News



Anthony Fauci and Christine Grady give remarks as they jointly accept Catholic Theological Union's 2021 "Blessed are the Peacemakers" award. (NCR screenshot)



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April 30, 2021

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Dr. Anthony Fauci and nurse-bioethicist Christine Grady were honored for their work against the coronavirus with Catholic Theological Union's "Blessed are the Peacemakers" award at an online event April 28.

Fauci was praised for being "a voice of reason, compassion and integrity as director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases and the chief medical adviser to the president" during the pandemic, while Grady was hailed for her work "identifying, researching, and documenting ethical issues concerning COVID-19 vaccines, resource allocation and the safety of health care workers during the pandemic through her role as Bioethics Department chief at the National Institutes of Health."

Dominican Sr. Barbara Reid, CTU's president, thanked Fauci and Grady, who are married, for providing an example to health care workers, including CTU-educated hospital chaplains, three of whom were highlighted in a video shared during the event for their ministry during the pandemic. "Their life's work has been a beacon of hope for our spiritual first responders," said Reid of Fauci and Grady.

In his remarks, Fauci said that when faced with a "formidable adversary" such as the coronavirus, "we need to pull together as a nation and recognize the pathogen as our mutual foe."

"In all we do, we must be guided by the data and science-based evidence. But only by working side by side towards a common purpose and for the greater good will we prevail," he added.

Grady, chief of the Department of Bioethics at the National Institutes of Health Clinical Center, also stressed the need for cooperation and solidarity. "The turmoil, disruptions and suffering that the world has experienced during this past year or so has emphasized to me how absolutely imperative it is to try to be a peacemaker, to try to be compassionate and fair to all, and to strive for harmony and love instead of hate and divisiveness," she said. Grady has a doctorate in philosophy.

Fauci and Grady both expressed gratitude for their Catholic educations for giving them knowledge and inspiration that have helped them throughout their careers.

Mayor Lori Lightfoot of Chicago and Gov. J.B. Pritzker of Illinois both gave welcomes at the beginning of the event, Cardinal Blase Cupich, archbishop of Chicago, opened with a prayer, and past award winners including Sr. Helen Prejean, Dr. Paul Farmer and Ireland's former President Mary McAleese spoke to congratulate Fauci and Grady.

Dr. Helene Gayle of the Chicago Community Trust specifically highlighted the early parts of Grady's and Fauci's careers, acknowledging Grady's promotion of the field of bioethics and Fauci's work with communities of color during the HIV/AIDS crisis of the 1980s and '90s.

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Prejean thanked Fauci for his decades of public service and expressed admiration for "[his] ability to maintain composure at all those press conferences with the past administration where all we got was anti-science political rhetoric."

"Thank you for maintaining the relationship with that president so that you could continue to serve the people," Prejean said.

Veteran television journalist Carol Marin, the event's host, praised Fauci and Grady for their honesty by proposing a new beatitude: "Blessed are those who tell life-giving truth based in reality. They will be cherished in the midst of the storm that will surely follow," she said.

"Thanks be to God for the work of Dr. Fauci and Dr. Grady, who show us what authentic science in the hands of good and courageous people can accomplish," she said.



From left: Catholic Theological Union president Dominican Sr. Barbara Reid, board of trustees chair Fr. Jim Halstead, vice president for institutional advancement Colleen Kennedy, and event host Carol Marin share a toast in honor of Anthony Fauci and Christine Grady, this year’s Blessed are the Peacemakers award recipients. (NCR screenshot)

After the official conferral of the award by Fr. Jim Halstead, chair of the CTU board of trustees, Colleen Kennedy, CTU's vice president for institutional advancement, led a celebratory toast. Though most of the event's speakers had pre-recorded their messages or else appeared virtually, Kennedy, Halstead, Reid and Marin were all together in the same room and stood side by side for the toast.

Typically, the annual Blessed are the Peacemakers event is held in person as a CTU fundraiser. Though attendees could not gather in person this year because of the pandemic, those who bought tickets were each sent a physical party favor in the form of an aloe plant. "The healing and renewal so needed in our world today is symbolized in the aloe plant," Reid said, holding one of the plants in front of the

camera.

A recording of the event can be viewed online here.