

# Lux Center News



June 30, 2022

## A NEW CHAPTER BEGINS

This is my final newsletter posting before my retirement begins on July 1, 2022. I have enjoyed communicating with all of you. It has been a blessing to be able to explore and compare beliefs, practices and perspectives of Catholicism and Judaism through the lens of the Lux Center for Catholic Jewish Studies at Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology.

Though much progress has been made in building bridges of respect and understanding for many years, the recent reversal of *Roe v. Wade* concerning religious views of abortion and women's reproductive rights has highlighted once again differences in religious beliefs, causing division and uncertainty.

While the response from the Catholic Church is quite clear, religious responses generally tend to be much more complicated. Most religious teachings on abortion are complex and often not in agreement. I do not wish to address this issue at this time. However, if you are interested in and open to reading about the perspectives of a variety of religious, I recommend an article from *Interfaith America Magazine* written by Samira Mehta, an Assistant Professor of Women and Gender Studies & Religion at the University of Colorado at Boulder.

<https://www.interfaithamerica.org/there-is-no-one-religious-view-on-abortion/>

A new director of the Lux Center has not yet been named at this time. An announcement concerning an interim director will be revealed shortly. The search for a full-time director continues.

In the meantime, let us not forget the purpose of interreligious relations and dialogue. I share the following writings for your inspiration.

Our first task in approaching  
Another people  
Another culture  
Another religion  
Is to take off our shoes  
for the place we are approaching is holy.

Else we may find ourselves  
treading on another's dream.  
More serious still,  
We may forget . . . .  
That God  
was there before our arrival.

*Author unknown*

Love Your Neighbor  
Leviticus 19

In the center of the Torah is the Book of Leviticus,  
In the middle of Leviticus is the chapter on holiness.,

At the core of the chapter on holiness  
Is the command to love your neighbor as yourself.

But before you can love you neighbor,  
You must have achieved love of yourself.

Before you can revere your parents,  
You must have struggled to fulfill the demands  
Of parenthood yourself.

Before you can love a stranger,  
You must have been a stranger in a harsh land.

Lord, how can we possibly experience enough  
and understand enough  
to love as You love?

From the deep center of our beings, we pray:  
Lead us toward wisdom and humility,  
Teach us compassion and understanding,

For we long to feel the holiness of your presence  
at the inmost center of our lives.

*From Harvest: Collected Poems and Prayers*  
By Ruth F. Brin

Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology (SHSST) is an apostolate of a Catholic religious community known as the Priests of the Sacred Heart or SCJ's for short. One of the first SCJ's that I met and got to know when I began my tenure as director of the Lux Center was Rev. Paul Kelly, SCJ. Fr. Kelly opened his big heart to me from the start. I appreciated his snarky sense of humor and his kind and listening ears. Fr. Kelly served as Vice President of Spiritual and Human Formation at SHSST for many years. He passed away in October 2018 after a lengthy illness. May Fr. Paul Kelly, SCJ, continue to rest in peace. His memory will always be a blessing for those who knew him. Here is a prayer that he wrote and delivered before the start of the Lux Center Spring Lecture in 2017:

O God  
We call you by many  
Names,  
We understand you in various ways  
We worship you  
Though we cannot comprehend you  
We rely on you  
For our many needs and deep desires.

You, who are beyond our grasp,  
You, who are more powerful than

Our thoughts can encompass,  
You, who are beyond our imaginings,  
Come to our aid.

Break down barriers that keep us apart.  
Stir within us a desire to be one human race,  
Help us to see what is common among our diversities.

You are the one God, living and true.  
You are the one God, source of what we have and are.  
You are the incomprehensible.  
You are the Source of life.

Humbled and grateful, With listening ears and hearts,  
We come,  
Open, ready, and attentive.  
You are with us here.  
Amen.



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*"For though my faith is not yours and your faith is not mine, if we are each free to light our own flame, together we can banish some of the darkness of the world."* Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks