Christianity not as a set of abstractions but the common pursuit of truth. Liberal arts and other areas of inquiry in the media, popular speakers and prolific writers. These scholars enrich intellectual life and amplify Villanova's voice in the public realm. Neither do Villanova's theologians. Theology can and should engage culture. "Theology at Villanova must relate our faith tradition to current thinking in science," says Peter Spitaler, ThD, associate professor and department chair. If it weren't being used by the pope, "Pontifex"—Latin for "bridge builder"—would be an apt Twitter handle for church historian and professor Massimo Faggioli. Massimo Faggioli. The Italian-born theologian and Vatican II expert helps the different worlds of European and American Catholicism understand each other. After years of study at the universities of Bologna and Turin, research in the Vatican archives, and teaching in other countries, Dr. Faggioli came to the United States during the 2008 presidential campaign. He was promptly tapped to write articles for European audiences, explaining the religious aspects of US politics, and for American audiences, explaining the qualities unique to Catholicism in this country. That task continues. "Having had a more universal experience of Catholicism, I try to cast light on ideas that are distinctly American, some of which may be worth questioning," Dr. Faggioli says. The 2013 election of Pope Francis catapulted Dr. Faggioli, then a faculty member at Saint Louis University, into the spotlight. The community sent her to Fordham University, where she earned her second doctoral degree, this one in Historical Theology. The convergence of her interests in cells and souls transformed her. "I was like a fish who had finally found water." From student to church—a different one each Sunday. Religious beliefs shape—and are shaped by—people, events and eras. To do their work, then, faculty in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies approach Christianity not as a set of abstractions but the common pursuit of truth. Liberal arts and other areas of inquiry in the media, popular speakers and prolific writers. These scholars enrich intellectual life and amplify Villanova's voice in the public realm. Neither do Villanova's theologians. Theology can and should engage culture. "Theology at Villanova must relate our faith tradition to current thinking in science," says Peter Spitaler, ThD, associate professor and department chair. If it weren't being used by the pope, "Pontifex"—Latin for "bridge builder"—would be an apt Twitter handle for church historian and professor Massimo Faggioli. Massimo Faggioli. The Italian-born theologian and Vatican II expert helps the different worlds of European and American Catholicism understand each other. After years of study at the universities of Bologna and Turin, research in the Vatican archives, and teaching in other countries, Dr. Faggioli came to the United States during the 2008 presidential campaign. He was promptly tapped to write articles for European audiences, explaining the religious aspects of US politics, and for American audiences, explaining the qualities unique to Catholicism in this country. That task continues. "Having had a more universal experience of Catholicism, I try to cast light on ideas that are distinctly American, some of which may be worth questioning," Dr. Faggioli says. The 2013 election of Pope Francis catapulted Dr. Faggioli, then a faculty member at Saint Louis University, into the spotlight. The community sent her to Fordham University, where she earned her second doctoral degree, this one in Historical Theology. The convergence of her interests in cells and souls transformed her. "I was like a fish who had finally found water." From student to church—a different one each Sunday. "Augustine was involved in the social, political and theological movements of his day, and he wanted people to dialogue about them," says Barbara Wall, PhD, vice president for Mission and Ministry. "We need more people thinking about how science and religion fit together. My hope is to have PhD students who will further the dialogue based here will make Villanova a center of these conversations," he says. "The department is well-positioned for this role."