



The Institute for  
Advanced  
Catholic Studies

at the University of Southern California

# An Ancient Task, a New Institution

**S**omething both ancient and new is happening at the Institute for Advanced Catholic Studies.



Saint Peter by Giuseppe De Fabris

The Institute continues an ancient and worthy practice: faith seeking understanding. Following the example of Mary and all Christians who ponder the things of God in their heart, the Institute brings faith and reason together to address contemporary problems and enduring questions. It welcomes ecumenical and interfaith dialogue. It seeks to heal rather than divide. It pursues

relationship between faith and culture in new ways, and rejuvenate Catholic intellectual life. The Institute aims to apply this renewed wisdom to the daunting questions and pressing needs of our times.

The Institute stands in a long tradition of Christian responses to new challenges. The monastic communities in the 6<sup>th</sup> century and great medieval universities of



Fr. James Heft, S.M., Institute President, and Cardinal Peter Turkson, at the Vatican.

truth, humbly but fearlessly, in conversation with all the branches of human knowledge and research.

How is the Institute new? It is designed uniquely for a new century, a new millennium and a new global reality. It is an independent, lay-led research center dedicated to deepening and broadening Catholic thought. The Institute will provide a residential center in which to explore the

the 12<sup>th</sup> century were institutions that allowed faith and reason to enrich each other. In our own time, people committed to Catholic intellectual tradition need an opportunity to re-engage with the vast tradition of learning that has emerged in the great modern universities. Human knowledge will be richer as these two traditions begin to learn from each other again.

# The Institute for Advanced Catholic Studies: Unique and Needed

The Institute Advanced Catholic Studies at the University of Southern California is specially designed to meet the two great

challenges of our time: exploring the unity of faith and reason in new ways, and rejuvenating Catholic thought and life through sustained conversations

with other religious believers and secular thinkers. This mission has four important dimensions:

First, the Institute embraces the ever increasing leading role of lay scholars and thinkers who enrich and transmit the Christian legacy.

Second, along with theology and philosophy, the Institute looks to the full range of modern inquiry and

scholarship, including the natural and social sciences, the professions, the many branches of historical and

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literary studies, and other humanities along with the arts. Writing on the university and citing the Second Vatican Council, Pope John Paul II urged a constant conversation with every religion and every current of contemporary thought and scientific discovery. Catholic thought has too often operated in isolation from other religions and currents of secu-

lar thought. The Institute welcomes these conversations. There is nothing to fear in the pursuit of wisdom, wherever it may be found.

Third, the Institute holds itself accountable to the best standards of contemporary research and thought in every discipline, including humility in the face of truth, correction in the face of error, imagination and awe in the face of mystery, and civility and community in the face of divergent views.

Fourth, the Institute, respecting people of different faiths and people of no faith, makes it possible for scholars to grow not only intellectually but also spiritually.

## A New Kind of Institution in Our Time

The 20<sup>th</sup> century witnessed an important institutional innovation: the establishment in 1933 of the Institute for Advanced Studies at Princeton, a residential center with its own endowment where scholars could foster research in a communal setting with other scholars. In the following decades, autonomous institutes of advanced study opened in California, North Carolina, the Netherlands, Germany, and Sweden. The Library of Congress and the New York Public Library both host similar centers. All of these offer ideal environments for sustained research:

residential centers where communities of scholars can for extended times interact, challenge each other, overcome their narrow specializations, and advance knowledge. The work of these scholars surpasses that of dozens of partisan “think tanks.” However, in all of these centers, little research focuses on religion, and none supports sustained research on Catholic intellectual and spiritual life. Something new is therefore needed.

Learning from these important 20<sup>th</sup> Century institutional innovations, the Institute for Advanced

Catholic Studies at the University of Southern California enjoys both independence and support, and is located within one of the great cities of the world, Los Angeles, along the Pacific rim and at the doorway to Latin America. In this ideal location, the Institute charts a new course: bringing together scholars from around the world and from all religious traditions willing to address together the global challenges we face, and in this noble effort drawing especially upon the long and rich Catholic intellectual and spiritual tradition.

## The Future of the Institute

For more than a decade, the Institute has fostered conversations among the great scholars of the world, including philosopher Charles Taylor, theologians David Tracy and Joseph Komonchak, legal scholars Mary Ann Glendon and Douglas Kmiec, historians John O'Malley, S.J. and Francis Oakley, literary critic and poet Dana Gioia, sociologists Hans Joas, Margaret Archer, Christian Smith, and José Casanova, Judaic scholars Reuven Firestone and Rachel Adler, economists Daniel Finn and Stefano Zamagni, policy experts J. Bryan Hehir, Mary Jo Bane and Katherine Marshall, public philosopher Michael Novak, leaders in inter-religious dialogue Peter Phan, Francis Clooney, Mustafa Cerić, Irving Greenberg and Fathi Osman, ethicists Lisa Cahill and Kevin Fitzgerald, biologist Ken Miller, and religious leaders Cardinals Peter Turkson and Avery Dulles. The Institute has organized many successful international con-

ferences on topics such as the inter-generational transmission of faith, economics and social justice, interreligious dialogue, the impact of Vatican II, and film and the arts. It has published ten volumes of seminal studies, with more underway. It has created a unique program, Generations in Dialogue, that brings together junior scholars and renowned senior mentors for the exploration of Catholic tradition.

In short, in the brief time of its existence, the Institute has established itself as an independent entity with an international reputation.

And now it seeks to establish a residential center where scholars from diverse disciplines and religious traditions can pursue cutting-edge research and sustained dialogue in an innovative environment integrating intellectual and religious growth.

In all this the Institute has found support from patrons within the Catholic world and



other traditions. It has built a cooperating network of outstanding scholars and administrators from Catholic and secular universities around the world. It has won support from Catholic intellectuals, from members of the American and European hierarchies, and from the Vatican. Indeed it has been aided by individuals of every background, religious and academic, who believe that the wisdom of Catholicism remains as relevant to the present and the future as it has been to the achievements of the past.

Convinced of its vast potential to bring together intellect, faith, research and compassion in ways that will benefit the Church, society and all people of all faiths, the Institute welcomes everyone who seeks a more comprehensive response to the deepest needs of our times.

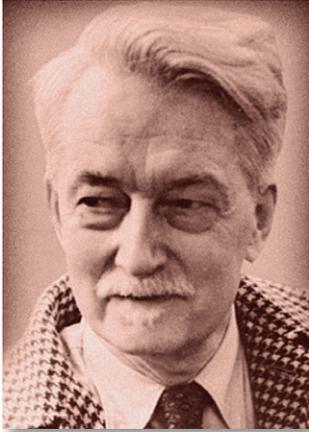
Bringing together scholars for extended conversations about issues confronting humanity today, the Institute for Advanced Catholic Studies draws on a rich theological and spiritual tradition of over 2,000 years. The IACS is uniquely positioned to create something that has never been attempted before: an independent, lay-led center of advanced research focused on deepening and broadening Catholic intellectual life.

We seek support to be the premier location for scholars committed to developing this great tradition for the service of the Church, the academy and the world.



# Carrying the Vision of Newman and Maritain

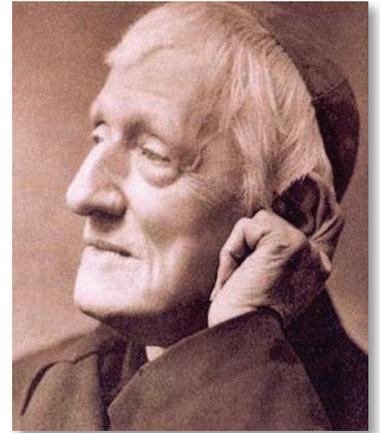
**T**he Institute's unique structure and mission solves a problem that has confronted Catholic thinkers for the past two centuries—a problem that has diminished the development of Catholic contributions to intellectual life and culture.



Jacques Maritain

In the middle of the nineteenth century, Blessed John Henry Newman rejected the segregation, often favored by people both within and outside the church, of intellectual and religious life in separate compartments. “Devotion is not a sort of finish given to the sciences,” he wrote; “nor is science a sort of feather in the cap ... to devotion.” Like Newman, the Institute believes in a vision that integrates spiritual life with rigorous scholarship.

One hundred years later, in 1955, the world-renowned philosopher Jacques Maritain envisioned an institution where creative minds in many fields could pursue objective research bonded and buoyed by personal conversation and community and a sense of shared tradition. The Institute now embodies what Maritain had hoped for.



Cardinal Newman



**T**he Institute for Advanced Catholic Studies (IACS) upholds values that stand at the very core of USC's mission: the preservation and illumination of history, the rigor of intellectual examination and discovery, the advancement of interdisciplinary scholarship, and the promotion of research that directly addresses critical issues facing our society. The IACS also fosters cross-disciplinary, interreligious, and ecumenical dialogue among scholars from across the globe, while charting new courses for academic exploration. Through this innovative work, the Institute advances the vibrant tradition of Catholic thought and teaching, thereby enriching our campus, our nation, and our world. USC is certainly proud to be its home.

— **C.L. Max Nikias, President**  
University of Southern California

**O**ur USC Strategic Vision commits the university community to creating scholarship with consequence. The Institute for Advanced Catholic Studies has consistently produced scholarship with consequence by drawing on a deep two-millennial intellectual tradition, renewed through substantive conversation with other Christians, with scholars from other religions, and with the best secular thinkers. We are proud to have the Institute at the University of Southern California.

— **Elizabeth Garrett**, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, University of Southern California, and Institute Board Member

