

Department of Catholic Studies

Spring 2019

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Special Interest Articles

--Meet the Faculty



--Michael Higgins on David Adams Richards



--Student Voices



From the Chair

I am delighted to present this second publication of the Catholic Studies Newsletter, and my many thanks to June Ann Greeley and Brent Little, without whom this Newsletter would not happen. The Department has had another full and exciting year. In this Newsletter we include some comments from our students in the CIT Seminars to showcase their experience in the Seminars. We are also offering our first Catholic Studies interdisciplinary seminar: "Springsteen, Scorsese, and SHU: Catholic Thought and the Contemporary Culture." The course is an exciting exploration of the intersection of Catholic thought and imagination and the contemporary culture from the 1960's to the present. As part of this course, we will be inviting CIT faculty and students to attend the Andy Warhol Exhibit at the Whitney Museum. CS will host two CIT Salons this year, one with Dr. Peter Warrian who spoke with us about Artificial Intelligence and the work of Pope Francis. The second Salon will host Dr. Mark Roche, from the University of Notre Dame, who will speak with us on the religion, faith, and the intellectual life. Our annual Bergoglio Lecture will feature Fr. John O'Malley, S.J., Professor of Theology at Georgetown University, and expert on Vatican II history. Fr. O'Malley will speak on "The Current Crisis: Thoughts and Historical Perspectives" on February 6th. CS also hosted a Human Journey Colloquium led by our CIT Faculty on the Sex Abuse Crisis in the Church. Another very special colloquium was given by Dr. Roosevelt Montas, Director of the Great Books Core at Columbia University. He spoke on the importance of reading and reflecting on the great books and big ideas to developing knowledgeable citizens for a democratic world. Finally, I am also excited to report that the Department of Catholic Studies was awarded a Lilly Regional Collaborative Grant to offer a conference in April 2020. We will be collaborating with colleagues from Seton Hall University to sponsor an academic conference: "The Catholic Intellectual Tradition: Challenges and Opportunities for the Catholic University in the 21st Century." Our CIT Faculty continue to research, publish, present and most of all remain dedicated to the pedagogy and curriculum of the CIT Seminars facilitating conversation and reflection with our students on great books and big ideas and their lives and the world in which they live. ~ Dr. Michelle Loris



Meet the CS Faculty: Barbara Benjamini

Teaching was not Prof. Benjamini's original career goal: she wanted to become a journalist and travel the world. Barbara Walters was her idol when she stepped forward as the first network news "anchorette." In the heyday of the 60's, Prof. Benjamini interrupted her undergraduate studies at the University of Bridgeport to spend 18 months on Kibbutz Revivim, a commune in the Negev desert of Israel. Golda Meir's daughter, Sarah, was her Hebrew teacher. She wore work boots and ploughed potatoes. Socialism was hard work.

She returned home (married) to the University of Bridgeport to complete both a B.A. in English Literature with a minor in Secondary Education and an M.A. in English Literature with focus on Mark Twain and Arthur Miller. Her teaching certificate led me to the Darien School System where she published instructional materials and taught ninth grade: Noam Chomsky's now obsolete transformational grammar, writing, literature and film. She then left teaching to raise a family of four children.

Prof. Benjamini credits Dr. Michelle Loris as a mentor and friend for her entire college teaching career. With Sacred Heart's expansion of the core curriculum and the development of the Catholic Intellectual Tradition courses have come exciting changes, Benjamini says. Under Dr. Loris's guidance, Benjamini and her colleague, Janine Lane, produced an online course sequence for CIT 201-202, specifically designed for nursing cohort sections. Professional nurses register nationwide at SHU to achieve an online B.S. degree now required for continued employment. They respond well to the CIT material, especially the concept of social responsibility, a complement to their nursing vows.

Prof. Benjamini says that her professional experience in business and communication has shaped her belief that the seminar approach is the closest we come to creating a nurturing environment for learning among colleagues. Teaching the Catholic Intellectual Tradition has become her most challenging and rewarding teaching assignment to date, she says, and she finds herself reaching into her personal Jewish DNA (Ancestry.com certified!) to educate herself to the depth and meaning of myriad connections within the Judeo-Christian Intellectual Tradition. As a result, Benjamini concludes, the journey becomes personal as well as pedagogical.

Erica Murphy

Dr. Erica Murphy lives in Monroe, CT and joined the CS faculty with an M. Div. and PhD in Theology from Drew University, as well as with a Master of Arts in English from the University of New Mexico. Dr. Murphy describes her doctorate studies as: "... interdisciplinary. My dissertation drew from the areas of biblical studies, philosophy, and church history as well as theology. I had a love for antiquity in particular because many of those thinkers had an openness to mystery that I found intriguing. Exploring the way the early church thought about God and cosmology helped get me in touch with my own sense of awe and wonder." Dr. Murphy has enjoyed teaching in the CIT seminars because "they bring together the best things I enjoy about teaching: experience and community. When you're teaching a seminar, the highest value is not in the content, but in the experience that the students have in that space. There's a lot of potential there, and when the students participate in that experience of community they start to bring out the best in each other. It's especially rewarding to see that happen as they explore the fundamental questions that the CIT raises. For me, there's nothing more important or profound than the journey of self discovery. Our culture doesn't offer many spaces for self-reflection, so I believe it's vital to give students tools for thinking about who they are, who they want to be, and how to foster a connect to something bigger than themselves."

She goes on to say that she has found a wonderful collaborative spirit in the Catholic Studies Department and in her work in the seminars, she has found that "...seminar pedagogy is a continual practice of letting go: letting go of the need to be the expert in the room, to "fix" conversations that go silent, or to protect students from discomfort. The CIT claims and questions aren't simply theoretical, they are alive right there in the classroom. We're experiencing together what it means to be a human, which can range from profound to awkward and many places in between. The way we treat each other in the classroom is also a living model of what we as a group define as a "common good" or a "just community..." and she hopes continually to hone her skills as a seminar facilitator of deeper self-reflection among all participants.

Joan Marie Kelly



Dr. Joan Marie Kelly is a native of Massachusetts and first arrived in Connecticut as a freshman at Saint Joseph College in West Hartford where she received her undergraduate degree. She obtained her master's degree in theology from the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. and a doctorate in pastoral ministry (D.Min.) from the Graduate Theological Foundation at Notre Dame, Indiana. She did further study in Rome, the Catholic University of Louvain, Belgium, and Cambridge University.

Having worked in pastoral, administrative and teaching positions in the Diocese of Bridgeport for over thirty years most notably as Diocesan Director of Religious Education and on the faculty at St John Fisher Seminary in Stamford, Joan's academic focus was on the liturgical life of the Church, the historical development of the sacraments, leading the laity and especially catechists and teachers in Catholic Schools to a fuller understanding and appreciation of the role of the sacraments in Catholic life and practice.

Dr. Kelly loves the subject matter of the Catholic Intellectual Tradition because it addresses the Ultimate Questions of Life (Who Am I? What Am I Here For? Where Am I Going?) and engages students to ponder these questions in a compelling way. A best practice she employs is ending each class by asking the students to think about how the material relates to their lives now! She appreciates the cooperation and respect received from all of the students in her classes and keeps in mind that each pupil has a unique life history that can contribute to the overall good of the entire group.

When people inquire about Catholic Identity at Sacred Heart University Dr. Kelly quickly points out the required courses of the CIT as well as the University's emphasis on the compatibility of faith and reason. She encourages people to walk the campus and discover the many buildings named after the various luminaries of the CIT (Augustine, Aquinas, Newman, etc. etc.). Dr. Kelly received the Papal Cross from Pope John Paul II in recognition of her commitment to the teaching mission of the Church.

Jennifer Reek

Dr. Jennifer Reek earned a PhD from the University of Glasgow, Scotland after earning a M. Div. from the University of Toronto-Regis College, a Jesuit institution. Prior to her life in the academy, Dr. Reek had worked in journalism, including writing for the *National Geographic* magazine in Washington, D.C. Dr. Reek became intrigued with the works and decisions that emerged from Vatican II which spoke to the need for spiritual renewal and greater recognition of the laity. Her dissertation (recently published in book form) addressed a similar concern in its exploration of the spaces of believers. She was invited to contribute to the book *Visions and Vocations*, part of *Catholic Women Speak*, a project that is devoted to giving women greater prominence and a voice in Catholic ecclesial polity.

In her seminars, Dr. Reek approaches the study of the great texts in the CIT both from a close reading of the texts and from the personal explorations and encounters of her students, creating, as she says, "a shared journey" in the classroom.

Department Scholarship: Publications and Conferences

Dan Rober

Publications:

"Grace and the Secular: Reading Charles Taylor Through Henri de Lubac" in *Philosophy and Theology* 30, no. 1 (2018)

"Catholic Theological Anthropology, Capital, and Secularization: Reassessing the Patterns in Light of 21st-Century Conditions" in *Journal of Religion and Society Supplement* 17 (2018).

"Christianity after the Eclipse of Grace: John Henry Newman and Charles Taylor's Secular Age" in *John Henry Newman and the Crisis of Modernity*, edited by Brian W. Hughes and Danielle Nussberger, 2018.

Conferences:--need dates

- American Academy of Religion – "The Communio School's Failure of Nerve and the Legacy of 1968" (November 2018)
- College Theology Society – "Sex and Secularity in Post-1968 Catholicism: Beyond Cognitive Dissonance" (June 2018)
- The Idea of the Catholic University in the 21st Century (Loyola Marymount University) – "Renewing Christian Humanism: Catholic Higher Education Beyond Anthropocentrism and Technological Anti-Humanism" (March 2018)

Stephen Meawad

Publications:

Article accepted for publication in *Modern Theology*. "Sexuality, Angelification, and Divine Indwelling: A Contemporary Ethic of Early Christian Asceticism." *Modern Theology* (2019).

Book chapter accepted for publication. "Liturgy as Ethicizer: The Development of a Coptic Liturgical Ethos and Its Contribution to Ecological Ethics." In *Christian Theology and the Modern Sciences*, edited by John P. Slattery. London: Bloomsbury/T&T Clark, 2020.

"Unveiling Dialogue and Criticism as Social Virtues in Pluralistic America through the Context of American Coptic Christians." *The Alexandria School Journal: Agora University Press* 4 (2017): 24-44.

Review of *Technology and the Virtues: A Philosophical Guide to a Future Worth Wanting*, by Shannon Valor. *Religious Studies Review*. (2018).

Conferences:

Society of Christian Ethics Conference Presentation, Louisville, Kentucky (January 2019): "Gregory of Nyssa's Theory of Perpetual Ascent and Its Implications for Virtue Ethics"

Brent Little

Conference Presentation: "A Dialogue with L'Arche: Grace, Hospitality, and Church." Annual Convention of the Catholic Theological Society of America. Indianapolis, IN, June 9, 2018.

Jennifer Reek

Publications

Two poems: 'Job's Wife' and 'The Elephants'. Online literary journal *Amethyst Review: New Writing Engaging with the Sacred*. (Sept. 2018)

Co-editor, with Francesca Bugliani Knox, the fourth volume of the 'Power of the Word' project, an international, interdisciplinary group of scholars (theologians, philosophers, poets, literary theorists) committed to organizing conferences and publishing in 'literature and theology' since 2011. This volume will consist of essays and poems originating in a conference on 'Wonder' that took place in Rome in June 2015: *The Power of the Word International Conference IV, 'Thresholds of Wonder: Poetry, Philosophy and Theology in Conversation'*, Pontifical University of St. Anselm. Forthcoming from Routledge.

Conferences:

- 'Attending to the "Inside": Hidden Terrains of Resistance in Authoritarian Regimes', at *Terra Incognita: A Convivium Literary Gathering*, sponsored by the Revolution of Tenderness and Pittsburgh Christian Studies, University of Pittsburgh (Nov. 2018)
- Chaired a panel: 'Reflections in a Time of Crisis—Power, Abuse and Sexuality,' with panelists Astrid Lobo Gajiwala (India), Nontando Hadebe (Southern Africa), Ursula Halligan (Ireland), Celia Wexler (USA) at the *Catholic Women Speak Symposium and Book Launch for Visions and Vocations* at the Pontifical University Antonianum, Rome. (October 2018)

Student Voices: The CIT Seminars

Throughout the class discussions (CIT 201), my knowledge about intellect has grown tremendously. It has made me become aware that God is present in every aspect of our lives, through the good and struggles. Talking with my peers about this topic has made me connect with my faith into developing a stronger sense of God. I have enjoyed CIT and look forward to continuing this study in CIT 202 next semester. -- *Olivia Banks*

This CIT seminar has allowed me to become closer to my faith, and see what God has to offer to me in my own personal journey. I believe everyone should have the opportunity to read the great works we have read this semester, as they test you to reflect and think about your own life, journey, and inner soul. My all-time favorite work we have read in this class is St. Augustine's Confessions, which allowed us to reflect on our own personal struggles and our journey towards human flourishing and happiness. St. Augustine made me realize the importance of perseverance, and the truth we can find in God.-- *Paige Larkin*

CIT opened my mind and enhanced my view on life and its purpose, my spirituality, and my overall human journey. This course opened my eyes to dive into the roots of one's actions, and discover and reflect the reasoning behind them. I've strengthened my perspective on the world- seen, heard, and unseen- around me through studying works from Plato and Dante to Genesis and St. Augustine. CIT helped push me to develop my character and existential ideals and carry them throughout all aspects of my life.-- *Devin Gavigan*

I truly believe that the CIT Seminar challenged me to think critically about many different ideas and questions presented in the Great Books. Reflecting upon these big ideas and profound questions such as "what does it mean to be human?" and "what constitutes living a good life of meaning and purpose?" gave me the opportunity to grow in self- awareness and understanding of the world around me. Plato's "Allegory of the Cave" stresses the importance of education in turning the soul towards the light of truth, beauty, and goodness. This class opened my eyes to a way of thinking and reflecting that I have never experienced before, which has given me the power to transcend towards the light of God that Plato speaks of. I have learned something extremely valuable from this CIT Seminar and I hope to share the light of truth, beauty, and goodness with the rest of the world. I am confident that this new knowledge will remain with me for the rest of my life and push me to flourish as an individual in both my personal life and professional career.~ *Julia Scherer*

My experience in CIT Seminar was extremely positive and beneficial in helping me grow as an individual. In this class, I was able to voice my thoughts to my peers and hear their opinions about big topics, such as faith versus reason. It also helped me to reflect on my own life and how my life is a human journey and relates to many of the authors we have discussed throughout the semester. - *Julianna DiMartini*

Arriving at my CIT class at 8am on Monday morning, the very first day of my very first semester here at Sacred Heart University has wound up being a very fulfilling experience for me. The students in the room would be the first classmates I'd meet. The first conversation would be essential in setting the tone for the rest of that first day, week, and semester even. What I credit most to this class for helping to propel me academically here at Sacred Heart is the diversity of the students in the class and the enlightening conversations which we would dive into together. The philosophical and spiritual connotations explored through The Great Books in the Catholic Intellectual Tradition have a deeply rich application to my core business curriculum and entices a more conceptual approach to learning, I believe. I feel that I finished this course with a unique connection to the other students whom I had the pleasure of experiencing this alongside and am grateful for every moment of it. - *Eric Sippin*



While Sacred Heart University has many majors that are career focused, like Business or Nursing, the core curriculum requirement of the CIT gives each student a chance to find themselves at a time in life when this is so crucial. The lessons learned here transcend through all aspects of life, and through every focused major studied here. By promoting the study of these great books and encouraging students to be eternally questioning, Sacred Heart University is not only preparing students for a future job but is developing the whole human to live a moral and just life through a deeper and more clear human experience. - *Meghan Briggs*

From an instructor's perspective



Teaching in the CIT Seminar is one of the most valuable and rewarding things I do at SHU. Working more closely with students on their academic journeys, and having the chance to engage them in their very own Human Journeys, for me, is a great privilege. It gives perspective to everything I do as an administrator and is a constant reminder of why the other things I do are so important. I have enjoyed, immensely, my time working with Fr. Ciorra and our students and being reminded of what the great texts of the Catholic intellectual tradition have to say to us today.

Michael L. Iannazzi, M. Div., is the VP for Marketing and Communications at SHU and has been an instructor of the CIT seminars from the inception of the program.

CS Faculty and the Common Good: Kirsten Nestro and buildOn

Twelve members of SHU's buildOn chapter went on "trek" to Senegal in January 2019 to begin construction of a primary school in partnership with local community members. Students lived and worked alongside host families. In addition to their travel costs, the students raised the \$35,000 necessary to fund the building of the school. Last year, students began construction of a school in a community in Western Nepal. Community members completed the school in March, and the school is now fully operating. The SHU buildOn community team is dedicated to buildOn's mission and actively works to break the cycle of poverty, illiteracy and low expectations through service and education. The club is advised by Professors Nestro (CIT, TRS) and Stiltner (TRS). Professor Nestro participated in the first trek to Nepal in January 2018. "Across the globe, almost twenty percent of adults cannot read or write. Two-thirds of those are women," said Nestro. "My host mom in Nepal said, 'Even though I cannot read or write, I still have big dreams for my children.' As a team, we learned about the power of big dreams. SHU students join buildOn because they believe in the power of education to fuel these dreams."

Chapter members also actively volunteer in our local community. The buildOn students recently hosted the third annual Amnesty International Write for Rights Day in partnership with the Central and Bassick High School chapters of buildOn. Professors Nestro and Stiltner are continually amazed by the dedication, energy and commitment of the buildOn team members. Nestro said, "The students' work with buildOn connects deeply with the fourth claim of the CIT as they are actively working to form a more just society by increasing access to education."



Catholic Studies Faculty attend Dante Conference

- by Joe Nagy

Teaching Dante's Divine Comedy

Three Sacred Heart University faculty and one of their students attended a conference on teaching Dante's Divine Comedy on Oct. 25-27 at Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama. The conference, entitled "Teaching the Christian Intellectual Tradition," was sponsored by the Lilly Foundation. It focused on teaching the Divine Comedy in an interdisciplinary course in a core curriculum.

June-Ann Greeley, associate professor of Theology; Nathan Lewis, associate professor of Art; and Joe Nagy, instructor of Catholic Studies, formed a panel entitled "Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Teaching and Studying Dante's 'Divine' Commedia." Their participation in the conference came as a result of being awarded the first Dean's Interdisciplinary Teaching Grant, which led to their teaching an interdisciplinary honors seminar on the Divine Comedy in Spring 2018. "Without Dean Cautin's generous assistance, we would not have been able to teach the course," said Prof. Nagy.

Dr. Greeley's paper was entitled, "The "Better Waters" of the "Second Kingdom": Teaching Dante's Purgatorio in the Contemporary College Classroom."

Prof. Nagy's paper was, "Teaching Dante's Beatrice: The Transformative Power of Love."

They were joined by Sacred Heart junior Tyler Lascola, an English major who was a student in the Dante honors seminar. They were so impressed by one of Lascola's papers, "The Tender Turn: Ambivalence toward Brunetto Latini and Homosexuality in Inferno XV," that they invited him to present it in the panel. He was the only undergraduate participant at the conference.

The conference's keynote speaker, Albert Ascoli, Distinguished Professor of Italian Studies at the University of California at Berkeley, attended the SHU presentation, and afterwards praised Lascola's paper, encouraging him to go on to graduate studies in Dante.

"That a Dante scholar of Ascoli's stature – he is president of the Dante Society of America – singled out one of our students for praise was fantastic," said Prof. Nagy. Afterwards Lascola said, "The entire conference was enthralling. There were so many illuminating presentations, and I was honored to have been a part of one of them."

The conference was particularly relevant for Sacred Heart, since the Divine Comedy is a core text in Sacred Heart's year-long foundational core course, "The Human Journey: Great Books in the Catholic Intellectual Tradition." Said Dr. Greeley, "The conference was a marvelous occasion of celebrating one of the greatest poets of the CIT and of engaging in inspiring, creative conversations with like-minded colleagues--Danteans all!--from across the U.S."



Joe Nagy, June-Ann Greeley, Tyler LaScola and Nathan Lewis at Dante Conference sponsored by the Lilly Foundation.

Highlight: January Human Journey Colloquium

The movement for Jesus was always from the outside in. His message was always one of inclusion, communicated through speaking to people, healing them, and offering them what biblical scholars call "table fellowship," that is, dining with them, a sign of welcome and acceptance in first-century Palestine. In fact, Jesus was often criticized for this practice. But Jesus's movement was about inclusion. He was creating a sense of "us." ~ Fr. James Martin

The Office of Mission & Catholic Identity and
the *Human Journey* Colloquia Series

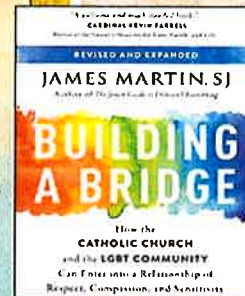
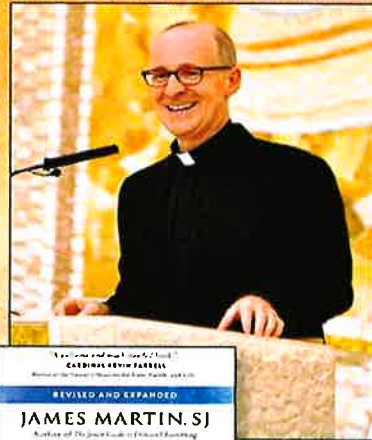
P R E S E N T

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James Martin, S.J. *Showing Respect and Welcome in the Church to LGBT People*

Tuesday, January 29, at 7 p.m.
Chapel of the Holy Spirit

Fr. James Martin is a Jesuit priest, editor at large of *America* magazine and an internationally known bestselling author. He has written for many publications, including the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*, and he is a regular commentator in the national and international media. In 2017, Pope Francis appointed him a Consultor for the Vatican's Dicastery for Communication. Fr. Martin will sign copies of his latest book, *Building a Bridge: How the Catholic Church and the LGBT Community Can Enter into a Relationship of Respect, Compassion, and Sensitivity* following the talk. Books will be available for purchase.



Sacred Heart
UNIVERSITY

Dr. Mark Roche Colloquium

The 2019 Hesburgh Lecture Series, the Human Journey Colloquia Series and the Department of Catholic Studies present "Religion and Intellectuals" on Thursday, March 14, at 7 p.m. in the Schine Auditorium.

The guest speaker will be Mark W. Roche, the Rev. Edmund P. Joyce, C.S.C., Professor of German Language and Literature and Concurrent Professor of Philosophy at the University of Notre Dame. He teaches courses in German language, literature, and culture as well as in intellectual history, philosophy, and film. He also offers broader courses, such as the two-semester Humanities Seminar, which takes students in the Fall from Homer to Dante and in the Spring from Machiavelli to Woody Allen, and the College Seminar, which is oral-intensive, explores great questions, and draws on the arts, humanities, and social sciences.

In 2013 Roche received the Joyce Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching and in 2006 the Kaneb Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching.

His publications have been on German literature and on philosophy, film, and higher education. Roche is the author of nine books, including *Why Choose the Liberal Arts?* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2010), which received the 2012 Frederic W. Ness Book Award from the Association of American Colleges and Universities. That publication will be the focus of a CIT Salon for CS faculty prior to Dr. Roche's lecture.

Dr. Roche will address the tensions that seem to exist in the academy and elsewhere: Why do so many educated persons lose their faith? What arguments seem to speak against religion and how are these arguments to be weighed? The presentation considers these issues along with the questions: What paths to religion exist for the educated person? And which seem to be the most promising?

Dr. Roche's lecture is co-sponsored by the University of Notre Dame's Hesburgh Lecture Series and the Notre Dame Club of Fairfield County

Contemporary Catholic Voices

Rebel with a Cause: The Religious Landscapes of David Adams Richards

~ Michael W. Higgins, Distinguished Professor of Catholic Thought, Sacred Heart University

Canada's most demonstrably Catholic writer, and increasingly a fixture on lists of Nobel nominees in literature, David Adams Richards is the author of a number of award-winning novels—*Nights Below Station Street*, *Mercy Among the Children*, and *The Friends of Meager Fortune*—as well as several celebrated nonfiction works, including *Lines on the Water: A Fisherman's Life on the Miramichi*. A Canadian hybrid of Thomas Hardy, Leo Tolstoy, and William Faulkner, Richards is a prolific writer whose work conveys a haunting mix of fatalism, moral gravitas, and tragic heroism. His fictive landscape is the naturally idyllic, economically ravaged, and morally contorted world of northern New Brunswick. Born in 1950 in Newcastle, Richards retains a deep attachment to the people and places of his youth. His fiction brims with outrage over the economic devastation visited on the rural population of New Brunswick—one of the “have not” provinces in Canada—and with contempt for the corporate mandarins whose mining, forestry, and fishing investments rule the region. Richards spent several years studying at St. Thomas University in Fredericton, but left without a degree, taking a variety of menial jobs while sharpening his persona as rebel and nonconformist. Out of this period came *Blood Ties* (1976), a work the eminent critic, poet, and editor Fred Cogswell once called the greatest novel ever written in New

Brunswick. It captures a world caught in the vortex of radical change with all its disruptions, uncertainties, and social casualties. Since then, the prolific Richards has written dozens of novels, short stories, poetry, and screenplays, amassing an ever-mounting commercial and critical success in Canada.

Tony Tremblay notes that “Richards is obsessed with the menace of power in society, a menace which he sees as perpetually conspiring to destroy the individual's interior search for God.”

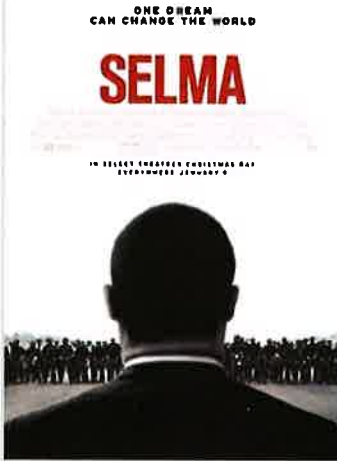
Faith in his own life, (Richards) confesses, has never kept him safe from sin or personal failure; but it has led him away “from what I once believed in, that liberty was bought with power, and toward a more astonishing recognition of the sacred in our midst.”

In the end, David Adams Richards's search for the sacred in our midst—for faith in a secular world—brings him back to his fiction. It is fiction that will save him, he knows, not metaphysics, not theology, not argument or rhetoric. As for his characters, scorched by the fires of their own personal hells, they too will taste something of the life-restoring water which is the Life, Richards writes, that “made the lame walk, and, yes, the blind see.”



“A quintessentially Catholic writer, Richards incarnates rather than reifies; he identifies sin for what it is, understanding that genuine freedom is spiritual at heart.”
~ Michael Higgins

Catholic Studies Film Series: Spring 2019



SELMA

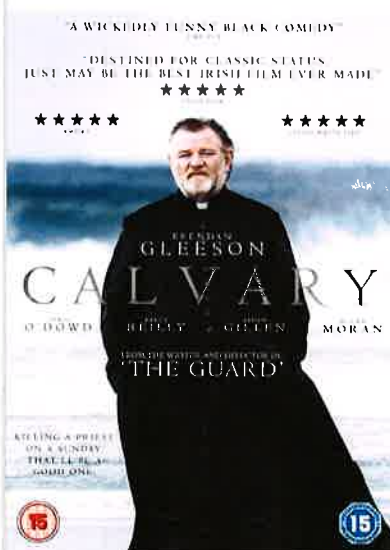
Thursday January 24 6:30pm Schine

On January 24, the Department of Catholic Studies honored Martin Luther King, Jr. with a showing of *Selma* (2014). King's famous "A Letter from the Birmingham Jail" is required reading for our CIT 202 seminars, and the story of *Selma* serves as a sequel of sorts to King's "Letter," for students were able to view how King's fight for justice continued in the years after his imprisonment at Birmingham.

CALVARY

Tuesday, February 26 7:00pm Schine

On February 26, the Department of Catholic Studies presented a screening of the 2014 award-winning film from Ireland, "*Calvary*," an unflinching portrait of a small Irish village and the damage, both direct and collateral, caused by the abuse crisis roiling the universal Church. The film is a nuanced study of a good priest who tries to negotiate the needs of his dwindling congregation as the Church lies in ashes (both literally and figuratively) about him and it asks students to ponder questions that are part of their study in the CIT: what is human dignity? what is the common good? what is the place of forgiveness in contemporary society? Can justice and mercy achieve the same ends?



SILENCE

Thursday, March 28 6:30pm Schine

On Thursday, March 28 at 6:30 pm, the Catholic Studies Department will present the 2016 film "Silence", directed by Martin Scorsese and based on the 1966 novel by Shusako Endo. The film is based loosely on historical accounts of two 17th-century Portuguese Jesuits, Father Sebastian Rodrigues and Father Francisco Garupe, who travel to Japan to find their missing mentor. While there, the two men encounter Japanese Christian villagers who must worship in secret or face death. The film engages questions about religious identity, truth, faith and commitment, and the wages of unjust persecution.

ANDREW GARFIELD ADAM DRIVER and LIAM NEESON



DECEMBER

JAY COCKS • MARTIN SCORSESE • MARTIN SCORSESE