

THE JEWISH-CHRISTIAN STUDIES GRADUATE PROGRAM

FALL 2013 NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 16 / NUMBER 1

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

WELCOME, ÁGNES VETÖ



Agnes Vetö

We are pleased to welcome Adjunct Professor Ágnes Vetö to the Jewish-Christian Studies Graduate Program and Seton Hall University! This Fall 2013 semester Professor Vetö is teaching our program's JCST 7044 course, "Rabbinic Thought," which offers an introduction to the early history of rabbinic material and an evaluation of the legal and value concepts of the rabbinic mind in light of various examples of the tradition.

Professor Vetö is from Budapest, Hungary, where she earned an undergraduate degree in Hebrew and Jewish Studies from Eötvös Lorand University. She holds two Master's degrees: one in Jewish Studies from the Roth-

berg Graduate School at Hebrew University in Jerusalem and one in Hebrew and Jewish Studies from the School of Oriental and African Studies at London University. During her studies at London University, Professor Vetö spent a year at the Oxford Postgraduate Center for Hebrew and Jewish Studies, and during her studies at Eötvös Lorand, Professor Vetö spent her supplementary year abroad in Paris at the Sorbonne at both the Institut Catholique and École Pratique des Hautes Études. She is currently completing a Ph.D. in the Skirball Department of Hebrew and Judaic Studies with an emphasis on Talmud and Rabbinic literature.

Before teaching in the Jewish-Christian Studies Graduate program, Professor Vetö served as Visiting Assistant Professor of Rabbinic Literature at Vassar College, where she taught both general introductions to rabbinic literature and courses on women in the classical Jewish tradition. Fluent in Hebrew, English, French and Hungarian and well-versed in Aramaic and Classical Greek, Ms. Vetö recently delivered the lecture, "Fluid Masculinity: Metaphors and the Rabbinic Conceptualization of Madness," at Princeton University and will have her article, "Bible to Mishnah to Gospel: the politics and polemics of rewriting the bitter water ritual," published in the *Journal for the Study of Judaism Supplement Series* later this year.

OPPORTUNITY AHEAD

Scholarships

The Institute of Judaeo-Christian Studies and the Sister Rose Thering Fund are currently accepting applications for full and partial scholarships and tuition assistance for the Spring and Fall 2014 semesters.



The Institute offers scholarship assistance to students who are matriculated in the Jewish-Christian Studies Graduate Program and in Master's of Arts in Theology with a concentration in Judaeo-Christian Studies program in the Immaculate Conception Seminary School of Theology at Seton Hall University. To learn more, visit the Institute online at <http://bit.ly/JCStudies>.

The Sister Rose Thering Fund (SRTF) awards tuition scholarships to non-matriculated educators who wish to take graduate courses without or prior to enrolling in the master's program. Educators with non-matriculation status who complete a four-course sequence will be awarded a Certificate in Jewish-Christian Studies. Go to <http://bit.ly/SRoseFund> to apply.

Inside this Issue

Letter from the Director	2
New Graduate Student Updates	3
Faculty News	4-5
Spring 2014 Course Schedule	6
Student News	6
Alumni Updates	6
Research in Biblical Studies	7
Alumni Making a Difference: Ira Melon	8
Holiday Colloquium: December 11, 2013	9
In Memoriam: Geza Vermes	9
Upcoming Events	10



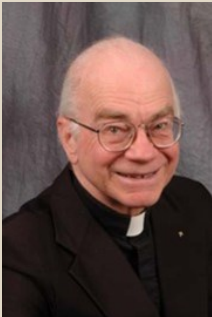
SETON HALL UNIVERSITY

Department of Religion

The Jewish-Christian Studies
Graduate Program

Eliminating prejudice through understanding since 1975

Letter from the Director



Lawrence E. Frizzell
Director

This Fall 2013 semester has proven to be very productive and rewarding as we welcome six new students and one new adjunct faculty member to the program and continue to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Institute of Judaeo-Christian Studies.

We are pleased to have Ágnes Vetö join us as an Adjunct Professor for the Fall semester. As you will note from the lead story on the front cover, Ms. Vetö has an impressive background. No doubt her students will greatly benefit from her extensive knowledge of rabbinic literature and her multi-lingual abilities.

We also have the pleasure of welcoming six new students into the Jewish-Christian Studies Graduate Program. As you will see from their biographical highlights on page 3, they are a diverse group with various backgrounds and are all committed to making meaningful contributions in our field and throughout our world.

I am very happy to announce that Rabbi Alan Brill, who holds the Cooperman/Ross Endowed Chair of Jewish-Christian Studies, received a Fulbright Senior Scholar Award for teaching and research in India, where he will focus on the parallels between Judaism and Hinduism. You can learn more about the scope of Rabbi Brill's research project on page 5. We wish Rabbi Brill safe and happy travels abroad and blessings for rewarding and fruitful explorations and studies.

Be sure you check out our recent student and alumni updates on page 6 as well as the article on page 9 by an alumnus, Ira Melon. Ira earned his Master of Arts in Jewish-Christian Studies in 2000 and has made an extraordinary impact over the years in teaching Holocaust, genocide and diversity studies. We are all very proud of his accomplishments and his extraordinary dedication to the work of his closest mentor, the late Sister Rose Thering. I am also delighted that he is one of the newest members to join the Board of the Foundation for Judaeo-Christian Studies.

Please mark your calendars and join us on December 11 for a Holiday Colloquium that will feature a panel discussion about what positive impact Christian, Jewish and Muslim religious communities are having in New Jersey and New York urban schools. Although the panel discussion will be based on class discussions and course readings from JCST 6014: Lessons from the Holocaust and JCST 7576: Personal Rights and Responsibilities for a Just Society, the event is free and open to the public.

Students, in particular, will find the list of freely-accessible databases on page 5 to be a helpful supplemental resource to their studies and research. Also please refer to page 6 for the list of Spring 2014 Course Schedule and register online today for next semester's classes.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone that has assisted me throughout the entire year with the 60th anniversary of the Institute of Judaeo-Christian Studies. Looking back in reminiscence, I remember giving a lecture with Rabbi Asher Finkel for the 20th anniversary in the sombre proximity of the Yom Kippur War in October 1973. Now, with the Institute's entry into the world of the social media under the guidance of our graduate, Ms. Laura Smith, I hope that the work of the Institute's founding director, John M. Oesterreicher, and this M.A. program that he founded will become more widely known. May the academic and spiritual foundations for Christian-Jewish understanding provide a key to some of the challenges of the next decade!

Best wishes to everyone for joyous Holy Days and a relaxing winter break.

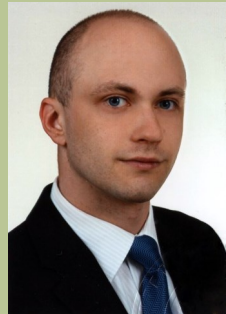
Reverend Lawrence E. Frizzell

Director & Associate Professor
Jewish-Christian Studies Graduate Program
Seton Hall University
lawrence.frizzell@shu.edu
www.facebook.com/lawrence.frizzell

NEW GRADUATE STUDENT UPDATES: Students Seek to Promote Peace Within Their Varied Communities



Elizabeth Casiano resides in Maplewood, NJ and has a bachelor's degree in Music Education and a certificate from the Chubb Institute. Before entering the Jewish-Christian Studies Graduate Program, Liz taught Music in Cranford elementary schools for six years and was a computer analyst for 20 years at IBM. She views the program as "the perfect opportunity" to pursue her passion in Bible studies and believes her coursework will "bring a depth and richness to the Women's Bible Studies" she teaches at CrossRoads Christian Fellowship in Union, NJ.



Piotr Dudek is from Poland where he earned a bachelor's degree in Hebrew Language from the Higher School of Hebrew Philology in Torun and a master's degree in law from Nicolaus Copernicus University. Before attending Seton Hall Piotr participated in the YIVO Summer Program in Yiddish Language, Literature and Culture in New York where he taught a Hebrew Course. He plans to focus his studies on the work of Blessed

John Paul II and how Jews in Poland are rediscovering their Jewish identity after the Shoah (Holocaust). When asked why he entered the Jewish-Christian-Studies Program, Piotr stated his overarching goal is "to disseminate my acquired knowledge, inter alia, concerning the merits of Monsignor John M. Oesterreicher and Sister Rose Thering to academic environments in my country, especially to the Higher School of Hebrew Philology. I believe that the program will increase my comprehension of changes in the Church of the 20th century, which initiated the process of reconciliation."



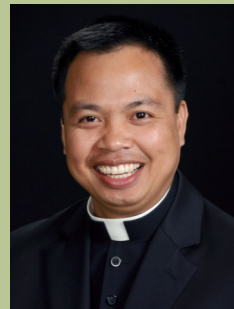
Ann Marie Felix Peters is a full time teacher at Our Lady Help of Christians School in East Orange, NJ. Ann Marie teaches all subjects to grade 5 and has certifications in General Education, Science and Special Education (K to 8). She also holds bachelor's degrees from Grenada's Teachers College and Kean University. Ann Marie is interested in learning to "create lessons that will foster a degree of tolerance and respect in the

students" that she teaches with the aim of helping "them become law abiding, caring, responsible citizen [in] our diverse world." Moreover she says, "I plan to do what I can to help make the young people that I encounter in our world a bit more accepting of our differences."



Brother Charles Joseph is from France and holds a master's degree in International Law. Before entering the M.A. in Jewish-Christian Studies Graduate Program, he attended the University of Paris II Assas-Sorbonne and the University of Occidental Brittany. A former naval officer, Charles is now a brother of the Community of St. John and is interested in working to help facilitate ecumenical

dialogue and understanding and plans to focus his research on messianism in the Second Temple era.



Father Roy Regaspi, parochial vicar of St. Vincent de Paul Church in Bayonne, NJ and assistant vocation director of the Archdiocese of Newark, was born and raised in the Philippines where he took philosophical studies at the Holy Rosary Seminary in Naga City. He continued his seminary formation at the Immaculate Conception Seminary, Seton Hall University and earned two master's degrees: one in Divinity in Pastoral Ministry and

one in Systematic Theology. Fr. Roy has entered the Jewish-Christian Studies Graduate Program to learn how Judaeo-Christian traditions relate to the four pillars of the Catholic Faith (Creed, Sacraments, Life in Christ and Prayer) and will focus his research on evaluating the development and impact of Vatican II documents on interreligious dialogue and how it has influenced the mission of the Catholic Church. Fr. Roy also anticipates that the lessons he learns in the program will further strengthen his vocation by giving him "a deeper understanding of the Sacred Scriptures" and a greater "respect for the people of other creeds."



Father Anthony Uwandu is a priest of the Catholic Diocese of Aba in Abia State, Nigeria. He has earned a bachelor's degree in Philosophy from the University of Ibadan (Nigeria) and a bachelor's degree in Theology from the Pontifical Urban University (Rome). Prior to attending the Jewish-Christian Studies Graduate Program, Fr. Anthony served the Archdioceses of Lagos and Aba respectively. He has matriculated into the

graduate program because he says, "As a priest, I have always developed an interest in deepening my understanding of the Christian faith, which is deeply rooted in Judaism," and he knows that the lessons he learns here will afford him the opportunity to "to be a better shepherd to the flock."

FACULTY NEWS

The Reverend Lawrence E. Frizzell, D. Phil.

Director & Associate Professor, Jewish-Christian Studies Graduate Program

Director, Institute of Judaean-Christian Studies

The 60th anniversary of the Institute of Judaean-Christian Studies has been the primary focus of Father Lawrence Frizzell's attention during the 2013 academic year. You can read more about Father Frizzell's and the Institute's accomplishments and activities online via the Institute's annual newsletter at <http://bit.ly/IJCS2013Newsletter>.

Father Frizzell is teaching three graduate courses this semester: *Christian-Jewish Encounter*, *Hebrew Bible Readings II* and *Jerusalem's Fall: Jewish and Christian Interpretations*. He also recently participated in the following academic conferences and meetings:



The 22nd meeting of the International Catholic-Jewish Liaison Committee in Madrid

- Father Frizzell coordinated two sessions on Jewish-Christian Studies for the International Congress on Medieval Studies in Kalamazoo, Michigan (May 9-12, 2013). He presented a paper, "Isaiah in John's Gospel: Medieval Latin Exegesis."

- During the annual meeting of the Catholic Biblical Association at Gonzaga University, Spokane, Washington (August 3-6, 2013), Dr. Gregory Glazov of Seton Hall's School of Theology coordinated a task force "John and the Old Testament." Fr. Frizzell made a presentation on a written paper, "Isaiah in the Gospel of John: Modern Commentators."

- During the biennial meeting of the International Catholic-Jewish Liaison Committee, which was held in Madrid Spain from October 13-16, Fr. Frizzell presented a paper on the theme of "Challenges to Religion in the Modern Age: Catholic Responses." The joint statement from this meeting on current issues of concern may be found on the Vatican website at <http://bit.ly/ICJL2013Madrid>.

**David M. Bossman, Ph.D.**

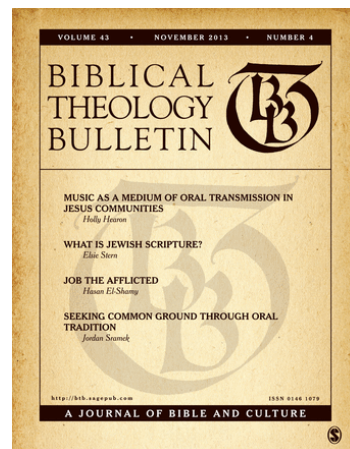
Professor, Jewish-Christian Studies Graduate Program

Executive Director, Sister Rose Thering Fund

Dr. Bossman is teaching *Lessons from the Holocaust* and *Personal Rights and Responsibilities for a Just Society* this semester. Two months ago, he was the Catholic respondent at the Ecumenical Awards Ceremony for 9/11 Responders at Christian Love Baptist Church in Irvington on September 11, 2013, where Governor Chris Christie was the keynote speaker.

David M. Bossman This summer Dr. Bossman delivered the opening address for the Twentieth Annual Evening of Roses at Seton Hall University on April 21, 2013. You can read more about the Evening of Roses program at <http://www.shu.edu/news/article/440424>.

Dr. Bossman continues to serve as editor of the *Biblical Theology Bulletin* (BTB). The November 2013 issue of BTB (43:4) is now published, featuring articles on music and biblical performance in the Christian, Jewish, and Muslim traditions, with an added article by a performing musician: "Music as a Medium of Oral Transmission in Jesus Communities" (Holly Hearon); "What is Jewish Scripture?" (Elsie Stern); "Job the Afflicted" (Hasan El-Shamy); "Seeking Common Ground through Oral Tradition" (Jordan Sramek). This issue may be accessed and purchased online at <http://btb.sagepub.com/>. Seton Hall students can access these and other *Biblical Theology Bulletin* articles online through the **E-Journals** tab on the University Libraries homepage at <http://www.shu.edu/academics/libraries>.





Alan Brill

Rabbi Alan Brill, Ph.D.

Cooperman/Ross Endowed Chair of Jewish-Christian Studies

Rabbi Alan Brill is currently on sabbatical in Varanasi, India where he is working on the Fulbright-Nehru Project, *A Needed Dialogue and Encounter of Hinduism and Judaism* at Benares Hindu University. Rabbi Brill's project will focus on teaching a graduate-level course that surveys commonalities between Judaism and Hinduism and on writing a monograph that aims to engage the encounter of Judaism and Hinduism. His research has the following three-fold aim: 1) to advance the state of interfaith discussions; 2) to decenter the field from Christian and Buddhist questions to the more ritualistic aspects of religion; and 3) to point out similarities in terms of ritual, textual focus and visualization practice.

Rabbi Brill will focus on researching and analyzing the Jewish Hindu encounters of 2007, 2008 and 2009 and their outcomes and will be teaching Judaism to those who have little or no understanding of the basic fundamentals of Judaism. Likewise, he seeks to explain the complexity of Hinduism beyond what most read in introductory American textbooks, which is often based on colonial era presentations, eclectic mixtures of ancient citations, 10th century texts, obscure cults and ethnography of the populous.

Learn more about Rabbi Brill's research and his contribution to the Fulbright-Nehru Project, *A Needed Dialogue and Encounter of Hinduism and Judaism*, and how to contact him while he's in Varanasi, India by visiting his blog, *The Book of Doctrines and Opinions: notes on Jewish theology and spirituality*, at <http://bit.ly/FulbrightBrill>.

You can also read Rabbi Brill's most recent publication, "Observations on Orthodox Jews in the Pew," which was published in *The Jewish Standard* on October 4, 2013, online at: <http://bit.ly/PewBrill>.



The Entrance Gate at Benares Hindu University in Varanasi, India



Anthony C. Sciglitano

Anthony C. Sciglitano, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Religion Chair, Department of Religion

Dr. Sciglitano, Associate Professor and Chair of Seton Hall's Department of Religion, will teach *Christian Theologies of Judaism: Ancient and Modern* during the Spring 2014 semester. This course, being taught for the first time in the Jewish-Christian Studies Graduate Program, seeks to draw an analogy between the early period of Christian development and the modern cultural situation of Christians as both are times when Christian self-definition is fluid and in contention and when relation to Judaism is of defining interest. Students taking this class will study the different ways in which Christian thinkers from early and modern Christianity understand Judaism in relation to both Christianity and to their surrounding cultural milieu, including religious, mythological and philosophical discourses. Of particular interest will be how Christians think of themes such as covenant, law, freedom, revelation, religion, God and history in relation to Judaism and how Christians define themselves in continuity and discontinuity with the Jewish people. Towards the end of the class, focus will switch and briefly examine Christianity through Jewish eyes.

Dr. Sciglitano is also the [Director of the University Core Curriculum](#), and his primary areas of interest are theological hermeneutics; theology, religion and secularism; theology of religions; and fundamental religion. His most recent publications include:

- "Nihilism," in the *New Catholic Encyclopedia Supplement 2012-13: Ethics and Philosophy*. Ed. Robert L. Fastiggi. 4 vols. Detroit: Gale, 2013)
- "Gianni Vattimo and Saint Paul: Ontological Weakening, Kenosis and Secularity," in *Paul in the Grip of the Philosophers*, ed. by Peter Frick (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2013).
- Forthcoming: *Marcion and Prometheus: Balthasar against the Expulsion of Jewish Origins from Modern Religious Dialogue* (NY: Crossroad Publishing, 2013) (Official Publication Date is April 1, 2014)

SPRING 2014 COURSE SCHEDULE

Master of Arts in Jewish-Christian Studies



Registration for the 2014 Spring Semester is in full swing!

Classes will begin January 13, and all new and returning students must begin their registration process by contacting Jay Wolferman via email at Jay.Wolferman@shu.edu or via phone at 973.761.9751 to obtain their PIN.

After receiving a PIN, students need to sign in to Piratenet at <http://piratenet.shu.edu>. Detailed instructions for registering online may be found on the Office of Registrars webpage at www.shu.edu/academics/registration.cfm.

Here's a tentative list of classes that will be offered in the M.A. in Jewish-Christian Studies Program:

JCST 6009 Hebrew Bible Reading III – Lawrence E. Frizzell, TBA

JCST 6013 Hebrews and Catholic Epistles – Lawrence E. Frizzell, Monday, 5:00 – 7:30 pm

JCST 6014 Lessons from the Holocaust – David M. Bossman, Wednesday, 5:00 – 7:30 pm

JCST 7030 Law and Ethics: Jewish and Christian – Lawrence E. Frizzell, Tuesday, 5:00 – 7:30 pm

JCST 7576 Personal Rights and Responsibilities for a Just Society – David M. Bossman, Tuesday, 5:00 – 7:30 pm

JCST 7579 Christian Theologies of Judaism: Ancient and Modern– Anthony Sciglitano, Thursday, 5:00 – 7:30 pm

JCST 9001 Thesis – Lawrence E. Frizzell, TBA

STUDENT NEWS

Kudos & Highlights



Congratulations to **Analicia Culp** who successfully defended her M.A. in Jewish-Christian thesis, "The God of Hesed, the Lovingkindness of God, as found in Exodus 34:6-7," and graduated in May 2013!

Analicia, who teaches classes on scriptural analysis including its historical and cultural components and daily application, earned her bachelor's degree in Psychology from William Patterson College. She recalls that her interest in Jewish-Christian-Studies began early in her life: "I can attribute the beginning of my interest in Jewish-Christian Studies when as a young girl, I would watch my father pore over the works of Josephus, the Bible and various Apocryphal books. His love and excitement for these works and for archaeological findings was passed on to me."

Now that she has graduated, Analicia notes, "I am looking forward to additional avenues of opportunity in the effort of disseminating the knowledge that I have acquired through the Jewish-Christian Studies Program and will be honored to direct all those who are interested to this life-giving venue."

ALUMNI UPDATE

Where are they now?



Jonathan Dwyer graduated from the M.A. in Jewish-Christian Studies Program in 2010 and is the Director of Campus Ministry at [Saint Martin's University](http://www.saintmartins.edu) – a small Catholic Benedictine university in Lacey, Washington. As Director of Campus Ministry, Jon is responsible for organizing and implementing liturgies, retreats, faith sharing groups, opportunities for service and service immersion trips and opportunities for continuing religious education. He also directs the RCIA program and teaches a Freshman Seminar course. Next year Jon will be part of a team that will introduce the Interfaith Youth Core to Saint Martin's – a program that brings together young people from diverse faith backgrounds for service and social justice initiatives. Regarding his studies Jon noted, "In all that I do I am always keenly aware of my particular theological perspectives resulting from my graduate work in the Jewish and Christian Studies program at Seton Hall."

RESEARCH IN BIBLICAL STUDIES

Online Resources

Here's a useful list of freely-accessible databases designed to help students and scholars with their studies and research in biblical research and Jewish-Christian Studies.

4 Enoch: The Online Encyclopedia of Second Temple Judaism and Christian Origins @

http://www.4enoch.org/wiki3/index.php?title=Main_Page

A comprehensive and authoritative introduction to scholarly research in Second Temple Judaism and Christian Origins, i.e. from Ezekiel to the completion of the New Testament and the Mishnah.

Academic Jewish Studies Internet Directory @ <http://jewishstudies.virtualave.net/>

Provides links to more than 500 resources for the study of Judaism, including academic associations, research institutes, Jewish studies at universities, libraries, archives, and other Internet resources.

The Bialystoker Synagogue Online Library @ <http://www.bialystoker.org/talmud.htm>

This library contains links to a large variety of Jewish texts, including the full text of the Tanach, Rashi's classic commentary in English, Talmudic manuscripts, the full text of the Mishnah Torah and many more.

The Cooperative Digital Resources Initiative (CDRI) @ <https://www2.atla.com/digitalresources/>

This database provides access to digital images of woodcuts, photographs, slides, papyri, coins, maps, postcards, manuscripts, lithographs, sermons, shape-note tune books and various forms of Christian art, architecture, and iconography.

Dialogika @ <http://www.ccjr.us/dialogika-resources>

An online library that provides a comprehensive cyber-archive of official statements, historical documents, educational resources, and current information on Christian-Jewish relations.

Guide to Early Christian Documents @ <http://www.iclnet.org/pub/resources/christian-history.html>

This site contains links to Internet-accessible files relating to the early church, including canonical documents, creeds, the writings of the Apostolic Fathers and other historical texts relevant to church history.

The Leon Levy Dead Sea Scrolls Digital Library @ <http://www.deadseascrolls.org.il/home>

View infrared photos from the 1950s archive and examine the latest high-definition spectral images, which enhance the texts' visibility and readability.

The New Testament Gateway @ <http://www.ntgateway.com/>

A web directory of internet resources on the New Testament. Browse or search annotated links on everything connected with the academic study of the New Testament and Christian Origins. Includes a Greek New Testament Gateway, book reviews, biblical translations, non-canonical writings, the books of the NT, the ancient world, historical Jesus, the synoptic problem, women and gender, and art and images.

The Post-Reformation Digital Library (PRDL) @ <http://www.prdl.org/>

A select database of digital books relating to the development of theology and philosophy during the Reformation and Post-Reformation/Early Modern Era (late 15th-18th century). Late medieval and patristic works printed and referenced in the early modern era are also included.

Resource Pages for Biblical Studies @ <http://torreys.org/bible/>

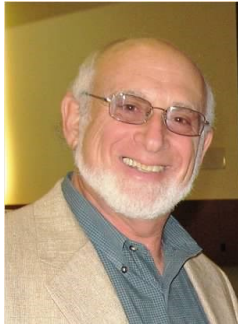
Contains links to resources, arranged in three parts: Texts and translations, which include linguistic resources and lexica; Social World of New Testament, which presents sources and studies dealing with the social world related to the NT; and the Philo of Alexandria page.

Tyndale Library & Online Books @ <http://www.tyndale.cam.ac.uk/index.php?page=library>

Holds one of the world's most outstanding collections of academic biblical Studies books and journals.

The Works of Flavius Josephus @ <http://wesley.nnu.edu/other-theologians/flavius-josephus/>

Wesley Center Online contains the full text of several essential works of Josephus translated by William Whiston and The Complete Collection of Josephus in a zip file.



Ira Melon
Class of 2000

ALUMNI MAKING A DIFFERENCE: IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Ira Melon, M.A. in Jewish-Christian Studies

Building bridges...from Monsignor John Oesterreicher to Sister Rose Thering; to Father Lawrence Frizzell and Rabbi Asher Finkel; to Professor David Bossman and Professor John Morley; and eventually to my classroom, S13, at Copeland Middle School in Rockaway Township, New Jersey. The building of these bridges began with my introduction to the Jewish-Christian Studies program when I attended a June 3, 1994, conference at Seton Hall University, supported by the Department of Education of the State of New Jersey. The conference reflected upon the conduct of professionals in Germany during the Third Reich and examined the question, "Were they pawns or players?" My experience was highlighted by a spirited lunchtime discussion with a woman of outstanding knowledge, energy, and passion. This was my introduction to Sister Rose Thering who later asked me, "So, Ira, would you like to pursue studies at the Judaeo-Christian Institute?" So moved by the lunchtime discussion, the later break-out sessions, and with my own resolve crystallized to find out more, I decided to

seek formal entrance into the graduate program in the fall of 1994, which at that time was the only program of its kind in the country. The beloved Sister Rose was the catalyst.

Living an hour away from the Seton Hall campus, with two teenagers at home, with a spouse who was a fulltime teacher, and with my own teaching career and family obligations, I could only manage to take one course per semester. Thus, my journey was a six year adventure of cerebral activity, challenge, knowledge, and enlightenment, under the guidance of the finest scholars and instructors one could ever hope to encounter. These courses involved numerous papers, reflections, as well as mid-terms and final exams.

The New Jersey state mandate for teaching the Holocaust, genocide, and diversity has been an important legislative high-water mark. However, the time spent on the topic, the depth, along with other curriculum restraints, as well as the teacher's comfort level and knowledge, all strongly impact what and how much is delivered to our students. These all affect the quality of instruction. Education is the greatest single tool in fighting prejudice and hatred borne of bias and ignorance. As a public school teacher I incorporated my learning into team-taught courses in literature and history offerings for my 7th grade students. My first graduate courses, *Teaching Lessons from the Holocaust* and *Teaching Values in a Pluralistic Society*, helped shape the lesson plan/unit developed for my literature students in our school's interdisciplinary unit on World War II.



Sr. Rose Thering
1920-2006

The highlight of my 39 year career in public education was the creation of a thirty day elective course, *Creating a Better Future through Lessons of the Past*, with my co-teacher, Mrs. Adele Black, a child of survivors. The class ran six times a year over a 3-4 year period during my tenure. My various graduate course readings by Alice Miller, Eva Fogelman, James Hunter, Arthur Schlesinger and others aided my understanding of the time period as well as illustrated why pluralistic values are appropriately taught in the classroom. Incorporating social values into our classroom became an important part of our teaching equation. The Institute course, *The History of the Holocaust*, provided me with very specific information and details of the horrors of the Holocaust. Dealing with the sensitivities of young 11-13 year olds, their parents, the administration, as well as the Board of Education, Adele and I designed our middle school course to encourage our students to ask questions, gather input, and study the Holocaust from a sociological perspective, without losing sight of facts. We addressed difficult questions gently, but we stressed positives like up-standers, people who risked their lives in a time when madness ruled Germany.

As I progressed through the graduate program, I shared courses such as the *Teachings of Jesus, Rabbinic Thought, and Jewish History I and II* with parochial school teacher colleagues. These courses provided a forum for discussion and even greater appreciation of our common traditions. In the course, *Encounter between Christians and Jews*, the Vatican Council II document known as *Nostra Aetate*, "In Our Age," was explored. This and related documents outlined the closeness and bond between our two traditions. For me, this was moving and memorable.

As I conclude many thanks are due to the excellent scholars mentioned above who I was so fortunate to have as instructors and colleagues and to the Foundation for Judaeo-Christian Studies for its financial support. They gave me the inspiration, knowledge, desire, and strong foundation, which allowed me to have the confidence to forge ahead. A heartfelt debt of gratitude is forever owed to the indefatigable, tireless champion of Jewish-Christian brotherhood and harmony, the dear departed Sister Rose Thering who planted the seed. As educators we have a moral imperative to educate future generations to "remember." Borrowing from John Donne, the following words ring out... "No man is an island entire of itself... Any Man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls, it tolls for thee."

I hope that in some small measure I have honored Sister Rose's legacy, and that I've played a part in the building of bridges of mutual respect and understanding.

PROGRAM EVENT

Holiday Colloquium

The Jewish-Christian Studies Graduate Program hosted a special Holiday Colloquium on December 11, 2013 at Seton Hall University.

The colloquium functioned as an extended classroom experience with a panel discussion based on class discussions and course readings from Dr. David Bossman's two courses, **JCST 6014: Lessons from the Holocaust** and **JCST 7576: Personal Rights and Responsibilities for a Just Society**. The panel discussed what Christian, Jewish and Muslim religious communities are currently doing and what else they need to do to address issues such as bullying, violence, and racial and ethnic prejudice, in New Jersey and New York urban schools.

Invited panelists included:

Reverend Ron Christian - Christian Love Baptist Irvington, NJ
Father Benedict Taylor - Harlem, NYC
Imam Deen Shareef - Masjid Waarith ud Deen Irvington, NJ
Rabbi Karen Perolman - Temple Bnai Jeshurun Millburn, NJ
Maria Ortiz - Principal Alexander Street School Newark, NJ
Dr. Neely Hackett - Superintendent of Schools Irvington, NJ

The colloquium was free and open to the public and was sponsored by [The Sister Rose Thering Fund](#) for Education in Jewish-Christian Studies.



The Walsh Library

IN MEMORIAM

Dr. Geza Vermes (1924-2013)

by Rev. Lawrence E. Frizzell

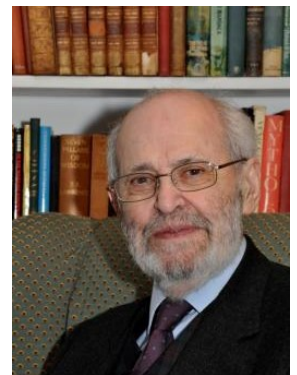
Familiar to many because of the Penguin book, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls* in English, Dr. Geza Vermes was the Reader on Jewish Studies at the University of Oxford from 1965 until his retirement in 1991. Born and raised in Hungary, his mature youth coincided with the period of persecution by the fascist political groups. The Nazis extended their vicious attack on the Jews to Hungary in 1944; his parents, who were of secular Jewish background, perished in spite of their conversion to Catholicism in 1931. He told of his rescue from grave danger in *Providential Accidents* (London: SCM Press), his autobiography published in 1998.

He completed doctoral studies at the University of Louvain in 1953 with a dissertation on the Dead Sea Scrolls, and in subsequent years he gained a wide and profound knowledge of both Rabbinic literature and the New Testament as well as Greek and Roman texts. This served him well in the research that he conducted both in Jewish sources and the Gospel traditions.

In the late 1960s few students at Oxford specialized in Jewish studies; one of them was Kevin O'Donnell, whom I had met in Jerusalem in 1964. Kevin introduced me to Dr. Vermes in April 1969, and we discussed study of the theme "People of God" in the Qumran Scrolls. Under Dr. Vermes' guidance this work was defended in 1974. Among Dr. Vermes' students of note during that time were Philip Alexander and C.T. Robert Hayward; both have made major contributions to rabbinical and related studies. Dr. Alexander's obituary of Dr. Vermes was published in *The Guardian* on May 13, 2013: <http://bit.ly/Vermes2013>.

Besides Dr. Vermes' work on Qumran Scrolls and the Gospels, his collaboration with Dr. Fergus Millar and others to revise Emil Schürer's *History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ* (Edinburgh : Clark, 1973) will benefit the scholarly community for decades to come.

May his soul rest in peace!



Dr. Geza Vermes



Upcoming Events

- **December 11 thru January 10** - *Seton Hall University*

REGISTRATION FOR SPRING 2014 SEMESTER

Classes will begin January 13, and all new and returning students must begin their registration process by contacting Jay Wolferman via email at Jay.Wolferman@shu.edu or via phone at 973.761.9751 to obtain their PIN. (see page 6).

- **March 13, 2014** - *Seton Hall University*

TEACHERS WORKSHOP

“On the Heroic Effort of Jan Karski in 1942 to alert the West to the atrocities of the Nazis in Poland.”

The keynote speaker will be the Reverend Dennis McManus, Ph.D., who is director of the [Karski Institute at Georgetown University](http://www.karskiinstitute.org) (<https://www.facebook.com/179502872181425>).

THE JEWISH-CHRISTIAN STUDIES GRADUATE PROGRAM

400 South Orange Avenue
Fahy Hall, Suite 240
South Orange, NJ 07052
Phone: 973.761.9751
Fax: 973.761.9596

Visit us online at:

[http://www.shu.edu/academics/artsci/
ma-jewish-christian-studies](http://www.shu.edu/academics/artsci/ma-jewish-christian-studies)

