... look to peaceful discourse rather than conflict" in the month leading up to the election.

Some students were more surprised by the willingness of their peers to openly support Trump. One such comment came from a Chinese exchange student living in Siegfried Hall, who is taking a Notre Dame course on the 2024 election and describes

himself as a "liberal supporter of Donald Trump."

He shared with the *Rover* that "students in the 'Election 2024' class are about half for Trump and half for Kamala," but as the liberal professor further expresses his anti-Trump views, less and less students are stating their conservative opinions. He claimed he was "surprised when Notre Dame students were willing to demonstrate their support for Donald Trump" in the recent *Rover* presidential poll.

Although he cannot participate in the election himself, the Siegfried Hall resident offered insight into how his experience with U.S. education has impacted the way he views the American political system. Specifically, he claimed that many of his peers believe Harris is a "better political figure and debater" but also acknowledge Trump's policies are postured at "practicality and success."

Another freshman living in Lewis Hall echoed a similar sentiment for different reasons, explaining that "Trump's radical figure and polarizing rhetoric makes me slightly surprised that so many students would support

him." She also shared that she was surprised that a community "so committed to bringing a good into the world" would support a man with "such a crude and criminal past."

As a Harris supporter, she expected that a student body made up of "mostly white Catholics" would support a Republican candidate, but not Donald Trump specifically. She expressed concern that, due to the pro-Trump majority, "Notre Dame students will be less friendly and aware of people who do not share the same opinions ... and as a black, bisexual student I feel less comfortable in certain spaces."

With less than thirty days to go before the November vote, students on campus are still divided over their political beliefs and the impact the election will have on Notre Dame.

Raymond Webber is a freshman philosophy and political science major. After a long day, he relaxes by watching sit-coms on his futon. Contact him at rwebber2@nd.edu.

WRITE FOR THE ROVER, EMAIL MCANADY2@ND.EDU

Students React to VP Debate Debate receives national, campus praise

COLIN HEIL
Staff Writer

Senator J. D. Vance (R-Ohio) and Governor Tim Walz (D-Minnesota) met for the vice presidential debate on October 1 in New York City. The debate, hosted by CBS, came as the presidential race remains essentially deadlocked nationwide. With under 30 days left to go until the election, polls show neither ticket is able to maintain a consistent lead in any of the key swing states.

The candidates discussed a variety of topics during the event, including the response to hurricane Helene, immigration, housing, personal scandals, abortion, gun violence, inflation, healthcare, childcare, and the state of democracy. Despite the close state of the race, viewership of the vice presidential debate significantly declined from 57.9 million in 2020 to just 43.2 million in 2024.

The debate was praised across the political spectrum for its focus on policy relative to the matchup between Trump and Harris a month earlier. According to a CBS News / YouGov Poll, 42 percent perceived J. D. Vance as

the debate's victor, 41 percent said Walz had won, and 17 percent said it was a tie. In addition, 88 percent perceived the debate as generally positive. A CNN / SSRS poll also found that a slim majority of viewers believed Vance had won, 51 percent to 49 percent.

Reactions on Notre Dame's campus were mixed, but generally favorable towards the debate and Vance's performance in particular.

Freshman Tim Katz praised the debate's positivity: "The biggest thing that stood out to me was the civility and respect; it gave me hope in politics for the future."

Keough Hall resident Alex Surface shared this sentiment: "I much preferred this debate to the presidential, and the bipartisanship is something we haven't seen in years which is good to see again."

Regardless of political affiliation, the vast majority of those who spoke with the *Rover* felt that Vance had won the debate.

One student, Annabelle Tautges, told the *Rover*, "Vance won. It was not a source of entertainment, I didn't want to go pop some popcorn. I'm not planning on voting for Trump-Vance, but I thought he was

well spoken and made concrete points."

Tautges continued, "I'm Minnesotan so I love Walz, but his answer to the China question was not great. However, he is a genuine person, and I've seen that aspect of him in person at his events," she continued.

At one point in the approximately 105-minute-long debate, Vance clashed with the CBS moderators in what would be one of the most watched moments of the night. The dispute began after Vance spoke on the recent influx of approximately 20,000 Haitian migrants to the small town of Springfield, Ohio. According to the New York Times, "CBS said the moderators [...] would primarily focus on encouraging the ground rules, rather than fact-checking."

Freshman Jack Ring criticized CBS' conduct in hosting the event, telling the *Rover*, "The unfair moderation shows how it's Trump-Vance versus the machine, rather than them against the Harris-Walz ticket."

Despite Vance's strong performance, a recent New York Times analysis indicated that "while ... vice-presidential debates



Modified from photos by Gage Skidmore via CC 2.0

have delivered some memorable moments, there is little evidence that they have a meaningful impact on elections overall."

This sentiment was reflected on Notre Dame's campus. First-Year Class Council Representative Chandler Davis said, "I think J. D. Vance won. My position was not affected at all by the debate, I am still a Harris supporter."

Davis continued, "I feel that this debate was one of the most boring I have watched, but that's a good thing because the previous debates were so hostile and this was so civil. They showcased true American values."

For some students, however, the debate did seem to have some impact on who they would ultimately end up supporting.

Freshman Nick DeNatale said, "I think Vance won and the debate was very civil. Both parties did a good job. The debate definitely swayed me towards the Trump-Vance ticket because it painted a picture that made them seem more electable."

DeNatale concluded, "I think the addition of Vance definitely helps the ticket."

With no further debates scheduled, it is likely that the VP debate was the last head-to-head confrontation between the two tickets before the election on November 5.

Colin Heil is a freshman studying political science. He can be reached at cheil@nd.edu.



ND Forum Lecture Discusses War in Gaza

Faculty offer historical context and predictions for the growing conflict

**SAM MARCHAND &
ELLA YATES**
Staff Writers

As part of the 2024–2025 Notre Dame Forum, the Office of the President hosted a lecture titled “One Year After October 7: Historical Backdrop and Future Prospects.” The purpose of the talk, according to the website, was to “offer a multi-lens perspective on the lead-up to the Hamas attack of October 7, 2023, and the Israeli response in Gaza.”

Charles and Jill Fischer Provost John McGreevy offered the introduction to the event. McGreevy stated, “We do this as a university, which has a responsibility to foster a learning environment that facilitates constructive discussion. ... One of the ways we do that is the Notre Dame Forum.”

McGreevy referred to the theme of this year’s Notre Dame Forum, “What Do We Owe Each Other?” chosen by newly-inaugurated university president Father Robert Dowd, C.S.C. McGreevy continued, posing the questions, “How can Catholic social thought help us engage in fruitful dialogue with those whose perspectives are different from our own?”

Tzvi Novick, Abrams Jewish Thought and Culture Professor of Theology at Notre Dame, continued the introductions. He highlighted the importance of the Israel-Palestine conflict to Americans, saying “[the conflict] has long drawn the attention of and inspired emotion in Americans.” Novick added, “It matters to us as a Catholic university, one that is distinguished from almost any university in America because it has a physical campus in Jerusalem.”

Maura Policelli, Executive Director of the Keough School of Global Affairs’ Washington Office, served as the moderator of the discussion. She began by introducing the two speakers, Hussein Ibish, senior resident scholar at the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington, and David Myers, Sady and Ludwig Khan Chair in Jewish History at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Myers began the discussion by emphasizing his concern for the preservation of human

rights: “One must hold up the dignity of all human life, one cannot choose sides. That’s a core guiding principle of ours.”

Ibish responded that the root of the debate concerns the motivations of both sides, rather than the facts of the conflict: “There are no competing facts. There is a body of common knowledge that ... we do not disagree about. ... Why those people did what they were doing, what they were intending, what was their project, what was their motivation: that is heavily contested and that is where the arguments come in.”

Myers then offered a brief history of the situation. He began with the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 after the end of British Mandatory Palestine following World War II. He referred to the historical strife between Jews and displaced Arabs in the region as a “clash of competing collective traumas” between Jewish survivors of the Holocaust and Arabs displaced by Israelis.

Myers then discussed the international response to the present conflict. He said that there was initial support for Israel and a “belief that Israel had the right to retaliate.” However, he noted that support for Israel began to diminish as the campaign continued into 2024 and negotiations stalled over a cease-fire deal with the return of hostages.

Myers noted that support for Israel in the United States breaks down along ideological and generational lines. He stated, “55 percent of Americans over the age of 65 supported President Biden’s policy on Israel” while “70 percent of individuals under the age of 30 were opposed to it.”

According to Myers, American support has the potential to be a “very significant political factor that may alter the landscape of the coming years and decades with respect to the United States’ relationship with the Middle East and to Israel.”

Support of the war amongst Israelis has also begun to fall as the goal of eliminating Hamas, which Ibish said “could not be accomplished,” has shifted to recovering hostages.

Myers also claimed that the U.S. hasn’t used its leverage as forcefully as it could, arguing that “although the United States



Image by the Irish Rover

is a declining power,” it still has the capacity to exercise its powers. “Biden could do that ... after the election ... in that two month period before he leaves office.”

In the Q&A session following the talk, one member of the crowd asked the speakers, “Why don’t you think it is central to call what is happening in Gaza a genocide?” Ibish responded, “[We] can have that debate. ... We also need to discuss the other controversial word ‘apartheid’ ... although I would certainly say this is genocide.”

Ibish said the problem with classifying the war as genocide is that “international law begins with intent.” Myers added that intent is an incredibly high bar to prove in international law.

Following the speakers’ responses, at least four members of the crowd began to chant “Free, Free Palestine,” repeatedly as they walked out of the lecture hall.

Later in the Q&A, Ibish said, “Ethnic cleansing was a prerequisite for the establishment of an Israeli state. ... Everything we’ve seen continues the logic of that.”

In an interview with the Rover following the talk, Myers said the U.S. should “be a fair and honest broker by indicating its strong support for Israel and its strong support for the Palestinian crisis.”

He continued, saying that the United States “should have used its substantial power to alter the map of the region and break the cycle of violence by making clear to Israel that it can’t occupy or eradicate through military means the Palestinians or their aspiration for self-determination.”

When asked about Israeli policy towards Gaza, Ibish told the Rover, “Netanyahu’s focus is on denying Palestinians a state and creating circumstances for Israel to annex large parts of the West Bank.” Speaking on the power of Israeli influence on American foreign policy, Ibish was skeptical, saying, “Increasingly, because most Jewish-Americans are Democrats, and Democrats are becoming disillusioned with Netanyahu, it’s become harder for him to manipulate Jewish-American sentiments.”

The next talk in the “Israel-

Palestine Series,” titled “Peaceful Co-Existence Among Israelis and Palestinians: Vision for a Shared Future,” will take place on November 11 as part of the Notre Dame Forum.

Sam Marchand is a sophomore studying political science and finance from Beaumont, Texas. He squanders much of his spare time by reading the Current Events section of Wikipedia preparing arguments for ND Speech & Debate, of which he serves as president. He can be reached at smarcha3@nd.edu.

Ella Yates is a sophomore studying philosophy, political science, and theology from Western Springs, Illinois. She spends most of her free time desperately trying to convince her friends to have philosophical conversations with her. For anyone interested, she can be reached at eyates4@nd.edu.

Iranian Attacks

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real damage, and indeed it did not. The question is whether Israel will see the attack for what it was or use it as another excuse for disproportionate escalation.”

“In any case, the U.S. should not be involved. I don’t want a war with Iran,” he added.

An upcoming Notre Dame Forum event, titled “The Perils

of U.S. Isolationism,” looks to discuss these topics in the context of American foreign affairs. Scheduled for October 11, the fireside chat will feature former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice in conversation with Notre Dame president Father Robert Dowd, C.S.C.

Sam Marchand is a sophomore studying political science and finance from Beaumont, Texas. He squanders much of his spare time by reading the Current Events section of Wikipedia preparing arguments for ND Speech & Debate, of which he serves as president. He can be reached at smarcha3@nd.edu.





Exploring the Raclin Murphy Museum

Collections showcase cultures, Catholicism, Marian chapel

XAVIER ANDERSON

Staff Writer

After two years of construction, Notre Dame officially opened the Raclin Murphy Museum of Art in December of 2023. The new building was donated by Ernestine Raclin and Carmen and Chris Murphy, three philanthropists in the South Bend area, and was designed by Robert A. M. Stern, former dean of the Yale School of Architecture. Located on the south end of campus, on St. Andre Way, it is open to both the Notre Dame student body and the South Bend community at-large.

Encompassing 132,000 square feet, the Raclin Murphy Museum was built to provide a larger space for exhibition of the work of the previous campus museum, the Snite Museum of Art, which closed in November of 2023. The new museum features 23 different galleries spread across three levels, with pieces ranging from Renaissance European paintings to contemporary sculptures.

The museum's first floor exhibits are dedicated to European and American art, and they showcase a wide variety of themes, styles, and time periods. Works range from Eduard Steinbrück's 19th century oil on canvas *Adoration of the Magi*, to Charles-Louis Muller's depiction of the French Revolution in *The Roll Call Of the Last Victims*, to serene American landscape paintings. Also on display is a marble replica of the first century Roman sculpture *Laocoön and his Sons*, as well as a gallery of African art.

The second floor contains

mostly Native American art, holding collections of ancient pottery, weapons, tapestries, and decorations. It also features galleries of early European works, with many paintings depicting interactions between European and Native American peoples.

Also on the second floor is Paul Henry Wood's *Absolution Under Fire*. Displayed in the balcony overlooking the atrium, it features a familiar legend of Notre Dame history, Fr. William J. Corby, C.S.C., a chaplain at the Battle of Gettysburg and President of Notre Dame. The painting shows Fr. Corby standing on a large rock and giving absolution to the Irish Brigade as enemy troops come into view.

Ian Gerdon, professor of theology and instructor at the University Writing Center, expressed his appreciation for the work with the *Rover*: "Wood's 'Absolution' tells a story about Notre Dame and Catholicism in America: It shows us a group of people trying to be quintessentially American and quintessentially Catholic at the same time."

Another notable aspect of the museum's second floor is a Chapel dedicated to Mary, Queen of Families. Freshman Sam Hatch, a student intern at the Raclin Murphy Museum of Art, told the *Rover* that the chapel is his favorite part of the museum, saying, "I really like how bright it is, and how right behind the altar they combine a contemporary, boldly-colored backdrop with a more traditional European-style painting."

The basement level of the museum is dedicated to

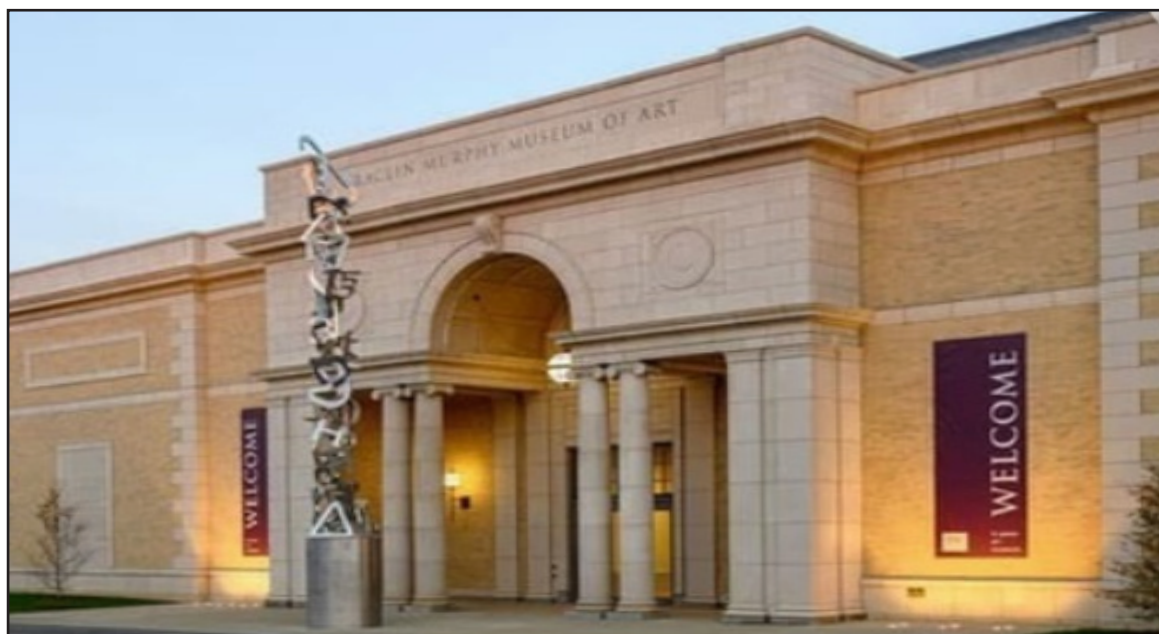


Image by Notre Dame News

contemporary art, modern art, and the Sculpture Court. Featured on this level are scientific constructions and photographs by sculptor and physics-lover Kenneth Snelson.

Sophomore Matthew Fagerheim, a student in the school of Architecture, commented on Snelson's pieces, saying to the *Rover*, "I was not expecting much since I don't really like modern art. But, I was happily surprised by how much I enjoyed Snelson's work. His models were such an interesting example of the intersection between art and science."

The modern art section also emphasized both Native American and African American art, particularly through works like Bernard Williams' *Black Indian*, *Buffalo Soldiers*, a piece depicting black soldiers in the post-Civil War era and their interactions with both Native Americans and Christian settlers.

The Raclin Murphy stated its commitment to displaying such

art, stating on an informational mural, "As an initial step towards reconciliation and out of a desire for a brighter and more equitable future, the Museum is committed to amplifying Indigenous voices and building conversation and collaboration through the hosting and support of Indigenous artists, art forms, and communities."

Along with the wide array of art featured by the Raclin Murphy, the museum has received positive feedback for its inclusion of Catholic art specifically, from both students and faculty.

One senior shared with the *Rover*, "There are a great deal of paintings depicting scenes from classical mythology or Biblical stories, which I find especially beautiful. I was also surprised to discover the museum owns a Gustave Doré sculpture. I'm a big fan of Gustave Doré's famous illustrations, and to see such a big name at our museum was a pleasant surprise."

Gerdon also shared his thoughts on the Catholic nature of the museum, stating how he frequently takes student groups to visit for his class. Gerdon told the *Rover*, "How many collections can inform their visitors, 'We are in the midst of reality responding with joy,' and then lead them not only to the beauty of art but to the beauty of prayer and liturgy? I can't imagine there are many art museums in the world that teach that point as clearly as the Raclin at Notre Dame."

The Raclin Murphy is free and open to the public weekly from Tuesday through Sunday.

Xavier Anderson is a sophomore from Reston, Virginia studying finance. To escape the stress of sophomore year, he has decided to take up fishing. Send him worm recommendations at xanderso@nd.edu.

Hillbilly Thomists

continued from front hillbilly Thomist.

The band's name was conceived of by Fr. Austin Litke, O.P., not present at the concert, and Fr. Thomas Joseph White, O.P. In the words of O'Connor, as "preachers of the Incarnation," the friars' music combines their Thomistic theology with southern bluegrass melodies.

The first members of the band, Fr. Thomas Joseph and Fr. Austin, were joined by several other friars, and, after playing together for several years, began to record their music. Their first and eponymous album reached number three on the Billboard Bluegrass Charts. Since its launch in 2017, the band has released three more albums: *Living For the Other Side* in 2021, *Holy Ghost Power* in 2022, and their most recent release, *Marigold*, which reached second on the Bluegrass Charts in 2024.

The band performed a selection of their songs, ranging from "Bourbon, Bluegrass, and the Bible" to the title track from



Image by the de Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture

their newest album, "Marigold." At one point, to the excitement of the crowd, Fr. Peter performed an acoustic version of the Notre Dame Victory March to introduce the song "Good Tree," a track from *Holy Ghost Power*.

Other highlights included "Jacob's Ladder," during which Fr. Justin called for audience participation, and Fr. Thomas Joseph's distinctive vocals on "Way Down to New Orleans."

Two of the band's members, Fr. Joseph Hagan, O.P., the percussionist, and Fr. Peter

Gautsch, O.P., who played the guitar, dobro, piano, and harmonica throughout the night, are Notre Dame alumni. Fr. Joseph, who graduated from Notre Dame in 2009, is now the chaplain for undergraduate formation at the Catholic University of America, and Fr. Peter graduated from Notre Dame in 2011.

The other members of the band hail from around the world. Fr. Thomas Joseph, who was also featured as a keynote speaker at the Aquinas conference, is rector

Bolger, O.P., who plays guitar, as well as several other instruments, is the Catholic chaplain at Brown University. Bassist Fr. Timothy Danaher, O.P., is chaplain of Dartmouth University.

Sophomore Ellen Burks, who was backstage during the concert, told the *Rover*: "I thought it was wonderful how joyful and enthusiastic the friars were throughout the concert, both on and off the stage. As they left the stage, they were chanting, 'Not too bad, not too bad,' which was certainly much too modest

for their performance!" Students and conference attendees alike echoed her sentiment, singing along with the performers and videoing the performance for their family members.

With their concert at Notre Dame, the Hillbilly Thomists have concluded their 2024 Marigold Tour. Their four albums can be found on all streaming platforms, and at www.hillbillythomists.com.

Dora Tomko is a junior in the Program of Liberal Studies, who enjoys causing confusion as to her place of origin through her love of the Hillbilly Thomists, use of "y'all," incongruous English pronunciations, and insistence that it is a hoagie, not a sub. If you'd like to know where she's really from, she can be reached at dtomko@nd.edu.



Democracy Initiative Initiates Democracy

Voters elect to vote in elections

HALEY GARECHT
Campus Editor

Under the thrall of the newly established “Democracy Initiative,” Notre Dame has announced that all administrative positions will be voted upon by the entire student body. Current administrators have begun campaigning for student votes ahead of upcoming elections this November.

In a statement to the *Rover*, Professor David Campbell, Director of the Initiative, explained, “We thought it was hypocritical for Notre Dame to promote democracy around the world without doing it here. Plus, I have a bone to pick with a few of these administrators, and you better believe I’m going to campaign against them myself.”

The announcement seemed to come as a surprise to several members of the administration, who had endorsed the Democracy Initiative ... until it extended to their own positions. One such administrator told the *Rover*, “When we gave them half of the endowment, we figured they would host a couple lectures and maybe publish a report or something. This was a big shock. By the way, do any of you guys know how to run a campaign?”

Several administrators have already begun campaigning on campus, with a few hosting events intended to draw certain student populations. Last week, Provost John McGreevy threw an “inclusion picnic” for students on Library Lawn, complete with over 15 food trucks. When asked about his campaign policies, McGreevy responded, “Honestly, just free food and inclusion.” When asked what “inclusion” means, McGreevy stated, “Including.”

Father Gerry Olinger has followed in the footsteps of Vice President Kamala Harris and



Image by the Irish Rover

posted bright green signs around campus that say “Olinger IS Brat.” Similarly, Executive Vice President Shannon Cullinan has been seen filming TikTok dances on South Quad before posting them to his campaign’s profile, @Shannon<3Students.

Other administrators have attempted to appeal to a more traditional demographic. Several associate provosts have formed a coalition promising to ban tight-fitting pants on campus. In response, another group of university deans has formed a group called “NDLovesLeggings” on Facebook, stating that they would make leggings a mandatory requirement for all classes on campus. Concerningly, the group consists of only male administrators.

To further their goal of “restoring faith in democracy,” the Initiative also announced that students would be allowed

to run for positions in the administration. In order to get their names on the ballot, students are required to fill out a questionnaire online. The survey includes questions such as “What’s your preferred Ethics Center on campus?” “Which dining hall is superior?” and “Are you now or have you ever been on the *Irish Rover* editorial board?” When asked about the questionnaire, a spokesperson for the Initiative said, “Well, we can’t have just ANYONE running for University president. This is a premier research university, after all.”

Student responses to the upcoming elections have varied. One sophomore in the College of Arts and Letters expressed excitement about her influence in the election, saying, “It’s been really great! The Dean promised everyone who votes for her an automatic A+, so I’ve been

skipping classes. I didn’t know democracy could be so much fun!”

One less-than-excited group is the newly formed club RadicalND, which has been hosting protests since the announcement. A junior in the club told the *Rover*, “It is important to our club that we protest against the traditional political structures which keep the patriarchy in power. ... If only we had some way to allow all students on campus to express their opinions in a political manner.”

In the club’s online publication, one RadicalND member published a poem entitled “Down with the Democracy Initiative,” reproduced below:

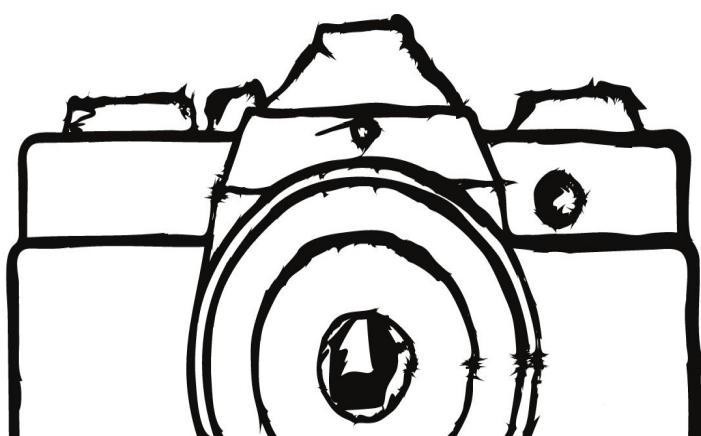
*Democracy bad.
Communism good.
Stop telling me what to do, you
big meanies.*

Several staff members at the

Center for Citizenship and Constitutional Government (CCCCG) raised concerns about the change. The *Rover* accessed an email from CCCC Director Vincent Phillip Muñoz to the Initiative’s board. In the email was a single link to an online version of *The Federalist Papers*. The subject line read, “You guys do know what a republic is, right?”

Haley Garecht should be a junior. She is likely majoring in something political, given the classes she’s taken. We can try to track her down if you need. Email jwhitak5@nd.edu and he’ll do his best to get you in touch.

If you are interested in
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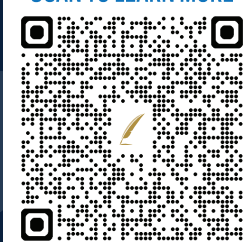
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★★★★★

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This event is free and open to the public

SCAN TO LEARN MORE



Professor John Yoo is the Emanuel S. Heller Professor of Law at the University of California, Berkeley; a Republican, former deputy assistant attorney general in the George W. Bush Administration; former general counsel to the Senate Judiciary Committee who has served in all three branches of national government; and a regular commentator on FoxNews.



Harry Litman is the senior legal affairs columnist for the Opinion page at the Los Angeles Times; a former U.S. Attorney and deputy assistant attorney general; a Democrat who advised the Kerry-Edwards campaign in 2004 and (post-election) the Obama-Biden campaign in 2008; and a regular commentator on MSNBC, CNN and CBS News.

