



Dear Friends:

It's been a productive 2023-2024 academic year at St. John's [Mattone Center for Law and Religion](#), and we're pleased to share some of the highlights and achievements with you.

A TRANSFORMATIONAL GIFT

In recognition of a transformational gift from alumni Denise Melillo Mattone and Michael X. Mattone to endow its activities, the Center has been renamed the Denise '90 and Michael '91 Mattone Center for Law and Religion in their honor. The multimillion-dollar gift will allow the Mattone Center to offer new educational programs and expand its impact as a hub for exploring issues of law and religion in the United States and around the world.

[Read the full story online.](#)



MEDIA PRODUCTIONS

Podcast

[Legal Spirits](#), the Mattone Center's podcast series on cases and issues in law and religion, is onto its 60th episode with 16.6K listens worldwide. Covering a range of topics, including Supreme Court decisions and newsworthy church-and-state conflicts, the podcast features notable guest commentators, like journalists Richard Brookhiser and Daniel McCarthy. You'll find *Legal Spirits* on Apple, Android, Spotify, and other streaming platforms.

Blog

The Mattone Center's blog, the [Law and Religion Forum](#), regularly draws media attention and has been cited in

major law reviews. Along with commentary by Center Director Mark Movsesian and guests, the blog features a weekly [Scholarship Roundup](#) post that highlights new work in the field and an [Around the Web](#) column that compiles the latest law and religion news.

CENTER NEWS

Reading Group

The Mattone Center's Reading Group continues to bring students, alumni, and friends together to discuss law and religion in works of fiction and non-fiction. In March, about 20 students and faculty participated in a discussion of Shakespeare's great play about law, religion, and justice, *Measure for Measure*. Students and faculty discussed the play's themes and debated its ambiguous ending.

Public Events

In April, the Mattone Center and St. John's *Journal of Catholic Legal Studies* co-hosted a symposium on *Kennedy v. Bremerton School District*, the Supreme Court's recent school prayer case. Speakers included Professors Stephanie Barclay (Notre Dame) and Marc DeGirolami (Catholic University) and Center Director Mark Movsesian (St. John's Law). You can [read more about the symposium](#) and [watch a video of the symposium proceedings](#).

Student Fellows

Each year, the Mattone Center selects St. John's Law students to serve as student fellows and assist with its programs. This year's fellows were [Riki Markowitz '25](#), [Patrick McKelvey '24](#), [Ryan Pugh '24](#), and [Panayiotis Xenakis '25](#). We're grateful for their hard work, including their contributions to the *Law and Religion Forum* blog and *Legal Spirits* podcast.

DIRECTOR NEWS

Center Director Mark Movsesian published a review essay, "[Religious Liberty and the American Founding](#)," in the *Journal of Law and Religion*. At Princeton University's James Madison Program, he spoke on a [panel on the history of religious freedom in the United States](#) that included Professor Robert P. George (Princeton) and journalist Richard Brookhiser. He also spoke on a panel, "[Free Speech vs. Non-Discrimination](#)," at the 25th annual Federalist Society Faculty Conference, along with Professors Drew Carpenter (Southern Methodist) and Amy Sepinwall (Wharton). Professor Movsesian participated in a [webinar on the Karabakh Crisis](#) sponsored by St. John's CRS Global Campus Committee, and in an online symposium on the 30th anniversary of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act produced by Emory University's Center for the Study of Law and Religion. His contribution, "[RFRA and the New Thoreaus](#)," is online, as are his pieces for opinion journals, including those in [COMPACT](#), [First Things](#), [Law & Liberty](#), and the [Volokh Conspiracy](#). Professor Movsesian also gave interviews to media outlets and continued to serve as co-editor of the *Journal of Law and Religion* (Cambridge).

THANK YOU!

Thank you for being part of the Center community. We have much more planned for next year, so please follow us on [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Instagram](#). As always, we welcome your feedback and suggestions for future

programs. If you would like to support our ongoing research, programs, and student fellowships, please [make a gift online](#) (from the designation menu, first select Centers and then select Mattone Center for Law and Religion).



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