



Consortio

I T I C A T H O L I C U N I V E R S I T Y

WINTER 2024



Studying, learning, and reading in a friendly atmosphere.

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Why Study at the ITI?

by the Rector, Dr. Bernhard Dolna

For 28 years now, the ITI has followed the vision of a saint. It was the founding intention of Pope St. John Paul II to establish a program for the study of Catholic theology as a unified whole, within which particular attention is devoted to the theme of marriage and the family.

It was also a coincidence orchestrated „from above“ that our Grand Chancellor and former theology professor, Cardinal Christoph Schönborn, carried in his heart a similar longing for a renewal of sacred theology studies. Together with Prof. Dr. Michael Waldstein and other „comrades-in-arms“ they gave this vision a concrete form. Their intended objective was to return to the theological sources, to the great masters, from which the Catholic Church has always reformed and renewed itself. This vision is consistently before the eyes of the teachers at ITI; it is written upon their hearts and in their habitus. It is primarily the fidelity to it

The little way of our Patroness St. Thérèse of Lisieux serves as a lighthouse for our life and teaching.

that has made the ITI an attractive place of education and formation within the Church. The path by which this vision takes shape is both simple and difficult at the same time. It is simple, because it invokes an “abundance of witnesses” – effective wisdom that has inspired the Church for more than two thousand years.

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Ad Fontes/To the Sources

At the ITI, students have the unique opportunity to engage with the intellectual pillars of the Church and her Saints. The questions and answers they posed in their own times continue to serve as a vibrant source of inspiration for the present.

Our academic programs are committed to uniting holiness and theology. They are characterized by a commitment to intellectual excellence, integration of faith and reason, as well as life and knowledge, in a balanced manner.



Why Study at the ITI? continued from page 1



Prof. DDr. Bernhard Dolna
ITI Rector

To this tradition belong the prophets of Israel, the Apostles, the rabbinic tradition, the masters of the Greco-Roman tradition, the Church Fathers of East and West, and the Doctors of the Church (especially St. Thomas Aquinas). The little way of our Patroness St. Thérèse of Lisieux serves as a lighthouse for our life and teaching. Further, the *Depositum Fidei* of the Church and the Catechism are both

essential help along this path. Finally, it is Christ himself, all-encompassing and comprehensive, who is the path along which both the teachers and the students at the ITI walk.

The Nature of a Teacher

The path is difficult because it is necessary to internalize the truth. A teacher at the ITI not only claims to teach the Truth, but he or she has to surrender themselves “selflessly” to it, in order to be formed and to gain a certain connaturality with it. This is why the teacher has to be a contemplative, one who sees. As St. Thomas teaches, “Inside of the teacher is the source of teaching” (*Visio docentis est principium doctrianae* - *De Veritate* 11, 4 ad 3). The one who looks selflessly towards God is truly a teacher who is free...

free from the self and free to be selfless. In this way is he able to pass on to others what has been seen (*contemplata aliis tradere*). As an almost natural consequence of such an attitude, the teacher respects and awakens the freedom of a student to discover the truth of the matter (the “*res*”) from within his/her own heart. A teacher can teach only from outside, providing assistance. For the student should comprehend the knowledge in the light of truth which he bears within himself (*De Veritate* 11,

1 ad 7). Precondition for the effectiveness of this method is that the one who teaches has to look persistently at the truth of the object beforehand in order to be a witness of it. He vouches for what he teaches and believes what he says.

The Nature of a Teaching at the ITI

Learning and teaching at the ITI is an almost artistic endeavor in which both student and teacher are involved. Both look “in silent listening to the truth of the object.” Without this attentive listening, the words become idle talk, chatter, and “a mouthful of dust.” At the same time, however, both look and listen to each other in order to cast what has to be said into clear and simple words.

Education cultivates mind and character and enables students to have an integrated view of reality to grasp things as they are.

At the ITI, we practice the seminar method, in which the subject matter is not merely learned and reproduced, but is an event in which the content is discovered. Finally it is “digested” together in active pursuit of the truth, where discussion occurs between students and is guided by professors. Sometimes it may happen that teachers and students suddenly become aware of the truth of the matter “as if for the first time.” What seemed to be familiar to our understanding reveals itself anew, so that the mind is surprised by unexpected insight: an ancient truth reveals itself in a completely new light, as an actuality that is valid for today. Such experiences shape both the character and the mind of student and teacher, and they develop a sense for quality.

The Nature and Necessity of a Classical Education

As far as the education of the mind is concerned, it should be strengthened and guided into a balance that has its foundation in the holistic perspective of the Catholic worldview. Education cultivates mind and character and

enables students to have an integrated view of reality to grasp things as they are. It develops the ability to distinguish between truth and falsehood, to order things according to their real value. Education of the mind and character manifests itself in good sense, sobriety of thought, reasonableness, self-control, steadiness of view, and good actions. It develops the capacity of entering with comparative ease into any academic subject of thought, science, or profession, including „the digital world.“ This general education of the mind and soul is taught in the ITI’s liberal arts program. This program design drew on a foundational notion of universities in the Middle Ages. According to this understanding, the faculty of arts, *artes liberales*, had a guiding and governing role. It prepared students for higher courses of study such as theology, jurisprudence, and medicine. With this foundation, the ITI provides the age-old ideal of education which focuses on the mystery of the human being as a whole and, in fact, extends its attention to the transcendent realm – to the theological virtues.

The Goal of Education

In addition, a renewal is sought even for the study of theology itself, which stems from confrontation with Sacred Scripture, the works of the great masters of East and West, the holy theologians, and the saints. **This is our conviction:** for all the brilliance radiated by modern sciences, with their amazing achievements and their usefulness, as well as the talent and genius of some of their representatives – in the end, they will still not overthrow the sense-generating depth of classical education and the studies associated with it from the place they have occupied within education throughout the centuries.

The ITI tries to convey this “*sense-generating depth*” along with its contents in the heart of the Church through a threefold approach: Prayer and Liturgy, Study, and Community Life on campus. The harmony of these three is in itself an effective educational program, because prayer, learning, and a common Christian life inspire and flow into each other. They create a Christian

culture in which faith is effective through love. The fact that such an educational opportunity exists for young people today is a unique gift of Providence. The graduates of ITI’s programs are hope for both the world, wherever they act, and the Church. This not only because of their competence, orthodoxy, and willingness to serve Christ in the Church.

Much more, they have become a living hope and witnesses to the truth that the life that strives for holiness is profoundly meaningful.

„Holiness is the most beautiful face of the Church“
(Pope Francis in *Gaudete et Exultate*). ✂



The pursuit of the truth requires a fruitful discussion.

The Solution is Tradition

by the Dean, Dr. Michael Wladika

Introductory Remarks

People and communities today have many problems, with themselves and with each other. These problems, these unstable forms of self-perception, are directly reflected in endless discussions about education and training, in the ambiguity of the answers to the questions: „What is education for?“ And: „How do we educate?“

I summarize these problems here under the word combination „narcissism and nihilism“.

These problems can be overcome intellectually by recognizing that human beings only exist in double self-transcendence. They are not autonomous, but created. And they are not factually meaningless, but rather thought of and willed as something. And it is precisely this, i.e. what human beings are thought and willed to be, that is the non-arbitrarily existing content of education. This being thought and willed is not only there in being, but also in thinking and acting. Self-transcendence is therefore real in existing thought and action being taken up (via thinking and acting). This is the tradition. It only needs to be taken up. It solves all the problems of the present. The same applies to educational discussions: The strongest traditions, if they are taken up systematically, i.e. in such a way that they make present reality transparent, are therefore truly sources. „*Ad fontes*“ is the most important educational motto.

Narcissism and Nihilism

We are somehow also living in the present, so I will start with the unpleasant and end with the pleasant. In our secular late-modern

*„What is education for?“
And: „How do we educate?“*

age, many people see themselves as emancipated, emancipated from God and their neighbor. Many play God, want to be like God, presumably above all emotionally: *desertione, non participatione* (St. Augustine: *De civitate Dei* XXII 30).

However, humans are not first causes. Therefore, human autonomism is inhuman. Since it is also



Prof. Dr. Michael Wladika, Dean of the ITI

true here that nothing is hidden that will not be known (Luke 12:2), this is accompanied by certain problems.

Modern thinking begins with the results of alienation, the products of isolation and dualism. These are unusual and extraordinarily interesting, yet they begin systematically with unreality, i.e. hypothetically. They begin with pure ego without being, to point to Kant and the early Fichte as by far the most intellectually powerful icons of modern thought as such. If this is not transcended, reintegrated, and relativized, then the results must be disillusionment and more — also theoretically more, namely: subreption, regress and destruction. This is the lovely thing we have: Late modernity as a gigantic demolition enterprise, a reality-free self-fixation, intended, affirmed nullity.

Theologically, it is ultimately simple: humans in themselves are nothing — this is the content of nihilism. Taken by themselves, human beings are nothing — we are created from nothing. If we autonomize ourselves, then we are — nothing.

To form a human being according to the image that a human being has of himself according to his own ideas of humanity is only harmful. It leaves man at the mercy of arbitrariness. Arbitrariness, however, is free of content.

This absence of objective content, however, brings with it self-simplification, infantilization, and ridiculous narcissism. For those who seek their self-image in their views and products, there is no

longer any task or way to shape their own selves. The “culture” in which they then find themselves is therefore a “culture” of successive simplification of the human being.

In this way, people become uninteresting to themselves in a serious sense. They drift. The attempt to abolish alienation and boundaries in no way means a pleasant self-discovery, the emergence of an authentic self, a pleasant return from the aberrations of tradition, which is known to have always been wrong, but rather an automatic lowering of standards, simplification, infantilism.

All autonomism leads to the abolition of the human being. The softer emotional counterpart to this is that all narcissism also becomes boring. It is the subjective variant of the tedium of nihilism.

We are becoming strangers in a world of our own making (see E. Jünger: *Gläserne Bienen*, 1957). Some people who are not yet able to think this have now discovered it emotionally: A self-made world does not suit human beings precisely because they are not self-made.

Double Self-Transcendence

Human beings fundamentally exist only in double self-transcendence. They therefore only actualize themselves in love of God and love of neighbor. This is not purely a matter of an “ought” – of course we are made, intended, for love of God and love of neighbor, but it is also a matter of being. People do not exist outside of this twofold going beyond themselves.

Why? Why this non-stop self-transcendence of human beings? Why are people persons, i.e. not things, but — more or less — existing relations?

Because, on the one hand, human beings are not first causes and, on the other, they know themselves.

Human beings are not first causes: what is not first cause is first cause-dependent. In order to be able to grasp oneself as first cause-dependent, the distinction between God and oneself is necessary: He who knows himself knows his Father (Plotinus: *Ennead* VI 9). Human beings know themselves: that which is not first cause cannot recognize itself and thus

everything else automatically nor directly, but only indirectly.

It is impossible to find oneself as a human being through direct introspection. There is not a single example of this. Self-knowledge, however, is necessary for thinking beings. For without this, object cognition would also be impossible, i.e. all cognition. But to say that all cognition is impossible is self-contradictory.

There is a problem with self-centeredness, a theoretical one: radically conceived, it makes any self-perception impossible. Self-perception is necessary, but impossible directly. So, it must be indirect.

In order to be able to perceive oneself as a human being, it is therefore necessary to perceive at least one other human being and to identify with them in a distanced way. (Plato: *Alcibiades I*) Hence double dependence.

The fact that human beings are thinking and acting creatures is not something they invented. As in relation to everything that is created, here too the “ought” comes with the “is” and not after it or somehow separate from it.

One can think of the human being as flatter and less flat. Some believe that one can, indeed one should, think of him as completely flat: total nihilism is combined in a peculiar way with ready-made moral statements (see P. Handke: *Unter Tränen fragend*, 1999).

Some believe that man can be thought of in such a way that he comes along without any difference between “ought to be” and “is”, self-centeredness and other-centeredness, differentiation between past, present, and future (mere so-called facticity). However, this is something that does not exist. There is nothing that exists without a tendency to actualize, nothing that is not supposed to be something. It is impossible to say that anything exists without a



Studying at the ITI means the best answers, i.e. those of the most excellent thinkers, small classes, and instruction according to the seminar method

All autonomism leads to the abolition of the human being.

purpose, goal, or meaning. Such a statement would make it as unfounded as it would be inexpressible. And so people are not only somehow there, nihilistically, but they are also supposed to be something. The mission comes with being.

We Want to Think. And We Want to Act.

Both thinking and acting exist not only in different ways — according to the now no longer quite so exciting discoveries of the 20th century (see H. Blumenberg: *Wirklichkeiten, in denen wir leben*, 1981) — but on very different levels. Thinking as such, however, has a tendency towards complete conformity with being. And action tends to actualize the two forms of self-transcendence in love of God and love of neighbor.

We want to know what is, to think without external boundaries, and we want to act with excellence, as an end in itself, in such a way that we do not lose sight of the goal.

Unfortunately, the fact is that everything that is not pure reality and yet is still somewhat high-level has problems with realization. Hence upbringing. Hence education. Hence regulations. Hence laws. All of these are mediations between “being” and “ought.” All laws educate. Always. Unfortunately, even the bad ones.

A self-made world does not suit human beings precisely because they are not self-made.

These are all ways of mediating essence and reality, with all the accompanying problems.

If education, then as strong as possible. The solution is tradition, or at least includes it. It includes temporal

distance and — in large, relevant cases — also time-transcendence in terms of content. Even the former alone is something, because: The present seduces into exaggeration (J.W.v. Goethe: *Faust II* 1).

Time-Transcendence and Divine Historical Action

Human beings are not a momentary phenomenon. Neither are communities. Therefore, temporal distance is already something: it is practically a

falsification criterion if the historian dares to assume parallels between past and present (H. Krämer: *Collected Essays on Plato*, 2014).

Meanwhile, tradition is also always refreshingly out of date, unadapted.

Many live in a confused world, at least for them. They need the best theories of all, those of the superstars of thought. These provide the answers we need, because excellent thinking, in terms of content, also transcends time.

If someone thinks: Thinking and being are the same (Parmenides) or: What is, is a synthesis of unity and being (Plato) or: First-class existence is pure reality, pure presence, I am there (Aristotle), then there is always clarifying knowledge in it.

Or if someone remembers divine historical action and speech, then the reference to tradition which is established through education is in this case actually mediating the fundamental and the historical in an ultimately incarnational way.

Education must therefore never produce something new, something fashionable, or elegant nonsense. No one can solve theoretical and practical questions off the cuff. Nor do we have to. Tradition is there, essentially providing all the answers. If we don't incorporate it, we become momentary impressions.

Education must therefore never produce something new, something fashionable, or elegant nonsense.

Studying the authors and texts, the modes of action and ways of life that are the most consistent in themselves and the strongest in explanation to the outside world, this is the relation to tradition that also solves all the educational problems of the present.

Many people are constantly telling us what no longer „works“ today. That's all propaganda. The fact remains: the problems are those of the present; the solution is tradition. ✂





My way to the ITI

by Henry “Mac” Hunter

I first learned of the ITI from a Byzantine Catholic Abbot. We were sitting in the Abbot’s office after morning prayer, and I asked him whether he might have a recommendation for where I could pursue a Master’s degree in Sacred Theology. I was a recent convert to the Greek Catholic Church and would be graduating with a Bachelor’s degree in English Literature within the next few months. Without a moment’s hesitation, the Abbot suggested a small school in Austria named the International Theological Institute. He explained that the school would be a place where I would grow spiritually with its rich liturgical life and also intellectually with its strong academic standard. Now that it has been almost two years since I began my studies at the ITI, I could not be more grateful for the Abbot’s recommendation.



Henry “Mac” Hunter

As he suggested, the liturgical life at the ITI has indeed been fruitful for me. I have not only been immersed into the Eastern Rite through the many Byzantine services presided over by our Ruthenian Greek Catholic Chaplain, Father Juraj, but have also been able to experience the beauty of the Latin Rite through the many Roman masses offered on and near campus; moreover, the liturgical life at the ITI extends well beyond our chapel walls. Feasts are celebrated with an authenticity I would not have thought possible in the modern age; campus meals, dances, and even pilgrimages lift the Church’s liturgical calendar from a written costume into a lived reality.

In regard to academics, the ITI has also proved to be greatly edifying. During my propaedeutic year, I had the privilege of taking a variety of the ITI’s BA courses to prepare for the STM program. This preparatory year was valuable both for familiarizing me with philosophical disciplines such as Aristotelian and Platonic metaphysics and for allowing me to continue my studies in subjects such as Hebrew and Holy Scripture. Moreover, while the ITI’s curriculum is grounded upon a strongly Thomistic foundation, it has been a great joy to take complementary courses on subjects such as Neoplatonic philosophy, the Theology of St. John Paul II, and Eastern Patrology.

In addition to the courses themselves, it has also been a blessing to get to know many of the ITI professors over the past two years. Given the small class sizes and Socratic discussion-based pedagogy, it is easy to establish relationships with faculty in the classroom; nonetheless, it is not at all uncommon to pray alongside

them in the chapel or to break bread with them during common meals. In this way, it is a great privilege to not only learn from some of the brightest professors in the Catholic Church but to also develop personal relationships with them.

Finally, it is this communal aspect of the ITI that I think is worth reemphasizing. True to its founding mission, there have always been families on campus whose hospitality and stability greatly contribute to the campus culture. Furthermore, while the student body hails from around the world, the campus remains unified by a common way of life. It is rare for a week to pass that does not have at least one student-coordinated activity such as a hike, dance, or music night; I also find it truly remarkable that none of the campus activities are ever forced but rather arise from the initiative of the students themselves.

In short, I have been greatly blessed by my time here at the ITI and would certainly recommend this school to anyone looking for an authentically Catholic college experience at a traditional Thomistic institute. ✂



Mary Innerst

The Anthropological Implications of a Liberal Arts Education

by Mary Innerst

F*acts are to be possessed and used.* This was the attitude I held implicitly throughout a secular secondary education and into the first two years of community college. “Knowledge” was a conglomeration of strange *things* somewhere outside of me; if I was fortunate, they would cling superficially to me for a time. Truth was a cumbersome, awkwardly shaped reality that I had to force myself to bear. Each fact, which I considered someone else’s, had to be grasped as an alien object in my mind and I exhausted myself by tenaciously holding each individual fact, terrified of letting any slip through the sieve of my straining mind. It was like trying to cup water in my hands—as soon as I received them, they would already be leaking out and dripping into forgetfulness. Some of my professors denied any objective truths entirely, professing their truth, which made grasping and applying what they taught all the more difficult. I was juggling shadows; my only experience was what Dorothy Sayers describes in *The Lost Tools of Learning* in her account of the modern pragmatist approach to learning: “We have merely a set of complicated jigs, each of which will do but one task and no more... so that no man ever sees the work as a whole... They learn everything, except the art of learning.”

In short, what I learned was not connatural to me. It felt forced and foreign. It felt like a burden. I loved education for what I could do with it, for what I could get from it, but in the time before I arrived at ITI to study the Liberal Arts I never loved it for its own sake. Upon arriving in Trumau, I was quickly introduced to the benefits of the direct approach to primary sources and the importance of not relying on secondary accounts to substitute for first principles. As our professor and President, Dr. Dolna, is so keen to remind us, if one reads the original, “you cannot be lied to.” Intrigued by the prospect of this medieval approach to learning, I drew close to the first font, logical first principles and the arguments to be derived therefrom, and dove face-first into the sources set before me.

Upon arriving in Trumau, I was quickly introduced to the benefits of the direct approach to primary sources and the importance of not relying on secondary accounts to substitute for first principles.

I walked the halls of history, armed with assertions from primary sources. I internalized them, but in doing so encountered an objection, which in turn was answered by someone thinking with me hundreds, if not thousands of years ago, whose thoughts fit like a puzzle piece into my own thought, contributing to the picture that was forming.

We were led on these excursions by professors as guides, like Virgil leading Dante through the purgative realm to glimpse something of the eternal stars of virtue beyond. On and on it went, in each subject, until they began to converge, and I realized: all these arguments are in fact, just one. I could, without any fear of losing my footing, step back and survey the expansive horizon opening before me.

As I gradually learned to use the “tools of learning”, the mysterious formulation of Psalm 42 became an increasingly familiar experience to me: “deep calls to deep.” Something primeval, something deeper than my deepest self shifted; a mysterious transformation was taking place. It was as though I had discovered a new dimension within myself, a deep-seated identity with what I was reading. I had failed, all those years, to recognize the transcendently penetrating nature of knowledge. It is, in a mysterious way, part of me—permeating to the depths—and yet utterly beyond me. I was shocked to be confronted, not by a finite reality, but something infinite. I stared into the face of my Creator. St. Augustine addresses God in the midst of such an intimate encounter: “You were more inward to me than my most inward part and higher than my highest” (*Confessions* 3.6.11). It was here that I found myself approaching a second source, a deeper and sweeter source, a font that the Liberal Arts prepares us for and points to: the supernatural spring of Divine Wisdom itself.



I discovered a marvelous phenomenon: the human intellect, when it operates according to its proper function, it unfailingly leads to God, the First Cause. What do we do when we reach the limit of logical arguments, the outer limits of our natural faculties? We jump into the arms of faith. The setting for this leap of mine was ITI, as I graduated to the STM program, building on the solid foundation of the Liberal Arts. It became the meeting place for two aspects crucial for human flourishing, namely, intellectual and spiritual rigor. My days look something as follows: I leave class and jump directly into the arms of the Church’s sacramental life, comprised of Eastern and Western rites, breathing with both lungs, and what I have just learned takes supernatural root in my soul. I’ve gained a deep appreciation of the Eucharist especially, in which we are privileged to receive the real body of the very Truth Himself. I return to class, and the sources are illuminated by the liturgy just celebrated and in turn support my next experience in prayer. And so, the living cycle continues.

I spent five years at ITI partaking of these two fonts, “as a deer that longs for running streams,” one natural and the other supernatural. Such a double-contact is transformative—it sweeps the entire person, body, soul, and spirit, into one grand *reditus* in the very process of revealing his *exitus*. Education is not just a question of pure empirical knowledge, but a matter of anthropology. The human heart beats out the questions, *What am I? Who am I? Who am I for?* and stirs impatiently with the restlessness St. Augustine describes as only quieting when the heart rests in her identity in God. Knowing from Whom you came and to Whom you are going tells you what you are and how to act according to your nature. This is freedom. This is the “liberality” implied in the very name “Liberal Arts.”

Everything I learned in this process toward true freedom—yes, even all those seemingly disconnected facts that so troubled my earlier educational efforts—points to Christ, the *Logos*, Who, in turn, reveals something to me about myself. As Benedict XVI observed so beautifully: “*Jesus Christ is the personified Truth... Every other truth is a fragment of the Truth that he is and refers to Him.*” Learning is no longer a game of grasping at foreign objects with a utilitarian aim, but a living experience of coming to know myself and creation in relation to the Last End, as I strive to conform myself to Truth personified. “It is not I who live, but Christ who lives in me” (Gal 2:20). Isn’t this, after all, the ultimate goal of knowing anything? This is proper human education, an education which, in Sayers’ words, “looks to the end of the work,” namely to know and love God for all eternity. ✂

Knowing from Whom you came and to Whom you are going tells you what you are and how to act according to your nature. This is freedom. This is the “liberality” implied in the very name “Liberal Arts.”

News from ITI

ITI Summer Program 2025

Why should I attend?

The primary aim of ITI's Summer Program is to cultivate wisdom by fostering a sense of wonder about life's most profound questions. Together, we will explore these questions and their answers through the rich traditions of Catholic theology and classical liberal arts. Our journey toward wisdom will be deepened by the rich cultural heritage of Austria and the meaningful friendships formed along the way.

Who is invited?

We welcome all interested adults (18 and over), especially university students and their parents.

When does it take place?

Two week program in Trumau, Austria from Monday, June 30th to Friday, July 11th 2025
For more information see www.iti.ac.at/admissions/summer-program-2025



Romano Guardini in the year 1948

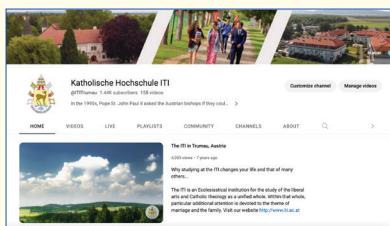
Man – A Project Aimed at Something Tremendous

Romano Guardini's Perspective on Christian Anthropology
May 31 – June 1, 2024

Joint Conference of the ITI Catholic University and the Philosophical-Theological College of Benedict XVI in Heiligenkreuz.

This conference engaged the thought of Romano Guardini who was one of the few truly significant and enduring theologians of the 20th century. His teaching on humanity reflects the profound classical understanding that is fundamental to Western civilization.

Talks and lectures are available online on the ITI homepage at www.iti.ac.at as well as at www.youtube.com/@StiftHeiligenkreuz1133



Like and Subscribe!

Visit the ITI's YouTube Channel
<https://www.youtube.com/user/ITITrumau>
to see lectures, conferences, and talks held at the ITI





“... for I have called you friends.” (Jn 15:15)

A Celebration in Honor of Cardinal Christoph Schönborn

January 28, 2025

We are celebrating the 80th birthday of our esteemed Grand Chancellor, His Eminence Christoph Cardinal Schönborn, on the feast day of our patron, St. Thomas Aquinas. There could be no more fitting connection, especially since he himself is also a friar of the Dominican Order and since he will lecture on how important it is to study the writings of the Doctor Angelicus.

For twenty-eight years, Cardinal Schönborn has guided and accompanied the ITI as a good shepherd, who possesses a remarkable vision for the study of theology and love for holiness in doing so. He is our protector, teacher, and friend—and will remain so!

This is a special day and a historic moment for the ITI. Join us in prayer and celebration!

ITI through the Eyes of a Benefactor

Chris Cole, originally from Wales and currently residing in the USA, he also maintains a home on the Isle of Man—a small island in the middle of the Irish Sea, where, on a clear day, you can see Wales, England, Ireland, and Scotland! A longstanding supporter of the ITI, he recently shared his insights with us, explaining the reasons for his unwavering support.

„During my first visit to Austria and the ITI, I had a truly wonderful experience. What I witnessed made me think, this is it, this is education, and education is a powerful thing. It prepares people for a better life, and this is the real motivation for giving: to be associated with young people who strive to be better than average.

The experience was overwhelmingly positive, as I encountered an environment where young people are treated with respect and dignity. I also appreciate the way the ITI is repurposing the castle, preserving its history rather than demolishing something that no longer seems to fit. ITI is breathing new life into it—a small side note, perhaps, but a commendable effort nonetheless. Similarly, the renewed use of the castle gardens is a double blessing: not only does it provide an opportunity for the caretakers to hone their skills and grow as a person, but the university also benefits from the fresh produce grown there.

Knowing you and the ITI has been an incredibly uplifting experience. It has been truly wonderful and inspiring. I have enjoyed giving to other charities, like the Red Cross, but when you give to the ITI, it is more specific. It is profoundly rewarding to know that the contributions positively impact specific lives—like the students I’ve seen around the campus. That sense of making a tangible difference is what truly matters.“



Chris Cole with ITI Finance Director Sebastian Hoogewerf at a pilgrimage

ITI USA - Successful Support from Another Continent

“As the Philosopher says in the beginning of the Metaphysics, it is the business of the wise man to order. The reason for this is that wisdom is the most powerful perfection of reason whose characteristic is to know order”. (Commentary of St. Thomas Aquinas on Aristotle’s Metaphysics).

On September 29-30, the ITI USA Board, a number of ITI Alumni and a few invited Catholic leaders gathered in Dallas, Texas to consider wisdom in action. The University of Dallas graciously granted the use of the Church of the Incarnation and their new board room in SB Hall for our first annual ITI USA summit. We convened for three reasons and one purpose. The three reasons were the annual ITI USA Board meeting, seeking Alumni perspective and inviting collaboration with other Catholic leaders. Our purpose was to begin the conversation about Catholic leadership: wisdom to know order. We spent time discussing St. Thomas’s thoughts on leadership while discussing Board, Alumni and Catholic collaboration considerations.

We were joined by the Most Reverend Salvatore J. Cordileone, Archbishop of San Francisco. The archbishop is an advisor to the ITI Board and a new Board member of the ITI USA. Dr. Michael Waldstein was also able to join the gathering and was elected to the ITI USA Board as well.

We will continue to consider Catholic leadership, specifically as it pertains to the ITI’s commitment to “the study of Catholic theology as a unified whole within which particular attention is devoted to the theme of marriage and the family”. In pursuing the intellectual vocation, the ITI recognizes that “it requires penetration and continuity and methodical effort, so as to attain a fulness of development which will correspond to the call of the Spirit, and to the resources that it has pleased him to bestow on us”. (A.G. Sertillanges, O.P., *The Intellectual Life*). Forming wise leaders for the world does not happen by chance.

The ITI USA has initiated the North America Project which is actively working to re-engage ITI alumni, reconnect with ITI supporters and recruit new students and supporters. ITI USA will continue to work to advance the mission of the ITI in and through North America. Whether through hosted presentations, Austrian Balls, leader gatherings, seeking new supporters, establishing online forums or organizing alumni reunions, it is important to increase awareness of and collaboration with the ITI in North America. We hope to gather in Dallas next Fall for our first annual ITI Alumni Reunion. Praying that Cardinal Schönborn will be able to join us. We will keep you posted. ✂



ITI USA Board, alumni and friends gathered at the annual meeting in Dallas



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