



The Center for Dominican Studies NEWSLETTER

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Fr. Anthony Gittins, C.S.Sp.

Dr. Godwin Duru and Sister Justina Nnajofofor, OP. greet Fr. Gittins.

Dominican Life of the Mind Lecture: What Does It Mean to be Human? Reflections on the Christian Response to Homelessness

Fr. Anthony Gittins, a member of the Congregation of the Holy Ghost Fathers also known as the **Spiritans** delivered the **Life of the Mind** lecture on **March 6, 2008** to a large audience of enthusiastic students, friends of ODU, and local catechists. Fr. Gittins, currently professor of mission and culture at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, was born in Manchester, England. He earned an MA and Ph.D. from the University of Edinburg, Scotland. His pastoral outreach includes ministry in cultures from Africa to the Pacific, and work with Chicago's disenfranchised, especially homeless women. He is the author of fifteen books and numerous articles. He continues his anthropological work by spending periods of time in local churches, especially in Africa and the Central Pacific, working on inculturation by bringing learnings from cultural anthropology and theology together. His commitment to homeless women in Chicago, whose stories he told in *Where There's Hope, There's Life: Women's Stories of Homelessness and Survival*, is ongoing. Some of his additional books include: *Reading the Clouds: Mission Spirituality for New Times*; *Hallelujah for the Day: An African Prayer Book*; *Encountering Jesus: How People Come to Faith and Discover Discipleship*; and *A Presence That Disturbs: A Call to Radical Discipleship*.





Mary Catherine Hilkert, OP, Ph.D.



ODU Chaplain Fr. John Boll, OP greets guests.

Speaking with Authority: Catherine of Siena and the Voices of Women Today

The **Dominican Life of the Mind** lecturer honoring **St. Catherine of Siena**, featured renowned theologian and author, **Mary Catherine Hilkert, O.P., Ph.D.**, who is currently professor of theology at the University of Notre Dame. Approximately 100 participants gathered on the evening of **April 11, 2008**, in the Colonial Room of Sansbury Hall, to hear an inspiring and challenging lecture on this noted fourteenth century mystic and Doctor of the Church. Mary Catherine Hilkert intertwined her talk with a series of beautiful pictures of St. Catherine, which included scenes from her native land of Siena. This slide show set a lovely context for the lecture, bringing Catherine's visual presence into the midst of the assembly. Mary Catherine specializes in contemporary systematic theology and has a particular interest in theological anthropology, feminist theology and theologies of preaching. She has published extensively on the relationship between theology and preaching, including her book *Speaking With Authority: Catherine of Siena and the Voices of Women Today*. Mary Catherine is a former member of the board of directors of the Catholic Theological Society of America and was awarded the Sophia Award for Theological Excellence in Service to Ministry by the Washington Theological Union in 1997.

“Keep in mind that each of you has your own vineyard. But every one is joined to your neighbors’ vineyards without any dividing lines. They are so joined together, in fact, that you cannot do good or evil for yourself without doing the same for your neighbor.”

(Catherine of Siena, The Dialogue)



Statue of St. Catherine of Siena found in the lobby of her home in Siena, Italy greets all visitors.

“Wherever you are, be of service.”

(Catherine of Siena)



Thomas Merton: The Hermit in New York



On March 3, 2008 the CDS sponsored a Thomas Merton play presented by Still Point Theatre Collective based in Chicago, Illinois. Still Point's full time mission is to portray modern spiritual heroes. *Thomas Merton: The Hermit in New York*, wrought from the journals of Thomas Merton, is the story of a contemporary man of faith practicing the fourth century tradition of eremitism, while a participant in the crowded, modern world. The performance, held in the Matesich Theatre, Erskine Hall, drew a diverse crowd of attendees from the ODU community and neighborhood. Quoting from Merton's own journals and other writings, actors Beau O'Reilly and Matthew Wilson held the attention of the audience throughout the event. Playwright Theresa Weed indicated that *The Hermit in New York* is not an autobiography but a discussion, a mosaic of this well known Trappist monk who became a public figure through his more than 60 books, hundreds of poems and spiritual articles, as well as his stance on non-violence, civil rights and the nuclear arms race.

"The Hermit in New York opens a funny and challenging window on the world of Thomas Merton: a solitary, a celebrity, and an ordinary man." (Still Point Theatre Collective)

Fr. Stephen Fitzhenry, OP, STL



Celtic Spirituality

The third 2007-2008 **Dominican Conversations** Circles dinner welcomed 35 participants who listened and conversed on the topic of **Celtic Spirituality** on **March 12, 2008**. Fr. Fitzhenry, a former missionary in the Diocese of Multan, Pakistan. He also served as Vicar Provincial there from 1972-1980. Currently, he is the chaplain for the Dominican Sisters of St. Mary of the Springs. Fr. Fitzhenry has published widely for a variety of journals including Spiritual Life. Some article titles include: *Qualities of a Contemplative Soul*; *Love and the Celibate*; *Dominic, Preacher of the Word* and *A Celtic Way*.



Attendees take time to view the display prepared by Fr. Fitzhenry that featured articles, pictures and classic works related to Celtic Spirituality. Other participants converse with each other previous to the lecture and discussion. All attending received a copy of Fr. Fitzhenry's article entitled *A Celtic Way*, found in a recent edition of Religious Life Review.



Truth Seekers Reflection Luncheon Featured Richard Woods, OP

On **February 21, 2008**, Dominican friar, scholar and author **Fr. Richard Woods** addressed the topic, *The Relevance of the Mystics for Our Christian Journey*. Fr. Woods is professor of theology at Dominican University and President of the International Meister Eckhart Society. During his presentation, Fr. Richards highlighted ways in which the mystics of the early Church serve as examples for us as we walk the contemporary Christian journey. His book *Mysticism and Prophecy: The Dominican Spiritual Tradition*, recounts how the spirituality of Aquinas, Meister Eckhart, Catherine of Siena and other Dominicans and non-Dominicans is relevant in today's world. Fr. Woods is also the author of *Christian Spirituality: God's Presence through the Ages*. The new third edition includes a chapter entitled *21st Century Spirituality*.



Book Study Groups 2007-2008: During this academic year over 80 individuals from the ODU community and beyond, participated in the book study and discussion sessions held in the CDS. The books included: ***Becoming Who You Are: Insights on the True Self*** by Jim Martin, S.J.; ***Living Justice: Catholic Social Teaching in Action*** by Thomas Massaro, S.J., and ***Where There's Hope There's Life*** by Anthony Gittins, CS. Sp. Participants received a copy of the book two months previous to the lively and informative discussion sessions that were held in the CDS.



John Allen greets Benedict XVI during the Holy Father's visit to the U.S.A.

CDS 2008-2009 Programs and Events Preview

Sept. 6, 2008: Symposium: *Catholic Social Teaching* (8:00 AM-2:00 PM)

Oct. 2, 2008: *The Church and the Political Landscape* (7:00 PM)
Featuring John Allen

Nov. 7, 2008: *Interreligious Dialogue* (7:00 PM)
Featuring Thomas Michel, S.J.

Jan. 22, 2008: *Aquinas Convocation: Dominican Values: Alive to the Real and the Possible.*
Featuring Chrys McVey, O.P.



For additional exciting program listings visit the CDS web site at

<http://www.ohiodominican.edu/about/dominicanstudies/default.asp>