



GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

For Immediate Release

The Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate
October 27, 2010

CARA Board Appoints Fr. Thomas P. Gaunt, S.J. as New Executive Director

Father Thomas P. Gaunt, S.J., of the Maryland Province of Jesuits, has been named executive director of the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University.

Gaunt will lead CARA following the seven years Sister Mary E. Bendyna, RSM, served in this role before stepping down at the end of June. CARA research associate Father Stephen J. Fichter has served as interim executive director on a part-time basis during the national search for a new executive director. Father Fichter is a priest of the Archdiocese of Newark and pastor of Sacred Heart Parish in Haworth, NJ.

“Father Stephen Fichter has distinguished himself in his time as interim executive director strengthening CARA’s mission,” said Bishop Gerald F. Kicanas, Chair of the CARA Board of Directors. “I am grateful for his willingness to continue to use his research abilities for CARA.”

Father Gaunt most recently served as Socius/Executive Secretary for the Jesuit Conference in Washington, DC from 2001 to 2010. He entered the Society for Jesus in 1971 and was ordained in 1981 in Baltimore. Fr. Gaunt has a Ph.D. in City and Regional Planning and a Master’s of Public Administration from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.

Father Gaunt has served previously as a pastor, Director of Planning and Research for the Diocese of Charlotte, and as the Assistant Provincial for Formation and Studies for the Maryland Jesuit Province. Father Gaunt has served on a variety of boards and committees including those for the Jesuit Volunteers, the Weston Jesuit School of Theology, Self-Help Credit Union, and L’Arche of Greater Washington, DC. He has served on the Editorial Board of the *Journal of the Community Development Society* since 2002.

“Father Gaunt brings to CARA a wealth of experience in administration and marketing and public relations as well as research experience, which will further CARA’s mission in service to the Church,” said Bishop Kicanas.

Father Gaunt has conducted research for the Jesuit Conference; the Jesuit Volunteer Corps; the Daughters of Charity; the Immaculate Conception Province, O.F.M. Conventual; the Society of the Divine Word, Chicago Province; the Archdiocese of Atlanta; and the dioceses of Charleston, Charlotte, Palm Beach, and Raleigh.

Father Gaunt has published research in the *Journal of the Community Development Society* and *National Jesuit News*. He has been a frequent presenter at the meetings of the Religious Research Association (RRA) and the Community Development Society. On several occasions his work has appeared in *The CARA Report*. He is a member of the American Planning Association, the Community Development Society, the Religious Research Association, and the Conference for Pastoral Planning and Council Development.

About the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate

CARA is a national, non-profit research center that conducts social scientific studies about the Catholic Church. Founded in 1964 and affiliated with Georgetown University since 1989, CARA has three major dimensions to its mission: to increase the Church's self understanding, to serve the applied research needs of Church decision-makers, and to advance scholarly research on religion, particularly Catholicism. For more information about CARA, visit <http://cara.georgetown.edu>.