

Plenary Sessions

The Most Rev. Dr. Ray R. Sutton

“On the Air and Out of the Wardrobe”

This introductory talk will develop how the apologetics of C.S. Lewis was a combination of the old, historic approach, with a new, extraordinary method to defend the Faith Once Delivered. His message was classical and orthodox cast in a manner that was more than just critique. It was a constructive case in the midst of a torn and troubled society, all the while Lewis was part of a growing atheistic and materialistic academic world. He used everything from the Aristotelian logic as part of the older model of Christian apologetics, while not limiting his advocacy of Christ and Christianity to the use of evidences per se. He developed his arguments with a keen knowledge of comparative religion, finding the “inescapable concept” unavoidably shared by all. This is not to say that all religions believe the same thing. Rather they cannot escape created realities by the Creator no matter how decadent. Turning to the media, Lewis used in his unique way of proclaiming Christ, his creativity emerges all the more. He took advantage of the new electronics of his age, the radio. And he wrote volumes of literature via the cutting edge genre of science fiction and the older form of fantasy literature. He was a Christian apologist of classical vintage conveying with contemporary openness to new ways to present ancient Truth.

The Rev. Cn. Lawrence Bausch

“Mutual Indwelling: Theology in Charles Williams”

Editor for the Oxford University Press for virtually his entire adult life, Charles Williams made time to write poetry, supernatural thrillers, plays, biographies, literary and theological works, and was a practicing Anglo-Catholic. In his position as Editor, he was responsible for getting the writings of Kierkegaard published, and wrote a preface to the first volume. From 1939, when the London Office of OUP was evacuated to Oxford, until his death in 1945, Williams enjoyed a friendship with C.S. Lewis, participating regularly in the fellowship of "Inklings" who enjoyed reading their work to one another and exchanging ideas. Williams also inspired Dorothy Sayers to translate Dante's "Divine Comedy". While centered in orthodox Christian theology, he was an explorer, following trajectories in Scripture and Creed to see where they might lead (for example "bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ in Galatians 6:2). His vision included a conviction that everything is connected under God, and that relationships are at the center of life. In his life and in his writing, he continued to explore the manner and implications of such relationships, particularly between God and persons and between persons. In his Preface to Lewis' collection, "Essays Presented to Charles Williams" published in 1947, he wrote, "No event has corroborated my faith in the next world as Williams did by dying. When the idea of death and the idea of Williams thus met in my mind, it was the idea of death that was changed." It is my hope that, as we explore some of William's key insights into the "Mutual Indwelling", the meaning of Lewis' remarkable statement may become apparent.

Dr. Peter Kreeft

“Mere Christianity”

Mere Christianity is a comprehensive overview of essential Christian doctrines, both moral and theological, and their foundations in natural reason and philosophy. This book has probably done more for both conversions and for ecumenism, than any other. I will focus on the secret of its power and popularity. For this apparently wide ranging and diverse book has a single strong center.

Dr. Peter Kreeft

“The Problem of Pain”

The Problem of Pain is the best, clearest, and most convincing book I know on the problem of evil, which is the strongest argument for atheism and against religious faith. It is about one specific question but it includes very creative chapters on the Fall, animals, Hell, Heaven, and a summary of the essence and history of all religion in four pages.

Dr. Peter Kreeft

“The Great Divorce”

The Great Divorce is Dante's "Divine Comedy" updated by good psychological drama, cinematic imagery, and condensation. It shows us the reality and motivations for our choices (apparently manifold but really single) that lead to Hell as well as those that lead to Heaven. What could possibly be more important than that?

Dr. Peter Kreeft

“The Screwtape Letters”

The Screwtape Letters are a clever and funny yet profound and holy set of letters from one devil to another about how to tempt humans. A life-changingly practical spiritual classic. Like #3, this very diverse book has a profound unity, and can unify and simplify our lives.