

CULTURES *of* FORMATION:

Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment

BREAKOUT SPEAKER BIOS AND SUMMARIES

ROUND 1 - MONDAY, MARCH 5 - 1:30 P.M.

SESSION A - McKenna Auditorium

Evangelizing through Land-Based Experiences and Dialogue with Science

Sister Damien Marie Savino, F.S.E.
Dean of Science and Sustainability, Aquinas College

Young people today are growing up in a technology-saturated culture which increasingly separates itself from face-to-face communication and see-touch realities. Is this contributing to the marginalization of the Catholic Church in today's culture and the waning interest of youth in institutional religion? This paper considers catechetical approaches using science and elemental land experiences as one strategy for the new evangelization and for building a culture conducive to faithful vocational discernment for young people.

Sister Damien Marie Savino is a Franciscan Sister of the Eucharist and the Dean of Science and Sustainability at Aquinas College in Grand Rapids, MI. She holds degrees in science and theology, with a Doctorate in Civil (Environmental) Engineering and a Master's degree in Theology from the Catholic University of America, a Master's degree in Soil Science from University of Connecticut, and a B.S. degree in Biogeography from McGill University. Sister Damien Marie has published in the areas of science and theology, ecology and theology, ecological restoration, and environmental science.

Cultivating the Interior Garden: Augmented Reality and Cognitive Self-Responsibility

Luis G. Vera
Assistant Professor, Mount Saint Mary's University

Christians seeking to confront modern technology's formative power have achieved much by emphasizing our need to be drawn out and disciplined by realities outside of us. But 'augmented reality' media (AR) are themselves designed to pull us toward the outside world. Hence, an adequate response to AR must focus on cognitive self-responsibility: the deliberate cultivation of interior resources for prudent technology use. Thomas Aquinas's account of memory training can help us imagine such an approach.

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Luis Vera, Ph.D., teaches at Mount Saint Mary's University in Emmitsburg, Maryland. His work explores the links between fundamental moral theology, technology ethics, and Catholic social teaching. He is currently preparing a book about memory as a fruitful focus point for interpreting and evaluating digital media as well as for conversing with the Catholic tradition on the ethics of media use. He also focuses on theologies of revelation, Latino theology, and ethical questions surrounding childhood, parenting, and education.

Thinking Critically about Critical Thinking in the Formation of Young Catholics

Clare Kilbane

Professor of Education, Otterbein University

Critical thinking initiatives are an increasingly influential emphasis in K-12 schools across the U.S. This presentation raises concerns about how these initiatives may influence the formation of young Catholics and the future of the Catholic Church. It offers recommendations for action.

Clare Kilbane is a Professor of Education at Otterbein University in central Ohio. There, she teaches courses that address educational technology, instruction and assessment for both undergraduate students and practicing teachers. She is the author of numerous books on 21st century teaching and learning, has been the lead consultant on several state and federal grants, and is a frequent speaker at professional conferences. Kilbane began her career as a fourth grade teacher and technology coordinator at St. James the Less Elementary School in Columbus, Ohio.

SESSION B - McKenna Rooms 100-104

Who are these "Young People?" Understanding the Distinctions Between and Transitions Within Youth and Young Adulthood

Paul Jarzembowski

Assistant Director, USCCB for Youth and Young Adult Ministries, Lay Ecclesial Ministry

The Synod defines "young people" as those 16 to 29 years of age, but what does that really mean? Who are they and how are they distinct from older generations and from each other? This session will explore the major distinctions within the age range, in particular the key transition moments that are so critical to the experience of and ministry with "young people."

Paul Jarzembowski is the lead staff at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops for youth and young adults, which includes work with this year's Synod of Bishops, the Fifth National Encuentro, and World Youth Day. He has consulted with over 250 dioceses, religious communities, and Catholic organizations in the U.S., Europe, and the Caribbean, and has presented twice at the Vatican. Originally from Northwest Indiana, Paul served in parish and diocesan ministry in the Archdiocese of Chicago and Diocese of Joliet prior to his work at the USCCB. Paul is also a graduate of and adjunct instructor at Loyola University Chicago's Institute for Pastoral Studies. He and his wife Sarah live in the Maryland suburbs of Washington, DC.

ROUND 1 - MONDAY, MARCH 5 - 1:30 P.M.

A Social Scientific Perspective on “Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment:” A Constructive Critique of the Synod Preparatory Document Questionnaire

Timothy Reilly

Developmental psychologist and postdoctoral fellow, Center for Theology, Science, and Human Flourishing at the University of Notre Dame

Linda Kawentel

Senior Research Scientist, Wellbeing at Work Program at the University of Notre Dame

Sean Allen

Director of Young Adult Ministry, Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend

Aileen Hurd

Speech-language pathologist

How does the synod questionnaire understand faith and vocational discernment? We examine how the questionnaire considers faith development, and use findings from our diocesan survey and other surveys of Catholic teens and young adults to explore the relationship between religious practice, faith development, and vocational discernment. We also show how social scientific theories can constructively expand upon and support future inquiry into vocational discernment among Catholic young people.

Timothy Reilly is a developmental psychologist and postdoctoral fellow at the Center for Theology, Science, and Human Flourishing. He studies, purpose, virtue, vocation, especially as they are related to the intentional development of the spiritual and moral self.

Linda Kawentel is a Senior Research Scientist at the Wellbeing at Work Program at the University of Notre Dame. She received her Ph.D. and M.A. in sociology from the University of Notre Dame, in addition to an M.A. in religious studies from John Carroll University. Her primary research interests are in the sociology of religion, particularly American Catholicism.

Sean Allen earned a Master of Divinity Degree from the University of Notre Dame and serves as the Director of Young Adult Ministry for the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend. After working for ten years as an electrical engineer, Sean heard the Lord calling him to a vocation of lay ministry.

Aileen Hurd works as a speech-language pathologist at a public elementary school. She is an active leader of the diocesan young adult community in the South Bend area.

Insights on Hispanic Ecclesial Vocations from the V Encuentro

Ken Johnson-Mondragón

Coordinator of Research in the Consultation for the V National Encuentro for Hispanic/Latino Ministry

The V National Encuentro for Hispanic/Latino Ministry is an ongoing process of consultation, mission, and community building for Hispanic ministry. This presentation will include some preliminary findings and outline continuing efforts to strengthen leadership for ecclesial ministry among Latino Catholics.

Ken Johnson-Mondragón has almost 20 years of experience doing applied socio-cultural research for Hispanic Ministry in the Catholic Church at the national level. He currently serves as the Coordinator of Research in the Consultation for the V National Encuentro for Hispanic/Latino Ministry. His passion is for creating tools and empowering people for the evangelization of Latino Catholics—in families, schools, parishes, and apostolic movements.