



**BOSTON COLLEGE**  
CENTER FOR CHRISTIAN-JEWISH LEARNING

May 16, 2023

It is with great joy that I accepted the role as Director of the Center for Christian-Jewish Learning last year. Reflecting on all that has transpired since, I feel a sense of privilege and honor to serve in this capacity. I consider myself a product of the Center, having learned with Ruth Langer and Philip Cunningham and engaging with the Center's programming while I was a doctoral student at Boston College. Through the stewardship of Phil, Ruth, and James Bernauer, I had the fortune of returning to Boston College to find the Center to be thriving and vibrant. This past year has involved working with Ruth Langer and Camille Markey to utilize this firm foundation to expand and refine the Center's programming.

This program year had a strong showcase of speakers and events. Kendall Soulen gave our annual John Paul II lecture and Dara Horn spoke for our Yom Ha-Shoah commemoration. Our Jewish-Christian Lecture Series, which brings prominent speakers into courses at Boston College, included Susannah Heschel, Rebecca Carter-Chand, and Kevin Spicer. We also hosted other speakers, including Barbara Meyers and Emma Polyakov. We have embraced the technological possibilities learned during the pandemic. Most of our events are now both in person and livestreamed, with these videos available via our website and YouTube channel. Aside from our already robust attendance at public events, we gain an extra level of engagement through our online presence.

We have continued to pursue partnerships with other centers at Boston College. This includes deepening our partnership with Fr. Mark Massa, S.J. and the Boisi Center for Religion and American Public Life. We also hosted an event with the Center for Ignatian Spirituality and continue to collaborate with the Jewish Studies program in hosting events. We also partnered with external groups. Notably, the Center is now a partner with similar entities at St. Joseph's University, the Gregorian Pontifical University and the University of Salzburg for a project on the meaning of the Jewishness of Jesus. In addition, the Center hosted a summer program with Yad VaShem.

The Center discovered a new form of partnership this year in its collaboration with the Miller Center for Interreligious Learning at Hebrew College, under the leadership of Rabbi Or Rose. Together we will serve as co-hosts this coming June for the 2023 conference of the International Council of Christians and Jews on the theme of "Negotiating Multiple Identities: Implications for Interreligious Relations." We are looking forward to the plenary sessions and workshops for this conference and are hopeful that it bears much fruit for the field of Jewish-Christian relations and the work of the Center.

The Corcoran Visiting Chair is a flagship element of our programming. This year we were grateful to have Dr. Frans van Liere of Calvin University with us in this position. Dr. van Liere is an accomplished scholar of medieval biblical exegesis. He shared his scholarship with the Center and

other faculty at Boston College through a variety of presentations over the course of the year, along with teaching a graduate level course on medieval exegesis. Dr. van Liere designed an excellent Corcoran Chair Conference on Jewish and Christian exegetical practices in the medieval era. Arrangements are currently under way for the proceedings of this conference to be published. You can read more about Dr. van Liere's time at the Center in his own report in this communication. We wish him well in his future endeavors and know he remains a friend of the Center. Next academic year we are looking forward to welcoming Dr. Jonathan Decter of Brandeis University to serve as the Corcoran Chair.

Our student internship program continues to thrive. Last year's intern, Dennis Wieboldt, successfully published his research on the interreligious work of William J. Kenealy, SJ in *American Catholic Studies*. We wish him well as he begins his studies in a dual PhD/JD program at the University of Notre Dame. This academic year we welcome Owen Fletcher (Class of 2025) as he researches Christian and Jewish responses to migration in the United States. We are grateful to Fr. Massa for his advising of both students.

This academic year I taught both introductory and upper-level courses on Jewish-Christian relations. For the fall semester I taught "Judaism and Christian in Dialogue." This course fulfills one of the undergraduate requirements in Theology. Teaching this course was an exciting way to introduce students to the dynamic study of Jewish-Christian relations. I taught an upper-level course on "Antisemitism, Racism, and Christian Nationalism." This course charted a genealogy of our current political and social climate through developments in the Christian West around race, antisemitism, and the power of the state. Students reported that this was a revelatory and eye-opening class for them. I am currently developing my courses next year, including one on Jewish and Christian readings of the Bible co-taught with Dr. Langer.

In terms of my own scholarship, I am currently working on the intersection of liturgy and Jewish-Christian relations. Born out of my work in preparing an alternate rite for Good Friday in the Episcopal Church, I have published two articles on the role of liturgical experience for comparative theology and how to incorporate issues in Jewish-Christian relations when considering liturgical revisions. I hope to soon begin a full-length book on the latter topic.

A significant aspect of the work of the Center is to engage outside entities locally and nationally. I worked with a number of organizations, especially around the topic of counteracting rising antisemitism. A highlight of this work was representing the Center for an event at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library where Second Gentleman Doug Emhoff was the featured guest. I have begun a term of service for the Committee on Ethics, Religion, and the Holocaust of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, which extends public awareness of the need to resist antisemitism. I delivered talks on issues in Jewish-Christian relations at Fairfield University, at the annual meeting of the Council of Centers for Christian-Jewish Relations, and at Temple Beth El in San Antonio, TX. As an aspect of my work in liturgical issues, I spoke on the issue of anti-Judaism and lectionary readings to the Consultation on Common Texts, which oversees the Revised Common Lectionary used by many Protestant churches.

This report offers a sense of the wide-ranging work that the Center for Christian-Jewish Learning has done over the past calendar year. This work is only possible because of the dedication

of past leaders of the Center. I am profoundly grateful for their work, and I am looking forward to continuing to build upon it.

Sincerely,

Daniel Joslyn-Siemiatkoski, Ph.D.  
Kraft Family Professor  
Director, Center for Christian-Jewish Learning