

Lux Center News



September 20, 2017

Maintaining Tradition While Embracing Transformation

Throughout history, there have been moments that change the world in a dramatic way—e.g. in 1439 when Gutenberg invented the printing press, in 1903 when the Wright Brothers executed the first manned flight, in 1990 when Tim Berners-Lee invented the World Wide Web. Changes at Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology (SHSST) may not be of the same historic magnitude, but current changes this year will be transformative for this institution.

First of all, SHSST welcomes the Very Rev. Thomas Knoebel as its new rector/president. Fr. Knoebel is firmly connected to the traditions of Sacred Heart Seminary since he has over 30 years of experience during his tenures as professor of systematic theology, director of spiritual formation, academic dean, vice president for external affairs, vice rector, and interim rector prior to his “retirement” in 2011. This extensive experience has provided him with the forward thinking vision and leadership that is important for the future of SHSST and the formation of future priests. The Lux Center welcomes Fr. Knoebel and congratulates him on his recent call back to service.

Secondly, growth and positive change are a way of life at Sacred Heart. The English-as-a-second-language (ESL) program is experiencing rapid expansion. About 50 students and clergy from 16 different countries (including Colombia, Brazil, Viet Nam, Rwanda, Cameroon, Togo, Poland) came to SHSST to study English this summer.

Also, an exciting new master’s degree program that combines both face-to-face instruction with online education to advance theological learning has begun this semester with a cohort of 14 students. This program, *Cor Unum*, is off to a robust start.

The Evolving Changes in Religion and the World

While deeply steeped in tradition, both Judaism and the Catholic Church are each in their own way built around the idea of a living, active God. While liturgy and rituals cling to tradition, intentions continually change over time in order to adapt to the evolution of new

realities. And so, throughout the centuries these religions and others have been shaped by their responses to the constant flow of history.

Judaism and Christianity were both rooted in the ancient traditions of the 1st and 2nd Temples in Jerusalem. After the destruction of the 2nd Temple by the Romans in the year 70, both “traditional” Jews and followers of Jesus were bereft of their national center of religious life. This may sound surprising to Christians, but the Acts of the Apostles indicates that the disciples continued to worship at the Temple after Jesus’ death and resurrection. This loss required a dramatic realignment in religious sensibilities among the followers of Jesus, as well as the sages of rabbinic Judaism. Revolutionary reforms were born within each group, eventually evolving through the centuries into the contemporary traditions we know today.

The 16th century proved to be a catalyst for a new theology within Christianity that not only caused a split within the Church, but would also have a major affect on Judaism within the European environment. Not even Martin Luther himself could have dreamed that his ideas would foment not only a major challenge to religious authority within the Roman Catholic Church, but would change the course of history. This year the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation will be commemorated.

Some may be surprised that Judaism was impacted by the rise of Protestant Christianity. Although anti-Jewish attitudes existed before Martin Luther and the rise of the Protestant churches, many agree that Luther’s virulent anti-Jewish statements and writings contributed to the roadmap for later anti-Jewish actions instigated by Nazi Germany. Luther’s hostility was not a direct cause for the murder of the Jews during the Holocaust, but scholars of history deem its existence as a factor.

Jewish High Holidays: A Time for Renewal and Transformation

As fall approaches, Jews throughout the world begin a period of deep introspection, prayer, fasting and repentance for past misdeeds. It is time for the Days of Awe, the High Holy Days: Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. These are the most solemn, and also the most joyous, of all of the Jewish holidays.

Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, is a time for celebration with family and community, but also a time to review actions of the past year and think about the year to come. It is a time to stand before God and publicly confess missteps (sins). The prayer service stresses the concept of “return to God” (*teshuvah* in Hebrew), in the belief that God’s mercy is willing to receive the penitent, forgive sins, and offer an opportunity to begin the New Year with a clean slate. The shofar (ram’s horn) is sounded to herald the beginning of the new Jewish

year and to awaken the senses reminding each person to mend their ways and to always be their best selves.

Yom Kippur means “Day of Atonement” and is considered to be the holiest day of the Jewish calendar. It is a day of fasting, prayer and repentance. As evening falls, one long blast of the shofar will be blown to end the day reminding all to reach out towards new insights and more meaningful living during the coming year. Observance of these High Holy Days encourages a process of spiritual transformation so that each person has the opportunity to turn back to a righteous path for the year to come.

New Programs at the Lux Center

The Lux Center does not have a long tradition as it is currently in its eighth year of existence. However, it continues to follow a pattern of growth and continuing transformation. Educational programs for seminarians and the community will continue. Two new programs will offer additional opportunities for the community to explore Catholic-Jewish relations:

Catholic-Jewish Film Series

An opportunity to learn about interesting aspects of Catholic-Jewish relations through the medium of film.

Sunday, October 29 at 3:00 p.m. ***My Italian Secret: The Forgotten Heroes***. Introduction and post-film discussion led by renowned author and speaker, Elizabeth Bettina. Location to be determined.

Sunday, December 2 at 3:00 p.m. ***The Jewish Cardinal***. Introduction and post-film discussion by Dr. Richard Lux, PhD., Professor Emeritus at Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology. Location: Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology.

Date and location TBD at 3:00 p.m. The ***Zookeeper’s Wife***. Introduction and post-film discussion by Dr. Neal Pease, PhD., Professor of History, UW-Milwaukee.

(More details available for all films soon)

Lux Center Catholic-Jewish Book Program

This fall we will begin this program to inspire dialogue and discussion in the context of a “book talk.” Bishop Richard J. Sklba and Rabbi Ronald M. Shapiro will present the book ***The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus*** and lead a discussion around the content of the book.

*The Lux Center wishes all of its Jewish friends
a very healthy and happy New Year (5778)!*

A 2017-2018 Jewish Holiday Calendar for your information is attached courtesy of the Lux Center.

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