Thank you very much, Tom [Banchoff]. Thank you all for being here and for sharing your afternoon with us. We’re honored to have so many of you here today for the official launch of the Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life here at Georgetown and its inaugural public dialogue.

We are honored to have with us today His Eminence Cardinal Donald Wuerl, Archbishop of Washington. We’re grateful for his engagement within our community. Thank you so much for being here Your Eminence.

I also wish to recognize our panelists for this inaugural dialogue:

• David Brooks and Mark Shields of the PBS NewsHour; Mark has also taught public policy here at Georgetown;
• Kim Daniels, the spokesperson for the president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops; and,
• Alexia Kelley, the President and CEO of FADICA (Foundations and Donors Interested in Catholic Activities).

I want to thank you all for joining us today and for sharing your reflections with us.

We have come together today to launch a new Initiative on our campus.

Under the leadership of John Carr—who we are honored to welcome to Georgetown—the Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life represents an unprecedented effort to engage the resources of the tradition of Catholic Social Thought, to articulate and apply its values, and connect us all more deeply.

There is no one better to lead this work than John, a man who has dedicated his life to the intersection of faith and public life…and who is an unwavering advocate of the tradition of Catholic Social Thought.

Many of you know him well, and you know, as I do, that John will be an exceptional director of this new Initiative. John, it is a great pleasure to welcome you into our community.
I’d like to thank all of you for being with us this afternoon. The vibrancy of Catholic Social Thought lives in community...in dialogue...and in service—and we are deeply grateful to have this opportunity to come together in community today and to explore the possibilities, the promise of this idea.

The spirit of this work—the pursuit of justice, equality, and peace—has a deep resonance within our community—here at Georgetown and in this city...and in the lives of our alumni and our partners around the world.

Our founder John Carroll created for us the vision of an institution that would be both distinctly Catholic...and distinctly American. It is from this perspective that we offer our University as the context for this new Initiative.

A commitment to the common good—which lies at the heart of Catholic Social Thought—entails a commitment, as Peter Steinfels once described, “to bring[ing] Catholic faith and modern life, especially the experience of American freedom and diversity into fruitful contact” (Jordan 17).

Catholic Social Thought offers a bridge...a tradition...a methodology for pursuing the common good in an American and Catholic context.

We are called to this work through our mission at Georgetown. This new initiative enables us to deepen our contribution to the promotion of human dignity and the common good.

We reflect today—at a moment of renewal and recommitment to the ideas of Catholic Social Thought—on the six months since the election of Pope Francis and the impact that he has had on our faith community.

We are aware, perhaps now more than ever, of the resources of our faith that we can bring into public life, and of the leadership of the Church in bringing these values and contributions to the forefront of public dialogue.

Here today—we are called to answer:

How can we more effectively live out the values of our faith and of the tradition of Catholic Social Thought?

How can we embody—as individuals and as a collective—the very best of our Church?

How can we better, in the words of Pope Francis, “seek God in every human life” (Pope Francis)?

This new Initiative provides us with a new way to reimagine our response to the call of living out the principles of Catholic Social Thought.
John brings unequalled leadership to this endeavor, and I know we all share in the hope of the contributions that he and his team will make in enlivening this vital aspect of our tradition.

Now, it’s my pleasure to introduce our next speaker this afternoon.

Cardinal Wuerl has been the Archbishop of Washington since 2006. He is widely respected for his efforts on behalf of Catholic education and for his catechetical and teaching ministry.

He serves on numerous national and international bodies, including the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, the Congregation for Clergy, the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, and the Pontifical Council for Culture.

He was elevated to the College of Cardinals in 2010 by Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI.

He was also appointed Relator General for the October 2012 Vatican Synod of Bishops on the New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith.

In his role on the College of Cardinals, he was a participant in the election of Pope Francis this past March.

We are honored to have him here today for the launching of this Initiative and to have the opportunity for him to share his reflections with us.

It’s my privilege to introduce to you, His Eminence, Cardinal Donald Wuerl...

 Works Cited
