



Something to Start From

“Has anyone ever promised us anything? Then WHY do we expect something?”

Cesare Pavese

NEW YORK—The **2019 New York Encounter**, an annual three-day public cultural event featuring panel discussions, artistic performances, and special exhibits, will take place February 15-17, 2019, at the **Metropolitan Pavilion** at 125 West 18th Street in midtown Manhattan.

- The **2019 theme, *Something to Start From***, addresses that *something* within us -- that irreducible and stubborn expectation -- which can drive us to understanding value of our lives during uneasy times. The weekend’s communal exploration, through scores of events and exhibits, offers a way forward through the challenges of lost certainties, anonymous conformity and isolation, toward life-sustaining truths. Participants include cultural commentators **David Brooks, Robert George, John Waters, Austen Ivereigh**, and others. Topics explored comprise the stuff of our everyday realities, such as immigration and social rejection, personal loss, education, business, discoveries in science, poetry, and music -- from Bob Dylan and John Coltrane to brand new compositions created expressly to address the theme of this year’s **New York Encounter**.

Now in its 11th year, the **Encounter** aims to give witness to a new, flourishing life, generated by faith. Supported by the work of **350 volunteers**, it catalyzes intense engagement among speakers and attendees, from all walks of life, whose common ground is that of inquiry, the desire for dialogue, and, ultimately, hope.

Highlights:

- **Saturday, Feb. 16, 11:30 am -- AN EPIDEMIC OF LONELINESS**
A dialogue on the topic of loneliness in our society and its root causes. **Dr. Kerry Cronin** of Boston College will share her findings on the alienation that underlies the “lost art of dating,” while author **Emily Esfahani Smith** will speak about the close relationship between solitude, belonging, and the lack of meaning in life.
- **Saturday, Feb. 16, 4:00 pm -- BEYOND THE MOON ... TO THE FARTHEST REACHES**
Our innate need for novelty represents a continuous prompt to “go beyond,” with scientists recently revealing the existence of “exoplanets” far beyond man’s reach. The questions sparked by these discoveries will be explored by some of the top minds in the field: **Jonathan Lunine**, Director, Cornell Center for Astrophysics and Planetary Science, and **Karin Öberg**, Professor of Astronomy, Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics.
- **Sunday, Feb. 17, 4:00 and 5:30 pm -- LIFE IN THE AFTERMATH and BORN NOT TO DIE**
With profound depth of judgment, **Sandy Hook** massacre survivors and witnesses discuss that *something* from which to begin again, followed by reflections from the husband and medical doctor of **Servant of God Chiara Corbella** -- offering powerful insights into sorrow, hope, and life.

All events, except for the Saturday night performance, are free of charge. No registration necessary.

Credentialed media are welcome. Contact for interviews: press@newyorkencounter.org or (914) 548-1275 (before the Encounter) and (240) 793-5132 (during the Encounter).