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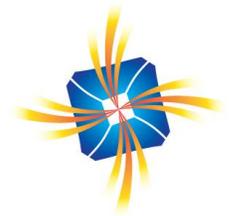
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WASHINGTON - Marc J. DelMonico, 40, recently received his Ph.D. in Systematic Theology from the School of Theology and Religious Studies at The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. His doctoral dissertation examines the understandings of the church in the writings of two contemporary North American Roman Catholic theologians, Gregory Baum (b. 1923) and Fr. Patrick Granfield, OSB (1930-2014). The work analyzes how both men draw upon the primary understanding of the church expressed in the teaching of the Second Vatican Council of the 1960s, namely, that the church is, first and foremost, a spiritual community of believers united and empowered by the grace of God.

DelMonico examines the complementary scholarship of Baum and Granfield with respect to this understanding of the church and their related efforts to encourage fresh examinations of the church's engagement with the world in dialogue and action. He also analyzes their proposals for the updating of the Catholic Church's internal governing structures in ways which reflect what they view as the ecclesiology of communion articulated by the Council.

Baum, a German-Canadian theologian, is widely known for his work at Vatican II, where he was instrumental in the drafting process of *Nostra Aetate*, a major declaration which opened new pathways for constructive dialogue and engagement between the Catholic Church and non-Christian religions, especially Judaism. (2016 marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the declaration's promulgation.) The author of over twenty books, Baum also is known for his pioneering work promoting ecumenical dialogue and cooperation among the Christian churches, as well as his interdisciplinary studies combining Catholic theology with insights from the social sciences. Fr. Granfield, a U.S. academic, was involved in similar ecumenical work and investigations of the church from the perspective of sociology. He authored several books examining the historical origins of the office of the pope and bishops and utilized tools of analysis from the social sciences in an effort to promote the Council's call for greater shared responsibility in the church between clergy and laity.

In summarizing his examination of the works of these two theologians within the framework of the themes of "communion," "communication" and "conflict," DelMonico noted his work's significance for contemporary Catholic theology in particular: "Baum reflected on these three realities with respect to the church's life and mission to the world. He has articulated a demanding call for members of the Catholic Church and all Christian communions to cultivate a spiritual and social disposition which prioritizes concrete relationships, dialogue and prophetic witness in the ongoing search for truth, together with and unflinching social analysis of all forms of oppression and alienation, even within the churches themselves. Granfield reflected on these same three themes



with an emphasis on their importance for the future of the church's institutional life and a similar openness to, in his words, 'seek truth no matter where it may be found' and, once understood, to act upon it accordingly. He recognized that genuine communion in the life of the church would only be effective to the extent that the structures which comprise it are truly based on practices which concretely demonstrate and value the contribution of the gifts of all people in the church."

DelMonico indicates in the work that his own analysis of the complementarity of the theologies of these two men provides three important insights for the church's life today: "First, the reality of communion in the church must always be expressed in concrete patterns and practices, so that it does not become an ineffective abstract notion. Second, communication in the church is not simply about the imparting of doctrine and teaching, but involves the sharing of the whole person, as God has shared divine life totally with us through Christ. Third, conflict in the church need not be seen as destructive. With a proper social analysis for understanding their causes, tensions and conflicts in the life of the church can be attended to in a way which strengthens communion and does not undermine it. By their attention to these three realities in the church, both Baum and Granfield have provided important reflections, not only on how the church lives and functions, but on how it can remain faithful to its divine calling and mission in a continually challenging and complex era."

Dr. DelMonico is a life-long beneficiary of Catholic education. He attended Catholic grade school and junior high school in his hometown of Utica, NY before graduating from Notre Dame High School, Utica, in 1993 as class valedictorian. He again graduated at the top of his class from Saint Bonaventure University with a B.A. in Theology and Philosophy, and a minor in Justice, Peace, and Conflict Studies. After several years of Catholic lay ministry service at a parish in Utica and a Franciscan-run soup kitchen in Philadelphia, Pa., he continued his theological studies and received, in 2006, a Master of Divinity degree and a Master of Arts degree in systematic theology, with distinction, from the Washington Theological Union, Washington, D.C., one of a handful of lay students to simultaneously complete both degrees in the history of the school. He also received the Washington Theological Consortium's Certificate in Ecumenical Studies in 2008. During his doctoral studies, Marc studied with and was guided through part of his academic program by Granfield, before the latter's retirement and unexpected death in 2014.

While pursuing doctoral studies, DelMonico has served as a ministry and liturgical consultant with a number of parishes, Catholic religious communities and advocacy organizations. He has also taught in the Education for Parish Service program for the Archdiocese of Washington. In 2012, he co-founded a website design and online digital communications studio, Perisphere Media ([PerisphereMedia.com](http://PerisphereMedia.com)), at which he serves as Partner and Executive Producer. The studio presently boasts a team of 10 professionals and over 50 small business and nonprofit clients from across the country.

Dr. DelMonico looks forward to continuing his consultation and business activities while pursuing full-time academic work in theology. He will soon launch a new portfolio website for his consultation services and academic activities at [churchMD.com](http://churchMD.com).