

## **Reflections on the Monteverdi Award Experience from the 2015 Winners**

### **Domenic Canonico**

This summer I had the opportunity to conduct research for my senior thesis in the village of Castiglioncello del Trinoro in the province of Siena, Italy, thanks to the Cioffi family's Monteverdi Award. I was accommodated by Hotel Monteverdi, the staff of which made my stay smooth and relaxing and my studies productive.

My thesis aims to discuss medieval Christian pilgrimage as a form of narrative theology, a mode of making the human life coherent in light of a transcendent end. In particular, I hope to focus on Dante's *Purgatorio* as a depiction of the transcendent ideals of pilgrimage. Given these themes, I could not have been in a better location than the province of Siena. The Val d'Orcia, which Monteverdi overlooks from a mountain, was one of the most trafficked sections of a major medieval pilgrimage route to Rome, the Via Francigena. I was able to visit sites along the route and see churches, towns, and holy objects where pilgrims would stop to pray on their journeys. I was even able to visit certain places and relics cited in Dante's *Comedy*.

While I was not traveling, the grounds of Monteverdi afforded me a wonderful setting for reading books on my topic and drafting ideas for my thesis, and I was able to socialize with the staff and with Morganne, as well as to brainstorm with one of the artists-in-residence during her stay. My stay was fruitful and extremely valuable for my progress thus far on my thesis.