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News Release

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Key religious leaders kick off unique center for Catholic-Jewish studies at Sacred Heart

Sacred Heart School of Theology will establish the Lux Center for Catholic-Jewish Studies, the first program of its kind at a Catholic seminary in North America, officials announced at a May 11 dinner in Hales Corners.

The Most Rev. Richard Sklba, auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, Rabbi Ronald Shapiro, senior rabbi of Congregation Shalom in Milwaukee, are co-chairs of the center. They and others told supporters about the center's value in sustaining positive momentum in Catholic-Jewish dialogue, and about the center's ambitious mission.

The Lux Center, named for a retiring faculty member, will advance Catholic-Jewish relations in two ways, according to the Very Rev. Jan de Jong, SCJ, the seminary's president-rector. It will provide unprecedented resources and outreach opportunities directly to the priests, rabbis and congregations of Southeast Wisconsin. And it will equip students to engage in interfaith dialogue and pursue common Catholic-Jewish interests as they go on to serve as priests throughout North America, Fr. de Jong said.



The Most Rev. Richard Sklba, auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee (left) and Rabbi Ronald Shapiro (right), senior rabbi at Congregation Shalom in Milwaukee, congratulate Richard Lux, Ph.D., on the kickoff of the Lux Center for Catholic-Jewish studies at Sacred Heart School of Theology.

Sacred Heart School of Theology is establishing the Lux Center to continue the life's work of Richard Lux, Ph.D., as he retires after 37 years as professor of scripture studies. During his tenure, Lux earned a reputation not only as an inspiring teacher, but also as an important national voice in Catholic-Jewish relations, Fr. de Jong said. Lux provided leadership to local and national organizations related to Catholic-Jewish dialogue, and published several books and articles, including *The Jewish People, the Holy Land and the State of Israel, a Catholic Perspective* (Paulist Press, 2010).

Center to provide community resources

In terms of direct community outreach, the Lux Center will expand the school's calendar of public events to include regular major lectures on issues that advance Catholic-Jewish relations. These lectures will be named for a major financial sponsor.

Additionally, the center will feature a significant addition to the 1,100-item Judaica collection at the seminary's Dehon Library. This collection, also to be named for a major financial sponsor, will be open to the public and visiting scholars.

Enhancing the formation experience

The Lux Center also aims to enhance priestly formation by preparing men for a ministry that encompasses understanding of, and appreciation for, Judaism, and prepares future pastors to engage in meaningful interfaith dialog. Main elements of these efforts include an ongoing accredited study program in Israel for seminarians in cooperation with a major ecumenical institute; and the endowment of an adjunct Sacred Heart faculty position for a Jewish scholar teaching Judaism, ensuring long-term continuity in a program currently provided on a year-by-year basis.

Dinner focuses on need for dialogue

Nearly 100 Catholic priests, rabbis, other religious leaders, Sacred Heart alumni, and others interested in interfaith dialogue attended the dinner at the Boerner Botanical Gardens to hear Bishop Sklba, Rabbi Shapiro and a host of others extol the value of Catholic-Jewish dialogue and describe how the Lux Center is ideally positioned to focus such efforts. Bishop Sklba's comments are available at <http://luxcenter.shst.edu>, as are the remarks of the Rev. Raúl Gómez, SDS, the seminary's academic dean, who emceed the event.

A highlight of the evening was a surprise appearance by Eva Fleischner, Ph.D., an internationally known author and speaker on Christian-Jewish relations. Fleischner, who resides in California, arrived at the event directly from an engagement in Spain in time to speak to attendees about the importance of continuing Lux's work.

Priests of Sacred Heart jump-start fundraising

The center is in the process of raising \$350,000 to fulfill its vision. The Priests of the Sacred Heart, U.S. Province, has already contributed \$25,000 in seed money, and has pledged an additional \$25,000. The Priests of the Sacred Heart is the religious order that owns and operates Sacred Heart School of Theology.

Contributions, which are tax deductible, can be sent to: The Lux Center at SHST, P.O. Box 429, Hales Corners, WI 53130.

Sacred Heart School of Theology is North America's premier Catholic seminary focused on priestly formation for men of all ages. More information is available at www.shst.edu.