



## SINGING THE WANING DARKNESS INTO LIGHT

IACS mourns the loss of a visionary leader and celebrates the work ahead



Friends,  
May has arrived! With all its busyness — graduations and Mother’s Day, preparations for upcoming weddings and vacations — May apparently now rivals December in its whirlwind of activity. In the church year, May is the month we celebrate Mary.

And May remains solidly in the season of Easter.

And yet, we remain rooted to earth. A colleague said to me the other day: “Just when we thought we were getting out of the pandemic, now there is war.” And a constant drumbeat of acrimony, along with relentless provocation to further division. And yet.

Christ is risen! Indeed.

In his beautiful sonnet “Ascension Day,” the British poet and Anglican priest Malcolm Guite captures the juxtaposition between the knowledge that Christ is risen — and that we remain earth-bound. Two lines in particular describe and celebrate this tension:

“Whilst we ourselves become his clouds of witness/And sing the waning darkness into light.”\*

In other words, we are given the beautiful work of singing the light of the Resurrection into our world. Affected by the realities of our time? Yes. But stuck? No.

That work is at the heart of the Institute for Advanced Catholic Studies at USC. Our part in singing the light of the Resurrection into the world is to strengthen Catholic thought and imagination.

And we are delighted at the direction our work is taking.

In this edition of *En Camino*, we introduce the inaugural Hancock and DePaul fellows, Brandon Vaidyanathan, Ph.D, and Leo Guardado, Ph.D. Both are involved in

pioneering work that touches all three of our Institute’s emphases: Catholic thought, imagination and experience. Dr. Vaidyanathan links the worlds of work and beauty, and Dr. Guardado connects indigenous practices of healing with the world of Catholicism.

We are also celebrating another great installment of our collaboration with Loyola Marymount University that explores the religious, academic and cultural influence of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Our event “Guadalupe: Holy Art in the Streets of Los Angeles” in April packed the house at the USC Fisher Museum of Art. Watch for a reprise of “Holy Art” in Orange County this fall.

While we celebrate the Institute’s ongoing work, we also mourn the passing of our trustee and former board chair, Ellen Hancock. Ellen helped shape IACS from its earliest days. Just last fall she noted in *En Camino* that “in today’s world, the Institute’s mission is more important than ever.” She was proud of the Institute’s role in producing research that supported the church’s teaching to “love our neighbor and care for others.” Ellen did just that and in her own inimitable fashion sang “the waning darkness into light.” We will miss Ellen — and we continue to sing that song.

Christ is risen! Indeed.

Warmly,

Becky King Cerling, Ph.D.  
Executive Director  
Institute for Advanced Catholic Studies at USC

\* Find the entire poem in: Malcolm Guite. *Sounding the Seasons: Seventy Sonnets for the Christian Year.* Norwich, Norfolk, UK: Canterbury Press, 2012.

# GENERATIONS IN DIALOGUE

## The 2019-22 Sociology of Religion cohort meets to discuss research and projects

The scholars of the Fr. James L. Heft, SM Generations in Dialogue Program met at Daylesford Abbey near Philadelphia in March to discuss their research, areas of collaboration and future projects.

One of the Institute's marquee programs, Generations in Dialogue provides early-career scholars the opportunity to meet with and learn from some of the finest and most experienced minds in their fields. The scholars of the Sociology of Religion Cohort are:

**Clayton Fordahl, Ph.D.**, assistant professor of sociology, University of Memphis

**Jane Lankes**, doctoral candidate, Penn State University

**Andrew Paul Lynn, Ph.D.**, postdoctoral fellow, Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture at the University of Virginia

**Tia Noelle Pratt, Ph.D.**, director of mission engagement and strategic initiatives at Villanova University

**Brad Vermurlen, Ph.D.**, research associate in the Department of Sociology at the University of Texas, Austin

Learn more about Generations in Dialogue at [iacs.usc.edu/generations-in-dialogue](https://iacs.usc.edu/generations-in-dialogue).



*The fourth cohort of the Fr. James L. Heft SM Generations in Dialogue Program: Jane Lankes, Andrew Lynn, Brad Vermurlen, and Tia Noelle Pratt (far right) with Villanova University professor Anna Moreland, Villanova University professor and IACS Trustee Michael Moreland and IACS Executive Director Becky Cerling.*



# HANCOCK AND DEPAUL FELLOWS

IACS is pleased to announce the Hancock and DePaul Fellowships, which will support scholars conducting cutting-edge research across different academic disciplines.



**Brandon Vaidyanathan, Ph.D.** the inaugural Hancock Fellow, is an associate professor and the chair of the Department of Sociology at the Catholic University of America in Washington D.C.

His research examines how culture shapes human flourishing across a variety of institutional disciplines and fields including business, religion and science, and has been published widely in peer-reviewed journals.

He holds bachelor's and master's degrees in business administration from St. Francis Xavier University in Nova Scotia and HEC Montreal respectively, and a doctorate in sociology from the University of Notre Dame.

Born in Qatar, he lives in Maryland with his wife Claire and their six children.

Follow Brandon Vaidyanathan on Twitter: [@brvnathan](https://twitter.com/brvnathan)



**Leo Guardado, Ph.D.**, the inaugural DePaul Fellow is an assistant professor in the Department of Theology at Fordham University.

Born in El Salvador, Guardado immigrated to the U.S. with his mother when he was a child, settling in the Highland Park neighborhood of Los Angeles. His research focuses on theological responses to the violence of forced displacement, focusing specifically to the tradition of church sanctuary.

Guardado also conducts research on how migrant communities in New York City turn to indigenous healing practices and rituals to address personal and communal wounds.

He earned his bachelor's degree in religious studies from St. Mary's College of California, and his master's of theological studies and a doctorate in systematic theology and peace studies from the University of Notre Dame.

Follow Leo Guardado on Twitter: [@guardadoleo](https://twitter.com/guardadoleo)

[Read more about the Hancock and DePaul Fellowships at iacs.usc.edu.](https://iacs.usc.edu)



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# IN MEMORIAM: ELLEN HANCOCK

**IACS trustee helped shape the Institute from its earliest days**

Ellen Marie Hancock, a member of the Board of Trustees of the **Institute for Advanced Catholic Studies at USC** and a visionary leader in the tech industry and business world, has died. She was 79.

A resident of Ridgefield, Connecticut, Hancock died peacefully on Tuesday, April 19, 2022. She is survived by her husband of 50 years, Jason, and her siblings Peter, Paul and Patricia Mooney.

As an active member of the IACS Board of Trustees and its former chair, Hancock was influential in shaping the Institute's structure and operations.

Born in the Bronx, on April 15, 1943, to the late Peter and Helen (Houlihan) Mooney, Hancock grew up in New Rochelle, New York. She graduated from The Ursuline School, The College of New Rochelle and Fordham University, where she earned a

master's degree in mathematics.

Hancock worked for 29 years at IBM, where she was appointed senior vice president with global responsibilities, the first female to achieve the position. Following IBM, she moved on to senior leadership roles at National Semiconductor Corporation, Apple Inc. and was later named chief executive officer of Exodus Communications.

Hancock was deeply devoted to education. Her philanthropy includes serving as an IACS trustee for more than 13 years.

Read her obituary at [iacs.usc.edu](http://iacs.usc.edu).



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