

ALISON MEARNS BENDERS

ambenders@scu.edu

EDUCATION

PH.D. Boston College, Systematic and Comparative Theology,
Dissertation: *A Comparative Study of Self Awareness and Self-Transcendence* (Lonergan and Sankara)

(<http://escholarship.bc.edu/dissertations/AAI3255941/>)

S.T.L. Jesuit School of Theology, Systematic Theology

M.A. Boston College, Systematic Theology/Spirituality

J. D. University of Virginia, School of Law

B.A. Yale University, Philosophy

ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

August 2024 **Senior Lecturer Emerita**

Jesuit School of Theology at Santa Clara University
Santa Clara, CA

2021 - 2024 **Vice President for Mission and Ministry**

Santa Clara University, Santa Clara, CA

2014 - 2021 **Associate Dean and Senior Lecturer,**

Interim Dean 2019-20

Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University, Berkeley, CA

On sabbatical through July 2021. Project title: *Recollecting America's Original Sin: A Pilgrimage of Race and Grace* (Liturgical Press, 2022)

2012 - 2014 **Professor of Theology**

Vice President for Academic Affairs (2011-12)

Ohio Dominican University, Columbus, OH

2010 - 2011 **Vice President for Academic Affairs/Chief Academic Officer**

Professor of Religion

Lake Erie College, Painesville, OH

2003 - 2010 **Associate Professor and Dean, School of Graduate and Professional Studies** (2008-10)

Associate Professor and Dean, School of Graduate Studies
(2007-08, tenure earned 2007)

Assistant Professor and Co-Director, Graduate Ministry Program (2006-7)

Instructor and Co-Director, Graduate Ministry Program (2003-2006)

Ursuline College, Pepper Pike, OH

2003 - 2010 **Board Member and Faculty**

Cleveland Ecumenical Institute for Religious Studies, Cleveland, OH

- 1991 - 2003 **Adjunct Academic Instructor**
Case Western Reserve University, Department of Religion; John Carroll University, Department of Religious Studies; Villanova University, School of Law, 1991 – 1993
- 1983 - 92 **Associate Attorney** - Admitted to the Bar of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, inactive status
Dechert Price & Rhoads, Philadelphia, PA, 1991-1992
Schnader Harrison Segal & Lewis, Philadelphia, PA, 1983-1991
*Admitted to practice in the U.S. Eastern District of Pennsylvania and in the U.S. Third Circuit Court of Appeals
- 1982-1983 **Law Clerk, The Honorable Boyce F. Martin, Jr.,** United States Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals, Cincinnati, OH

COMMUNITY AND ACADEMIC SERVICE - RECENT

- NETWORK Lobby and Advocates Boards – Board of Trustees member; chair, Strategic Committee for NETWORK Advocates; member, NETWORK Boards Executive Director Search Committee, 2024 to present.
- American Association for the Advancement of Science, Dialogue on Science, Ethics and Religion (DoSER) advisor, 2024 to present.
- Ignatian Legacy Fellow Board of Trustees, member, 2023-24.
- Our Lady of Peace Parish and Gesu Parish and School: (Cleveland, OH) formation leaders, lector, spiritual direction, and community service – ongoing.
- Book/Manuscript Reviewer for *Journal of Catholic Education* (AJCU); *Horizons: Journal of the Catholic Theological Society*; *Spiritus: A Journal of Christian Spirituality*; Georgetown University Press – periodic.

PUBLICATIONS - RECENT

BOOKS:

- 2024 Benders, A., Fullam, L. and Hens-Piazza, G. *Living Prayer: A Book of Hours for Renewing Creation*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2024.
- 2022 Benders, Alison M. *Recollecting America's Original Sin: A Pilgrimage of Race and Grace*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2022.
- 2020 Benders, Alison M. *Reading, Praying, Living the US Bishops' Open Wide Our Hearts: A Faith Formation Guide*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2020.

- 2015 Benders, Alison M. *Just Prayer: Book of Hours for Peacemakers and Justice Seekers*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2015; 2016 Catholic Publishers Association Award: *First Prize*, Prayer and Spirituality.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS:

- 2025 Benders, Alison M. Review of *The Ambiguity of Being: Lonergan and the Problems of the Supernatural*, by Jonathan R. Heaps. *Horizons, The Journal of the College Theology Society*, forthcoming.
- 2024 Benders, A., Kalkbrenner, L; and Raphael, C. In Review: “Universities on Fire: Higher Education in the Climate Crisis,” by Bryan Alexander (JHUP, 2023), *Conversations in Jesuit Higher Education*, Nov. 25, 2024.
- 2023 Benders, Alison M. “Listening for the Power of Jesuit Education.” *explore*, vol. 23, Winter 2023, pp. 52-53.
- 2022 Benders, Alison M. “Seriously Seeking a Christian Theology to Resist White Supremacy.” *Theology Today*, vol. 79, no. 2, July 2022, pp. 127–132, doi:[10.1177/00405736221091921](https://doi.org/10.1177/00405736221091921).
- Benders, Alison M. “An Easter Solidarity Reflection.” *explore*, vol. 22, Summer 2022, pp. 51-53.
- Benders, Alison M. Review of “The Soul of Higher Education: Contemplative Pedagogy, Research, and Institutional Life in the Twenty-first Century,” edited by Margaret Benefiel and Bo Karen Lee. *Spiritus: A Journal of Christian Spirituality*, vol. 22 no. 2, 2022, p. 319-322. *Project MUSE*, doi:[10.1353/scs.2022.0053](https://doi.org/10.1353/scs.2022.0053).
- 2020 Benders, Alison M. "Genetic Moral Enhancement? Yes. Holiness? No." in Fullam, L. and Charles Curran, eds., *US Moral Theology from the Margins: Readings in Moral Theology No. 19*, Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 2020 (reprint of 2018 article).
- Benders, Alison M. Review of "Seeing race again: Countering colorblindness across the disciplines," edited by Crenshaw, K.W. *Teaching theology and religion*, 23.3 (2020): 209-211.
- Benders, Alison M. Review of “The Depth of God’s Reach: A Spirituality of Christ’s Descent,” Michael Downey, *Horizons*, vol. 47, no. 1, June 2020.
- Benders, Alison M. *Quilting as Spiritual Practice and the Possibility of Redemption*, GTU Doug Adams Gallery, Black Lives Matter Exhibit (Online).
- 2019 Benders, Alison M. “Evaluating the Effectiveness of Culturally Contextualized Theology” in *Doing Theology as if People Matter*. Eds. Fernandez, Eduardo and Deborah Ross. New York: Herder and Herder, 2019.
- 2018 Benders, Alison M. "Genetic Moral Enhancement? Yes. Holiness? No." *Theology and Science* 16.3 (2018): 308-318.

- Benders, Alison M. "Reconstructing the Moral Claim of Racially Unjust Mass Incarceration" in *Today I Gave Myself Permission to Breathe*. Eds. Brigham, Erin and Kimberly Rae Connor. San Francisco: USF Press, 2018.
- Benders, Alison M. *Reflections on a Civil Rights Pilgrimage*, editor of student writings, JustFaith Ministries.
- 2016 Benders, Alison M. "Book Review: Walking with the Mud Flower Collective: God's Fierce Whimsy and Dialogic Theological Method. By Stina Busman Jost." *Theological Studies* (2016): 267-267.
- 2015 Benders, Alison M. "Book Review: God at the Margins: Making Theological Sense of Religious Plurality. By Aimée Upjohn Light." *Theological Studies*, (2015): 365-367.

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS AND WORKSHOPS - RECENT

2024

Synodal Moments: moderator with Fr. James Martin, SJ, "LGBTQ Catholics and the Synod;" moderator with Sr. Maria Cimperman, and Sr. Leticia Salazar, "Women, Ministry, and the Future of a Synodal Church;" moderator with Bishop Robert McElroy, "How to Become and All Missionary Synodal Church." Santa Clara University Ignatian Center for Jesuit Education (Zoom).

2023

Ignatian Colleagues Program, presenter, "Because we are Catholic Institutions" and "Jesuit Mission and DEI", Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities.

Recollecting America's Original Sin, Women in Conversation, Berkeley, CA.

2022

Engaging Open Wide Our Hearts in Community, Ignatian Solidarity Network, presenter for Parish Resource series (Zoom).

Spiritual Work of Racial Justice, hosted by Creighton University, presenter (Zoom).

Search for What Matters, Ignatian Center for Jesuit Education, featured speaker, 2022.

2021

Grasped by the Spirit, guest reflection for Mass of the Holy Spirit, Mission Santa Clara.

The Spirituality of Racial Justice, hosted by WINGS, Women's Spirituality Group in Berkeley, CA (Zoom).

2020

Can We Talk About Race? presenter, Women-in-Conversation Community Group (Newman Center, UC Berkeley).

Reframing Covid-19 Crisis as Opportunity, convenor, Association of Theology Schools, Academic Leaders Event.

Race and Justice: A Primer, presenter, University of California Berkeley, Life-Lounge: Catholic Women's Leadership.

I Have Seen the Lord: Resurrection Hope in Turbulent Times, invited homilist, St. Mary Magdalene Parish, Berkeley, CA.

Inculturated Liturgy, workshop panelist, GIA Publications (Zoom).

2019

Race, Class and Gender in Institutions, invited presenter at the Association of Theological Schools, Chief Academic Officer conference, Pittsburgh, PA.

New Wine Must Be Poured into New Wineskins, guest reflection, Jesuit School of Theology, Berkeley, CA.

Mary Magdalene: I Have Seen the Lord! Invited homilist at St. Mary Magdalene Parish, Berkeley, CA.

Theology and Ministry of Academic Administration, workshop presented at the Association of Theological Schools, Chief Academic Officer Conference, Newport Beach, CA (Zoom).

Tech and the Human Spirit, Bannon Center Forum, moderator.

2018

Reactions and Reflections on the Catholic Church Sexual Abuse Crisis. Arrupe Group (workshop at St. Ignatius Prep High School, San Francisco).

[*Turbulent Spirit in Turbulent Times*](#), *Catholic Women Preach: Homily June 10, 2018*.

Humankind as Originators of Value according to Lonergan's Theological Anthropology. Catholic Theological Society of America, June 2018, Lonergan Consultation, Indianapolis, IN; see CTSA Proceedings 73 (2018) 136-137 (refereed).

Lonergan and Phenomenology in Dialogue, presenter, Society for Phenomenology of Religious Experience, Second International Conference, Berkeley, CA (refereed).

Racism and Catholic Social Teaching, Workshop Presenter for Catholic Diocesan Communication Directors (California).

Mass Incarceration: From Indifference to Awareness, Acknowledgment and Action. Lane Center Roundtable Forum on Race and Mass Incarceration, University of San Francisco, invited presenter and facilitator.

Lonergan and the Spirituality of Desire, JST Renewal Program, annual workshop leader (2014-18).