

# Lux Center News



April 12, 2018

## Spring Is a Busy Season

The last few weeks have been busy times of the year for both Christians and Jews. Easter and Passover, two spring holidays that frequently overlap, both unite and separate Jews and Christians.

Both holidays are grounded in nature and history. Both emphasize a resounding message of hope along with their differing stories of redemption.

For Judaism, Passover commemorates when Jewish slaves in Egypt are redeemed by God and not only achieve freedom but are reborn as a nation united through the experience of the exodus, receiving the Torah, and entering into a covenant with God. For Christianity, Easter commemorates the sacrifice and resurrection of Jesus, the son of God, which is the ultimate affirmation of life and the assurance that each Christian is freed from sin and reborn to life eternal. Themes of liberation, freedom, renewal and transformation are central to both.

## Counting the Days

We human beings are aware and engaged in the passing of time. Most of us are constantly counting minutes, days, weeks, and years. A group of students at Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology are now counting the days until graduation. On May 5<sup>th</sup>, 17 students will celebrate their honorable achievement and will alter their status from SHSST student to alumni. The Lux Center congratulates them and wishes them well as they go forward.

Both Jewish and Christian communities are also in the midst of counting the days with religious significance. It is a period of time, when both faiths are connected, yet also go their separate ways.

Jews are currently involved in the “counting of the *omer*.” The *omer* refers to the 49 day period (7 weeks) between the second night of Passover and the holiday of *Shavuot* (also known as the biblical Pentecost). In ancient times, this period marked the beginning of the barley harvest. Jews would bring the first sheaves to the Temple in order to thank God for the harvest. The holiday of Shavuot later became associated with the giving of the Torah and not only a celebration of agricultural bounty. This period of counting the omer, then, began to symbolize a link between Passover and *Shavuot*. *Shavuot* literally means weeks and is known as the “feast of weeks.”

Christians are involved in counting the days between Easter and the Feast of Pentecost which is celebrated on the fiftieth day after Easter. Pentecost commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles and the birth of the Catholic Church. It represents the fulfillment of Christ’s promise from the end of Luke’s Gospel:

“Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but stay in the city, until you are clothed with power from on high” (Luke 24:46-49).

*Shavuot*, the Jewish Pentecost, and the Christian *Pentecost Sunday* obviously do not celebrate the same event, have the same religious meaning, or are commemorated in the same manner. However, because Jesus was crucified during the Jewish holiday of Passover, it was no coincidence that the followers of Jesus, who were Jews, had gathered together during the Jewish celebration of Shavuot (Pentecost) seven weeks after Jesus' resurrection (Easter). This was when, as written in the New Testament, the Holy Spirit was poured out upon these first followers of Jesus.

## All Are Invited

**Fr. John T. Pawlikowski, OSM, Will Receive the First Sister Rose Thering Award**

**Please join the Lux Center on May 3<sup>rd</sup> for the first Sr. Rose Thering Award Dinner. Festivities begin at 6 p.m. at the Boerner Botanical Gardens, 9400 Boerner Drive, located in Whitnall Park in Hales Corners.**

This award was established to recognize an individual who has made significant contributions to interreligious relations. And so, the Lux Center has proudly chosen Fr. John Pawlikowski to be this award's first recipient.

Born in Chicago, Servite Father Pawlikowski is a graduate of the University of St. Mary of the Lake (Mundelein Seminary) and was ordained in 1967. Spending most of his career in Chicago, he was one of the founding faculty members of the Catholic Theological Union. He served there as a professor of Social Ethics and was the director of CTU's Catholic-Jewish Studies Program until his retirement in 2017.

His scholarship is well-known. He is a prolific writer and speaker on topics related to social ethics, the Holocaust, and on the dramatic change in Christian attitudes toward Jews since Vatican II. He has also been an active participant in Christian-Jewish dialogue as well as wider interreligious dialogue, as he served as president of the International Council of Christians and Jews and on the board of the Parliament of World Religions.

This dinner will also honor those who have contributed to the Lux Center in a major way. Our major donors who include the Priests of the Sacred Heart, the Clarice S. Turer Charitable Fund, and an individual anonymous donor will be recognized. Danielle Merrill Yakich and Acklen Banks will receive awards for their volunteer service to the Lux Center.

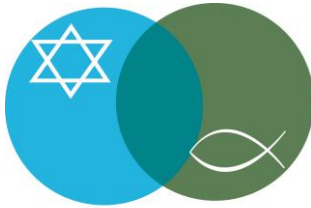
It is with great pride that the Lux Center for Catholic-Jewish Studies honors these exemplary individuals and institutions who not only understand the importance of interreligious relations, but have given passionate support to the work of the Lux Center and have made significant contributions in the genuine service of mankind.

For more information about the Award Dinner, contact Bonnie Shafrin at the Lux Center at [bshafrin@shsst.edu](mailto:bshafrin@shsst.edu) or 414-529-6966.

**Holocaust Remembrance Day (Yom Hashoah)**

The Lux Center will again be one of the institutional sponsors of the Milwaukee area Yom Hashoah commemoration service on Sunday, April 15<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 p.m. It will be held in the Community Hall of the Harry & Rose Samson Family Jewish Community Center, 6401 N. Santa Monica Blvd. in Whitefish Bay.

This event is free and open to the public.  
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**The Lux Center**  
for Catholic-Jewish Studies  
at Sacred Heart Seminary and  
School of Theology

**Ms. Bonnie Shafrin**

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at Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology

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