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Hillsdale College Hosts Benedict Kiely for Drummond Lecture in Christ Chapel

Kiely's lecture addressed persecution of Christians and the meaning of martyrdom.

HILLSDALE, Mich. — Rev. Benedict Kiely, a Catholic priest and the founder of Nasarean.org, presented the first talk in the “Drummond Lectures in Christ Chapel” series for the 2025-26 academic year on Sept. 12. His lecture was titled “The Persecution of Christians: Background, Paradox, and the Meaning of Martyrdom.”

Kiely discussed how Christians should respond when the church is persecuted.

“We know the teaching of St. Paul,” Kiely said. “We are part of one body. When one part suffers, we all suffer. And more than that, when one part is suffering, we have a duty to do all in our power to aid and comfort our suffering brethren. Part of the mystery of this present time, the days that we’re in, the years that we’re in now, especially this new century — we might even call it the mystery of iniquity — is how weak and pathetic the response of the church has been to the worldwide persecution of Christians.”

The paradox of persecution, Kiely said, is that it strengthens the persecuted church. Kiely said that to be a martyr is to die as a witness to the truth and that this witness keeps what Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn called “the general conscious lie” from taking hold.

“That participation in the conscious lie is becoming ever more present in secular societies which deny eternal truths. It is the conscious lie of political correctness. It is the forced silencing of opposing opinions on college campuses, the shaming and cancellation of political opponents. It’s the lie that a man can be a woman and a woman can be a man. It’s the lie that the unborn are not human persons created in the image and likeness of God. It’s the lie that the elderly and the sick

must be euthanized,” Kiely said. “The paradox of persecution and the witness of the martyrs is the antidote to the conscious lie.”

Kiely said it is not just the martyrs who die but also those willing to lose property or position whose stories strengthen the faith of those tempted to compromise.

“Many of you young people will be asked at some point in your careers to do things which are against the faith,” Kiely said. “This is the point: will you be martyrs for the truth?”

Rev. Benedict Kiely, founder of Nasarean.org, has dedicated his ministry to aid and advocacy for persecuted Christians in the Middle East and throughout the world. Born in London and ordained a Catholic priest in Canterbury, he divides his time between the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Middle East, speaking, preaching, and writing about the plight of suffering Christians. Kiely’s work has appeared in First Things, National Review, The European Conservative, RealClearPolitics, and numerous other publications.

The “Drummond Lectures in Christ Chapel” series presents faculty, staff, and students with lectures on faith, learning, and related issues of the day. Previous speakers include Christ Covenant Church Pastor Kevin DeYoung, University of Cambridge Professor Michael Hurley, Bishop Robert Barron, Heritage Foundation President Kevin Roberts, and Grove City College Professor Carl Trueman.

For photos from the lecture, click [here](#). For photos of Christ Chapel at Hillsdale College, click [here](#). For photos of Hillsdale College, click [here](#). For a high-resolution copy of the Hillsdale College clocktower logo, click [here](#).

About Hillsdale College

Hillsdale College is an independent, nonsectarian, Christian liberal arts college located in southern Michigan. Founded in 1844, the College has built a national reputation through its classical liberal arts core curriculum and its principled refusal to accept federal or state taxpayer subsidies, even indirectly in the form of student grants or loans. It also conducts an outreach effort promoting civil and religious liberty, including a free monthly speech digest, Imprimis, with a circulation of more than seven million. For more information, visit hillsdale.edu.

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