

ERIK J. VAN VERSENDAAL

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University of St. Thomas
3800 Montrose Boulevard
Houston, TX 77006

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

- 2024- University of St. Thomas
Associate Professor of Humanities, Core Fellow
Director of the Core (2025-)
Associate Division Dean of Core and Centers for Excellence (2024-25)
- 2019-24 Magdalen College of the Liberal Arts
Professor of Philosophy & Humanities
Academic Dean (2023-24)

DEGREES

- 2019 Ph.D. in Theology
Pontifical John Paul II Institute at the Catholic University of America
Letting Be: Ferdinand Ulrich on Freedom as the Fruitfulness of Being
Director: D.C. Schindler
- 2011 M.A. in Theology
Villanova University
No One Has Ever Seen God (Jn 1:18): The Phenomenon of Revelation and the Perception of Faith, a Study in the Christology of Jean-Luc Marion
- 2007 B.A. in Philosophy & English (double major)
Boston College

PART-TIME ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

- 2022-24 St. Bernard's School of Theology and Ministry
Adjunct Professor, MA in Catholic Philosophy Program
- 2015-19 Georgetown University
Professorial Lecturer, Department of Theology & Religious Studies

OTHER EDUCATION

- 2016-17 Universität Regensburg
Visiting Doctoral Researcher
- 2007-08 University of St. Mary of the Lake/Mundelein Seminary
Pre-Theology Program (for Archdiocese of Kansas City, KS)

RESEARCH AND TEACHING INTERESTS

AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

Philosophical & Theological Anthropology, Philosophy of Religion, Christology & Ecclesiology

AREAS OF COMPETENCE

Greek Philosophy, Catholic Metaphysics, German Idealism, Soteriology, Aesthetics & Poetics

PUBLICATIONS

In Progress

“Full of Gods: The Imaginative Universal in Platonic Tragedy and Comedy”

To appear in *Desmond and his Others*, ed. Brendan Thomas Sammon and Paul Camacho.

“Legacy of the Father: Platonic Writing and the Maker’s Desire to Multiply”

To appear in *Communio: International Catholic Review*.

Book Chapters

“A New Creation: The Wonder of Innocence in Shakespeare’s *The Winter’s Tale*”

Accepted, forthcoming in *The Intimate Strangeness of Poetry*, ed. Steven E. Knepper (Cascade Books).

“I in Them, Thou in Me: The Agapeic Community as Exceedingly Whole”

In *A Heart of Flesh: William Desmond and the Bible*, ed. Steven E. Knepper (Cascade Books, 2024): 103-122.

Peer-Reviewed Articles

“God-Beloved: Storytelling as a Method of Discovery and Renewal in *Phaedrus*”

Forthcoming in *Communio: International Catholic Review*.

“Man the Measured: The Socratic Exemplar of the Teacher’s Calling to Magnify”

In *Communio: International Catholic Review* 52.2 (Summer 2025): 355-394.

“The Delivering Word: Dialogue as Coauthorship of Reality”

In *Communio: International Catholic Review* 50.3 (Fall 2023): 494-552.

“The Whole in the Fragment: The Vocations of Philosopher and Poet for the Salvation of the World”

In *Communio: International Catholic Review* 49.4 (Winter 2022): 677-703.

“Memory Eternal: Fruitful Death as the Form of Personal Mediation (Pt. 2)”

In *Communio: International Catholic Review* 48.2 (Fall 2021): 597-627.

“Memory Eternal: Fruitful Death as the Form of Personal Mediation (Pt. 1)”

In *Communio: International Catholic Review* 48.1 (Spring 2021): 52-91.

“*Plenitudo Fontalis*: Love’s Groundless Yes and the Grateful Originality of Nature”

In *Communio: International Catholic Review* 46.1 (Spring 2019): 134-181.

“Reason for Being: Festivity, Perfection, and the ‘Very Good’”

In *Communio: International Catholic Review* 44.3 (Fall 2017): 502-558.

Conference Proceedings

“The Symbolism of Love: Use as Praise in St. Augustine’s Doctrine of Creation”

In *Studia Patristica* LXXXVIII, Vol. 14 (2017): “*Latreia and Idolatry: Augustine and the Quest for Right Relationship*,” ed. Paul Camacho, Veronica Roberts: 21-33.

“Beheld by Beauty: Jean-Luc Marion’s Christological Definition of Truth”

In *Proceedings of the Villanova University Theology Institute: Conference on Truth and Mystery*, Vol. XLIII (2013).

Books In Progress

The Fruitfulness of Being: Ferdinand Ulrich on the Gift of Universal Responsibility (Book Manuscript)

Ferdinand Ulrich, *Gift and Forgiveness: A Contribution toward a Biblical Ontology*

Translation of *Gabe und Vergebung. Ein Beitrag zur Biblische Ontologie* (832 pages),

In progress, commissioned by Humanum Academic Press.

Online Essays

“Bearers of Communion: Reality Remembered in the Home”

In *Humanum: Issues in Family, Culture & Science* 2022, Issue One: 3-10.

“Many Tongues, One Spirit: How Language is Natively Catholic”

In *Humanum: Issues in Family, Culture & Science* 2020, Issue One: 21-28.

“A Gift for Doing Nothing: Ordering Play, Liberating Work”

In *Humanum: Issues in Family, Culture & Science* 2017, Issue Three: 39-48.

“The Discovery of Freedom: Education and the Work of the Child”

Co-Authored with Micheala van Versendaal.

In *Humanum: Issues in Family, Culture & Science* 2015, Issue Four: 66-89.

Translations from German

Hans Urs von Balthasar, “A Commentary on John Paul II’s *Dominum et Vivificantem*”

In *Communio: International Catholic Review* 47.4 (Winter 2020): 839-861.

Gustav Siewerth, “The Life-Giving Word: Gustav Siewerth on Language”

Excerpt from Gustav Siewerth, *Philosophie der Sprache*.

In *Humanum: Issues in Family, Culture & Science* 2020, Issue Four: 3-6.

Stefan Oster, “Of the Love that is ‘For Nothing’: In Honor of Ferdinand Ulrich”

In *Communio: International Catholic Review* 47.3 (Fall 2020): 570-576.

Eckhard Nordhofen, “What Bread Is This? What Bread This Is!”

In *Communio: International Catholic Review* 44.1 (Spring 2017): 43-71.

Ferdinand Ulrich, “Giving Time: The Trinitarian Origin of Created Spatio-Temporality”
 Excerpt from Ferdinand Ulrich, *Gabe und Vergebung. Ein Beitrag zur Biblische Ontologie*.
 In *Communio: International Catholic Review* 43.3 (Fall 2016): 484-487.

Ferdinand Ulrich, “‘Once Upon a Time’: Preserving the Past in a Present Open to the Future”
 Excerpt from Ferdinand Ulrich, *Erzählter Sinn. Ontologie der Selbstwerdung in der Bilderwelt des Märchens*.
 In *Communio: International Catholic Review* 43.3 (Fall 2016): 488-520.

Book Reviews

Jean-Louis Chretien, *The Call and the Response*.
 In *Humanum: Issues in Family, Culture & Science* 2020, Issue Three: 47-50.

Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations*.
 In *Humanum: Issues in Family, Culture & Science* 2019, Issue Two: 56-60.

Jean-Luc Marion, *In the Self's Place: The Approach of Saint Augustine*.
 In *Augustinian Studies* Vol. 45, No. 1 (2013): 103-106.

Original Poetry

“The Bonfire at Tiberias”
 In *Dappled Things* Vol. 15, Issue 1: Candlemas 2020.

ACADEMIC EVENTS AND PANELS ORGANIZED

2026	Commemorating St. Francis Conference Co-Organizer, University of St. Thomas
2024	Personalism and Communio Metaphysics Colloquium Co-Organizer, Sponsored by Hildebrand Project, St. Bernard’s School of Theology and Ministry
2023	Colloquium on Catholicism and the Liberal Arts Organizer, Magdalen College of the Liberal Arts
2020-21	Seven Centuries of the Sacred Poem: A Celebration of the Divine Comedy (<i>Anno di Dante</i>) Organizer, Magdalen College of the Liberal Arts
2019	Dante and Philosophy (Conference) Co-organizer, Villanova University Featuring keynote addresses by Denys Turner and Vittorio Montemaggi
2018-24	Creative Fidelity: Dialogues in the Tradition Patristic, Medieval, Renaissance Conference, Villanova University Annual Workgroup (Multiple panels per year)

2012 Truth and Mystery: A Conference on Faith and Reason
Co-organizer, Theology Institute, Villanova University
Featuring keynote addresses by William Desmond and Jean-Luc Marion

LECTURES AND PRESENTATIONS

Invited Academic Lectures

“Creation in Travail: The World Remembered among the Communion of Saints”
St. Patrick’s Theological Colloquium, St. Patrick’s Seminary, Fall 2025

“The Most Imitative Animal: The Person as the End of Art?”
Hillsdale College, Spring 2024

“Freedom to Say Yes: The Joy of Dante Alighieri”
Assumption University, Spring 2022

“Seeing Even as I am Seen: The Glory of Beatrice’s Smile”
Encountering Dante’s Beatrice, University of Leeds, Summer 2021

Academic Conference Papers

“Thinking at its Best: Aristotle on Speech within the Common Life of Friends”
American Catholic Philosophical Association, University of Notre Dame, Fall 2025

“The Kingliness of a Child at Play: Plato and Desmond on the Family Between Self and City”
American Catholic Philosophical Association, University of Notre Dame, Fall 2025

“The Art of Setting Free: Rhetoric and Augustine’s Charity in Writing the *Confessions*”
Patristic, Medieval, and Renaissance Conference, Villanova University, Fall 2025

“The Fullness of Christ: Augustine on Corporate Personality and the Personhood of the Church”
Academy of Catholic Theology Conference, Dominican House of Studies, Spring 2025

“Tradition as a Dialogue: The Mission of Remembrance in Dante and Eliot”
Patristic, Medieval, and Renaissance Conference, Villanova University, Fall 2024

“Soul Writ Large: The Analogy between Person and Community”
Hildebrand Project Colloquium on Personalism and Communio Metaphysics, St. Bernard’s
School of Theology and Ministry, Fall 2024

“Charity Created and Uncreated: The Eucharistic Consummation and Trinitarian Exemplar of
Secondary Causality”
Metaphysics Colloquium, Saint Anselm College, Summer 2024

“The Spiritual Womb: Ferdinand Ulrich on Fatherhood as Divine-Human Traditioning”
American Catholic Philosophical Association, University of St. Thomas (Houston), Fall 2023

“Loving Oneself *as* Another: Plato, Aristotle, and Augustine on Standing for and with Community”
American Catholic Philosophical Association, University of St. Thomas (Houston), Fall 2023

- “Learning by Heart: Plato on the Letter as Re-cord of Reality”
50th Anniversary Colloquium, Magdalen College of the Liberal Arts, Fall 2023
- “The Swan Song: Philosophical Midwifery as a Discipline of Hopeful Dying in *Phaedo* and *Paradiso*”
Patristic, Medieval, and Renaissance Conference, Villanova University, Fall 2022
- “Formed in and for Communion: The Lay Vocation of the Philosopher in the Salvation of the World”
Catholicity as Gift and Task, St. Bernard’s School of Theology and Ministry, Fall 2022
- “Generative Power: Aquinas on the Mediation of Divine Life by Natural and Miraculous Efficient Causality”
Sacra Doctrina Project, Thomas Aquinas College, Summer 2022
- “Wondrous Exchange: Ferdinand Ulrich on Dialogue as the House of Being”
American Catholic Philosophical Association, St. Louis University, Fall 2021
- “Beloved First: St. Anselm’s Amen on Nietzsche’s Behalf”
Patristic, Medieval, and Renaissance Conference, Villanova University, Fall 2021
- “*Our* Kingdom Come: Fleshless Mediation and the Idol of Self-Generating Community after Kant and Hegel”
Symposium on Advancing the New Evangelization, Benedictine College, Spring 2021
- “Beginning from *I Am*: Augustine Mediating Aristotle and Kierkegaard on Interpersonal Selfhood and Intrapersonal Communion”
Patristic, Medieval, and Renaissance Conference, Villanova University, Fall 2020
- “No Longer I Who Live: Graceful Conversation as Mediated Selving in Dante’s *Paradiso*”
Philosophy & the Divine Comedy, Villanova University, Fall 2019
- “Love Seeks Not Its Own: Augustine’s *Caritas* and the Exorcism of Hegelian *Geist*”
Patristic, Medieval, and Renaissance Conference, Villanova University, Fall 2019
- “Instruments of our Salvation: Artifice and Human Perfection”
Symposium on Advancing the New Evangelization, Benedictine College, Spring 2019
- “No Good Divinity: Reading *King Lear* with Ferdinand Ulrich”
Patristic, Medieval, and Renaissance Conference, Villanova University, Fall 2018
- “*I In-you* as *You In-me*: Communicating Communion in Dante’s *Paradiso*”
International Congress on Medieval Studies, Western Michigan University, Spring 2018
- “Merciful as Your Father: Augustine’s Doxological Naming in the Practice of Brotherly Love”
Patristic, Medieval, and Renaissance Conference, Villanova University, Fall 2017
- “The Grain of Wheat: Being, Mercy, and the Vicarious Form of Freedom”

Catholic Theological Society of America (Hans Urs von Balthasar Society), Summer 2016

“Creation as Mercy: Aquinas on Being and Salvation”

Patristic, Medieval, and Renaissance Conference, Villanova University, Fall 2015

“The Symbolism of Love: The Use of Signs as Praise of God in St. Augustine’s Doctrine of Creation”

International Conference on Patristic Studies, Oxford University, Summer 2015

“St. Thomas Aquinas on Divine and Human Begetting: Causality, Filiation, and the Analogy of Personhood”

Patristic, Medieval, and Renaissance Conference, Villanova University, Fall 2014

“Grace is Poured Upon Your Lips: Nuptial Soteriology and the Voice of the Bridegroom Christ in St. Augustine’s *Enarrationes in Psalmos*”

Patristic, Medieval, and Renaissance Conference, Villanova University, Fall 2013

“Our High Priest in the Heavenly Tabernacle: The Glorified Christ as Exemplar and Mediator in Aquinas”

Patristic, Medieval, and Renaissance Conference, Villanova University, Fall 2011

“The Childlikeness of the Father: Péguy and Balthasar on Divine Humility”

Center of Ethics and Culture Conference, University of Notre Dame, Fall 2010

“In Him it is Always Yes: Divine and Human Freedom in Maximus Confessor and Hans Urs von Balthasar”

Patristic, Medieval, and Renaissance Conference, Villanova University, Fall 2010

“The Intimacy of Truth and Involvement of the Heart: Reason in the Philosophy of Dietrich von Hildebrand”

Hildebrand Project Conference, Pontificia Università della Santa Croce, Rome, Spring 2010

“Here I am! What Luck!: Gift and Availability in Gabriel Marcel and Jean-Luc Marion”

Conference on Catholic Philosophy, Franciscan University of Steubenville, Spring 2008

Public-Facing and Popular Lectures and Seminars

“The Written Word as Medium of Reality”

Friends of Doherty Library Faculty Lecture Series, Doherty Library, Fall 2026 [Anticipated]

“The Third Between Us: The Presence of Christ in the Procreative Good of Sacramental Marriage”

Theology of the Body Club, University of St. Thomas, Spring 2026

“A Foretaste of the Feast: Dante on Fasting as the Quickening of Desire.”

Lenten Lecture Series, University of St. Thomas Theology Department, Spring 2026

“Is Love Cringe?: The Risk of Desire in Plato and Pieper”

Philosophy Club Symposium, University of St. Thomas Philosophy Department, Spring 2026

“The Liberality of Honor in Homer and Aristotle”

Catholic Home Educators Collective, Houston (CHECH), Spring 2026

“Dante on Jesus’ Resurrection and Our Hope”

Theology Club, University of St. Thomas, Fall 2025

“Entering the Cloud: Reading a Literary Classic as an Exercise in Faith”

Adult Forum, Our Lady of Walsingham Parish, Fall 2025

“The Teacher’s Contemplation of the Student in Plato’s *Phaedrus*”

Teacher In-Service, Cathedral High School, Fall 2025

“Common Personhood: Why did Augustine Write *Confessions*?”

QQC Homeschooling Group, Summer 2025

“Plato on Play and Story as Foundational for the Good Life”

Honors Program, University of St. Thomas, Fall 2024

“Finitude and the End of Art”

Friday Night Lecture, Magdalen College of the Liberal Arts, Spring 2024

“Remembering in Hope: Festal Conversation and *Paradiso*’s Mystagogy of Joy”

Anno di Dante Lecture, Magdalen College of the Liberal Arts, Fall 2020

Humanities Faculty Panel Lectures, Magdalen College of the Liberal Arts

“*Il Punto Fisso*: Being at Home While in Exile,” Spring 2024

“Treasures Old and New: Ancient Memory in the Church’s Inheritance,” Fall 2023

“Festivity as Politics in Plato’s *Symposium*,” Spring 2023

“Myth and Meaning: Socrates as Fulfillment of the Homeric Hero,” Fall 2022

“The Ever Womanly: Beauty and Dante’s Desire for Immortality,” Spring 2021

UNIVERSITY SERVICE

University of St. Thomas

Administrative Positions

Director of the Core (2025-)

Associate Division Dean of Core and Centers for Excellence (2024-2025)

Search Committees

Search Committee Member for Core Fellow in Theology (2024-25)

Committee Membership

Faculty Senate: Faculty Awards Committee (2025-26)

Organizing Committee, Commemorating St. Francis (2025-26)

Chair, Sub-Committee for Core Media Project (2026)

Chair, Sub-Committee for Fine Arts Core Curriculum Review (2025-26)

Member, Sub-Committee for Theology Core Curriculum Review (2025-26)

Chair, Sub-Committee for Fine Arts Core Curriculum Review (2024-25)

Member, Sub-Committee for Philosophy Core Curriculum Review (2024-25)

Events

Seminar Leader, Merit & Mission recruitment event, Liberal Learning Track (2026)

St. Bernard's School of Theology and Ministry

Comprehensive Exam Reader for MA in Catholic Philosophy (2025)

Magdalen College of the Liberal Arts

Administrative Positions

Ex Officio Member of the Board of Trustees (2023-24)

Academic Dean (2023-24)

Search Committees

Search Committee Member for Theology Faculty (2021-22)

Search Committee Member for College President (2020-21)

Committee Membership

Chair of Instruction Committee (2023-24)

Member of Instruction Committee (2020-24)

Coordinator of Humanities Program (2021-24)

Advising

Director of 20+ Senior Theses (2019-2024)

Faculty Advisor for St. Genesius Theater Troupe (2019-24)

OTHER PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Communio: International Catholic Review

Member of the Editorial Board, 2023-present

Editorial Assistant, 2013-23

First Things Intellectual Retreat, New York City (Annual)

Seminar Leader, 2019-23

Dante's Theology: An International Seminar on Theological Dimensions of Dante's Work
Seminar Participant, 2013, University of Notre Dame Summer Seminar (Israel)

MEMBERSHIP

Academy of Catholic Theology (ACT)
American Catholic Philosophical Association (ACPA)
Sacra Doctrina Project (SDP)

GRANTS, FELLOWSHIPS, AWARDS

2026 St. Thomas Aquinas Excellence in Teaching Award, Nominee
University of St. Thomas

2025, 2026 Faculty Development Awards
Full conference travel support at University of St. Thomas

2022 Hildebrand Project Summer Grant for Research in Personalist Philosophy

2016, 2019 College Honors Banquet at Georgetown University
Recognition of student-nominated Georgetown faculty for excellence in teaching

2012-17 McGivney Scholarship at the John Paul II Institute
Full tuition and stipend for PhD Program in Theology

2016 Catholic Theological Society of America (CTSA) Dolores L. Christie Scholarship
Travel stipend to CTSA Conference

2009-11 Connelly Chair Research Scholarship at Villanova University
Full tuition and stipend for MA Program in Theology

LANGUAGE PROFICIENCIES

German	Advanced Reading, Intermediate Speaking and Writing
Spanish	Intermediate Reading, Speaking, and Writing
Latin, Biblical Greek, French	Reading Competency

TEACHING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS

MA in Evangelization and Culture

EVNG-5304 Christology for Evangelists

Department of the Core

ARTSC 3301 Art & Contemplation

ENGLC 2301 Medieval and Renaissance Imagination

ENGLC 1301 Classical Imagination

PHILC 2301 Ethics

THEOC 3301 Return to God

THEOC 2301 Scripture and Salvation History

THEOC 1301 Faith, Reason, and Revelation

Freshman Symposium—1 credit

UNIV 1111 Transcendence in Film

TEACHING AT MAGDALEN COLLEGE OF THE LIBERAL ARTS

Philosophy Major—Upper-level seminars

PHIL 406 Lifetime and Tradition (Philosophical Anthropology)

PHIL 405 Spirit and Institution (Political Philosophy)

PHIL 404 Person and Community (Philosophical Anthropology)

PHIL 403 Freedom and the Good (Ethics)

PHIL 402 God and Being (Metaphysics)

PHIL 401 Word and Truth (Epistemology)

Humanities—6 credits, multiple instructors, lecture and seminar

HUM 402 Late Modernity & Postmodernity

HUM 401 American Studies

HUM 302 The Dialectics of Modernity

HUM 301 Renaissance & Reformation

HUM 202 The Middle Ages

HUM 201 Rome & the Middle Ages

HUM 102 Ancient World II (Aristotle & the Tragedians)

HUM 101 Ancient World I (Plato & Homer)

Theology Sequence

THL 401 Theology of Love

THL 302 Moral Theology

THL 301 Sacred Scripture: New Testament

THL 201 The Creed

THL 102 Sacraments and Prayer

Honors Colloquia—1 credit per semester

Form and Splendor: Nature and Spirit in the Arts

Beauty and Artistic Form I & II

Other

Nature of Man (co-taught)

Directed Independent Studies—1 credit per semester

Memory and Desire (Soteriology)

Hegel's *Science of Logic*

Collegiate Summer Program—1 credit

Friendship

Myth in Philosophy

**TEACHING AT ST. BERNARD'S SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AND MINISTRY
MA in Catholic Philosophy (Online)**

CP 661	Ethics	2024
CP 621	Philosophy of Nature	2023
CP 611	Ancient Philosophy	2022
CP 435	Art of Education: Natural and Artificial Intelligence	2024

TEACHING AT THE JOHN PAUL II INSTITUTE

The Gift as Given: An Introduction to Ferdinand Ulrich	2019
Four-session, non-credit mini-seminar for graduate students (MTS, STL, and PhD)	

TEACHING AT GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY**Theology and Religious Studies**

THEO 119	Paradise, Sacrifice, Festivity	2019
THEO 101	Creation, Liturgy, Work	2016
THEO 001	Problem of God	2015-2019 (8x)