

500 Years of Saint Teresa of Ávila

October 16, 2015

Sponsored by:

The Department of Spanish and Portuguese, Georgetown University

Library Associates, Georgetown University

Georgetown College, Georgetown University

The Carmelitana Collection, Whitefriars Hall, Washington D.C.

Georgetown University will celebrate the Quincentenary of Teresa of Ávila with an all-day commemoration in Lohrfink Auditorium, Rafik R. Hariri Building, on October 16, 2015, the day after the saint’s feast day. The event will include a symposium featuring the most renowned Teresian scholars in the country, a book exhibition at Special Collections in Lauinger Library, a concert of Spanish music by the Georgetown University Orchestra, and scenes from a play, *God’s Gypsy,* by Coco Blignaut, based on the novel *Sister Teresa,* by Barbara Mujica. The day’s activities will feature Georgetown faculty and students of Performing Arts. All activities are free and open to the public. Books by presenters will be available for purchase.

**Schedule of Events:**

9:30-9:35 Welcome: Barbara Mujica, Professor of Spanish, Event Organizer

9:35-9:40 Opening Remarks: Dean Chester Gillis, Dean of Georgetown College

9:40-9:50 Remarks: Ramón Gil-Casares, Ambassador of Spain

9:50-10:00 The Rare Book Collection: John Buchtel, Director, The Booth Family Center for Special Collections, Lauinger Library

**Symposium: Lohrfink Auditorium, Raffik B. Hariri Building**

Barbara Mujica, Moderator

10:00-10:30. Brian McDermott, S.J., Georgetown University and Constance FitzGerald, OCD, Discalced Carmelite Community, Baltimore. "Christ-Consciousness: Teresian and Ignatian Spiritualities in Dialogue.”

10:30-10:50. Gillian Ahlgren, Xavier University. “Radical Fidelity: Partnership as Teresa's Principle and Foundation."

10:50-11:10. Alison P. Weber, University of Virginia. “Teresa of Ávila and Spiritual Friendship.”

11:10-11:30. Christopher Wilson. “Reimagining Bernini's Ecstasy of St. Teresa.”

Discussion: 11:30-12:00.

**Book Exhibition: The Booth Family Center for Special Collections, Lauinger Library**

Barbara Mujica, Curator

Ross Karlan, Assistant to the Curator

John Buchtel, Director of Special Collections

Ethan Henderson, Curator of Rare Books

**Performances: Lohrfink Auditorium, Raffik B. Hariri Building**

2:00-3:00. **Concert**: Georgetown University Orchestra

Angel Gil-Ordóñez, Director

3:00-4:30. **Play**: *God’s Gypsy,* by Coco Blignaut

**Organizing Committee:** Barbara Mujica, John Buchtel, Angel Gil-Ordoñez, Ethan Henderson, Grace McKinney, Jennifer Ann Smith, Stephanie Hughes

**Bios (in alphabetical order)**

**Gillian T. W. Ahlgren** is Professor of Theology at Xavier University (Cincinnati), where she is also founding director of the Institute for Spirituality and Social Justice.  She is the author of four books, including: *Teresa of Ávila and the Politics of Sanctity* (Cornell University Press); *Entering Teresa of Ávila's Interior castle: A Reader's Companion* (Paulist Press), and *The Inquisition of Francisca* (University of Chicago Press).  Her work as a theologian and church historian is enriched by her retreat work and pastoral ministry with challenged populations.  She is currently at work on a book exploring the theological synthesis of Teresa and John of the Cross.

**Coco Blignaut** studied the art of acting at the University of South Africa, La Sorbonne in Paris, Jack Waltzer’s Conservatory in Paris and London, and The Lee Strasberg Theatre Institute in Los Angeles. She is a lifetime member of The Actors Studio in Los Angeles and New York. Ms. Blignaut has played the lead in most of her projects. Highlights are Sandy in *Grease*, Nina in *The Seagull*, Tatiana in *Midsummer Night’s Dream*, The Nun in *Madman and The Nun*, Maggie in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, Salome in Oscar Wilde’s *Salome*, and the crown of her theatrical experiences, Saint Teresa of Ávila in *God’s Gypsy*, which she adapted from Barbara Mujica’s novel, Sister Teresa. Coco Blignaut is also a children’s book writer, and her second book, *Puss in Boots in Provence*, will be on the shelves in September 2015.

**John A. Buchtel**is Director of the Booth Family Center for Special Collections at Georgetown University. He has previously held curatorial positions at The Johns Hopkins University and at Rare Book School at the University of Virginia. He earned his PhD in English from the University of Virginia in 2004 with a dissertation on early modern literary patronage.

**Angel Gil-Ordóñez**is Music Director of the Georgetown University Orchestra. He is the former Associate Conductor of the National Symphony Orchestra of Spain and Music Director or the PostClassical Ensemble. He has conducted symphonic music, opera and ballet throughout Europe, the United States and Latin America. In the United States, he has appeared with the American Composers Orchestra, Opera Colorado, the Pacific Symphony, the Hartford Symphony, the Brooklyn Philharmonic, the Orchestra of St. Luke’s and the National Gallery Orchestra in Washington. Abroad, he has been heard with the Munich Philharmonic, the Solistes de Berne, at the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival and at the Bellas Artes National Theatre in Mexico City. Born in Madrid and an American citizen since 2009, he worked closely with Sergiu Celibidache in Germany for more than six years. In addition to his music directorship of PostClassical Ensemble, he serves as advisor for education and programming for Trinitate Philarmonia, a program in Leon, Mexico, modeled on Venezuela’s El Sistema, conducting its youth orchestra and choir several weeks per year. He is also Principal Guest Conductor of New York’s Perspectives Ensemble. In 2006, the king of Spain awarded Mr. Gil-Ordóñez the country’s highest civilian decoration, the Royal Order of Queen Isabella, for his work in advancing Spanish culture around the world, in particular for performing and teaching Spanish music in its cultural context.

**Constance FitzGerald**, **OCD**, is a contemplative theologian and a member of the Carmelite Community in Baltimore where she has served as prioress, formation director, archivist/historian and treasurer. She was a founder of the Association of Contemplative Sisters in the U.S. (1969) and a founding member of the Carmelite Forum (1982-2013), a group of Carmelite scholars dedicated to opening contemplative prayer and life to people through the contemporary interpretation of the Carmelite classics. For more than fifty years, Sr. Constance has devoted her intellectual life to the explication and interpretation of the writings of the great Carmelite mystics, with a special predilection for Saint John of the Cross. She is best known for her classic essay, “Impasse and Dark Night,” first published in 1984 (Harper and Row), in which she looked at the traditional understanding of dark night spirituality through the lens of impasse and applied it not only to personal growth in prayer but also to one’s relational life, the development of society and culture, and the feminist experience of God. This original insight has provided theologians, religious communities and spiritual seekers with a valuable hermeneutical key for engaging the multiple impasses we face today. In 2009, she addressed the Catholic Theological Society of America with a follow-up presentation, “From Impasse to Prophetic Hope: Crisis of Memory.” She was the first contemplative nun in the U.S. to be so honored. In her writings and lectures, Sister Constance has consistently worked to show the relationship between contemplative prayer and the evolution of consciousness. Sr. Constance’s publications include “A Discipleship of Equals: Voices from the Tradition, Teresa of Ávila and John of the Cross,” “Transformation in Wisdom: the Subversive Character and Educative Power of Sophia in Contemplation,” “The Passion of the Carmelite Tradition: Edith Stein,” “The Mission of Therese of Lisieux,” and The Carmelite Adventure: Journal of a Trip to America. Her audio CDs and DVDs from the Carmelite Forum’s summer seminars are available.

**Fr. Brian McDermott, S.J.** is a Catholic priest and a member of the Jesuits, the Society of Jesus. He is currently a special assistant to the President of Georgetown University and adjunct professor in Catholic Studies. He received his doctorate in systematic theology from the University of Nijmegen, The Netherlands, in 1973. From 1973 to 2000, he was a member of the faculty of Weston Jesuit School of Theology in Cambridge, MA, one of the two national Jesuit theological centers sponsored by the Society of Jesus for the training of Jesuits, other religious and laypersons for ministry in the Church. While at WJST, he taught systematic theology, Ignatian spirituality, and authority and leadership. For eight years (1991-1999) he was academic dean at the school. Fr. McDermott is the author of two books, *What Are They Saying About the Grace of Christ?* (Paulist Press) and *Word Become Flesh: Dimensions of Christology* (Liturgical Press) and numerous articles and book reviews. He has produced three audio CD series for Now You Know Media, Inc: “Who Is Jesus?: An Introduction to Christology,” “The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola,” and “The Dynamics of God’s Grace.” He has been a spiritual director, helping people with your prayer lives, since 1973. From 1996 to 2012 he was the director of tertians for the Maryland and qNew York provinces of the Society of Jesus. In that capacity he accompanied fellow Jesuits as they made, for the second time, the full Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola, prior to being fully incorporated into the Society of Jesus. For nineteen years Fr. McDermott was a member of the Board of Directors of Georgetown University.

**Barbara Mujica** is Professor of Spanish and Associated Faculty of Performing Arts at Georgetown University. She has written two scholarly studies of Teresa de Ávila: *Teresa de Ávila, Woman of letters* (Vanderbilt University Press, 2009) and *Teresa de Jesús: Espiritualidad y feminismo* (Orto / U. Minnesota, 2006) and a novel, *Sister Teresa* (Overlook 2014). Her other books include *A New Anthology of Hispanic Classical Theater, Play and Playtext* (Yale University Press, 2014), *Shakespeare and the Spanish Comedia* (Bucknell University Press 2013), *Women Writers of Early Modern Spain: Sophia’s Daughters* (Yale University Press, 2004), *Et in Arcadia Ego: Essays on Death in the Pastoral Novel* (University Press of America, 1990, co-authored with Bruno Damiani) and *Iberian Pastoral Characters* (University Press of America). She has edited several collections of articles, including *El texto puesto en escena* (2000, with Anita Stoll); *Looking at the Comedia in the Year of the Quincentennial* (1993, with Sharon Voros); and *Texto y espectáculo* (1989). She also edited *Comedia Studies at the End of the Century*, a special issue of the journal *Hispania* (Sept. 1999). She has written numerous articles on Saint Teresa and her disciples, among them Paul the Enchanter: Jerónimo Gracián and Teresa’s Vow of Obedience”; “Performing Sanctity: Lope’s Use of Teresian Iconography in Santa Teresa de Jesús”; “Was Saint Teresa a Feminist?”; “Letters to Friend and Foe: Ana de Jesús in France and the Low Countries”; “Corpus Sanus, Mens Sana, Spiritus Sanus: Cuerpo, mente y espíritu en las cartas de Teresa de Jesús”; “Encuentro de santos: Francisco de Borja y Teresa de Jesús”; “Healing on the Margins: Ana de San Bartolomé: Convent Nurse”; “Teresa de Ávila: Portrait of the Saint as a Young Woman”; and “Evil Within, Evil Without: Teresa of Ávila Battles the Devil.” She has lectured widely on subjects related to Saint Teresa. Barbara Mujica is also a novelist. In addition to Sister Teresa, she is author of Frida and I Am Venus. Her short story, “Jason’s Cap,” won first prize this year in the Maryland Writers’ Association Fiction Competition. She is Faculty Adviser of the Georgetown University Student Veterans’ Association and Co-Facilitator of the Veterans Support Team. In February 2015, Dr. Mujica received a Presidential Medal from Georgetown University.

**Alison Weber** is Professor of Spanish with a joint appointment in the Corcoran Department of History at the University of Virginia. She is the author of *Teresa of Ávila and the Rhetoric of Femininity* (Princeton University Press, 1990) and editor of *Approaches to Teaching Teresa of Ávila and the Spanish Mystics* (Modern Language Association, 2009). She has also edited a forthcoming volume, *Devout Laywomen in the Early Modern World*, from Ashgate Press.

**Christopher Wilson*,*** a specialist in Carmelite art of Early Modern Europe and Latin America, edited and co-authored *The Heirs of St. Teresa of Ávila* (Edizioni Carmelitane and ICS Publications, 2006). He has contributed to numerous exhibition catalogues published by Saint Joseph’s University Press in addition to the volumes *Approaches to Teaching Teresa of Ávila and the Spanish Mysitcs* (Modern Language Association of America, 2009) and *Women and Art in Early Modern Europe and Latin America* (Brill, 2007). He has published articles on Carmelite art in journals that include *Carmelus, Archive for Reformation History,* and *Tradición Revista*. He teaches at Holton-Arms School in Bethesda, Maryland.