



SSS Grapevine

An Internal Publication of the
Province of Saint Ann (USA)
Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament

May 4, 2025 – 2025.11

CTU Annual Board, Trustee, Congregational Leaders & Banquet Share Successes and Joys

By Father John Thomas Lane SSS

The annual Board of Trustees and Congregational Corporate leaders' meetings of Catholic Theological Union (CTU) took place on April 26 in Chicago. This is an opportunity for the provincials, their delegates, and other key stakeholders who support CTU's mission to plan, promote, and forge a future for our Catholic seminary. The Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament (SSS) is a member of a special "union." There are 41 members representing the different religious communities. Some of these members are also essential stakeholders/leaders in the dioceses of Chicago and Joliet. The SSS, part of CTU since 1982, became part of the Corporate Members (now 23 corporate members – religious orders) in 1998 with a sizeable financial commitment to the school's endowment. We heard of efforts that continue to increase enrollment (239 credit hours more than last year, and 22 more students overall than last year). One of our priest-students is Vietnamese Father Joseph Kiet Nguyen, SSS. (While being a chaplain at Hillcrest Hospital – Cleveland Clinic and living at Saint Paschal Baylon, Highland Heights, Ohio, he continues his studies, finishing his Master of Divinity degree online.) The new bilingual and Spanish-speaking only degree track has attracted 12 to the cohort, with another larger class expected next year.

Dominican Sister Barbara Reid has faithfully served and improved CTU for five years. Her first two years were unprecedented in higher education, shifting the school of ministry to a bi-model learning model. Continuing to have students online everywhere and in person has helped the seminary grow. In the last five years of Barbara's leadership, another key success in the financial strength of CTU is the reimagining and leasing of two different floors to two different theological schools in Hyde Park, Chicago: The Lutheran School of Theology and

McCormack Seminary (Presbyterian). Their presence supports not only financially, but also has led to shared library-resource space, other theological studies, and classes for students to take. (It is a requirement for CTU students to take a class in another theological school at one of the other 11 theological schools in Chicago; with two now in the building, it has been easy for students to enjoy this benefit if taking the class in person.)

Sister Barbara soon completes her 5-year term as president, so the board plays a role in the school's business: choosing a new president. 8 candidates applied for the position. Three were brought to campus during March and April to interview in person in a synodal process. The fifteen-member search committee unanimously focused on one candidate. He will be announced on May 5, and we will share the link.



Sister Barbara Reid OP with Father John Thomas Lane SSS.

Like typical board meetings, we reviewed budgets, heard proposals for the future, approved new initiatives to try for marketing, and will be welcoming two new religious communities to the CTU community, perhaps as Corporate Leaders. I joined a task force to develop a new formula for welcoming corporate members since there is no structure in place, nor has there been a new corporate member since 2002. This meeting is also a chance to hear concerns and brainstorm with other religious communities about the trends and congregational experiences we are leading to. We are so grateful to Sister Barbara, and she will return to the faculty, teaching Scripture and continuing her time-honored work in writing for biblical studies.

Provincial Offers the Keynote Address at the National Association of Diaconate Directors Convention

By Father John Thomas Lane SSS

Nestled in the heart of the Wasatch Mountains in Salt Lake City, the National Association of Diaconate Directors gathered from April 29 to May 1. This year's annual convention theme was *"The Diaconate: Our Sacramental Participation in Service."* The leaders of each diocese gather each year to also focus on liturgical updates and trends in theology and service for the diaconate. Because of the revised, second edition of *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery Outside of Mass* (HC), our provincial Father John Thomas J. Lane SSS, flew in for the day, Tuesday, April 29, to share his wisdom and reflection in implementing the updated text.

Father Lane is noted for publishing with Liturgy Training Publications (LTP in Chicago), *Guide to Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery Outside of Mass* (HC) (2015). A second, revised edition will arrive later this year. This best-selling, and the first book on HC for pastoral liturgy, became the basis of his talk, tracing Eucharistic theology and history for the last 2,000 years until the Second Vatican Council. After 1967, the church developed a ritual text for sharing



Father Lane with Bishop Oscar Solis from the Diocese of Salt Lake City and Deacon Scott Dodge at the National Deacon Convention in the Cathedral of the Madeleine

Holy Communion outside Mass, exposition and prayer in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, Eucharistic processions, and congresses. After his 60-minute address, he had 45 minutes of liturgical questions from the deacons and their wives. They were eager to learn much more, especially about the second edition of the Liturgy of the Hours, which is now hoped to be published for the First Sunday of Advent 2026.



Deacons from across the country

The hosting bishop, Most Reverend Oscar Solis, also gave a keynote address on the theme. Deacons' wives were present, and there was an assistance for their ministry, plus a keynote talk on the value of marriage inventories. The directors also enjoyed a mini-retreat day, focusing on "listening to God." A preparation guide for the sacrament of marriage has also been revised. The popular "FOCCUS" tool has been adapted to the changes of the young people who are getting married, when and if they get married, and especially if they get married in a "destination wedding" at a church. As usual, there is much reflection and guidance for the deacon directors on the mission and identity of deacons and deacons' wives: always trying to balance the two vocations that deacons (and their wives) live each day.



Father Lane explains the minor changes in the 2nd edition of the document, Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery outside of Mass.

Blessed are the Peacemakers

Annual Fundraising Gala for Catholic Theological Union

by Father John Thomas Lane SSS



Sister Barbara Reid OP (left of Father Lane) with mutual friends at CTU Gala, Blessed are the Peacemakers.

Since 1993, CTU has had the *Blessed are the Peacemakers* award, honoring a key leader who exhibits bold and zealous work to advance the bonds of peace, unity, and communion. From Stephen Spielberg to Queen Nor and other dignitaries, CTU honors excellent examples of Christ's beatitude through this three-quarters-of-a-million-dollar fundraiser.

This year, Father Bryan Massingale, a professor at Fordham University in New York City, was awarded for advancing the theology and ethics of interracial, intercultural, and interfaith dialogue. He has been an outspoken moral theologian with many impressive areas of study, including the interplay of LGBTQ+ persons in the church's life. Father Massingale was the first Black Catholic priest ordained in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. An award-winning scholar, teacher, and activist, Massingale is a leader in Catholic theology.

Father Massingale highlighted in his acceptance speech that each time he proposed a course, whether in his 17 years at Marquette University, or the last 16 years at Fordham,

his directors would say, “Well, you are on your own with getting that together and it is not going to be a required course.” After each success, they would become part of the curriculum during the first year of the course.



The new David Rubenstein Forum at the University of Chicago campus, where the Gala fundraiser was held.

CTU also has a second service award, *Diakonia*, which this year featured Arne Duncan. As the CTU brochure for the night says, Arne Duncan served as U.S. Secretary of Education from January 2009 through December 2015 as part of the Obama Administration. Before joining the Obama Administration, Duncan served as chief executive officer of Chicago Public Schools. From 2001 to 2008, Duncan won praise for uniting the city’s stakeholders behind an education agenda that included opening 100 new schools; expanding after-school, summer learning, early childhood, and college access programs; dramatically boosting the caliber of teachers; and building public-private partnerships around a variety of education initiatives.

He currently leads Chicago CRED, a nonprofit trying to achieve a transformative reduction in gun violence in Chicago. Through partnerships with local business leaders, community organizers, and nonprofit groups, Duncan aims to provide outreach, therapeutic, educational, and employment opportunities for the young men most likely to be engaged in gun violence. He is also the managing partner at Emerson Collective, an organization dedicated to removing barriers so people can live to their full potential.

Both of these men, their powerful witness and example, inspired us to live the beatitudes and place more emphasis on being leaders and peacemakers for our fractured world.



Classmate Dr Vanessa White presents Father Bryan Massingale the award
with Sister Barbara Reid OP.

Don't forget to share your news and information about your ministry, your retreats, and special events that make the Province of Saint Ann grow in its Eucharistic identity and mission.

Please send to <ssscommunications@blessedsacrament.com>. Be sure to label your photos for us. Thank you so much!