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Ignatian Center for Jesuit Education

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explore

An examination of

Catholic identity and Ignatian character in Jesuit higher education

SPRING 2005 · VOL. 8 · NO. 2



Interreligious Dialogue

Francis X. Clooney, S.J., of Boston College explores how to promote interreligious understanding on campus today. Page 4

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**Santa Clara
University**

Bannan Center
for Jesuit Education

From the Center Director

Dear Friends,

It's been about a dozen years, I think, since a Jordanian student of mine handed me a tattered, celery-colored paperback about Islam. A simple gesture, really; it was an invitation to inter-religious dialogue that has been repeated countless times in human history. That encounter led to several conversations that ended when he graduated and returned to the Middle East. For me, and I think for him as well, the fruits of our religious discussions were a deeper appreciation of our respective faiths, a more complete understanding of each other, and the insight that we share solidarity as children of God.

Inter-religious dialogue is not a new flavor-of-the-month on Jesuit campuses invented to keep up with diversity or to celebrate empty-headed ecumenism. Nor does it represent a substitute for the call to evangelize. Its roots can be traced back all the way to Ignatius who sent his companions to remote locales to engage others where they stood. In this sense, inter-religious dialogue builds upon the Jesuit traditions of learning, discernment, a commitment to the formation of the whole person, and finding God in all things.

In these pages you will find testimonies of those who are experiencing inter-religious dialogue in their personal and professional lives. As I read them, I was struck by the contradictions: "Jewsuits," coming home and being a newcomer, Zen sitting in St. Francis' Chapel. Ultimately, however, this issue of **explore** is about discovery—that moment in our search when God reveals himself most vividly.

It was generous of my Jordanian friend to offer me that tattered, celery-colored paperback. It was in many ways a Jesuit gift.

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Founded in 1982, the Bannan Center for Jesuit Education, one of four Centers of Distinction at Santa Clara University, assists in maintaining the University's Catholic and Jesuit character. The center offers grants for faculty, staff, and students. It sponsors retreats, lectures, and conferences, and brings religious scholars and leaders to the University to engage in educational activities.

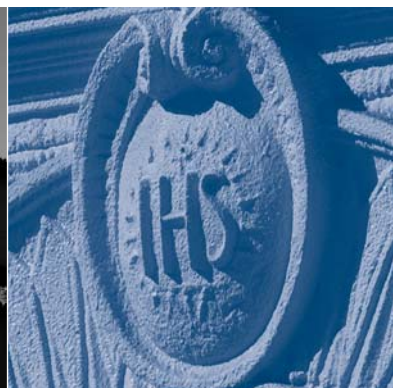
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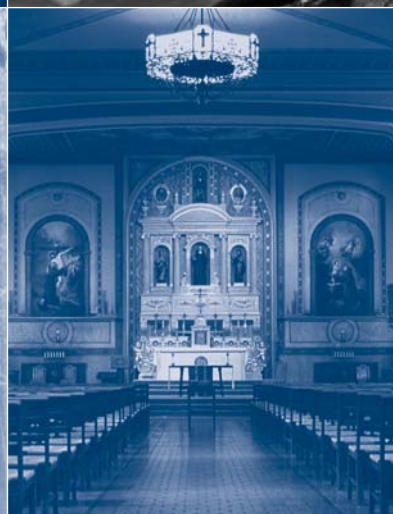
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Surrender to God

Interreligious Awareness,
the Life of the Jesuit University



UNIVERSITY PHOTOS BY CHARLES BARRY

BY FRANCIS X. CLOONEY, S.J.

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The topic of this essay is indeed “promoting interreligious understanding on campus today” but allow me to begin with St. Francis Xavier, whose 500th birthday (April 7, 2006) fast approaches. Xavier, one of Ignatius’ original companions, was the first Jesuit to go to Asia, and the first to inquire into Asian religions and reflect on them from a Christian perspective. Several years ago, in the course of writing an essay on the early Jesuit missionary charism,¹ I read many of Xavier’s letters from Asia. He was by no means a scholar of Hinduism or Buddhism—he had neither the time nor inclination, nor were written resources easily available—but nevertheless he learned many things, as his letters indicate. In a long and detailed 1544 letter from India, he reports the following encounter with a Brahman, recognized as a religious intellectual of sorts, who finally caught his full attention:

I found only one Brahman in a village on this coast who knew anything, since, as I was told, he had studied in some renowned schools. I arranged to meet him and discovered a way to do so... The language used for teaching in their schools is like the Latin used in ours. He recited their commandments for me very well, giving a good explanation to each one of them. Those who are wise observe Sundays, something that is quite incredible. On Sundays they say no other prayer than the following, which they repeatedly recite: *Om Sri Narayanaya namah*, which means, “I adore thee, God, with thy grace and assistance for ever,” and they recite this prayer very gently and softly in order to keep the oath they have taken....²

Xavier’s initial sense had been that the Hindus were largely ignorant, and that Brahmans were not to be trusted—priests fooling the people, perpetuating a hierarchical structure that kept themselves in comfort. This suspicion, though never entirely dispelled, was tempered somewhat by meeting this educated Brahman who could speak of and for his tradition. Xavier was fascinated with the details and intrigued by apparent similarities. Perhaps the encounter was an encouragement for his later, more concerted, effort to understand the religious traditions of Japan.

Yet, lacking context, he did not understand the fuller import of what he was learning from the Brahman. For instance, we know today that *Om Sri Narayanaya namah* (“Om, reverence to Narayana with Sri,” the supreme God with the supreme Goddess) is (with slight variations) one of the key mantras sacred to the many schools of Vaisnavas, those Hindus who worship Lord Narayana (or Visnu) with the Goddess Sri. The prayer is often called simply the *Tiru Mantra* (holy mantra). This mantra’s meaning and practice have figured in my own research of late, as I have studied the 14th century *Srimad Rahasya Triya Sara*—the “Essence of the Auspicious Three Mysteries”—by Vedanta Desika (1268-1369). Much of this Hindu *summa theologiae* is dedicated to the exegesis of the *Tiru Mantra* and two other mantras paired with it, revered as encapsulating the core truth (*rahasya*) of the faith, surrender to God. All three, beginning with the *Tiru Mantra*, inculcate and give expression to total surrender to God as the highest religious ideal: all is God’s, and we live by giving ourselves over to God and letting God rule our lives.

By reading Vedanta Desika and his commentators—reading with the tradition rather

than simply about it—I have been learning to understand the Hindu concept of surrender with some sense of how insiders view surrender and the mantras expressive of it. In the 12th chapter of his treatise, in explaining the act of approach and surrender to the Lord (having already explained its presuppositions and hereafter planning to examine its effects), Desika describes the meaning and manner of handing over one's core identity to the Lord:

The Lord is Himself the refuge and He accepts our burden; He indicates that offering up of one's burden is to be recognized as the primary action, when one utters the mantra of surrender. He means the following: "With this mantra one should give over one's self to Me. Whoever has given over to Me all that is to be done is a person who has *already* done all that must be done."

To enrich our sense of what this surrender means, Desika recalls the words of surrender uttered by an earlier teacher, Nadadur Ammal:

I have been wandering in this dreary world, age upon age without beginning, doing what is not desired by You. From this day forward, I must do what is conducive to reaching You, and I must cease from what is contrary. I have no resources by which to attain You. I have realized that You alone can be the means to my salvation. So You

must be my means! If You are, how could there be, from now on, any burden, either in the removal of what is not desired or in the attainment of what is desired?

All concern about how to be or what to do is now in the hands of God alone.

The *Tiru Mantra* represents a beautiful spiritual tradition, and in its various formulations, it has inspired many millions of Vaisnava Hindus. Indeed, one might say that the mantra and accompanying act of surrender are where this Hindu tradition happens at its fullest.

In light of Xavier's limited opportunity for further conversation and study, it is not likely that he glimpsed any of this deeper significance of *Om Sri Narayanaya namah*. But today we can, since primary sources, translations, and secondary writings are available in abundance. If we do, we see that there are sure analogies with what would come to be perceived in the Jesuit tradition as the core of the Ignatian spiritual vision enunciated in the *Spiritual Exercises*: the act of total surrender to God. After prolonged and patient reflection on self and God, the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, it is in a moment of surrender to God occurring at the end of Week IV that the *Exercises* reach their climax. Ignatius expresses the concluding prayer in this way:



First Point. This is to recall to mind the blessings of creation and redemption, and the special favors I have received. I will ponder with great affection how much God our Lord has done for me, and how much He has given me of what He possesses, and finally, how much, as far as He can, the same Lord desires to give Himself to me according to His divine decrees. Then I will reflect upon myself, and consider, according to all reason and justice, what I ought to offer the Divine Majesty, that is, all I possess and myself with it. Thus, as one would do who is moved by great feeling, I will make this offering of myself: "Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my entire will—all that I have and possess. You have given all to me: to You, O Lord, I return it. All is Yours, dispose of it wholly according to Your will. Give me Your love and Your grace, for this is sufficient for me."³

This core moment of the *Exercises* is an act of surrender to God deeply parallel to the Srivaishnava utterance and enactment of the *Tiru Mantra*. That everything is in God's hands and that surrender to God is the primary human act lie at the heart of both the Ignatian tradition and the Srivaishnava tradition. In form and expression, the deepest spiritual instinct of this

Ignatian tradition is one we share, to some extent and despite differences, with Srivaishnava Hindus.

I am not expert in other religious traditions, but nonetheless am confident that the act of surrender lies at the core of other traditions as well. (I must take for granted here the rich array of ways in which other Christian communities express and practice surrender to Christ.) Consider, for instance, the opening sura of the *Qur'an* in the A. Yusuf Ali rendering:

In the name of God, Most Gracious,
Most Merciful.
Praise be to God, the Cherisher and
Sustainer of the Worlds;
Most Gracious, Most Merciful; Master
of the Day of Judgment.
Thee do we worship, And Thine aid
we seek.
Show us the straight way, The way of
those on whom
Thou hast bestowed Thy Grace,
Those whose (portion) Is not wrath,
And who go not astray. (1.1-7)

In introducing the sura, Ali writes,
This sura teaches us the perfect Prayer.
For if we can pray aright, it means
That we have some knowledge of God
And His attributes, of His relations To
us and His creation, which includes
Ourselves; that we glimpse the source
From which we come, and that final
goal Which is our spiritual destiny



Conversation about and sharing in this act of surrender central to our various religious paths becomes the occasion both for a much deeper than usual dialogue, and for energizing across religious boundaries the more active virtues we rightly see as characteristic of Jesuit universities and colleges.

Under God's true judgment: then We offer ourselves to God and seek His light.⁴

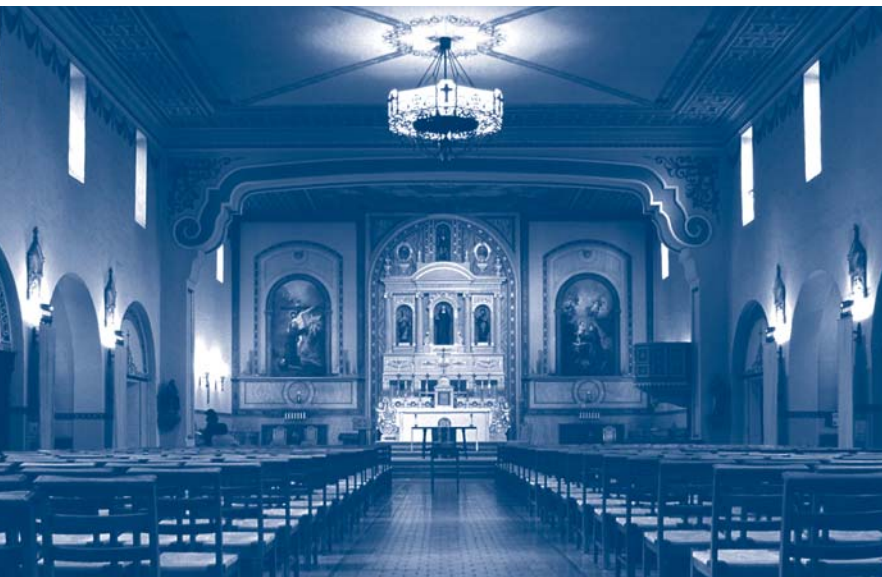
Right from the start, "Islam"—which, we are often told, means surrender, submission—marks the Islamic tradition as one that sees the entirety of the religious life in light of the requirement to surrender, giving oneself over to God. While there are many ways to approach the study of Islam, it seems fair to suggest that it is in this core act of surrender that the truths and values of the tradition come together.

Closer to home, we can likewise trace the roots of Christian ideals of surrender to God in the Biblical Jewish experience, even as this has unfolded in Jewish life through the centuries. At a great remove, and with due acknowledgment of enduring differences, we can turn to non-theistic traditions such as Buddhism, wherein the core act of surrender takes still other forms, such as taking refuge at the Buddha's feet or even giving oneself over to an Enlightenment experience. We must also listen to the primarily oral traditions of Africa, the Afro-Caribbean context, and Native Americans, in order to hear how in these traditions, too, religious individuals may give themselves over to the divine mystery. Nor is there any sure reason why we cannot also learn from the spiritual insight and self-dedication energizing people choosing spiritual paths of their own making,

even those who somehow make radical commitments while resisting the notion that their paths are religious at all.

With due acknowledgment of theological differences among traditions that cannot be easily resolved, once we begin to notice commonalities in traditions' most sacred inner core, where that basic and total religious response to God occurs, we can also start recognizing how the core energy of the Christian tradition in practice harmonizes well with that of other traditions. In essence, the fact of a living pluralism provides us with the opportunity to discover parallels and areas of consonance that well reflect the values and acts of the Catholic and Jesuit tradition: that is, the core truth and act distinctive to our tradition not only set us apart, but also bring us closer to believers in other traditions who likewise seek ways of surrender to God.

Today we are accustomed to saying that by learning from our religious others we will become better Christians, or as John Paul II has put it, "By dialogue we let God be present in our midst, for as we open ourselves to one another, we open ourselves to God."⁵ This insight is now an event, with a place, time, and occasion—here, on our religiously diverse campuses, today, as people of different traditions live out lives oriented to surrender to God. The interreligious exchange is deep, occurring at the



center of our spiritual lives, and it is there that our dialogue with people of other traditions begins, not in a polite, extrinsic conversation.


However fascinating such parallels may be, it might seem arcane or pious to say that surrender to God is the fundamental and defining religious and interreligious act on a contemporary Jesuit campus. There are, after all, urgent tasks before us, and most of these do not easily fit under the rubric of “spirituality” or “surrender to God,” be this named as a Christian or interreligious value. Indeed, we live in a world where there is already too much passivity in the face of authority, and we might rather feel compelled to encourage people to take more active responsibility for their lives. Social responsibility matters acutely, and whatever the inner truths of our traditions, it should be work for justice that we share most evidently.

It is true that the rhetoric of surrender can become an instrument of the status quo and a tool in the hands of those whose oppression depends on the passivity of those who are ruled over. But surrender is also key to the Ignatian and Christian tradition, wherein active engagement in the world arises from surrender to God. In modern Jesuit spirituality, we can recall, the *Take, Lord, and Receive* opens a new way of life for the retreatant, sending her or

him out into a world of service. The 32nd General Congregation of the Society of Jesus (1974-1975) rightly saw a connection between the trajectory of the *Exercises* and the work of Jesuits in the service of faith and justice:

[As to the wellspring of our apostolate, we] are also led back again to our experience of the *Spiritual Exercises*. In them we are able continually to renew our faith and apostolic hope by experiencing again the love of God in Christ Jesus. We strengthen our commitment to be companions of Jesus in His mission, to labor like Him in solidarity with the poor and with Him for the establishment of the Kingdom. This same spiritual experience will teach us how to maintain the objectivity needed for a continuing review of our commitments. Thereby we gradually make our own that apostolic pedagogy of St. Ignatius, which should characterize our every action.⁶

This dynamic, though always a gift and ideal, in some measure works itself out in the lives of those who have surrendered to God in the way envisioned by St. Ignatius. This is the energy of the retreatant returning to the world, now guided by a familiar adage in its more interesting form: “Work as if everything depends upon God; pray as if everything depends upon your-



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self.” Because we have surrendered to God and now let God act through us, we have boundless energy to change the world.

By analogy, we should at least presume that the path of surrender in other traditions encapsulates a core energy from which service and social action well up. For instance, Vedanta Desika recognizes that the act of surrender articulated in accord with the *Tiru Mantra* has social implications. The chapters immediately after Chapter 12 of the *Srimad Rahasya Traya Sara* have to do with the life of the person who has surrendered to God, and the character of the community of persons who have changed their lives by surrendering to God. Even the sensitive issue of caste is debated, since an obvious objection to caste distinctions is that these are done away with in light of the new status of believers who have surrendered; those who have surrendered to God are not marked by caste or gender or other such distinctions. Since Desika is a conservative theologian concerned about the maintenance of his tradition, and since 14th century South India is a conservative environment vastly different from ours today, he backs away from more radical conclusions, defending caste as a legitimate social structure pleasing to God. Nonetheless, he also admits that, in the end, God judges people by their

hearts, not their assigned social status. More or less explicitly, a Hindu version of the “Ignatian” principle is operative: allow God to act through you, and then live differently, in a new reality.

Conversation about and sharing in this act of surrender central to our various religious paths becomes the occasion both for a much deeper than usual dialogue, and for energizing across religious boundaries the more active virtues we rightly see as characteristic of Jesuit universities and colleges. Today, we should be able to challenge our friends in other traditions to live out the implications of surrender to God in a manner appropriate to the 21st century, where the old religious hierarchies can and should be called into question. Even if we Christians find ourselves called to emphasize to Hindus and Muslims, for instance, that progressive social attitudes should today be the fruit of inner surrender to God, our appeal will not be from a sense that there is a unique core of Ignatian spirituality unlike anything they might have in their traditions. Rather we can and should appeal to the core energies of both their and our traditions, precisely because we believe that justice is already rooted in the deepest religious sensitivities present in the lives of our neighbors on campus.



What then does “promoting interreligious understanding on campus” look like? Dialogue will not mean a polite discussion of superficial elements of our traditions, an exchange of notions already known to be acceptable to everyone, a call to action “whatever one’s motives,” or a gentle condescension by which we share our unique spirituality with others who lack what we have. Rather, more to the point, we can ask, what motivates and gives life to the persons of varying religious backgrounds on campus? Can being friend and neighbor to devoted practitioners of other traditions re-energize us all, religiously? And *then*, how does this deeper exchange affect everything else we do on campus?

If we reflect on a prayer like the *Tiru Mantra* in our day and age and discover that it and prayers like it in other traditions resonate deeply and fruitfully with the *Take, Lord, and Receive* so central to the *Exercises*, then promoting interreligious understanding on campus leaves an opening for an interreligious conversation near the act of surrender to God at the very core of many traditions.

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More intimate interreligious openness and a respect that goes deep enough to allow us to share the deepest energies of our traditions are therefore relevant if we are to re-energize and redefine the project of giving our campuses a religiously and socially responsible identity. If so, and if we appreciate the rich wholeness of the Catholic and Jesuit tradition, we will also do well to aid other traditions, in the minority on campus, to flourish among us in their rich wholeness. The promotion of interreligious understanding on campus challenges us to create an environment in which a deeper sharing of elements fundamental to each tradition can flourish, where core and not merely secondary elements of religious traditions are honored and celebrated, and where we understand that it is not only ourselves who bring to campus a sense of relationship to God such as can transform the world around us. The Vaisnava Hindu, the Theravada Buddhist, the Shia Muslim, the Orthodox Jew, and people of many other traditions, too, bless our campuses with the energy that wells up from their inner relationships to God.⁷

If we remember that the religious act at the core of our personal and communal identities is not a private preserve, but rather a point of commonality with other traditions, then we will be well on our way toward making religious pluralism not a compromise among strange or competing religions, but rather the opportunity for a companionship and a collaboration that aid each of us in our specific relationships to God, and in the common work of a university that is more religiously diverse and more deeply religious at its core—indeed, more deeply Christian—than ever before. ✱

ENDNOTES

¹ “A Charism for Dialogue: Advice from the Early Jesuit Missionaries in our World of Religious Pluralism,” *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits*, March 2002.

² A letter to the Jesuits in Rome, January 15, 1544, *The Letters and Instructions of Francis Xavier*, translated and introduced by M. Joseph Costelloe, S.J. (St Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1992), p. 71-72.

³ Adapted from the translation of Louis J. Puhl, S.J. (Westminster, MD: The Newman Press, 1957).

⁴ A. Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'an: Translation and Commentary*, (The Holy Qur'an Publishing House, n.d.), p. 13-15, for his introduction to sura 1, and his rendering of it.

⁵ John Paul II, Address to the Leaders of Non-Christian Religions, Madras, 5 February 1986, AAS 78 (1986): p. 769f. Cited also in “Our Mission and Interreligious Dialogue,” Decree 5 of the 34th General Congregation.

⁶ “Our Mission Today,” n. 38, *Documents of the 31st and 32nd General Congregations of the Society of Jesus*, (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1977).

⁷ For a fuller sense of how we might re-envision our campuses religiously, see “Goddess in the Classroom: Is the Promotion of Religious Diversity a Dangerous Idea?,” *Conversations in Jesuit Higher Education* (Fall, 1999), pp. 29-39.



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On Being a Familiar Stranger

“**T**here’s a word for us, you know,” my counterpart at Boston College told me shortly after I had joined the faculty of SCU. “We’re ‘Jewsuits,’ we Jews at Jesuit institutions.” The moniker, (pronounced “JEW-su-it”), at once amusing and bemusing, encapsulates rather aptly something of the “fit” between Jewish teachers of Jewish studies and Jesuit higher education. Jews and Jesuits are both heirs to valued intellectual and spiritual traditions and have produced prominent advocates for social justice and human rights. This commonality creates a promising compatibility between the two in the realm of education—especially education that encourages intellectual curiosity about spiritual matters and an activist orientation toward social justice. This potential “fit” between Jew and Jesuit is part of what brought me to SCU in the first place.

A more bemusing aspect to the moniker, however, is the way in which it evokes the Jew's singular position within a self-consciously Catholic setting. The "Jewsuit" is the quintessential familiar stranger: familiar insofar as Jews and Judaism bear a strong "family resemblance" (for historically obvious reasons—Jesus being the most prominent) to Christians and Christianity—and to Society of Jesus Catholicism, in particular—while at the same time standing as their particular stranger, their necessary but largely repressed and misrepresented "Other."

Occupying the role of familiar stranger, as a publicly visible Jew and teacher of Jewish studies at SCU, provides distinct pleasures and pedagogical possibilities, as well as serious challenges. Often the pleasures predominate; at other times, the challenges are daunting.

Seeing the Bible and other familiar elements of religion rendered "exotic" through the eyes and words of rabbinic Jewish strangers usually enables people from culturally dominant communities to begin to see their own traditions and practices from an "outsider" perspective. Such a perspective is useful for gaining a greater sense of what being an "other" or "stranger" might actually feel like, as well as for better appreciating the particularities of one's own religious heritage or cultural assumptions.

One of the greatest pleasures of teaching Jewish studies at this Jesuit university is the opportunity, again and again, to "riff" on themes of religion, faith, and belief in a radically different key from the dominant Catholic one, with people who are genuinely engaged and intrigued by these themes. For Catholics and other Christians, and Americans in general (the majority of my students and colleagues), Judaism seems familiar and nonexotic enough to be grasped, but once explored at greater depth, it is found to be peculiar in ways that blow open space for true reflection, dialogue, and insight.

Introducing others to classical rabbinic texts and attitudes—one of my favorite areas of study—is sheer delight. The audacity and multiplicity of Jewish commentaries preserved for a single biblical verse is often breathtaking, and the traditional Jewish practice of encouraging questions and honoring a vast range of (sometimes conflicting) opinions and voices on any given issue is a model of piety so at odds with standard conceptions of "unquestioning faith" and uniform doctrine that its discovery inevitably unhinges all manner of unscrutinized assumptions about religion and religiosity. When that happens, real learning on a number of levels becomes possible. Seeing the Bible and other *familiar* elements of religion rendered "exotic" through the eyes and



Being a familiar stranger, then, brings with it both the pain and pleasure of being “family” and the freedom and isolation accorded the “outsider.” Embracing this role as a teacher involves working conscientiously and imaginatively to bridge the divide between familiar and strange in compelling ways. It requires listening to and learning from my students while pushing them to the limits of—and even beyond—their comfort zones in religious exploration.

words of rabbinic Jewish *strangers* usually enables people from culturally dominant communities to begin to see their own traditions and practices from an “outsider” perspective. Such a perspective is useful for gaining a greater sense of what being an “other” or “stranger” might actually feel like, as well as for better appreciating the particularities of one’s own religious heritage or cultural assumptions. Skills like these are valuable assets for interreligious dialogue in an increasingly global culture. Having a hand in their development is not only gratifying, but often great fun as well. And learning, in turn, from those who learn with me: what more could a teacher ask?

Nonetheless, familiarity can breed contempt.

One of the reasons why Jews and Judaism seem familiar, and therefore accessible, to many Christians is that they are present throughout the New Testament. Yet the sectarian disputes that infuse every page of that fascinating document (for example: in portrayals of nasty and deadly Pharisees, slippery and dangerous Sadducees, priests as conniving executioners, the Jewish mob forcing the hand of the reluctant Roman governor, John’s “spawn of Satan,” and Paul’s “bewitched” opponents and benighted “Judaizers”) have fed a cultural legacy of unselfconscious contempt for Judaism, on the one hand, and an unreflective, triumphalist sense of ownership of Israel’s “true destiny” on the other—a legacy that rears its head with some frequency in my courses. In courses that examine Judaism on its own, this is rather rare. Students are always intrigued by and generally receptive to the study of “Modern Jews and Judaism” or “Gender and Judaism,” for example. But in other, “close encounter,” courses, such as “Religions of the Book” and, especially, “Jesus the Jew”—courses in which the shared origins of and bitter conflicts among our closely related religious communities are the focus—expressions of the difficult legacy of New Testament rhetoric are an almost daily occurrence.

Confronting and deconstructing these dynamics is tricky business. Although many students will censor themselves out of fear of saying something offensive, others will readily, and often unselfconsciously recount how they were taught such “lessons” as: Christians have to be better than Jews, just as Jesus was better than the Jews of his time; the God of Christians is a God of love, whereas the God of Jews is an angry and vengeful God; one feels sorry for the pathetic Jews who are still anxiously awaiting their Messiah because they didn’t recognize him when he came; Christianity is the “pure” version of Judaism; and so on. Although there are simple and effective rejoinders to misrepresentations like these (as well as to more modern slurs and stereotypes), the work of encouraging Christians to critically assess other, more cherished

aspects of their religious training in light of both historical scholarship and the millennia-long history of Christian antipathy to Judaism is much more complicated and painful.

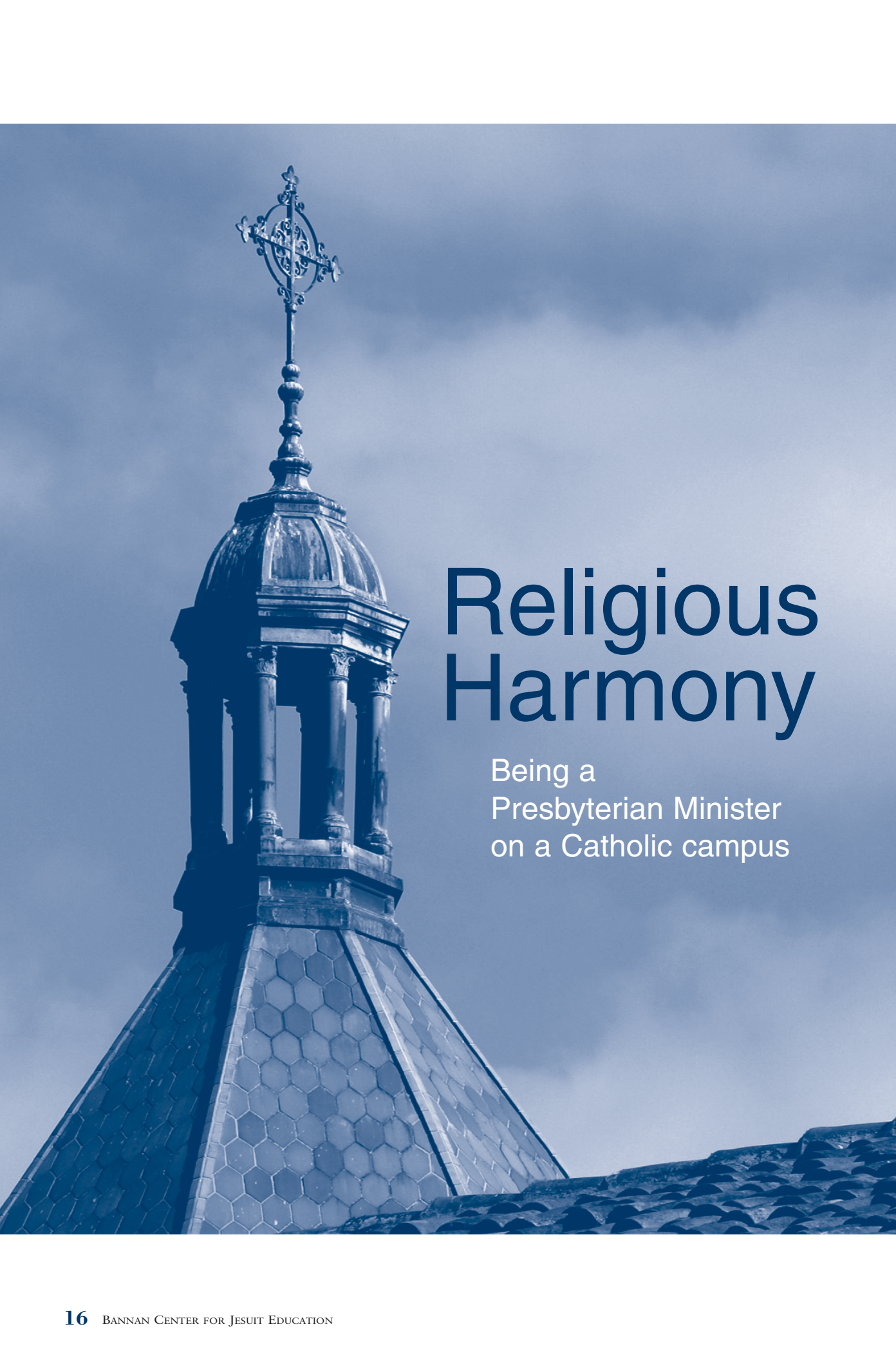
When I was invited to write this essay in fall 2004, I was teaching “Jesus the Jew” for the second time. In this class, we periodically reflect together on the intellectual, emotional, and spiritual challenges posed by the material with which we work and the backgrounds we each bring to its study. Toward the end of the quarter, I told the students about my own “writing assignment” and asked them to discuss with me the ways in which our work together realized or failed to realize the potential of cross-cultural understanding and meaningful interreligious dialogue. Throughout the conversation that ensued, I was impressed with the candor and thoughtfulness exhibited by these Santa Clara students: some Catholic, some Evangelical Protestant, some unaffiliated.

They described how “hard but rewarding” our work on interreligious understanding had been—especially insofar as it had required them to turn their questions about others back onto themselves. “When you stay within a single religious community and never explore beyond it,” offered one student, “you don’t learn as much about it. You’re like a fish in water—so you don’t know what water is.” Another observed how “questioning your own tradition opens you up to other people and their traditions and makes you realize that other people struggle with their religions in the same way. Seeing that creates a kind of bond between people of different faiths.” The historical study we undertake in this course—the close examination of origins, social contexts, and rhetoric—revealed, according to one student, “where some of the butting of heads today comes from”; while, to another, “the Christian-Jewish dialogue of the early centuries could be a stepping stone to contemporary dialogue,” with potential to “facilitate interreligious dialogue, but it could also make it much more challenging.” I confided to the students that this course is much more difficult for me to teach than other courses, that witnessing their personal struggles with the material is often painful for me as well. They assured me that their struggles, as well as mine, are well worth it in the end. “Hey, Professor Baker,” one said, “‘No pain, no gain,’ right?” You’ve got to love students like that.

Being a familiar stranger, then, brings with it both the pain and pleasure of being “family” and the freedom and isolation accorded the “outsider.” Embracing this role as a teacher involves working conscientiously and imaginatively to bridge the divide between familiar and strange in compelling ways. It requires listening to and learning from my students while pushing them to the limits of—and even beyond—their comfort zones in religious exploration. Being a “Jewsuit” means being deeply committed to interreligious dialogue and the potential it holds for authentic social transformation: transformation that moves beyond “tolerance,” beyond “inclusion,” and beyond a well-meaning but nonetheless marginalizing “ecumenism” that congratulates itself on its multicultural sensitivity but leaves its own self-understanding untouched. It means risking hurt and misunderstanding, even anger, on all sides, while trusting that the commitment to greater comprehension is genuine and mutual. Ultimately, being a “Jewsuit” at SCU is a gesture of faith: in the fundamental goodness of my students and colleagues, in my own capabilities as a teacher and scholar, and in the vitality of the institution that brings this community together and makes possible our shared endeavors. *



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Religious Harmony

Being a
Presbyterian Minister
on a Catholic campus

By JAMES B. BENNETT

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I think a few of my friends were puzzled. Why would I, an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A), take a job teaching at a Jesuit, Catholic University?

They were, I think, playfully expressing more concern for Santa Clara University than for me, especially since I am far from the first to make such a crossover. I had no concerns, though. I was going home. A few weeks after our wedding, my wife and I had left the temperate climate, prolific palm trees, and stunning Mission of our native Santa Barbara for a sojourn of graduate school and jobs that took us to the Northeast and Midwest. Twelve years later I walked up Santa Clara University's palm-tree lined driveway and knew I had come home. I teased my non-California friends that my Exodus was over and I was returning to the Promised Land.

Of course, the motivations behind our move to Santa Clara extended beyond palm trees and the familiar stucco walls and tile roofs. The chance for our children to be close to their grandparents and extended family as well as the opportunity to return to a culturally and geographically diverse region were also appealing. But the professional fit was equally important. Since my field of religious studies was central to the mission and identity of the University, I would not have to worry about working in a marginalized department that might have to justify its existence. Appropriate to that status, the department itself was rich in its intellectual diversity and committed to expanding its offerings in my areas of teaching and research. Nor would I, an ordained minister working as a college professor, be out of place or even unique. On this campus, these components of my identity would be more common than confusing. But even then, I did

not yet realize just how much Santa Clara University would provide me a sense of home.

A few weeks later, during new faculty orientation, I recognized the framework for understanding the comfort I had immediately experienced at Santa Clara. In rapid succession, University President Paul Locatelli, S.J., campus minister Mario Prietto, S.J., and then-director of the Bannan Center, Bill Spohn, each used the vocabulary of vocation, calling, and ministry to describe the roles of faculty members. Not since completing my theological training at Princeton Seminary nearly a decade earlier had I encountered such a consistent institutional affirmation of these ideals in an academic setting. They were not the frameworks used in my graduate training nor were they invoked at the large public university where I first taught, but they were the same theological categories through which I have understood the trajectory of my life. It was also the vocabulary that

explained my ministerial ordination, including my work as an assistant professor of American religious history. Hearing that language helped me realize that this cradle-Presbyterian had found his home at a Jesuit, Catholic University.

On further reflection, I began to recognize similarities between the Reformed theological tradition that shapes my own Presbyterian denomination and the Jesuit tradition within Catholicism. Vocation has been a primary lens through which Santa Clara University encourages its students, faculty, and staff to understand their education, work, and place in the world. Likewise, from John Calvin, the 16th century father of Reformed Theology, to Karl Barth, its most systematic expositor in the 20th century, vocation has been a crucial category for understanding faithfulness in work and life. The confluences of these traditions appeared again during my participation in the Bannan Center's DISCOVER program last summer, when I was part of a group of faculty and staff that spent two weeks exploring the idea of vocation. Around those tables, identities as Catholic or Protestant or Buddhist or none of the above would melt away and then reappear in new configurations as we explored both the particularity and the breadth of the vocabulary of calling and vocation. All the while we were nurtured and fed (literally as well as figuratively) by Santa Clara University and its emphasis on vocation as a framework to understand what links the diverse members of its community. The categories were a familiar and comforting

framework for me, even as the seminar conversations challenged me to constantly rethink and reapply them to my life and my work.

Another important shared framework is the emphasis on education as a fundamental component of religious identity. The Jesuit commitment to education is well known, as the order very early committed itself to the formation and staffing of schools as a form of pastoral ministry. This educational commitment was not merely an ideal for others, but for Jesuits as well, who have a long and ongoing record of accomplishment in all fields of intellectual inquiry, scientific as well as humanistic. We at Santa Clara University benefit from those commitments that date back nearly half a millennium. From its beginning the Reformed tradition has likewise insisted that the life of mind is not only compatible with but a necessary component of the spiritual life. Sometimes to the exclusion of other important characteristics, we have insisted upon necessity of an educated clergy (that we wear academic gowns in the pulpit is one of the more mundane expressions of that ideal). But at our best, the Reformed tradition parallels the Ignatian ideals that marry the life of the mind with the life the heart, joining together intellect and spirituality to see them as expressions of one another rather than opposite or conflicting understandings of faith.

I am grateful for these resonances, for as I hear about Ignatian ideals and practices I am reminded that my own tradition calls me to a similar faithfulness. As an ordained minister, I

Ironically, Santa Clara's well-articulated arena of acceptance may lead us to overlook important forms of religious dialogue. Perhaps our inclusive rush to identify similarities across denominations, combined with the ever-pressing need to engage non-Christian and non-Western traditions, leads us to neglect more subtle differences that might enrich ourselves and our environment. If we rush to make Ignatian or Reformed or any other spirituality too encompassing or too inclusive, we lose sight of the specific contributions that each tradition makes and of the dynamic ways different traditions interact.

am accountable to my regional jurisdiction (the Presbytery of San José). Yet, because I belong to a non-Episcopal denomination and do not work as a minister to a particular congregation, my employment is not subject to immediate ecclesiastical supervision. Nonetheless, the Presbytery might be both surprised and relieved to know that the environment and expectations of Santa Clara University keep me faithful both to my ordination vows and to my sense of vocational calling.

To exhaust the similarities I encounter would far exceed the space I have. Nor should these comparisons be limited to the Jesuits and Presbyterians. Methodists and Baptists, Muslims and Buddhists, could all draw their own lists of similarities and places of comfort on this campus, many of which would overlap with my own. What we all recognize is that Santa Clara University's understanding of its Jesuit and Catholic identity leads not only to intellectual excellence, but also to an inclusiveness that extends beyond toleration to a call for genuine openness and acceptance of people of all backgrounds. As a result, what I experience as a Presbyterian minister teaching at Santa Clara University is an environment in which I feel very comfortable; never has my religious identity or clerical status been a problem or a source of criticism. In that, I suspect that I am no different from most on this campus who are non-Catholic, for we have all experienced and benefited from these inclusive ideals. I continue to feel as at home as I did when I first saw the palm trees at the campus entrance.

But feeling at home runs the risk of getting too comfortable. Ironically, Santa Clara's well-articulated arena of acceptance may lead us to overlook important forms of religious dialogue. Perhaps our inclusive rush to identify similarities across denominations, combined with the ever-pressing need to engage non-Christian and non-Western traditions, leads us to neglect more subtle differences that might enrich ourselves and our environment. If we rush to make Ignatian or Reformed or any other spirituality too encompassing or too inclusive, we lose sight of the specific contributions that each tradition makes and of the dynamic ways different traditions interact. We also run the risk of overlook-

ing the particularities of those we seek to include in our ever-expanding claims of commonality. I sometimes wonder if this tendency makes us less prepared to engage other religions in a genuine, honest, and respectful manner. In other words, might *intrareligious* dialogue be an important precursor to *interreligious* dialogue? Since conflict occurs as frequently within religious traditions as across them, those of us within Christianity might first consider how well we converse Christian to Christian—or even Presbyterian to Presbyterian and Catholic to Catholic—before we pursue dialogue outside of those boundaries.

The harmony I sense between my own religious tradition and the Jesuit identity that informs Santa Clara University means that I do not spend much time talking about being a Presbyterian on a Catholic campus. But maybe that is a missed opportunity. In glossing over these sorts of differences we neglect conversations whose richness, were we to express and engage them, would promote the intellectual environment for which we strive as a modern university. This is neither confessional competition nor evangelical enthusiasm. Articulating the ways our identity shapes how we interpret the world in our classrooms, analyzing it in our scholarship, and engaging it in our lives, would make Santa Clara both more catholic (with a small “c”) and more Jesuit at the same time. The overlapping similarities that many of us experience provide a safe space from which such conversations about difference might begin. These are dialogues from which we should not shrink, for they will make us not only better teachers and better scholars, but also better Catholics and better Presbyterians.

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“In the beginner’s mind there are many possibilities,
but in the expert’s there are few.”

—SHUNRYU SUZUKI

Boundless Practice

Zen and the Art of Paying Attention

BY JUAN VELASCO

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What are you doing right now?

I remember my first encounter with Zen master Hae Kwang, one snowy winter in the small town of Lawrence, Kansas. The Kansas Zen Center was in a poor neighborhood on the east side of town. As I walked down the carefully designed curving path to a small building, I noticed a bright, white, small statue of Kwan Yin set against the dark foliage. The Goddess of Compassion seemed to invite me to slow down, to just stop, sit there, and breathe. But I was too nervous. As a beginner, I didn’t know exactly what to ask. I knew I was attracted to the quiet elegance of Zen, but I didn’t know, really, why I was there.

As I entered the small room, warm air washed over me like a wave. Hae Kwang smiled invitingly from a cushion at the end of the room. He was wearing gray robes and there was a small bell to his right and a cup of tea to his left. I took my seat.

“Welcome!,” he said.

“Thank you,” I replied.

“Any questions?” he asked.

I realized I wanted to impress him. I collected my thoughts and (what I thought) was the brainpower of my two Ph.D.s. My first question (I decided) would open a challenging discussion:

“What is Zen?” I asked. I was feeling ready for a lengthy debate on the issue. Hae Kwang’s smile changed. “What are you doing *right now*?” he replied, his eyes filled with intense concentration. I stammered, my jaw dropped, and for what seemed an endless amount of time I couldn’t say anything. I was looking for an answer in the books I had read. He waited for a few more seconds, but I knew I was running out of time.

“Aha!” said Hae Kwang. He rang the bell. The interview was over. “Come back,” he said with a smile.

I found myself back in the snow. What had happened? What kind of answer was that? As I was leaving the Zen center I realized that he had given me a great gift—the question was the answer. I laughed. I had felt truly present and alive during our 30-second exchange.

The Roshi’s message came at the right time. What am I doing in my life right now? What is this new situation? I realized its deeper meaning. When I started practicing ten years ago, I was in a very difficult situation. I had just moved to Lawrence, had no permanent job, no friends, and I had never been in the Midwest before, so I didn’t know anything about my new environment. After studying at UCLA, Kansas felt like a state of exile.

The difference between paying attention or not to this new chapter of my life was simple but powerful. I could choose to sleepwalk through this new experience or I could bring mindfulness to every moment and live my life fully, passionately, with engagement. I could empower myself to find the taste of my life or I could use all my time and energy trying to escape the wealth of feelings, thinking, sensations, and creativity that the new situation possessed. The difference between paying attention to my new situation (or not) was huge; it was a matter of learning to live my life fully no matter what the situation.

I realized then that paying attention is not the same as being focused. The realm of awareness awakened by the effort to be present draws the sting of “productivity” from it. I came to realize this vital contrast—productivity is a single-minded concentrating on doing, producing, ignoring our bodies, our environments, our neighbors and ourselves; instead mindfulness integrates all the aspects of our experience in relationship to others. Mindfulness erases the border between doing and the doer, between the I and the “other.”

To me, paying attention is an act of love. The effort to appreciate the unfolding of life, moment by moment, requires the kind of compassion a mother would bring to her crying child. The Jesuit concept of “companion-

ship” reinforces this belief and in many ways complements and enriches this practice of compassion. In mindfulness and companionship, living close to the mystery of our lives, we can perceive what’s clearly in front of us. When you really pay attention to the person in front of you, when you can really “see” the person in front of you, then you can really help this world.

Companionship and Mindfulness

Saint Ignatius of Loyola was a man who began his quest not to find something, but to encounter a way of being that would draw him closer to Christ. During the process of dictating his autobiography, he frequently used the image of companions. I found a new meaning for “companionship” last fall, when I visited El Salvador with a delegation from SCU.

As I was learning about the influences of Ignatian Spirituality all over Latin America, what impressed me most was learning about how people had linked their spiritual practice to social justice. The theme for the trip was that of “companionship,” since from the very beginning there was an effort on the part of the group to be “present” to the people of El Salvador. I was inspired and humbled by the strength of character in the people we met, and I sensed the unfolding of their very difficult journey through their *testimonios*.

I remember especially Zoila Benavides. When we went to La Chacra the first day of our visit, she walked with us, introducing us to the people living in the neighborhood. We visited the houses of some of the people she was trying to help. Some houses were barely standing, made of filthy pieces of laminated cardboard. There was a tremendous sour smell inside. The darkness of some of the rooms considered “living rooms” was depressing. The television sets in most of the houses projected images of rampant consumerism, in sharp contrast to the reality of their lives.

After our official walk, I talked informally with Zoila in Spanish. Her expression was calm but what she told me about the conditions of the poor people living in the slums was overwhelming. She remarked especially about the children. Some women would have up to eighteen children to feed. Some children would end up involved in prostitution, sexual abuse, or would even sell their organs. I wondered how she managed after all those years to commit herself to the poor, to be “present” to their experiences and their needs?



In mindfulness and companionship, living close to the mystery of our lives, we can perceive what’s clearly in front of us. When you really pay attention to the person in front of you, when you can really “see” the person in front of you, then you can really help this world.

Learning about the lives of these social workers in El Salvador, I was deeply moved and felt I had a closer understanding of the meaning of the word “companionship.” I felt the courage of Zoila’s presence in other people’s lives in powerful ways. Her stories emphasized being able to listen to each other, accompany others, to be open to moments in which she encountered the difficulties and challenges of their lives.

Companionship reaffirmed the direction and the benefits of mindfulness practice. Through companionship and listening with a discerning heart, I was able to be more open to these people’s suffering and see more clearly its origins.

I came away from the trip with a renewed commitment to live my life in a more mindful way, more open to the practice of deep listening, more committed to finding a space for justice and peace even in the midst of uncertainty and difficulty. I hope also to use the gifts from this trip to enhance my teaching, research, and writing. As a teacher I am committed to being more mindful with my students; in working with my colleagues I am committed to using deep listening as an active working model, especially in those moments when there is not a clear answer to the difficulties ahead of us. In my scholarship, I notice I am paying more attention to both the voice of my vocation and the needs of the community. The trip showed me that it is possible to find a way of being that allows for a process of presence and compassion in the midst of my academic life.

A Chapel of Peace

I make a point to go every Tuesday evening to the St. Francis Chapel for an hour of Zen meditation. The chapel is built in the back of the Mission church so it receives the evening light from the setting sun. I love it, especially in the Spring, when the roses are fully alive and the wisteria spreads its branches around the path.

As I walk from Saint Joseph’s Hall to the chapel, the statue of Jesus points carefully to the heart. I take notice of this invitation to practice careful listening, to pay attention to the movements of our inner life, to enter the sacred heart.

It is a kind of invitation to pay attention to suffering too, whether in El Salvador, in the Middle East, in the U.S., in our students, or in ourselves. Paying attention and, breath by breath, gaining the courage to be peaceful even in the midst of the difficulties. I believe peace can be built moment by moment. Maybe peace can also be built chapel by chapel, temple by temple, heart by heart.

I walk slowly to the Saint Francis chapel after a long day of teaching. I open the door of the chapel. What are you doing right now? I ask myself as I bow respectfully to the place. I sit, allowing myself a pause, a small moment of breathing.

What is this moment? I ask myself again. I hear the wind outside, I watch the warm light of sunset dancing on the walls. I slowly breathe in. I breathe out. I smile as I am paying attention, embraced by an ocean of silence.¹ ✧



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“We [Jesuits] also cooperate with many others: priests, men and women religious, with their distinct charisms, as well as people of all faiths and beliefs who seek to build a world of truth, justice, freedom, peace, and love. We are grateful for this cooperation and are enriched by it.”

—34TH GENERAL CONGREGATION, DECREE 13, 33.3

Building a Contemplative Community

The Ignatian Faculty Forum

BY TRACEY L. KAHAN

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Towards a contemplative community: A brief history of the IFF

- “Who am I becoming?”
- “What is my responsibility to others?”
- “What are my hopes and dreams?”
- “Where do I encounter the sacred in my life and work?”

What would it take to develop a university community where faculty members have an opportunity to explore such questions? What conditions might help make this possible? The Ignatian Faculty Forum (IFF) was initiated in fall 2000 with support from the Bannan Center and the SCU Provost’s Office to provide a pro-

fessional development “forum” for faculty to engage in reflective exploration of their lives as teacher-scholars. As Andre Delbecq, professor of management and founder of the IFF, explains:

The objective [of the IFF] is to uncover the intersection of a modern Ignatian spirituality with individual faculty choices—not an abstract, idealized dialog but rather an opportunity to learn through the current struggles of the scholar-teacher (2003, p. 30).

It has been my good fortune to serve as a co-facilitator of the IFF for the past three years, first with Professor Delbecq and currently with Juan Velasco, associate professor of English and modern languages. I never imagined that participating in the IFF would be such an adventure and personal blessing! What a gift, indeed,

to regularly explore life, work, and spirit with a group of immensely talented, caring, and courageous colleagues. Each year, IFF participants have, with great care, cultivated and nourished an atmosphere of mutual trust, respect, and deep compassion. In the Ignatian Faculty Forum, I found I could reveal my most unfettered self, explore difficult questions, name not only the joy, but also the despair. I have felt encouraged, supported, and lovingly “held” through difficult and challenging times.

IFF participant Judith Dunbar captures what the Ignatian Faculty Forum has been for many of us:

A place of refuge, in the good sense:
not of flight, but of spiritually grounded
insight, community, support, growth.¹

Contemplation—Clarity—Community: IFF Format and Process

Invitations to participate in the IFF are extended by current and former participants and facilitators. The IFF meets the first Monday of the month for eight months, October through May, for four hours that span late afternoon and early evening. Two faculty facilitators oversee the logistics, choose the organizing themes, compile the set of associated readings, and provide overview and structure at each gathering. Forum participants are asked to read and reflect upon several readings related to the month’s theme before each meeting. Clearly, the Forum represents a significant time commitment. Not surprisingly, many IFF participants reported later that they were initially reluctant to accept the invitation to participate because of the considerable time involved. However, they were won over, as one faculty member states, by the “genuine sense of joy, excitement, and satisfaction” of faculty who participated in earlier Forums.

The IFF is now in its third year. Each year, a new group of faculty is invited to participate in the IFF. Gratifyingly, a number of the partic-

ipants from the previous two Forums have chosen to continue their participation into a second and, now for some, a third year. Thus, we have had two Faculty Forums running concurrently for the past two years.

The IFF process is straightforward (see Delbecq, 2003 for a description of how this framework evolved). We begin each forum by lighting a “candle of confidentiality” to reinforce our commitment to create and maintain an environment of mutual trust and respect. As noted by one participant, this assists us to, “insofar as we were able, tell the truth, drop the masks.”

Each of us offers a brief reflection on our current spiritual and professional situations and challenges. This is followed by some form of meditation or contemplative practice. We then discuss the general topic of spirituality in academic life in relation to the month’s particular theme and related readings. Following a short break, the group shares a simple meal of soup and bread. The second half of the evening is devoted to group discernment. Each participant identifies a current concern, signifies its urgency and/or importance, and indicates how much of the group’s time he or she needs to explore this concern. The facilitator begins the process by identifying the first person to briefly describe the particular challenge he or she is facing as a teacher-scholar. The other group members listen closely and then offer reflections and questions intended to help the individual clarify his or her understanding of the situation. This process repeats for as many group members as possible during the time available. The evening closes with a brief meditation or prayer. As one IFF participant explains:

...each person’s willingness to open up to the group about professional challenges further binds us together. In this collective, each and every participant is compassionate and genuine in his or her engagement with the group.

—TAMMY MADSEN,
DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT

Intent of the Ignatian Faculty Forum

A central aim of the Ignatian Faculty Forum is to explore the interface between Ignatian spirituality and the faculty member's diverse lives as teacher-scholars in a contemporary Jesuit university. IFF participants represent different religious and spiritual traditions. We meet in the silence of contemplation and in the compassion that arises through the Ignatian practice of discerning the movement of God in our own lives. Certainly, inter-religious understanding is promoted by the discussion of readings and practices from various wisdom traditions, and through an experiential and scholarly exploration of the Ignatian Spiritual tradition, including the cultivation of a trusted "Contemplative Community" (deMello, 1978).

As one IFF participant noted:

I was surprised by how many basic tenets of Jesuit education the IFF experience revealed to me that I hadn't fully understood before. I knew the vocabulary well enough, but terms like 'Ignatian spirituality,' 'discernment,' 'campus community,' and even 'education of the whole person' now hold much richer meanings.

—NANCY UNGER, HISTORY DEPARTMENT,
ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES PROGRAM, PROGRAM
FOR THE STUDY OF WOMEN AND GENDER

In his 1991 book, *Experiencing God in Daily Life*, Robert Fabing, S.J., explains the Ignatian *Spiritual Exercises* as follows:

The *Spiritual Exercises* of Saint Ignatius Loyola are a series of meditations, contemplations, considerations, silent and spoken prayers, the examination of consciousness and other exercises that are 'spiritual.' All of these exercises are a means to nurture our desire for God, to love with God's love, and to find God in all things.... Ignatius' overriding

concern is to 'see God in all things,' to find God in the events and moments of our days. (pp. 14-15)

Two questions that are drawn from the Ignatian *Spiritual Exercises* serve as the underpinning of the Ignatian Faculty Forum:

- "Where is God in this moment?"
- "Where/how do I experience God in all things?"

In order to recognize (or "discern") God's presence in daily life, we need to be awake and aware of our ongoing experience and able to observe with compassion when and how we are carried away by judgment and habitual reactions. In the IFF we engage in contemplative and meditative practices from a variety of spiritual traditions to become more aware of and open, to the extent possible, to *all* aspects of our current experience. Our usual inclination is to identify with the content, the "what" of our experience. If we practice noticing the movement of energy or, in Ignatian terms, the movement of spirit, we can draw a larger circle around experiences we are willing to admit, willing to feel, willing to explore. We cultivate the capacity to notice and accept whatever arises without judgment. We ask "where is God in my current experience?" We practice listening in silence for the questions in our hearts. We practice listening to each other as we seek to identify and understand the deeper issues within particular personal or professional challenges. We do not attempt to solve problems. Rather, we offer questions that may help to clarify a presented challenge and to illuminate the spiritual opportunities within the difficulty. Often, we find that the challenges described by others are uncannily similar to our own. Thus, even across differences in academic discipline, life-stage development, religious orientation, and family environment, we are able to recognize

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and nurture our common humanity and sincere questing. In the words of IFF participants:

Having a forum of colleagues with whom to discuss issues of spiritual development (or challenges to one's spiritual growth), from an intellectual as well as a personal perspective, has been a very powerful experience for me. Even if some of us are active members of religious/spiritual communities offcampus, the space that IFF affords us to consider these important questions with colleagues has made an important difference in my personal and professional life this academic year. All of us have been willing to openly discuss ideas, issues, and personal and professional problems in an atmosphere of genuine respect and trust that has nurtured all of us.

—PEDRO HERNÁNDEZ-RAMOS, EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, AND CENTER FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, & SOCIETY

Because the participants in the forum come from different departments, programs, and schools, they have helped me attain an experiential awareness of my being part of a common enterprise that transcends my particular circumstances. I cannot emphasize enough that simply being with colleagues from across disciplines and attending to them—their personal and professional experience—in a space of particular reverence has changed my experience of Santa Clara University... The IFF has offered me an experience of collegueship rooted in a deeper human and spiritual connectedness.

—MICHAEL ZAMPELLI, S.J., THEATRE AND DANCE DEPARTMENT

In ways that touched upon all of my roles here at Santa Clara, my colleagues directed my attention to the possibilities being offered to me by God.

—JUDITH DUNBAR, ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

[The IFF] is a non-coercive, collaborative way to bring many voices into the discussion. We have good people here at Santa Clara and the pooling of such insights and energies would be a

positive development for this institution. I can think of no better way to foster a shared vision for this school.

—J. DAVID PLEINS, RELIGIOUS STUDIES DEPARTMENT

For myself, the Ignatian Faculty Forum is an important gateway to a more authentic life as a teacher-scholar, a life in which aspiring to embody the three C's of action so valued by the University (competence, conscience, and compassion) is informed by the three C's of contemplation (contemplative practice, clarity, and community). The IFF is my contemplative community, a group of teacher-scholars with whom I can explore my spiritual yearnings and wrestle whole-heartedly with issues of life, work, and purpose. It is a place where I find compassion for my personal frailties, where I can name my "deepest heart's desires," where I can take a deep, nourishing breath in an atmosphere of care and trust. It is through the experiences of the Ignatian Faculty Forum that I am beginning to see the true transformative power of St. Ignatius' call to become, each in our own way, "contemplatives in action." *

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¹ At the conclusion of the academic year, participants in the Ignatian Faculty Forum are asked to write letters to the director of the Bannan Center and comment on their year-long IFF experience. All quotes from IFF participants are taken from these letters, with the permission of the individual and the Bannan Center.



TRACEY L. KAHAN
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Interreligious Encounter and the Local Religion Project

BY PHILIP BOO RILEY

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Before commencing his amazing trip across the Pacific Ocean, the main character of Yann Martel's *Life of Pi* chronicles a difficult moment during his spiritual journey into the religions of his home town of Pondicherry. Young Pi had been pursuing simultaneously a Christian, Hindu, and Muslim spiritual life. His enthusiasm led his teacher in each tradition to assume his devotion and dedication were exclusive—until a chance encounter between the priest, imam, and pandit with Pi and his religiously indifferent parents revealed to each that he had been practicing the three faiths all at once. Although Pi experienced no contradiction—"I just want to love God," an aspiration he pursued in churches, temples, and mosques—his teachers were incredulous, and thereafter set roadblocks to Pi's personal inter-religious dialogue. Pi's commentary on this episode is instructive:

Alas, the sense of community that a common faith brings to a people spelled trouble for me. In time, my religious doings went from the notice of those to whom it didn't matter and only amused [parents], to that of those to whom it did matter [teachers]—and they were not amused.¹

Community and Pi's Interreligious Dialogue

The model of community that Pi encountered in Pondicherry reflects a tendency within faith traditions to forge their identity by drawing boundaries between themselves and other traditions. Take, for example, Pope Boniface II's, *Unam Sanctam*, published in 1302: "Urged by faith, we are obliged to believe and to maintain that the Church is one, holy, catholic, and also apos-

tolitic...[and] that outside of her there is neither salvation nor the remission of sins." Although the historical context suggests it was not the author's primary intent, Boniface's letter has become a classic example of how a religious truth claim can extinguish openness to other faiths.²

Some scholars have argued that exclusive truth claims fuel the intolerance and violence we find in conflicts around the globe today. The stronger the construction and representation of religious identity, so goes this argument, the more likely is violence against others to follow. According to a 2004 Harris Poll, the general public agrees with the scholars: a majority of Americans cite religious differences as a major obstacle to world peace.³ This is the backdrop against which many Santa Clara students approach inter-religious dialogue.

Jesuit Campuses and Interreligious Dialogue

Last Fall I made these issues immediate by asking my students to discuss the ways inter-religious dialogue was promoted at Santa Clara. I was surprised to find my students agreed with the scholars and general public: while by no means promoting hostility toward other faiths, the University's commitment to Catholicism for them precludes an interest in dialogue. Pi would feel no more supported in his multi-religious quest at Santa Clara than he did in Pondicherry.

My students argued that dialogue requires a critical mass of peers who publicly identify themselves as members of different religious groups. Since the Catholic background of most of SCU's undergraduates renders the community religiously homogenous,⁴ dialogue was just not possible. More importantly, the students



The Local Religion Project (LRP) uses Silicon Valley as something of an experimental lab for understanding how different faiths live together in a community. While the Valley is most known for technology, the complex ways in which globalization comes alive locally are equally important.⁷ Far ahead of the rest of the country, we became a county without a majority ethnicity: the 2000 census revealed Santa Clara County was 44 percent Caucasian, 27 percent Asian, 24 percent Hispanic, and 3 percent African American. The key to this story is immigration, which has increased 60 percent since 1990. Today 36 percent of the county's residents (nearly 600,000) were born in another country, and 177 different languages are spoken in our homes.

claimed that the institution's Catholic character monopolizes the campus's symbolic life—e.g. Mission Santa Clara at the center of the campus as well as the logo—and effectively leaves out and thereby discourages inter-religious dialogue. To adapt George Bernard Shaw's famous claim, a Catholic university interested in dialogue is a contradiction in terms.

My students and I shifted the discussion to another front: mission. Among the warrants for inter-religious dialogue at Jesuit universities is this statement from the Jesuit's 34th General Congregation in 1995:

The Jesuit heritage of creative response to the call of the Spirit in concrete situations of life is an incentive to develop a culture of dialogue in our approach to believers of other religions....If we imagine ourselves with the Trinity, in the spirit of Ignatius, looking down on the earth as the third millennium of Christianity is about to unfold, what do we see?...some Christian (1.95 billion), some Muslim (1 billion), some Hindu (777 million), some Buddhist (341 million), some of new religious movements (128 million), some of indigenous religions (99 million), some Jewish (14 million), some of no religion at all (1.1 billion) What meaning and what opportunity does this rich ethnic, cultural, and religious pluralism that characterizes God's world

today have for our lives and for our mission of evangelization?

Our discussions of what this might look like at SCU were similar to those offered by Francis Clooney, S.J., in his essay in this issue: that promoting and engaging in inter-religious dialogue need not threaten or compromise the institution's Catholic character, but can actually deepen and re-energize the religious convictions of all members of the campus community. Clooney's call to move the dialogue past superficial or secondary aspects of traditions to honor and celebrate their core convictions is important, and brings to mind a proposal he made in a reflection on the 34th Congregation's statement a few years ago: Jesuit campuses should actively profile the diverse religious symbols and narratives through which their community's non-Christians live their lives—in promotional material, public art, worship—even days off. Instead of "a policy of institutional neglect regarding religions other than our own," why not, he suggested, observe holy days—*Yom Kippur*, *Ramadan*, *Diwali*—from the calendars of other traditions?⁶

The call to make Jesuit campuses homes for inter-religious dialogue that can deepen and transform the faith and theological reflection of Catholics is appealing. But my students and I chose to embark on a different path: we shifted to the Local Religion Project, leaving campus to explore the Valley in which we live. Just as Pi encountered multiple religions living along side

Local Religion Project



each other in Pondicherry, perhaps we can pursue the 34th Congregation's warrant for dialogue by studying the same phenomenon in the community beyond our campus walls.

Local Religion Project and Interreligious dialogue

The Local Religion Project (LRP) uses Silicon Valley as something of an experimental lab for understanding how different faiths live together in a community. While the Valley is most known for technology, the complex ways in which globalization comes alive locally are equally important.⁷ Far ahead of the rest of the country, we became a county without a majority ethnicity: the 2000 census revealed Santa Clara County was 44 percent Caucasian, 27 percent Asian, 24 percent Hispanic, and 3 percent African American. The key to this story is immigration, which has increased 60 percent since 1990. Today 36 percent of the county's residents (nearly 600,000) were born in another country, and 177 different languages are spoken in our homes. The region's religious life reflects these trends—for example, compared to 3 percent nationally, 11 percent of our neighbors belong to a tradition other than Judaism and Christianity. While Catholicism is the largest denomination in the Valley, its fifty-plus churches share the Valley with thirty-two Buddhist centers. The public square still has Christianity at its center—e.g. the recently refurbished Catholic Cathedral Basilica—but that center is also populated by public art celebrating the Ohlone heritage and creation myths, and its hillside environs now include Sikh gurdwaras, Hindu temples, and Muslim mosques.⁸

LRP and Student Learning

For the past eighteen months, I have asked my students to enter into this complex community to research how religion is lived in the Valley's varied faith communities. Taking bearings from class and library research on the region and religious traditions, students observe rituals, interview leaders and community members, and document with images, video, and text what they encounter. Each research study adds to the growing collection of profiles of the area's religious communities on the LRP web site, and in

turn provides a starting point for further student research.

Students come away from their research with a greater understanding of alternative faith traditions and an experience of different ways of being religious. Catholic students for whom Buddhism was a distant and esoteric practice performed *puja* with a small Tibetan Buddhist community in a residential neighborhood in San Jose. Students who had never heard of the Baha'i marveled at the local San Jose community's hospitality and syncretism-like openness to all faiths. Students who had not ventured beyond California's borders got a taste of India in their study of immigrant communities at the Jain Center in Milpitas. A Vietnamese Catholic student, with the aid of an elderly gentleman visiting from India, learned about Hindu religiosity by observing a *Diwali* celebration at Fremont's Hindu temple. Other Catholic students puzzled over the use of light (albeit a flashlight) in the local Silicon Valley Atheist's "Human Light Festival" celebration—was it not a ritual drawing on a universal religious symbol?

The inter-religious encounter is not just about Christians encountering other traditions and worldviews. Last quarter a Buddhist student learned about Catholic social justice traditions by interviewing men served by the Cathedral's homeless ministry in downtown San Jose. An Ahmadiyyah Muslim from Pakistan became interested in World War II internment, and researched the extent to which the history of that experience lives on in a local Japanese Buddhist community. Interviews with a Sikh high school student about her language and music classes at the new gurdwara in south San Jose demystified religious practice for a group of non-religious students. A religious studies-art double major witnessed first-hand the power of public inter-religious dialogue when she documented the Ramadan fast by San Jose's police chief, a Mormon, who sought closer ties to the community in religious practice. Local students have turned to their own communities to be guides in encounters: a Jewish student shared her synagogue's Holocaust education program with her Catholic classmates, and a Chinese Buddhist student opened his family's practice at Pao Hua temple in East San Jose to his Catholic classmates.



I bring these studies into the classroom to challenge students to make sense of the Valley's religious landscape.⁹ For instance, does their field research suggest that the Valley's diverse spiritual marketplace means that faith communities grow and thrive less by openness to other religious beliefs than by turning inward to their own distinctive truth claims? Does the way faith communities function to reproduce the ethos of their countries of origin result in enclaves that distance immigrant groups from one another and/or the Valley's broader globalized and technologically saturated culture? Are those residents who are most religious drawn to communities that place high demands on adherents and isolate themselves from the wider community? What concerns and hopes bring communities together in the region's inter-faith coalitions? Questions like these lead students to explore religious diversity and reflect on the possibilities of inter-religious dialogue.

LRP and Mission

Are these encounters and questions the life-changing inter-religious dialogue Pi experienced in Pondicherry? Hardly. But they are consonant with a University mission that promotes inter-religious dialogue. Students are bombarded daily with images of religions contested and contesting—indeed, CNN, the Internet, and the popular media are content to leave us with images, but little understanding of the persons and religions they capture. LRP takes students beyond these dramatic and distant representations of religion and puts individual faces on religion; contact with their neighbors provides them direct experience of how religion is part of the fabric of life in the Valley. Students can move to understand religion as lived and experienced in a diverse setting, cultivating a disposition to engage across religious differences that will stand them well in the future. In this way, the University takes advantage of its privileged location in the Valley, providing an illustration of what Jesuit Superior General Kolvenbach intended when he called for education of "...the whole person of solidarity in the real world."¹⁰ ✧

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Yann Martel, *Life of Pi* (2001), p. 64.
- ² Boniface II, Papal Bull, *Unam Sanctum*, Nov 18, 1302; <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Bon08/B8unam.htm>.
- ³ See Regina Schwartz, *The Curse of Cain: the Violent Legacy of Monotheism* (1977); on conflict and religious intolerance, see the Ontario Consultation on Religious Tolerance, www.religioustolerance.org/curr_war.htm.
- ⁴ SCU registration statistics from 1999-2002 show between 50-60 percent of the undergraduate population describe themselves as Catholic. Other traditions reported included Buddhist (2-3 percent); Islam (less than 1 percent); and Judaism (1-2 percent). "None" was the response chosen by 17-18 percent of the students.
- ⁵ Decree 5, "Our Mission and Inter-religious Dialogue" (<http://puffin.creighton.edu/jesuit/dialogue/documents/documents.html>).
- ⁶ Francis Clooney, S.J., "Goddess in the Classroom: Is the Promotion of Religious Diversity a Dangerous Idea?" http://puffin.creighton.edu/jesuit/dialogue/documents/articles/goddess_in_classroom.html. Cf. my religious studies colleague, Catherine Bell, "Who Owns Tradition? Religion and the Messiness of History," Santa Clara Lecture Santa Clara University (February 4, 2001) (<http://www.scu.edu/bannan-center/eventsandconferences/lectures/archives/bell.cfm>).
- ⁷ See J.A. English-Lueck, *Cultures@ Silicon Valley* (2002).
- ⁸ For statistics on religion, see the American Religion Data Archive, <http://www.thearda.com/>; for ethnicity, Lewis Mumford Center for Comparative Urban and Regional Research (<http://mumford.albany.edu/census/index.asp>); for immigration, see the Foundation for American Immigration Reform (www.fairus.org/Research/Research.cfm?ID=976&c=9). For an overview, see Diana Eck, *A New Religious America: How a "Christian Country" Has Become the World's Most Religiously Diverse Nation* (HarperSanFrancisco, 2001).
- ⁹ See "Building Community: Social Connections and Civic Involvement in Silicon Valley" (Preliminary Findings Report February 27, 2001) (<http://www.cfsv.org/communitysurvey/docs/scsrfd.pdf>).
- ¹⁰ as cited in *SCU Strategic Plan*, 2001, p. 7.



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Bannan Grant Report

BY WILLIAM JAMES STOVER

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A Dialogue of Faith

Moral Reflections on Middle East Conflict
from Jewish, Muslim, and Christian Perspectives

The Middle East is both the birthplace of the world's three great religions and the cradle of seemingly endless conflict.

Over many centuries, various civilizations and conquering armies brought their ideas, authority, and often repression to the region, affecting values, sometimes evoking respect, frequently fostering resentment and provoking resistance.

During the recent past, with violence escalating, individuals and groups from all sides have tried to move the Middle East toward peace with little success. Clashing national interests, the baggage of history, greedy outsiders' meddling as well as indigenous people's suspicion, mistrust, and bitterness have combined to subvert their efforts.

Despite these failures, the moral principles of Islam, Christianity, and Judaism provide a pathway to peace, and increasing numbers of the faithful cry out for a resolution of the region's conflict.

During the winter of 2004, Santa Clara University brought together online religious teachers and practitioners from the three world religions to discuss important issues associated

with Middle East conflict: resistance, suicide bombing, America's role in the Middle East, and the future shape of peace. (See <http://itrs.scu.edu/stover/dof> for the project Web site.) Supported by the University's Bannan Center for Jesuit Education, these conversations aimed at helping all parties better understand one another's concerns, values, and commitment to peace.

In preparation for this Dialogue of Faith, I made two trips to the Middle East, one to Israel, the other to Lebanon, Syria, and Morocco. In Jerusalem, I was able to contact officials in the Ministry of Education (both Israelis and Palestinians) and several rabbis as well as faculty at Al-Quds University and Hebrew University. These individuals introduced me to other interested parties with whom I was able to correspond later by e-mail.

In the Arab countries, I recruited participants from Saint Joseph's University in East Beirut, a Jesuit institution, and American University in West Beirut. Contacts in Morocco came from Al Akhawayn University, an English language institution founded by the Saudi Arabian and Moroccan kings.

The dialogue also included individuals in Europe and the United States, particularly several from the San Francisco Bay Area. As a result of this effort, the Dialogue of Faith involved four Jews, two of whom are nationals of Israel; nine Muslims, five of whom are nationals of Arab countries; and six Christians including three Jesuits, a Baptist who is a chaplain at Al Akhawayn University, a Congregational minister from Palo Alto, Calif., and a professor of religion from Loyola University New Orleans. The Jesuits are represented by faculty from Saint Joseph's University (Lebanon) and Boston College, and by the Secretary for Inter-religious Dialogue of the Society of Jesus (Rome). This provided us with a wide variety of experience and opinion.

We invited guests to join us, observing the dialogue through reading the conversations of our participants on the website. More than 30 individuals registered as guests, formally "visiting" the website from Morocco, Israel, Palestine, the United Kingdom, Jordan, Lebanon, and Canada as well as the United States. Other guests may have also viewed the exchange without formally registering. Additionally, University classes participated: two in Morocco, two at Santa Clara, one in Lebanon, and one at Loyola University New Orleans. To help these "visitors" better understand the exchange, we posted on the Web site an extensive bibliography dealing with war, morality, and justice from the Jewish, Muslim, and Christian traditions. This included on-line citations, classical texts, journal articles, and other bibliographic sources. As a result, guests, students and participants had easy access to literature dealing with the topics under discussion.

For two weeks in March 2004, our participants replied to a series of questions, and then questioned each others' replies about the following issues.

Resistance to Occupation

For over half a century, ever-increasing areas of land in which a majority of Palestinians

live have been occupied by Israeli settlers, some for religious reasons, others for reasons of state security, still others because of government subsidies for inexpensive housing.

How does your religion view civil resistance to oppression or occupation? Can armed struggle be justified on moral and religious grounds? Who or what should be the targets of such resistance?

Suicide/Homicide Bombing

During the past few years, hundreds of civilians have been killed by individuals who take their own lives in order to inflict damage on their enemy. These suicide or homicide bombers have been lauded as "martyrs" by a small minority of people who profess a belief in Christianity or Islam. To most observers, they are simply misguided terrorists.

What do your religious beliefs teach about homicide/suicide bombing? Can taking one's own life ever be justified for the greater good? Can you conceive of a situation when such an act could be considered martyrdom?

America's Role in the Middle East

Since the peace conference ending World War I and Woodrow Wilson's call for national self-determination, the United States has been increasingly involved in the Middle East. Today, Americans are pursuing "nation building" in Iraq, a failed effort to end Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and a war on terrorism throughout the region.

What religious principles might inform policy makers and concerned citizens about the United States' role in the Middle East? Who or what should that country support? Who or what should it oppose?

The Future of Peace

"To have peace," goes the ancient Roman adage, "prepare for war." While some form of deterrence is often necessary in an imperfect and untrusting world, religious and moral leaders may envision peace to encourage negotiation and foster hope in its coming.

Bannan Grant Report

What is your vision of peace between Arabs and Israelis? How could Israeli and Palestinian basic values be achieved through peace? What steps might lead these two nations in the right direction?

Conclusions and Summary

These on-line conversations over so great a distance and wide a barrier are in themselves an important accomplishment. Many of the participants could not visit each other's homes due to governmental exclusion, refusal to recognize their state, or outright hostility. Yet they could exchange viewpoints in this forum, respecting one another, listening, and being heard.

The dialogue revealed areas of agreement and discord. All supported the idea that any armed resistance should exclude attacks on non-combatants. Muslims argued that civil resistance was the right of oppressed people, and armed struggle against an occupying military power as well as against settlers armed to protect their settlements was justified morally. After millennia of experience with oppression, Jews felt resistance could only be justified if the minority were denied their right to worship according to their conscience. Christians spoke of non-violent civil disobedience, but recognized the patience and difficulty this entails.

All condemned suicide bombing, but expressed differences in analyzing why this phenomenon has increased exponentially during the past few years. Muslims and Christians focused on the despair of the Palestinian population, leading to despondency and depression. Jewish respondents pointed out that the bombings seemed to increase just as peace seemed possible, and explained this in terms of a strategy to force more concessions from Israel. It was less the moral responsibility of young people who surrendered to this despondency by killing themselves and others, and more the responsibility of leaders who recruited them to do so. There was widespread agreement that any act that causes the deaths of innocent civilians should be condemned whether carried out by soldiers or suicide bombers.

The United States should have a major role in the Middle East, according to our respondents. This includes impartial mediation to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; the restraint of Prime Minister Sharon from extremist acts against the Palestinians; the establishment of a viable, hopefully moral and democratic, regime in Iraq, at least fixing what the Americans broke; the enforcement of agreements that disputant parties accepted; and underwriting the cost of peace. Some participants expressed considerable doubt that the present American administration could achieve any of these goals.

Finally, there was much disagreement on the future shape of peace. All agreed that attitudes must change, respect for each other must be encouraged through social and cultural interaction, and education should point toward the common values of peace and human development. Muslims and Christians argued for a two-state solution based on the pre-1967 borders, while Jews felt these borders should be negotiated and that the pre-1967 "green line" formula might preclude creative efforts at peace making. One such creative suggestion was the administration of Jerusalem's holy places by the United Nations in some form of shared sovereignty among Israelis, Palestinians, and the international community.

Despite these differences, the Dialogue of Faith has provided some hope for the prospects of Middle East Peace. Through the darkness and fear, we must keep alive the vision of Jews, Christians, and Muslims living together in harmony.

*Shalom, Peace, salaam **



WILLIAM JAMES STOVER

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coming events

The EXAMENed Life with Tom Powers, S.J.

MAY 3, 2005

The Examen is foundational to Ignatian Spirituality. Like so much about our spiritual lives, it is simultaneously very simple and multifaceted. Come and hear about what the Examen is, how it can benefit you, and how you can integrate it into your life. Tom Powers, S.J., is a Bannan Fellow. He was previously the founding director of the Center for Ignatian Spirituality at Loyola Marymount University. (SCU community only) **Noon–1 p.m., Sobrato Commons.**

More to *explore*

MAY 4, 2005

A panel of authors of articles from this issue will discuss ways of promoting interreligious understanding on campus. **Noon–1 p.m., Sobrato Commons.**

DISCOVER Luncheon Speaker Series:

“The Search for What Matters”

MAY 17, 2005

Mark Ravizza, S.J., director of the Ignatian Centers and associate professor of philosophy, will answer the question “What matters to me and why?” This series aims to provide a space on campus for a discussion of personal experiences and values among faculty, students, alums, and staff of the University. (SCU community only) **Noon–1 p.m., Benson Center Parlors.**

For more information on events, please visit www.scu.edu/bannancenter/eventsandconferences.cfm or call 408-551-1951.

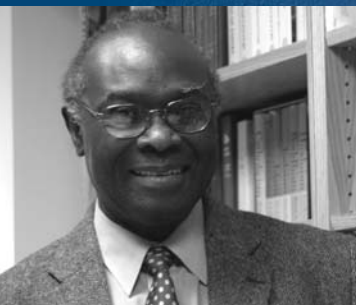
next issue:

FALL 2005

Ignatian
Philanthropy

If the adjective “Ignatian” preceded the noun, “philanthropy,” what would that mean? First, it would mean solidarity between the giver and receiver, a solidarity that implies love. Second, it would mean an act of generosity regardless of the magnitude of its material manifestation. Third, it would advance the vocation of both giver and receiver, and as such it would be a mutually formative process. Fourth, it would require discernment to avoid facilitating another’s greed or freeing others from their duties to be generous. Fifth, it would include being a grateful recipient with all the stewardship that requires. Finally, a Jesuit philanthropy occasions reflection on the gifts one has received from the Creator of us all. Our next issue will explore these and other ideas with essays from various members of the SCU community, including faculty, staff, and donors.

“Why is Christianity, the Religion of the Colonizer,
growing so fast in Africa and what can Euro-American
Christians learn from these Christianities?”



LECTURE BY
LAMIN SANNEH

May 11, 2005
7– 8 p.m., Benson Center, Williman Room

Lamin Sanneh is the D. Willis James Professor of Missions and World Christianity and Professor of History at Yale Divinity School. A naturalized U.S. citizen, Sanneh is descended from the Nyanchos, an ancient African royal house.

Early in his academic career, he spent years studying classical Arabic and Islam, including a stint in the Middle East, and working with the churches in Africa and with international organizations concerned with inter-religious issues. He earned his Ph.D. in Islamic history from the University of London. He was a professor at Harvard University for eight years before moving to Yale University, where he is actively involved in Yale's Council on African Studies. He is an editor-at-large of the ecumenical weekly, *The Christian Century*.

He is an honorary research professor at the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London, and is a life member of Clare Hall, Cambridge University. He serves on the board of Ethics and Public Policy at Harvard University, and the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute in Birmingham, Alabama.

Sanneh is the author of numerous articles and several books, including *Whose Religion is Christianity: The Gospel According to the West* (Eerdmans), which won the 2004 Theologos Award from the Association of Theological Booksellers for the Best General Interest Book. In 2004, Pope John Paul II appointed Sanneh to the Pontifical Commission of the Historical Sciences.



The Jesuit university in Silicon Valley

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