

JOHN COURTNEY MURRAY AWARD 2013

The theologian whom we honor tonight with the John Courtney Murray award was born on April 5, 1941, in Washington, D.C., the eldest of six children of an Irish Catholic family. She attended parochial schools where her athletic and musical abilities were evident early on. Like many young Catholic women of her age, she found inspiration in communities of women religious and made the commitment to join one of them. Following her first vows in 1960, her teaching responsibilities involved piano, choir, and musical theater, including preparing her students for a performance of “The Pirates of Penzance.” She earned her B.A. taking college courses on weekends and in the summers, completing it in eleven years, instead of the usual thirteen.

In the years after Vatican II, our awardee, who would later become the President of our own Society, had the fortunate experience of hearing lectures on theology by two other future CTSA Presidents, Bernard Cooke and Monika Hellwig, and set her sights on studying for an advanced degree in Theology. In preparation for this, she earned an M.A. in English literature from the University of Maryland, and then took up graduate studies in Religion and Literature at the University of Chicago. During her time as a graduate student, she participated in the first Women’s Ordination Conference in Detroit, published a landmark article in *Theological Studies*, and played a skilled hand of bridge. In 1980, she accepted a position at Carleton College, where she spent her academic career, ultimately as the William H. Laird Professor, and served multiple terms as department chair, until her retirement in 2009.

Concerned throughout her career with the issue of conscience in its many dimensions, she has written three books on the topic, and published numerous articles and book chapters dealing with ethics, feminist theology, Vatican II, moral responsibility, Jesuit education and the

cultivation of virtue, to name only a few. She has a special interest in the relationship between the theological and the literary and has lectured widely in this country and around the world. She is able to draw out the ethical dimensions of some of the great novelists of the English language, such as Graham Greene and George Eliot. Her energy and concerns, however, are not only scholarly but also quite practical. Organizations such as ours need good structures as well as wise and careful leadership. Her concerns for the efficient work of this Society are evident in the time and attention she has given to our organization and in her efforts to reorganize the Society's administrative structure some 20 years ago with the office of Executive Secretary (now Executive Director). She was also a founding member of the Steering Committee and Vice President of the International Network for Societies of Catholic Theology (INSeCT) and has also served on the Board of the Society of Christian Ethics.

Over the last ten years, as she has dealt with serious health issues, her dedication to her community, students, family, and church has never wavered. She has continued to teach, write, lecture and travel while maintaining a sense of humor and a keen perspective on what really matters in life. In recognition of her distinguished service to her own community, our Society, and to the discipline of theology, I am honored to present the John Courtney Murray award to Anne E. Patrick of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary.