

Our Distinguished Panelists

44th Faculties' Convocation of WTC



Rev. James Dominic Brent, O.P. is an Assistant Professor of Philosophy on the Pontifical Faculty of the Immaculate Conception (PFIC) at the Dominican House of Studies. He earned the Ph.D in philosophy from St. Louis University and the STB from the PFIC. Previously he taught in the school of philosophy at Catholic University of America. Fr. James has been a Dominican Friar for ten years and was ordained a priest in 2010. He has several publications on the epistemology and rationality of faith, especially in the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas.



Rick Elgendy is a visiting professor of Public Theology at Wesley Theological Seminary. He earned his Ph.D from the University of Chicago. Rick studies the connections between Christian conviction and action in contemporary society, using systematic and political theologies, social ethics, and critical theory. He is a contributing author and editor of the collection, *Renegotiating Power, Theology, and Politics* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2015), and is preparing a book manuscript, entitled *Life Among the Powers: A Political Spirituality of Complicity and Resistance*.



Harold Dean Trulear (Dean) is Associate Professor of Applied Theology at Howard University School of Divinity. A graduate of Morehouse College, Dean earned his Ph.D from Drew University. His professional associations include the Correctional Ministries and Chaplains Association, Just Leadership USA and Community Corrections for Youth. He directs a national project called "Healing Communities USA," mobilizing congregations to support those returning from incarceration. With Charles Lewis and W. Wilson Goode, he is co-editor of the book *Ministry with Prisoners and Families: The Way Forward* (Judson Press 2011).



Moderator

Dr. Elisabeth (Lisa) Kimball is the Associate Dean of Lifelong Learning, the Director of the Center for the Ministry of Teaching, and Professor of Christian Formation and Congregational Leadership at Virginia Theological Seminary. She is chair of the department of Practical Theology. She earned a Ph.D and a M.E. in Education from the University of Minnesota. Prior to VTS, Lisa was on the faculty of the College of Education at the University of Minnesota with a dual appointment in the School of Social Work. Her current research, teaching, and writing focus on faith transmission in a hyper-connected digital age and how religious pluralism and declining religious affiliation are opportunities for re-imagining being church.

Trulear: will present on Applied Theology and the Myth of the Colorblind Society. Building on the work of Michelle Alexander and Nicole Gonzalez Van Cleve, I will be speaking about how our culture has recodified race into deracialized but equally polarizing discourse, and the ways in which this informs criminal justice practice. This challenges the Judeo-Christian tradition to offer both prophetic voice to the explicit dehumanization involved in criminal justice practice, and offer theological anthropological insight to the practice of shalom and justice in America. Such a theological anthropology will resist the tendencies of mainline religion to reduce its witness to political issue activism, and ground its work in a narrative based engagement of personal trials whose amalgam becomes the content of advocacy.

I plan to talk about political discourse as one site among many for the formation of virtues and as a kind of ascesis. In this, I'm influenced by Charles Mathewes, particularly from *A Theology of Public Life*, but equally by other sources, ancient and modern, who see that God is doing in the social world what God is doing elsewhere: calling us to a non-conformed participation in the world and deeper communion with God and others. In our society, in particular, this includes discipling one's attention and empathy so as to understand or (better) to inhabit the experiences of the other, particularly the marginalized. This is the bedrock of the practice that I call "liturgical participation": political engagement undertaken as an act of repentance and solidarity, with a view to the coming Reign of God.