

“It ain’t no sin to be glad you’re alive’: Praise in an Age of Agitation”

DR CHRISTOPHER RUDDY



THE 2022 PLUSCARDEN PENTECOST LECTURES

A series of four public lectures
to be livestreamed from the USA

7th to 9th June 2022

Dr Christopher Ruddy

Dr Christopher Ruddy is associate professor of systematic theology at The Catholic University of America. He was formerly associate professor of theology at the University of St Thomas in St Paul,



Minnesota, and taught also at St John's University and the College of St Benedict in Minnesota. A graduate of Yale College and Harvard Divinity School, he received his doctorate in systematic theology from the University of Notre Dame.

His two books are *The Local Church: Tillard and the Future of Catholic Ecclesiology* and *Tested in Every Way: The Catholic Priesthood in Today's Church* (both Herder & Herder). His articles and reviews have appeared in *America*, *Christian Century*, *Commonweal*, *Ecclesiology*, *Heythrop Journal*, *Horizons*, *Irish Theological Quarterly*, *Josephinum Journal of Theology*, *Logos*, *Nova et Vetera*, *Origins*, *Theological Studies*, *The Thomist*, and *Worship*. His theological interests include ecclesiology, Vatican II, the *nouvelle théologie* and *ressourcement* movements, and the relationship of Christianity and culture. New York natives, he and his wife, Deborah, have four sons.

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“To praise you is the desire of man”
(St Augustine, *The Confessions*)

We live in times marked by the omnipresence of agitation – political, religious, economic, cultural, “virtual”, psychological, familial. Anger and unsettledness are everywhere. And yet, the first words that the Church speaks every day are: “Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall proclaim your praise!”

These lectures will suggest that much of our agitation is rooted in a rejection of the goodness of being, in a self-hatred that leads ineluctably to death.

Praise, rightly understood and lived, is not escapism, irresponsibility, or even complicity in oppression. It is the highest possible affirmation of God’s goodness and – in the words of the American musician Bruce Springsteen – of the joy in being alive.

Programme

Tuesday 7th June at 3.00 pm

Context: An Age of Agitation, Anger, and Acedia

Agitation flows partly from anger as a rejection of dependence, and from acedia as despair before God’s goodness. Divided against God, others, and ourselves, we fall into aggression, distrust, hyperactivity, listlessness, and sterility.

Wednesday 8th June at 10.30 am

**Creator and Creation:
The Affirmation of Dependence**

Praise involves an assent to the Creator and to being created. The refusal to praise stems from a rejection of creatureliness, divine filiation, and the goodness of being itself. Praise, as Josef Pieper wrote, is “impossible to the naysayer.”

Wednesday 8th June at 3.00 pm

**Christ and Church: “In the midst of the congregation I will
praise you” (Ps. 21[22])**

Jesus offers perfect praise – in his words, his deeds, his very self – to his Father. He experienced evil like no one else, yet died with praise on his lips. The Church’s “intimate vocation,” in the words of Vatican II, is likewise to be a community of praise.

Thursday 9th June at 10.30 am

Consequences: A Praise-Filled Life

Being a person or a people of praise involves, among other things, habits of worship, prayer, humility, and true leisure. Praise flows ultimately from being able to see reality clearly and fully – and thus to affirm it as good. A praise-filled life leads one to say, in every circumstance, “Master, it is well that we are here.”

Please check the Abbey website for further information. The Lectures will be livestreamed at the above times and recordings will afterwards remain on the website:

www.pluscardenabbey.org