



## *Margarita Unplugged*, Volume 3, Fall 2019: Towards a Humanistic Synthesis of Knowledge

*Dear Friends,*

What do topics such as engineering and beauty, monasticism and education, integral humanism and American democracy, and forgiveness and grace have in common? My publications this fall in *Scientific American*, *Real Clear Politics*, *Church Life Journal* and *Public Discourse* all show what a humanistic synthesis of knowledge looks like--philosophically grounded yet also providing practical wisdom for human flourishing. In two interviews about my career, published by Duke Divinity School and Princeton Theological Seminary, I tell a bit about how I've learned to integrate various fields of knowledge.

In October 2019, I had a chance to share my own spiritual and intellectual journey with the senior class of St. Benedict's Prep in Newark, where I'll be returning on December 4th, 2019, for an event on Benedictines in the City. On December 6th, I'll be speaking at Crossroads NYC on a panel with Professor Roosevelt Montás of Columbia and what it means to educate the whole human person.

**This Thanksgiving, I'm more aware than ever of the fact that I could not do the rewarding work I do without the support of people like you. Please contribute to Scala today so we can continue spreading the important message about a humanistic synthesis of knowledge and the practical wisdom it provides!**

Best Regards,

*Margarita Mooney*

Margarita Mooney, Ph.D.

Executive Director, Scala Foundation



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## RECENT NEWS

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A screenshot of a Scientific American article page. At the top, there are navigation links for 'Subscribe', 'Latest Issues', 'Sign In', and 'Stay Informed'. The article title is 'Engineering, Beauty and a Longing for the Infinite' with a subtitle 'A recent excursion to Italy made it clear to students and professors alike that these things are interrelated'. The author is 'By Margarita A. Mooney on October 22, 2019'. Below the title is a social media sharing icon grid. To the right is a 'READ THIS NEXT' section with three article teasers: 'PHYSICS: Inside the World's First Underground Gravitational-Wave Detector', 'NATURAL DISASTERS: Can Scientists Predict Fire Tornadoes?', and 'EVOLUTION: The "Hobbit" at 15'. A large image of a person working on a motorcycle is also visible.

[Click here](#) to read my recent article featured in Scientific American on Engineering, Beauty and a Longing for the Infinite. In this piece, I describe my participation in the Princeton University summer travel course to Italy on [engineering and beauty](#) with Princeton professor of Civil Engineering, [Maria Garlock](#).

Check out these pictures from the trip:



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On July 9, 2019 the Faith and Leadership resource from Duke University published an interview with me, in which I reflect on my work that connects social science, theology and philosophy. I also get to highlight Scala's mission and impact. [Click here](#) to read the full interview. In November 2019, Princeton Theological Seminary also published an interview about my work, which you can read [here](#).



On October 4, 2019 I published an article at [RealClearPolicy](#) as part of a [series](#) centered on [the American Project](#), an initiative of the Pepperdine School of Public Policy. The project looks to the country's founding principles to respond to our current cultural and political upheaval. This piece outlines how personalist and humanist philosophy can provide a more secure foundation for American education than instrumentalism and pragmatism.

On October 10, 2019, I spoke at St. Benedict's Preparatory School in Newark, NJ at the invitation of Stephen Aduato, religion teacher at St. Benedict's and an alum of Scala's Summer Seminar. [Click here](#) to read a student's reflections on my talk. [Click here](#) to watch the video and [click here](#) for the audio. Come join us at [St. Benedict's on Wednesday, December 4th](#) to hear more about Benedictines in the City!



On October 17, 2019, I published a piece in [Church Life Journal](#) in which I critically analyze the educational philosophy of Paulo Freire. Following the thought of Jacques Maritain and Luigi Giussani, I argue that when educational systems embrace a notion of collective liberation but reject personal liberation through a relationship with God, it becomes all too easy

to turn the collective into another kind of god that eradicates the value of the individual.

On October 22, 2019, I released [an article on forgiveness and love](#) at Public Discourse, the journal of the Witherspoon Institute. In this piece, I ask what we might learn from people who have forgiven others for violent crimes. Drawing on my sociological fieldwork, I reflect on how the human heart longs to love, grow, and expand. This article was inspired by my talk at a Veritas Forum event at Columbia University, which you can listen to [here](#).



THE  
LOVE OF  
LEARNING  
AND THE  
DESIRE  
FOR  
GOD

On November 6, 2019, I released another article in the Church Life Journal in which I explore Jean Leclercq's understanding of integral humanism, a humanism that integrates classical humanism with the eschatological humanism of Christianity. In this piece, I show how integral humanism seeks beauty in both the horizontal and the vertical—the world we can see and study and the world we do not see

directly, yet perceive through the beauty of the world that is a sign of another type of existence. Read the entire piece [here](#).

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