

Media Release

October 22, 2015

Public Lecture and Music Recital by Samuel Rocha **“Imagine the Real: Fidelity, Improvisation, Witness”** **Tuesday, October 27 at 7 pm**

Educator and musician Samuel Rocha will deliver the Bishop Dollard Lecture at St. Thomas University using a combination of words and music.

In “Imagine the Real: Fidelity, Improvisation, Witness,” Rocha will discuss the divided self as explored in Augustine’s *Confessions*. The lecture, which will be both a talk and musical performance, will take place on Tuesday, Oct. 27 at 7 PM in McCain Hall Room 101.

“At the heart of religious experience there is a fruitful tension between fidelity and the imagination, authority and agency, the call to obedience and the dignity of conscience,” said Rocha. In the *Confessions*, Augustine explores such a tension in his notion that his “inner self is a house divided against itself” and Rocha offers what he calls folk phenomenology as a way of navigating these tensions and the goal, he says, is to “imagine the real.”

“One of the big puzzles in the *Confessions* is the way in which we can form a coherent self out of all of the different parts of our identities and Professor Rocha will be exploring this tension as at the heart of the religious experience,” explained Professor Matt Dinan, St. John XXIII Chair in Catholic Studies at St. Thomas University.

Rocha’s recording *Late to Love* is a concept album that performs a reading Augustine’s *Confessions* through soul music. From beginning to end, Rocha offers a bold and fresh reading of Augustine’s *Confessions* where the form is the content, where melody and verse take the place of assertions and argument.

“I think soul music is a fitting way to explore the tension between faithfulness and prophetic witness that is central to Catholic Christianity. Think about how we might know the shape of a song—its beginning, middle and end—and yet within any performance there is the chance for improvisation and individual expression. We can recognize a cover of a familiar song even if it’s really different from the original. Maybe faith is like that too. There’s the Church’s teachings, and how they’re lived. It’s like singing a song,” said Dinan.

Rocha is Assistant Professor of Philosophy of Education at the University of British Columbia, specializing in artistic and theological research in education. He is author of the award-winning *A Primer for Philosophy and Education* and *Folk Phenomenology: Education, Study, and the Human Person*. He has also released two works of music: *Freedom for Love* and *Late to Love*. Rocha has written extensively on a range of subjects at online sites such as *Patheos*, *First Things*, and *Ethika Politika*?

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