

John Courtney Murray Award Citation 2021

Saturday Evening, June 12, 2021

The theologian we honor this evening with the John Courtney Murray Award has a distinguished record of contributions to systematic and ecumenical theologies. As an expert in the influential theological movement *Nouvelle Théologie*, with a specialization in Henri de Lubac, *elle parle très bien le français et est également une experte dans cette langue romane.*

Our honoree is a thoroughly mid-Western person who was born in Washington, D.C, and raised in the Kansas City area. She has two twin brothers, two years younger, who prepared her to work in predominantly male environments for the rest of her life. She enjoys fishing and singing. She earned a bachelor's degree in English and French, then a master's in French, and moved into theology after ten years of teaching French in high school and college. Entering religious life with the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth, Kansas, founded in 1858, our honoree embraced this community's Vincentian spirituality and charism. She has also spent many years working with Benedictines and Jesuits. With this array, one wonders, how many charisms can a person absorb in one lifetime?

Our award recipient has been recognized as a pioneer in the study of Henri de Lubac's theology in the U.S. Catholic theological community. Her doctoral dissertation at Marquette University in 1986 bears the title *The Church as the Social Embodiment of Grace in the Ecclesiology of Henri de Lubac*. Later in 1998, in her book titled *Spiritual Exegesis and the Church in the Theology of Henri de Lubac*, she demonstrated the unity of his approach by organically articulating spiritual exegesis, the Church, and Eucharist, in a treatment of the way the four senses of Scripture connect spiritual and historical realities. More recently, she published essays on "Henri de Lubac and the Church-World Relationship in *Gaudium et Spes*" and "Pope Francis and the Ecclesiology of Henri de Lubac." Her study of de Lubac has inspired the theological pursuits of a newer generation of Catholic theologians, as illustrated in the work of Joseph S. Flipper with his stellar book *Between Apocalypse and Eschaton: History and Eternity in Henri de Lubac*.

The Society member we honor today has made extensive contributions to various fields of theological inquiry, including ecclesiology, sacraments, liturgical theology, ecclesial ministry, ecumenism, and the theology of priesthood. Her book *Sacramental Orders* was translated and published in the Spanish language as *El*

Sacramento del Orden: Una Visión Teológica desde la Liturgia. Her extraordinary scholarship includes six authored and edited books, and more than one hundred essays in academic, professional, encyclopedia, and pastoral publications. In addition to this, she has co-authored and co-edited official documents for the Lutheran and Roman Catholic Dialogue. Indeed, she is passionate about ecumenism, and has contributed abundantly both to its understanding through her scholarship, and its practice through her service.

Our eminent Society member has a breathtaking record of institutional and academic service. The list of service she has provided over decades is copious and impossible to condense. An illustrative sample includes appointments to the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the Baptist World Alliance, the International Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue, the North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation, the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches, the Center for Catholic and Evangelical Theology, the Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research, and the Faith and Order Commission of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA. Likewise, her record of service to the profession and the academy simply excels: service to the CTSA Board and the presidential line, service as external program reviewer for Duquesne University, Graduate Theological Union, University of Notre Dame, and Saint Louis University, and work on innumerable university committees and in leadership positions at St. John's University, Marquette University, and currently at Regis College of the University of Toronto. She recalls with particular pleasure her service on the Committee on Illumination and Text of the Saint John's Bible project over the course of its production.

As we gather this evening to celebrate conferment of the Society's highest accolade, let us remember that from 1972 to 2019, thirty-nine male theologians have been recognized for their theological accomplishments, compared to only ten women theologians. This year, I am delighted that in recognizing our worthy colleague, we also contribute to rectifying this gender disparity.

In recognition of her extraordinary contributions to the Society, the academy, the church, and the wider community, the Catholic Theological Society of America is honored to present the John Courtney Murray Award for a lifetime of distinguished theological achievement, to Prof. Susan K. Wood, S.C.L.

Next: Prof. John D. Dadosky, CTSA Past-Treasurer, delivers the award in person.