



OST NEWS

OBLATE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

Summer 2017 Volume 21 No. 2



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Summer 2017 Volume 21 - No. 2

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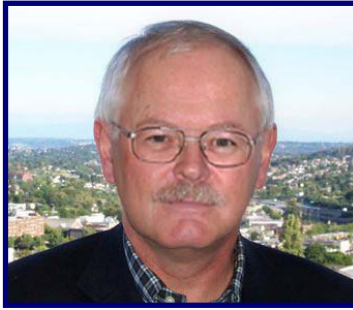
Cover Photo:

Yolanda Garcia receives the OST Medal of Honor, the highest award presented by the School, solely to honor outstanding service to OST.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

SUBSTANCE AND APPEARANCE



My old philosophical mentor, Eric Mascall, used to say that, in our time, all the goods are in the store window and there's little under the counter. He was commenting on empiricism as a philosophy and how it was slowly robbing life of its mystery and depth. Sadly, that

comment, made years ago, rings true today at a different level.

Our world has become obsessed with appearance, with image, with persona, with what's in the store window, with how we're perceived. Today it's more important to look good than to be good, more important to look healthy than to be healthy, and more important to have a good-looking surface than to have much in the way of integrity and depth underneath.

We see this everywhere, in our obsession with physical appearance, in the cult around image, in our worship of celebrity, in the imperialism of fashion, and in our not-so-disguised efforts to be perceived as connected to all the right things.

For example, typically, more and more universities are handing out honorary degrees to two types of people, celebrities and highly recognized justice advocates. I'm not sure that many of those institutions actually care about the poor or intellectually endorse what the entertainment and sports industry (which produce most of our celebrities) are doing, but a Desmond Tutu, a Mother Teresa, a Meryl Streep, a Michael Jordan, or a Tom Brady looks mighty good on a university's public face: "Just look how caring, beautiful, and energetic we are!"

In the end, and I hope I'm not being cynical, it seems it's less important what an institution believes in, or how it treats its employees and students, than how it's seen and perceived from the outside. Giving a doctorate to a Mother Teresa doesn't do much for the poor in India, but it does a fair amount for the institution that's honoring her.

The same is true in politics. Image has triumphed over substance. We tend to care less about policy than about appearance, and we elect people to political offices more on the basis of their persona than anything else. To be elected to a public office today, it's more important to have the right image than to have substance and character.

But we shouldn't be too hard on the triumph of appearance

over substance in public life, because this simply mirrors what's happening in our private lives: More and more, appearance is the first thing, the whole thing, and the only thing. It's not important to be good, but only to look good.

Cosmetics is becoming the biggest industry in the world, and concern for how we look, for the perfect body, is now a crucifying anxiety that's leaving more and more of us, especially young people, dissatisfied with our own bodies and deeply restless within our own lives. The prevalence of anorexia, among other eating disorders, more than bears this out. Too often, we're dieting not to be healthy but to try to attain and maintain an impossible appearance. Everything is about how we look, and so we exercise more, diet more strictly, and spend yet more money on fashionable clothing in an attempt to look right, even as we remain forever disenchanted with how we look and know deep down that we're fighting a losing battle as our bodies age and society's standards grow ever more unattainable – and all because our worth lies in looking good.

Not that all of this is bad. Concern for physical appearance is a good thing, as are concerns for exercise and diet. We are meant to look good and to feel good. Neither bodily health nor healthy anxiety about our appearance should ever be denigrated in the name of morality, depth or religion. Indeed, lack of concern for one's physical appearance is a telltale sign of depression or even some deeper illness of soul.

But concern for appearance should never replace a concern for substance, depth and integrity of soul, just as, conversely, concern for substance and depth may never be an excuse for shoddiness and sloppy appearance. Still, today, we've lost the proper balance.

Faith is built on the blood of martyrs, and the institutions that bind a society together (marriage, family, church, politics) are sustained largely on the basis of self-sacrifice. But ninety-nine percent of that martyrdom and self-sacrifice remains hidden, silent, anonymous, unnoticed, unglamorous, blood sweated in secret, love given for reasons beyond appearance.

If this is true, then the prognosis for the future leaves me uneasy. When appearance is everything, we soon stop focusing on deeper things and then slowly, imperceptibly, appearance begins to look like character, celebrity begins to replace nobility of soul, and looking good becomes more important than being good.

Ronald Rolheiser, omi
Ronald Rolheiser OMI



YOLANDA GARCIA AWARDED OST MEDAL OF HONOR



Oblate School of Theology awarded the second OST Medal of Honor in its history to an employee who has lived the Oblate charism for many years and worked for the School for some 18 years.

The medal was instituted in 2016. Yolanda Garcia, administrative assistant for OST's Institutional Advancement Department, received the medal from Father Ron Rolheiser, OMI, President of the School, May 4 during its Honorary Doctorates and Medal of Honor Recipients' Dinner at the Whitley Theological Center.

"This award is the non-academic parallel to the honorary doctorate," Fr. Rolheiser said. "That's why we present it at Commencement. It's the highest non-academic award that OST can give," he said as he introduced Ms. Garcia's daughter, Rebecca, of San Antonio; her son, Joseph and daughter-in-law Jeannette, of Houston; her sister, Ana Rosen, of Tamarac, Fla.; and her niece, Jessica Brodman; her great-niece Alexis Brodman; and her great-nephew, Vincent Colonna, all of Coconut Creek, Fla.

Honorary doctorates are awarded for extraordinary service to the Church; the OST Medal of Honor is awarded for extraordinary service to the School, the priest explained.

Ms. Garcia began working for the Oblates in 1967 with the Mary Immaculate League, forerunner of the Oblate Missions. She worked in the mail department and did other administrative tasks. Later, she worked for a Catholic newspaper, *El Visitante Dominical*, the Spanish-language equivalent of *Our Sunday Visitor*. The newspaper was subsidized by the Oblates and edited by Fernando Piñon, brother of Fr. Gilberto Piñon, OMI.

After that, she worked briefly for Oblate Missions, but then moved over to work at OST, where she handles a broad range of administrative tasks," Fr. Rolheiser said. She works in the Institutional Advancement Department and was the administrative assistant for the International Priest Internship for more than 10 years. She maintains the database

for the School and for Mission Project Service, a new outreach of OST for missionaries around the world; she also runs the little bookstore for the School, sells OST merchandise, and works every major fundraiser and major events at OST.

However, the job isn't everything, the priest asserted. "There's also the heart, and it's more for her heart that we want to honor Yolanda. For her, these past 50 years have always been a vocation more than a job. She has believed in and lived the Oblate charism, which can be summarized in five words or phrases: the poor, the cross, Mary, community and simplicity. These five things have characterized Yolanda for these 50 years, and her simplicity is a simplicity of both life and lifestyle," Fr. Rolheiser observed.

He joked that, "I don't want to canonize her – that'll be done later," but he emphasized that "while that may be pious hagiography, everybody here who has worked with Yolanda knows that she brings these five wonderful qualities to the School."

The OST President commented that Ms. Garcia is distinguished by her loyalty to the School, her trustworthiness and her graciousness. "Yolanda is what you'd order from a catalogue for a dedicated employee. She's thoroughly dedicated, she never misses work, she never slacks on any work and she's always been very loyal to the School and everything the School stands for. Fifty years of carrying that is a long time."

For example, Fr. Rolheiser noted that Ms. Garcia is completely trustworthy with money. "A lot of the money that flows through the School flows through Yolanda's office and Yolanda's hands; we've never needed a forensic audit of her office." The audience laughed, and he added facetiously that, "If anything, whenever anything comes up short, she adds some of her own money to make it all come out right." Then he added, "She's trustworthy in everything – absolutely everything."

Finally, Ms. Garcia has brought a wonderful



graciousness to her work and her office. “Whatever personal issues or personal goals there have been – and there are always office politics, jealousy and tensions among staff – Yolanda has always risen above these; they’ve never affected her work or how she’s treated people,” the OST president stated, adding that this is not always easy. Working in such a capacity, “you aren’t always noticed and you’re very seldom appreciated. Sometimes you have to endure what Iris Murdoch calls ‘the martyrdom of obscurity,’ or the martyrdom of not being noticed. Sometimes it makes or breaks people in the workplace.”

He used a military metaphor to illustrate the importance of all Ms. Garcia does. “For every pilot who flies, or every soldier who carries a gun into battle, you need 37 other people. We have 25 faculty members, but we don’t have 37 people for each of them; we have about one and a half – about 40-50 staff – and they are vitally important.”

Addressing the honoree directly, he said, “Yolanda, we want to recognize you tonight in this marvelous public forum, to say thanks to you and how important your work has been, and the qualities you’ve brought to this work. You haven’t flown the plane, but it wouldn’t have flown if you weren’t here. Your work has been a very important part of the mission of the School.”

He compared awarding this medal with last year’s touching moment awarding an honorary Doctor of Pastoral Leadership to Monsignor Lawrence J. Stuebben, who died in March, and in 2011 the awarding of an honorary Doctor of Pastoral Leadership degree to the Rev. Dr. Homer Bain, when there was an ovation for seven minutes and people had tears in their eyes. Dr. Bain died in 2013. “Yolanda,” Fr. Rolheiser said, “This is a touching moment for me, and I think for the School, to present this medal to you.”

Accepting the medal, Ms. Garcia, said she did so “with great honor and pride,” adding, “Thank you, Father Rolheiser and Oblate School of Theology, for selecting me. I am thankful to my children, my Florida family and my friends for taking time to celebrate with me; and I’m in very good company with Fr. Bryan and Sister Jane Ann. May God bless them and may God bless each and every one of you.”

OST AWARDED TWO ATS GRANTS

The Association of Theological Schools announced it will award OST two grants totaling \$65,000: a \$50,000 Innovation Grant to enable the School to develop and offer the Master of Arts in Pastoral Ministry degree in Spanish and a \$15,000 Faculty Development Grant to address the challenges of teaching second-language students from a Hispanic culture and of teaching primarily African-American students from diverse non-Roman Catholic backgrounds. **Read more at ost.edu/blog.**

FACULTY NEWS

Victor Carmona, Assistant Professor of Moral Theology, leaves Oblate School of Theology after a five-year stint to assume a position at the University of San Diego. The post will bring him, his wife, Astrid, and their two young daughters closer to their families.

Father Ron Rolheiser, OMI, was awarded an honorary Doctor of Theology degree May 11 at the Catholic Theological Union’s commencement “for his significant contributions to the world Church in contemporary spirituality, theology and adult Christian faith. His focus on human experiences appeals to a wide spectrum of theological views and life experiences.”

Father Frank Santucci, OMI, animated a January retreat for 25 bishops of Texas and adjoining dioceses. He also delivered the concluding address for the Oblate Bicentenary celebrations in Rome, animated the retreat for the Congregation of Divine Providence at Our Lady of the Lake University and was spiritual director at a retreat for priests of the Diocese of Corpus Christi in February. He gave a retreat day in March for Oblate Associates in Eagle Pass.

Father Dale Schlitt, OMI, reviewed *Julian Among the Books: Julian of Norwich’s Theological Library*, by Julia Bolton Holloway, on the new American Academy of Religion Online Book Review site.

Dr. Scott Woodward gave a two-day presentation on Islam and Catholicism to the Oblate Partnership in February. With **Dr. Rose Marden**, **Dr. Greg Zuschlag**, **Fr. Bob Wright**, **Dr. Victor Carmona** and **Dr. Renata Furst**, he participated in the Association of Theological Schools’ Models and Practices Projects in Global Partnerships and Hispanic Programming. He spoke on the Global Partnerships project at the ATS Chief Academic Officers Society meeting in March.

Three Oblate priests with OST connections were among six named May 22 to the United States Provincial Council of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate: **Father James Brobst, OMI**, is a former OMI student and supervised interns for OST from 1998-2001; **Father Art Flores, OMI**, is Southwest Area Councilor and earned a DMin degree in 2012; **Father Frank Santucci, OMI**, is the Kusenberger Chair of Oblate Studies; and, **Father Raymond Cook, OMI, MDiv and STB ’12**. Also named were Father José Antonio Ponce Diaz, OMI, and Father James Taggart, OMI.



CERTIFICATE PROGRAM GRADUATION



Oblate School of Theology graduated 52 women and men from three different certificate programs May 6 in OST's Immaculate Conception Memorial Chapel.

Graduates included 22 from the Programa Espiritualidad y Direccion Espiritual, 14 from the Instituto de Formación Pastoral and 16 from the Lay Ministry Institute certificate programs.

Graduates from the Espiritualidad y Direccion Espiritual program included Cecilia A. Bernal, Elenida Brux, Leah Couvillion, SSND, Rosa De La Cerda, Ricardo De La Pena, Silvia De La Vega, Cecilia Espinoza, Vianca Ibeth Flores, Aracely T. Garcia, Estela Kuhn and Javier Medina.

Also graduating from the program were Sandra Metz, Elizabeth Laura Ibarria Michel, San Juanita Olivo, Bertha A. Perez, Ruben Caudillo Porras, Ma. Guadalupe Quintero, Alejandro Ramirez, Maria G. Rodriguez, Martha Rodríguez, Patricia Frinee Sabella and Maria Guadalupe Valdez. Medina, Metz and Quintero received certificates from both the Lay Ministry Institute and the Espiritualidad y Direccion Espiritual programs.

Graduating from the Instituto de Formación Pastoral/Pastoral Formation Institute were Leticia DeLeon, Francisca E. Gonzalez, Ygnacio Gutierrez, Maricella Leija, Lisa Ann Martinez, Corina B. Ortiz, Marco Reyes, Siria Maria Reyes, Iris Trevino, Mary Vega, Arcilia R. Villarreal, Roel Villarreal, Yvonne Ybarra-Longoria and Irene Zapata.

Lay Ministry Institute graduates were Rosa Castro, James Robert Curd, Mary Jackson Dawson, Irma Flores, Johnny Flores, Barbara Lambor-Hagel, Louis Lecoche, Lisa Marie Medina, Carol Mika, Richard Jude Moreno, Omar Alonzo Ordonez, Cassie Perez, Kathryn Restivo, Gloria Andrea Reyna, Jack Arnold White and David Thomas Ziegler.

Victor Carmona, Assistant Professor of Moral Theology, gave the Commencement address, reflecting on the meaning of "having hearts touched by the Oblate

Cross." He said, "becoming alumni does not mean you stop being part of the Oblate family. On the contrary, you carry the blessing of having a heart touched by the Oblate Cross, which the Oblate priests and brothers have known during their studies, and which they saw in all the rooms of this school and the cross we have in this chapel."

He spoke of three distinctive marks that carry a heart touched by the Oblate Cross. "First, a heart touched by the Oblate Cross is hopeful. Like Mary Immaculate, patroness of the Oblates and of this chapel, the heart seeks to heal in a world torn by injustice; likewise, a heart touched by the Oblate Cross lives faith like Joseph, with humility. They do not see it, but Joseph is here at a cost, always present. Finally, a heart touched by the Oblate Cross dares to love like Jesus, with the joy of trusting that nothing – not even death itself – separates us from the love of God."

Dr. Carmona observed, "if our hearts are touched by the Oblate Cross, our ministries will bring healing in a world torn by injustice; they will speak to a faith lived in humility."

Those who believe the reign of God is already among us must proclaim it and live accordingly, he asserted; however, racism, fear of the immigrant and fear of the poor keep many of our relationships from bearing those marks.

He exhorted graduates to become spiritual directors, pastoral agents and lay ecclesial ministers who bring the healing ministry of the Church, aware that they serve persons and communities marred by those realities, either as those suffering under their weight or as those who force such burdens upon others.

Dr. Carmona added that, "While some are tempted to live their baptismal vows as if Easter Sunday were not preceded by Good Friday – as if a Christian understanding of joy should deny or ignore the reality of Christ's suffering, or our own, our ministries must acknowledge the reality of Good Friday, that many we serve



continue to suffer as crucified peoples; yet our ministries must always be faithful to the joy of Easter Sunday.”

He pointed out that “God never tires of forgiving us; we’re the ones who tire of seeking his mercy. With the tenderness which never disappoints but is always capable of restoring our joy, he makes it possible for us to lift our heads and start anew. Let us not flee from the Resurrection of Jesus; let us never give up, come what will.”

That is what the ministry of those with hearts touched by the Oblate Cross looks like, he concluded. “It’s tender to the point of restoring the joy of knowing ourselves to be God’s beloved so that all of us – especially the poor and the marginalized – may lift our heads and start anew, come what may,” he said.

“Thank you to the Oblates for being witnesses of the Cross; thank you to all in Oblate School of Theology for your friendship; and thank you, Oblate graduates, for all you are about to do. May our hearts be daring in the humility and joy of proclaiming the good news of God’s love in all we do.”

THE BIG GIVE - A BIG HELP TO OST



Oblate School of Theology received \$6,665 in gifts May 4 during the Big Give San Antonio, an annual community-wide, 24-hour online giving event, thanks to 71 generous donors, including 50 previous donors and 21 first-time donors to the School. Net proceeds will help with the School’s general operations. Twenty-two of the donors are current employees of the School and four others are OST Trustees. We wish to send a huge thank-you to everyone who donated to OST during the Big Give, which raised \$4.6 million for 648 deserving nonprofits in South Central Texas. You made OST proud and are in good company. More than 31,000 donors participated in the Big Give San Antonio. Donations came from all 50 states and Puerto Rico and from 17 different countries.



Check out the OST Blog for the latest OST news, videos and more! ost.edu/blog

Save These Dates

MORE EVENTS AT WWW.OST.EDU

Rolheiser Lecture Series

Simply Being Good is Not Enough:
A Spirituality of Charity, Justice & Prophecy
Sept. 7, 14 & 21, Whitley Theological Center

Oblate Open Golf Tournament

Sept. 18, 8:00 am, TPC San Antonio

Greg Zuschlag Lecture Series

Will the Real Jesus Please Stand Up?
Understanding Different Portraits of Jesus in
the Gospels
Sept. 25, October 2, 9, 16, & 23, 2017

Dr. Peter Phan Systematic Theology Lecture
Doing Ecclesiology in the World Church
Oct. 17, 7 pm

Annual Alumni & Friends Gathering
Oct. 18, 6:30 pm, Whitley Theological Center

Oblate 285 Benefit

Oct. 21, 5:30 pm Mass 6:30 pm Festivities

Black Catholic History Sankofa Lecture
Nov. 4, 9 am, Whitley Theological Center

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OST 2017 COMMENCEMENT



Oblate School of Theology awarded 10 Master of Arts (Spirituality), one Master of Arts (Theology), five Master of Arts in Pastoral Ministry, eight Master of Divinity, one Doctor of Ministry and two honorary doctoral degrees during its 2017 Commencement exercise May 5 in the Immaculate Conception Memorial Chapel.

The Master of Arts (Spirituality) was conferred on James Mark B. Adame, Donald Bassana, Jr., OFM Conv., Misty Kay Garriga, Julia E. Hinojosa, Leticia Givilancz Long, Lucie Thérèse Luduc, Kathleen Ann O'Connor, Glenda Margaret Prosser, Carol H. Solis and Daniel E. Villarreal Paez.

Patrick Neil Bastien was awarded the Master of Arts (Theology). The Master of Arts in Pastoral Ministry was conferred on Duncan Amek, Rosa K. Hawthorne, Cheryl Lynn McMullan, William Douglas Neel and Vincent Wambugu.

Receiving the Master of Divinity were Edgardo Diaz Vazquez, OFM, Heleodoro Lozano Macias, Juan Mercado, Pedro Mercado Jr., Fidel Valdez Rivero, Abel E. Ruiz, Daniel E. Villarreal Paez and Cong Chi Vo.

The Doctor of Ministry was conferred on Neil Andion Arce, the sole recipient of the degree this year. Javier Gonzalez Cabrera and Daniel E. Villarreal Paez completed the Baccalaureate in Sacred Theology. This degree, offered through an affiliation with Saint Paul University in Ottawa and accredited by the Vatican's Congregation for Catholic Education, will be conferred at a later date.

Nine seminarians – Duncan Amek, Edgardo Diaz Vazquez, OFM, Heleodoro Lozano Macias, Juan Mercado, Pedro Mercado Jr., Fidel Valdez Rivero, Abel E. Ruiz, Daniel E. Villarreal Paez and Cong Chi Vo – also were awarded the Certificate of Advanced Studies for Presbyteral Ministry.

Father Bryan Massingale, professor of theological and social ethics at Fordham University, received an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters. He also was OST's

Commencement speaker. Sister Jane Ann Slater, CDP, Chancellor of the the Archdiocese of San Antonio and the first woman to hold that post, received an honorary Doctorate of Pastoral Leadership and gave the invocation.

In his address, Fr. Massingale said that the November 2016 election revealed a nation “where truth is confused and manipulated, where folks on all sides of the political spectrum throw accusations of ‘fake news’ and ‘alternative facts’ at one another, and where playing loose with reality – or as my grandmother would say, ‘just plain lyin’ – has become commonplace in our common life.”

It also revealed a fearful nation, he continued. Women fear for the respect of their bodies; gays, lesbians and transgender people for protection of their rights; blacks fear official misconduct; immigrants fear for the integrity of their families, Muslims for the protection of their lives, Jews for the sanctity of their synagogues and cemeteries, the sick for access to affordable, quality health care, and working-class whites for security in the face of downward mobility and increasing class disparity.

Yet, in Massingale's view, perhaps the most important revelation in the election was that Americans are deeply divided – and not only by fissures of race, class, ethnicity, gender, geography, religion, essential identities and expressions.

“We are separated by chasms of *understanding*. Those who differ from us seem increasingly alien and incomprehensible,” he asserted. We have become a nation of strangers, siloed in racial, geographic, media and digital enclaves where we mostly interact with those who are like us – who think like us, act like us, sound like us, vote like us, love like us and pray like us.”

This isolation fuels ignorance, indifference and fear, which become the fertile soil for moral callousness and disregard for those who are not like us, the priest observed.



He cited the vitriol of public discourse, a spike in hate crimes and “a callousness and even cruelty toward those not like us,” which he said “disturbs me and fills me with dread.”

The professor reminded listeners that Christian Scripture summons us to love our neighbor, care for the stranger and show one another the compassion that God has for us. “Our sacred texts tell us bluntly that we *are* our brother’s keeper; they warn us that our response to ‘the least among us’ – especially those not like us – is the measure of our holiness and righteousness: ‘For I was hungry and you gave me to eat; thirsty and you gave me to drink; naked and you clothed me; a stranger and you welcomed me,’” he said, quoting from the Gospel of Matthew.

Healing this national estrangement and preaching and ministering to this deeply confused, fearful and divided nation are perhaps the greatest challenges facing ministers of the gospel today, Fr. Massingale warned graduates. “St. John Paul II reminded us that one of the most important challenges facing a society is how we live together. Healing will not come from facile appeals for unity, and even less from a dismissive attitude such as ‘After all, elections have consequences; *we won, get over it!*’”

Living together in harmony requires cultivation of public compassion, “which demands, at the very least, decency and respect for those who are not like us,” the priest commented. Ministers must be close to those in their care and know their fears and anxieties. It is by listening to people – especially to those not like us – that we show that our God is close to our fears.

In a nation confused about truth, he observed, a prophetic voice “proclaims the truth of the equal, sacred human dignity of *all* God’s people. This is the foundation of Catholic social teaching.” In today’s language, he continued, “*unborn* lives matter, *women’s* lives matter, *Muslims’* lives matter, *immigrants’* lives matter, and yes, *black* lives matter. We must be forthright and declare that fear is no excuse for hate. As Jesus did for the woman caught in adultery, we must be willing to be ‘stone-catchers’ for those most endangered by our collective fear.”

Finally, he warned that a joyful witness means “not a sappy reassurance of a shallow optimism that ignores hard and difficult times; we offer the joy that comes from deep, contemplative prayer, because in such prayer, we become one with Christ, who came that his joy may be ours and our joy may be complete.”

Fr. Massingale cited Pope Francis’ summons to be joyful witnesses inspired by the message of the Resurrection, which does not deny the reality of the Crucifixion or gloss over suffering and death, but proclaims that human sin and tragedy are not the final word and that God and Jesus’ disciples can bring good out of human callousness and evil. “*That’s* the joy we proclaim and that’s the joy they desperately need,” he said

The theologian, the first in his extended family to graduate

from college, ended by recalling how his grandmother savored the rich, smooth feel of his college diploma.

“She took her Bible seriously, especially the admonition that ‘to those to whom much is given, much will be required.’ She didn’t have money to buy me a gift, but her question to me was both a haunting challenge and yet the most loving gift she could have given me,” he recalled. She asked, “Whom are you going to use this for? Whom are you going to help with this?” He admonished graduates to ponder whom *they* would help with the privileges and opportunities their new degrees would open for them.

“It is my deep hope and prayer that (the honorary degree) is a sign that in some way I have honored my grandmother’s charge and used my gifts to respond to the joys, hopes, griefs and anxieties of God’s people,” Fr. Massingale declared.

SALLY GOMEZ-JUNG RETIRES AFTER 24 YEARS OF SERVICE TO OST



Sally Gomez-Jung, Director of Theological Field Education and Assistant Professor of Pastoral Studies, has retired, effective June 30. She was honored April 20 at a despedida reception in the Whitley Theological Center auditorium. The average tenure in such a position is five years, but she lasted for 24. Gomez-Jung came to OST as a

student in 1991 after being an elementary teacher very involved in ministry in the diocese of El Paso. She earned a Master of Arts in Theological Education in 1995 because a priest friend had said that “a lay Hispanic woman needed graduate credentials to be a credible lay minister in the Church.” Father Pat Guidon, OMI, then President of the School, offered her the chance to direct the Theological Field Education (TFE) program. Teaching at OST, Gomez-Jung has seen the changes in the ethos of the school given the growing diversity of students to include more lay students, women and Sankofa students.



HONORARY DOCTORATES AWARDED



Father Bryan Massingale and Sister Jane Ann Slater, CDP, were honored May 4 by Oblate School of Theology (OST) at the Honorary Doctorates and Medal of Honor Recipients' Dinner on the eve of the School's 2017 Commencement.

Fr. Massingale, professor of theological and social ethics at Fordham University and Commencement speaker, received an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree. Sr. Slater, the first woman chancellor of the Archdiocese of San Antonio and twice superior of the Sisters of Divine Providence, received an honorary Doctor of Pastoral Leadership degree and delivered the invocation. The degrees were conferred at Commencement May 5 in the Immaculate Conception Memorial Chapel.

Sr. Addie Lorraine Walker, SSND, said Fr. Massingale is faithful to his calling as a priest, a prophetic witness, a professor and a teacher, displaying the courage to teach with his life. After teaching at St. Francis de Sales Seminary from 1991-2004, he taught at Marquette University until 2016. A leading Catholic social ethicist and scholar of African American theological ethics, racial justice and liberation theology, Fr. Massingale earned Marquette's highest award for teaching excellence.

"Fr. Bryan is willing to take a stand and be at the forefront of public discussion of issues that may be too controversial for others. He's brought a historical perspective to the conversation, crafting challenges for the broader Catholic faith community – and to priests, religious and bishops – to re-think how we live out and witness lives of justice faithful to Catholic teaching day to day" Sr. Walker said.

She said he teaches critical thinking skills from a Catholic perspective and is concerned for the witness of the Church he loves, challenging Catholics to grow as a

church and to proclaim the gospel in our times. "He sees the poor and those left out in our society and seeks the prophetic word of God in situations of injustice – especially racism and poverty – helping us all to show responsible love and concern for the marginalized, excluded or overlooked, and those without voices," she said.

Thanking the School for the honor, Fr. Massingale asserted that theologians must be thinkers for the hierarchy and for the entire people of God, "trying to make sense out of their human experience and to bring human experience into dialogue with faith."

The motivation for his work comes from his parents' and grandparents' flight from Belzoni, Miss., in the middle of the night in fear of their lives in the early 1940s to move to Milwaukee. They were part of the Great Migration of six million African Americans from the South from 1910-1970, the largest internal movement of people in world history not caused by famine or war. "It was a forced displacement, caused by racial terror and the threat of violence – largely involuntary relocations compounded by unspoken trauma. These were terror survivors leaving the South in search of safety, bearing with them an oppressed history of hidden suffering and secret pain, of horrors not spoken," he explained.

In the seminary, he was told that this had nothing to do with theology, which was said to be about personal sanctification more than social justice. "Christian and Catholic theology has been marked off by what I call the systemic erasure of the black body and its pain and ecstasy; its trauma and its beauty; its talents and its trials; its resilience and its struggles," he explained.

"The voices, questions, moans and laments of black and dark-skinned bodies had to be erased and silenced, marginalized and trivialized in Christian discourse



and Catholic reflection because theology had another role to play: providing a sacred canopy to legitimate the racial injustices in our nation, to justify the sufferings of the Great Migration, Manifest Destiny and African colonization as somehow being the will of God,” he continued.

That story motivates his work. “It makes people uncomfortable, so the tendency is to say that ‘the story doesn’t have anything to do with our story.’ That struggle motivates my existential compassion and passion – and my vocation has been a struggle to make sense out of unspoken trauma and unshared horrors, with the insistence that these traumas and horrors are not black ones, for the black story is the American story,” the priest asserted.

Dr. Scott Woodward, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean, welcomed Archbishop Gustavo García-Siller, MSpS, who introduced Sr. Slater. The Archbishop joked that meeting her in 2010 was “my first experience of a ‘Tex-akana’ accent – a lilting drawl that sounds like it came out of a country-western song.” He added, “Her bright eyes, her energy and her ever-ready sense of humor have made many encounters very memorable –not only for me but for most people in this room.” He praised her intelligence and the widespread respect for her as a leader of women religious, noting that she respects people, listens attentively and responds with sensitivity and wisdom.

Frankly, he joked, “We never have to wonder where she stands on an issue. She tells us directly, honestly and respectfully what she thinks, often with a big smile. Not always; she can also frown. Truly, I’ve come to treasure Sr. Jane Ann’s insights and suggestions,” he added. He said his meetings have lengthened and multiplied since Sr. Slater frequently suggests people with whom he should meet.

Sr. Slater brings “a clear, straightforward and different point of view to our discussions,” and “a freshness of view, an honest if unexpected opinion and a challenge,” he explained, adding facetiously, “That does not mean I did not have some trepidation and some sleepless nights thinking about the impending appointment and wondering if she would like to work with me,” the prelate continued.

Thanking him, Sr. Slater said that the Oblates have been a part of her life since her childhood. In her childhood, a cousin frequently raved about Fr. Paul Decker, OMI, on her return from Our Lady of the Lake College. In 1954, Sr. Slater enrolled at the college and met “my own Oblates,” whom she called “the epitome of what it meant to be a priest and teacher.” She cited Oblate friends from her early days in the convent and present ones who have been longtime friends, such as Frs. Bill Morell, Bill Davis, Sal de George, Armand Matthew, Kevin Collins “and most of the guys in this room.”

Later, she learned of the decades of collaboration between the Sisters of Divine Providence and the Oblates. Fr. Henry Constantineau, OMI, came from Ottawa to build

the San Antonio Philosophical and Theological Seminary, forerunner of Oblate School of Theology. He assigned chaplains for the sisters and helped them become a pontifical congregation in 1912.

“Knowing the Oblates has reinforced for me the charge of St. Eugene de Mazenod to ‘leave nothing undared,’ because we’ve climbed some amazing heights. I love the ministry that OST has, and I love what you do for the whole church, the Southwest, the United States and beyond. I love the opportunity and challenge to get to know St. Eugene and his amazing missionary heart and spirit, and my ongoing friendships with so many wonderful Oblates, seeing how you live St. Eugene’s missionary spirit and how the charism animates your own lives,” she said.

“I give thanks to God’s providence for leading me to San Antonio and to my congregation, in which the Oblates have been so significant.” Oblate School of Theology, she commented, is not only a concrete testimony to the Oblate charism lived out. “It’s a blessing to all who find a home here, like me. Receiving this honorary doctorate really is icing on the cake of the many blessings I’ve received in my long relationship with the Oblates. Thank you very much, Oblate School of Theology, for this wonderful honor.”

School officials bade Fr. William Antone, OMI, the outgoing chair of the OST Board of Trustees, a fond farewell and thanked him for his service.

ORDINATION NEWS

Praveen Lakkisetti, MA (Theol.) ’15, MDiv, STB ’16, Danny N.D. Darius, MA(Sp) ’16, Abel Ruiz, MDiv ’17, and Daniel Villarreal Paez MA(Sp), MDiv, STB ’17, were ordained to the priesthood May 20 in San Antonio.

Fidel Rivero, MDiv ’17, was ordained to the priesthood May 20 in Chino Hills, Calif.

Cong Vo, MDiv ’17, was ordained to the priesthood and **Victorino Loresca** to the diaconate May 26 in El Paso.

Friar Nader Ata, OFM was ordained to the priesthood May 27 in Syracuse, NY. **Reginald Odima** and **Freddy Perez** were ordained to the diaconate May 27.

Juan Mercado, MDiv ’17, and Pedro Mercado Jr., MDiv, ’17, were to be ordained to the diaconate June 3 in Laredo.

Heleodoro Lozano is to be ordained to the priesthood at a time and date to be determined.

Jason Moore, OFM Cap., is to profess solemn vows Aug. 5 in Denver, Colorado.

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