**Abstracts: Pappas Patristic Institute's Graduate Student Conference 2012**

**Presenter**  Stefanita Barbu

**Institution**  KU Leuven Faculty of Theology

**Title**  *Byzantium, Rome and the Papal Primacy in the First Fourteen Centuries: Historical and Cultural Factors that Contrived to Building up an Ecclesiological Crisis*

**Abstract**  For many years the Ecumenical dialogue has focused its attention almost exclusively on the ecclesiological aspects of the topics under discussion, leaving the historical factors and developments aside in the attempt to overcome the centuries old blockages and mutual accusations. This was the case as well with the topic of papal primacy in the Orthodox-Roman Catholic dialogue, where only recently (in 2010) the historical aspects of this highly debated issue have been tackled, although no official results have been issued yet.

Our study wishes to bring forth some of the most important factors and principles that have been deeply imbedded into the two ecclesiological visions developed in the East and in the West during the first twelve centuries of Christian Era, yet which seems to raise little interest for modern ecclesiologists.

Therefore, our study will focus on the one side on the two organizational principles the East and West adopted independently during the first millennium, namely the principle of accommodation in the East and the principle of apostolicity in the West, and on the other side on the Hellenistic and Roman heritage that have furnished the Eastern and Western political theology with incalculable ecclesiological consequences for the topic of primacy.

These two parallel complex developments will become evident during the 12-14th centuries debates on the papal primacy, when the Byzantines and the Latins became conscientious of their irreconcilable ecclesiological visions.

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**Presenter**  Erik Bolt

**Institution**  Pennsylvania State University

**Title**  *A Great Divide in the Stars: From the Astrology of Clement and Firmicus Maternus to the Angelology of Pseudo-Dionysus and Stephen Bar-Sudaili*
Abstract

In his Stromateis, Clement of Alexandria presents an impassioned defense of Classical liberal arts as important aids to Christian growth, emphasizing in both the first and sixth books that these pursuits are also good things in themselves. Clement is a powerful second-century Christian apologist who defends the Classical tradition and particularly approves of its astronomy despite facing persecution in his own lifetime and eventually being forced out of the academic environment of Alexandria. Julius Firmicus Maternus – almost certainly writing before his own conversion to the Christian faith – imbues his Mathesis with a hierarchy of astrological powers that demonstrably embraces the pagan traditions of Greeks many centuries past, making him one of the last unabashed defenders of pagan spirituality.

What remains unclear is whether, despite Clement’s Christianity and the lack of controversy surrounding his other writings, the astrological hierarchy found in Firmicus’ Mathesis could survive his conversion and so outlast the earliest centuries of Christianity. In the Celestial Hierarchy of Pseudo-Dionysus and the Book of the Holy Hierotheos of the Syrian Stephen Bar-Sudaili, together representative of fifth-century Christian thought, we find a marked break from the approaches of Clement and Firmicus. Rather than adapting the earlier Christian writings on the subject, the first treatise on angelology officially approved by the Roman church appropriates a different pagan tradition: Neo-Platonism. Whereas in Clement and Firmicus, the subject of the action is almost always the human believer or practitioner, for Pseudo-Dionysus and Bar-Sudaili the source of action is dominantly the orderly and remarkably impersonal God.

Presenter

Yelena Borisova

Institution

Baylor University

Title

Doctrinal Development as a Theandric (Divine-human) Act: Vladimir Soloviev’s Appropriation of Maximus the Confessor’s Christology

Abstract

For both Maximus the Confessor and Vladimir Soloviev the theandric (divine-human) mystery of the Incarnation is the organizing principle of their theology and a hermeneutical paradigm for issues that surpass “Christology proper.” Doctrinal development is one such issue. Both authors contribute to its interpretation: Maximus articulates the Christological principles that Soloviev discerns and applies to his apologia of doctrinal development.

In his teaching on God-manhood Soloviev echoes Maximus most pronouncedly. The interaction of the divine and human principles in man, creation, and history are patterned after the free interaction of the divinity and humanity of the incarnate Christ. Both authors understand the correlation of these principles in Chalcedonian terms—as mutually-irreducible, united without confusion, yet distinct without opposition—and interpret unity and difference in other spheres in light of this human-divine correlation. As humanity and divinity are insepدارately united in Christ's hypostasis while retaining their distinct properties, so also diverse elements
of creation can coexist in harmony without losing their uniqueness. This harmonious cooperation of divinity and humanity is realized within the unique theandric organism of the Church. Maximus' doctrine of perichoresis ("mutual penetration") provides Soloviev with conceptual tools for presenting doctrinal development as such a theandric action. Unconfused humanity and divinity are inseparably united in doctrinal transmission while fashioning this process by their unmitigated properties. Divine immutability ensures the continuity of doctrine in essence, while human changeability allows its definition to be perfected and adjusted to current challenges. Soloviev uses the very method he advocates by deriving new doctrine from the teaching of his predecessor in light a new challenge: the challenge to reconcile the western developmental idea with the eastern emphasis on the preservation of doctrine.

**Presenter**  
Matt Briel

**Institution**  
Fordham University

**Title**  
*An Orthodox Thomist? Gennadios Scholarios II (1400-1472) on Providence*

**Abstract**  
The question of providence has recently received serious scholarly attention, and the interest in this question among theologians is surely only nascent [Murphy, Deus Habet Concilium, London, 2009; Levering Predetermination, Oxford, 2011]. Historical theologians have long overlooked this question in both the patristic and Byzantine periods even though it was a major concern to theologians in these eras [Louth, Maximus, London, 1996, 96]. In this paper I bring attention to the work of Gennadius Scholarios on providence which has been considered both his best dogmatic-theological work as well as the acme of Greek Orthodox reflection on this question. In these treatises Scholarios draws on Thomistic vocabulary and distinctions but uses them in an Orthodox key and within the Greek Orthodox tradition that asks different questions than Latin scholastic theology. The resulting theological anthropology and teaching on providence differ in emphasis and some details from the Angelic Doctor. For example, Scholarios emphasizes human liberty and overlooks, to a certain extent, the question of divine foreknowledge. Furthermore, he gives more attention to the Orthodox teaching of synergy than Aquinas does to the similar scholastic concept of gratia cooperans (Summa Theologiae I-II 111 a. 2). In this paper I examine Scholarios' use of Thomistic concepts, demonstrate the different understanding of the human person in relation to God and grace, and argue that Scholarios' theology and use of Aquinas fits within an Orthodox theological framework.

**Presenter**  
John Carr
Fr Dumitru Stănîloae, though touted by some as the greatest Orthodox theologian of the 20th Century, is still unknown by many in the world of Anglophone theology. This is largely due to the fact that, unlike the famous émigré scholars of the ‘Paris school,’ Stănîloae lived and wrote behind the Iron Curtain in Romania, one of the most repressive regimes of Eastern Europe. As Stănîloae’s works are slowly appearing in English, the time is ripe for an investigation of his importance for modern Orthodoxy and theology in general. My paper will do this for one of the themes that runs through the first three volumes of his Orthodox Dogmatic Theology: his teaching on the rationality of creation. As this aspect of Stănîloae’s theology is primarily inspired by St Maximus the Confessor’s doctrine of the logoi, my paper will be looking at how Stănîloae interprets Maximus’ doctrine. This will entail an examination of Maximus’ teaching itself, which will then allow us to see how Stănîloae appropriates the Maximian teaching in order to answer some particularly modern anxieties and questions. My contention is that, while Maximus is primarily interested in describing the ontological connection between man and God in his doctrine of the logoi, Stănîloae applies the same basic ideas to epistemological and cosmological concerns. Although he does not put it in these terms, I believe that Stănîloae is primarily attempting to overcome dualisms in the modern understanding of a) God’s relationship to creation and b) the relationship between the knowing human subject and the object of knowledge.

Since Paul’s analogy of the condemnation and death that came to all humanity because of Adam’s trespass, and the righteous act and resurrection of Christ that justify and give life to humanity (cf. Rom 5:12-21), Christianity had explained the Genesis story of the Fall of Adam and Eve (cf. Gen. 2-3) as the origin of sin and death in human nature. However, the interpretation of how this original Fall affected human nature varied in the different parts and times of the Christian world. Current scholarship, particularly historians such as J.N.D. Kelly and theologians such as Teilhard de Chardin and John Hick, emphasized two variant interpretations of the Fall and its effects: a tradition of Eastern theology that has its roots in the writings of Irenaeus of Lyons; and a tradition of Western theology that has its roots in the writings of Augustine of Hippo. I will first begin by explaining Irenaeus’ understanding of the Fall and its consequences, followed by Augustine’s understanding of the Fall and its consequences.
While there are differences of interpretation of the Fall and its consequences between Irenaeus and Augustine, which I will explain shortly, I will also argue that some of the differences between the Eastern and Western traditions have been exaggerated by misreadings of both Irenaeus and Augustine.

**Presenter**  
Stefaan Deschrijver

**Institution**  
Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies Katholieke Universi

**Title**  
*Covenantal Performance of Pastors turns Pastorants toward Appropriation of God’s Incarnational Action and Leads Them through Perichoresis to Transcendental Theosis*

**Abstract**  
This paper investigates instances of how perichoresis and theosis work as evidenced in the transformation and increased well-being in the persons with psychiatric problems to whom I minister. The turn towards a life embracing the primacy of love through perichoresis, brings greater fulfillment in increasing union with God, or theosis. Particularly the insights in the dynamics of the relation between images and their referent in Maximus the Confessor, and Saint John of Damascus seem relevant to our observations. Hence we turn to them as sources for understanding how events that make people encounter their finitude can generate awareness and felt knowledge of God’s irruption in reality. People who call on a pastor in faith hope to receive the power of God’s love who through this limit exposing event intruded in their life. Pastorants intend to be transformed and become responsive to God, and respected by peers and society. Into their space of encounter with God, self, community, and society they invite the pastor as catalyzer for thematizing this unthematized experience of perichoresis initiated by God. Encountering God and fellow humans requires a turn to radical love. Heeding Christ’s great commandment guides the way to spiritual transformation and personal development away from self-centeredness. This comes in supportive relation with a community living in love i.e. a church, accompanied by a pastor, catalyzing Triune God’s covenantal indwelling in individuals, community, and society.

**Presenter**  
Marshall Evans

**Institution**  
Andover Newton Theological Seminary

**Title**  
*On the Necessary Ambiguity of Angels*

**Abstract**  
In this paper I examine the iconography of angels in the mid-fourth century hypogeum via Dino Campagni in Rome and argue, following the Italian scholar Cecilia Proverbio, that their absence of wings emphasizes their role as mediators of finite, physical salvation on earth rather than their role as a
divine court singing the praises of God in paradise. I analyze three separate frescoes depicting angels, all of which lie in one arcosolium of one cubiculum. Frescoes depicting Jacob’s vision of the ladder to heaven at Bethel, Abraham’s encounter with angels at Mamre, and Balaam and his donkey confronting an angel all share this remarkable space with a mélange of Biblical scenes and pagan figures. After an attempt to demonstrate that the angels’ peculiar iconography reflects some of the theological consequences of 4th century Trinitarian controversies, I offer an interpretation of the significance of these angels situated in their funerary context. The angels, adjacent to minor pagan gods and framed by verdant natural imagery, serve not to inform the mourners of their beloved’s life in paradise, but to assure them of God’s active role and their own precious lives in the epically fascinating world of the living.

Presenter  Scott Fennema
Institution  Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology
Title  Is Your God Universal or Not?
Abstract  In this essay, I address the contemporary theological question, whether the exposition of the Trinity by eastern patristics and Augustine are the same in meaning—despite ostensibly different expositions, because of different languages and figures of speech—which is to say, do the metaphysical systems of the eastern patristics and Augustine align despite their distinct articulative systems? The above question will be investigated by having recourse to the history of patristic interpretation, selecting the mediaeval patristic commentator, Peter Lombard, as its dialogue partner. In book one of his Sententiae, Lombard comments upon a pericope from Augustine’s De Trinitate, which concerns whether the divine essence is a universal or not. While fully affirming Augustine’s view, that the divine essence is not a universal, Lombard seeks to reconcile an apparent metaphysical contradiction, which arises from another patristic, John Damascene, who contrarily states the divine essence is a universal. Lombard reconciles the contradiction by claiming the metaphysical systems of the two patristics do not differ, although how they are articulated do. After having established the question, and Lombard’s resolution to the question, I will reject Lombard’s view on the basis that Lombard misinterprets Damascene’s Trinitarian metaphysics. Thus having had historical recourse to Lombard, for eliciting the contemporary question, this essay will conclude that, antithetical and irreconcilable metaphysical systems exist between Augustine and at least one eastern patristic, the former believing the divine essence is not a universal, and the latter believing the divine essence is a universal.

Presenter  John Fulton
Tertullian’s Adversus Judaeos: a Tale of Two Treatises

Tertullian’s Adversus Judaeos is a controversial text of disputed origins. Until recently, it was not given much scholarly attention, because it was unclear whether Tertullian wrote it as an integral, finished work. Nonetheless, the most recent scholarly assessment, based on rhetorical analysis, argues strongly for the work’s authenticity and integrality. Offering an alternative rhetorical solution, I argue that Adversus Judaeos is a poorly collated composite of two works: 1/ an original, rhetorically-complete, two book Christian apology, integral to Tertullian’s apologetic program of ca. 197 C.E. (when Septimius Severus became undisputed Emperor of Rome), and 2/ passages ripped (later) from Book III of Adversus Marcionem. That the latter originated in Adversus Marcionem, not Adversus Judaeos (as some have argued in the past), is reasoned on the basis of context and audience. Also, that Tertullian did not pull together the redacted composite is argued in the context of his other works. Tertullian’s original, two-book apology addresses the “charge” of Christian novelty by grounding the Church in ancient Jewish tradition. That this argument is not found in Ad Nationes, but is found in Apologeticum, suggests that Adversus Judaeos was written between the two larger apologies, and provides clues about the pressures felt by Carthaginian Christians as their pagan neighbors reveled at the ascendency of the first “African” Roman Emperor. Sometime after this crisis, the work was redacted, adding little in the way of argument to the original treatise. The purpose of the redaction remains a mystery.

The Devotional Use of Augustine’s Confessions: Manuscript Evidence from Medieval England

In this paper I will review my research on the manuscript tradition of Augustine’s Confessions, looking particularly at how medieval readers understood the text. My paper will show the benefit of manuscript studies for scholars of patristics and early Christianity. The centrality of Augustine’s Confessions in the Christian tradition makes it a prime example to use for this purpose. After outlining my interpretation, therefore, of the theological nature of Confessions, which understands the purpose of Confessions to be its use as a model for transformation in Christ through the Holy Spirit, a view in some form shared by Pierre Hadot, Thomas Martin, and Andres Niño, among others in recent scholarship, I will provide historical evidence of readers in medieval England who support this claim. John de Exeter in the fourteenth century is the best case study, and Linda Olson argues for a similar change taking place in John
from the time of his student days to his later service as bishop of Exeter. John’s annotated manuscript of Confessions, gives evidence to support the historical validity of my interpretation. Other examples taken from the work of Teresa Webber, who deals with eleventh and twelfth century women readers of Augustine, will further support this thesis. In my case, the study of the manuscript tradition of a late-antique text proves the historical validity of my theoretical approach.

**Presenter**  
Jennifer Jamer

**Institution**  
Fordham University

**Title**  
The Ομφαλοψυχοι of the Fourteenth Century: The Monk, the Navel, and the Public Imagination of the Byzantine Christian Subject

**Abstract**  
Monks – in their embodied performances of monastic piety – were seen by Byzantine Christians as the closest earthly representatives of the angelic, post-resurrection life. Having rejected their former, earthly state of sin, they became liminal subjects who existed between the sinful and corruptible world of humanity and the perfect divine. These monks entered into this liminal space by becoming integrated persons; they rejected the sinful and corrupted world by rejecting the passions, and entered into a community that anticipated the beatific state of contemplation of the divine. Additionally, these monks – no longer torn apart by the passions – could essentially re-enact Christ’s act of re-integration through their performance of fasting, celibacy, prayer, and other ascetic acts. As a result, the actions which were undertaken by the monks in their communities were the source of great public interest – and therefore patristic commentary. They served as templates for salvation and as intermediaries between human communities and the divine.

Therefore, the practices of Palamas and the hesychast monks were a lightning rod for public controversy and conflict. The insult leveled at the hesychasts by their adversaries – ομφαλοψυχοι – carried with it the implication of anti-monastic behavior and focus. The ομφαλοψυχος monk, arguably, focused his psychic attention on the source of the his most problematic passion – that is, the desire for food. The ομφαλος was seen in works such as John Climacus’s Ladder of Divine Ascent, Symeon the New Theologian’s Great Catechism and John of Damascus’s sayings as being at war with the ψυχη, because it is the seat of the stomach and linked with gluttony. It is likely that the usage of the term was intended to evoke this particular connotation in the minds of the listeners – particularly since dietary indiscretions were linked to other forms of sinfulness such as lust. Ultimately, Palamas takes the body and in his focus on it, redeems it, and provides a new template for how to make it holy. Not only can the body participate in prayer productively and publicly, but that it also could become a source of reintegration. Ultimately, Palamas presents a vision of the monk who has become integrated in a particularly thorough way, and who could work in the world rather than solely in the monastery.
**Presenter**  
Jordan Jenkins

**Institution**  
Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary

**Title**  
Clarification of Modern Perspectives on Various Non-Chalcedonian Christologies

**Abstract**  
Modern scholarship in the area of non-Chalcedonian christology has increased in recent decades. Needless to say, many advances have been made in interpretation, and these advances have in turn aided ecumenical dialogue. However, many modern scholars are still guilty of combining divergent groups of non-Chalcedonians under one heading or term (“monophysite”), thereby obscuring the many differences between various non-Chalcedonian christologies. In this essay I will look at modern scholars’ interpretations of the christologies of Julian of Halicarnassus (who virtually all scholars agree is heretical), Severus of Antioch (who virtually all scholars agree is acceptable/orthodox), and Philoxenus of Mabbug (who is variously interpreted). After surveying scholarship on these three christologies, I will look in more depth at the christology of Philoxenus in order to show the varying bases on which scholars define what is acceptable/orthodox and heretical. The purpose of this analysis will be to draw a clearer line of separation between acceptable non-Chalcedonian christologies and heretical non-Chalcedonian christologies, without lumping historical figures into groups to which they clearly do not belong. With this approach a clearer view of the development of separate Christian groups is possible, and this will continue to aid in ecumenical dialogue.

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**Presenter**  
Chris Jones

**Institution**  
Boston College

**Title**  
“The Pure in Heart Will See God”: Purification and Contemplation in Augustine’s De Trinitate

**Abstract**  
One common trope in the twentieth-century literature is that Augustine’s De Trinitate prioritized the unity of God over the triunity of God. Accordingly, Augustine’s theology is more Neoplatonic than Christian. Against this dominant thought – popularized by De Regnou among others – I argue in this paper that Augustine developed a thoroughly Christian Trinitarian theology that utilized concepts and argumentative strategies from his era but transformed them in the process of making an innovative restatement of Nicene theology. Specifically, Augustine utilized Greco-Roman psychagogic practices and the Neoplatonic concepts of divine goodness and simplicity to develop a Trinitarian theology that offers pastoral guidance to purify sinful human beings so that they could see God. Citing Mt. 5:8, Augustine contends both that the end of human life is the beatific vision of God, and that human beings need to be purified from sin in order to enjoy the bliss of this union. This purification – which
demonstrates Augustine’s reworking of psychagogy, goodness, and simplicity—comes in four ways: linguistically, volitionally, cognitively, and ultimately through grace in Christ and the Church. Thus, Augustine not only demonstrates “the rightness of saying, believing, and understanding” that the three persons are “the same substance or essence” (trin. I.1.4), he also develops a pastoral program to purify human minds and hearts in order to contemplate the God in whose image they are made. In short, Augustine’s De Trinitate is a thoroughly Christian dogmatic and pastoral work.

**Presenter**
Matthew Keil

**Institution**
Fordham University

**Title**
On the Relationship Between the Symposia of Plato and Saint Methodius of Olympus

**Abstract**
There has been in recent years, and particularly since Patterson’s monumental work on Saint Methodius, a push towards reassessing the importance of this intrepid ecclesiastical writer and early martyr, taking him from Trigg’s justifiable description, slightly over a decade ago, as “a long-neglected figure in the history of Christian thought,” to Zorzi’s recent claim that he deserves to be considered one of the major theologians of the third century. However, even in Patterson’s probing analysis of Saint Methodius’ Symposium, very little is spoken about the philosophical and literary relationship between the work and that of its Platonic namesake. This is striking, since the question is highly contentious: what really do we have in the work in so far as concerns its relationship to Plato? Is it perhaps, as has been often alleged, simply a contrived classical exterior in which an assembly of otherwise totally unrelated, Christian themes are discussed, with the unsuccessful attempt of giving a kind of Platonic veneer to materials which resist such glossing? Or are we to see in it a distinct philosophical and theological response to Plato, though one of a decidedly aversive nature, described by the 17th century Jesuit Poussines as “an illustrious monument, and as it were, a trophy of victory carried back by Christian philosophy away from the Greek and gentile.”

This paper argues that such perspectives on the nature of the relationship between Plato’s Symposium and that of Methodius miss the critical point that the latter does indeed speak in conversation with the former, not solely through obvious linguistic and formal allusion, but also through a deep understanding and implicit critique of the central ideas about love proposed in the single work that is arguably the key to Plato’s philosophy. For on the one hand, Methodius can be seen to have laid out a notion of love envisioned as a fulfillment of the higher strivings towards divine love imagined by Plato, while simultaneously offering a critique of the shortcomings inherent in the Platonic vision. In particular, in its structural and narratological principle of ascent from the physical to the spiritual realm, in its nascent ideas about the personal revelation of divine Beauty to
the soul, and in its inexorable difficulty of reconciling communal/interpersonal love with the solitary experience of divine eros, Plato’s Symposium served as a complex model of both profound philosophical insight as well as error which Saint Methodius, on each of these points, was not only demonstrably aware, but also responsive. Methodius’ concepts of love are then placed in the larger context of Heavenly Eros found among many of the Greek authors from the patristic period, and are shown to be consonant with them.

Presenter  
Mitchell Kosht

Institution  
Harvard Divinity School

Title  
The Contraction of Messianic Time: Giorgio Agamben, St. Paul and Dionysius the Areopagite

Abstract  
Understanding the pseudonymity of Dionysius the Areopagite as a literarily significant decision calls for variety of thematic analyses exploring the relationship between St. Paul and his 5th century pseudo-convert. I am approaching a specific element of Dionysius’ inheritance of Paul, explicating the ways in which our mysterious pseudo-epigrapher has inherited and transformed a Pauline sense of messianic time. In The Time That Remains: A Commentary On The Letter To The Romans, Giorgio Agamben, a contemporary Italian philosopher, works to articulate “the very structure of messianic time,” asserting that “the possibility of understanding the Pauline message coincides fully with the experience of such a time.” The assumption that such an understanding and consequently such an experience of time was not lost on the Areopagite requires us to ask precisely how the messianic appears within the Corpus Dionysiacum and under what transformations. Proceeding by way of Agamben’s reading of Paul, I will suggest that Dionysius has effectively severed a specifically Pauline messianic time from its dependence on an event in historical (continuous, linear) time and reinscribed it into sacramental liturgical practice leading to mystical union with the Divine. By this move he anachronistically marks the transition of Christianity from a messianic community to a messianic institution. Additionally, I will argue that the formal structure of the corpus itself performs a contraction indicative of the Pauline messianic. (1) Giorgio Agamben, The Time That Remains: A Commentary on the Letter to the Romans, 1st ed. (Stanford University Press, 2005); pp. 1-2.

Presenter  
Nick Marinides

Institution  
Princeton University

Title  
Some theological prolegomena to a study of Byzantine lay piety
Abstract
Lay piety, or spirituality, has been a popular topic among historians and theologians of Western Christianity for some time now. The question of lay piety has arisen among the Orthodox as well, although usually in a less articulate form. Any Orthodox response must necessarily refer to the patristic tradition. But there has been little work on lay piety by either theologians or historians of Byzantium, and what exists is largely descriptive, rather than analytical and synthetic. A proper study requires attunement to the theological that underlie the theory of lay piety through the ages, allied with a properly historical and sociological awareness of the variety of practice presented by the historical sources.

The great theological question hinges on an ever-present tension between unity and holiness in the Church. If all are called to salvation in and through the One Body of Christ, yet experience and history presents the inevitable fact of differentiation between individual members in their attainment of degrees of holiness and perfection. This paper brings theology to bear on my dissertation research about lay piety in the early Byzantine Empire. I differentiate lay primarily from monastic, rather than clerical. But the relationship of clerics to monastics, and the intermediate position of ascetic bishops in this configuration, is of key importance for understanding the problem.

Various fathers provide different models of lay piety in relation to monastics and clergy. I will briefly examine the contrasting visions John Climacus, with his emphasis on the superiority of monastic life and that of Dionysius the Areopagite, with his firm placement of monastics above the ordinary laity but below the clergy. Finally, a synthesis of these monastic and hierarchical visions, rooted in a return to the Incarnational and Eucharistic sources of scriptural and patristic Christianity, is provided in my period by the profound reflections of St. Maximus the Confessor. This must be fleshed out, however, by the more popular bread and butter of Byzantine piety, such as homilies that provide a positive vision of Christian married life and hagiographies that depict the mutually-beneficial interactions of monastic saints with laypeople, as well as unexpected exploits of lay holiness under the least likely circumstances.

Presenter
Joshua McManaway

Institution
University of Notre Dame

Title
Ephrem’s ‘Hymns Against Julian’: Scripture as a Hermeneutic of History

Abstract
Ephrem’s “Hymns Against Julian” provide insight into the historical and theological world of Ephrem and his community at Nisibis. This paper explores how Ephrem utilizes Scriptural paradigms as a hermeneutical lens through which to view the situation within the Empire immediately following Julian’s ascension to the throne and his subsequent death. Within this exploration, there are two primary questions which shape the paper: 1) In what way is Ephrem’s use of “madrāshā” different from the Greek
invective used by Gregory of Nazianzus in his two orations against Julian?

2) How does Scripture inform Ephrem’s view of the historical situation within Nisibis and the Empire at large?

While Gregory’s two orations against Julian, given shortly after the Emperor’s death, are highly stylized pieces drawing upon both Scripture and Classical sources for rhetorical flourishes, Ephrem uses Scripture to establish historical precedents as part of a divine plan of history. The Scriptural allusions are therefore not simply rhetorical flourishes, but call to mind in the hearers and readers of Ephrem the Scriptural narrative through which one can understand the historical situation surrounding Ephrem.

**Presenter**  
Sean Moberg

**Institution**  
Catholic University of America

**Title**  
Of First and Second Principles: Gregory of Nyssa, Plotinus, and the Relationship of Philosophy and Theology

**Abstract**  
One of the central issues in patristic studies is the relationship between Christian theology and Greek philosophy. In particular, three scholarly models have evolved to describe this relationship, with some asserting that Christian theology is dependent upon pagan philosophy, others that theology is influenced by philosophy, and, more recently, that theology uses philosophy as a tool for achieving essentially Christian ends. This paper seeks to better understand how philosophy and theology coexist in the thought of St. Gregory of Nyssa by examining how he understands the generation of the Son by the Father, with particular attention to connections with the earlier Neoplatonic philosophy of Plotinus. After elaborating the three existing models, St. Gregory’s account, as found in a number of texts, most importantly his anti-Eunomian writings, is compared with Plotinus’ on a number of points. While some overlap emerges, there are a number of vital differences, and Gregory develops what he does take from Plotinus in a way substantially different from the philosopher. This lends credibility to the theory that, for St. Gregory, philosophy was a tool which he could employ to explain and understand Christian revelation, and that he was not dependent upon it.

**Presenter**  
Rachel Nelson

**Institution**  
Boston College

**Title**  
Martyrdom as a Christian Spectaculum

**Abstract**  
Pre-Decian stories of martyrs who died in the Roman arena use the motifs of the “fatal charades” (executions involving the reenactment of mythological or historical narratives) in order to transform the arena from a place of humiliation and defeat into one of glorification and triumph. By
replacing Roman myth with the passion narrative, the authors of these early acta martyrum present martyrdom as a kind of literary fatal charade. Prior to the mid-third century persecutions under Decius and Valerian, the use of arena motifs is limited to stories of martyrs who were executed in the context of spectacula. However, in the wake of the Decian persecution, arena motifs are increasingly used in the stories of martyrs who are beheaded, as well as those sentenced to forms of aggravated execution (e.g. damnation ad bestias or crematio). In addition, a number of post-Decian acta martyrum present the martyrs as reenacting not only Jesus’ death, but also the deaths of earlier martyrs. I will examine this expansion of the use of arena motifs in these later martyr stories and how these developments relate to issues facing the Church in the late-third century, such as the readmission of the lapsi, the rule of the bishop and its relationship to forms of ecclesial authority claimed by confessors and martyrs, and an increased focus on sacrifice as a result of the edicts of Decius and Valerian. I will also explore how, in these post-Decian acta, martyrdom becomes a particularly Christian spectaculum, attended by Christian spectators and glorifying the authority and power of the Triune God.

**Presenter**  
Travis Pickell

**Institution**  
University of Virginia

**Title**  
Schleiermacher’s Second-Adam Christology – Heterodoxy or Proto-orthodoxy?

**Abstract**  
In an early letter to his parents about his faith struggles, Friedrich Schleiermacher wrote, “I cannot believe that he who called himself the Son of Man was the true eternal God; I cannot believe that his death was a vicarious atonement because he never expressly said so himself; and I cannot believe it to have been necessary, because God, who evidently did not create men for perfection, but for the pursuit of it, cannot possibly intend to punish them eternally because they have not attained to it.” With this statement, Schleiermacher expressed utter dissatisfaction with commonly held beliefs about who Jesus was, what he accomplished, and why he had to accomplish it.

Far from simply rejecting the faith, however, Schleiermacher eventually became instrumental in reconciling Christian piety with the spirit of the Enlightenment—seeking, as he would later say, “to establish an eternal covenant between the living Christian faith and completely free, independent scientific inquiry.” Ironically, in elaborating a thoroughly modern view of Christian belief, Schleiermacher’s end product is surprisingly compatible with the pre-orthodox Christianity of St. Irenaeus of Lyons!

This essay places Schleiermacher constructively in line with Irenaeus, with special reference to each theologian’s Christology. First it will present a brief summary of Irenaeus’ second-Adam Christology, with special reference to how that Christology reveals Christ’s saving work. Next, it will
proceed along the same lines with reference to Schleiermacher’s reconstructed understanding of Christ as the second-Adam. Finally, it will show why the bodily resurrection is essential from an Irenaean perspective, and therefore why Irenaeus would ultimately reject Schleiermacher’s Christology.

**Presenter**  Cara Polk  
**Institution**  University of Notre Dame  
**Title**  *The Refrigerium: Its Relationship to Roman Funerary Practices and the Christian Cult of the Martyrs*  
**Abstract**  The fourth-century Christian practice of celebrating feasts at martyrs’ shrines on the dies natalis of a martyr is well attested in the sermons of bishops such as Augustine and Chrysostom. Seeking the origins of this practice, scholars such as Johannes Quasten, Ramsay MacMullen, and Robin Jensen have theorized that these celebrations were adaptations of traditional Roman feasts for the dead. This paper argues that the fourth-century martyrs’ feasts did not originate in pagan funerary practices but in the distinctly Christian rite of celebrating a Eucharistic refrigerium at funerals. To demonstrate this thesis, Roman practices and attitudes toward the dead will be identified and compared with evidence for the early form and development of Christian funerary practices. Evidence from Tertullian, Cyprian, and Origen will be used to show that at an early time, Christians had unique funerary practices that included the celebration of the Eucharist for the departed. In the third century this Eucharistic celebration gained the specific title of refrigerium and was performed for ordinary and martyr dead alike: This was the original form of Christian graveside feasting. Then developments in third-century Christian understandings of martyrdom necessitated a re-evaluation of the applicability of the refrigerium rite to the martyrs. As martyrs came to be seen as intercessors, the practice of celebrating the Eucharist for them no longer accorded with the logic of their new status. Arising thus, the Christian martyrs feasts have no historical relationship to traditional pagan rites for the dead. Instead the best explanation for the fourth century shrine celebrations is the persistence of ritual action in the face of the loss of the original significance of the martyrs’ refrigerium.

**Presenter**  Joshua Sales  
**Institution**  Boston College  
**Title**  *Rethinking Evil*  
**Abstract**  This essay, which I have long been willing to write and present, takes on the daring, and perhaps foolhardy, task of rethinking evil. This essay arises
out of a desperate attempt to hold the reality of evil in a world which seems all too content to slip into moral (and therefore ontological) relativism. This presentation purposes to vindicate Christianity in an age where providence, the good, absolute categories, and divine judgment have become foul words. In some sense, this is one of several long-in-coming Christian cries of “enough” to irrational and reckless tolerance given to relativism, nihilism, and the principle of uncertainty.

By focusing on St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Basil of Caesarea, and the Holy Confessor Maximus, this essay will redefine evil in a way I dare say (and I very rarely dare do so) has never been done before — while not ceasing to be in respectful line with the Fathers’ teachings. I have chosen to focus on a few aspects of personalism and theological anthropology vis-à-vis epektasis, cosmological metaphysics, and providence to make my case. This essay holds that good and evil, divine providence and disaster, can indeed be articulated coherently and convincingly in the 21st century via the Fathers.

This essay implicitly takes on the mystery of human suffering, the recently-renewed heresy of theopaschitism, and postmodern ethical anxiety. If my thesis is correct (and you must wait for the presentation to hear it), this revision of evil could have unprecedented results for the rightful restoration of a strong Christian voice in all spheres of ethics that the 21st century challenges us with. I expect the results to extend into bioethics, international law, global political economy, human rights, and especially the greatest ontological challenge which has ever faced the meaning of what it means to be human: human bio-improvement through technology.

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**Presenter**  
Jason Scully

**Institution**  
Marquette University

**Title**  
The Bible as Divine Pedagogy: Origen’s Interpretation of the Samaritan Woman at the Well in John 4:13-26

**Abstract**  
Throughout history, Origen’s exegesis has often been dismissed on the grounds that it either confuses Greek and Christian ideas or uses allegory irresponsibly (i.e. Porphyry, de Faye, Hanson). Twentieth-Century scholarship has responded to this criticism by showing that Origen’s exegetical methodology proceeds along Christian lines, particularly in its pastoral and pedagogical intent (Crouzel, Torjesen).

This paper will build on this discussion and argue that exegesis according to modern methods may still reach the same conclusions as Origen’s exegesis—which is accomplished with different methods—provided it shares the primary principle of the belief in the divine pedagogy of Scripture. In other words, a pedagogical reading of Scripture lends coherence and reason to Origen’s allegorical exegesis.

This paper will demonstrate the pedagogical focus of Origen’s exegesis by
closely examining his allegorical rendering of Jn. 4.13-26, which is the story of the Samaritan woman at the well. The procedure will be to delineate Origen’s understanding of the text and then compare it to a reading that follows the plain sense of the Biblical text while incorporating Old Testament allusions. The conclusion of this comparison will be that Origen’s insights are not foreign to the text; rather, his readings, which at first seem so speculative as to be completely unrelated to the text, are actually close readings where small Scriptural details become the keys that unlock numerous Scriptural resonances in ways that are meant to lead the simple Christian towards full knowledge of the mystery of the Trinitarian God.

Presenter    K. Andrew Temple
Institution  St. Tikhon’s Orthodox Theological Seminary.
Title        A Patristic Understanding of ‘Wisdom’ as ‘a tree of life’ in Proverbs
Abstract     In the third chapter of Proverbs (3:11-18) Solomon proclaims of Wisdom, “She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her.” This selection from Proverbs is one of the Old Testament readings for the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross. In this study the passage from Proverbs is investigated based on the teachings of the Church Fathers, in order to develop an understanding of the passage which is consistent with the Tradition of the Orthodox Church. The writings of the Fathers were surveyed and three themes or understandings were identified: (1) Christ as the Wisdom of God, (2) Christ as the Tree of Life, and (3) the Cross as the Tree of Life. The survey of the Fathers spans from St. Justin Martyr (†165) to St. John of Shanghai and San Francisco (†1966) and is presented based on the three themes. A seemingly unique perspective from one Father is also considered. Further analysis is then presented to reconcile these understandings. The passage from Proverbs is discussed briefly in the context of its liturgical use by the Eastern Orthodox Church. The conclusion from the study is that Wisdom as a “Tree of Life” can be understood as an indication of Christ and the Cross on which He was crucified and worked salvation for mankind – granting life eternal to believers. Wisdom, the Incarnate Son of God crucified on the Cross, is the Tree of Life.

Presenter    Petros Toulis  Graduate Student
Institution  Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
Title        The will of Christ’s two natures and the deliberative will according to Saint John Damascene
Abstract     In this paper, we will try to examine the Christological subject of the natural and deliberative will (φυσικόν καὶ γνωμικόν θέλημα) in its
functional unity with the Trinitarian and Anthropological teaching of Saint John Damascene. With the assistance of the historical background and the original texts of Saint John we will examine and analyze the divine and human will and finally we will give the definitions of natural and deliberative will. All these are connected with the divine Incarnation which is the background of Saint John Damascene’s teaching and finally we will try to give a suggestion to the problem of the dialogue between the two Churches nowadays.

Presenter
Brandon Wanless

Institution
The Saint Paul Seminary School of Divinity (University of St. T

Title
St. Thomas Aquinas and the Eastern Fathers on the Union of the Incarnation

Abstract
Though it is widely known that the greatest Scholastic mind of the Western church relied heavily on authorities such as Aristotle, St. Augustine and St. Paul, St. Thomas Aquinas was anything but biased against sources not traditionally Western. In fact, his method of incorporation was largely dependent on the effectiveness of the source. Where one authority provided a better argument for his purposes, it was chosen. This is evidenced clearly in less-read sections of St. Thomas, particularly the theology of the person and natures of Jesus Christ.

The proposal of this paper is an extension of recent research on the influence of certain Eastern Fathers, particularly St. Cyril of Alexandria and St. John Damascene, on the Incarnational theology of St. Thomas Aquinas. Their presence and importance in his Christology is widely overlooked, but reveals a Scholastic character quite “open-minded” to the various sources of Christian and natural truths. I hope to examine particular themes in both the source documents and question two of the Tertia pars of the Summa theologiae, as well as noting individual examples of explicit citation.

Not only does St. Thomas cite these two Eastern doctors more frequently here than other Western sources, his whole apparatus of the hypostatic union seems to be drawn almost entirely from Damascene and Cyril. St. John Damascene’s De Fide Orthodoxa affords the Scholastic a thorough examination of the composition of the two natures, while St. Cyril’s letters and anathematisms offer, by means of conciliar documents, the necessary emphasis on the unity of the singular person of the divine Word. Together, these two Fathers are indispensible not only to the theology of St. Thomas, but also to our current understandings of the person of Christ.