



UNIVERSITY OF
ST. THOMAS
HOUSTON

HITTINGER NAMED MEMBER OF PONTIFICAL ACADEMY OF ST. THOMAS

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Dr. John Hittinger with Bishop Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo, the prelate secretary of the Pontifical Academy of St. Thomas Aquinas.

Dr. John Hittinger, professor of philosophy at the University of St. Thomas, received a letter signed by Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the Vatican secretary of state, naming him an ordinary member of the Pontifical Academy of St. Thomas Aquinas in May.

Being an ordinary member means Hittinger is a permanent member who participates in meetings about the general business of the Academy and attends the annual conference held at the Casina Pio IV on the Vatican grounds.

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There are around 50 ordinary members from around the world, including eight from the United States. The Pontifical Academy of St. Thomas Aquinas was founded by Pope Leo XIII in 1879, and the criteria for membership include knowledge of the work of St. Thomas Aquinas and an interest in applying the thought of Aquinas to modern-day issues.

“St. John Paul II re-founded the academy and asked that its members devote themselves to the special task of defending the dignity of the human person in light of the work of Thomas Aquinas newly designated by him as the Doctor of Humanity,” Hittinger said.

In a note, the Most Rev. Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo, a bishop and prelate secretary of the Academy, congratulated Hittinger on his well deserved appointment.

“I have great expectations about [Hittinger’s] work, which spreads St. Thomas’s authentic thinking applied to today’s issues,” Sorondo wrote.

The Pontifical Academy of St. Thomas Aquinas meets at Casina Pio IV, a historical villa in Vatican City that is also now home to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences and the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences.

Hittinger is the author of four books and recently published a fifth, titled “Thomas Aquinas: Teacher of Humanity,” dedicated to the Rev. Victor Brezik, CSB, who co-founded



the University of St. Thomas Center for Thomistic Studies in 1975. The topics discussed include the political ideas of Karol Wojtyła, philosopher Gadamer on common sense, prudence and subsidiarity, embodied cognition, the knowledge of God, the commandment of love, Pope Francis on the Beatitudes, the new evangelization, Thomism and modern cosmology, and the challenges of transhumanism and gender ideology.

Seven other UST scholars also contributed to this volume, including Steven Jensen, professor of philosophy; John Knasas, professor of philosophy; Mirela Oliva, professor of philosophy; and graduate students Brian Kemple, Geoffrey Meadows, Daniel Wagner and John Boyer. The book also includes writings by Bishop Sorondo and Rocco Buttiglione, and talks by the late Cardinal Francis George and the Rev. Lawrence Dewan.

Hittinger hopes to present a paper on St. Thomas's thought on the family at the next meeting of the Academy in May 2016.

"This appointment is very exciting and challenging," Hittinger said. "I am honored and delighted to be given the opportunity to meet with such a distinguished group of scholars who love St. Thomas, and who work for the good of the Church and for the special request of the Pope."

Hittinger founded the Pope John Paul II Forum for the Church in the Modern World in 2009. He has published articles and presented papers on a variety of topics including John Locke, Jacques Maritain, military ethics, liberal education, political philosophy and the thought of St. John Paul II.

By Deema Al-Rasheed