

Beatrice Institute



ANNUAL REPORT 2023

PITTSBURGH, PA



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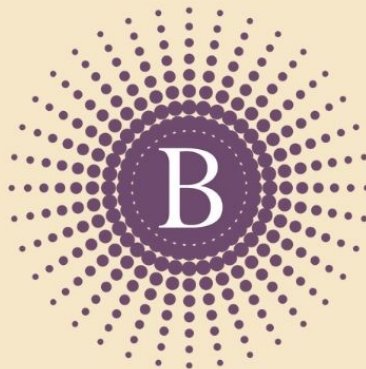
INTRODUCTION

MISSION

Beatrice Institute is an ecumenical learning and research community based in Pittsburgh that fosters friendships around the Christian intellectual and cultural traditions in pursuit of the Beautiful, the True, and the Good.

VISION

Beatrice Institute contributes to the universities and community of Pittsburgh, and beyond, in three ways. First, we address the gaps in undergraduate and graduate education in Pittsburgh by facilitating engagement with the intellectual and cultural riches of the Christian tradition. Second, we sponsor advanced research projects within a Christian framework, built around the expertise of our local faculty. Third, we host public events to promote the renewal of culture in the Pittsburgh area. We aspire to become the center of Christian intellectual life in Pittsburgh and a light beyond it.



CHRISTIAN STUDIES FELLOWS PROGRAM

Christian Studies Fellows are undergraduates from a wide variety of majors who want to learn more about the Bible and Christian history, culture, and theology in community. Fellows meet for dinner and a bi-weekly seminar. We welcome students from any major, year, or religious affiliation.

AT-A-GLANCE:

Spring 2023 - Fall 2023

- Fellows: 52

Expanded to four cohorts in 2023:

- Body and Soul
- Formative Christian Ideas
- Happiness and the Good Life
- Created for Community

TOPICS COVERED INCLUDE:

- The Problem of Evil In the Christian Tradition
- God, Nothingness, and Creation
- Is Work a Curse?
- Loving Your Neighbor in the Age of Individualism
- Icons in Eastern Christianity
- Is Social Media Even Social?

Graduate Spotlight

Rebecca Voss

BI provided me a community where I could be curious about the faith, ask questions, and invite others to join. Since graduation, I have been able to incorporate these aspects into my workplace by reaching out to coworkers, creating an environment where others feel comfortable asking questions about Christianity, and continuing to seek out communities where I can stretch myself and grow deeper in my faith.



University of Pittsburgh, '23

CHRISTIAN STUDIES FELLOWS PROGRAM



Fellows tilling flower beds at Oasis Farm and Fishery, helping the farm transition from winter into spring.

CULTURAL EXCURSIONS:

- Screening of Terrence Malick's *The Tree of Life*
- Iconography Workshop
- Oasis Farm and Fishery
- Amen to Action
- Maxo Vanka: Faith, Society, and the Immigrant Church in Pittsburgh
- Mozart's Requiem Lecture and Symphony
- Undergraduate Colloquium
- Winter Salon: Smartphones: A Path to Flourishing or Collapsing?



Fellows and staff helped Amen to Action pack one million Thanksgiving meals for Western Pennsylvania residents.



Students practiced how to integrate prayer and painting in the Iconography Workshop.

CHRISTIAN STUDIES FELLOWS PROGRAM

UNDERGRADUATE COLLOQUIUM

To close this academic year, the Christian Studies Fellows hosted a student colloquium where they shared original stories and poetry, papers, and ideas. An audience of two dozen enjoyed seven student presentations and discussions. We are incredibly proud of our Fellows' presentations and all they have accomplished this year and hope to include even more of our Beatrice Institute Community in next year's Colloquium — join us next year!



WHAT DO OUR STUDENTS THINK?



The Christian Studies Fellows Program has been packed with fruitful conversations and fascinating questions I wouldn't otherwise engage with. I am without fail enlightened by the questions and comments that students with a variety of backgrounds provide to each seminar. This program has been a perfect break from day-to-day work and helps bring life back to reality for me. - Maya

As an engineering student, Beatrice Institute has provided a robust yet accessible environment for me to engage with the Christian tradition and other elements of philosophy and history I would not have otherwise encountered. I feel that I've grown both intellectually and personally through my involvement with the Institute, and I'm so grateful that it's been a part of my university years. - Susanna



FACULTY FELLOWS

The Faculty Fellows Program creates spaces where faculty can bring the resources of Christian traditions and revelation to their disciplines without compromising professional standing or intellectual rigor. Through intellectual friendship, Faculty Fellows promote flourishing in the academy and beyond it. The Christian Faculty Convivium convenes twice a season to hear from a faculty member about their work and engage in wide-ranging conversation over dinner.



Christy Martsof, Faculty of the Practice Fellow, works as a nurse practitioner at East Liberty Family Health Care Center.



This year, BI Research Fellow Dr. Grant Martsof launched The Headwaters Project at Beatrice Institute, an interdisciplinary education and research initiative dedicated to the study of the flourishing person as the central animating principle of the applied sciences.



Professor Marta Peciña, of the University of Pittsburgh's Department of Psychiatry, brings her neuroscience research on the adolescent brain to this year's Winter Salon on smartphone use.



Beatrice Institute Faculty Fellows

Assoc. Prof. Thérèse Bonin (*Philosophy, Duquesne University*)

Dr. Joel Brady (*Religious Studies, University of Pittsburgh*)

Prof. Jonathan Caulkins (*University Professor of Operations Research and Public Policy, Carnegie Mellon University*)

Prof. Elizabeth Cochran (*Theology, Duquesne University*)

Assoc. Prof. Allyson Creasman (*Associate Head of History, Carnegie Mellon University*)

Assoc. Prof. Michael Deem (*Human Genetics, University of Pittsburgh*)

Asst. Prof. Andrew Dierkes (*School of Nursing, University of Pittsburgh*)

Prof. John Dolan (*Robotics, Carnegie Mellon University*)

Kristin Gottron, MA; BI Faculty-of-the-Practice Fellow (*Data Architect, FedEx*)

Rev. Dr. Daniel Hall (*Professor of surgery, University of Pittsburgh; Medical Director, High Risk Populations and Outcomes, UPMC; Episcopal priest*)

Dr. Gretchen Huizinga, (*BI Research Fellow, Podcast co-host*)

Professor Anthony Isacco (*Psychology, Chatham University*)

Professor Cecile LaDouceur (*Psychology and Psychiatry, University of Pittsburgh*)

Christy Martsof, CRNP, AGNP-C, BI Faculty-of-the-Practice Fellow (*Nurse Practitioner, East Liberty Family Health Care Center*)

Professor Grant Martsof (*UPMC Health Systems Chair, School of Nursing, University of Pittsburgh; BI Research Fellow*)

Associate Professor Calum Matheson (*Communication, University of Pittsburgh*)

Assistant Professor Irene Mena (*Mechanical Engineering and Material Science, University of Pittsburgh*)

Associate Professor Ryan McDermott (*English, University of Pittsburgh; BI Senior Research Fellow*)

Professor Kevin Mongrain (*Independent Scholar*)

Associate Professor Marta Peciña (*Psychiatry, University of Pittsburgh*)

Professor. Brent Robbins (*Psychology, Point Park University*)

Assistant Professor David Sanchez (*Civil & Environmental Engineering, University of Pittsburgh*)

Professor William Scott (*English, University of Pittsburgh*)

Assistant Professor Luke Sheahan (*Political Science, Duquesne University*)

Associate Professor Anthony Wachs (*Rhetoric & Communication Ethics, Duquesne University*)

Associate Professor Kurt Weiss (*Orthopaedic Surgery, University of Pittsburgh*)

Associate Professor Kenneth Woo (*Church History, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary*)

DANTE SOCIETY

"So did the triumph that forever plays
around the Point that overcame me (Point
that seems enclosed by that which It encloses)
fade gradually from my sight, so that
my seeing nothing else—and love—compelled
my eyes to turn again to Beatrice."
(Par. 30.10-15)



The Dante Society is our group for graduate students and anybody beyond college interested in fostering the Christian intellectual life in Pittsburgh.

This fall's series, "Podcasts and Picklebacks," previewed episodes of the new season of the Genealogies of Modernity podcast over picklebacks, that quintessential Rust-belt libation. Each episode takes up a well-known or lesser-known story of what it means to be modern and offers a surprising counter-narrative based on recent humanities research.

PUBLIC EVENTS



Forsaken? The Problem of Evil in the Christian Tradition

In this lecture, Dr. Gerald McDermott sketched how the Christian tradition has answered one of theology's perennial questions: if there is a God who somehow directs the world and is both good and all-powerful, how and why would this God permit evil?



A Screening of Terrence Malick's *The Tree of Life*
Together we watched Malick's epic, heart-rending retelling of the story of Job in 1950s Texas.



Iconography Workshop

We explored the art and prayer of icon writing, a beautiful, long-standing tradition in Christianity of providing a "window to heaven" through image, which is both a sacred presence and a reminder to pray.



Welcome Back BBQ

Over 60 people joined for a delightful evening of games, food, and refreshments.

PUBLIC EVENTS



How to Listen to Mozart's *Requiem*

In anticipation of the PSO's March 18th performance of Mozart's *Requiem*, Dr. Paul Miller dispelled many of the myths surrounding Mozart's *Requiem*, suggested some ways of hearing it that deepen listeners' appreciation of its music, and contextualized it within the Roman burial rite.



Playing the Bible

Salons have a long history as a refined format for the exchange of ideas and cultivation of intellectual friendship. Our Spring Salon asked the question: How does the popular TV series *The Chosen* compare to other re-imaginings of the Gospel narratives? Four panelists investigated this question with reference to various portrayals of the Nativity narrative and the character of Mary Magdalene.



Maxo Vanka: Faith, Society, and the Immigrant Church in Pittsburgh

At the arresting murals of Maxo Vanka at St. Nicholas Catholic Church, Dr. William Scott gave a presentation on immigrant literature and labor history in Pittsburgh. Following this, Dr. James DeMasi provided a brief introduction to Maxo Vanka's theological vision and a reading of his murals in context.



This is Your Brain on Smartphones

Experts from the fields of neuroscience, teen psychology, public policy, and theological ethics led a lively conversation about how those pocket supercomputers can foster or challenge human flourishing.

CO-SPONSORED EVENTS



The Artifice of Intelligence with Noreen Herzfeld (Co-sponsored with Duquesne University's Grefenstette Center)

Herzfeld presented on her new book, *The Artifice of Intelligence*, which asks two questions at the heart of a theological response to AI: is it possible for human beings to have authentic relationships with an AI? And how does the increasing presence of AI change the way humans relate to one another? In pursuing answers to these questions, Herzfeld explores what it means to be created in the image of God and to create AI in our own image.



Faith Encountering AI: How Should the Vatican Approach AI? (Co-sponsored with Duquesne University's Grefenstette Center)

What does it mean to encounter AI from a position of faith?

This event brought scholars from across the country who are part of the Vatican Center for Digital Culture to discuss the upcoming volume, *Encountering AI: Ethical and Anthropological Investigations*.

DEFENSE OF THE FAITH FORUM

Hosted by the Order of Malta, Pittsburgh Region

EXPLORING THE LAITY'S CALL TO EVANGELIZE THROUGH CREDIBLE RELATIONSHIPS.

Panelists discussing the Domestic Church as the foundation for evangelization, the meaning of the Eucharistic Revival for building relationships, and practical tools and approaches from missionaries

Defense of the Faith Forum (Co-sponsored with the Order of Malta)

BI discussed evangelizing the culture at the Order of Malta's Defense of the Faith Forum, where panel topics included the family as the primary source of evangelization, practical and programmatic ways to support marriages and faith transmittance, practical tools for setting faith examples, and cooperative intellectual exploration.



RESEARCH

Beatrice Institute houses three research projects, reflecting its broad range of intellectual and cultural pursuits. These projects are manifest in BI's podcast, seminars, and public events.

Research Initiatives

Genealogies of Modernity

Led by Ryan McDermott, the project asks, *What does it mean to be modern, and how did we get here?* Through interdisciplinary research and popular media, GenMod pays special attention to the religious sources of the modern world.

Happiness and Human Flourishing Initiative

Dr. Grant Martsof asks, "How should we organize our common life to promote the flourishing of the person, made in the image of God?"

Being Human in an Age of Artificial Intelligence

Guided by Professor John Dolan, we investigate what makes humans special and what it means to flourish on the frontier of a technological future.

HAPPINESS AND HUMAN FLOURISHING COURSE AT UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

As part of our Happiness and Human Flourishing Initiative, Grant Martsof, David Sanchez, and Ryan McDermott developed a new course that tackles our contemporary "happiness crisis" by surveying cultures throughout the world and across human history for wisdom on the nature of what it means to be a flourishing human. The course helps students reflect on their own lives and how they might thrive in college and beyond. This Fall, we had **34 students** — and there are already **60 signed up for next semester**.

“ I cannot begin to express how wonderful and beneficial this class has been to me both personally and professionally. It gave me the tools to be more present in my day to day routine and enjoy more of my last year at this school. As a nursing student, by incorporating these practices personally, I in turn can incorporate them professionally, as nursing is such a personal profession when interacting with each patient.

Senior Nursing Student



“ It is rare to find professors who actually deeply care about their students and want a relationship with them. This is the first class I've taken at Pitt that has made me feel that way. ... I will always remember this class. There are many things I have learned that have really resonated with me and helped me learn what type of person I want to be out in the world post-grad.

Junior Nursing Student





GENEALOGIES of MODERNITY COLLOQUIUM

From August 3rd – 5th, **41 scholars** from around the world came to Pittsburgh to offer responses to episodes of the new season of the **Genealogies of Modernity Podcast**, which was released as a limited series of the Ministry of Ideas podcast.

What is modernity, anyway?
Check out the GenMod project's
many resources.



Here's what one visiting scholar had to
say about the colloquium:

“

**Early career academics usually get
treated like trash.**

**But I just gave a talk on the origins of
American gun violence at the
Genealogies of Modernity conference at
the University of Pittsburgh, and they
actually took care of the speakers as
well as our families.**

**They paid a generous speaker stipend,
assisted with travel, gave us a family
room, and even provided babysitters
for families during the conference.**

**Modernity might treat humans like
replaceable parts, but the Genealogies
project certainly does not. Plus, it was
a fantastic weekend of lively
discussion and paradigm changing
proposals.**

”



BEATRICE INSTITUTE PODCAST



Top Podcast of 2023

Professor Abigail Favale of Notre Dame and host Grant Martsolf discuss contemporary gender paradigms, capitalism, fertility and ask, “What is a woman, essentially?”

(Gathered from data across all streaming platforms)

1. *The Once and Future Woman* with Abigail Favale
2. *Progressing toward Apocalypse* with Mary Harrington
3. *Why Does Atheism Seem Obvious Now?* with Joseph Minich
4. *How Should We Love Tradition?* with Anne Carpenter
5. *AI and Faith* with David Brenner

PODCAST STATISTICS AT A GLANCE

We were heard in 62 countries

Top 5

1. United States (**7,389 downloads, 31.3% increase from 2022**)
2. United Kingdom (**410 downloads, 62.15% increase**)
3. Ireland (**299 downloads, 327.14% increase**)
4. Canada (**285 downloads, 74.85% increase**)
5. Australia (**272 downloads, 106.06% increase**)

2023 was a year of great growth on our biggest streaming platform, Spotify

- 109% increase** in streams
- 105% increase** in followers
- 79% increase** in listeners



FINANCIAL SUMMARY

#BeatriceGives



52

Undergraduate
Fellows

Free public cultural
events

8



650+

Event
attendees

Podcast Episodes

20



4

Faculty
Fellowship
Events

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STATISTICS AT A GLANCE

\$357,054.27 Total Revenue

\$71,690.47 Board and Individuals

\$185,000 Foundations

\$100,363.80 NEH Grant

\$331,582.27 Total Expenditures

\$138,697.43 Payroll and Benefits

\$29,131.84 Christian Studies Fellows

\$4,681.12 Public Events

\$1,957.61 Podcast Production

\$2,021.52 Faculty Events

\$1,386.23 Dante Society

\$84,190.78 Genealogies of Modernity

Project (Funded by the National
Endowment for the Humanities)

\$14,406.06 Development

\$55,109.68 Other Operating Expenses



We would not have been able to serve the Pittsburgh community without the support of our individual donors!



Thank You!





Beatrice Institute



 Support



 Podcast