

President's Report

Kimberly Hope Belcher

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Now for my report to the body gathered as the North American Academy of Liturgy at its annual meeting in Valparaiso, Indiana, and online, January 4, 2025.

We have important business this year, so I have to be brief, which is a mercy, since my heart is full. As you all know, I began thinking about the future of our academy working with the Emerging Scholars group; or rather, I began working with the Emerging Scholars group because I was thinking about the future of the academy. You see, I came to my first meeting in 2008 as a non-resident doctoral student with a toddler in tow, who couldn't afford the conference hotel. Your hospitality at that meeting was nonetheless overwhelming. It gave me the confidence to finish my struggling dissertation. This experience motivated me to figure out how to make *this* community's commitments to liturgical scholarship and practice more widely accessible, and to amplify a wider constituency's contributions as well. Bruce Morrill took me and spouse and baby Thomas (now in college) out to lunch in 2008, so obviously when he called to ask me to run for the Vice President's office, I had to agree.

You never do everything you hoped to do for an organization, but we have done so much together in the past few years. We weathered the financial storm of existing hotel contracts and maintained our relationships with one another during the pandemic. We updated the website and created webforms with a more streamlined way of communicating from the seminars to the academy committee and the whole membership. We moved our *Proceedings* journal to be open access and hosted on our website. We've done some remarkable fundraising, though this is mostly Michael Prendergast's work and, unexpectedly, Demetrio Yocum's. We've made progress on our goals for diversity and inclusion, though there is still much to do. We've met at a university in a financially sustainable way that lowers total costs for attendees, even though there is still more to do to make the academy meeting financially affordable for more students, contingent faculty, and pastoral ministers. In a few minutes, we are considering a proposal to update our membership process. Meanwhile, we've welcomed a *lot* of new members. Would everybody in the room or on Zoom that has been admitted to membership since 2020 raise your hand? Thanks to you newer members, and to all of you in this room, for sharing your gifts.

Thank you, North American Academy of Liturgy. Long may you flourish.