9th Annual Paula Ignes Castagnet Lecture Series on Faith & Science

Event Recap

April 22, 2026

Ave Maria University's Biology Department proudly hosted the ninth annual Paula Ignes Castagnet Lecture Series on Faith and Science this February, continuing a cherished tradition that bridges scientific inquiry with Catholic thought. The lecture series continues to honor Paula Ignes Castagnet's legacy of intellectual rigor and faithful scholarship. This year's timely topic—brain death and the death of the human person—brought together two distinguished speakers who offered compelling perspectives on one of the most pressing questions in modern medicine and bioethics. The lecture series, which alternates between the Biology and Chemistry departments in odd and even years respectively, remains a cornerstone of our commitment to helping students navigate the complex intersection of faith, reason, and scientific discovery.

The two-evening event featured Dr. Richard Rowe, an accomplished neurosurgeon, and Fr. John Johnson, who presented complementary yet distinct viewpoints on whether brain death or cardiac death constitutes true death. Their dynamic presentations reflected the ongoing scholarly conversation within the medical and theological communities, offering students and attendees the opportunity to engage thoughtfully with this profound question.

We were grateful to welcome active members of the Catholic Medical Association to campus, whose expertise and dedication helped form our students in dialogue with the Church's wisdom on vital questions of human life and dignity. Events like this demonstrate Ave Maria's distinctive mission to educate the whole person within a Catholic intellectual tradition, equipping our students to become thoughtful leaders and advocates for life in their future careers and communities. The success of the ninth annual lecture series reminds us why this annual gathering remains so vital to our educational mission.

Read online for photos and videos:

https://alumni.avemaria.edu/news/9th-annual-paula-ignes-castagnet-lecture-series-on-faith-science-1776890052826