

Science, Philosophy, and Theology in Dialogue



Interviews with Expanded Reason Awards Recipients

Edited by Quentin Wodon

April 2022



Acknowledgment

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Cover photos

The cover photos are from recipients of the expanded award interviewed for this report.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction: The Expanded Reason Awards	1
Interviews with Max Bonilla and Expanded Reason Award Recipients	9

1. Max Bonilla, International Director, Expanded Reason Institute, Universidad Francisco de Victoria

Expanded Reason Awards Recipients (Alphabetically)

2. James Arthur, Professor at the University of Birmingham
3. Marta Bertolaso, Professor at Campus Bio-Medico University of Rome
4. Father Javier Sánchez Cañizares, Professor at the University of Navarra
5. John C. Cavadini, Professor at the University of Notre Dame
6. Robert Enright, Professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison
7. Juan F. Franck, Professor at Universidad Austral
8. Gonzalo Génova and María del Rosario González, both Professors at universities in Madrid
9. Therese Lysaught, Professor at Loyola University Chicago
10. Jay Martin, Assistant Teaching Professor at the University of Notre Dame
11. Darcia Narvaez, Professor emerita at the University of Notre Dame
12. William Simpson, Junior Research Fellow at the University of Cambridge
13. John Slattery, Senior Program Associate with AAAS
14. Claudia Vanney, Director of the Philosophy Institute at Universidad Austral

INTRODUCTION: THE EXPANDED REASON AWARDS

Quentin Wodon

The Expanded Reason Awards were created a half dozen years ago by the Vatican Foundation Joseph Ratzinger and the University Francisco de Vitoria in Madrid. The awards promote a dialogue between the humanities and science. As described on the [website for the Awards](#), expanded reason aims to “*explore those aspects of reality that go beyond the purely empirical and to achieve a harmonious synthesis of knowledge that integrates theology and philosophy.*” The rationale for expanded reason is the belief that “*the fundamental questions of man, how to live and how to die, cannot be excluded from the scope of rationality*” (see Box 1 for more details).

The first competition for the awards took place in 2016-17. Typically, four Awards are given each year for exemplary work on expanded reason. This includes two awards for research and two for teaching. The Expanded Reason Institute at the University Francisco de Vitoria in Madrid also organizes an annual Congress.

Expanded reason essentially considers some of the complex relationships between faith and reason. Given the importance of those questions for Catholic education, it seemed appropriate to conduct interviews of Expanded Reason Award recipients for the Global Catholic Education interview series.

This report includes 14 such interviews. The first interview is with Max Bonilla, International Director, Expanded Reason Institute, Universidad Francisco de Victoria. The other 13 interviews are with Award recipients who accepted to be interviewed for the series. By alphabetical order, interviews were conducted with James Arthur, Professor at the University of Birmingham; Marta Bertolaso, Professor at Campus Bio-Medico University of Rome; Father Javier Sánchez Cañizares, Professor at the University of Navarra; John C. Cavadini, Professor at the University of Notre Dame; Robert Enright, Professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison; Juan F. Franck, Professor at Universidad Austral; Gonzalo Génova and María del Rosario González, both Professors at

universities in Madrid; Therese Lysaught, Professor at Loyola University Chicago; Jay Martin, Assistant Teaching Professor at the University of Notre Dame; Darcia Narvaez, Professor emerita at the University of Notre Dame; William Simpson, Junior Research Fellow at the University of Cambridge; John Slattery, Senior Program Associate with AAAS; and finally Claudia Vanney, Director of the Philosophy Institute at Universidad Austral.

Box 1: The Expanded Reason Awards

The Expanded Reason Institute was created at the University Francisco de Vitoria for the reflection, study, discussion and dissemination of research and teaching programs that, from the various particular sciences, pose fundamental questions and seek answers in open reason, always at the service of truth, the person and the transformation of society.

The Expanded Reason Awards, organized by the Expanded Reason Institute, are born of this desire to discover the ultimate truth about existence through the acquisition of universal knowledge that allows human beings to better understand themselves and to progress in their own fulfillment.

The use of reason, the so-called “expanded reason” and the search for truth in Ratzinger are found not so much in the academic articles that the emeritus pontiff has dedicated to the question, but in its effective use, that is, in how he himself has used reason to grasp reality. It is therefore a question of seeing how to use reason and see it in action. In other words, it is a use of reason that is challenged by reality, that leads him to be amazed and to know with truth.

Source: [Expanded Reason Awards website](#).

The first interview with Max Bonilla is about the history of the Awards, how to apply for them, and what the aims of the Awards and more broadly the Expanded Reason Institute are. The other interviews provide an opportunity for Award recipients to briefly explain their work, while also giving some advice to graduate students interested in these questions. Each of the interviews with Award recipients is based on a core set of questions (with occasionally slight changes from the base set of questions):

- 1) Would you describe where you work, and some of the particularities of your university?
- 2) What is your main field of research, and why did you choose that field?
- 3) You are a recipient of the Expanded Reason Awards. What was your contribution for receiving the Award?
- 4) How easy or difficult is it for you to share your values with students when teaching?
- 5) How do your values affect your research? And what are some challenges you face?
- 6) What is your advice for students who may be Catholic and are contemplating doing graduate work or a PhD?
- 7) Could you share how you ended up in your current position, what was your personal journey?
- 8) Finally, could you share a personal anecdote about yourself, what you are passionate about?

Rather than attempting to summarize the interviews in this introduction, it seems best to simply highlight some of the key messages of the interviewees as outlined in excerpts from the interviews. Two excerpts from each interview are provided below, with the interviews listed by last name alphabetical order. We hope that this collection will make a useful contribution to understanding the richness and diversity of work on expanded reason. We also hope that the collection of interviews will provide you with useful insights and inspire you in your own work.

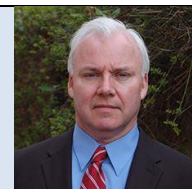
Max Bonilla, International Director, Expanded Reason Institute at Universidad Francisco de Victoria



"The Expanded Reason Awards seek to humanize the sciences by returning to a deeper understanding of the purpose of science, technology and professional work through a dialogue with philosophy and/or theology; to understand the sciences as human efforts at the service of society and the common good."

"It is important to create a network where younger and beginning scholars can interact with experienced academics so that together they can develop new avenues to solve human problems and contribute more effective solutions to a society that badly needs them."

James Arthur, Professor at the University of Birmingham



"I like the quotation: 'We must acknowledge ... that the most important, indeed the only, thing we have to offer our students is ourselves. Everything else they can read in a book'... Role modelling is a powerful teaching tool for passing on knowledge, skills, and values and I have always believed that you must make explicit what is implicit in your teaching."

"A recent story was when I met the Queen who awarded me the title Officer of the British Empire – she asked me 'How does one measure character' – I responded, 'Your Majesty, one does not measure character, one recognizes it.' She was amused!"

Marta Bertolaso,
Professor at Campus
Bio-Medico
University of Rome



"Philosophy is important for science and technological innovation, for example for clarification of scientific concepts, critical assessment of scientific assumptions or methods, formulation of new concepts and theories, fostering of dialogue between disciplines and between science and society..."

"Critical thinking and contextual judgment are crucial in science as in normal. It is unreasonable, on the contrary and just to give an example, to expect that a mere larger and larger amount of gene expression patterns or cellular mechanisms will explain complex diseases."

**Father Javier
Sánchez Cañizares,**
Professor at the
University of Navarra



"If science and religion wish to address each other, both need the common ground provided by philosophy. Even though philosophy itself is hardly a well-defined discipline, it behooves her an attitude of criticism and clarification that helps purify both poles of the science and religion dialogue."

"We share with our fellow men and women a pilgrimage: not only the pilgrimage of faith but the pilgrimage of truth. Thus, ethical and intellectual humbleness is a prerequisite should one make progress in the adventure of research."

John C. Cavadini,
Professor at the
University of Notre Dame



"I am always interested in recovering and re-proposing the riches of the Catholic theological tradition. The challenges are to make these riches intelligible to modern people, without reducing them to rationalism and without making it simply an exercise in nostalgia."

"There is nothing especially interesting about me that I can think of. I am very devoted to St. Joseph, because he too, seemed to be of no particular interest to anyone. But he didn't mind."

Robert Enright,
Professor at the
University of
Wisconsin-Madison



"Academia prides itself on being cutting-edge with freedom of thought. I challenge that view. Many academics are most comfortable being in the mainstream, asking the questions for the moment that are safe to ask. Yet, mainstream ideas come and go and [may] not improve the human condition."

"I began to ask myself: What in the area of moral development might make a major impact on the lives of adults and children, families, and communities? The idea of forgiveness kept coming up for me. Forgiveness occurs when people are treated unfairly by others. Might forgiveness be a way of people working their way out of resentment and hatred to reclaim their psychological well-being?"

**Juan F. Franck,
Professor at
Universidad Austral**



"Our limited knowledge will never allow us to decide whether the universe behaves deterministically or not. And even if it did, determinism and indeterminism would still be philosophical theses, not scientific ones. My personal conclusion is that they appear as a threat to freedom only if one concedes that physics is the ultimate level of analysis of reality."

"The conviction that our life is more than just an episode in the long history of the universe and that man has a higher destiny, prompts you to the additional effort of seeking for signs and hints of that in nature and in our human experience, when that is possible."

**Gonzalo Génova &
María del Rosario
González,
Professors at
universities in
Madrid**



"Ethics is often presented as a brake, a barrier, a series of annoying limits and prohibitions. But we are convinced that ethics is not the brake, but the real engine of technological progress. So, our values, unsurprisingly, drive us to keep searching for the truth, a truth that none of us have 'in our pocket.'"

"We share the view that the teaching of professional ethics has to be completely founded on ethical rationality, with our feet grounded in concrete practice and in the mental and vocational form of each profession. Otherwise, they will be overlapping schemes and not committed professional lives."

**Therese Lysaught,
Professor at Loyola
University Chicago**



"I am passionate about [...] the fact that reality is greater than ideas—and how we can develop the practices and virtues that help us to allow reality, via encounter, to constantly convert our intellectual paradigms, our lives, and the church, in service of the truth and healing and grace."

"Full-time, secure faculty positions in colleges and universities, especially in theology, are evaporating... And unfortunately, the church has still not fully embraced the role of lay pastoral associates in parishes."

**Jay Martin, Assistant
Teaching Professor at
the University of Notre
Dame**



"Perhaps a majority of researchers in mine and related fields tend not to share my particular values and commitments, especially with respect to Catholicism, but I have generally enjoyed the opportunities to engage with and learn from them."

"My advice to Catholic students who are considering pursuing advanced degrees in Theology is simply to allow themselves the chance for genuine discernment. Everyone knows that the job market is tough, graduate school is arduous, and that the academy can be an unwelcoming place, but I would encourage them to refuse the pull of cost-benefit analysis."

**Darcia Narvaez,
Professor emerita at
the University of
Notre Dame**



"Humans are so immature at birth that to develop in a healthy manner, reaching their full potential, they need to experience humanity's evolved nest. This helps structure well-functioning brain and body, preparing the individual for cooperative behavior and compassionate morality."

"The western education system emphasizes a detached orientation to relationships and the natural world, using cognitive models that are limited and underperform but are taken as images of reality. You have to have some outside experience to realize this."

**John Slattery, Senior
Program Associate
with AAAS**



"The idea for the project was simple: how can we help religious leaders better understand modern science, and how can we do it in a way that affirms a healthy dialogue between and among scientific and religious communities? Because there were so many examples of unhealthy science engagement with faith communities, a proper engagement ... was imperative."

"The world will always need people who can articulate a clear sense of Catholic thought... No one knows what scholarly work will look like in 50 years, but we will always need interpreters of tradition, and we will always need scholars!"

**William Simpson,
Junior Research
Fellow at the
University of
Cambridge**



"The lack of a humane philosophy – a logos, or general account of how everything 'hangs together' – has fragmented the academy and divided our society. We must reclaim what Gilson called 'the unity of philosophical experience'."

"These are exciting times to be a Catholic intellectual engaged in analytic philosophy. We are beginning to witness a tectonic shift in Western philosophy of a kind that has not been seen for several centuries. There is a turn back toward Aristotle which is gathering momentum, and new opportunities for drawing upon the Catholic philosophical tradition to address contemporary philosophical problems."

**Claudia Vanney,
Director of the
Philosophy Institute at
Universidad Austral**



"To reverse the excess of specialization and make room for the cross-enrichment of disciplines, it seems necessary to migrate from the current epistemic plurality towards a collaborative project of social cognition that demands specific intellectual virtues."

"Good values are attractive by their own. The role of the professor is to make easier for students to discover values by themselves. Values are not imposed from the outside; on the contrary, they should be freely assumed."

About the Global Catholic Education Project

[Global Catholic Education](http://www.GlobalCatholicEducation.org) is a volunteer-led project to contribute to Catholic education and integral human development globally with a range of resources. The website went live symbolically on Thanksgiving Day in November 2020 to give thanks for the many blessings we have received. Our aim is to serve Catholic schools and universities, as well as other organizations contributing to integral human development, with a special emphasis on responding to the aspirations of the poor and vulnerable. If you would like to contribute to the project, please contact us through the website at www.GlobalCatholicEducation.org.

INTERVIEW WITH MAX BONILLA, DIRECTOR OF THE EXPANDED REASON INSTITUTE AT UFV IN SPAIN

Interview conducted by Quentin Wodon

February 2021



EXCERPTS:

- “The Expanded Reason Awards seek to humanize the sciences by returning to a deeper understanding of the purpose of science, technology and professional work through a dialogue with philosophy and/or theology; to understand the sciences as human efforts at the service of society and the common good.”
- “It is important to create a network where younger and beginning scholars can interact with experienced academics so that together they can develop new avenues to solve human problems and contribute more effective solutions to a society that badly needs them.”

You are the International Director of the Expanded Reason Institute at the University Francisco de Vitoria in Spain. Could you please explain what the Institute does?

The Expanded Reason Institute was born out of an interest in the dialogue between the particular sciences and the humanities, and, in particular, an initiative along those lines jointly run by the Vatican Foundation Joseph Ratzinger and the University Francisco de Vitoria in Madrid, the Expanded Reason Awards. The institute carries out university initiatives that promote the dialogue between faith and reason in various fields of knowledge.

The main interest is to engage academic fields with a proper understanding of the human person and the quest for truth, since universities, when properly understood, are not just entities meant to offer professional credentials, but are communities of people dedicated to seeking the truth in the many aspects of human reality. The Expanded Reason Institute promotes initiatives that engage deeper questions about the human person and the nature of reality so as to foster a more authentic human community, through a better understanding of the human person, the truth, ethics and ultimately that which gives us meaning.

Box 1: Interview Series

What is the mission of the Global Catholic Education website? The site informs and connects Catholic educators globally. It provides them with data, analysis, opportunities to learn, and other resources to help them fulfill their mission with a focus on the preferential option for the poor.

Why a series of interviews? Interviews are a great way to share experiences in an accessible and personal way. This series will feature interviews with practitioners as well as researchers working in Catholic education, whether in a classroom, at a university, or with other organizations aiming to strengthen Catholic schools and universities.

What is the focus of this interview? In this interview, Max Bonilla, International Director of the Expanded Reason Institute at the University Francisco de Vitoria in Spain, explains the origins and aims of the Expanded Reason Institute and its annual Awards.

Visit us at www.GlobalCatholicEducation.org.

Why were the Expanded Reason Awards created? What is their objective?

The Expanded Reason Awards were created as a response to the encouragement of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI to "broaden the horizon of reason." The Vatican Foundation Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI wished to increase projects that promote the vision of the Pope and thus asked us to work with them. Since the Foundation already offered the famous Ratzinger Prize, we thought that a complementary prize offered to scientists and experts in secular fields who engage the questions that were important to Pope Benedict (and now to Pope Francis) would be a suitable way to contribute to that important work of the Vatican Foundation. So the Expanded Reason Awards program offers 100,000 euros a year in four prizes to professors from around the world (25,000 euros each) who engage their field of knowledge with deeper questions of philosophy and theology.

Pope Benedict encouraged academics to not remain locked in the positivist mentality so common today or to assume that only an empiricist mentality can unlock the truth. In other words, Pope Benedict encouraged professors and researchers to ask deeper questions so as to unlock greater truths. The Expanded Reason Awards rewards and incentivizes this kind of work. The challenge of Pope Benedict that the awards propose is for anyone that seeks the truth without bias. This is a search that, as Ex Corde Ecclesiae argues about university work, is "a search that is neither subordinated to nor conditioned by particular interests of any kind." (Ex Corde, 7). And Pope Francis insists that all the work we do should put the person's dignity front and center, especially the neediest among us. Thus the Expanded Reason Awards is a project that seeks to humanize the sciences by returning to a deeper understanding of the purpose of science, technology and professional work through a dialogue with philosophy and/or theology; that is, to understand the sciences as human efforts at the service of society and the common good.

What is the role of the Vatican Foundation Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI in the awards?

The Vatican Foundation Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI jointly sponsors the Expanded Reason Awards with the University Francisco de Vitoria in Madrid. The president of the Foundation, currently Fr. Federico Lombardi, SJ, functions as co-chair of the international jury that decides the winners along with the rector of the University Francisco de Vitoria, Daniel Sada. Because the Expanded Reason Awards is an initiative of the Vatican Foundation, the award ceremony takes place most often at the Vatican followed by an audience with the current Holy Father, Pope Francis.

Who can apply for the awards, what do they need to do, and what are the deadlines for the current cycle?

Anyone who is doing university level research or teaching can apply for the awards. As an international awards program, applicants are welcomed from any country in the world. Applications are received in two general categories, teaching and research. 100,000 euros are awarded each year to four professors (25,000 euros each) who do either great teaching projects or outstanding research in a way that engages deeper questions about human reality, as explained on our website, www.expandedreason.org.

The application process is simple. A candidate would visit our website and fill out the application form, submitting three documents: the primary document which is a book or an article in research, or a teaching project; a CV showing the candidate's academic career; and an explanatory document where the book or article or teaching project is explained in light of the Expanded Reason Awards. So the explanatory document shows how the primary document meets the criteria of the awards. The criteria can be found in a conditions document found on our website. We began the awards receiving applicants in two languages, and are gradually increasing the languages we accept. We are currently receiving applications in any of four languages: English, French, Italian, and Spanish.

The award cycle repeats every year: The awards open in October, the deadline is in April, the winners are announced in July and the award ceremony takes place usually at the Vatican in September. This year, the deadline is April 12, 2021 at midnight in Vatican City (or Central European Time).

There seems to be quite a bit of diversity in past award recipients. Could you give a few examples of their work?

The work of winners is varied precisely because the encouragement we offer is for scholars in nearly any field of knowledge. Thus we have had scientists that study quantum physics and philosophy, theologians that seek to understand environmental questions, economists that promote a more just society, philosophers that make a contribution to cancer research, management professors that reframe the purpose of doing business, and many others. Added to the winners are hundreds of participants from around the world and from many more fields of knowledge that are helping us create a network of scholars that is interested in engaging deeper questions related to the relationship between any particular science and philosophy/theology. The jury invites not only established scholars from any field of knowledge, but also younger academics.

It is of course a great honor for recipients to be recognized by the awards, but how do you aim to achieve a broader impact?

Our goal is to create a network of scholars who understand the need for a broader engagement with their fields of knowledge and who are willing to ask deeper philosophical questions, not only narrow scientific ones. To achieve a broader impact, it is important to create a network where younger and beginning scholars can interact with experienced academics so that together they can develop new avenues to solve human problems and contribute more effective solutions to a society that badly needs them.

Part of this effort requires me to travel to various places where I can explain and encourage professors to participate in our network. In practice this means that sometimes I am invited to visit a particular city in a country that I happen to plan to visit and work with an interested university to organize meetings or seminars related to the Expanded Reason projects. These can take the form of simpler meetings where I explain the awards to groups of professors, or more complex seminars or conferences where multiple speakers and scholars engage questions from an expanded reason perspective. It all depends on the interest and needs of the host university. For a university this is helpful because they

often have the need to promote excellence in research and teaching from among the professoriate, and our awards are a great avenue to do that at no cost to those universities. Universities that are interested in a visit would contact me and ask me if I happen to visit their country or city in the next few months. If that is the case, together we can plan the type of activity they would find most helpful to them.

We also have a series of other projects that increase our impact. The Templeton World Charity Foundation has generously funded several of them. For one of them which we are launching soon, we hope to engage interested universities from around the world in an online teaching project. I cannot give details about this yet, but universities that might be interested can contact me for more details either by email or through our website.

Finally, we also have a series of publications in our Expanded Reason Collection by our publishing house, Editorial UFV, that offer some of the writings from our winners and selected authors. These is a growing collection of publications distributed around the world for the benefit of anyone seeking to understand and see examples of what we mean by an expanded reason approach. Some of these publications are offered free in digital form, and the number of authors being published increases constantly.



What is your own trajectory? How did you come to be responsible for the Institute?

For over twenty years I have worked in Catholic education, first in the US, and now in Europe. When the Expanded Reason Awards were first proposed, I was asked to help organize and run them. Now we are also expanding the initiatives of the Expanded Reason Institute with more projects, all aimed at promoting the approach to university education and research that I described above.

Could you tell us a bit more about yourself, your passions or particular interests?

Since the days I was a college student back in the 1980s and 1990s, I was concerned about the nature of Catholic university education and the importance to promote it in healthy ways that respect academic freedom and that promote and nurture communities that seek the truth in mutual respect. At that time, the publication of *Ex Corde*

Ecclesiae and later of *Fides et Ratio* marked a pivotal moment in my thinking because they encouraged a serious dialogue within the university community among the various fields of knowledge with philosophy and theology. As I transitioned from professor to administrator, it was just natural to continue to promote the important work of Catholic universities around the world. From before I began my doctoral studies, a great passion of mine has been to promote solid and rigorous intellectual work that can enter into fruitful dialogue with philosophy and/or theology instead of just co-existing happily in parallel but not in dialogue, as it happens often at many universities, where a core curriculum adds to but does not engage the science or professional curriculum. But that dialogue always seemed to me to be essential for a mature and well-rounded university community, especially a Catholic university, and, at the same time, a great challenge to carry out in academically rigorous ways. The Expanded Reason initiatives seek to do exactly that.



Photo: Winners and other participants in the Expanded Reason Congress meet with Pope Francis.

INTERVIEW WITH JAMES ARTHUR, PROFESSOR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

Interview conducted by Quentin Wodon
May 2021



EXCERPTS:

- “I like the quotation: *“We must acknowledge ... that the most important, indeed the only, thing we have to offer our students is ourselves. Everything else they can read in a book”*... Role modelling is a powerful teaching tool for passing on knowledge, skills, and values and I have always believed that you must make explicit what is implicit in your teaching.”
- “A recent story was when I met the Queen who awarded me the title Officer of the British Empire – she asked me *“How does one measure character”* – I responded, *“Your Majesty, one does not measure character, one recognises it.”* She was amused!”

Would you describe your work, and some of the particularities of your university?

I work within The University of Birmingham which is a public research university located in Birmingham, United Kingdom. It received its royal charter in 1900 as a successor to Queen's College, Birmingham (founded in 1825), making it the first English civic university to receive its own royal charter.

The university is a founding member of both the Russell Group of British research universities and the international network of research universities, Universitas 21.

The student population includes 23,155 undergraduate and 12,605 postgraduate students, which is the 7th largest in the UK (out of 169). The annual income of the institution for 2019–20 was £737.3 million.

Box 1: Interview Series

What is the mission of the Global Catholic Education website? The site informs and connects Catholic educators globally. It provides them with data, analysis, opportunities to learn, and other resources to help them fulfill their mission with a focus on the preferential option for the poor.

Why a series of interviews? Interviews are a great way to share experiences in an accessible and personal way. This series will feature interviews with practitioners as well as researchers working in Catholic education, whether in a classroom, at a university, or with other organizations aiming to strengthen Catholic schools and universities.

What is the focus of this interview? In this interview, James Arthur, Professor at the University of Birmingham, shares insights about the work that he received an Expanded Reason Award for and about life in academia, with a particular emphasis on his research for the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues.

Visit us at www.GlobalCatholicEducation.org.

What is your main field of research, and why did you choose that field?

My first degree was in history from the University of Birmingham, which I attended at the age of 17, but I have also studied theology, education and philosophy at the University of Oxford where I gained my masters and doctorate. I have worked principally in the field of educational research because I began my career as a history teacher, which I believed I was called to be.

I came to realise that education should aim to form people so they can live well in a world worth living in. The goal of human life is to develop its essential excellences, the potentialities that define and constitute it. In education today there is an ever-increasing anxiety—an anxiety which emphasizes student success as the end all and be all of education. Our educational system has been shaped by the idea that the purpose of human beings is to produce and consume in the marketplace, and that the measure of all things is success in the marketplace—profitability, or in the case of an individual, his or her wealth and status. We have a responsibility to challenge this narrow and mistaken view of human life.

You are a recipient of the Expanded Reason Awards. What was your contribution for receiving the Award?

The Award was made for an amalgam of projects, summarised under the title *Teaching Character Virtues – A Neo-Aristotelian Approach*, which captures the multiple teaching programmes I initiated in the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, at the University of Birmingham. These programmes range from the internationally-recognised *A Framework for Character Education in Schools*, to the world's first distance-learning Master's degree in character education. I promoted a neo-Aristotelian approach to virtue and character formation and, with the Jubilee Centre's staff, continue to undertake world-leading research in character and virtues that guides practice and informs policy.

The Jubilee Centre was launched in May 2012. The research undertaken by the Jubilee Centre is summarised in the online exhibition [*The Jubilee Journey: Celebrating research into character and virtues*](#).

How easy or difficult is it for you to share your values with students when teaching?

I like the quotation: “*We must acknowledge ... that the most important, indeed the only, thing we have to offer our students is ourselves. Everything else they can read in a book.*”

I think it is impossible not to pass on the values that we hold and display in what we do. Role modelling is a powerful teaching tool for passing on knowledge, skills, and values and I have always believed that you must make explicit what is implicit in your teaching. I do not consider it to be difficult because it is who you are when you teach. Students are always curious what the teacher thinks. However I do not want my students to simply think what I think, but to be authentic thinkers.

How do your values affect your research? And what are some challenges you face?

My values influence my research approach. Research needs to seek the truth and I do not exclude any aspect of who I am in this search. While I teach in a secular university, I do not, for example, exclude theological insights from my research.

There are many values that are influential in shaping the norms that constitute research practices. Often academics are not conscious of them. Six are often mentioned:

- Objectivity
- Honesty
- Openness
- Accountability
- Fairness
- Stewardship

Most academics, as I do, will subscribe to these values. However, I am increasingly conscious that Universities have trouble defining the Human. This is particularly important to my research which focuses on character formation for a life of flourishing.

Since flourishing entails a virtuous life, it cannot be divorced from the community in which we are part. We are not only rational and ethical beings; we are also social and political beings. Solitary or individualistic approaches to ethical thinking lack elements essential to the telos. We only flourish as individuals in relationship, and therefore the telos includes both individual and societal dimensions. The telos of a human being is to live a life worth living. A life worth living is living a good life, which is a life lived according to the virtues. The telos in this life is found in common projects, shared activities and intimate relationships. Individuals need other individuals in order to become what they are as human beings. We need others to be truly ourselves.

What is your advice for students who may be Catholic are contemplating doing graduate work or a PhD?

Resist the nonsense! Seriously, as a doctoral student we experience much that will challenge us both in the supervision session and in the bar with fellow students. Much of this is good for us. We need challenge. However, it is important to separate out that which is true and that which is false, even when sincerely said.

Could you share how you ended up in your current position, what was your personal journey?

I attended a Catholic boy's school in Scotland and moved to England. I joined the Jesuits as a novice, but left to become a history teacher. My schooling, novitiate, and teaching experience were the three most powerful formative experiences in my life... Strange that my

University experience was less formative. I was made a professor in my 30s and have been in leadership positions in Universities ever since. I have been offered very senior positions, but have declined them to pursue my work on virtue ethics. Nevertheless, I have been Dean and a Pro Vice Chancellor of my current University.

Finally, could you share a personal anecdote about yourself, what you are passionate about?

I am passionate about reading and travel. A recent story was when I met the Queen who awarded me the title Officer of the British Empire – she asked me *“How does one measure character”* – I responded, *“Your Majesty, one does not measure character, one recognises it.”* She was amused!



Photo: Professor James Arthur receiving the OBE from the Queen.

INTERVIEW WITH MARTA BERTOLASO, PROFESSOR AT CAMPUS BIO-MEDICO UNIVERSITY OF ROME

Interview conducted by Quentin Wodon

May 2021



EXCERPTS:

- “Philosophy is important for science and technological innovation, for example for clarification of scientific concepts, critical assessment of scientific assumptions or methods, formulation of new concepts and theories, fostering of dialogue between disciplines and between science and society...”
- “Critical thinking and contextual judgment are crucial in science as in normal. It is unreasonable, on the contrary and just to give an example, to expect that a mere larger and larger amount of gene expression patterns or cellular mechanisms will explain complex diseases.”

Would you describe your work, and some of the particularities of your university?

My main academic appointment is with Campus Bio-Medico University of Rome. My university promotes integrated teaching, research and healthcare structures, pursuing the good of the human person as the main end of all its activities. The university offers students a formational experience aimed at stimulating their cultural, professional, and human growth. This is done by proposing the acquisition of skills in a spirit of service. It promotes knowledge, interdisciplinarity of the sciences, and research in all fields that contribute to the overall good of the human person. Patients are cared for in the unity of their material and spiritual needs, in accordance with a view of life open to the concept of transcendence.

What is your main field of research, and why did you choose that field?

I am the Head of the Research Unit of Philosophy of Science and Human Development in the Faculty of Science and Technology for Humans and their Environment. I was initially trained in bio-molecular sciences and cancer research. I decided to continue my academic path in philosophy of sciences only afterwards.

Box 1: Interview Series

What is the mission of the Global Catholic Education website? The site informs and connects Catholic educators globally. It provides them with data, analysis, opportunities to learn, and other resources to help them fulfill their mission with a focus on the preferential option for the poor.

Why a series of interviews? Interviews are a great way to share experiences in an accessible and personal way. This series will feature interviews with practitioners as well as researchers working in Catholic education, whether in a classroom, at a university, or with other organizations aiming to strengthen Catholic schools and universities.

What is the focus of this interview? In this interview, Marta Bertolaso, Professor at Campus Bio-Medico University of Rome, shares insights about the work that she received an Expanded Reason Award for and about life in academia, with a particular emphasis on her research in the philosophy of sciences.

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I was, in fact, aware that there was somehow 'more in science than science itself', paraphrasing contemporary philosophers that highlighted the importance of the human factor in managing emerging technologies, finding new models and theories and asking relevant questions in getting towards more satisfactory explanations of developmental processes. At that time, in fact, limits of reductionist approaches in life sciences were increasingly evident. I always trusted science and scientific practice as an integration of technological possibilities and of the human capability to pose and explore relevant questions in order to better our life.

You are a recipient of the Expanded Reason Awards. What was your contribution for receiving the Award?

A global vision of cancer biology and cancer research seems to go hand in hand with a wide vision of human capability of understanding living beings through science. Empirical positivism, in fact, in the last century has affected both the object and the subject of scientific knowledge in a harmful and sterilizing way. It was also a message for university and training institutions: keeping the sense for truth alive, is necessary to put the whole man back into play, rescuing the fundamental existential questions that emerge from his particular tasks and also from any scientific task. Here comes the possibility for a more honest epistemology (a new relational epistemology of life, in the book's thesis) that keeps the human insight in all dimensions of science, while not giving up with understanding and the progressive search of truth.

In this, we also see the role of philosophy in the most important research programs of our time. Disciplinary dialogue with philosophy or theology as a requirement of the fundamental questions, as well as philosophical or theological concepts can lead the integration of fragmentary knowledge into the whole of reality. They are able to drive from knowledge to wisdom and from phenomenon to foundation. Also, knowledge of the historic and philosophical background provides a kind of independence from prejudices scientists desperately need. Much of the discussed literature demonstrates that scientists do have many philosophical hallmarks. Philosophy does have a productive impact on science.

How easy or difficult is it for you to share your values with students when teaching?

I have to acknowledge that I am in a privileged position because my students choose my courses and they are every year more attended. It is easy for them (being engineers, scientist or medical students) to understand the mantra 'bad science bad ethics'. Moving from these premises we can discuss the importance of the 'mesoscopic' lesson contained in the book. It is that human reason is fundamental to keep the results *within* the boundaries of the reasonable and understandable.

Such reasonability matches with the notion of 'expanded reason' very well and opens the possibility to discuss the importance of virtues for successful scientific work with a positive social and ethical impact. Critical thinking and contextual judgment are crucial in science as in normal life in order to identify the adequate and relevant level of detail. It is unreasonable, on the contrary and just to give an example, to expect that a mere larger and larger amount of gene expression data or cellular mechanisms will explain complex diseases.

How do your values affect your research? And what are some challenges you face?

Honesty, transparency, trust, humility and courage are the driving values and virtues I always try to live and share with my students, colleagues, and friends. Envy and bad competitions can make this hard and difficult but it is, at this point, that faith and trust in God helps me in moving forward anyway. All this does affect all my life and, in this sense, also my work and research activity. Optimism when looking at the human capability to search for truth is definitely part of my leadership in the academic and educational environments.

What is your advice for students who may be Catholic and are contemplating doing graduate work or a PhD?

I always encourage them to keep in mind and deepen the universal truths that are contained in the Gospel and the Tradition or in the Church's documents (e.g. the Social Doctrine of the Church is extremely current). This is important to be better persons and, therefore, also better professionals in different fields. I also encourage them to take care of their humanistic training. Philosophy is important in different ways also for science and technological innovation: for example for clarification of scientific concepts, critical assessment of scientific assumptions or methods, formulation of new concepts and theories, fostering of dialogue between science disciplines, as well as between science and society, opening up new reflections of ethical aspects and epistemic values, encouraging reflection on the philosophical foundations of science and its practice.

Could you share how you ended up in your current position, what was your personal journey?

I am currently Professor for Philosophy of Science in the Faculty of Science and Technology for Humans and their Environment. I have focused my research on the epistemology of science and philosophy of biology and medicine, including in terms of how to deal with different aspects of regulatory issues of complex biological systems, organizations, and growth.

I have also studied how different explanatory theories evolve in science, and how (mechanical) models can be considered a way towards discovery in the biotechnological field. How science works in practice, from biology to bio-engineer, has also been my recent areas of research and philosophical reflection, with particular attention to systems biology. More recently, I have been involved in a research program exploring the impact of modern philosophy of sciences' main trends in our understanding of human work and its future as mediated by new AI technologies.

Finally, could you share a personal anecdote about yourself, what you are passionate about?

An anecdote I like to share refers to a diagnosis of genetic mutation I was asked to do. The intent was to pass the result on to a doctor who was probably suggesting a woman to abort her child because of a possible predisposition to a somehow related cancer. It was crucial not to enter into a 'moral' argument about the badness or goodness of abortion but rather to discuss with the colleagues to what extent it was fair to communicate such diagnosis without clarifying that the real risk (on the basis of the scientific literature) to die for the child in the case he/she would bear such mutation was on average the same each one of us has to die because of a car accident before age 50 or 60. The result was thus transmitted with a completely different emphasis. After a few months we met that woman with her husband in the lab. They were grateful for the consultancy as they were worried and depressed with the idea, at that time, of giving up with that pregnancy they had looked forward to for years before.

INTERVIEW WITH FR. JAVIER SÁNCHEZ CAÑIZARES, PROFESSOR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NAVARRA

Interview conducted by Quentin Wodon

April 2021



EXCERPTS:

- “If science and religion wish to address each other, both need the common ground provided by philosophy. Even though philosophy itself is hardly a well-defined discipline, it behooves her an attitude of criticism and clarification that helps purify both poles of the science and religion dialogue.”
- “We share with our fellow men and women a pilgrimage: not only the pilgrimage of faith but the pilgrimage of truth. Thus, ethical and intellectual humbleness is a prerequisite should one make progress in the adventure of research.”

Would you describe where you work, and some of the particularities of your university?

As a professor, I work at the University of Navarra (UNAV). Currently, I run the CRYF Group (CRYF is the Spanish acronym for “Science, Reason, and Faith”) and am also a researcher of the “Mind-Brain” Group at the Institute for Culture and Society (ICS)—one of the several research institutes in UNAV. As a priest incardinated in the Prelature of Opus Dei, I develop some pastoral work related to groups of students and professors of UNAV. I celebrate mass and attend the confessional daily at a residence of professors and periodically preach recollections and retreats.

One may easily recognize the Christian inspiration behind the academic work at UNAV, in keeping with its founder’s desire. Saint Josemaría was insistent on the harmony between faith and reason and envisaged the university as a privileged place to provide newer generations of Christians with the intellectual and moral tools to live their faith in the middle of the world, also in academia.

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Why a series of interviews? Interviews are a great way to share experiences in an accessible and personal way. This series will feature interviews with practitioners as well as researchers working in Catholic education, whether in a classroom, at a university, or with other organizations aiming to strengthen Catholic schools and universities.

What is the focus of this interview? In this interview, Father Javier Sánchez Cañizares, a Professor at the University of Navarra, shares insights about the work that he received an Expanded Reason Award for and about life in academia, with a particular emphasis on the intersection between theology, philosophy, and physics.

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The CRYF and the ICS embody such ideals. I would also like to mention here the courses offered by the Core Curriculum Institute for the whole university, which aim to build intellectual bridges between the curricula of sciences and humanities and heal the wounds of excessive specialization.

What is your main field of research, and why did you choose that field?

Had I to pick out one specific field, I am more inclined to select Philosophy of Physics. However, let me introduce some caveats to explain this choice. First, I am far more interested in the Philosophy of Physics as an updated Philosophy of Nature than as an epistemology. In that sense, I endeavor to retrieve the classical Galileo-like view of the physicist as a philosopher of nature. Second, when reflecting on the philosophical presuppositions and results of Physics, there is plenty of room to provide new insights for emerging specific fields, like the philosophy of neurosciences and the philosophy of mind, and for broader frameworks, like the science and religion dialogue.

The fact of myself being a physicist and theologian may provide the short answer to why I chose Philosophy of Physics. However, I think there are also deeper reasons in my case. Mariano Artigas, the late founder of the CRYF Group, deemed philosophy as the central partner for the science and religion dialogue to successfully develop. I agree with that view. If science and religion wish to address each other, both need the common ground provided by philosophy. Even though throughout history philosophy itself is hardly a well-defined discipline, it behooves her an attitude of criticism and clarification that helps purify both poles of the science and religion dialogue.

You are a recipient of the Expanded Reason Awards. What was your contribution for receiving the Award?

Let me first explain something. When I entered the science and religion field, I felt astonished by the amount of space devoted by believers to come to terms with evolution. To be honest, I can hardly understand how one can focus on discussing the problem of the emergence of life or even the emergence of man on earth just from Biology and Theology. As far as we know, life is an extremely rare phenomenon in a huge universe. Do we really aim to make progress in the science and religion dialogue without heeding at the deeper dynamics of nature? Physics cares about that. Even if it assumes its own methodological reduction, it is intrinsically open to the whole reality and can eventually focus on all phenomena that interact with us, human beings, no matter how indirect such interaction may turn out to be.

I received one of the 2018 Expanded Reason Awards in the category of research for my book “Universo Singular”. This work deals with the most relevant problems that emerge in our physical knowledge of reality and offer a renewed agenda of topics for philosophical and theological reflection on nature. The book hinges upon the concept of ‘singularity’ and how it can be applied analogously to the universe in general, the existence of complex systems, the emergence of mind, and our specific knowledge of nature from its most fundamental description. The goal was to introduce the uniqueness of each problem in a comprehensible fashion, avoiding simplifications or inaccuracies that would displease readers with scientific expertise. My target was an academic audience and the educated public who want to delve, from the common ground of our scientific knowledge, into the image of a world created by God.

How easy or difficult is it for you to share your values with students when teaching?

Teachers, both in prep school and academia, face enormous difficulties today. For me, one of the most demanding challenges stems from the burden to get the audience “motivated”. Students live in a world soaked with continuous stimuli and lack the resources to build their own hierarchy of topics worth their attention. Thus, teachers spend a lot of energy just trying to catch the students’ attention. Teachers strive for entering their students’ field of interest, as in a theater, and the teaching content consequently becomes downplayed. It is illusory to think that teaching may fix something when many families and society, in general, deem college just a means to fight for what really matters in life for their sons, namely, money and success. In front of the latter, knowledge and wisdom appear like empty words of long by-gone eras.

More specifically, I think that one of the most acute problems relies on finding a common language from which to set up the relevant questions and problems that may eventually lead to acknowledge the ethical, intellectual, or religious values in human life. On top of that, in my view, there is an extended prejudice in Spain when a priest speaks as it is generally thought that, at some point, he will sneak some religious stuff in to try to proselytize or, worse yet indoctrinate you. To recap, one needs to invest much strength in overcoming the initial conditions –to use a physical image– of our students. However, once the right contact is made, they passionately live on the values they were actually seeking.

How do your values affect your research? And what are some challenges you face?

I would say that a religious person, specifically a Christian, is someone open to truth, no matter where it comes from. We Christians know only too well that we do not possess the truth; the Truth possesses you instead. Because of that, we share with our fellow men and women a pilgrimage: not only the pilgrimage of faith but the pilgrimage of truth. Thus, ethical and intellectual humbleness is a prerequisite should one make progress in the adventure of research. Since the truth is ultimately one, faith and reason mutually strengthen each other in the two-fold movement of *intellectus quaerens fidem* and *fides quaerens intellectum*. In my case, I can neither believe without reason nor think without faith.

On the one hand, within the science and religion dialogue, it is not uncommon to face fundamentalist stances in both slants. Scientists unable to see beyond their specific discipline, who fall into the trap of scientism, and religious people who cling to their representations of the contents of the faith. On the other hand, I hardly understand why many scientists, philosophers and theologians show themselves uninterested in the worldview provided by these germane disciplines. Usually, they use an (alleged) unrelatedness of methodologies as an excuse. In academia, in practical terms, for many reasons that I cannot unpack here, interdisciplinary research is seen with suspicion by many and penalized in mainstream funded research. Even if university authorities praise interdisciplinary research in public speeches, they ultimately pay lip service to such endeavors. One remarkable exception is the Francisco de Vitoria University, which has become exemplary with its effort in promoting and funding the Expanded Reason Awards.

What is your advice for students who may be Catholic are contemplating doing graduate work or a PhD?

First, I could not stress enough how important they are for the Church. Even though they will feel solitude and lack of understanding, they are witnessing how reason and faith may combine in the human person to ultimately reach a unity of intellectual life. In that sense, they will become beacons for many believers throughout their lives. Of course, theirs is a specific vocation within the richness of charisms distributed by the Holy Ghost and they will need, perhaps more than any other, the continuous feeding of the Liturgy and the sacraments and the help of their own communities. The Catholic scientist does need to live in the Church as a living communion, far from individualistic temptations.

Second, I ask them to not ever be afraid of seeking the truth. I am not only referring here to the ultimate truth but to the truth of a concrete problem. We live in a tough world where easy solutions are frequently provided to maintain the status quo. They will need a huge amount of mental strength to keep their way. Undoubtedly, everybody should be open to the advice of others, but it is important to find the right personal balance, which means that each of us has some personal contribution to offer. Please, do not quench the fire of research and subside into the public agenda. If I may borrow St Ignatius of Antioch's words about Christianity, *non opus persuasionis sed magnitudinis*, I think they can also apply to scientific research in its quest for truth.

Could you share how you ended up in your current position, what was your personal journey?

I was born in Córdoba, started to study Physics in Seville and, after meeting Opus Dei in a student residence of that city, I joined this institution in 1991 as a numerary member. I did my PhD in Physics in Madrid, at the Autonomous University, with work on the critical current of superconductors and, afterward, I went to Rome to study Theology and, eventually, being ordained in 2005. All those steps were quite natural for me, as I have always been very much interested in the quest for understanding the world. After studying Physics, Philosophy and Theology appeared as natural companions in my intellectual maturation. Regarding the ordination as a priest, it was also natural for me as another way of serving in Opus Dei, assuming that God and the Church were gently asking for it.

In the wake of my ordination and completion of another PhD in Theology, on God's revelation in creation according to the patristic comments to the Areopagus speech, I moved to the University of Navarra, in Pamplona, where I have remained during all these last years. I initially taught Moral Theology, but very soon shifted to Philosophy and the CRYF Group. Perhaps I felt a bit disappointed by what I perceived as a bit bland research in Theology and the call from science was still pretty alive in me. The possibility to engage in the science and religion dialogue at the CRYF, with the complement of the Mind-Brain Group at the ICS, definitely took the lead in my intellectual path.

Finally, could you share a personal anecdote about yourself, what you are passionate about?

My father usually tells a story about me that I do not remember well but must be true. When just a boy, I apparently used to say I wanted to study science to understand God. Certainly, I should add many nuances to such claim after coming of age –actually one never comes of age in these matters– but the central message remains. I do believe that science is a privileged way to understand God and, because of that, an essential partner in the dialogue between man and God started so many years ago. Of course, if science is seen as just a means to take control over nature and convert its achievements into technological gadgets, one may scorn that claim. The paradigm of technoscience does not seem to deem understanding, not to say contemplation, an end in itself. But I think that the fathers of modern science would share a view more akin to the innocent claim of my childhood.

As you were asking for something more personal about which I am more passionate, I must add something. I would say that I am not passionate about things but people. I am passionate about my friends and, in that sense, I am pretty much in line with the classical Aristotelian and Christian philosophy. Moreover, I consider friendship, together with Liturgy, the privileged access of God to people's hearts. Maybe for that reason, the scientific exchange should also take place in a friendly atmosphere to reach its utmost meaning.

INTERVIEW WITH JOHN C. CAVADINI, PROFESSOR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME

*Interview conducted by Quentin Wodon
May 2021*



EXCERPTS:

- “I am always interested in recovering and re-proposing the riches of the Catholic theological tradition. The challenges are to make these riches intelligible to modern people, without reducing them to rationalism and without making it simply an exercise in nostalgia.”
- “There is nothing especially interesting about me that I can think of. I am very devoted to St. Joseph, because he too, seemed to be of no particular interest to anyone. But he didn't mind.”

Would you describe where you work, and some of the particularities of your university?

I am a Professor in the Department of Theology, and also the Director of an independent unit, the McGrath Institute for Church Life. Notre Dame's Theology Department was recently ranked #1 in the world, for a second year in a row, with reference mainly to the Ph.D. program. But we also have a flourishing undergraduate culture in theology, with over 500 majors and minors.

What is your main field of research, and why did you choose that field?

My main field of research is Patristic Theology, which I chose because it is both biblical and yet deals with questions that today might fall under the category of systematic theology. I also chose this field because many of the riches of Christian Tradition are patristic, but are relatively unknown to most Catholics. So I like to think I contribute towards the recovery of these riches and giving them life in our contemporary setting.

You are a recipient of the Expanded Reason Awards. What was your contribution for receiving the Award?

I am Director of the Institute in which the program which received the award is located. *[On the program itself, see the interview of Jay Marin in this series!]*

Box 1: Interview Series

What is the mission of the Global Catholic Education website? The site informs and connects Catholic educators globally. It provides them with data, analysis, opportunities to learn, and other resources to help them fulfill their mission with a focus on the preferential option for the poor.

Why a series of interviews? Interviews are a great way to share experiences in an accessible and personal way. This series will feature interviews with practitioners as well as researchers working in Catholic education, whether in a classroom, at a university, or with other organizations aiming to strengthen Catholic schools and universities.

What is the focus of this interview? In this interview, John C. Cavadini, Professor at the University of Notre Dame, shares insights about the work that together with three other colleagues he received an Expanded Reason Award for - the Science & Religion Initiative at the McGrath Institute for Church Life.

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How easy or difficult is it for you to share your values with students when teaching?

Relatively easy. I teach a large class called "The Catholic Faith," and the values and vision it teaches are certainly ones I share and want to help students understand and acquire a sympathy for.

How do your values affect your research? And what are some challenges you face?

I am always interested in recovering and re-proposing the riches of the Catholic theological tradition. The challenges are to make these riches intelligible to modern people, without reducing them to rationalism and without making it simply an exercise in nostalgia.

What is your advice for students who may be Catholic and are contemplating doing graduate work or a PhD?

It is hard to give advice in the abstract, since students vary in their talents, preparation, and aspiration. It is certainly very important, too, to emphasize that there are fewer opportunities for jobs. It is ironic that there is such a need for pastorally minded theologians who really do

know the tradition, and yet so little ability for the Church to hire and support them.

Could you share how you ended up in your current position, what was your personal journey?

Mostly by accident, actually. I did not seek out any of the positions I currently have, or any that I have had here at Notre Dame.

Finally, could you share a personal anecdote about yourself, what you are passionate about?

I don't normally think in those terms, since I am passionate about a lot of things, some in a good way, some not. I don't have any dramatic conversion stories, or any conversion stories at all. I am a very standard Catholic, lucky to have been born into the faith since I am sure I would not have had the good sense or courage to convert. There is nothing especially interesting about me that I can think of. Perhaps that is my most distinguishing feature. I am very devoted to St. Joseph, because he too, seemed to be of no particular interest to anyone. But he didn't mind.



Photo: Cavadini, Baglow, Bellm, and Martin at the Vatican to receive the 2018 Expanded Reason Award.

INTERVIEW WITH ROBERT ENRIGHT, PROFESSOR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Interview conducted by Quentin Wodon

April 2021



EXCERPTS:

- “Academia prides itself on being cutting-edge with freedom of thought. I challenge that view. Many academics are most comfortable being in the mainstream, asking the questions for the moment that are safe to ask. Yet, mainstream ideas come and go and [may] not improve the human condition.”
- “I began to ask myself: What in the area of moral development might make a major impact on the lives of adults and children, families, and communities? The idea of forgiveness kept coming up for me. Forgiveness occurs when people are treated unfairly by others. Might forgiveness be a way of people working their way out of resentment and hatred to reclaim their psychological well-being?”

Would you describe where you work, and some of the particularities of your university?

The University of Wisconsin-Madison is a large public university in the Midwestern United States. It offers a very wide array of degrees throughout the academic spectrum. I am in the Department of Educational Psychology, which focuses on the themes of human development, learning, school psychology, and statistical methods. I also founded in 1994 the non-profit International Forgiveness Institute dedicated to the dissemination of information about forgiveness (internationalforgiveness.com).

I was the first person to publish an empirically-based journal article on the psychology of forgiveness in 1989. I decided to do research on forgiveness because I had been trained in moral development at the University of Minnesota. At the time in the 1970s the field of moral development was centered on questions of justice, or how adolescents and adults think about moral dilemmas in which the story characters needed to make decisions that could impact others in a fair or an unfair way. I, as with the majority of the academics who were interested in moral development, centered my research on a justice theme, particularly distributive justice, or how people think about the fair allocation of goods and services in communities.

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What is the focus of this interview? In this interview, Robert Enright, a Professor of Educational Psychology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, shares insights about the work that he received an Expanded Reason Award for and about life in academia, with a particular emphasis on his contribution to understanding forgiveness.

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I even received tenure while studying this topic and I was receiving one or two grants each year for my efforts, primarily because I was in the mainstream of academic thought and universities seem to reward mainstream thinking.

Yet, I woke up one day and asked myself this question: "Who am I helping with my research questions?" The truthful answer was this: I am helping a few of my research colleagues to better understand distributive justice; we get together each year at professional meetings, pat each other on the back for our achievements, and then we happily go back to our research labs, having helped no one in any society. It was at that point, in early 1985, that I decided to "throw all of my research over a cliff." I then began to ask myself this question: What in the area of moral development might make a major impact on the lives of adults and children, families, and communities? The idea of forgiveness kept coming up for me. Forgiveness, I reasoned at the time, occurs when the opposite of justice happens: when people are treated unfairly by others. Might forgiveness be a way of people working their way out of resentment and hatred to reclaim their psychological well-being?

You are a recipient of the Expanded Reason Awards. What was your contribution for receiving the Award?

Dr. Richard Fitzgibbons, a psychiatrist in private practice, and I teamed up on the book *Forgiveness Therapy* published by the American Psychological Association in 2015. This book is interdisciplinary in that it focuses on six themes: a) What is forgiveness from a theological viewpoint?; b) What is forgiveness from a philosophical viewpoint and what are the major philosophical views regarding why forgiveness might be seen as an appropriate response (by some philosophers) or a highly inappropriate response (by other philosophers) when treated unfairly by others; c) the description of a pathway or model of how people forgive; d) case studies of people who have worked through *Forgiveness Therapy* following this pathway; e) empirical evidence of the validity of this forgiveness pathway through randomized experimental and control group clinical trials; and f) what forgiveness education is and the validity of such programs with children and adolescents.

How easy or difficult is it for you to share your values with students when teaching?

It is easy to share the moral virtue of forgiveness with students because this now is a legitimate area of scientific investigation. I teach courses on the psychology of forgiveness to undergraduate students and to graduate students in a doctoral seminar focused on the philosophy and social science of forgiveness.

What have been some challenges you faced in focusing your research on forgiveness?

As soon as I started studying forgiveness as a possible research agenda, a fire-storm erupted within academia. My grants dried up. Scholars started to severely criticize me, even telling my students that they should no longer work with me because I have ruined my career with such a research agenda and I will ruin these students' future prospects for success in academia if they stay with me on this. Yet, the courageous students stayed despite the criticism and as soon as we started to publish empirically-based journal articles on the psychology of forgiveness, to the credit of open-minded academics, other researchers from across the world started to ask questions about forgiveness. There now are thousands of researchers studying the psychology of forgiveness and countless mental health professionals using *Forgiveness Therapy* in helping clients overcome the psychological effects of being treated unjustly. I had many opportunities to abandon the quest for knowledge on forgiveness. I am very glad that I did not listen to the critics, but instead continued to explore forgiveness for the good of hurting people.

What is your advice for students who may be Catholic and are contemplating doing graduate work or a PhD?

I would say this: Academia prides itself on being cutting-edge with freedom of thought. After four decades in academia, I challenge that view. In my experience, many academics are most comfortable being in the mainstream, asking the questions for the moment that are safe to ask because academia has implicitly approved those ideas. Yet, mainstream ideas come and go and too often do not necessarily improve the human condition. So, be aware of the pressure to conform and try to resist this, lest you end up boring yourself over time with your mainstream and safe questions. Ask, instead, the question: How might my ideas improve the human condition? This is a more exciting way to appropriate your doctoral degree.

Could you share how you ended up in your current position, what was your personal journey?

After my deep questioning about my academic pursuits about justice, and switching to the psychology of forgiveness, I started in 1985 what I called the Friday Forgiveness Seminar at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. It still runs to this day. The first Friday Forgiveness Seminar consisted of students and some faculty from a wide variety of cultures: Brazil, Korea, Taiwan, and the United States, for example. We sat around trying to figure out answers to three questions: What is forgiveness? How do people go about forgiving? What are the psychological consequences when people forgive? These three questions formed the basis of our

research. We have been addressing these questions for over three decades. Our research has centered on Forgiveness Therapy in drug rehabilitation centers, with people who are in Hospice, cardiac patients, women who were in emotionally-abusive relationships, incest survivors, and men in maximum security prison, among others. We have centered on forgiveness education in Northern Ireland, a challenging area within a United States city, Pakistan, and Iran.

Finally, could you share what you are passionate about?

I am most passionate about planting forgiveness within schools. It seems to me that if the point of education is to prepare children for the rigors of adulthood, what better way to do that than to give them the tools for confronting deep injustices against them, which invariably will come to visit everyone. If children become adept in the virtue of forgiveness, then as adults, they should be able to forgive those who treat them badly and so show resilience in the face of others' cruelty. We have professionally developed forgiveness education curriculum guides for educators of students from age 4 to age 18 available on the International Forgiveness Institute website.

Another passion is planting Forgiveness Therapy in correctional institutions. Our studies show that far too many who are incarcerated have been treated deeply unfairly by others when the now-imprisoned person was a child or adolescent. Helping those without homes, who have been crushed by others in the past, is another passion because we may be able to help such people become resilient and basically get their lives back. This hurting world needs an antidote to the resentment and discord that too often follow injustice. That antidote is forgiveness and the world has yet to awaken to this reality.



Click on the logo to access the website of the International Forgiveness Institute

INTERVIEW WITH JUAN F. FRANCK, PROFESSOR AT UNIVERSIDAD AUSTRAL



Interview conducted by Quentin Wodon

May 2021

EXCERPTS:

- “Our limited knowledge will never allow us to decide whether the universe behaves deterministically or not. And even if it did, determinism and indeterminism would still be philosophical theses, not scientific ones. My personal conclusion is that they appear as a threat to freedom only if one concedes that physics is the ultimate level of analysis of reality.”
- “The conviction that our life is more than just an episode in the long history of the universe and that man has a higher destiny, prompts you to the additional effort of seeking for signs and hints of that in nature and in our human experience, when that is possible.”

Would you describe where you work, and some of the particularities of your university?

I work at two different universities, Universidad Austral and Universidad del Norte Santo Tomás de Aquino (UNSTA), with a part-time dedication to each of them. It is quite common in Argentina that university professors teach and work at several institutions, mostly in the private sector. At Austral I am a research fellow at the Philosophy Institute, where we have interdisciplinary research projects, connecting philosophy with the sciences. We also run a postgraduate interdisciplinary program (M.A. and Ph.D.). Austral is a small university 50km north from Buenos Aires city. It supports the teaching of philosophy and theology in all its degrees but does not have a philosophy school of its own. The Philosophy Institute promotes interdisciplinary research among Philosophy professors who want to engage with the sciences, mainly the natural and the cognitive sciences. Presently, I also serve as Head of UNSTA's Center of Studies of Philosophy and Theology in Buenos Aires. The job is also part-time because all classes are concentrated in the afternoon only. UNSTA belongs to the Dominican Order and has a strong background in Christian, specifically Thomistic philosophy and theology.

Box 1: Interview Series

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Why a series of interviews? Interviews are a great way to share experiences in an accessible and personal way. This series will feature interviews with practitioners as well as researchers working in Catholic education, whether in a classroom, at a university, or with other organizations aiming to strengthen Catholic schools and universities.

What is the focus of this interview? In this interview, Juan F. Franck, a Professor at the Universidad Austral in Argentina, shares insights about the work that he received an Expanded Reason Award for (Determinism or Indeterminism? From the Sciences to Philosophy) and about life in academia, with a particular emphasis on

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It pays however great attention to modern and contemporary philosophy, offering a very interesting balance between traditional and modern insights. Most professors of philosophy at Austral come from either UNSTA or Catholic University of Argentina. The two positions I now hold are complementary in many senses, and what I do in each of them benefits in different ways from my work in the other.

What is your main field of research, and why did you choose that field?

I don't really have an exclusive focus on a particular field. However, I have always been concerned with an inaccurate reading of modern philosophy –from the 16th century on– among many Christian philosophers, who sometimes see modern thinking as an inevitable progress towards the denial of transcendence. They thus fail to recognize important seeds of truth which are sometimes also fruits of the encounter between faith and reason present in modernity. This reactionary attitude is now receding, but it has prevented a constructive engagement with modern culture for more than a century. I have therefore dedicated some attention to philosophers such as Vico and Rosmini, who are essentially modern and have renovated Christian philosophy without renouncing neither metaphysics nor the openness to the supernatural. With some nuances, even Descartes can be read that way. But lately I have been focusing on what one may call the intersection between the philosophy of the human person and the cognitive sciences. I find phenomenological thinking most appropriate as a methodological and conceptual framework in that dialogue, because its concentration on consciousness and its universal openness to experience provide a firm ground towards understanding the structure of human subjectivity. Far from opposing a more traditional approach, phenomenology strengthens and enlarges its reach, and probably also corrects it in some respects.

You are a recipient of the Expanded Reason Awards. What was your contribution for receiving the Award?

I was one of the two main responsible persons for a research project called “Determinism or Indeterminism? From the Sciences to Philosophy”, co-funded by Austral and the John Templeton Foundation. The project consisted in a broad discussion of how to understand the question of determinism in nature from a scientific, a philosophical and a theological perspective. We focused on physics, biology and the neurosciences, and assigned specific questions to pairs of scholars, one from the sciences and one from philosophy or theology. They had to engage with each other over a period of several months in order to prepare a joint presentation about that question at a workshop, and then co-author a chapter for a collective book. Apart from coordinating the pairs of scholars and working on one of those questions, we

sought that the book would reflect a unity of intent, even if the conclusions arrived at differed in some respects. The challenge was double. First, to bring scholars with a very different academic training to understand and value each other's contribution to the question; and second, to ensure that the co-authored piece reflected that interdisciplinary approach in a coherent way. It was in fact a permanent exercise of expanding our own reason and of aiding others to do so.

The main worry with determinism is that it makes freedom impossible or unthinkable. A totally deterministic universe would be one where every event, everything that happens in it, is already fixed. So, if we knew the state of the universe at one point in all its details and all the laws that govern it, we would be able to know every event in the future, and also in the past. If the opposite, namely indeterminism, were true, then there would be no way to predict certain events and they would just happen randomly, and probably also arbitrarily. Since we are part of that universe, the most logical reaction would be to think that in neither scenario there would be room for freedom. Whether our actions are determined by fixed laws or are the result of random events in nature, our actions would not be in our power.

Perhaps one of the main general conclusions from the project as a whole is that our limited knowledge will never allow us to decide whether the universe behaves deterministically or not. And even if it did, determinism and indeterminism would still be philosophical theses, not scientific ones, assuming that everything that exists must obey physical laws. My personal conclusion is that they appear as a threat to freedom only if one concedes that physics is the ultimate level of analysis of reality. In other words, if one takes the physical level, which is an abstraction among other possible ones, to define the whole of reality. It is one thing to say that physical laws cannot be broken –presumably like any other laws– and a different one to say that they dictate everything that takes place in the universe. The rules of chess tell you how to move the figures but cannot predict the game. It is neither science nor epistemology which are defining, but ontology.

How easy or difficult is it for you to share your values with students when teaching?

I teach at two different levels and in two very different contexts. My undergraduate students pursue mostly a philosophy degree and come from a Catholic background. Many of them have a religious call too. It is inspiring to see how passionate they are about learning and studying. They make you see and touch your responsibility in their education. I therefore don't have any difficulty to share or discuss openly my values with them, but since I teach philosophy, which tries to reach the bottom of things and achieve the greatest clarity possible, part of my challenge

is to make them see that some of their philosophical convictions may not be based on sheer reasoning but may be rooted in their faith. There is nothing wrong with that, but it is a good thing to learn to distinguish the two kinds of light, so to speak, and recognize one's assumptions. Some of what they take for granted may not be shared by others, simply because it is not so self-evident as it looks to them. That is a very strong motivation to seek greater clarity in philosophy and it also makes it easier to understand somebody else's positions, uncertainties or doubts.

At Austral, where I teach a graduate course on the philosophy of the person and the cognitive sciences, the audience is very different and the question of values almost never explicitly comes to the forefront. There is however an interesting challenge, which is to confront both philosophers and scientists with the depth of the human person, and therefore with the need to cultivate a humble attitude in our pursuit of knowledge. And that may also count as sharing values.

How do your values affect your research? And what are some challenges you face?

They probably don't affect research itself, but they may sometimes be reflected in the choice of topics and issues. If you are driven by values, there is probably something bigger giving sense to what you are doing. In this case, there is possibly a double challenge. On the one hand, one must learn to respect the rationality proper to each particular subject of research. One cannot bypass epistemology, so to speak, and come to the question of values without a good rationale. In this sense, there is a temptation to introduce values 'unlawfully' into the discussion. If there is something bigger at stake, that has to emerge clearly as a logical conclusion, or result from a reasonable assumption. On the other hand, the conviction that our life is more than just an episode in the long history of the universe and that man has a higher destiny, prompts you to the additional effort of seeking for signs and hints of that in nature and in our human experience, when that is possible. To see that by yourself and to help others see the same, always respecting the rationality of the discussion, is certainly a big challenge. But of course, not all topics of research are connected with specific values.

What is your advice for students who may be Catholic are contemplating doing graduate work or a PhD?

I would encourage them in the pursuit of truth, because the purpose is to obtain a greater knowledge of reality. I would advise them to follow both their deepest interest, but also find out what they are good at.

Research requires developing the right habits, both intellectual and moral, and also a lot of dedication.

Besides, learning to communicate our findings is an art and it demands the proper skills. Clarity in writing, cogency in reasoning, charity in interpreting other opinions make up a big part of our *métier*. So, I would encourage them to see graduate studies as a very enriching and inspiring challenge for their lives as well.

Finally, it would be good not to forget that there is also a pragmatic dimension to academic work. If they choose it as a career for life, it is not unreasonable to think about the following steps also during this stage: applying for a position, post-doctoral research, teaching, etc. My opinion however is that they should avoid the obsession with short-term impact, quotations, rankings, etc., and bear in mind that the academy is first and foremost a form of service.

Could you share how you ended up in your current position, what was your personal journey?

After studying Philosophy in Buenos Aires, I went to the International Academy of Philosophy in Liechtenstein, where I obtained a doctoral degree with a thesis on Antonio Rosmini's philosophy. Then I spent about three years in Fribourg (Switzerland) as a postdoctoral fellow, and after that I returned to Argentina. I taught there in different universities and also at the University of Montevideo, in Uruguay, with which I am still very closely connected. In 2012, I joined Universidad Austral's Philosophy Institute to participate in interdisciplinary research projects. That was probably an unexpected outcome of a research stay at the University of Navarre (Spain), hosted by the Mind-Brain Group, where I became aware of the importance of interdisciplinarity. Parallel to that I continued teaching Early Modern Philosophy with the Dominicans and also became more and more involved in the Philosophy Department. As I said before, UNSTA's Faculty is quite varied and there is room for different philosophical schools and methods. That fits my somewhat eclectic mindset very well.

Finally, could you share a personal anecdote about yourself, what you are passionate about?

What I am probably most passionate about is seeing students learn and grow intellectually. I like to see them think by themselves instead of repeating ready-made answers, even if they agree with some of those answers, totally or partially. I also like to see them develop academic skills and become independent in their thinking and in their academic work. Each person is entitled to their own path in the pursuit of truth, and it is a critical task of those who teach to help students in that path. It is a great joy when students you have mentored along their studies and helped with their research, stand on their own feet. In the process one learns a lot, and also corrects and enlarges one's own views.

INTERVIEW WITH GONZALO GÉNOVA, CARLOS III UNIVERSITY OF MADRID, AND MARÍA DEL ROSARIO GONZÁLEZ, COMPLUTENSE UNIVERSITY OF MADRID

Interview conducted by Quentin Wodon

May 2021



EXCERPTS:

- “Ethics is often presented as a brake, a barrier, a series of annoying limits and prohibitions. But we are convinced that ethics is not the brake, but the real engine of technological progress. So, our values, unsurprisingly, drive us to keep searching for the truth, a truth that none of us have ‘in our pocket.’”
- “We share the view that the teaching of professional ethics has to be completely founded on ethical rationality, with our feet grounded in concrete practice and in the mental and vocational form of each profession. Otherwise, they will be overlapping schemes and not committed professional lives.”

Responses for the interview are joint unless noted by MR for María del Rosario and G for Gonzalo.

Would you describe where you work, and some of the particularities of your university?

MR. I work in the Faculty of Education at the Complutense University of Madrid. It is the largest university in Spain, and one of the oldest in the country. You can study and research there in practically all fields of knowledge. It is considered one of the most important and prestigious universities in Spain and the Spanish-speaking world.

G. I work at the Polytechnic School of Carlos III University of Madrid, a very young university, just over thirty years old, but one that has earned the prestige of being one of the best universities in the country.

What is your main field of research, and why did you choose that field?

MR. My field of research is the philosophy of education. I am concerned about the foundations on which an integral educational process is based, especially regarding ethical and civic aspects.

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What is the focus of this interview? In this interview, Gonzalo Génova and María del Rosario González, both from universities in Madrid, share insights about the work that they received an Expanded Reason Award for and about life in academia, with a particular emphasis on a course on ethics for engineers.

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I am interested in the phenomenological and personalist perspective and also in integrating fundamental contributions of therapy regarding communication, personal relationships, healthy communities and societies from an understanding of the fundamental experiences that every human being lives.

G. For many years I have been mainly involved in software engineering research, but lately I have been drifting towards the philosophical foundations of technology, and in particular ethical issues in relation to artificial intelligence and in the teaching of ethics for engineers.

You are a recipient of the Expanded Reason Awards. What was your contribution for receiving the Award?

When we heard that the Prize was being announced, we had already been teaching the Ethics for Engineers course at Carlos III University of Madrid for several years, so we were able to present an experience that was already quite mature, which in fact we had published in a leading journal ("Teaching Ethics to Engineers: A Socratic Experience", *Science and Engineering Ethics* 22(2):567-580, April 2016).

The course is taught by Gonzalo, who is a professor at that university, but both of us have been involved in its design, with María del Rosario contributing with her deep knowledge of pedagogy. The approach of the course is novel in that it specifically addresses the frame of mind of engineers, who are accustomed to a particular type of reasoning. Gonzalo is himself an engineer, so it can be said that this is his "natural" way of thinking. But he also studied philosophy, so he can bring a more rigorous approach to ethics.

How easy or difficult is it for you to share your values with students when teaching?

G. As I said, you have to be able to tune in to the engineering mentality, to understand it in depth, not only from the outside, perhaps with prejudices. On the one hand, it is necessary to point out the limitations in dealing with ethical issues, especially the emphasis on measurable quantities and process efficiency. On the other hand, it is interesting to note the parallel between the creativity and "ingenuity" of the good engineer and an ethical approach that goes beyond compliance with a code of conduct: inventing new ways of doing good.

Moreover, engineering aims to transform the world, especially in its material aspects, but not exclusively. This establishes a very interesting bridge with ethics, which also wants to transform society, to correct what is wrong. It is by thinking of a way of understanding and inhabiting the world, a relationship with nature, other people and all

humanity, that we understand ourselves and how we project ourselves.

Therefore, to speak of ethics and engineering is not to speak of two different things, but, in a way, of the same thing: the transformation of the world. Engineering and technology focus on the effectiveness and efficiency of the means, and ethics looks more at the intrinsic goodness of the ends and the means necessary to achieve them: what changes are desirable, where should we move as a society, what means are we going to put in place to achieve these changes? In the end, it is a question that the engineer, as a person, as a professional, and as part of humanity, cannot help but ask himself or herself. Engineering poses the question, but it can't answer it by itself. When you present it that way, students understand it perfectly.

How do your values affect your research? And what are some challenges you face?

Ethics is often presented as a brake, a barrier, a series of annoying limits and prohibitions. But we are convinced that ethics is not the brake, but the real engine of technological progress. So, our values, unsurprisingly, drive us to keep searching for the truth, a truth that none of us have "in our pocket", because it is ungraspable by any discourse made up of a finite number of words.

But thoughts have become so entangled that it is necessary to seek and find new ways of explaining ethical issues. Ludwig Wittgenstein said that philosophy unties the knots of our thought, the knots that we have stupidly made in it; but to untie these knots it must make movements as complicated as those knots. The complexity of philosophy lies not in its subject matter, but in the entanglement of our understanding.

A particular challenge for us is to overcome the widely held view, even among our own faculty colleagues, that in ethics everything is ultimately a matter of opinion and preference. In order to teach ethics in the university it is necessary to overcome skepticism about its rationality. But it is a rationality that is different from the purely logical-deductive rationality of mathematics, from the empirical rationality of the experimental sciences, and from the rationality of mere consensus of conflicting opinions. It is also a rationality that does not live separately from the affective life, but that integrates it to mutually enrich each other. There is a lot of talk about the need for ethics in social life, but we have to relearn to think of ethics as a university discipline.

What is your advice for students who may be Catholic are contemplating doing graduate work or a PhD?

"Don't be afraid." Many readers will recognize the biblical resonance of these words, in both the Old and New Testaments. God is the source of truth, so that any path of inquiry into truth necessarily brings us closer to God.

But, as we have said before, no academic discipline has a monopoly on truth, neither does theology. In the past there have been strong conflicts because it was not known how to reconcile the different ways of searching for truth. No one was willing to acknowledge the limitations of their own method, and they were locked in a seemingly hopeless conflict. These conflicts continue to exist today, albeit in an attenuated form. They will not be resolved by cornering theology because it does not fit into the schemes of science; but neither will they be resolved if theology does not recognize what it must learn from the sciences.

So, Catholic youth who want to go to university should not be afraid of any rational knowledge. But they must be forewarned not to fall into the nets of a way of thinking limited to what can be known with the scientific-experimental method (natural sciences such as physics, chemistry or biology) and the axiomatic-deductive method (formal sciences such as mathematics and logic). And for this it is also necessary to study one's own faith, in order to be prepared in the face of contrary arguments that are presented as apparently irrefutable.

This idea has been a constant stimulus for our reflection for many years now, and most especially since we read it in the speech delivered by Benedict XVI at the University of Regensburg on September 12, 2006, when he refers to the dangers of a dehumanized scientific-technical reason, and how to avoid them: "We will succeed in doing so only if reason and faith come together in a new way, if we overcome the self-imposed limitation of reason to the empirically falsifiable, and if we once more disclose its vast horizons." In a word: Expanded Reason.

This is also important so that they do not need to live a certain dissociation between their professional and academic life, on the one hand, and their personal life and their ethical-civic commitment, on the other. They should not understand their beliefs, their reason or their profession as encapsulated; life is one and the commitment is lived in an integrated way.

Could you share how you ended up in your current position, what was your personal journey?

G. I went to university to study electronic engineering because I really liked it. I was good at mathematics and physics. At the university I was fascinated by computer science. After finishing my degree I was presented with the opportunity to get a new degree in philosophy, which I was also fond of. But I considered my "natural" field to be philosophy of science, not ethics. In any case, when I finished my philosophy studies I returned to my work as an engineer and landed at the university that currently hosts me.

It is only many years later, already teaching my course on Software Engineering, that I found that the classic manuals devoted a chapter to ethical issues of professional practice, and I decided to devote a couple of classes to the subject. Eventually these classes became a full course offered to all students on campus.

MR. I started to study architecture because I was fascinated by beauty, and architecture was for me the total art, where living, life and functionality are incorporated with the way of transforming the world and beauty. Once inside I imagined that I would end up building houses in series forced by company rules, and also the studies did not leave me time for volunteer activities and so on. So I decided to take a more humanistic turn and go into education. I have always been passionate about philosophy and therapy, and I never stopped training in these areas, specializing in philosophy of education, ethical and civic education, and systems and family therapy. For me they are ways to deepen the human condition and they are all completely interrelated.

I teach the Ethics of Education course to social educators, and together with Gonzalo we share the view that the teaching of professional ethics has to be completely founded on ethical rationality, with our feet grounded in concrete practice and in the mental and vocational form of each profession; otherwise, they will be overlapping schemes and will not bear the fruit of committed professional lives. That is why we have so much enjoyed working together developing ideas for teaching ethics to specific professions. We cannot teach ethics in the same way to engineers and social educators: although the principles are the same, the mental and vocational shape and understanding of the world is different.

Finally, could you share a personal anecdote about yourself, what you are passionate about?

G. While I was studying engineering I spent a year in Vienna as an external student at the university. I had a lot of time on my hands and devoted myself to self-taught activities. Knowing practically nothing about artificial intelligence, I designed a program that learned to play tic-tac-toe. My surprise was great when, after a few games, the program beat me by an oversight of mine! I still tell this anecdote when I explain the various ways in which an artificial intelligence system can be said to "learn".

MR. What I enjoy the most is that I can live from what I am most passionate about: learning, studying, reading, sharing, debating, continuing to search, doubting, and rethinking. One of the greatest gifts was to understand that the great encounters happen not only in certainties, but also in doubt. And well, it was also exciting to receive the award together. That our discussions, work times, debates, phone calls before a class to find the best approach for the students that Gonzalo was going to have that day... that all this turned into a great award that we could enjoy with our children and... how they played in the Vatican gardens on the night of the award. By the way, there are ponds with turtles in those gardens!

INTERVIEW WITH M. THERESE LYSAUGHT, PROFESSOR AT LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO



Interview conducted by Quentin Wodon

February 2022

EXCERPTS:

- “I am passionate about [...] the fact that reality is greater than ideas—and how we can develop the practices and virtues that help us to allow reality, via encounter, to constantly convert our intellectual paradigms, our lives, and the church, in service of the truth and healing and grace.”
- “Full-time, secure faculty positions in colleges and universities, especially in theology, are evaporating... And unfortunately, the church has still not fully embraced the role of lay pastoral associates in parishes.”

Would you describe your work, and some of the particularities of your organization?

I work at the Neiswanger Institute for Bioethics and Healthcare Leadership at the Stritch School of Medicine, Loyola University Chicago. Loyola is Jesuit university. Only four Catholic universities in the US still have medical schools, and Loyola is one of them.

What is your main field of research, and why did you choose that field?

My main field of research is theological ethics with a focus on Catholic moral theology and Catholic bioethics. I would say that this was less of a choice and more of a calling. During my undergraduate studies, I was majoring in chemistry when I encountered the field of theological ethics—I was powerfully drawn to it and it hasn't let me go yet! It has always seemed to me that if we are to devote our intellectual energies to the understanding of reality and the pursuit of truth, then the most important focus of those energies should be the foundation of reality—God, who is Truth. And if God is incarnate and acts in history, then we also have to engage the questions of how the Body of Christ (the Church) lives the Triune God's presence in the world—i.e., ethics, or, more accurately for Christians, discipleship. Or, in the Pope Francis' phrase, missionary discipleship!

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What is the focus of this interview? In this interview, M. Therese Lysaught, Professor at Loyola University Chicago, shares insights about the work that she received an Expanded Reason Award for. The interview is part of a series on the Expanded Reason Awards.

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You are a recipient of the Expanded Reason Awards. What was your contribution for receiving the Award?

I am a co-author of *Biopolitics after Neuroscience*, with Jeff Bishop and Andrew Michel. We have very much been equal partners in this project from the beginning—conceiving the project; writing the initial grant proposal to the Science of Virtue initiative; participating in grant-related activities; researching and writing and arguing about (collegially) and re-writing and revisioning and editing (and editing and editing) the book manuscript. It has been a wonderfully collaborative and collegial project. My research for the book focused on the economic aspects of the story we tell, as well as the parts on virtue theory.

How easy or difficult is it for you to share your values with students when teaching?

That's a great question. I have never found it difficult. I have always taught at Catholic universities, which creates a context in which it is appropriate to discuss and share values. I believe I communicate my values with my students through the material we engage in class as well as—very importantly—how I interact with them as individuals and a group. Witness is the most powerful form of sharing. Of course, I am far from perfect in this, but this is something that I work toward.

How do your values affect your research? And what are some challenges you face?

I think my values—or at least the questions and topics that I think are important—are largely captured in my lengthy response to another question below. But in addition to my passion for the study of theology, theological ethics, and medicine, I would say that additional values of my work are critical analysis of normative discourses, bridging siloed fields, asking different questions, reimagining our fields—and doing all of this collaboratively.

This can be challenging! The academy prefers “single-authored” work—while much of my work is collaborative, interdisciplinary, and co-authored. The academy (and the church, often) prefers that people focus ever more deeply in a very narrow area and that they opine on a narrow range of established questions, rather than trying to bring intellectual discourses into conversation and challenge received paradigms. I seek to reimagine theological ethics from a liturgical and ecclesial starting point—a position that perplexes and often provokes resistance from much of the theological academy. I seek to bridge the academy, parishes, and health care, a bridge requiring much more work. Few want to make visible the powerful role of economics in our lives and our intellectual frameworks—to do so is to name the invisible idol and often provokes a

powerful backlash. But no one said being a Catholic moral theologian would be easy.

What is your advice for students who may be Catholic are contemplating doing graduate work or a PhD?

This is a tough question, primarily because the job market for those with graduate work in theology—either academic or pastoral—is not encouraging. Full-time, secure faculty positions in colleges and universities, especially in theology, are evaporating, as our institutions of higher education—even Catholic institutions—are being taken over by neoliberal management practices. And unfortunately, the church has still not fully embraced the role of lay pastoral associates in parishes. So, what does one do with graduate training in theology in 2022? This is a question that the church needs to address more intentionally.

At the same time, as I said, what could be more important than deepening our understanding of God in service of participating in the ongoing work of grace in the world? Graduate study in theology is a good in itself—and who knows what doors the Spirit might open for a person who takes this path?

Could you share how you ended up in your current position, what was your personal journey?

My personal journey has been very non-linear! In many ways, it has been a lifetime journey of conversion. As I said, I was happily studying chemistry when I was, in a way, knocked off my metaphorical horse and called to the study of theology. A key course in this conversion was a course on the philosophy of science, which helped me begin to see the social aspects of science and the need to bring both an appreciative and a critical lens to how we understand science—and all disciplines.

I completed my BA in Chemistry (with a focus in organic chemistry) as a back-up, but then decided to pursue the study of theology. I earned my MA in Theology at the University of Notre Dame and my PhD in theological ethics at Duke University. At Duke, I had the great gift of studying with Stanley Hauerwas. My doctoral studies included a concentration in the history of medicine, which I continue to believe is critically important for our work in theology and medicine. In an attempt to integrate my background in science with my training in theology, I chose to focus my dissertation in the area of medical ethics, exploring what it might mean to reimagine medical ethics through the lens of the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick. That framework—of seeing the liturgy and the sacraments as an essential source of theological and moral theology, particularly as they engage the body—has shaped my work since then.

After my graduate studies, I spent two years at a research center that focused on the intersection of faith and medical ethics, and then did a one-year post-doc at one of the Human Genome Project sequencing labs at the University of Iowa, where I had a marvelous opportunity to again do science but now as a theologian. This post-doc was sponsored by the Ethical, Legal, and Social Implications (ELSI) program of the US National Institutes of Health (NIH). In this post-doc, I was a lot like an ethnographer, getting a view of big science from the inside. It also prepared me for a three-year appointment to the Recombinant DNA Advisory Committee at the NIH, the committee that at that time reviewed all the human gene transfer (gene therapy) protocols submitted to the NIH.

From there, in 1995, I moved into the first of three teaching positions at Catholic universities, which have also entailed much academic administration. Along the way, I also became involved with the Catholic Health Association (CHA) in the US. Here I discovered an enormous and important ministry of the church—Catholic healthcare—which is largely siloed from the Catholic academy in the US. I was privileged to spend a whole year with CHA as their first Visiting Scholar. It has been highly rewarding trying to bridge these ministries, but also often maddening since these ministries largely seem to want to remain siloed (in my experience).

At another point along the way, I was invited to accompany a student immersion trip to El Salvador in 2009. That was life-changing and led to a six-year project working with Salvadorans and engineers on an appropriate technology global health project. This built on a trip to Haiti in 2004. These experiences brought home to me in a new way the critical importance of liberation theology and Catholic social thought for Catholic bioethics—something largely off the radar in the US. These encounters with global reality converted my teaching and research trajectory. They also helped me begin to see the determinative role of economics (which we could call the idolatry of Mammon) in both the structures of violence that oppress so much of the world as well as within healthcare.

Even after all these experiences in Haiti and Latin America, I must admit that the murder of George Floyd in the summer of 2020 and the surrounding protests helped me see the insidious evil of racism in a new way and how it continues to be so powerfully interwoven throughout the structures of US culture and the globe—but equally throughout our theological disciplines, the practice of

Catholic healthcare, and the life of the church. For the past few years, then, I have been directing many of my efforts to learning more about this so that it can reshape my teaching, my research, and my life.

Milestones of this journey are reflected in my publications, particularly my books. My first book, *Gathered for the Journey: Moral Theology in Catholic Perspective* (Eerdmans, 2007), sought to reimagine how one teaches a Vatican II moral theology to undergraduates and MA students. My work at the interface of theology and medical ethics led to me being invited to become the co-editor of the 3rd edition of *On Moral Medicine: Theological Perspectives in Medical Ethics* (Eerdmans, 2012). My time at CHA led to *Caritas in Communion: The Theological Foundations of Catholic Health Care* (CHA, 2014). My work in Latin America clearly informs *Catholic Bioethics and Social Justice: The Praxis of US Healthcare in a Globalized World* (Liturgical Press, 2019). And my career-long commitment to critical, historical, philosophical study of science—particularly its social and economic aspects—is reflected in *Biopolitics After Neuroscience*.

Finally, could you share a personal anecdote about yourself, what you are passionate about?

I tell this story at the beginning of a chapter I wrote entitled “Catholicism in the Neonatal Context: Belief, Practice, Challenge, Hope,” in *Religion and Ethics in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit*, edited by Ron Green and George Little, 37-64. Oxford University Press (2019). In 2000, I found myself unexpectedly one day sitting between two isolettes in a neonatal intensive care unit, each containing one of my twin children who had been born two months early. While prior to that I knew theoretically about the epistemological importance of experience, being in that situation as simultaneously a mother and a ‘medical ethicist’ made clear for me the crucial nature of immersion in reality, the embodied aspect of knowledge, and the importance of accompanying and listening to those who actually experience the suffering of the world.

So I am of course passionate about my children! But I am also passionate about, to again use a phrase from Pope Francis, the fact that reality is greater than ideas—and how we can develop the practices and virtues that help us to allow reality, via encounter, to constantly convert our intellectual paradigms, our lives, and the church, in service of the truth and healing and grace.

INTERVIEW WITH JAY MARTIN, PROFESSOR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME

Interview conducted by Quentin Wodon

April 2021



EXCERPTS:

- “Perhaps a majority of researchers in mine and related fields tend not to share my particular values and commitments, especially with respect to Catholicism, but I have generally enjoyed the opportunities to engage with and learn from them.”
- “My advice to Catholic students who are considering pursuing advanced degrees in Theology is simply to allow themselves the chance for genuine discernment. Everyone knows that the job market is tough, graduate school is arduous, and that the academy can be an unwelcoming place, but I would encourage them to refuse the pull of cost-benefit analysis.”

Would you describe where you work, and some of the particularities of your university?

I am a professor of theology at the University of Notre Dame. As a leading research university that is also Catholic, Notre Dame brings together academic excellence, innovative research, and the rich resources of the Catholic faith with an incredible student culture that promotes the education and formation of the whole person in order to prepare them for serving Christ, the church, and the world. Working at an institution and in a department that by its charter is committed to those same ideals is nothing short of a grace.

What is your main field of research, and why did you choose that field?

I am a systematic theologian whose research centers on the intersection of Catholic theology and various forms of theory, particularly psychoanalysis, German and French philosophical thought, radical emancipatory political theory, and critical race and postcolonial theory. In addition, I also write and research in the areas of science and religion and comparative theology. I pursued these particular fields of study first out of personal interest and perhaps a natural inclination toward them.

Box 1: Interview Series

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Why a series of interviews? Interviews are a great way to share experiences in an accessible and personal way. This series will feature interviews with practitioners as well as researchers working in Catholic education, whether in a classroom, at a university, or with other organizations aiming to strengthen Catholic schools and universities.

What is the focus of this interview? In this interview, Jay Martin, Assistant Teaching Professor of Theology at the University of Notre Dame, shares insights about the work that he received an Expanded Reason Award for and about life in academia including the work he did for the Science & Religion Initiative at the McGrath Institute for Church Life.

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As my research has developed, I have become increasingly convinced of both their importance and ability to provide conceptual resources to Catholic thinking, but also of their need to be studied in light of and with a commitment to Catholic teaching and tradition. Much of what I study is self-consciously inimical to religious belief in general and the Catholic faith in particular, but I can't help but see my academic work as my own modest way of the call to evangelize through the careful assessment of these various forms of thought to identify what is true in them and to help shore up resistance to what is not.

You are a recipient of the Expanded Reason Awards. What was your contribution for receiving the Award?

Before joining the Theology faculty at Notre Dame, I served as the Academic Director of the Science & Religion Initiative (SRI) at the McGrath Institute for Church Life. Over the course of six years, Patricia Bellm, the Programming Director of the Initiative, and I built and developed the SRI. We designed and executed its annual science and religion conferences and Institute Days for Catholic secondary educators, and established critical partnerships with other leaders in science and religion, including the Society of Catholic Scientists and the Lumen Christi Institute at the University of Chicago, among others.

As the Academic Director of the SRI, I was responsible for themes and speakers for our conferences, the selection of reading materials for our participants, and planning and coordinating future projects and collaborations. In the fall of 2018, Chris Baglow joined the SRI as its Executive Director, at which point I continued that kind of work in an advisory capacity to him.



Photo: Cavadini, Baglow, Bellm, and Martin at the Vatican to receive the 2018 Expanded Reason Award in Teaching from the Ratzinger Foundation.

How easy or difficult is it for you to share your values with students when teaching?

I am very lucky. At Notre Dame, it has been incredibly easy to share my values with students through my teaching. I have the freedom, even encouragement, to begin my classes with prayer and the luxury of approaching biblical and theological material with my students from the perspective of an affirming faith. Notre Dame students on the whole expect this approach, at least in their theology courses, though I am sure they find it across the university curriculum.

How do your values affect your research? And what are some challenges you face?

Perhaps a majority of researchers in mine and related fields tend not to share my particular values and commitments, especially with respect to Catholicism, but I have generally enjoyed the opportunities to engage with and learn from them. I do, on the sly, maintain some small hope that my presence in the field might amount to something like a faithful witness and an encouragement to students and fellow scholars who have similar intellectual interests and a desire to be faithful Catholics.

What is your advice for students who may be Catholic who are contemplating doing graduate work or a PhD?

My advice to Catholic students who are considering pursuing advanced degrees in Theology is simply to allow themselves the chance for genuine discernment. Everyone knows that the job market is tough, graduate school is arduous, and that the academy can be an unwelcoming place, but I would encourage them to refuse the pull of cost-benefit analysis. To study and teach theology can and should be a service to the Church, an opportunity to form students in the faith, and to seek on behalf a faith that seeks understanding. Those things are ends in themselves, whether done in a formal or informal way.

Could you share how you ended up in your current position, what was your personal journey?

My academic journey was relatively straightforward. In college, I became immediately interested in philosophy and theology, and as my interests developed I came to understand that the most important questions for me were theological, though my methodology was largely philosophical; this has served me well as my research profile came into focus during graduate school.

Between college and graduate school, I spent 4 years teaching theology at a Catholic school in South Bend, while my wife Jenny, now an associate professor at Notre Dame jointly in the Department of Theology and the Program of Liberal Studies, began graduate school. That experience, more than any other, helped me discern an academic future in theology.

Finally, could you share a personal anecdote about yourself, what you are passionate about?

Despite being an ontologically understated person, I am probably passionate about too many things to be very good at any of them. I am passionate about being a husband and father. I am passionate about the craft of teaching and the task of theology. I am passionate about learning Copperplate and blackletter calligraphy. I am passionate about cooking, heavily peated single malt Scotch whiskies, collecting vinyl records, travel, and lording over the 20,000-book library my wife and I have built over our nearly two decades of marriage.



Photo: An example of Copperplate calligraphy from 1740 (from Wikipedia).



Photo: Jay's upstairs library right after the shelving and ladder were built. (Most books are in the basement, but that view is reserved to hoarders).

INTERVIEW WITH DARCIA NARVAEZ, PROFESSOR EMERITA AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME

*Interview conducted by Quentin Wodon
May 2021*



EXCERPTS:

- “Humans are so immature at birth that to develop in a healthy manner, reaching their full potential, they need to experience humanity’s evolved nest. This helps structure well-functioning brain and body, preparing the individual for cooperative behavior and compassionate morality.”
- “The western education system emphasizes a detached orientation to relationships and the natural world, using cognitive models that are limited and underperform but are taken as images of reality. You have to have some outside experience to realize this.”

Would you describe where you work, and some of the particularities of your university?

I just retired from the University of Notre Dame in Indiana, USA, so I am now professor of psychology emerita. Notre Dame is a noted Catholic undergraduate university that is also famous for its American football team – it is on national television every week during the fall football season with fans all over the country. Notre Dame has been increasingly drawing respect for its graduate programs and faculty scholarship too. For example, in a recent analysis of the eight million scientists worldwide who have published five or more papers, further examining the top 100,000 across all disciplines, the top 2% of scientists in each of 174 different subfields included 137 Notre Dame faculty members. I was gratified to be one of the 137.

Could you share how you ended up in your current position, what was your personal journey?

My academic career is my seventh career. In college I started out as a world languages major but through several flukes took up playing pipe organ and becoming a music major—I was crazy about J.S. Bach and would practice for hours each day. I also majored in Spanish.

Box 1: Interview Series

What is the mission of the Global Catholic Education website? The site informs and connects Catholic educators globally. It provides them with data, analysis, opportunities to learn, and other resources to help them fulfill their mission with a focus on the preferential option for the poor.

Why a series of interviews? Interviews are a great way to share experiences in an accessible and personal way. This series will feature interviews with practitioners as well as researchers working in Catholic education, whether in a classroom, at a university, or with other organizations aiming to strengthen Catholic schools and universities.

What is the focus of this interview? In this interview, Darcia Narvaez, Professor emerita at the University of Notre Dame, shares insights about the work that she received an Expanded Reason Award for and about life in academia, with a particular emphasis on her research on neurobiology and the development of human morality.

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After college, I worked as a church musician off and on for years while at the same time teaching classroom music (one year in the Philippines). But then I felt called to study the bigger questions through theology and earned a masters of divinity (which got me interested in graduate school). I started my own business and also worked in the Hispanic services community until I was invited to become a middle school Spanish teacher. In the middle of four years as a Spanish teacher, I was excited to discover the field of moral development. I started the first two years of my doctoral program when I was still teaching full time.

What is your main field of research, and why did you choose that field?

I had been interested in issues of ethics/morality since I was a young child. Half my childhood was spent in Spanish-speaking countries, most of which had high rates of poverty. I remember seeing children my age in rags on street corners selling Chiclet gum to earn money for the family. And then at the end of each year away, I would return to the USA and see the excessive materialism and waste. I could not understand how the world could be designed to be so unjust.

When I was a middle school teacher, I became involved in a Lutheran World Ministries study group on the common good. There, I discovered the work of the late Professor James Rest who explained that moral behavior entailed more than moral reasoning. It also requires moral sensitivity, motivation and action capacities. I was excited to work with his theory to figure out what was wrong with the world. I went on to earn a PhD in educational psychology from the University of Minnesota with a minor in cognitive science.

In my early career at the University of Minnesota, I performed laboratory studies. To earn tenure, however, I was told I had to work in curriculum and instruction. Fortunately, I helped obtain a million-dollar character education grant from the federal government. It allowed me to work with primary and secondary school educators to integrate into regular academic instruction skills of ethical sensitivity, reasoning, motivation and action (the materials we created are free online at <https://cee.nd.edu/curriculum/>). Around that time, I was invited to give a talk at Notre Dame and then offered a faculty position. How could I refuse! Shortly after moving to Notre Dame, public schools became focused on testing and had no more time for moral character education.

In my continuous puzzling about morality, I started reading more widely and discovered the importance of neurobiology and early life for the structuring of the individual's brain and personality. Early life experience is engraved on the brain! I concluded that it must also influence moral functioning. I discovered evolutionary systems theory that did not emphasize genes but a host

of inheritances we receive from our ancestors through the tree of life, including what I now study and call the Evolved Nest (EvolvedNest.Org). Societies who raise their children with the Evolved Nest demonstrate a different human nature than people in my country. I was shocked by all these discoveries and have been trying to inform the world ever since.

You are a recipient of the Expanded Reason Awards. What was your contribution for receiving the Award?

The book I wrote that won the award was an attempt to put all my discoveries together (though it was getting long and the publisher wanted it before I could add everything!). The book, *Neurobiology and the Development of Human Morality: Evolution, Culture and Wisdom*, is an interdisciplinary integration of multiple fields to explain moral development and functioning. It incorporates neuro-, clinical, development, evolutionary, ethological and anthropological science addressing the questions of human nature, human development and human optimization.

Humans are so immature at birth that to develop in a healthy manner, reaching their full potential, they need to experience humanity's evolved nest. This helps structure well-functioning brain and body systems like the stress response, immune system and many other systems, preparing the individual for cooperative behavior and compassionate morality, including with the rest of the natural world. With a degraded evolved nest, the individual will have one or more areas of dysregulation, undermining sociality and morality. The evolved nest is an intergenerational, communal responsibility that industrialized societies have largely forgotten, especially the USA.

How easy or difficult is it for you to share your values with students when teaching?

I am rather countercultural. I know too much and care too deeply about the wellbeing of babies, about how human nature is constructed in early life, and the ongoing destruction of Creation. So, I tried to teach courses that would allow me to address those topics. Being concerned for the wellbeing of babies is not a popular position, nor is deep connection with the natural world. When I told students that living a good life is about relationships, virtue self-development and respect for nature, they had a hard time taking it in. Students spend years being told that a good student/person focuses on learning information and getting good grades to obtain a profitable career (even Catholics!).

There is a great deal of misunderstanding of child development and how to raise virtuous children. Many people think that adults have to coerce children into being good, to punish them and deny them pleasure. The

research on the Evolved Nest indicates that this is mistaken. God created children with an inner guidance system that signals what is needed. When caregivers follow this signaling from the very beginning, avoid causing trauma or shock, and meet children's basic needs with tenderness, children grow into cooperative, empathic, conscientious people.

Because of cultural myths about raising young children, many of my students were not raised with tenderness or with Evolved Nestedness, so many arrived with depression, anxiety and other problems. So, in my classes I always helped them learn self-healing techniques like belly breathing. I helped them learn to enjoy playing in the moment (with folk song games) which grows parts of the brain that were neglected in childhood. Then we would play those same games with young children. It's really important for students to develop a deep connection to the natural world so that they take this concern into account in their adult work and family lives. My classes offered various nature immersion experiences, like field trips to forests and building gardens on campus with native plants. These activities, along with self-development exercises and playful encounters with young children, helped break through the intellect-focused mindsets the students had at the beginning of the course.

How do your values affect your research? And what are some challenges you face?

Values are central to my research. The wellbeing of children, adults and the natural world is a central concern in all my work. My students and I have been studying provision of our species' evolved developmental system (evolved nest) and its effects on wellbeing, sociality and moral orientation for the last ten years.

Many people in my country are so emotionally- and relationally- disconnected in their lives that they have a hard time caring about more than getting money and consuming. They are extremely stressed and operate in a crisis mode most of the time. Many believe the tale that humans have made great progress and that there is no other option than this dehumanizing, anti-life, planet-destroying culture. At EvolvedNest.org, we show other options. We help people understand that life does not have to be the way industrialized societies have set it up.

In fact, I am spending my Expanded Reason prize money on films to inform the public about the findings in the book that won the prize. You can watch the first short film we made at <https://breakingthecyclefilm.org/> which contrasts the two basic ways societies can function. The optimal approach which most human societies through time have followed is what I call a cycle of cooperative companionship: children's basic needs are met; they grow into well-functioning, cooperative community members (from neurobiology and on up); as healthy adults, they

maintain the cooperative system. What is apparent in the USA is the opposite pattern: children's basic needs are not met; illbeing and dysregulation ensue; adults who are detached and distracted keep this competitive detachment cycle going.

What is your advice for students who may be Catholic are contemplating doing graduate work or a PhD?

A PhD can offer credentials for getting your voice heard. But it's critically important to develop your heart-sense, your heart-mind, rather than focus only on your intellectual development. This is a combination of personal and spiritual knowledge. It is good to work hard and master something but it does not have to involve a PhD. If you go directly into graduate school from college, it may have the unfortunate side effect of limiting your imagination. It may put you into a blindered silo that you then will defend for many years and perhaps all your life.

Moreover, the western education system emphasizes a detached orientation to relationships and the natural world, using cognitive models that are limited and underperform but are taken as images of reality. You have to have some outside experience to realize this. So, I recommend that before entering a graduate program you take a few years to explore life first, to develop relationships with people very different from you, and build multiple perspectives. In any case, within a graduate program be careful to always stretch yourself, to consider alternatives to the assumptions of the discipline.

Finally, could you share a personal anecdote about yourself, what you are passionate about?

Thomas Aquinas said there were two routes to God, the Bible and Nature. The western world abandoned the latter when the scientific method, colonialism and capitalism took over its dominant culture. The writing of my aforementioned book led me to the realization that our sustainable ancestors, and most of humanity on the planet through time, honored Creation as a sacred partner who keeps us alive. Pope Francis has spoken eloquently about our need to respect Creation. These days I do my best to honor Creation by being conscientious about the usage of water, planting native varieties of plants to feed the native wildlife, even singing to the trees and other plants on our land. Our ancestors used to do this to encourage them, as all living things need encouragement.

INTERVIEW WITH WILLIAM SIMPSON, JUNIOR RESEARCH FELLOW AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Interview conducted by Quentin Wodon

April 2021



EXCERPTS:

- “The lack of a humane philosophy – a logos, or general account of how everything ‘hangs together’ – has fragmented the academy and divided our society. We must reclaim what Gilson called ‘the unity of philosophical experience’.”
- “These are exciting times to be a Catholic intellectual engaged in analytic philosophy. We are beginning to witness a tectonic shift in Western philosophy of a kind that has not been seen for several centuries. There is a turn back toward Aristotle which is gathering momentum, and new opportunities for drawing upon the Catholic philosophical tradition to address contemporary philosophical problems.”

Would you describe where you work, and some of the particularities of your university?

I am currently a Junior Research Fellow of Wolfson College, which is a constituent College of the University of Cambridge, where I am engaged in research in metaphysics and the philosophy of science. Cambridge is the second-oldest university in the UK, and maintains a traditional collegiate system that differs from modern universities: most people are part of self-governing colleges distributed throughout the town, which are responsible for their own membership and activities, and which each maintain a fellowship of scholars who engage in research, teaching and mentoring. All of the colleges have distinctive characters and histories. Before I joined the fellowship of Wolfson, I was a postdoctoral affiliate of Trinity College, where Isaac Newton formulated his theory of universal gravity; before that, a doctoral student in philosophy at Peterhouse, the oldest and quirkiest of the colleges. I have been a member of the University of Cambridge since 2015, when I embarked on a Masters degree in the History and Philosophy of Science at Fitzwilliam College. Cambridge is certainly an inspiring place to work: you are never far from the fine architecture of ancient buildings recalling the scholarly achievements of years past.

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Why a series of interviews? Interviews are a great way to share experiences in an accessible and personal way. This series will feature interviews with practitioners as well as researchers working in Catholic education, whether in a classroom, at a university, or with other organizations aiming to strengthen Catholic schools and universities.

What is the focus of this interview? In this interview, William Simpson, Junior Research Fellow of Wolfson College, a constituent College of the University of Cambridge, shares insights about the work that he received an Expanded Reason Award for, and about life in academia as a Catholic philosopher with new ideas.

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What is your main field of research, and why did you choose that field?

I am principally a philosopher, although I have academic interests in theology and physics too. Before I became a philosopher at Cambridge, I pursued physics at the Weizmann Institute of Science in Israel and at the University of St Andrews in Scotland. I hold doctoral degrees in both philosophy and physics, and am currently working as part of an international and interdisciplinary project called “God and the book of nature”, which is generously funded by the John Templeton Foundation. I am attracted to the discipline of philosophy because it is the most rigorous of all the humanities, and because I find its use necessary to make sense of the sciences. Philosophers ‘keep the books’ on everybody, including theologians and physicists, using reason and logic to sort out their beliefs into a coherent whole.

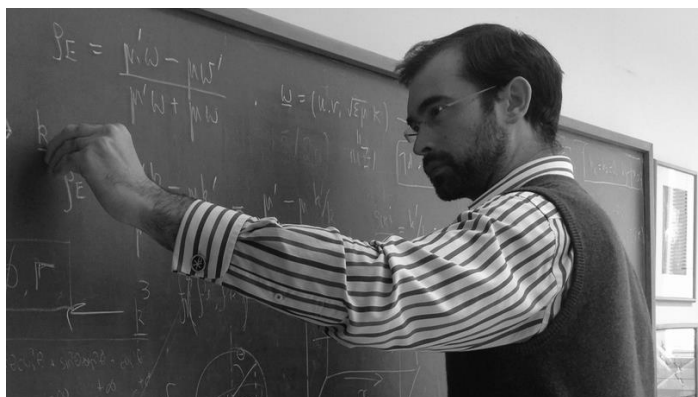


Photo: William Simpson at
The Weizmann Institute of Science, Israel.

Would you share with us how you ended up in your current academic position? What was your personal journey?

It began with a desire for a general account of things which could make sense of the world and unite the various interests that I was accumulating. Although I was not raised a Catholic, the Gospels were part of my upbringing within the home, and they instilled me with a sense of Christian identity. Yet I had no way of relating my Christian identity to the world outside. My formal schooling had been secular, scientific, and conducted in an environment that was hostile to Christianity, and I found myself pressed to give reasons for why I was refusing to ‘go with the flow’.

Before attending university, I began studying Christian theology, which seeks to provide a systematic account of what Christians believe. Christian theology, however, makes claims which are incompatible with the beliefs about reality that most people imbibe from our education system and the surrounding culture today, be it the frosty reductionism of modern materialism which typically

accompanies the hard sciences and analytic philosophy, or the soul-withering cynicism of ‘post-modernism’ which now dominates the humanities. I decided that I needed to know more philosophy and physics in order to make sense of my life within the rather arid world in which I found myself.

I commenced my university studies by starting a degree in ‘Logic and Philosophy of Science with Physics’; a combination I found stimulating and enjoyable, although the physics and philosophy were not well-integrated. I discovered that the imaginative world of our leading philosophers continues to be shaped by an antiquated conception of physics that has been superseded by what one might call the ‘Quantum Revolution’ of the last century. I also discovered that I was quite good at university-level physics, which is more interesting than the physics one is taught at school, and I eventually switched to physics and mathematics in order to access some of the more advanced courses. I was awarded a generous scholarship to pursue doctoral research in physics, which I only accepted after an inner-struggle, resolving to go back into philosophy later in life. My research took me to many parts of the world, and I had several adventures which someday perhaps I shall write about. It was in many ways quite a glamorous lifestyle! But I began to feel that I was drifting away from my ‘calling’, and that it was time to get back to the books.

Leaving behind the well-funded world of physics I had known for the impecunious world of philosophy was a big step of faith. I had no formal qualifications in philosophy and no private means to support further studies. Nonetheless, Cambridge offered me a place on a Masters course in the History and Philosophy of Science, and I won a partial scholarship which covered the bare minimal costs. After some prayer, I decided to take up my offer, and the rest of the funding fell into place over the following months. It was also during this year that I was formally admitted into the Catholic Church, since I had come to believe that the Church had been right about many things concerning which I had been wrong, and had discovered within Catholic Teaching a vision of the whole of reality that I found compelling.

When it came time to apply for PhDs, however, I found that Research Councils do not fund second doctorates, and had difficulties uncovering any financial provision for the kind of interdisciplinary project I had in mind. Fortunately, some of the Cambridge colleges have scholarships in their gift, and I was awarded a full scholarship from Peterhouse to pursue a PhD in philosophy, at the eleventh hour. My postdoctoral fellowship also fell into place in the nick of time, when I thought I’d reached the end of the road. I’ve been unusually blessed on this journey. We’ll see what happens next...



Photo: Peterhouse, University of Cambridge

You are a recipient of the Expanded Reason Awards. What was your contribution for receiving the Award?

I was awarded this generous prize for my doctoral thesis in philosophy: “What’s the matter? Toward a neo-Aristotelian ontology of nature”. In this thesis I argued, firstly, that the Quantum Revolution which has taken place in contemporary physics requires a radical reimagining of the standard way in which people thought about nature in the mainstream analytic philosophy of the last century. Whereas modern materialists have typically supposed the world to be built of some set of microscopic constituents, the physical properties of quantum systems seem to depend irreducibly upon the wholes of which they are parts.

Secondly, I argued that when we take seriously the diverse kinds of empirical content that can be captured by quantum theories – macroscopic observables, phase transitions, chemical and thermodynamic phenomena – this reimagining is further constrained to take a shape that would have been familiar to medieval thinkers like Thomas Aquinas; namely, something like Aristotle’s ‘hylomorphic’ philosophy of nature, in which the world consists of entities which are composed of both ‘matter’ and ‘form’. This vision of nature is more accommodating of traditional Catholic Teaching concerning how we fit into the material world, in which the human soul is conceived as the form of the body’s matter.

How easy or difficult is it for you to share your values with students when teaching?

This is not how I would frame the problem: it assumes a split between ‘facts’ and ‘values’ that I think we have reason to reject, and it presupposes a theory of how we get to know facts which I wish to call into question. I am rather in the business of putting forward a different conception of reality – you might say, of restoring an older conception of reality – that is more accommodating of the Catholic Church’s moral teachings. When you begin to think in this way, you will not need to add a second exogenous layer of values to your picture of reality.

On the one hand, this is very challenging work, in which I find myself locking horns with some of the leading philosophers and thinkers of our age, who see the world very differently. On the other hand, I think these are exciting times to be a Catholic intellectual engaged in analytic philosophy. We are beginning to witness a tectonic shift in Western philosophy of a kind that has not been seen for several centuries. There is a turn back toward Aristotle which is gathering momentum, and new opportunities for drawing upon the Catholic philosophical tradition to address contemporary philosophical problems.

But I should not exaggerate my own contribution: as an analytic philosopher, I spend most of my time focusing sharply on small parts of the Great Puzzle.

What is your advice for students who may be Catholic and are contemplating doing graduate work or a PhD, or may be seeking to become an interdisciplinarian like yourself?

Do you have questions you feel compelled to think about more deeply for the good of your soul, for the good of the Church, or for the good of the world around you? Are you adept at the subject which you are proposing to study and willing to put in the hard work that is necessary to push the frontiers of learning a little further, even if that work is undervalued and provides paltry remuneration? Then do it for the glory of God, and follow the truth wherever it leads you.

But be warned: it is difficult to make a lifelong career in academia. Many scholars doing excellent work come to dead-ends, especially in fields like philosophy and theology, because the job market is poor and funding is sparse and competitive. The university campus is also becoming increasingly politicised, creating pitfalls in your path that can be difficult to negotiate. And academic inflation has reduced the value of university degrees, so you should not expect immediate employment if you leave the academy to do something else.

It is even more difficult to become an interdisciplinarian. Whilst the modern academy pays lip service to interdisciplinarity, there are no career paths to becoming interdisciplinary, and many hurdles facing those who attempt to chart their own course toward competency in more than one field.

Still, a university – if it is to be a university – needs people who can testify to the unity of the truth. All too often, we see the sciences being pitched against the humanities, and technical expertise being played off against common sense. The lack of a humane philosophy – a logos, or general account of how everything ‘hangs together’ – has fragmented the academy and divided our society. We must reclaim what Gilson called ‘the unity of philosophical experience’. The Catholic Church has a special role to play – historically, and in the present age – in achieving this synthesis.

Finally, could you share a dream or aspiration – something that you are passionate about?

I would like to see more Catholic institutions which are willing to pursue a distinctively Catholic vision of the nature of intellectual inquiry, without turning in on themselves and failing to engage the best of secular scholarship, and without putting respectability ahead of the truth and becoming second-rate simulacra of secular institutions. I’m afraid that the Church today often fails to value and support people engaged in this difficult endeavour, and that Catholics often waste time and resources trying to convince people that they are not really different, instead of revelling in the traditions which set them apart and generously sharing their Deposit of Faith. Our business is not to keep our heads down at all costs, or to play second fiddle to the latest disharmonies of the Devil, but to bring the light of Christ to a world in darkness. I think the Catholic philosophical tradition provides us with the resources to do that.

INTERVIEW WITH JOHN SLATTERY, SENIOR PROGRAM ASSOCIATE, AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE



Interview conducted by Quentin Wodon

January 2022

EXCERPTS:

- “The idea for the project was simple: how can we help religious leaders better understand modern science, and how can we do it in a way that affirms a healthy dialogue between and among scientific and religious communities? Because there were so many examples of unhealthy science engagement with faith communities, a proper engagement ... was imperative.”
- “The world will always need people who can articulate a clear sense of Catholic thought... No one knows what scholarly work will look like in 50 years, but we will always need interpreters of tradition, and we will always need scholars!”

Would you describe your work, and some of the particularities of your organization?

Science for Seminaries is a program whose ideas began over 20 years ago in discussions and conferences of the Dialogue on Science, Ethics, and Religion (DoSER) program at the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). In 2010, the DoSER program began a thoughtful, strategic planning process by partnering with the Association of Theological Schools (ATS), the sole accrediting body for nearly all Christian seminary schools in the US and Canada, with over 280 graduate education programs accredited. Science in theological education was of particular importance to ATS leadership because an integral part of the organization's mission is to adequately prepare future leaders to be culturally relevant on issues faced by modern congregations.

The idea for the project was simple: how can we help religious leaders better understand modern science, and how can we do it in a way that affirms a healthy dialogue between and among scientific and religious communities? Because there were so many examples of unhealthy science engagement with faith communities, a proper engagement, focusing on dialogue and mutual learning,

Box 1: Interview Series

What is the mission of the Global Catholic Education website? The site informs and connects Catholic educators globally. It provides them with data, analysis, opportunities to learn, and other resources to help them fulfill their mission with a focus on the preferential option for the poor.

Why a series of interviews? Interviews are a great way to share experiences in an accessible and personal way. This series will feature interviews with practitioners as well as researchers working in Catholic education, whether in a classroom, at a university, or with other organizations aiming to strengthen Catholic schools and universities.

What is the focus of this interview? In this interview, John Slattery, a Senior Program Associate with AAAS who oversees the Science for Seminaries project, shares insights about the work that he received an Expanded Reason Award for. The interview is part of a series on the Expanded Reason Awards.

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was imperative. As such, the AAAS DoSER program explored various ways to implement this idea through workshops and consultations supported by a planning grant from 2010-2014. The input obtained from active seminary faculty, administrators, graduates, and interested scientists sculpted an innovative approach, where every seminary student in an institution would be impacted by relevant science in core required courses, introduced in ways that non-scientist faculty could realistically and confidently integrate into a busy syllabus.

The need for this work was highlighted by a major 2013 public survey, carried out through a parallel DoSER project in association with sociologist Elaine Howard Ecklund at Rice University. This survey found that some Christians (particularly evangelicals) are more likely than people from other religious groups to consult a religious leader or fellow congregant if they have a scientific question. This survey result, combined with years of workshops and planning, paved the way for a project that was both pedagogically focused and open-ended. The best kind of project, the planning team discovered, was one in which seminary professors felt supported, pedagogies were strengthened, and seminaries could tailor the project to fit the needs of their particular community. The difficult planning work paid off in 2014, when AAAS DoSER staff and advisors, with assistance from the Association of Theological Schools, proposed and received a grant from the Templeton Religion Trust that became the first phase of the Science for Seminaries project.

What is your main field of research, and why did you choose that field?

As one of the leaders of the Science for Seminaries project, I focus largely on the field of science communication, but in my scholarly work, I focus on the intersections of science and religion within the last few hundred years of history, especially focusing on the history of evolution, eugenics, and racism.

You are a recipient of the Expanded Reason Awards. What was your contribution for receiving the Award?

I have been leading the Science for Seminaries program since 2018, including onboarding 34 grantee institutions, travelling across the US and Canada (pre-Covid) and digitally (post-Covid) to connect seminary leaders to scientific advisors and counsel them on integrating science into their religious education.

How easy or difficult is it for you to share your values with students when teaching?

This varies widely for the professors throughout our project, but I personally find it an invaluable piece of scientific and theological pedagogy. Best practices in

science communication stress the importance of connecting to the audience emotionally as well as intellectually. It is not just about presenting facts, but letting the students know that the teacher struggles with a topic, finds it compelling, or appreciates how it challenges accepted beliefs.

How do your values affect your research? And what are some challenges you face?

I am a staunch believer in the value of theological tradition as well as scientific fact, yet in my research on the history of science, race, and religion, I find many instances of corrupted tradition and politicized scientific facts that remind me of the necessity of strong moral foundations. Such moral foundations should not change the result of scientific experiments, but should allow us to look toward history and judge fact from fiction, corruption from piety, where possible. When applied to the modern day, it is ever more important for people to understand that science can both be objective experimentally and subjective based on a choice of research program, funding partner, and overall aim. The same, sadly, can be said of faith leaders and traditions.

What is your advice for students who may be Catholic are contemplating doing graduate work or a PhD?

The world will always need people who can articulate a clear sense of Catholic thought. While the academic job market is constricting rapidly in the US and elsewhere, I think there would be opportunities for graduates of advanced degrees in Catholic theology if the student is prepared to venture into the world that exists, not into a world that existed 50 years ago. No one knows what scholarly work will look like in 50 years, but we will always need interpreters of tradition, and we will always need scholars!

Could you share how you ended up in your current position, what was your personal journey?

I joined the military after my undergraduate career at Georgetown University, where I majored in computer science but took a minor in theology. After a few years of active duty service, I left the military to teach and then do full time music and youth ministry at a Catholic Church in Kansas. There I felt pulled to go back to school both to teach as well as to understand the traditions and teaching of Christian theology. I received a Master's Degree from Saint Paul School of Theology in Kansas City, MO, and a PhD from the University of Notre Dame in Systematic Theology and the History and Philosophy of Science.

After completing my PhD, for which I focused on the intersections of evolutionary sciences with the Catholic Church in the 19th and 20th centuries, I was drawn to this unique position at AAAS, where I have been able to

largely run the Science for Seminaries project for the past few years. While non-profit life is not university life, I have been honored to remain close to graduate theological education, and I firmly believe that good pedagogy is good pedagogy, whether scientific or theological.

Finally, could you share a personal anecdote about yourself, what you are passionate about?

I am passionate about reaching those who have given up on the Catholic Church being a voice for justice and peace in the world. There are so many who have left in the US because of scandals or because they feel they can make the world a better place without the Church, even within my own family. I hope that my scholarly and pedagogical work can show how modern science and Catholic theology not only coexist, but thrive together, as they have for hundreds and hundreds of years.



Photo: Participants in the 2019 Science in the Curriculum Faculty Enrichment Retreat receive a behind-the-scenes tour of the National History Museum of Utah | AAAS/Rob O'Malley.

2021 Seed Grants



Drew University
Theological School



Fuller Theological
Seminary



Garrett-Evangelical
Theological Seminary



Holy Apostles College &
Seminary



John Leland Center for
Theological Studies



Lutheran School of
Theology at Chicago



Mount Angel Seminary



Virginia Theological
Seminary



NAIITS: An Indigenous
Learning Community



Providence Theological
Seminary



Regis College



Wycliffe College

Photo: Schools and seminaries that benefitted from seed grants in 2021.

INTERVIEW WITH CLAUDIA VANNEY, DIRECTOR OF THE PHILOSOPHY INSTITUTE AT UNIVERSIDAD AUSTRAL

Interview conducted by Quentin Wodon

May 2021



EXCERPTS:

- “To reverse the excess of specialization and make room for the cross-enrichment of disciplines, it seems necessary to migrate from the current epistemic plurality towards a collaborative project of social cognition that demands specific intellectual virtues.”
- “Good values are attractive by their own. The role of the professor is to make easier for students to discover values by themselves. Values are not imposed from the outside; on the contrary, they should be freely assumed.”

Would you describe where you work, and some of the particularities of your university?

I am currently the director of the Philosophy Institute at Universidad Austral in Argentina. The Philosophy Institute was created in 2008 in order to promote interdisciplinary research between science, philosophy and theology. The investigations that are developing are oriented particularly to sustain philosophically the specific areas of knowledge in which Universidad Austral is involved in research or teaching. These investigations tend to focus on new approaches that contemporary science is opening up as it progresses.

Since 2010, we have uninterruptedly carried out at the Philosophy Institute several research projects involving physicists, biologists, psychologists, neuroscientists, philosophers and theologians, most of whom are from Latin America. Through these projects, the Philosophy Institute research team has tried different ways to promote collaborative work between university scholars with diverse academic backgrounds.

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What is the focus of this interview? In this interview, Claudia Vanney, Director of the Philosophy Institute at Universidad Austral in Argentina, shares insights about the work that she received an Expanded Reason Award for and about life in academia, with a particular emphasis on her work for the Philosophy Institute.

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We understand interdisciplinary research as a practice that, without denying the individual identity of the disciplines involved, results in the production of new knowledge with insights from different fields. In interdisciplinary research, experts from different disciplines work in a joint, not independent, manner on a common problem, engaging in a creative pluralism that requires them to share the way of thinking of others, and not only to learn new content from different fields. In this sense, interdisciplinarity differs from a mere multidisciplinary approach because it tries to bring forth an integrated vision, whereas multidisciplinary works usually consist of a juxtaposition of results obtained in an independent process, and therefore their conclusions lack deep unity. Since philosophy and theology are sapiential disciplines, they play a leading role in the interdisciplinary dialogue.

What is your main field of research, and why did you choose that field?

My main field of research has changed over the years. It is currently the epistemology of interdisciplinary research. This kind of research raises new challenges for cognitive sciences in general, and for epistemology in particular. In my opinion, to reverse the excess of specialization and make room for the cross-enrichment of disciplines, it seems necessary to migrate from the current epistemic plurality towards a collaborative project of social cognition that demands specific intellectual virtues.

As I mentioned, through the various projects developed at the Philosophy Institute we have tried different ways to foster collaborative work between scholars with diverse academic backgrounds. These experiences conducted me to the study of the intellectual character, since the intellectual virtues involve both a motivational component and a component of success as essential to achieve the desired results. In this way, the very specific topic I am researching now is the development of the intellectual virtues that favor the realization of interdisciplinary work between science and the fundamental questions.

You are a recipient of the Expanded Reason Awards. What was your contribution for receiving the Award?

One of the most paradigmatic results of the interdisciplinary initiatives carried out at the Philosophy Institute was the volume *¿Determinismo o Indeterminismo? Grandes preguntas de las ciencias a la filosofía*. We received the Expanded Reason Awards for this book. Each of the 18 chapters that constitute the book is focused on a question that simultaneously requires and exceeds a purely empirical approach and is the object of study by a team comprising a scientist (a physicist, biologist or neuroscientist) and a philosopher/theologian. In this way, each chapter involved collaborations between coauthors who have, in the past, published in different

domains. Their dialogue culminated in three workshops that were held at Austral University in 2013, 2014 and 2015, but this dialogue was not limited to the workshops.

Prior to the meetings, each pair of researchers began an exchange of ideas to prepare their presentations. During the workshop sessions, the various topics were discussed in depth. Finally, after the meeting, each pair of researchers continued working in collaboration until they assembled an integrated interdisciplinary document. This process required each pair of researchers combining their individual knowledge to generate a cognitive output that they could not have produced alone. Thus, for at least a year, two researchers with different disciplinary training were encouraged to focus jointly their attention on a common question. This methodology of collaborative work faced challenges related to the interaction between specialists, the overcoming of problems such as the communication between them, and the reciprocal evaluation of their different points of view. While the willingness of the researchers made it possible to conclude the book successfully, many of them stated later that the process of writing together involved a much greater effort than initially planned.

The process of writing of this book led me to consider the challenges of interdisciplinary works that bridge the "two languages" of the humanities (especially philosophy and theology) and the sciences. That is, those academic investigations that include different epistemological emphases and refer to multiple levels of analysis.

How easy or difficult is it for you to share your values with students when teaching?

It is neither easy nor difficult for me. I do not seek to communicate my values to students as contents that must be transmitted. It would be more appropriate to think that sharing values involves spreading a way of seeing life, and this usually happens naturally. In any case, the starting point is a great respect to others, to their way of seeing things and to their personal experiences.

Good values are attractive by their own. The role of the professor is to make easier for students to discover values by themselves. Values are not imposed from the outside; on the contrary, they should be freely assumed.

How do your values affect your research? And what are some challenges you face?

I would like to introduce a little nuance before answering. My values are not something that I add externally to what I do, but something intrinsic to the way I live. In other words, they are always present when I act and, in this sense, of course, my values affect my research, as they affect everything I do. However, they do so in a much

more profound way than, for example, simply incorporating an ethical research protocol.

Some contemporary thinkers often speak of a flourishing life to refer to the archetype of the mentally healthy adults, with high levels of emotional well-being, content and satisfied with themselves, with a clear meaning of their life, self-acceptance, with a sense of autonomy and seeking their own personal growth. All this requires having well-defined values.

I believe that cultivating a rich intellectual life that contributes to the harmonious development I have just described is the main challenge for me and for every researcher.

What is your advice for students who may be Catholic are contemplating doing graduate work or a PhD?

My advice would be to always try to be consistent with themselves. It is important not to be afraid to think, and also not to be afraid to share ideas with people who think differently. Other people's looks often open up new perspectives and enrich our own approaches.

With some frequency, John Paul II used to speak of the splendor of truth. A few years later, at the general audience of May 11, 2011, Benedict XVI remarked that "Man bears within him a thirst for the infinite, a longing for eternity, a quest for beauty, a desire for love, a need for light and for truth which impel him towards the Absolute ". I think that the most important thing is to face these things in depth, and to rely on the force of truth, beauty and love when we discuss with others.

Could you share how you ended up in your current position, what was your personal journey?

From a very young age, the desire to understand things better led me first to read a lot, and then to combine my university studies in physics with courses for a degree in philosophy. Subsequently, I devoted a few years with intensity to research in physics, concluding my doctoral thesis and publishing in this discipline. During that time, I experienced the rigorous research methodology of the natural and formal sciences, but also its limited scope to answer the deepest questions. The need to complement an intense research experience in science led me to attend simultaneously several doctoral seminars in philosophy. Then I lived three years in Rome, where I concentrated on research in epistemology to conclude my PhD in philosophy. I also took the opportunity to study various subjects for a degree in theology.

Upon my return to Argentina in 2007, I dedicated myself exclusively to the government of the Austral University for three years, as Vice President of Academic Affairs. Those years helped me not only to understand more deeply the existence of a variety of "academic tribes," but also to perceive the potential of a university project that contributes to collaborative research between experts from different disciplines. This insight gave rise to the Philosophy Institute, which I have directed since 2011.

I should mention that in the last 10 years, it was possible to develop interdisciplinary projects at the Institute of Philosophy, also thanks to the support of the John Templeton Foundation and Templeton World Charity Foundation, which financed several grants.

Finally, could you share a personal anecdote about yourself, what you are passionate about?

I find this question difficult to answer... because I am passionate about everything. I like to enjoy everything I do, whatever it is.

Science, Philosophy, and Theology in Dialogue: Interviews with Expanded Reason Awards Recipients

