



IJCS NEWS

The Institute of Judaean-Christian Studies Annual Newsletter | Volume 2

2014

From the Director

We have been busy this past year developing, encouraging and increasing the collaborative peace-building efforts of Jewish and Christian scholars, theologians, educators and students through our many initiatives and programs in the Institute of Judaean-Christian Studies (IJCS).

Our scholarship program continues to fund students from all over the world who are matriculated in the Master of Arts in Jewish-Christian Studies program at Seton Hall University. You can read about the remarkable impact that our alumna, Sister Caroline Mbonu, is making in Nigeria on pages 8-9.

We also sponsored several events in 2014 that were free and open to the public and attracted a diverse group of Jewish and Christian academics, students and advocates. The most exciting event for me was the 21st Monsignor John M. Oesterreicher Memorial Lecture, which featured noted historian, Dr. Robert L. Wilken. Be sure and check out the overview of his presentation, *The Changing Relations between Jews & Christians*, and the link to its podcast on page 2.

I also recently attended two inter-faith meetings in Manhattan, one sponsored by The Jewish Theological Seminary and the other by the National Council of Synagogues and the National Conference of Bishops. I offer a brief summary of these meetings and links to two new publications regarding Jewish-Muslim engagement and relations that you can download for free on page 6.

As always, I want to thank all of our supporters and volunteers who devote their time, talent and donations to helping promote our mission. Your support allows us to continue to answer God's call to promote and advance universal peace while demonstrating compassion, cooperation, justice and charity.

Reverend Lawrence E. Frizzell

Director, Institute of Judaean-Christian Studies
Director, Jewish-Christian Studies Graduate Program



Our scholarship recipients have come from 21 countries across five continents

In This Issue

- The Changing Relations between Christians & Jews
- New Website & Blog
- Sisters of Sion, Vatican Council II & Seton Hall
- Meetings in Manhattan
- Upcoming & Recent Events
- Catching Up in Nigeria



Dr. Robert L. Wilken (left); IJCS Advisory Board Member, Dr. Michele Dahl; and IJCS Director, the Rev. Dr. Lawrence E. Frizzell

The Changing Relations between Christians & Jews

Distinguished scholar and historian, Robert L. Wilken, Ph.D., delivered the insightful presentation, *The Changing Relations between Christians and Jews*, at this year's 21st Monsignor John M. Oesterreicher Memorial Lecture, which was sponsored by the IJCS on November 2, 2014 at Seton Hall University. Dr. Wilken is the William R. Kenan, Jr. Professor of the History of Christianity (Emeritus), University of Virginia and the General Editor of the series, *The Church's Bible: Interpreted by Early Christian Commentators* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans).

Beginning with events in the late 19th century and continuing through the present day, Dr. Wilken discussed the complex development of historical relations between Christians and Jews and between the Catholic Church and Jews in particular. Professor Wilken highlighted the pioneering work of IJCS's founding director, Monsignor John M. Oesterreicher, and his devotion to removing anti-Judaism from Christian thought as well as his pivotal contribution to paragraph 4 of *Nostra Aetate*. Dr. Wilken further emphasized the far-reaching impact of what he termed was the "fundamental and revolutionary theological insight" on which paragraph 4 of *Nostra Aetate* is based - namely, Christianity is supported and sustained by Judaism. According to Dr. Wilken, it is on this theological insight, which was drawn directly from St. Paul's Letter to the Romans, that relations between Jews and Christians were forged over the past 50 years.

Moving to current and future times, Dr. Wilken stressed how relations between Jews and Christians have changed in unexpected ways since the Holocaust and the promulgation of *Nostra Aetate* in 1965. Most notably, he observed, "Jews in the West will no longer be living in Christian societies." Dr. Wilken acknowledged that while Christians in Europe and the United States "are still the most numerous among the various religions," in terms of attitudes, beliefs and practices their influence is waning, and Christianity is becoming a minority religion. As a result, he noted, societies today have become more secularized and intolerant and more hostile toward the Judaeo-Christian tradition as well as Jewish and Christian beliefs and practices. Dr. Wilken believes this change has contributed, in large part, to the present and alarming rise of anti-Semitism and Christian persecution throughout the world.

Recalling the work of Rabbi Jonathan Sachs, the former Chief Rabbi of Great Britain, and Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, Dr. Wilken ultimately expressed the hope that Christians and Jews will learn to stand together as a "creative minority" in the future as friends, brothers and bearers of a common tradition as they address the challenges inherent in an increasingly irreligious, secular and intolerant world.

You can watch Dr. Wilken's presentation and the Question & Answer period that followed on the IJCS's iTunes channel for free by clicking [here](#).

Welcome Antoinette Gissubel

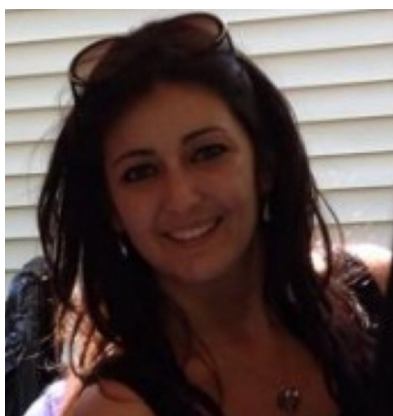
The IJCS is pleased to welcome our new Graduate Assistant, Antoinette Gissubel.

Antoinette is from Hackettstown, NJ and holds a Bachelor of Science degree in International Relations and Diplomacy and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Religious Studies from Seton Hall University.

On a personal level, Antoinette has matriculated into the Jewish-Christian Studies (JCST) graduate program to gain a better understanding of her Catholic faith and its Jewish roots.

Professionally, Antoinette aspires to work for an interfaith non-profit organization and believes JCST studies are “fundamental to the peace and development efforts” to which she wants to contribute. She therefore plans to focus her research on peacemaking efforts and their foundations in both the Catholic and Jewish traditions.

We look forward to helping you realize your goals, Antoinette!



Antoinette Gissubel



Visit Father Frizzell's blog at <http://blogs.shu.edu/lawrencefrizzell>

New Website & Blog

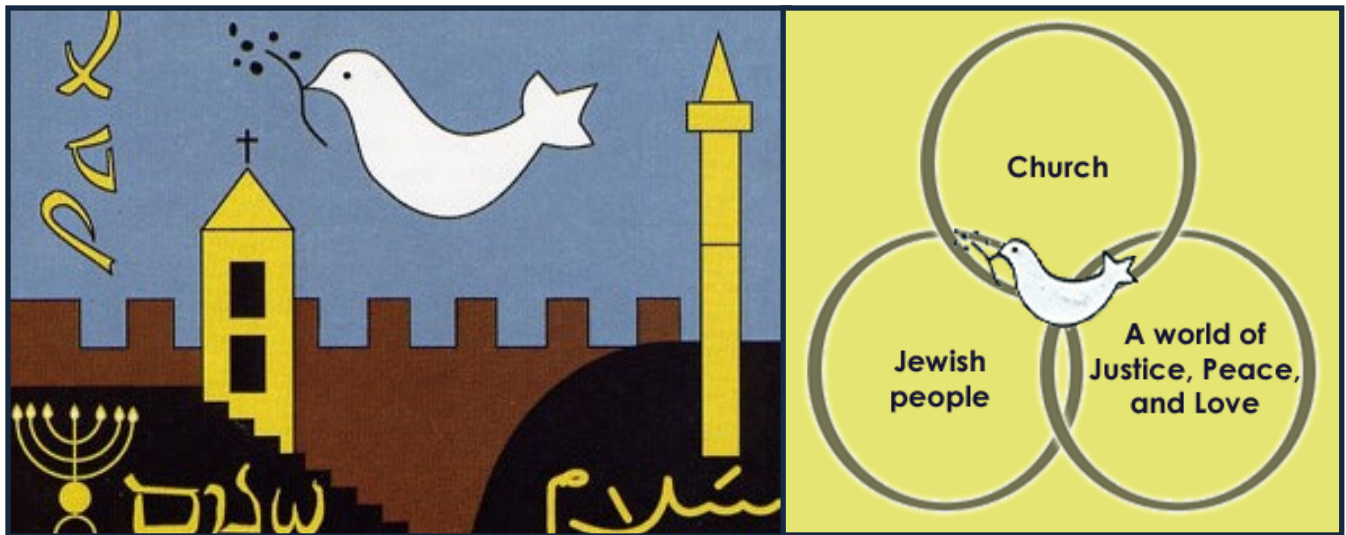
Our director, the Reverend Dr. Lawrence E. Frizzell, has a new [website and blog](http://blogs.shu.edu/lawrencefrizzell), where he frequently makes posts about various topics in areas of biblical research, scholarship and archaeology; Jewish-Christian studies and relations; ecumenical studies; Catholic liturgy, prayer and ethics; and medieval and renaissance religious art.

Father Frizzell's website also promotes the [Jewish-Christian Studies Graduate Program](http://blogs.shu.edu/lawrencefrizzell) at Seton Hall University and features the following resources and research pages that are designed to assist students with their studies:

- [Academic Study of the Bible](#)
This page outlines various methods used by scholars to analyze and interpret biblical writings in addition to providing links to other websites that offer more in-depth historical overviews; classic and modern bibliographies for further study; and/or access to ancient manuscripts and/or their translations.
- [Online Biblical Hebrew Language Resources](#)
This page provides various free online resources to help students with their Hebrew language studies.
- [Online Resources for Biblical Studies](#)
This page provides a list of free databases, journals and websites that help students and scholars with their work and research in biblical and Jewish-Christian studies.

The IJCS and the Jewish-Christian Studies Graduate Program [newsletters](#) are also now published online on Father Frizzell's website. Students and visitors can also access many of Father Frizzell's [course syllabi](#) and [scholarly publications](#), many of which are linked to his SelectedWorks and Academia.edu sites.

To receive notifications about Fr. Frizzell's new blog posts, simply visit his site at <http://blogs.shu.edu/lawrencefrizzell>, and enter your email address in the "Subscribe by Email" section on the right side bar of his site.



The Sisters of Our Lady of Sion, Vatican Council II and Seton Hall University

by Rev. Lawrence E. Frizzell

Immediately after the Second Vatican Council had promulgated the Declaration of "the Church's Bond with the Jewish People" (the title Monsignor John M. Oesterreicher gave to the clarification of the Church's Relationship with Non-Christian Religions, *Nostra Aetate* #4) on October 28, 1965, there was a need to coordinate efforts of Catholics to improve relations with the Jews in various parts of the world. Father Cornelis Rijk, a professor in a Dutch seminary, was appointed to be the first officer in the Holy See for Catholic-Jewish relations. What could one man expect to accomplish? Teamwork was essential!

Augustin Cardinal Bea, asked in 1960 by Pope John XXIII to form the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, coordinated the schemata (drafts) for Christian Ecumenism, Religious Liberty and "the Statement on the Jews." On January 15, 1964 he addressed the Sisters of Our Lady of Sion at their Chapter in Rome, saying: "Today your vocation is more urgent than ever. The Church has confided to both of us, in a special manner, the question of the relations between the Catholic Church and the Jewish People."

Even before the Council the Sisters, located in five continents, had founded information centers and were editing publications in Australia, Brazil, Canada, England, France and the United States. They were also working to prepare dossiers of information for some of the experts at the Council.

In Fall 1965, Sister Edward Berkeley from England and Sister Joan Poulin from western Canada arrived in Rome and worked to develop the avenues whereby the documentation could be catalogued and visitors interested in this encounter would be welcome. The first issue of the SIDIC periodical (*Service International de Documentation Judéo-Chrétienne*) appeared in Spring 1967. French and English versions were published three times a year until 2003.

Father John M. Oesterreicher, who came to New York City in November 1940 as a refugee from Austria and France, had known the Sisters of Sion in Vienna before Austria was annexed to Germany in 1938. After the War he renewed contact with the European pioneers in fostering understanding between Catholics and Jews. Supported financially by Mme. H. Suzanne Jobert, Father Oesterreicher found a home for the Institute of Judaeo-Christian Studies in 1953 at Seton Hall University.

Following the Second Vatican Council's wish "to encourage and further mutual understanding and appreciation among

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Sisters of Sion - *continued* -

Christians and Jews" (*Nostra Aetate* #4), Msgr. Oesterreicher promoted the creation of a Master of Arts in Jewish-Christian Studies (JCST) program, which was inaugurated in September 1975 with two-full time and four part-time professors.

Among the graduates of the master's program in its second decade was Sister Rosalie Hanley, N.D.S., of Sydney, Australia. Because she had lived in Israel and had a strong background, including knowledge of Hebrew, she completed the degree in one year plus summer courses. Later, Sister Mary Raeburn, N.D.S., came from Melbourne to spend 18 months with us as she conducted research on St. Jerome's commentary on the Book of Daniel. She took several courses as an auditor and shared her interest in the exegesis of St. Jerome with our JCST faculty.

As the Sisters of Sion decided to found a community in the New York City area, Sister Isabel Lewis joined the students in our Master of Arts (M.A.) program for several courses. Visitors of the Sisters, including Sister Kay MacDonald (who was then the Superior General), came to Seton Hall on occasion.

As the result of an invitation to the Sisters of Sion, Sister Phyllis Kapuscinski joined the group of students in Fall 1997. She had taken early retirement from the University of Saskatchewan in Regina, and after receiving the M.A. in Jewish-Christian Studies, she became a teacher in the Educational Opportunity Program and then coordinator of English as a Second Language courses for seminarians, a position which she held until the end of June 2014. In this setting Sister Phyllis was able to promote an understanding of Catholic-Jewish relations among the seminarians. During these years she also served on the Advisory Board of the Institute and was a faithful, energetic member of the program committee for the annual Holocaust Memorial Service in South-Orange-Maplewood.

After approximately 30 years in the SIDIC Centre in Rome, where she served the multi-faceted work of the Centre and gave tours of the ghetto near the Tiber, Sister Margaret McGrath matriculated into our program in 2003. She already knew many of those involved in Christian-Jewish relations, both through their publications and during meetings in Rome. Sister Margaret graduated in 2005 and did fine work in Toronto before returning to Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

Those whose involvement in the field of Christian-Jewish relations spans several decades are looking for successors in this challenging, delicate but very enriching area of endeavor to foster mutual understanding that is the basis for amity and collaboration for the healing of our world. May many young people take up this calling! The Sisters of Sion in several countries are engaged in this task, along with many people of good will who appreciate both the commitment and the sensitivity of these Sisters. May their work continue to blossom like the spring flowers in the Land of Israel!

I appreciate the assistance of Sister Margaret McGrath regarding the early paragraphs of this essay!

"Today your vocation is more urgent than ever. The Church has confided to both of us, in a special manner, the question of the relations between the Catholic Church and the Jewish People."

- Augustin Cardinal Bea

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Meetings in Manhattan

by Rev. Lawrence E. Frizzell

Significant progress in Jewish-Muslim relations, at least in the United States, is signaled by the publication of two texts, initiatives in which Rabbi Burton Visotzky, Director of the Milstein Center for Interreligious Dialogue of The Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) is involved.

At a luncheon at JTS on November 18, 2014, attended by many involved in this dialogue, the publication, [Sharing the Well: A Resource Guide for Jewish-Muslim Engagement](#), a project of JTS, Hartford Seminary, and the Islamic Society of North America was shared. You can further explore this topic and many other areas of Jewish studies and relations by surveying more than 1,500 other lectures, commentaries, classes and podcasts directly from your computer or mobile device at learn.jtsa.edu.

The second text of note is the special issue, [Judaism and Islam in America](#), by guest editors Professor Zainab Alwani of Howard University Divinity School and Professor Burton L. Visotzky in the journal, *The Muslim World* (2014). You can learn more about Dr. Alwani's work and publications by visiting her website and blog at www.zainabalwani.com/.

Congratulations to the scholars and editors of these much-needed works about Jewish-Muslim relations!

On December 1, 2014 the members of the National Council of Synagogues gathered for their semi-annual meeting with delegates of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops at the Union of Reform Judaism in New York City. Presentations by Mr. Kenneth Jacobs, Deputy National Director of the Anti-Defamation League, on "Rising Anti-Semitism in Europe," and by Monsignor John Kozar and Mr. Michael La Civita of the Catholic Near East Welfare Association on "The Persecution of Christians in the Middle East" led to a prolonged and informative discussion.

It was a privilege to meet people from many locations at these sessions!

The Kinship of Catholics & Jews

Tune in to WSOU 89.5 FM every Sunday morning from 8:30 am - 9:00 am for the IJCS radio program, *The Kinship of Catholics & Jews*.

Moderated by Father Lawrence E. Frizzell, the show promotes the shared values of Christians and Jews and features a wide variety of special guests, including Jewish and Christian academics and specialists.

You can also listen to past shows 24/7 from any computer, iPhone, iPad or mobile device for free on *The Kinship's* iTunes channel.

Click [here](#) to start listening now!





Recent Events

Global Vatican

On October 6, 2014 the IJCS co-sponsored the lecture and book signing, *The Global Vatican*, by L. Francis Rooney who served as U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See from 2005 to 2008. Ambassador Rooney was the guest of Seton Hall's School of Diplomacy and International Relations.

The Honorable Rooney outlined the special relationship between the United States and the Holy See and their effect on world politics and diplomacy.

You can listen to Ambassador Rooney's presentation in its entirety on Seton Hall University's YouTube channel by clicking [here](#) and can learn more about and/or order a copy of *The Global Vatican* by visiting Ambassador Rooney's website at <http://francisrooney.com/>.

Pope John XXIII & the Jews

In honor of the canonizations of Popes John XXIII and Pope John Paul II, the IJCS sponsored the lecture, "Pope John XXIII and the Jews," on March 30, 2014 at Seton Hall University.

The keynote speaker was Rabbi David G. Dalin, Ph.D., Professor of History at Ave Maria University and noted scholar of American Jewish History and Catholic-Jewish relations. Rabbi Dalin discussed the many ways in which Pope John XXIII positively impacted Catholic-Jewish relations, both as the former Vatican diplomat in Turkey and Greece during World War II and later as the Vicar of Christ in Rome.

Editor, reporter and blogger, Thomas L. McDonald attended the event and wrote the article, [John XXIII and the Jews](#), for *The Catholic World Report*. The article provides a comprehensive overview of Rabbi Dalin's lecture and the many accomplishments of Pope John XXIII, including his commission of the watershed document, *Nostra Aetate*.

A podcast of Rabbi Dalin's lecture can also be viewed for free on the IJCS iTunes channel at <http://bit.ly/DalinLecture>.



Sister Caroline Mbonu (right) with two of her co-workers

Sister Caroline

Over the last six decades, the Institute of Judaean-Christian Studies (IJCS) has provided more than \$1 million in scholarship grants to students from all over the world who are matriculated in the Master of Arts in Jewish-Christian Studies program at Seton Hall University.

We recently caught up with Sister Caroline Mbonu (Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus), one of the many graduates IJCS has supported, to find out what she's been doing since her earning her degree.

IJCS: It is so good to catch up with you after all these years. How long has it been and where are you now?

SCM: A decade ago this past May, I graduated from the Master of Arts in Jewish-Christian Studies program and returned to Nigeria six years later having completed further studies in theology at the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley.

IJCS: What have you been doing in Nigeria since your return?

SCM: I have been engaged in various ministries since my return to Africa. Presently, I teach New Testament Studies as well as Gender Studies in the Department of Religious and Cultural Studies at the University of Port Harcourt (UPH), Nigeria.

Passionate about contextual Biblical studies in Africa, I am also active in several scholarly associations such as the Pan African Catholic Exegesis (PACE), the Nigerian Association of Biblical Studies (NABIS), and the Igbo Studies Association (ISA), which provides an avenue for scholarly interaction between African cultures and biblical thought. I also contribute to [Global Sisters Report](#), an online journal of the *National Catholic Reporter*.

IJCS: We love to hear you're still keeping busy on the scholarly front! We suspect you're very active with your diocese as well. What are you doing pastorally?

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Sister Caroline - *continued*

SCM: My pastoral engagement includes being advisor to a group of Catholic Women at the Church of the Nativity, Origwe, Port Harcourt diocese. I also give talks on different aspects of Catholic Spirituality to parishes.

Additionally, in response to the New Evangelization and the call of Pope Francis to spread the “Joy of the Gospel,” we have begun a process of establishing a Renewal Center for the theological discourse and spiritual enrichment of the teaming youths within the vicinity of the University of Port Harcourt.

IJCS: It must be incredibly rewarding and challenging to build a new center from the ground up. Have any of the lessons you learned in the Jewish-Christian studies graduate program helped you in this sphere or in any of the other work you do in your local community?

SCM: My M.A. work in Jewish-Christian Studies continues to shape my Christian consciousness and provide valuable sources from which I draw in enriching my teaching, writing and social actions.

The vision of *tikkun olam*, in particular, informs my social engagement. *Repairing the world* or *healing the world* is what I attempt to do when ministering to women, particularly widows, in the villages. Although we do not have sufficient funds to embark on our main project of establishing a center for an adult literacy program, health-care initiatives and economic empowerment projects, we nevertheless have been making some progress in holistic development of our rural women.

Our goal is to minimize human suffering. On an annual basis, our small group of volunteers also raises funds and organizes free health drives. We invite groups of health-care givers to undertake health outreach programs in the villages of Ndashi in Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State. The providers treat common ailments, such as malaria, that could turn fatal if left unattended. They also conduct wellness programs for sickle cell, diabetic, hypertensive patients and others.

IJCS: Wow. It’s amazing to hear how deeply the vision of *tikkun olam*, has impacted your social programs, especially your health-care initiatives.

SCM: *Tikkun olam* covers economic wellbeing as well. Hence, our group of volunteers also raises funds to facilitate economic transformation at the grassroots level.

We empower women economically. Presently, 35 women are in the program. Each woman receives an interest-free loan of not more than \$100 to improve on her trade or agricultural productions. Each borrower repays her loan in full at the end of the year.

Improving women’s economic status translates to development of the household and especially translates into better nutrition for the children. A healthy child does well in school and can potentially contribute to the wellbeing of society.

IJCS: Sounds like you are making a meaningful impact and improving women’s participation in social processes on various levels. How would you summarize the main objective of your ministry?

SCM: The primary goal of our ministry is to help people positively engage life and worship God in truth.

IJCS: Thank you for taking time out and sharing numerous aspects of your work and ministry. It’s always a blessing to reconnect with our graduates and to learn how they are working toward repairing our world!

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tinues to shape my
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social actions. “*

- Sister Caroline Mbonu

Your loving-kindness is better than life! (Psalm 63:3)

Please consider supporting the mission of the Institute of Judaeo-Christian Studies by making a donation.

Your gift will help us continue to unite and empower Jewish and Christian scholars, educators and students who are dedicated to exploring and promoting their shared values, practices, traditions and peaceful pursuits.

All donations are tax deductible and may be sent to:

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Website: www.shu.edu/go/judaeo-christian

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IJCS has been promoting peace for more than 60 years

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