



- Home
- Everyday
- Sports
- Food & Art
- Community Channels
- Featured Businesses
- History
- Photos
- About
- Become a Customer
- Events
- Maps
- Business Directory
- Activities
- 15 Traffic Cameras

Father Edwin Leahy on The Rule at Saint Martin's University Benedictine Institute Lecture Series

September 30, 2015 | Filed under Events | Posted by ThurstonTalk Editor



Father Edwin Leahy will deliver the Benedictine Institute's fourth annual address at 7:00 p.m. on October 7 at the Norman Worthington Conference Center, located on the Saint Martin's campus in Lacey.

How can a 1,500-year-old book act as a useful guide for how to live together and behave in the 21st century? Further, if it were written by a Catholic monk for other monks, how can the principles it outlines be applied to non-Catholics and those with no specific faith?

Those are the questions Father Edwin Leahy, O.S.B., faced in Newark, New Jersey in 1972, and they are also the guiding force behind the [Saint Martin's University Benedictine Lecture Series](#). Leahy will deliver the Institute's fourth annual address at 7:00 p.m. on October 7 at the Norman Worthington Conference Center, located on the Saint Martin's campus in Lacey.

For Leahy, known as 'Father Ed,' the answer was clear: use the methods outlined by St. Benedict to revitalize a boys' prep school in a poverty-stricken neighborhood devastated by civil unrest in 1967.

"Prior to 1967, [Saint Benedict's Preparatory School](#) was a school that had attracted middle class boys from the suburbs," says Father Kilian Malvey, O.S.B., executive director of the [Benedictine Institute at Saint Martin's](#). "It was a good choice to go to St. Benedict's if you wanted to get into a good college. After the 1967 riots, the enrollment began to drop."

Approximately half of the community of monks left Newark and went to another abbey, leaving the rest of the community behind. "One of the vows that Benedictine monks and sisters take is a vow of stability, the idea that God has led me to this

place and I will live my life here," says Malvey. "These young men took that very seriously and they said, 'No. We are here to serve the boys in Newark.'"

The school shut down for the 1972-1973 school year as the monks considered how to best deliver a quality education to their new constituents. When it re-opened in 1973, most of the students came from the surrounding neighborhood and were of African-American and Hispanic heritage. Leahy became headmaster when the school re-opened. Today, the school has a nearly 100-percent college acceptance rate. In 2014, a documentary about St. Benedict's, called [The Rule](#), was released to critical acclaim.

"This documentary makes the point, very clearly, that this school is built on the wisdom and insight of The Rule of St. Benedict," says Jonathan Dwyer, who taught at the school for three years and today is director of [Campus Ministry](#) at Saint Martin's. "I know, from Father Ed, that part of the way he governs as a headmaster is by rooting everything in his understanding of the rule of St. Benedict."

"We thought that this is a wonderful opportunity for us," continues Dwyer. "We're not a boys' prep school in Newark; we're a co-ed university in Washington with our own culture and our own life and challenges but how do we have conversations with students and faculty? For those of us who are Catholic and not Catholic and coming from various perspectives, how does this rule inform who we are as a university?"

Malvey and Dwyer believe Leahy is an excellent fit in the ongoing lecture series. "Our focus has always been monastic Benedictine spirituality that would touch all people, that would have an appeal to our human nature and our spirituality," explains Malvey. "I have not yet met Father Ed, but any human being might easily give up

Local Area Weather

Today	Sunday	Monday
Chance of Rain 63°/54°	Overcast 61°/51°	Chance of Rain 58°/48°

Local Community Sponsors



Upcoming Events

- OCT 17 Sat** (http://www.thurstonalk.com/olympia-events-calendar/action-one-day/exac)
 - 6:30 pm** Flamenco Night @ Pizzeria La Gitana (http://www.thurstonalk.com/event/flamenco-night/?instance_id=25755)
 - 6:30 pm** Live Music: Guava Jam - Sounds o... @ The Lanai Cafe (http://www.thurstonalk.com/event/live-music-guava-jam-sounds-aloha/?instance_id=25807)
 - 8:00 pm** Harlequin Productions

when faced with the challenges of a school like St. Benedict's. Watching him and his spirit of dedication and commitment, so full of energy and aliveness, I could see how he'd be an inspiration for the students and the people who work with him."

Dwyer has worked closely with Malvey in shaping the focus of the Benedictine Institute Lecture Series. "It's kind of evolving," he says. "The Institute is new. The mission is to be a vehicle for inculcating our Catholic and Benedictine heritage, identity and spirituality to the university community, but also to the wider Catholic and non-Catholic world beyond the Saint Martin's campus."

The first speaker in the series was [Eboo Patel](#), the president and founder of the [Interfaith Youth Core](#). "(Patel) is a Rhodes Scholar Muslim-American



Lecture attendees greet Eboo Patel, the president and founder of Interfaith Youth Core, and the first speaker in the annual series.

whose mission is to build interfaith communities on college university campuses, to help people see the differences between faith and no-faith as a bridge of understanding rather than as a barrier," says Dwyer. Patel was followed by [Dr. Ken Butigan](#), a Catholic peace activist, and [Father William Meninger](#), a Trappist monk.

Dwyer says that including non-Catholics in the series was in accord with Benedictine teachings. "Within the Benedictine tradition, there is a real sense of community and of our connectedness with each other," he says. "The movement from there into non-Christians and people of a no-faith community is a logical step."

Malvey also emphasizes the expansive nature of the tradition. "When the Saint Martin's Abbey Church



Father William Meninger, a Trappist monk, was last year's speaker during Saint Martin's University's Benedictine Institute Lecture Series.

was designed, there was that thought of inclusiveness. When you walk in, it's not like your traditional Roman Catholic church. The architecture and the theology embrace the Quaker faith, the Hindu faith, and the Orthodox faith, as well as the Catholic faith. I always hope that when visitors come to the abbey church, they will have that feeling of being included."

For those who attend the lecture, Malvey has one wish: "Very simply, I hope it will be an informative experience for them and also a moment of inspiration," he says. "I hope they will be inspired by the goodness and the richness of The Rule and of Father Edwin."

For more information about the Benedictine Institute Lecture Series, call (360) 412-6152 or visit the [Saint Martin's University website](#).



The hope is that attending the Saint Martin's University Benedictine Institute Lecture Series is an informative event and provides a moment of inspiration.

t_date-10-17-2015/

Presents: ... @ The State Theater (http://www.thurstontalk.com/event/harlequin-productions-presents-recent-tragic-events/?instance_id=25301)

8:00 pm Theater Artists Olympia present... @ The Midnight Sun Performance Space (http://www.thurstontalk.com/event/theater-artists-olympia-present-the-head-that-wouldnt-die-%e2%80%8b%e2%80%8bredux/?instance_id=25156)

OCT 18 Sun (http://www.thurstontalk.com/olympia-events-calendar/action-oneday/exact_date-10-18-2015/)

10:30 am Love a Pit Bull Day and Oly Coas... @ Marathon Park (http://www.thurstontalk.com/event/love-pit-bull-day-oly-coast-coast-bully-walk/?instance_id=25763)

11:00 am The Tugboat Sand Man Tours @ Percival Landing (http://www.thurstontalk.com/event/tugboat-sand-man-tours/?instance_id=24002)

12:00 pm Workshop: Changing Woman – Menop... @ Radiance Herbs & Massage (http://www.thurstontalk.com/event/workshop-changing-woman-menopause-transformation/?instance_id=25552)

lar → (<http://www.thurstontalk.com/olympia-events-calendar/>)

What's Trending

Bordeaux, Washington - Last Remnants of a Thurston County Ghost Town

Olympia Events Calendar

Second Isthmus Building to be Demolished Starting on Monday

Sign-up for ThurstonTalk's e-Magazine

Email Address *

Please fill in the code below: G C P A

Share this: [Facebook](#) 54 [Twitter](#) 5 [LinkedIn](#) [Print](#) [Email](#) [More](#)

1. [Head of Inner-City New Jersey School to Deliver Benedictine Institute Lecture](#)
2. [Eboo Patel Shares His Vision of Interfaith Cooperation at the Saint Martin's University Inaugural Benedictine Institute Lecture](#)
3. [Saint Martin's Announces Its Second Cohort Of Benedictine Institute Scholars](#)
4. [Peace Advocate Ken Butigan Featured as next Benedictine Institute Lecturer at Saint Martin's University](#)
5. [Distinguished Spiritual Leader Father William Meninger Speaks at Benedictine Institute Lecture](#)

Local Community Sponsors