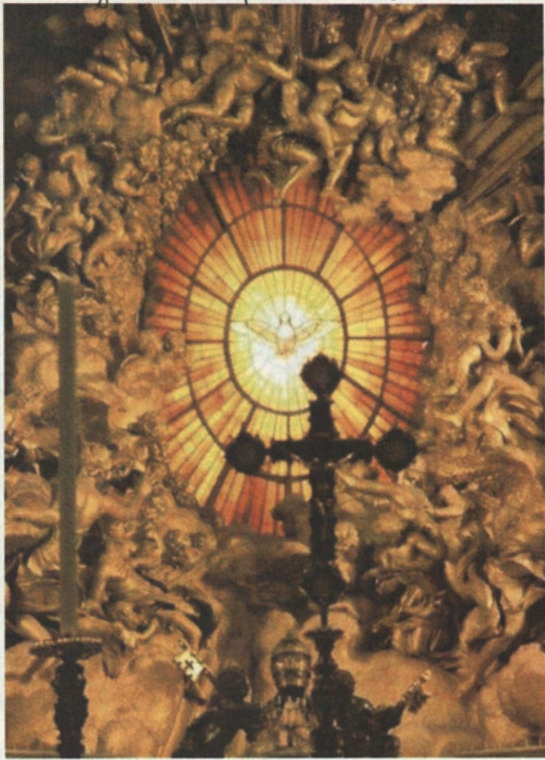


Creating Mullin Scholars

Summer 2013



Generations in Dialogue and the Impact of Mentoring on Academics and Artists Who Care About Faith

In the fall of 2010, with the generous support of Peter Mullin, the Institute for Advanced Catholic Studies launched the **Generations in Dialogue** program with a purpose that was both simple and profound: to create a multi-generational community that would allow participants – following the example set by the traditions of the Catholic Church – to explore how faith informs scholarship and scholarship informs faith. Today, this rich, intergenerational experiment is in its third year and going stronger than ever, thanks in no small part to Mullin’s personal commitment to mentoring and forming leaders, which has served as the program’s inspiration.

Through GID, young, early-career scholars are given the opportunity to meet and speak with, listen to and learn from some of the finest and most experienced minds in their fields. In turn, these mentors have the opportunity to pass on their accumulated wisdom and experience to a generation of scholars at the dawn of their professions—artists and educators who are eager to learn how to integrate their faith into their academic, artistic and intellectual lives.

Over the course of two years and four weekend-long sessions, these young scholars engage in intensive and intimate dialogue with their peers and mentors, who guide them through scholarly discussions, personal reflection, professional advisement, and shared prayer. Through these encounters, participants have an opportunity to cultivate a creative scholarship that engages the intellectual and spiritual traditions of Catholicism, as well as foster a lifelong commitment to serving others—tools that enable them to turn a profession into a vocation.

Upon completing the program, the participants become “Mullin Scholars” at the Institute and are invited to engage in future Institute research and writing projects. They are invited to stay in contact with their mentor and become a part of a larger community of scholars.



Mentoring as the Medium for Transformation

"Mentoring young scholars is at the heart of the both the program and the Institute, and no one I know values mentoring more or exemplifies it better than Peter Mullin, whose generous endowment helped create the program," explains Father James Heft, SM—the creator of the GID program, IACS president and the Alton M. Brooks Professor of Religion at USC. "The Generations in Dialogue program is something of a powerful microcosm of our long term goals, which are to bring senior and junior scholars together for extended and profound examination of how spirituality and academia intersect."

That exchange, that relationship – between mentor and mentee, between experience and aspiration, between wisdom and knowledge – is at the core of the Institute's mission, Fr. Heft continues. "The broader goals for the Institute as a residential center

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for scholars embody the mentorship principle between generations not just for four weekends, but for the full academic year."

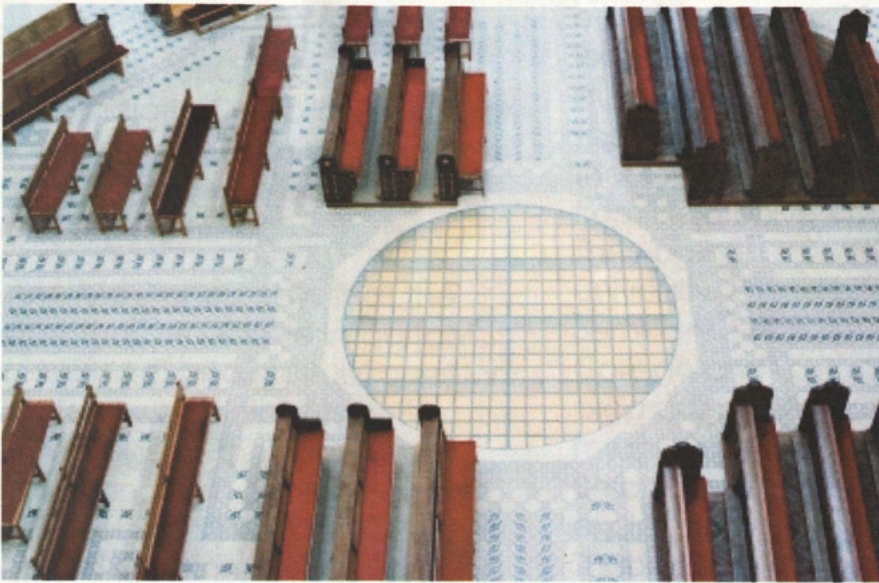
Filling the Spiritual Void in the Academy

The need for such a program is evident, not just among young scholars but across academia, according to Fr. Heft and the Institute's supporters.

"In its laudable desire to embrace all sorts of people with all sorts of backgrounds, the Academy has paid a certain cost for the intellectual lives it exists to support and nurture," he says. "By divorcing the spirit from the intellect, by excluding religious traditions as serious schools of formation and vocation for scholars, we empty the intellectual life of special purpose and leave out spirituality's God-given power to integrate and transform scholars. We end up with an educator, a scholar or an artist with little religious connection to the power or purpose of his or her work."

"Both the Institute and the Generations in Dialogue program exist to fill in that gap and allow scholars to relate their religious lives to their scholarly lives."

The desire for exactly this kind of dialogue is reflected in the exponentially growing interest in the GID program. "When we first began Generations in



Generations in Dialogue I: The History of Catholicism

Dialogue, the mentor chose four scholars to participate in the program,” explains Dr. Gary Addler, IACS Director of Research and the program’s principal organizer. “For the second GID group, we created an application process. And now, for this most recent cohort, more than 120 young scholars applied, which enabled us to hand pick those participants whom we deem have the most to gain and to contribute – both during the program and in the work they produce in the years to come,” he says.

Generations in Dialogue I: The History of Catholicism

The first GID cohort comprised historians from Yale, Penn and Notre Dame and was led by John O’Malley, S.J., historian, professor of Theology at Georgetown and author of a range of influential books, including *The First Jesuits* and *What Really Happened at Vatican II*.

Bronwen McShea, currently an American Council of Learned Scholar New Faculty Fellow in Columbia University's History Department, supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, was one of the first Mullin Scholars. She says her experience at GID I was transformative.

“We were blessed to spend three full weekends at Georgetown in the company of Fr. John O’Malley, SJ—a giant in our academic field,” she writes.

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“Nowhere else has it been possible for me to be as open about the role of faith in my academic life,” John McCormack, PhD candidate at University of Notre Dame explains.

For Matt Gaetano, Assistant Professor of History at Hillsdale College, “The GID program has enabled me to cultivate a deeper sense of the links between faith and scholarship, our vocation as Christians and our vocation as historians. This was the first time that I was able to ask these sorts of questions in the company of other Catholic historians.”

“Hearing the personal stories of John O’Malley, Jim Heft, Carlos Eire and our other guests will enrich my own vocation in a great number of ways,” Gaetano continues. “I have a more developed sense of what is

possible, within and beyond academe, for Catholic scholars and scholarly Catholics, and a lot more confidence in my vocation as a Christian who is pursuing an academic career."

Anne McGinness says that the opportunity to tackle important professional and spiritual questions with fellow participants at the same stage of their academic career and with experienced senior scholars like John O'Malley, Bernard McGinn, Carlos Eire, and others "was a privilege that will rarely be matched as my career unfolds."

"Before starting GID I had lost sight somewhat of my vocation and, caught up in the business of daily life, I was in the pattern of seeing my work as divorced from the church in all respects except for the subject matter," she says. Through GID, "I have come to understand that my vocation as a scholar has meaning both within and outside of small academic circles and, most importantly, that my faith life should be the base and the foundation of my life's work. I have learned that scholarship can nourish my faith, and my community of worship should inform and influence and my scholarship. I now challenge myself to answer the big, "So what?" question, as John O'Malley does so well."

Generations in Dialogue II: Christian Spirituality

In the summer of 2011, the second cohort began, led by University of Chicago Divinity School professor

emeritus Bernard McGinn, a leader in the academic study of Christian spirituality. That cohort comprised theologians and historians from Biola University, Boston Theological College, Boston University, Princeton Seminary, Providence College and USC. "This program helped to cement my intuitions about my unfolding vocation," explains Bo Karen Lee, Associate Professor, Princeton Theological Seminary.

"It's rare for young faculty to be in contexts where we can learn directly from a senior scholar in a close and intensive set of meetings, and was a tremendous opportunity for each of us. It was a great gift to be able to interact with Prof. Bernie McGinn in an open, safe setting to explore the connections between our faith and scholarship."

David Alberston, Assistant Professor of Religion, USC, says he learned a great deal from fellow participants about the spirituality of teaching and specific techniques to use in the classroom

"I've started to think more long-term about the purpose of research and writing projects that I'm choosing and the economy of time and spirit that I should budget for each. I've also thought more than I had before about the need for a forum for top-flight scholars to integrate prayer and research at the highest levels. This ideal would continue to be personally inspiring for me."

For Phil Haberkern, Assistant Professor of History, Boston University, it was the fellowship and the candor that emerged over the course of the program, that proved most rewarding. "Knowing we could talk in a space that was private but incredibly communal was very valuable to me," he says.

The program also "helped unify my sense of vocation, and to transform spiritual practice into something more palatable and useful in a secular context," he concludes.

"The Generations in Dialogue program helped to cement my sense of vocation, and confirm that the

Generations in Dialogue II: Christian Spirituality

ideas and concerns I possessed—about scholarship, teaching, and the hazards of academe,” says Michon Matthiesen, Adjunct Professor of Theology, Providence College. “It was wonderfully rewarding to listen to others and the challenges they were encountering in the effort to stay authentically faithful to their desire both to serve God and to prosper in the academic setting. I would like to think that the conversations we had and the clarity we achieved can have a ripple effect in our own particular communities. This program has given me a solid template for going forward as a professor of theology and a scholar of faith.”

The summer of 2013 marked the close of the second cohort and the beginning of the third, which

Generations in Dialogue III: The Writer and the Arts

is led by Gregory Wolfe, founder and editor of Image journal,

author of *Beauty Will Save the World: Recovering the Human in an Ideological Age*, and founder of the first Master of Fine Arts program (at Seattle Pacific University) to include extensive reflection on the Christian tradition. The theme of this cohort revolves around the vocation of the writer/poet in dialogue with the Catholic intellectual and spiritual traditions. Six writers from over 120 applicants have been



selected to spend four weekends together with Mr. Wolfe over the two-year GID period, reflecting on the spiritual discipline of writing, building a community of support, learning about Catholic thought on creativity and receiving and offering critiques of one another’s work.

“For writers early in their career, such an opportunity for support and guidance is crucial,” says Dr. Gary Adler, Director of Research for the IACS and the program’s principal organizer. “For religious writers, an opportunity like this one can be extraordinarily hard to come by.”

“I believe, as the novelist John Gardner said, that a writer needs both education and community in order to improve his craft and enrich his creative vision,” writes GID III participant, author and assistant professor of English at Northwestern College Samuel Martin.

“Participation in the GID program will allow me to do

both of these things, as well as to more fully participate in and learn from a religious, intellectual, and literary community I know mainly through the writings of its contemporary authors. I see participation in this program as an opportunity to deepen my historical knowledge of the Catholic tradition, to grow as an artist and person of faith, and to improve my pedagogy as a teacher of creative writing."

"In the wild enchantment of life, it's our journey inward that matters, but at the same time, I try to be the kind of traveler (and writer) who allows no scenery or landscape to simply roll by without a glance," writes Kathleen Tarr, a fellow GID III participant, poet and author. "It's time to take the next step, to move out of my solitary, self-directed approach to understanding Catholicism, divisive faith issues, and the Catholic literary tradition. I want to be a part of the stimulating and 'spirited' conversation the GID program stands for. I need

more intellectual engagement, research and serious reflection. Being in this community of gifted teachers and mentors will deepen my work and will help rescue me from some spiritual confusion."

The creation of a new generation of thoughtful, contemplative and engaged scholars is exactly the "return on investment" the Institute sought in establishing the GID program, and in its third year and third cohort, it's clear that that investment is paying off.

Sowing the Seeds of Wisdom: The Value of GID Today, and Tomorrow

But the value of the program doesn't lie with the creation of new generations of Mullin scholars alone. Professor McGinn counts his conversations with the scholars he mentored as among the most fulfilling of his long and distinguished career. They were, he writes, an "accomplished, articulate, and already productive cohort of the best of the best—scholars whom I believe will make a real difference in decades to come."

Their intellectual interactions, collaborations, and above all, their sense of commitment to unifying their intellectual and spiritual lives, were what Jim Heft had envisaged from the beginning.'

To Prof. McGinn, the Generations in Dialogue program represents "a long-term investment and promissory note," that he is certain will produce dividends in the future. "While productive scholarship can't be done overnight, I am convinced that Generations in Dialogue has made a difference that will become more and more evident as time goes on."

The idea that mentoring creates lasting value is one close to Peter Mullin's heart, and the impetus behind his support of Generations in Dialogue and the creation of the Mullin Scholar position. "I am a great believer in the impact of having a mentor," he said in a recent interview. "I realize in retrospect that I've had two or three mentors, and I see how crucial it was for me. Having brilliant scholars willing to mentor young scholars is great for their development. If you drop a few seeds of wisdom here and there, a few will take and grow!"

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