

July 27, 2018

Dear SSCS Colleagues,

I write to share with you the many developments which are quietly taking place in the Society, with the purpose of promoting its long-term development and of ensuring a fruitful gathering in Denver.

1. International Relations Committee

Using the Zoom communications system, much discussion has taken place between the IRC members regarding designing an opportunity for scholarly exchange with international leaders in the field of the study of Christian Spirituality. A draft plan was forwarded to the Board of Directors. Agreement has been reached regarding a gathering in 2019. This gathering will take the form of a joint conference between SSCS and the Forum of Spiritual Theology Professors in Italy. It has been scheduled for September 25-29, 2019 in Rome. This is an exceptional opportunity to collaborate with an equivalent scholarly society in Europe, though the calendar challenges are recognized. A call for papers, together with necessary practical information, will be issued towards the end of the Summer. I wish to express fulsome gratitude to our SSCS members Diana Villegas (IRC Chair), Gilberto Cavazos, and Rossano Zas Friz, for both their visionary initiative and the considerable efforts (including fund-raising) they have already invested in preparing this proposal. The warm welcome and support subvention received from the University base of Gilberto (the Antonianum) has also been a great gift to the planned conference. The contribution of other IRC members who graciously participated in calls, at sometimes unsocial hours, is also appreciated: Michael O'Sullivan (Dublin); Noel Burke (Barbados); Annie Ng (Hong Kong).

2. Emerging Scholars Group

The SSCS Emerging Scholars Group includes graduate students as well as pre-tenure faculty and those who have received a doctorate within the last six years. All eligible SSCS members are welcome to join the new Emerging Scholars Forum on Facebook, where there is the opportunity to discuss research, teaching, vocational direction, and other concerns. Among the activities organized by the Emerging Scholars Group is a subsidized lunch for Group members, Saturday at AAR. For more information, please contact Shannon McAlister at smcalister@fordham.edu.

This year also, the preparations are well advanced for awarding a Founders' Circle Prize to an Emerging Scholar (those entering do not need to be current members of the Society). The deadline for submission is September 15, and the Founders' Circle Prize Presentation will take place Saturday, November 17, 2:00-3:00 p.m., in the Torrey's Room on the Lobby Level of the Crowne Plaza. All are welcome and encouraged to attend. For more information on the Founders' Circle Prize, please see the "What's New?" listing on the home page of our website, <https://sscs.press.jhu.edu/index.html>. If you have additional questions, please contact Shannon McAlister, Prize Committee Chair, at smcalister@fordham.edu, or Anita Houck, Secretary, at ahouck@saintmarys.edu.

3. SSCS Events at the AAR/SBL

As one of the Related Scholarly Organizations of the American Academy of Religion, the SSCS will, as usual, meet in conjunction with this year's AAR/SBL Annual Meeting in Denver, November 17-20. More information on these events will be coming in early fall, but I hope you'll plan now to share these events with your colleagues in the Society.

This year, we won't be having a preceding Friday afternoon session, but instead have set that time aside for the Board to meet for a Summit so as to reflect on our mission and identity as a scholarly society as we move past our first 25 years.

Friday, November 16

Society dinner. Plans are now in place for an opportunity for dinner conversations together at Maggiano's Restaurant, near the convention area. As in the past, the cost for members will be around \$40, including tax and gratuity (alcohol will be extra), and need-based scholarships will be available. Doug Hardy is assisting in providing an Eventbrite booking facility for the dinner. Advance reservations and pre-payment will be required; Eventbrite details to follow shortly.

Friday evening program. 7:30 - 9:00 p.m. This year, our evening session will be on an exciting and important theme, "Christian Spirituality, Mental Health, and Psychology." The aim of the session is to explore collaborations across disciplines. We're delighted to welcome as our speaker Dr. Steven J. Sandage, Albert and Jessie Danielsen Professor of Psychology of Religion and Theology at Boston University. Dr. Sandage is one of the leading figures in the intersection between psychology and spirituality, and the program is designed to help us explore how our field can be in productive conversation with other disciplines. There will be ample time to join in conversation together and with Dr. Sandage, so please plan to join us and invite your colleagues. The session (P16-504) will be held in the Crestone Ballroom Salon A on the Third Level of the Embassy Suites.

Sharing publications. During the Friday evening session, we'll have a table where members can share their recent publications and learn more about each other's work. Please bring copies of recent books and articles for a table display; simply set up your contribution and then take it with you at the end of the evening.

Saturday, November 17

Saturday Presidential Address and Business Meeting. SSCS events continue on Saturday morning, 9-11:30 a.m., in the Centennial Ballroom C at the Hyatt Regency Convention Center. This session will include my Presidential Address, "Pilgrimage: Spirituality on the Move," to be followed by the annual SSCS Business Meeting, presided over by Glen Scorgie, who becomes our new President.

As you know, the AAR has changed its longstanding policies, and the Society is no longer affiliated with the Christian Spirituality Unit of the AAR. However, as we discussed at last year's Business Meeting, we expect and hope that many SSCS members will continue to be active in this Unit, including by attending the CSU Business Meeting (after the Saturday afternoon session) to suggest topics and choose leadership. For your interest, information on the CSU sessions is attached. You may find additional details in the AAR's online Program Book, https://papers.aarweb.org/program_book.

I look forward to seeing you in Denver!

Bernadette Flanagan: Spirituality Institute for Research & Education, Dublin, IRELAND

Sessions of the Christian Spirituality Unit of the AAR

Saturday - 3:30 PM-5:00 PM

Theme: *Christian Spiritual Classics and Trauma, Evil, and Illness* (A17-308)

Michael O'Sullivan, Spirituality Institute for Research and Education, Presiding
Convention Center-Mile High 4F (Lower Level)

This session explores the question of evil and suffering, the practice of spiritual affliction, and the imagery of wounds as signs of grace.

Tara Soughers, Plainville, MA: *Wounded Bodies: Teresa of Avila's Spirituality of Suffering*

Aline Gram Lewis, Graduate Theological Union, *The Power of the Symbol in Julian of Norwich's Parable of the Lord and the Servant*

Francis X. McAloon, Fordham University, *Disability Studies, Ignatian Spirituality, and Gerard Manley Hopkins: "Spiritual Affiliation" as Both Spiritual Practice and Goal for Those Living with Chronic Illness*

Business Meeting:

Margaret Benefiel, Shalem Institute For Spiritual Formation
Glenn Young, Rockhurst University

Sunday 3:30 PM-5:00 PM

Theme: *Christian Spirituality and Suffering* (A18-308)

Beringia Zen, Avila University, Presiding

Convention Center-Mile High 4B (Lower Level)

This session explores the relationship between suffering, homelessness, and Christian spirituality; the effects of a spirituality of martyrdom on end-of-life care; and the way the Christian spiritual tradition can decrease the social suffering of mental illness.

Travis Pickell, University of Virginia, *Re-Thinking Agency and Identity at the End-Of-Life: Baptism, Eucharist, and the "Spirituality of Martyrdom"*

William B. Whitney, Azusa Pacific University & Karen Kim, Azusa Pacific University: *Suffering and Mental Illness: The Work of the Spirit and Psychological Perspectives on Social Suffering*

Paul Blankenship, Graduate Theological Union, *Wounds of Love: Christian Spirituality, Suffering, and Homelessness*

Monday - 1:00 PM-3:00 PM

Christian Spirituality Unit and Religion and Ecology Unit

Theme: *Eco-Reformation (Cascade Books, 2016): Toward the Next 500 Years* (A19-209)

Timothy Robinson, Brite Divinity School, Presiding

Convention Center-203 (Street Level)

The 2016 volume Eco-Reformation: Grace and Hope for a Planet in Peril, ed. Lisa E. Dahill and James B. Martin-Schramm (Cascade Books), brings together contributions from sixteen notable Lutheran theologians, ethicists, biblical scholars, and practical theologians, arguing that the insights and spiritualities of Reformation traditions can and must contribute to the "ecological conversion" to which Pope Francis in Laudato Si' has called all humans. What aspects of Lutheran (or any other) tradition must die, as no longer helpful in the face of these crises? What new forms of spirituality and practice are called for? This panel will engage these questions through the contributions in the

volume, providing critical and constructive readings of those texts to stretch the discourse of what a Lutheran spirituality can contribute in unprecedented and chaotic times, toward a habitable and flourishing planet (or, perhaps, simply toward human survival itself), over the next 500 years.

Panelists:

Leah Schade, Lexington Theological Seminary
Jacob Erickson, Trinity College, Dublin
Mark S. Bocker, St. Andrew Lutheran Church
Jacob Sherman, California Institute of Integral Studies

Responding:

Lisa E. Dahill, California Lutheran University
James Martin-Schramm, Luther College

Monday 3:30 PM-5:00 PM

Theme: *The Spirituality of the Psalms* (A19-309)

Thomas J. McElligott, Saint Mary's College of California, Presiding
Convention Center-Mile High 4A (Lower Level)

This session explores the psalms in regards to a spirituality of candid encounter, a spirituality of illness, and the expression of lament.

Stefan Andre Waligur, Graduate Theological Union *“How Can We Sing the Lord’s Song in a Foreign Land?”: Psalm 137 and the Recovery of Lament in the Life and Liturgy of the Christian Church*

Deanna A. Thompson, Hamline University *Trauma, Lament, and a Spirituality of Illness in the Psalms*
Marian Maskulak, St. John's University, Queens, NY: *The Psalms: A Spirituality of Candid Encounter*