

Select Programs and Publications 2018-2023

# CROSSROAD OF RELIGIONS:

An interreligious space on  
"the world as it should be"



**ANSARI INSTITUTE**  
FOR GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT WITH RELIGION



# ANSARI INSTITUTE

Select Programs and Publications 2018–2023



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# ABOUT



Established in 2017 and inaugurated in 2018, the Rafat and Zoreen Ansari Institute for Global Engagement with Religion within the Keough School of Global Affairs is dedicated to studying, learning from, and collaborating with religious communities worldwide for the common good. Its wide-ranging work includes research, teaching, outreach, and interaction with religious communities, faith

and civic leaders, academics, journalists, and the general public. Together, these efforts enable the institute to foster deliberation, offer training, implement transformative educational programs, and generate ideas on how religion can continue to serve as a force for good in the world.

The Ansari Institute was established through a generous gift from South Bend physicians and philanthropists

Rafat and Zoreen Ansari, who are deeply committed to religious understanding and engaging the community in discussions about religion.

The gift is unique in that it establishes a global religion institute housed in a Catholic university with funding from a local Muslim family. As the benefactors desire, the institute embraces

an openness to the wisdom of diverse faith traditions, respectful partnership with local and global actors, and collaborations across disciplines to advance the mission of the institute, the Keough School, and the University of Notre Dame. The Ansaris have three children: Sara (JD '09), Adam, and Sonya.

## Media Mentions:

"An Unorthodox Gift to Notre Dame"

*The New York Times*

"Legends of Michiana Rafat & Zoreen Ansari: Gifted Hands"

PBS Michiana (WNIT) Documentary

"Muslim Couple Give Big to Autism and Promoting Religious Understanding"

*The Chronicle of Philanthropy*

More information about Ansari





**Founding Dean**

*R. Scott Appleby, the Marilyn Keough Dean, Keough School of Global Affairs*

R. Scott Appleby, the Marilyn Keough Dean of the Keough School of Global Affairs, leads the faculty and staff in setting the strategic direction for the school and in fulfilling its mission and vision.

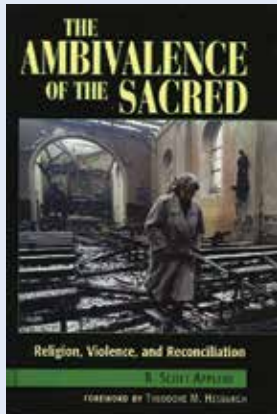
Appleby's research and teaching have focused on religious and intellectual history, global religious movements,

and international peace studies. He is a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences.

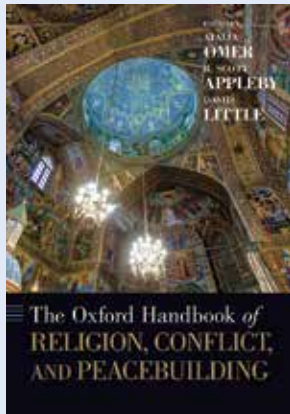
A graduate of Notre Dame, Appleby earned his master's and doctoral degrees in history at the University of Chicago. He has been a member of the Notre Dame faculty since 1994.

Appleby has been awarded five honorary doctorates.

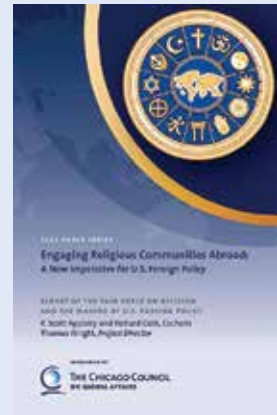
Select Titles by Scott Appleby



The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation



The Oxford Handbook of Religion, Conflict, and Peacebuilding



Engaging Religious Communities Abroad: A New Imperative for US Foreign Policy



# PROGRAMS



1

## INAUGURAL CONFERENCE

The institute's inaugural conference in 2018 took a close look at the ambivalent role of religion in present-day migration and ecological crises, as well as in the public discourses of media misinformation. View the inaugural lecture by Thomas Tweed and read the conference papers on our website: [ansari.nd.edu](http://ansari.nd.edu)

More information  
about the conference



*"The Reed Laments: Ecology in Muslim Thought"*

**Nosheen Ali**  
New York University

*"The Preferential Options for the Earth and the Poor: The Task and Contribution of Theology"*

**Daniel P. Castillo**  
Loyola University Maryland

*"The Spiritual Leadership of Sentient Landscapes: Health, Collective Ethics, and Environmental Justice in Peru"*

**Ana Mariella Bacigalupo**  
University of Buffalo

*"Media and Madrasa: Between Rhetoric and Reality"*

**Mahan Mirza**  
University of Notre Dame

*"Covering Jerusalem: In Search of Journalistic Religious Literacy"*

**Jolyon Mitchell**  
University of Edinburgh

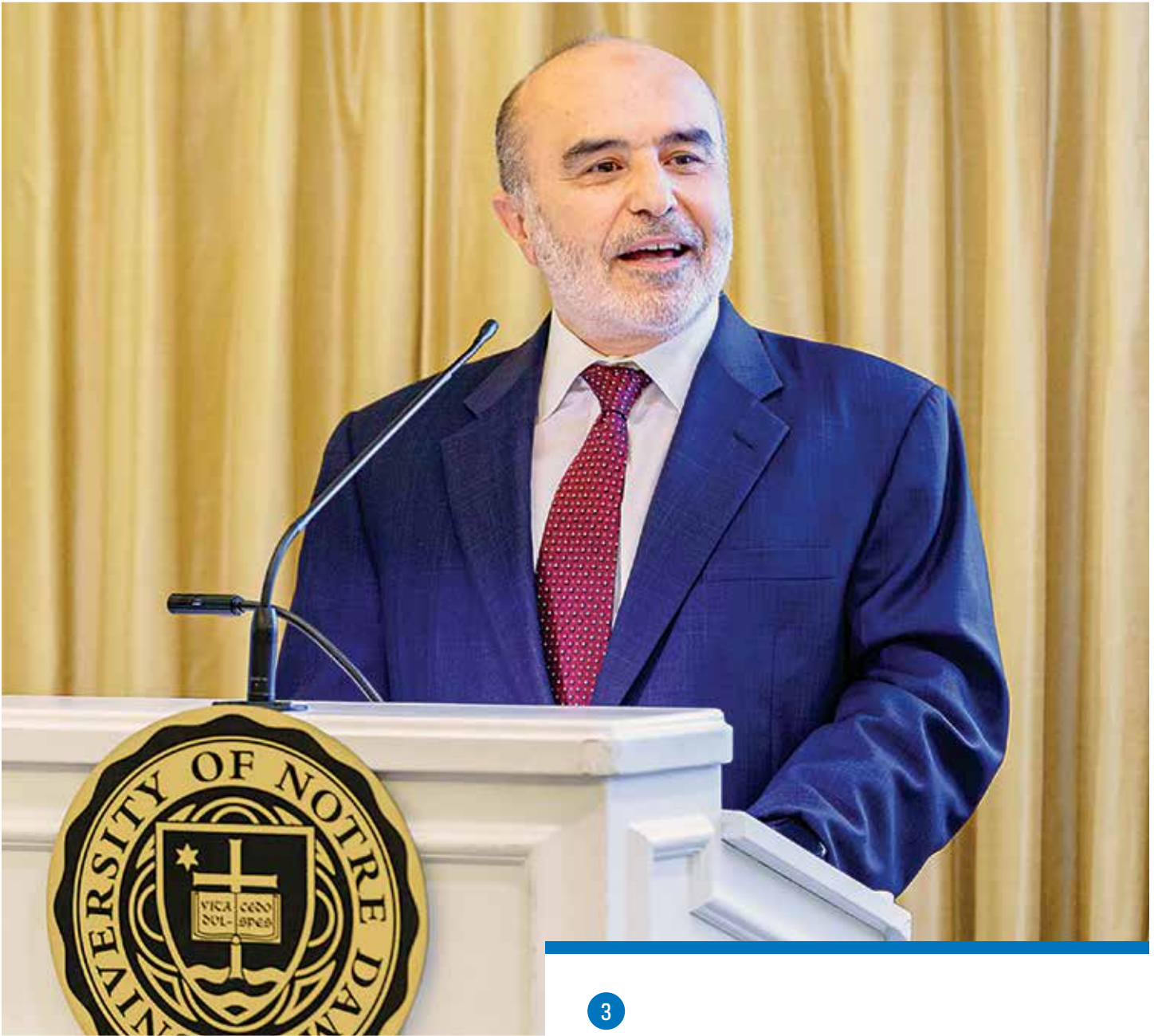
*"Between Despair and Hope: Religious Actors and the Challenges of Forced Migration"*

**Erin K. Wilson**  
University of Groningen

2

## ISLAM AND IRELAND CONFERENCE

In 2022, the Ansari Institute partnered with the Clingen Family Center for the Study of Modern Ireland, the UCD Newman Centre for the Study of Religions, and the Dublin City Interfaith Forum for a conference on Islam and Ireland. A conference report (forthcoming) will portray the rapidly shifting demographic landscape of Ireland with policy recommendations toward an inclusive Ireland, a model of integration within Europe.



3

### THE NASR BOOK AWARD

In 2022, the Ansari Institute inaugurated a book prize named after Randa and Sherif Nasr, awarded to a work that is normatively rooted within a particular tradition, is theoretically informed, engages an important

issue in global affairs, and is able to generate complex multifaith conversations on “the world as it should be.” The first winner of this prize was Tyson Yunkaporta’s *Sand Talk: How Indigenous Thinking Can Save the World*.

[More info on the Nasr Prize](#)



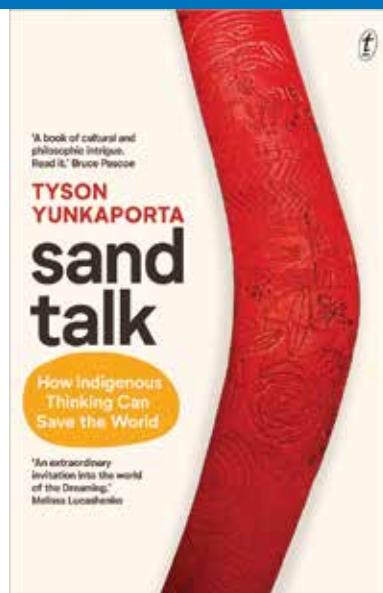


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### SAND TALK (INAUGURAL WINNER)

*Sand Talk* translates an Aboriginal worldview, which lives in the hearts of the First Peoples of Australia, into text. "I'm not reporting on Indigenous Knowledge systems for a global audience's perspective," writes the author. "I'm examining

global systems from an Indigenous Knowledge perspective." A wide-ranging multifaith symposium engaged Yunkaporta and his ideas on Notre Dame's campus. An edited volume from the symposium is forthcoming.



[More info](#)



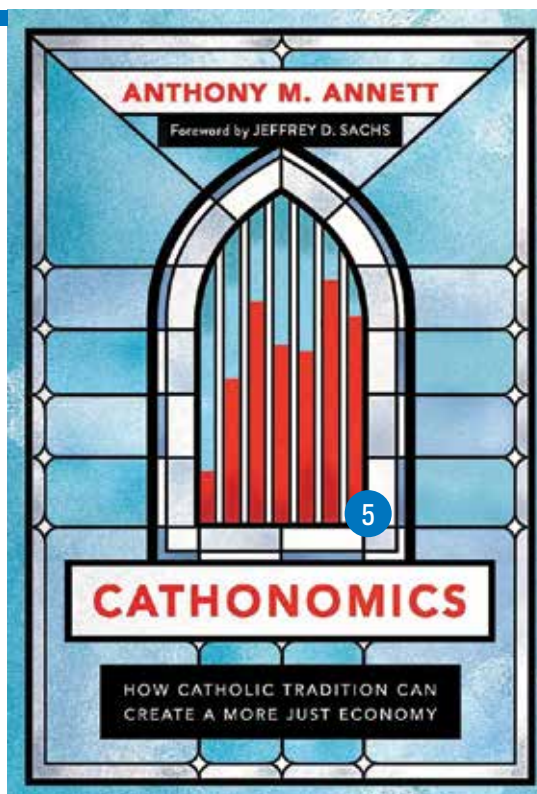
Tyson Yunkaporta  
*Sand Talk: How Indigenous Thinking Can Save the World*

5

### WINNER OF THE SECOND NASR BOOK AWARD

The winner of this year's Nasr Book Award is Anthony Annett's *Cathonomics: How Catholic Tradition Can Create a More Just Economy*. The award will be conferred at the Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago on August 17, and a multifaith symposium will be convened on Notre Dame's campus in South Bend on February 14–15, 2024.

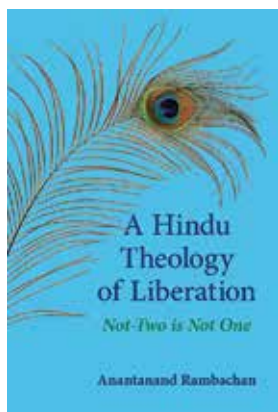
[More info on the Nasr Prize](#)



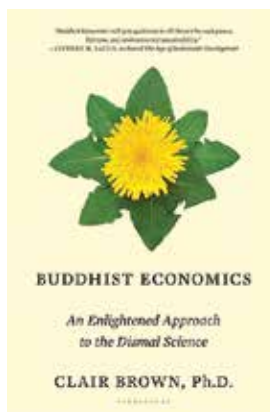
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### EXTERNAL ADVISERS FOR THE INAUGURAL NASR PRIZE

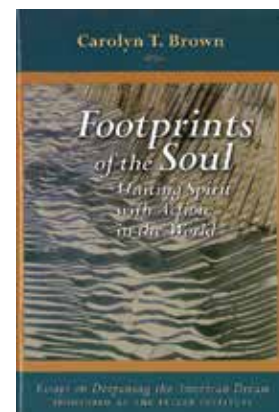
The inaugural Nasr Award was selected by a diverse team including three distinguished external advisers. Here are select publications of the advisers who informed our deliberations about the award.



Anantanand Rambachan  
*A Hindu Theory of Liberation: Not Two is Not One*  
(2015)



Clair Brown  
*Buddhist Economics: An Enlightened Approach to the Dismal Science*  
(2017)



Carolyn T. Brown  
*Footprints of the Soul: Uniting Spirit with Action in the World*  
(2005)





## 7 PARTNERSHIP WITH RELIGIONS FOR PEACE

The Ansari Institute for Global Engagement with Religion is partnering with Religions for Peace, the world's largest and most representative multi-religious movement advancing common action for peace.

The partnership allows the two organizations to work together on joint educational initiatives, collaborate on projects designed to advance understanding of interreligious work, and research multi-religious collaborative programs on human rights, peace and security, and sustainable development at various country levels.

The partnership was announced in 2022 at a ceremony with lifetime service awards conferred to individuals who have spent years advancing the shared missions of the two institutions to make a better world. The Ansari Institute and Religions for Peace confer lifetime service awards to individuals with exemplary and sustained contributions toward advancing their shared visions. The partnership was announced at the inaugural Nasr Award ceremony in 2022.

### Lifetime Service Award Recipients

**2023**  
**Ravinder Kaur Nijjar**  
*Co-Chair, Religions for Peace European Women of Faith Network, and Member, Scottish Joint Committee on Religious and Moral Education (United Kingdom)*

**2022**  
**Rev. Kosho Niwano**  
*Co-Moderator and Executive Committee Member, Religions for Peace International (Japan)*

**Mr. Abdul Ilah Rafie Marafie**  
*International Trustee, Religions for Peace (Kuwait)*

**Dr. Aruna Abhey Oswal**  
*Chair, Abhey Oswal Group and Aruna Abhey Oswal Trust (India)*

## 8 RELIGIONS FOR PEACE INTERNSHIP

Internships with Religions for Peace offer students valuable opportunities for learning beyond the classroom. Interns coordinate events, perform background research, synthesize information, prepare talking points, and are exposed to the rhythm of the Secretary General's day-to-day activities.



*"This opportunity provided me with a substantial understanding of the role religion plays in addressing pressing global affairs and global health challenges through multi-faith engagements."*

**Mariama Dampha**  
*former Religions for Peace intern*



9

## FAITH IN THE STORY: TRIALOGUES FOR ENHANCING RELIGIOUS LITERACY

This multi-year series of workshops from the Ansari Institute brings media professionals, faith leaders, and scholars of religion to work together to improve our public conversation about religion. By sharing knowledge about how their unique respective professions work with religions, we facilitate expert collaborations that will benefit both the professions and the public. "Faith in the Story" refers at once to each profession's respective commitment to truth-telling, and to our shared conviction that our national conversation requires sophisticated, multiperspectival explorations of religion.

[More info](#)



With support from the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations, and building on the "Religion Beyond Memes" conference, the Ansari Institute has hosted three interactive workshops over the past three years.

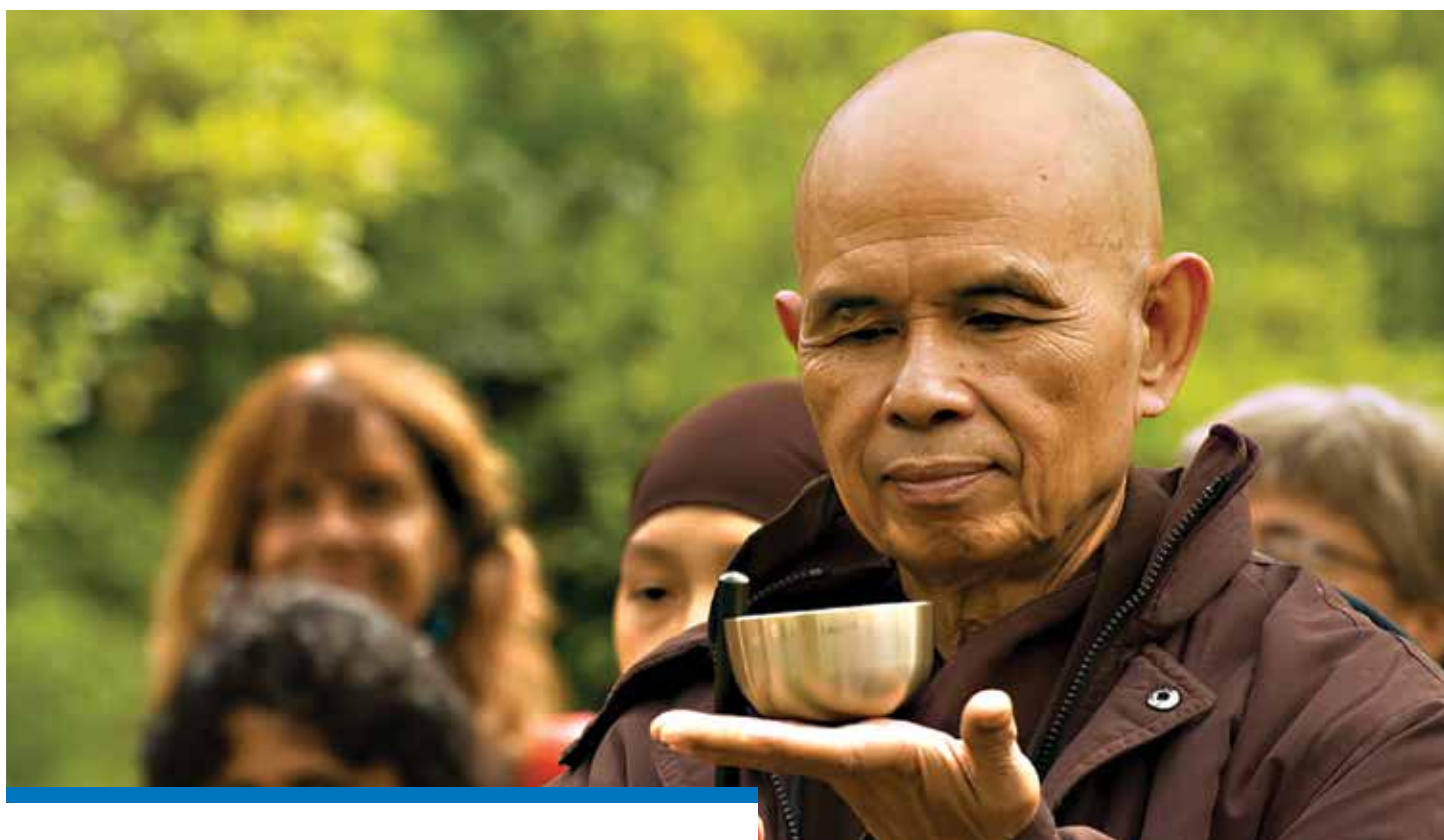
*For the first workshop*, we solicited commentary and reflection on three tumultuous events that reshaped American religious life in 2021: COVID-19, Black Lives Matter, and political polarization around the presidential election.

*For the second workshop* in 2022, we dove deep into two events that have negatively shaped the perception of religion over the past two decades: the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and the sex abuse scandals of the Catholic Church. What lessons can we draw from the coverage of these events? What positive stories about religion do dominant narratives tend to obscure? How can we do better?

*For the third workshop*, also in 2022, we solicited commentary and reflection

on global religion's many futures. What are the next chapters in the story of humanity? How long, how joyful, and how arduous will they be? Whose stories of the future should be circulated more widely?

More on the conference themes, participants, and public panels can be found on our website. In October 2023, the Ansari Institute will convene a summative conference engaging participants from all three workshops. Collaborative reflections from the series will be published in an edited volume.



10

The Ansari Institute engages in timely conversations on religion in current world affairs, supports transformative educational programs for graduate and undergraduate students, and brings the worldviews of diverse faith traditions into conversation with the idea of integral human development, a concept rooted in Catholic social teaching that animates the Keough School of Global Affairs.

A core value of the Ansari Institute is narrative empathy, defined as “the sharing of feeling and perspective-taking induced by reading, viewing, hearing, or imagining narratives of another’s situation and condition.” As such, the institute invites immersive engagement with the variety of religious and cultural worlds that humans inhabit.

[More info](#)



 [@AnsariUND](#)

### Titles of select events

*Faith and the Presidency: Perspectives from the Evangelical Christian Community*

*Peace in Absentia: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Voices on Arab-Israeli Normalization*

*The Lamentations of Jeremiah: An Intergenerational Conversation on the Crises of Our Time*

*2021 Religious Liberty Summit: “The Politics of Vulnerability” by Asma T. Uddin*

*Care for Our Common Planet: A Catholic-Muslim Earth Day Conversation*

*The Twentieth Anniversary of September 11: A Three-Part Series*

*Our Shared Paths to Justice: Learning from Desmond Tutu’s Faith and Activism*

*Native American Perspectives on Human Dignity*

*Russia in Ukraine: What’s Religion Got to Do with It?*

*Harmony with Humanity and Nature: Honoring the Legacy of Thích Nhất Hạnh*

# EDUCATION



11



11

The Ansari Institute curates a wide-ranging list of courses from across the University that relate to religion and global affairs. Institute faculty also offer courses of their own on core topics like Asian traditions, engaging religions, Islam, and American evangelicals and global affairs.



12

Students have the opportunity to engage in co-curricular programming on the University of Notre Dame's campus as well as to travel to countries far and wide. Since the inception of the Ansari Institute, sponsored opportunities have included trips to Oman, Poland, Bosnia, and Italy.

13

Interfaith conversation is imperative to achieving societal goals of deeper understanding, trust, and mutual respect for one another. The Interfaith Notre Dame Initiative (INDI), sponsored by the Ansari Institute for Global Engagement with Religion in partnership with the Building Interfaith Leadership Initiative (BILI) of Hebrew College and Interfaith America, aims to create an inclusive and supportive space (both physical and metaphorical) for students of any and all faiths, beliefs, religious affiliations, traditions, and worldviews to come together in a place where interreligious conversation is fostered and encouraged.



14



15



16

14

In 2020, the Ansari Institute led a trip to Muscat, Oman, for dialogue with students from Notre Dame University Bangladesh. The weeklong visit during spring break was hosted by Al Amana Centre, an ecumenical and interfaith organization in Oman.

15

In 2022, Dr. Mahan Mirza led a visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina on the topic of religion, identity, and peacebuilding. The 10-day visit was organized in partnership with Peace Catalyst International, whose faith-based mission is to establish holistic, just peace that brings flourishing in all dimensions of life. Funding for the trip was provided by the Nanovic Institute for European Studies. Additional support was provided by the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies.

16

Beginning in the summer of 2023, the Ansari Institute has also helped to develop the Rome Summer Seminar, a two-week program for graduate students, scholars, and practitioners working at the crossroads of religion and global politics. It is designed to draw on the unique religious and geopolitical resources of the city of Rome. The seminars begin with a

10-day writing workshop and culminate in a two-day policy dialogue for senior scholars and practitioners. Students attending the workshop also have the opportunity to observe the policy dialogues.



Asmaa El  
Messnaoui  
(2019)  
Morocco



Seiko Kanda  
(2020)  
Japan



John Bosco  
Lugonja  
(2021)  
Uganda

17

Every year, Dr. Charles Powell offers three lectures on religion, focusing on the Abrahamic faiths, during a summer course on international law and the Holocaust offered by Notre Dame International. The course, which is held in Poland, is led by Dr. Emilia Powell, professor of political science and Ansari Institute faculty fellow.



Elizabeth Boyle  
(2022, delayed  
to 2023)  
USA



Muhammed  
Shahzad  
(2023)  
Pakistan

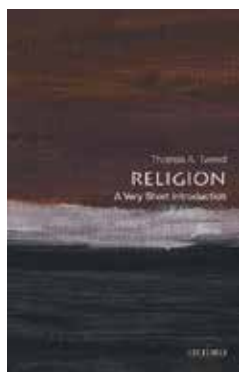
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### MASTER OF GLOBAL AFFAIRS STUDENTS

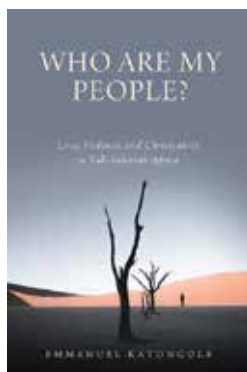
The institute supports the full-time study of a student in the Keough School of Global Affairs' Master of Global Affairs program. These MGA students come from diverse backgrounds, including three continents and five countries.

# FACULTY & FACULTY FELLOWS

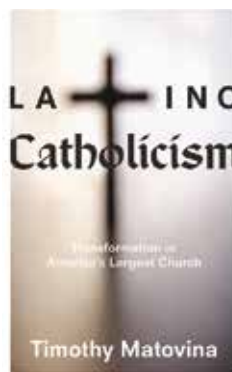
Select Book Titles



Thomas Tweed  
*Religion: A Very Short Introduction*  
(2020)



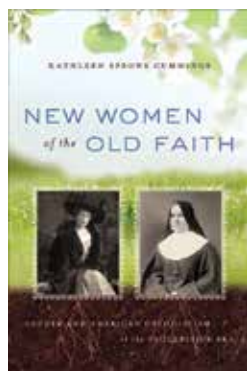
Emmanuel Katongole  
*Who Are My People? Love, Violence, and Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa*  
(2022)



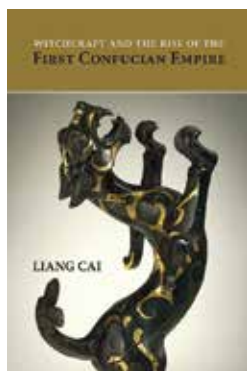
Timothy Matovina  
*Latino Catholicism: Transformation in America's Largest Church*  
(2012)



Mun'im Sirry  
*Finding Beauty in the Other: Theological Reflections Across Religious Traditions*  
(2021), co-editor



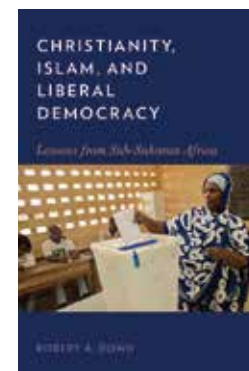
Kathleen Sprows Cummings  
*New Women of the Old Faith: Gender and American Catholicism in the Progressive Era*  
(2009)



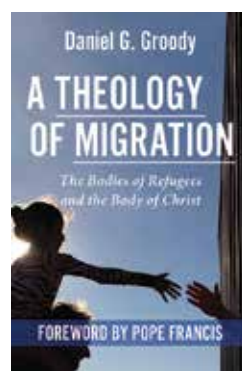
Liang Cai  
*Witchcraft and the Rise of the First Confucian Empire*  
(2014)



Peter Cajka  
*Follow Your Conscience: The Catholic Church and the Spirit of the Sixties*  
(2021)



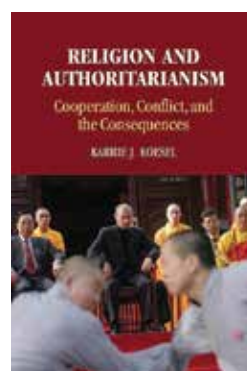
Robert Dowd, C.S.C.  
*Christianity, Islam, and Liberal Democracy: Lessons from Sub-Saharan Africa*  
(2015)



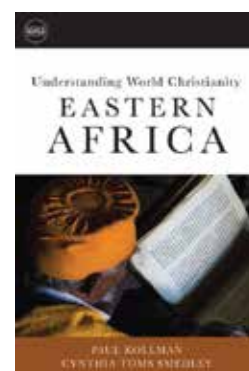
Daniel Groody, C.S.C.  
*A Theology of Migration: The Bodies of Refugees and the Body of Christ*  
(2022)



Perin Gürel  
*The Limits of Westernization: A Cultural History of America in Turkey*  
(2017)

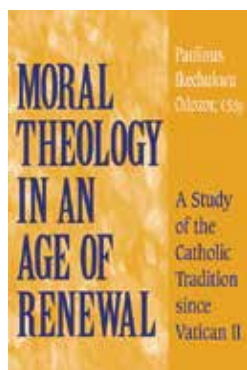


Karrie Koesel  
*Religion and Authoritarianism: Cooperation, Conflict, and the Consequences*  
(2014)

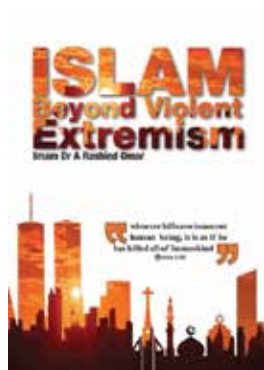


Paul Kollman, C.S.C.  
*Understanding World Christianity: Eastern Africa*  
(2018), co-editor

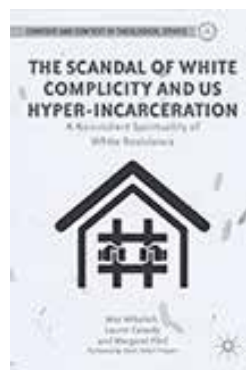




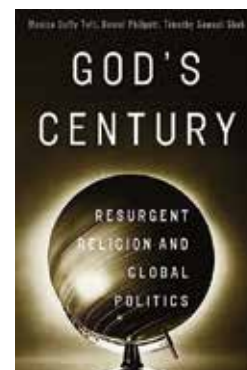
Paulinus I. Ozodor, C.S.Sp.  
*Moral Theology in an Age of Renewal: A Study of the Catholic Tradition since Vatican II* (2003)



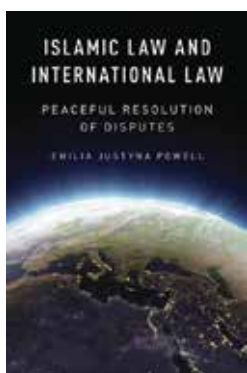
A. Rashied Omar  
*Islam Beyond Violent Extremism* (2017)



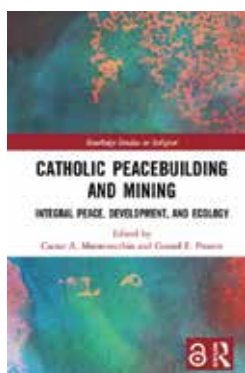
Margaret Pfeil  
*The Scandal of White Complicity and US Hyper-incarceration: A Nonviolent Spirituality of White Resistance* (2013), co-author



Daniel Philpott  
*God's Century: Resurgent Religion in Global Politics* (2011), co-author



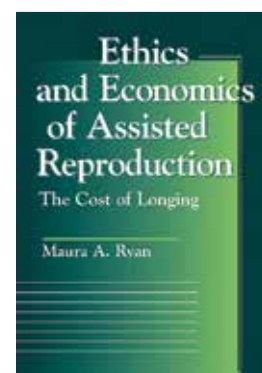
Emilia Justyna Powell  
*Islamic Law and International Law: Peaceful Resolution of Disputes* (2020)



Gerard Powers  
*Catholic Peacebuilding and Mining: Integral Peace, Development, and Ecology* (2022), editor



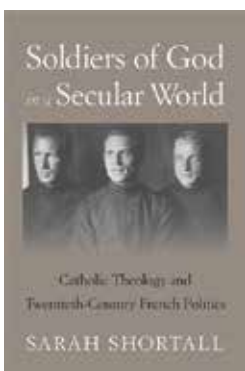
Gabriel Said Reynolds  
*Allah: God in the Qur'an* (2020)



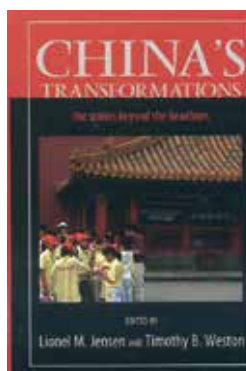
Maura Ryan  
*Ethics and Economics of Assisted Reproduction: The Cost of Longing* (2001)



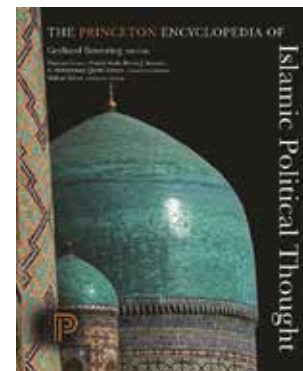
Clemens Sedmak  
*The Practice of Human Development and Dignity* (2020), co-editor



Sarah Shortall  
*Soldiers of God in a Secular World: Catholic Theology and Twentieth Century French Politics* (2021)



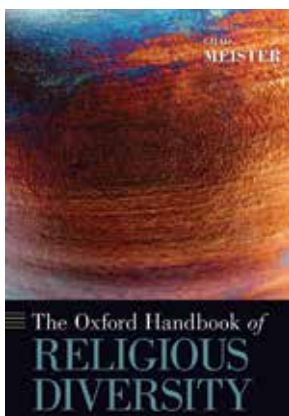
Lionel Jensen  
*China's Transformations: The Stories Beyond the Headlines* (2007)



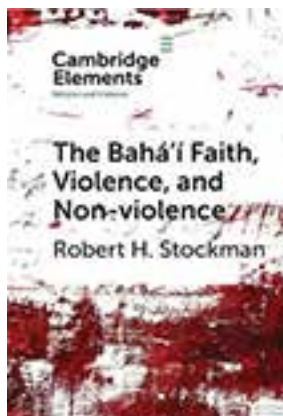
Mahan Mirza  
*The Princeton Encyclopedia of Islamic Political Thought* (2012), assistant editor

## AFFILIATED FACULTY

The Ansari Institute benefits from a rich and diverse pool of affiliated faculty. These are scholars based in South Bend with expertise in the many religions of the world. Affiliated faculty contribute to the intellectual life of the institute and serve on the steering committee for the Nasr Book Award.



**Chad Meister**  
*The Oxford Handbook of Religious Diversity*  
(2010), editor



**Robert Stockman**  
*The Baha'i Faith, Violence, and Non-Violence*  
(2020)



**Margaret M. Gower**  
*Glorifying God: The Theological Notion of Women in Christine de Pizan's Livre de la Cité des Dames in Religion & Literature 54.1-2*  
(Spring 2022)

## GLOBAL RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES CALENDAR

Religious literacy and cultural awareness are important skills. Keep up-to-date on the traditions and celebrations that are important to students and colleagues so you can provide accommodations and support diversity, equity, and inclusion. The Ansari Institute maintains this calendar of global religious

observances as a resource for your university or workplace. Use it to build awareness and promote inclusion and representation. To accompany the global religious observances calendar, the Ansari Institute is preparing a concise handbook for employers to support religious diversity in the workplace.

[View the calendar](#)



# ADDITIONAL PUBLICATIONS



## STRATEGIC PLAN

The strategic plan outlines the institute's vision, mission, and values and explores its important work, which includes research, teaching, outreach, and engagement with religious communities, faith and civic leaders, academics and journalists, and the general public. The plan takes a deeper look at the institute's hopeful and inclusive approach, with an emphasis on narrative empathy across multiple traditions and disciplines in support of human dignity.

Scan for a listing of our publications



## RELIGION BEYOND MEMES CONFERENCE REPORT

This report is based on the third of a series of conferences dedicated to "Changing the Conversation about Religion," organized by the Contending Modernities research initiative. Held in Washington, DC, in 2019, the "Religion Beyond Memes: Enhancing Public Discourse About Faith and Practice" conference sought to explore the complexities of religion at a time when a cascade of social media platforms shapes how people practice their faiths.



## THE ROLE OF RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT IN IMPLEMENTING THE GLOBAL FRAGILITY ACT

The bipartisan Global Fragility Act of 2019 mandates strategic coordination across the federal government to strengthen the capacity of the United States to prevent violence and increase stability in areas of the world most vulnerable to conflict. Among its requirements, the strategy must identify approaches to engage "civil society and local partners in the design, implementation and monitoring of [US] programs."



## PARLIAMENT OF THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS CONFERENCE REPORT

The Ansari Institute is pleased to be one of the premier sponsors of the Parliament of the World's Religions convening in August 2023 in Chicago (USA). At this global convention, the Ansari Institute is hosting a panel called "The Pen and the Sword," where it will confer this year's Nasr Book Award and Religions for Peace service award.

The theme of the parliament is "A Call to Conscience: Defending Freedom and Human Rights." A significant portion of the parliament will be focused upon discussion of the parliament's declaration Towards a Global Ethic and its five commitments. Ansari faculty will contribute to these conversations, informing the final document that is released following the convention. (forthcoming)



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## ANSARI INSTITUTE TEAM

Rebekah Go  
*Program and  
Communications  
Manager*

Alexander Hsu  
*Assistant Teaching  
Professor*

Mahan Mirza  
*Executive Director*

Charles Powell  
*Adjunct Assistant  
Teaching Professor*

Select Programs and Publications *August 2023*

### ABOUT THIS REPORT

Ansari Institute for Global Engagement with Religion.  
*Crossroad of Religions: An Interreligious Space on "The  
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