



FROM THE DIRECTOR



At the heart of the Hispanic Theological Initiative's (HTI) mission is the cultivation of scholars/leaders who have been formed by their community, intellectually advanced in the academy, and prepared via HTI's programming to serve the larger ecology of theological and religious education.

It is joyful and exciting to discover new ways and opportunities to serve HTI scholars and graduates, and to witness the new vocational paths they are taking, as well as their contributions at developing new curriculum, programming, lectures, monographs, etc. Having to adjust to a new era of hybridity, however, is quite a tall order, especially as technology continues to evolve at such a rapid pace. It is daunting, to say the least—but when I take a breath, this journey is still exhilarating.

This year's cover of HTI's annual brochure appropriately features a butterfly—a symbol of hope, metamorphosis, and new beginnings—bridging two hills on which individuals/institutions, at different stages in their journey, support one another towards reaching their goals. Through the commitment of dedicated member schools, funders, mentors, editors, faculty members, and partners, HTI's *en conjunto* support has been the bridge that holistically nurtures scholars as they work to finish their doctorate and become contributors to the larger ecology of theological and religious education. The cover represents a powerful beacon of growth and new beginnings, the power of transformation, and the incredible feats HTI scholars must achieve to reach the finish line.

It is with this springtime metaphor of transformation that HTI welcomes the 70 Scholars enrolled for the 2023–2024 academic year. Beginning on page 6, you can read the HTI Scholars' bios and learn about their journeys and aspirations.

We are grateful and overjoyed to share the number of ways HTI has grown wings and evolved during this past academic year of 2022–2023. Among the wonderful moments of growth and achievements that transpired are nine successful dissertation defenses, which raise the number of HTI graduates to 165! These HTI graduates continue to be employed in full-time positions in the academy, the church, and in non-profit organizations that advance theological and religious education.

En conjunto with funders, and partners, HTI expanded its program offerings. In April 2023, the first cohort of women completed the Latinas in Leadership program, introduced in September of 2021, with the support of the Lilly Endowment Inc. Additionally, a Trinity Church Wall Street grant enabled HTI to build and offer the Professional Development Conference (PDC) fully online to 25 HTI Scholars and non-enrolled PhD students.

In August of 2022, HTI, the Hispanic Summer Program (HSP), and Hispanic Youth Leadership Academy (HYLA) developed and began offering jointly the Latine Doctoral Accompaniment Seminar (LDAS) to prepare master-level students to write strong applications for admissions to PhD programs and for fellowships.

With your ongoing support of time, treasure, and talent, HTI works with excitement to advance Latine scholarship and leadership across the broader landscape of theological and religious education. As demonstrated by its history, HTI believes in the "butterfly effect," trusting that seemingly small actions do impact larger systems and future generations. We thank you for working with HTI and encourage you to stay connected and to give for the betterment of individuals and communities across the nation and the world.

Blessings,

Joanne Rodríguez
Executive Director