



# Annual Report 2023-24

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## Center for World Catholicism and Intercultural Theology

 DEPAUL UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND  
SOCIAL SCIENCES

*Center for World Catholicism and  
Intercultural Theology*

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# ABOUT US

## WHO WE ARE

Housed at DePaul University in the Department of Catholic Studies, the Center for World Catholicism and Intercultural Theology (CWCIT) focuses on the global nature of Catholic Christianity especially but not exclusively in the global South—Africa, Asia, and Latin America. CWCIT seeks to be at the forefront of the discussion about the relationship between globalization and the Catholic Church's future as a truly worldwide Church.



São Paulo, Brazil—Procession of the Virgin of Copacabana, Brazil's patron Saint (Photo by Alfribeiro)

## OUR MISSION

CWCIT was founded at DePaul University in 2008 to produce research that will serve the Church and the academy. To fulfill this mission, we have paid special attention to the world Church that has emerged since the Second Vatican Council and its growth in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

While our focus has been on the present global communion of faith, we also attend to historical, theological, and cultural questions that will contribute to a fuller understanding of Catholicism and the dialogue of cultures today.

“

We founded the Catholic Studies department—and its associated CWCIT—to be **at the forefront** of the discussion about the **globalization** and the **Catholic Church's future as a truly worldwide Church**.

We consider your department and its center as **gifts to the larger Church** housed here at DePaul. I have been gratified and proud of your convening of the **world's great minds** on a series of important Church conversations over these past years.

The Church in the modern age needs **a strong intellectual center, but one that goes beyond its Eurocentric tendencies** and invites great minds from the entire world—and especially its southern hemisphere—to weigh in and **shape our Church's thinking and directions**. You embody that commitment...”

— Rev. Dennis H. Holtschneider, CM (DePaul's 11th president)  
on the 20th anniversary of the Catholic Studies Department,  
April 25, 2017



# OUR STAFF



**William T. Cavanaugh**  
Director, CWCIT  
Professor, Catholic Studies



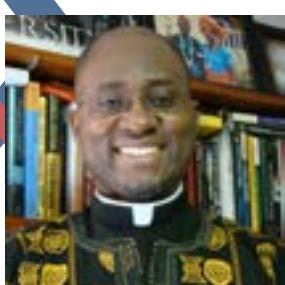
**Karen M. Kraft**  
Communications  
& Editorial Manager



**Michael L. Budde**  
Senior Research Professor, CWCIT  
Professor, Catholic Studies &  
Political Science



**Marlon B. Aguilar**  
Budget & Operations Manager



**Stan Chu Ilo**  
Research Professor, CWCIT  
Associate Professor, Catholic Studies



**Elliot Ellis**  
Student Assistant,  
Graphic Design & AV Editing

# LECTURES



## A Bird Does Not Fly with One Wing: Women and the Church in Nigeria

October 11

### Sr. Caroline Mbonu, HHCJ

Member of the Congregation of the Handmaids of the Holy Child Jesus, chair of the Religious & Cultural Studies Department at the University of Port Harcourt in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, and one of the CWCIT's fall 2023 visiting research scholars



## Crisis of Faith: Today's African Christians and Mami-Wata (Mother-Water Spirituality)

November 6

### Sr. Gesila Uzukwu, DMMM

Member of the Congregation of the Daughters of Mary, Mother of Mercy, a faculty member in the Philosophy & Religious Studies Department at Nasarawa State University (Keffi, Nigeria), and one of CWCIT's fall 2023 visiting research scholars



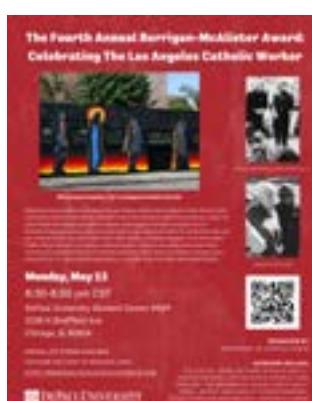
## Can Sport Bridge Social Divisions? Pope Francis, Fanatic Fans, and the Culture of Encounter

February 8

(Cosponsored with DePaul Athletics)

### J.J. (Jay) Carney

Professor of theology and African studies at Creighton University (Omaha, NE) and author of multiple books, including *On the Eighth Day: A Catholic Theology of Sport*, co-authored with Matt Hoven and Matt Engel



## 4th Annual Berrigan-McAlister Award Presentation: Celebrating the Los Angeles Catholic Worker

May 8

(Cosponsored with DePaul's Division of Mission & Ministry, Environmental Science & Studies, Catholic Studies, and Peace, Justice & Conflict Studies)

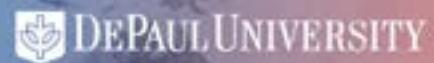
For its 50+ years of providing food, shelter, and support to the poor and unhoused in Los Angeles, the LA Catholic Worker received DePaul's 4th Annual Berrigan-McAlister Award, which honors those who exhibit a true commitment to practicing "gospel nonviolence."

# EVENT PHOTOS



# World Catholicism Week 2024

April 12-13



## IS IDOLATRY DEAD? DISENCHANTMENT AND MISENCHANTMENT IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

We often hear of the contrast between an "enchanted" global South and an increasingly secular and "disenchanted" North. At the same time, however, Pope Francis has revived idolatry critique, focused especially on the false gods of the supposedly secular political economies dominated by the global North. But idolatry critique can be dangerous; colonial powers frequently denigrated indigenous people as idolaters in need of conversion. This 15th annual World Catholicism Week conference took up these issues, exploring the question: How is the language of idolatry and enchantment used—and misused—in today's world?

In addition to our CWCIT director, Bill Cavanaugh, whose latest book, *The Uses of Idolatry* (Oxford University Press, 2024), inspired this conference, our speakers included

- **Emilce Cuda**, secretary for the Pontifical Commission for Latin America at the Vatican
- **Paul Gifford**, emeritus professor of world Christianity at SOAS University in London
- **Eugene McCarragher**, professor of humanities & history at Villanova University



# World Catholicism Week 2024



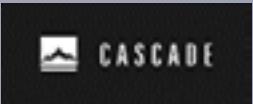
# COLLABORATIONS

## External

America Media, A Jesuit Ministry



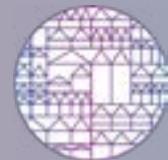
Cascade Books



*Chicago Catholic* newspaper



*Commonweal* magazine



Migrants & Refugees Section,  
Vatican Dicastery for Promoting  
Integral Human Development



Pan-African Catholic Theology  
and Pastoral Network (PACTPAN)



*U.S. Catholic* magazine



## Cross-Campus at DePaul

Catholic Campus Ministry

Center for Religion, Culture, and Community

Department of Catholic Studies

Department of Environmental Science and Studies

DePaul University Athletics

Division of Mission and Ministry

Peace, Justice, and Conflict Studies Program

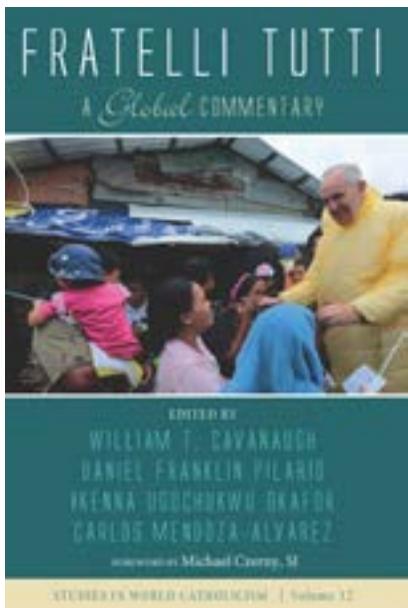
Vincentian Studies Institute

DEPAUL  
UNIVERSITY



# PUBLICATIONS

## Published in January 2024



### **Fratelli Tutti: A Global Commentary**

Vol. 13, Studies in World Catholicism

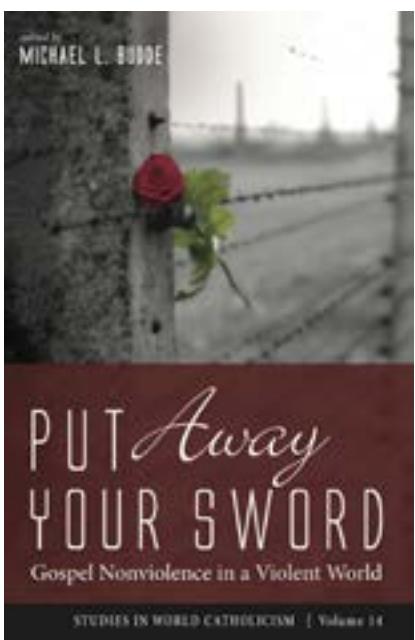
Cascade Books, A Division of Wipf and Stock Publishers

Edited by William T. Cavanaugh, Daniel Franklin Pilario, Ikenna Ugochukwu Okafor, and Carlos Mendoza-Álvarez, this interdisciplinary volume gathers commentaries from 32 international scholars on each of the 8 chapters in Pope Francis's latest encyclical.

"This is the first commentary on Pope Francis's encyclical on fraternity and social friendship, but it is hard to imagine it ever being surpassed. Such is the breadth and depth of this extraordinary work that stands as a genuinely worthy companion to an encyclical that powerfully calls us to recognize ourselves as children of the same God."

**—James Keenan, SJ (Boston College)**

## Published in March 2024



### **Put Away Your Sword: Gospel Nonviolence in a Violent World**

Edited by Michael L. Budde

Volume 14, Studies in World Catholicism

Cascade Books, A Division of Wipf and Stock Publishers

This book's contributors are Christian scholars and practitioners from across the Majority World (including El Salvador, Brazil, Kenya, and the Philippines) who are a mix of proponents of Christian pacifism and just war theory, advocates for varieties of "just peacemaking" frameworks, and people pursuing slow, modest steps toward reconciling enemies without the use of overarching theoretical frameworks.

"The proper Christian attitude to violence is a burning contemporary question. Here proponents from different continents, conditions, and disciplines highlight its complexity at a practical as well as the theoretical level...A superb and timely debate."

**—Paul Gifford, SOAS, University of London**

# RESEARCH SCHOLARS



## **Caroline Mbonu, HHCJ (Fall 2023)**

Professor of New Testament & Gender Studies  
University of Port Harcourt  
(Port Harcourt, Nigeria)

**Research Project:** Titled "Dialoguing with the Feminine Face of Scripture: Quest for an Ecclesial Integral Development in Nigeria," Sr. Mbonu's research project seeks to recall history and analyze culture, so as to use them to foreground women's experiences in Church life, for a transformative result. It also seeks to find biblical motifs in our own context as well as uncover, recover, and make contemporaneous cultural texts that tend to marginalize women and bring the findings into the conversation for a more wholesome relationship in a church life. As a Nigerian-Yoruba adage puts it, "A bird cannot fly with one wing."



## **Gesila Uzukwu, DMMM (Fall 2023)**

Faculty member, Department of Philosophy & Religious Studies  
Nasarawa State University  
(Keffi, Nigeria)

**Research Project:** Titled "African Catholic Spirituality, Mami-Wata, and Theodicy: Interrogating the Faith Crises of African Catholics on the Problem of Evil," Sr. Uzukwu's research project considers the impact of traditional African spirituality—especially West Africa's Mami-Wata tradition—on the Catholic faith in Africa. It investigates the different way(s) that African Catholics have responded to the problems of theodicy via their constructs and appropriations of grassroot spiritualities, especially the traditional Mami-Wata spirituality, which worships a pantheon of water spirits. While previous scholarship has investigated the crises of African Christian faith either from the dominant point of view of African culture and context, Christian/Muslim interaction, or from the influence of Western elements, there are no works that show the multidimensional impacts of Mami-Wata spirituality on Catholic faith, identity, and the perspectives on the problem of evil.

# CWCIT Online



**YouTube**

[YouTube.com/CWCIT](https://www.youtube.com/cwcit)

8 new videos  
29 new subscribers  
3,671 new views



1. U.S.



2. Nigeria



3. Philippines



4. Cameroon



5. Tanzania



**Vimeo**

[Vimeo.com/cwcit](https://vimeo.com/cwcit)

8 new videos  
277 new views  
3,647 new impressions



1. U.S.



2. Italy



3. U.K.



4. Philippines



5. Australia



6. India



7. Canada



8. Germany



9. Brazil



10. Republic  
of Korea



## Facebook

Facebook.com/WorldCatholicism

277 new followers  
3,647 total followers



## Near & Far Podcast

Soundcloud.com/WorldCatholicism

1 new episode  
1,018 total plays



### Top Episodes

**176 Plays** – Jodi Mikalachki on “Fraternity, Peace, and the 40 Young Martyrs of Buta Seminary, Burundi”

**121 Plays** – “Faith and Sports? An Interview with J.J. Carney”

**119 Plays** – Kochurani Abraham on “Gender Equality in India”



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