2014-2015 Annual Report
RIGHT MISSION, RIGHT TIME, RIGHT PLACE

When the Initiative was launched two years ago at Georgetown, we hoped that Catholic Social Thought and the new leadership of Pope Francis could bring people together to learn about and to dialogue on the connections between faith and public life.

- Who could have imagined that the president of the United States would come to Georgetown to be a part of a panel on poverty, joining Catholic and evangelical leaders, policy makers and diverse experts to make overcoming poverty a moral imperative and a national priority?

- Who would have predicted that Cardinal Oscar Rodríguez, chair of the Council of Cardinals, would spend a day at Georgetown to discuss the global impact of Francis and Catholic Social Thought?

- Who anticipated that a dozen Dialogues over two years would draw more than 6,000 attendees to discuss Pope Francis’ environmental encyclical: ecclesial polarization and political partisanship; global development and race in the United States; and the Francis Factor in our Church and nation?

- Who knew that that young Catholic leaders in public life would turn out for discussions on faith and politics and a conversation with Cardinal Wuerl? Or that young Latino leaders would come together to talk about the unique challenges and opportunities with a Latin American Pope.

The first two years of the Initiative have demonstrated that there is a hunger for civil and moral dialogue, a need to share Catholic Social Thought, an openness among students and faculty and a tremendous opportunity to communicate the message of Pope Francis at Georgetown, in Washington, and beyond.

The Initiative’s progress was made possible by the ongoing leadership, support and participation of President DeGioia and his office. Cardinal Wuerl and Cardinal McCarrick continue to offer their strong encouragement and personal participation. Tom Banchoff, vice president for global engagement, and our partners at the Berkley Center, offer crucial assistance. Caitlin Devine, the Initiative’s projects manager, has been indispensable from the beginning. We welcome Angela Miller McGraw as the Initiative’s program director from Notre Dame and the University of Pittsburgh.

We thank the leaders and donors who have made the Initiative possible by investing time and resources in our mission of sharing Catholic Social Thought and reaching a new generation of leaders to explore connections between faith and public life.

In two years, the Initiative has moved from a hopeful idea to a vital center of dialogue, analysis, and action that reflects the challenge of Pope Francis:

“We must regain the conviction that we need one another, that we have a shared responsibility for others and the world, and that being good and decent are worth it.”

— Laudato Si 229
An unprecedented Catholic-Evangelical Summit on Overcoming Poverty brought President Barack Obama, Harvard Professor Robert Putnam, and more than 150 Catholic, evangelical, and policy leaders to Georgetown to discuss how best to end the silence and break the stalemate on overcoming US poverty. The Initiative partnered with the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) for the May 11-13 Summit which had three major elements:


- A unique panel in Gaston Hall brought together President Barack Obama; Robert Putnam; Arthur Brooks, president of the American Enterprise Institute; and political columnist and Georgetown professor, EJ Dionne, Jr. who moderated the lively and substantive discussion. The livestreamed event drew a crowd of nearly 700, including 200 Georgetown students and faculty.

- The three day Summit for evangelical, Catholic, and community leaders included diverse panels on economic and family life, public policy, discrimination and the role of religious communities, civil society, business and labor. Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ) and Senator Tim Scott (R-SC) spoke as well as Catholic and evangelical pastors from Baltimore. The Summit concluded with strategic discussions on work and wages, tax policy, criminal justice, immigration, predatory lending, and strengthening alliances for common action.

The Summit drew overwhelming media coverage, including live coverage on national cable networks, 40,000 web news stories, more than four million Twitter impressions and almost a quarter million appearances on Facebook. The Annie E. Casey Foundation was a key partner that helped make the Summit possible. The Summit has led to new urgency, energy, and alliances to cross ideological boundaries in making poverty a priority.

“In all my years of covering Washington, this gathering is unprecedented...In Washington poverty is not a priority, right and left rarely come together, and presidents don’t do panels. This summit is unique and important.”

–PBS Commentator Mark Shields
In its second year, the Initiative brought together more than 6,000 students, scholars, policymakers, journalists, Catholic and interfaith leaders, and the public for six engaging and substantive conversations about the implications of Catholic Social Thought on key policy questions. These dialogues, held at Georgetown University and livestreamed, examined the moral dimensions of poverty, politics, partisanship, and humanitarian intervention, and the impact of Pope Francis on public policy.

“SEEKING THE COMMON GOOD IN A TIME OF POLARIZATION”

A diverse panel of prominent Catholic editors and publishers discussed working toward the common good in a time of political and religious polarization. Fr. Matt Malone, SJ, editor-in-chief of America; Paul Baumann, editor of Commonweal; R.R. Reno, editor of First Things; Caitlin Hendel, president and CEO of National Catholic Reporter, and Greg Erlandson, president and publisher of Our Sunday Visitor, participated in the Dialogue.

“GLOBAL INDIFFERENCE, SOLIDARITY AND DEVELOPMENT”

As part of Georgetown’s Global Futures Initiative, the Initiative hosted Archbishop Bernardito Auza, the permanent observer of the Holy See to the United Nations, to speak on Pope Francis’ warnings against “the globalization of indifference.” John Carr moderated a panel with David Beckmann, president of Bread for the World and Michele Brommelsiek, vice president of overseas operations at Catholic Relief Services. Ken Hackett, US ambassador to the Vatican, offered reflections as did diocesan leader, Robert Hart and Georgetown student, Kendra Layton.

“The Mission and Message of Pope Francis and Catholic Social Thought: A Conversation with Cardinal Óscar Rodríguez”

Cardinal Óscar Rodríguez Maradiaga, archbishop of Tegucigalpa and chair of the Council of Cardinals, came to Georgetown for Mass, a luncheon with leaders, and a public conversation with John Carr. The discussion focused on Pope Francis’ priority for the poor and the cardinal’s work with Caritas Internationalis. A student panel led off questions as part of this wide-ranging discussion.
PUBLIC DIALOGUES

“POPE FRANCIS’ ENCYCLICAL ON THE ENVIRONMENT: A DIALOGUE ON ITS MORAL AND POLICY CHALLENGES”

Shortly after the release of Pope Francis’ encyclical on the environment, Laudato Si, the Initiative hosted a major Dialogue to examine and respond to Pope Francis’ message. The panel included Gina McCarthy, administrator of the US Environmental Protection Agency, Anne Thompson, chief environmental affairs and Vatican correspondent for NBC News, Christiana Peppard, professor of moral theology at Fordham University, and Ralph Izzo, chairman, president and CEO of Public Service Enterprise Group Inc. Following the panel discussion, moderated by John Carr, Joan Rosenhauer of Catholic Relief Services addressed the global human impact of climate change, and Robin Morey, vice president, planning and facilities management at Georgetown University highlighted Georgetown’s efforts to care for creation.

CO-SPONSORED DIALOGUES:

“THE GREAT REFORMER: FRANCIS AND THE MAKING OF A RADICAL POPE”

Austen Ivereigh discussed and answered questions on his new biography of Pope Francis, sharing his insights into the childhood, service, and background of Jorge Bergoglio before he became pope.

“THE CHALLENGES OF THE RACIAL DIVIDE IN THE UNITED STATES” WITH BISHOP EDWARD BRAXTON

The Initiative co-sponsored a lecture by Bishop Edward Braxton of Belleville, IL, who offered challenging reflections on faith and race following the events in Ferguson and fifty years after Selma from the perspective of an African American Catholic bishop and theologian.
The Initiative encourages young Catholics involved in public policy in our nation’s capital to explore connections between faith, Catholic social teaching and their professional lives. These Salt and Light Gatherings bring together Catholics under 40, who work on Capitol Hill or in the administration, in government or other public policy organizations for discussion on a critical topic and networking opportunities.

Resisting the ‘Throwaway Culture’: Pope Francis’ Message on Human Life and Dignity brought to the Georgetown School of Continuing Studies Sr. Helen Prejean and Kim Daniels, two distinguished women who resist the “throwaway culture” in different ways and are committed to protecting human life and dignity. They highlighted how Pope Francis has encouraged young leaders to defend the weak and vulnerable, the poor, and forgotten.

A Conversation with Cardinal Donald Wuerl on Pope Francis, Catholic Social Thought and Public Service provided an informal opportunity for Cardinal Wuerl to respond to questions about the mission and message of Pope Francis and the ways that Catholic Social Thought might shape the work and lives of young Catholic leaders in Washington. A panel of young professionals responded and extended the conversation.


Catholic Faith and Public Life: Challenges for Young Catholic Latino Leaders included a distinguished panel of three Latino leaders with extensive experience in the Church, public policy and human development. Fr. Allan Figueroa Deck, S.J., Lydia Dibos, and Ambassador Roger Noriega discussed opportunities and obstacles for Latino participation in politics and the Church and how Catholic values might shape US policy toward Latin America, now and in the future.

The Initiative provides a home for the Catholic Latino Leadership Initiative/Iniciativa de Liderazgo Católico. Regular gatherings help young Latino leaders explore the particular challenges and assets of Catholic Social Thought in their work and leadership.

Cardinal Wuerl described the evening as “an example of what I think we all hoped would take place as the Initiative began to work. I was so impressed by the number of people in attendance and particularly the youthful age of so many of the young adults who will be future leaders.”
SHARING CATHOLIC SOCIAL THOUGHT

The Initiative’s director, John Carr, continues to share the vision of Pope Francis and principles of Catholic social teaching through his regular Washington column in America, his contributions to media coverage of the Church and his ability to build bridges across ecclesial and political lines. John’s insights and analysis have appeared in the Washington Post, New York Times, on PBS, CNN and EWTN, in the Catholic News Service and Religion News Service, in The Atlantic and the New Republic and many other places.

The Initiative is an active partner and participant in academic efforts, student programs, and other Georgetown activities. John serves as presidential appointee to the Committee on Investments and Social Responsibility. He has represented the Initiative at the University of Notre Dame, The Catholic University of America, Boston College, University of St. Thomas, and gatherings of the Knights of Malta, Bread for the World, ONE, Catholic Charities USA, Catholic Relief Services, and the US State Department, among others.

At its two-year mark, the Initiative continues to demonstrate how Georgetown takes seriously its Catholic mission and Jesuit identity in its academic and other programs. The powerful words and humble ways of Pope Francis are key factors in the Initiative’s extraordinary progress and his historic visit offers extraordinary opportunities to share Catholic social teaching explore links between faith and public life in our nation’s capitol.

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ANNUAL REPORT 2014-2015
“An authentic faith, which is never comfortable or completely personal, always involves a deep desire to change the world, to transmit values, to leave this earth somehow better that we found it.”

-The Joy of the Gospel

Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life

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