Blog



Theologian Sr. Mary Catherine Hilkert, a member of the Dominican Sisters of Peace and professor of Theology at the University of Notre Dame, received the Catholic Theological Society of America's John Courtney Murray Award June 15. (Courtesy of the Dominican Sisters of Peace)



by Dan Stockman

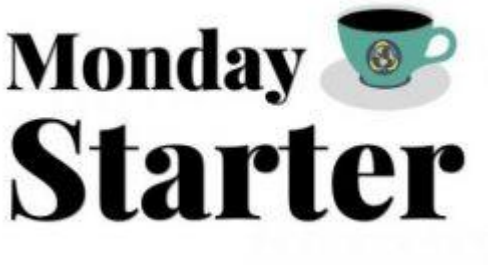
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Editor's note: *Global Sisters Report's Monday Starter is a feature from GSR staff writers that rounds up news from or about women religious that you may otherwise have missed.*



Theologian Sr. Mary Catherine Hilkert, a member of the Dominican Sisters of Peace and professor of theology at the University of Notre Dame, has won the Catholic Theological Society of America's highest mark of achievement, the John Courtney Murray Award.

The award, presented June 15 at the Catholic Theological Society of America's annual meeting in Baltimore, is for distinguished achievement in theology.

"For the past forty years, [Hilkert] has leavened and led the theological community in major academic institutions, international venues, and our guild itself," said president Kristin Heyer at the ceremony. "Through an integration of theological rigor, pastoral expertise, and generous mentorship, she has modeled excellence and invited us into an expansive understanding of our shared vocation."

Hilkert is the author of three books, edited and contributed to two others and published nearly 70 articles and book chapters. She holds four honorary doctorates and has won too many awards to mention. She has also served on two international theological commissions of the Dominican Order of Preachers and has lectured and preached in Catholic and ecumenical contexts in the United States, Canada, Ireland, the Netherlands, Australia and South Africa.

In her response to the award, Hilkert said her theological vocation has always been deeply intertwined with her vocation as a Dominican called "to contemplate and to share with others the fruits of our contemplation."

Sr. Pat Twohill, prioress of the Dominican Sisters of Peace, praised Hilkert's lifetime of ministry.

"In our 2022 Chapter Commitments, we made a commitment to prophetic preaching of the Gospel message. This has been Sr. Cathy's life work," Twohill said in a statement announcing the award. "She is truly a living example of infusing action with wisdom, as the CTSA has said. We are thrilled that she has been honored with this tribute and are grateful for the gift she is to our Church."



Four Springfield Dominican Sisters will attend the National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis July 17-20. Pictured is the recessional for the Mass celebrating the community's 150th anniversary Aug. 19, 2023. (Courtesy of the Springfield Dominicans)

Springfield Dominicans to attend congress

The Springfield Dominicans would love to say hello.

Four Springfield Dominican Sisters will attend the National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis, July 17-20. Anyone attending the congress is welcome to stop by their booths for a visit.

Sr. Rebecca Ann Gemma, who recently completed her term as the order's prioress general, will be at the LCWR booth number 939. Her term of office in the presidency for Leadership Conference of Women Religious concludes at their annual conference Aug 16.

Sr. Adele Human and Sr. Beth Murphy, the communications director for the congregation, will represent the Springfield Dominican Sisters at booth 1017, while Sr. M. Paulette Joerger will be present as a participant.

"We will be happy to meet new friends and welcome old friends and associates of the community at either booth," Murphy said. "We are looking forward to talking with visitors about what it means to live the Eucharist as Catholic sisters, and to invite conversation about our vocation to consecrated life."

The national Eucharistic Pilgrimage passed through Springfield, Illinois, July 11 and stopped at the order's Sacred Heart Convent.

To celebrate the gift of the Eucharist, the Dominican Sisters of Springfield have prepared a series of preaching on Scriptures about Eucharist which are available on their website, and YouTube.

"As members of the Order of Preachers, we want to share our desire to walk together with the Church as pilgrims on 'The Way' proclaiming the Good News of Jesus, the Bread of Life and Word made flesh for the life of the world," Gemma said. "Breaking open the Word of God through our preaching is a truly Dominican way to do that."

Dominican University names vice president for mission and ministry

Dominican University New York is joining the ranks of Catholic universities founded by sisters working to enshrine their charism as more and more lay leaders take over.



Blauvelt Dominican Sr. Jenn Schaaf will fill the new position of vice president for mission and ministry at Dominican University New York. (Courtesy of the Blauvelt Dominicans)

Blauvelt Dominican Sr. Jenn Schaaf will fill the new position of vice president for mission and ministry. Schaaf has spent the past 11 years as assistant chaplain at St. Thomas More Catholic Chapel and Center at Yale University.

"After many years in campus ministry at Yale, and previously at Ohio Dominican University, I am excited to take on this role, which brings together my past experience of ministry, my research focus on charism formation in higher education, and my passion for the future of Dominican life," Schaaf said in a statement announcing the appointment. "I know that I am following in the footsteps of many

beloved sisters who have served at Dominican University throughout the years and shaped it into the institution it is now — one that truly cares about the students and their success."

The announcement says a new professional field of mission integration has emerged in Catholic higher education in response to the growing number of universities founded by religious communities that now have lay leadership. Earlier this month, Dominican University announced it will have its first lay president as of July 15 after decades of sister leadership.

Sr. Mary Hughes, interim president of Dominican University, said she was delighted to welcome Schaaf.

"Sr. Jenn represents a new younger generation, and the future of the Dominican Sisters of Blauvelt," Hughes said. "Dominican University is prepared to carry on its proud tradition, while changing with the times to provide the best education for its students."

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