27th Annual Great Preacher Award
Aquinas Institute of Theology

HONORING TWO EXTRAORDINARY PREACHERS

Sr. Mary Catherine Hilkert, OP
Professor, University of Notre Dame

AND

Fr. Ralph Siefert, SM

Presented posthumously

Because the Preaching must go on….this year, in the time of COVID-19, the Aquinas community will gather at a virtual celebration

Thursday, November 11, 2021
7pm Central / 8pm Eastern
The Great Preacher Award

WHAT:

Established in 1995, the Great Preacher Award is presented to persons who embody the “Holy Preaching” which Dominicans understand as a comprehensive and dynamic response to God’s presence in our lives and in the world. We honor preachers who proclaim, in word and deed, the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the coming and presence of the reign of God.

WHY:

All proceeds from this event will benefit the Aquinas Scholarship Fund which enables Aquinas Institute to offer financial aid to future preachers, teachers, and Church leaders, many of whom would be otherwise unable to pursue theological studies.

WHEN:

VIRTUAL EVENT ON Thursday, NOVEMBER 11, 2021

7:00 pm Central Time / 8:00 pm Eastern
(Link will be sent in advance of the event)
The Honorees

Sr. Mary Catherine Hilkert, OP

Sr. Hilkert, a member of the Dominican Sisters of Peace, is Professor of Theology at the University of Notre Dame and a former member of the faculty at Aquinas Institute of Theology from 1984-1995 where she is remembered with much admiration and respect by her former students.

A noted theologian and author, Sr. Hilkert’s books include Naming Grace: Preaching and the Sacramental Imagination, Speaking with Authority: Catherine of Siena and the Voices of Women Today, and co-editor with Robert J. Schreiter of The Praxis of the Reign of God: An Introduction to the Theology of Edward Schillebeeckx. Currently she is working on a book titled Words of Spirit and Life: Theology, Preaching and Spirituality. In addition, she has published numerous articles on contemporary theology, spirituality, and preaching.

A former president of the Catholic Theological Society of America (2005-2006), Sr. Hilkert is the recipient of four honorary degrees (Providence College, Aquinas Institute of Theology, Oblate School of Theology, and Catholic Theological Union) as well as the Washington Theological Union’s Sophia Award for Theological Excellence in service of ministry, Barry University’s Yves Congar Award for Theological Excellence, the Veritas Award from the Dominican Colloquium on Higher Education, and the Ann O’Hara Graff Award from the Women’s Constructive Theology seminar of the Catholic Theological Society of America. She has preached and offered lectures, workshops, and retreats in Catholic and ecumenical contexts in the United States, Canada, Ireland, The Netherlands, Australia, and South Africa. Sr. Hilkert has also served on two international preaching commissions of the Order of Preachers.

Sr. Hilkert’s has preached the Gospel in word and deed throughout her life-long ministry to the Church. As scholar and educator, she exemplifies the mission of Aquinas Institute, and with great respect and admiration, we honor her with the 2021 Great Preacher Award.

Fr. Ralph Siefert, SM

Presented posthumously

On August 20, 2021, there is no doubt that a band of angels and saints, led by Blessed William Joseph Chaminade, gathered to welcome their brother Fr. Ralph Siefert home. Amidst much joy and laughter, there was a surely a great celebration to honor Fr. Ralph’s faithful service to the people of God for more than fifty years.

Raised in South St. Louis, Father Ralph met the Marianists as a student at St. Mary’s High school. He entered the Society of Mary in 1963 and was ordained a priest in 1972. A learned scholar, Fr. Ralph held a doctorate from the Andover Newton Theological School, and master’s degrees from Saint Louis University, the University of San Francisco, and Northwestern University.

Fr. Ralph served as the Director of the Marianist Seminary in Toronto and was the Provincial Assistant for Religious Life for his province for five years. In 1968, he assumed the presidency of Chaminade College Preparatory School in St. Louis where he would serve for almost thirty-five years. A visionary leader for more than a fourth of the school’s history, his tenure is marked by many accomplishments including ensuring the financial stability of the school, introducing a state-of-the art technology program, building an outstanding athletic program, and prioritizing the arts. Fr. Ralph was beloved by the school community—faculty, students, and parents alike. He was well-known as a master preacher and recognized for his ability to craft poignant and relevant homilies that helped to make sense of the many difficult challenges in our world today.

In honoring Fr. Ralph with the 2021 Great Preacher Award, Aquinas Institute celebrates his extraordinary legacy and the gift of his presence among us during his long and fruitful ministry as a Marianist priest, an educator, a leader, and as a man of God who preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ in word and deed.
Event Committee and Past Recipients

2021 GREAT PREACHER AWARD COMMITTEE

CHAIRS
Mary L. Hill
Joanna and Chris Pelligreen
Sr. Pat Twohill, OP

COMMITTEE
George Avila
Jennie Weiss Block, OP
Angie Doerr
Fr. Tom Condon, OP
Lucie Huger and Justin Nangle
Dot and Larry LeGrand
Nichole and Tom Lewis
Fr. Michael Mascari, OP
Fr. James Marchionda, OP
Daniel O’Brien
Fr. Mark E. Wedig, OP
Jill and Dave Wenzel
Ann Wittman
Brian Yanofchick

GREAT PREACHER AWARD PAST RECIPIENTS

1995  Reverend James Cormack, C.M.
1996  Joseph Cardinal Bernardin†
1997  Monsignor James T. Telthorst
1998  Reverend John F. Kavanaugh, S.J. †
1999  Most Reverend Paul A. Zipfel
2000  Reverend Gary Braun
2001  Sr. Joan Delaplane, O.P.
2002  Most Reverend Wilton D. Gregory
2003  Reverend Donald R. Wester
2004  Reverend Joseph Kempf
2005  Monsignor William A. Drennan†
2006  Reverend Dale Wunderlich
2007  Reverend James Krings†
2008  Monsignor Patrick Hambrough
2009  Monsignor Vincent Bommarito
2010  Francis Cardinal George, O.M.I. †
2011  Reverend Mr. Dennis Chitwood
2012  Most Reverend J. Terry Steib, S.V.D.
2013  Monsignor Michael E. Turek, V.F.
2014  Bishop Emeritus Robert J. Shaheen †
2015  Bishop Robert Barron
2016  Monsignor William J. Hitpas and
Reverend John Rogers Vien
2017  Reverend Edward Stanger and
Reverend Jeffrey H. Goeckner
2018  Monsignor John Costello and
Reverend Matthew O’T Oole
2019  Very Reverend Charles E. Bouchard, OP
& Reverend Craig Holway
2020  Reverend Harry Byrne, OP and
Reverent Jude Siciliano, OP

† Deceased
Great Preacher Award Sponsorship Opportunities

**Friends of Dominic – $10,000**
- Twenty tickets to the November 11th Virtual Celebration
- Two exclusively branded social media posts
- Sponsor name and logo in prominent location in production video and on virtual event landing page
- Evening prayer and dinner with the Dominican community at St. Dominic Priory for you and six guests at an agreed upon date
- Aquinas Institute will organize a private pre-event Zoom gathering for you and your guests with one of the Dominican friars hosting

**Friends of Catherine of Siena – $5,000**
- Fifteen tickets to November 11th Virtual Celebration
- One exclusively branded social media posts
- Sponsor name and logo acknowledged in prominent location on website and on virtual event landing page
- Sponsor name and logo on production video
- Evening prayer and dinner with the Dominican community at St. Dominic Priory for you and four guests at an agreed upon date
- Aquinas Institute will organize a private pre-event Zoom gathering for you and your guests with one of the Dominican friars hosting

**Friends of Albert the Great – $2,500**
- Ten tickets to the November 11th Virtual Celebration
- Sponsor name and logo acknowledged in prominent location on website
- Sponsor name and logo on production video
- Evening prayer and dinner with the Dominican community at St. Dominic Priory for two at an agreed upon date

**Preacher Circle – $1,000**
In lieu of buying a table at the event, we ask you to consider joining the Preacher Circle and buy a “virtual table” which includes:
- Ten tickets to November 11th Virtual Celebration
- Sponsor name and logo on the production video

Some ideas for hosting a Preacher Circle “virtual table”
- Organize a Zoom cocktail party with your family and friends prior to or after the event.
- Invite your “bubble” for a cocktails or dinner and watch the award ceremonies together.
- Give your family and friends tickets to attend the Great Preacher Award.

**INDIVIDUAL TICKETS ARE ALSO AVAILABLE AT $250 AND $100**

For general event information: ai.edu/GPA2021
For sponsorship information or to purchase a sponsorship, please contact Erin Hammond at 314.256.8808 or Hammond@ai.edu
THE AQUINAS WAY

Founded in 1925, Aquinas Institute of Theology is a Catholic graduate school of theology. Sponsored by the Dominican Province of St. Albert the Great, we are firmly rooted in the rich intellectual tradition of the 800-year old Order of Preachers.

At the heart of all our programs is the unique Dominican approach to education that holds as its primary purpose a search for Veritas, the One who is Truth himself, our Lord Jesus, whom we seek to encounter in all our programs, coursework and campus life.

Aquinas Institute is a Center for Institutional Studies, designated by the Order of Preachers to form Dominican friars in order to carry out its mission of preaching the gospel for the salvation of every person. We serve two distinct, complementary constituencies: Dominican student brothers preparing for ordination to the priesthood and pastoral ministry, as well as priests, religious sisters, and lay men and women preparing for careers in service to the Christian community or advanced academic studies. We welcome diversity and those of other faith traditions. We offer multiple graduate degrees and certificate programs in a variety of formats to accommodate the needs of our students, and we are known for our signature programs in Health Care Mission and our Doctor of Ministry in Preaching.

Our life at Aquinas Institute is organized around what Dominicans call the “Holy Preaching.” We place our theological study at the service of the ministry of preaching, which is understood in a very broad sense, not as a discrete experience confined to a few minutes from the pulpit, but rather as an expression of our shared life where as a community, we seek to make a comprehensive and dynamic response to God’s presence in our lives and in the world. Aquinas is a close-knit community, where professors and students learn from one another and we seek God, engage in dialogue, and share life together; all leading towards our primary goal of preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ in word and in deed.

AQUINAS INSTITUTE OF THEOLOGY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Jennie Weiss Block, OP
John M. Czarneckzy
Angie Doerr
Dan Foley
Craig George
Steve J. Givens
Samuel P. Hakeem, OP
Mary L. Hill
Lucie F. Huguer
Jennie D. Latta
Fr. James V. Marchionda, OP
Denis McCusker
Fr. Jorge Presmanes, OP
Fr. Marcos Ramos, OP
Brian P. Reardon
Fr. Edward M. Ruane, OP
John Sauer
Fr. Kevin Stephens, OP
Barbara Thibodeau
Rev. John Rogers Vien
David Wenzel
Brian Yanofchick
Fr. Mark E. Wedig, OP
President
Fr. Michael A. Mascari, OP
Academic Dean and
Vice-President
Sr. Sara Fairbanks, OP
Faculty Representative