



THE Ninth ANNUAL
JAMES M. MAY
LECTURE IN CLASSICS
ST. OLAF COLLEGE



JAMES M. MAY

Jim May retired in 2017 after teaching at St. Olaf for 40 years. He was Provost and Dean of the College (2002-11) and Kenneth O. Bjork Distinguished Professor (2014-17).

May graduated from Kent State University with a B.S. in Latin Education and English; he went on to earn a Ph.D. in Classics from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He is the author of many articles on classical rhetoric and Latin pedagogy, and of several books: *Trials of Character: The Eloquence of Ciceronian Ethos*, an annotated translation (co-authored with Jakob Wisse) of Cicero's *On the Ideal Orator*, *A Cicero Reader*, *38 Latin Stories*, and *46 Stories in Classical Greek* (the last two co-authored with Anne Groton). In addition, he edited *Brill's Companion to Cicero: Oratory and Rhetoric* (2002). His most recent book, *How to Win an Argument: An Ancient Guide to the Art of Persuasion* (Princeton University Press, 2016), has been translated into 12 different languages.

Former President of the Classical Association of the Middle West and South and the Classical Association of Minnesota, May held two NEH Fellowships and directed two NEH Summer Seminars for School Teachers. He has served the American Philological Association (now the Society for Classical Studies) in a number of capacities, including on the Board of Directors, as Vice President for Education, and as Vice President for Professional Matters. He won the APA's Award for Excellence in the Teaching of the Classics in 1986 and the Sears-Roebuck Foundation Teaching Excellence and Campus Leadership Award in 1991; he was honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award from Eta Sigma Phi, the national Classics honor society, in 2019.

May has visited Greece 41 times and rowed on the crew of the trireme *Olympias*. He restores antique trucks, cars, and tractors, competes in handball, and grows grapes to make his own wine. He has built houses, harpsichords, a violin, two lyres, and three bouzoukis. He enjoys performing Gregorian chant, singing in the Renaissance chamber choir that his wife Donna directs, and entertaining their five grandchildren.

BISHOP IRENEI

The Ninth Annual James M. May Lecture in Classics, "Cicero Speaks Norwegian': Reconsidering Perpetual Contextuality in Classical and Religious Studies" will be delivered on Thursday, November 13, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. in Viking Theater (Buntrock Commons) by His Grace the Right Reverend Irenei, Ruling Bishop of the Diocese of Great Britain and Western Europe of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia (ROCOR). The lecture is free and open to the public.

Bishop Irenei (Matthew C. Steenberg '01) majored in Religion and Classics at St. Olaf. As an undergraduate, he received many accolades including being selected as Student of the Year in St. Olaf's Great Conversation (Enduring Questions) program and as St. Olaf's first-ever British Marshall Scholar. A gifted learner of languages, he earned distinction in Classics with his annotated translation of 2 Maccabees. He also had a starring role in the Classics Department's Latin/English production of an ancient Roman comedy, Plautus' *Pseudolus*.

After graduating from St. Olaf, he earned M.St. and D.Phil. degrees from the University of Oxford, specializing in the writings of the early Church Fathers, especially St. Irenaeus of Lyons, whose name he took when he became an Orthodox monk and priest. In 2007-2010 he served as Professor and Chair of Theology and Religious Studies at Leeds Trinity University. Since then, he has held several other academic posts, among them Dean of the Saints Cyril and Athanasius Institute for Orthodox Studies in San Francisco and Distinguished Visiting Professor at the Saints Cyril and Methodius Orthodox Institute in Dandenong, Australia.

Bishop Irenei heads ROCOR's humanitarian efforts in Western Europe and is responsible for good Church-State relations in 13 countries and principalities. He lectures extensively around the world and is the author of numerous books and articles on patristic doctrine. He recently finished writing a monograph on creation, cosmology, and evolution as they bear upon Christian responses to contemporary ecological and social concerns. In his non-existent spare time, he composes liturgical hymns, pilots gyrocopters, and watches the antics of his two cats.