



All Things Ignatian



Amelia B. & Emil G. Graff Faculty Chair in Catholic Theological Studies

Fr. M. Dennis Hamm, S.J.-Chairholder

This chair bears the names of Amelia Bunbury Graff and Emil G. Graff. Like the founding stories of the Creighton family, the story of the Graff family has especially to do with the thoughtful initiative of women.

In the early 1900s Emil Graff's widowed mother moved her family to Omaha from rural Nebraska. She wanted Emil to get a good education, and Creighton University offered it free at that time. Emil attended Creighton Prep, and then Creighton University (both institutions lived together on this campus at that time). Emil Graff graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1922.

Three years later, he earned a Juris Doctor degree from the University of Detroit. In 1938, he became an assistant manager of mortgage loans for the Washington National Insurance Company in Evanston, Illinois. He remained with the company, becoming vice president and treasurer in 1963, and then serving on the Board of Directors until his retirement in 1967.

Throughout his successful career in the insurance industry, and as a business investor, Emil praised the education he received at Creighton University. He and his wife, Amelia Bunbury Graff, were active in civic affairs in the Chicago community. They shared a love of art and a keen interest in their parish and Catholic charities.

The couple had no children. When Emil died in 1986, Amelia expressed a desire to establish an endowed chair in theology at Creighton. She wanted to leave something in perpetuity in memory of her husband.

She wrote, "Emil loved Creighton and never tired of telling what he owed to the University. He always told me, 'Don't forget to take care of Creighton.'"

Amelia resolved to provide solid help for the school that helped Emil on his way. Upon her death in 1994, provisions were made to establish the Amelia B. and Emil G. Graff Faculty Chair in Catholic Theology.

Graff Chairholders

Fr. Dennis Hamm, S.J. is the second chairholder, he succeeds Dr. Mike Lawler, who inaugurated the Graff Chair and held it with distinction for nine years.

Fr. Hamm, S.J. was installed as the second chairholder on February 7, 2006.

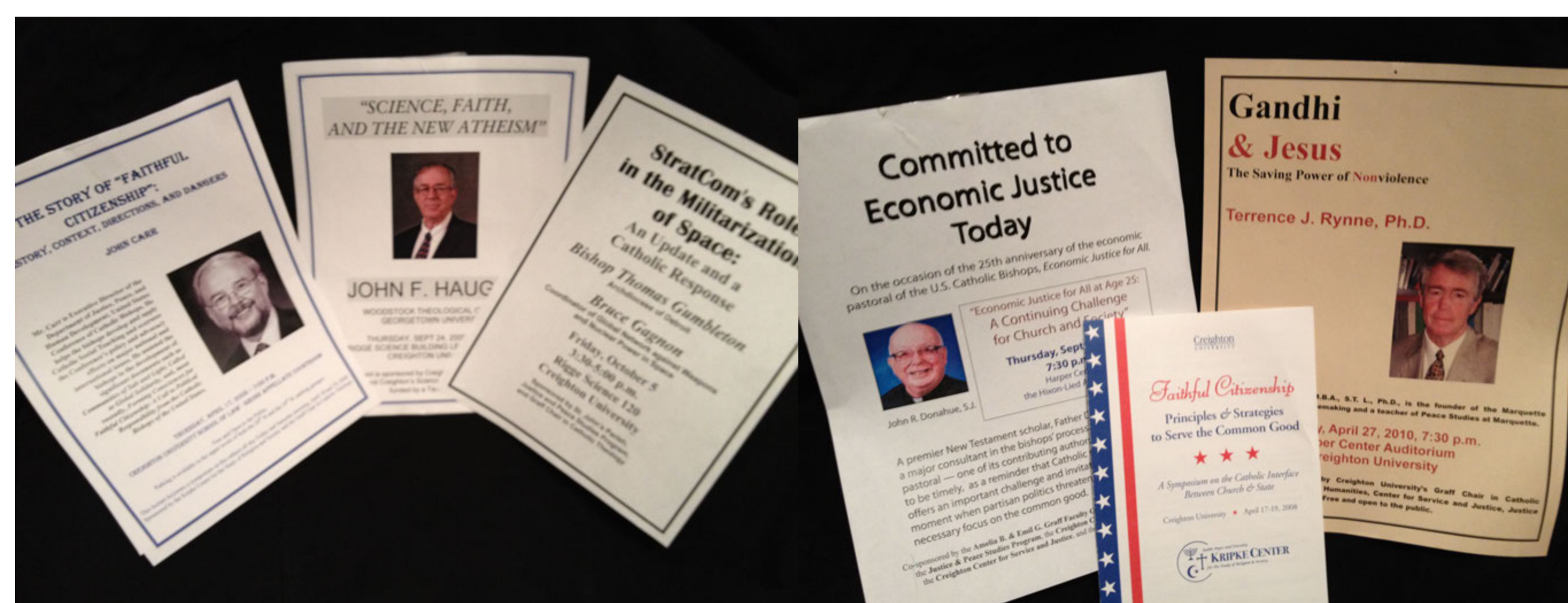


Dr. Michael Lawler



Fr. Dennis Hamm, S.J.

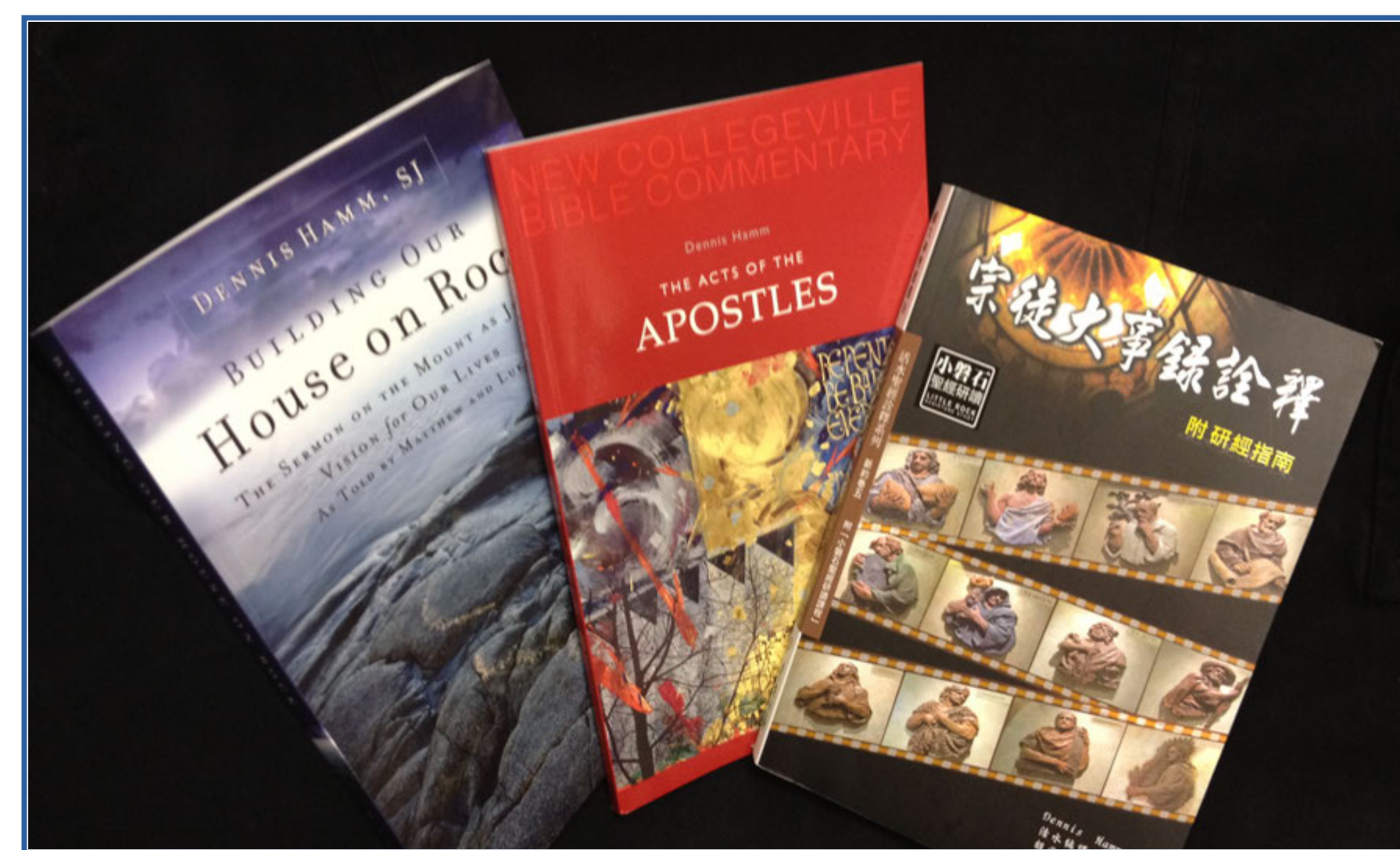
Sponsored by the Creighton University Jesuit Community, in association with the Deglman Center for Ignatian Spirituality.



Samples of lectures sponsored by current Graff Chair

As chairholder Fr. Hamm has pursued three threads of business in his work as scholar and teacher.

- First to continue exploring the Jewish matrix of Christian origins. That means things like taking seriously the Jewishness of Jesus and the Christian writers' use of the Hebrew Bible, mainly in the Greek version.
- Second to study and communicate the rich Catholic tradition of creation theology, so obviously missing in today's popular discourse about the relationship between faith and science.



Books published by Fr. Hamm, S.J. as Graff Chairholder

- Third, to try to advance the very unfinished business of relating Christian faith to public life. The U.S. Catholic bishops wrote in 2003 a powerful pastoral letter called "Faithful Citizenship." There they urged their flock to see active participation in the political processes of their nation as an integral part of living out of their faith. They urged us, for example, to choose candidates not according to a single issue but as measured against the full range of Catholic social teaching, including such issues as abortion, poverty, racism, immigration, capital punishment and war. In his installation speech Fr. Hamm, S.J. said; "In my opinion both our discourse and our performance have fallen far short of that vision. There is plenty here for us to learn, discuss, and write about, and I aim to spend part of my time promoting the good news and the challenge of the Catholic social tradition."