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## Letter from the Editor

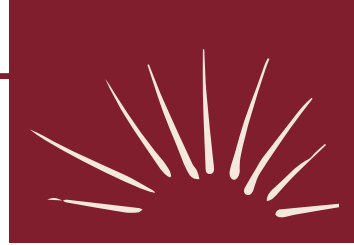
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# Letter from the Editor

By Barbara Anne Kozee

The horizon delineates earth from sky; it is a theoretical line, and its distance from the observer is always varying. I have never seen such beautiful horizons as the sunsets that I have witnessed atop Jesuit School of Theology (JST) buildings. These are multicolored, jaw-dropping horizons that encompass the Berkeley marina, hills and mountains, the shimmering lights of Oakland, the Golden Gate Bridge, and the city of San Francisco (all on a clear day, of course). For a brief, elusive moment, the sinking sun and the quieting earth are one, joined in joyous spirit along that horizon line that separates and varies. Horizons are an appropriate image for our journal for a few reasons. For one, they are unattainable by nature. Theology is a discipline of hope-filled seeking. As theologians and ministers, we sit in comfort with liminality and unknowing, with both the already and the not-yet. Just as the horizon always remains beyond our human limits, our understanding of God is constantly changing, varying, and ultimately incomplete. Secondly, horizons bring together. Our journal is a place where the human meets the divine, where we begin to catch a glimpse of God working in society. New horizons occur when positions and perspectives are shifted and varied. This journal dares to posit new ways of looking at the world around us, always in critical fidelity to the Gospels and the mission of Christ.

This first issue of *New Horizons*, “Dual Pandemics: Why Black Lives Matter,” exists as the fifth volume and urgent continuation of the previous series of JST journals known as *New Wineskins*. In Tim Manatt, SJ’s inaugural Letter from the Editor for the Spring 2006 issue, he cites a reason for the journal’s creation as a means to grapple with the following question: “What does the culturally contextualized study of theology, and a faith that contributes to justice, mean to us?” In our current social context, the COVID-19 pandemic and the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor have deeply defined our theological paths. This issue seeks to respond to the urgency of the situation around us and to provide theological reflections on health crises and racial injustice, problems and questions that are deeply intertwined. In this issue, JST students will reflect on social issues as they see them and propose potential paths forward, from including voices from the Black Church, to introducing new communities to James Cone, to incorporating Ubuntu ethics into U.S. reconciliatory processes, to seeing the family as a site of social change. While each author articulates a unique response to our world, engaging systemic, communal, and personal levels of analyses, they all offer a certain degree of hope for dismantling systemic racism and white supremacy during pandemic times. Further and importantly, they articulate a place for theologians and ministers in global conversations on injustice. Finally, the Editorial Board has provided a pastoral reflection on Pope Francis’s *Fratelli tutti*, identifying how the themes of welcoming the stranger might resonate in our current conversations.

This issue represents a beginning; it is a hopeful acknowledgment that we construct new horizons, and we realize our future. The work of resistance and regeneration will never be over, but our theology and faith can ground us in distinct approaches to addressing social issues and disrupting oppressive systems. This work is necessarily collaborative, as each of us possesses revelatory understandings of the perceived world for mutual interpretation and contemplation. Like the sunsets that we at JST are blessed with every day, may we always seek to experience beauty amongst the mystery, to find solace in ephemeral presence, and to see God on the horizon, as briefly gorgeous as this clarity can be.