

SECTION 5. Our Program History 2002 – 2017

2016 / 2017

Movie “Spotlight” and Presentation by Walter Robinson of the Boston Globe Spotlight Team

Sep. 26 and Oct. 3, 2016

The movie "Spotlight" attracted 65-70 people, with some in attendance who reported not having come to church since the scandal broke. **Spotlight** is the Academy Award winning movie about the Boston Archdiocese's efforts to conceal child abuse by clergy, and the Boston Globe Spotlight Team and its successful exposure of the scandal.

Walter Robinson, who was the Spotlight Team Editor at the Boston Globe for this story, spoke the following Monday on the topic. **Walter V. Robinson** is a [Pulitzer Prize](#)-winning investigative reporter for [The Boston Globe](#), where he has worked as reporter and editor for 34 years. From 2007 to 2014, he was a Distinguished Professor of Journalism at Northeastern University in Boston. Robinson currently holds the title of [Editor-at-Large](#) at the *Boston Globe*. The turnout for his presentation was enormous, numbering 147 people.

The Hidden and Long-Term Effects of War

October 17, 2016

Margot Carlson-Delogne was a good speaker for her cause, and her fledgling documentary put the idea home as she presented on understanding the long-

lasting and often unnoticed effects of war, and the healing process, with the example of Vietnam. It was good to see that the participants in the 2Sides Program overcame their hatred of "the enemy" and reached out to each other. You get a whole new idea of what is really bad about war, including a lasting hatred between the previously warring nations.

Ms. Carlson Delogne is the executive director and founder of the 2Sides Project, and presented portions of her documentary. The background was the Vietnam War, and our experience since then, including the point of view of children who lost a parent in the war, the positions taken by governments, and those of the communities involved.

Biblical Literary Criticism – Is the Bible “True?”

November 7, 2016

Presenter: Deacon Laurence J. Bloom

Why do different parts of the Bible say opposite things? Why do some parts sound like fables? How do we base our faith on what sometimes appear to be made-up stories? The main thrust of this presentation was on how to read the Bible so it makes a lot more sense, by understanding literary forms and historical settings, instead of depending on Fundamentalism. The Catholic Church has been calling on its scholars to assist the believers with this effort since the 1940s, but beyond telling people that it's OK to believe it took longer than six days to create the universe, little seems to have sunk in about what people should believe if they are not required to believe what is actually written. This evening was a very brief introduction to what the scholars have uncovered. Deacon Larry kept it light and interesting. It was reportedly extremely well organized, crammed with cogent information, leavened with humor and delivered with aplomb.

Eileen Markey, Author

“A Radical Faith: The Assassination of Sister Maura”

November 14, 2016

On December 2, 1980, Sister Maura Clarke and three other women were stopped by El Salvador's brutal US-trained National Guard at a checkpoint set specifically for them. On that night the National Guardsmen kidnapped, raped and killed them. Their discarded bodies were left by the side of a remote dirt road.

Investigative journalist Eileen Markey breathed life back into one of these women in **A Radical Faith**, the riveting biography of Maryknoll Sister Maura Clarke. Ms. Markey came to Saint Susanna to tell us that story.

"Eileen Markey's beautifully told narrative reminds us of Maura's courage in the face of brutal dictators and shocking suffering. It's an important story that has been forgotten for too long, and Markey's book returns Maura to her deserved place in history." -**Martin Sheen**

Ms. Markey's presentation went well. The interest level was high. Eileen took a while laying the foundation for her talk by reading from her book, but the event took off when she started speaking extemporaneously and during the Q&A period. Several people who were very familiar with the historical events in El Salvador at the time were present, and appeared new to Saint Susanna's, including a Latin American Study Group.

This was a joint presentation with Saint Susanna Pax Christi Committee, Pat Ferrone, Chair.

Jewish Mysticism and the Kabbalah

November 21, 2016

Presenter: Rabbi Jim Morgan

Mystical experiences have been a part of Jewish tradition from the earliest times, beginning with the bible. They have, however, not always been at the center of much of Jewish practice, which often focused more on practical law (*halakhah*--the Jewish way). Even within streams of Judaism that emphasized mystical experience, including Hasidism, explicit attention to mystical themes was often restricted to men (and a few women) who had already mastered written and oral Torah (i.e., the bible and legal codes based on the Talmud). This limitation is the basis of the well-known rule that people learn Kabbalah (one of the Jewish terms for the mystical tradition) only after the age of 40. Mistrust and even disdain for mysticism grew during the 20th century, with its emphasis on rationality in all things, including religion. As interest in spiritual experience across a variety of traditions grows now in the early 21st century (even if Madonna's infatuation with Kabbalah has waned!), Jewish mysticism remains a rich vein of discovery for Jews and non-Jews alike. This session presented a short introduction to the Jewish mystical tradition, drawing on texts from the bible, rabbinic literature, and the medieval texts that form the corpus of Kabbalah. The emphasis was on discovering the texts together rather than on a historical overview. Starting from scratch, which is where Rabbi Jim had to start with our audience with a topic like Kabbalah, is always challenging, and Rabbi Jim did a great job with it. He had actual paper handouts, a treat for those who recall fondly the earlier days of Adult Faith

Formation, before PowerPoint, and the handouts were both useful and interesting. In a sense this was for us a revisiting of the recent program on biblical criticism, but with a centuries-old perspective of rabbinical thinking, trying to tease out more meaning from the scriptures as they appear on paper. Our speaker was likable and kept everyone interested. The Question and Answer period was active and intelligent. All in all, a well-done program.

Rabbi Jim Morgan, who serves as Rabbinic Advisor to the Worship and Study Congregation at Harvard Hillel and as Rabbi and Chaplain at Center Communities of Brookline, holds a Ph.D. from Yale University.

Addiction, Addicts and the Faith Communities

Dec. 5 and 12, 2016

December 5, 2016 – Addiction’s Impact: Families, Communities and Friends.

Is it a disease, moral failing or bad choices? What can we do, does treatment work, what is the treatment, and is there a cure? In Week One Dr. Laura Kehoe of Massachusetts General Hospital, an addiction medicine specialist, and Amy Thomas, RN, who is familiar with the local scene in the Dedham area through the Dedham Coalition for Alcohol and Drug Awareness, presented. The audience figures were remarkable. The students of the Saint Susanna Confirmation Program, grades 9 and 10, were in attendance.

December 12, 2016 – Response of Faith Communities. For Week Two we had great numbers as well. There was a Ted Talk video of about 15 minutes on how most of what we thought we know about addiction was untrue, and the new information was imparted. Then Mike Benedetti and Scott

Schaeffer-Duffy from the Worcester Catholic Worker Houses gave personal witness talks and had some very practical suggestions for the audience on how to deal with addiction and those addicted in a fashion that is consistent with our Faith Tradition. The Q&A session was active and informative, with a very attentive group of listeners. This was an excellent complement to the medical/scientific information of Week One.

The sum and substance of what was brought out included what to look for, where to get help locally, what was available and not available by way of resources, and what was the best way to work with loved ones who were in the clutches of this condition. Much was learned.

The Gospel of John

Jan. 9 and 16, 2017

Presenter: Professor Nathaniel DesRosiers

Again a resounding success for Professor DesRosiers as he laid out the Gospel of John, compared it to the Synoptics, explained its differences, and showed us the Jesus of John. He has a following at Saint Susanna from his previous appearances, and despite bone-chilling cold the first Monday of the series he had large audiences for both sessions. He is enamored of our audience as well, and asked that he be kept on our list for future presentations. It doesn't get any better than this. Perhaps his popularity is explained in part by the fact that he enlists the audience deeply in making his presentation. He asks questions and then makes the absolute most of the answers he gets, such that it appears the audience is teaching themselves. Very few educators can do this well, and he is tops at it. He is Associate Professor in Religious Studies at Stonehill College in Easton, where he teaches courses in Classics, New Testament, and Early Christianity, and Visiting Professor at Brown University.

He received a Master's degree from Harvard University in 1998 and a Ph.D. from Brown University in 2007. His research focuses on the issues of conflict and competition in the ancient world and the social and intellectual developments that helped to create and shape the religious movements and texts of antiquity.

Nuclear Resistance in Word and Deed
A Conversation with –
The Prophet – Sister Megan Rice
The Professor – Elaine Scarry
The Journalist – Dan Zak
January 30, 2017

Sister Megan's story gives witness to her long-time commitment to stand up to nuclear madness by way of civil disobedience, and bear the burden of long periods of imprisonment for her resistance, most recently a years-long sentence at a federal prison. In 2012, at age 82, carrying a backpack and a deeply held conviction that the United States was breaking international law by quietly keeping up a multibillion-dollar nuclear weapons program, she took part in a middle-of-the-night break-in to a high security nuclear facility in Tennessee – an action that was later described as the largest security breach in American atomic history. Rice's non-violent anti-nuclear action, which involved walking through a wooded hill for two hours in the dark, crawling underneath four fences that had been cut through, and avoiding patrol cars, resulted in her being sentenced to almost three years behind bars.

Elaine Scarry is the Walter M. Cabot Professor of Aesthetics and the General Theory of Value at Harvard University. Scarry is the author of eight books, most recently *Thermonuclear Monarchy*. In it, she contends that nuclear weapons eliminate the citizenry and the legislature from the sphere of

decision-making about war. Scarry shows how elements of the US Constitution can be used as tools to abolish nuclear weapons.

“Centering on a single episode, a powerful declaration of conscience, *Washington Post* reporter **Dan Zak** tells an intensely unsettling story about living with our nuclear arsenal. In July 2012, cutting through fences topped with razor wire and avoiding guards, guns, sensors, armored cars, and alarms, an 80-year-old nun, a Vietnam veteran, and a housepainter, all deeply religious, all affiliated with the pacifist Plowshares movement, broke into the Y-12 National Security Complex in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, the "Fort Knox of Uranium."... it's the moral convictions demonstrated by Zak's three holy fools that will remain with readers. A scrupulously reported, gracefully told, exquisitely paced debut.” **–Kirkus (starred review)**

This evening’s event was an outstanding achievement by Saint Susanna Pax Christi Committee. A head count indicated an audience of 114. Veteran staffers estimated that maybe one-quarter of the audience, if that, was from our usual crowd of regular attenders. Many of the audience knew each other and greeted each other warmly as the hall filled up, and without the slightest doubt this was an anti-nuclear crowd. Sister Megan, Dan Zak, and Elaine Scarry all contributed significant information and ideas on the topic of nuclear resistance and networking on the subject. Most compelling was the fact that they somehow found motivation to continue on the mission despite overwhelming odds. Persons without a great deal of faith would have quit long ago. It was very inspiring.

The Evolution of God

February 6, 2017

Presenter: Professor Mary Joan Leith

By popular demand Professor Leith returned to present on the way our understanding of God has grown, and how this is reflected in the Scriptures. Why does God seem almost blood-thirsty in one book of the Bible and kind

and loving in the next book? Her mention of that in a prior appearance at Saint Susanna led to a plea on our part that she return and explain that all to us. It is always a question whether Mary Joan Leith, Chair of Religious Studies at Stonehill College, loves coming here even more than we love having her. She says she finds our audiences a treasure, since they are knowledgeable, committed, willing to listen, open to learning. She has sort of a following of people who do not come to our events that regularly but always show up for her. This evening she charmed and educated us on how the concept of God became more and more clear as centuries went by, and amused us with the still-remaining references to our God as the Storm God, Baal, and the truth that for quite some time God's people were comfortable that He was just one of the gods, the monotheism coming along as ages passed. Another chapter in Biblical Literary Criticism is under our belts.

Heresy in the Twenty-first Century –

Still with Us After All These Years

Feb. 13, 2017

Presenter: Tim Sullivan

Tim Sullivan's intention was for us to leave his talk wondering.

Tim did a fantastic job with his presentation, wasting little time on bizarre differences among religious authorities over the centuries, and homing in on how heresy could be avoided entirely by just concentrating on relationship between oneself and God. He had some good humor, some personal stories, everything thing you need to grab and keep an audience, and the feedback was extremely positive. One of our veteran commission members summed up the evening as follows: "Tim's heresy talk was one of the best homegrown programs in our history. He covered history, biblical sources, theology and personal spiritually with facility, humor and modesty that that kept the audience deeply interested. It was a remarkable and even moving evening."

Tim is the Coordinator of the Tuesday evening Sacred Scripture and Catholic Studies program here at Saint Susanna Parish, the sister program to Adult Faith Formation's Monday evening program.

The Sacraments in the Twenty-first Century

March 6, 2017

Presenter: Father Peter Folan, SJ, PhD Candidate at Boston College School of Theology and Ministry

The Sacraments have not always looked the same over the 2,000 years of the Church's existence. Prior to the start of the Second Vatican Council, much of sacramental theology amounted to little more than the application of the Code of Canon Law to the church's liturgical life. Practically speaking, this meant an outsized reliance on a mechanistic understanding of the sacraments, seeing them almost exclusively through a cause-and-effect lens. It was almost like a set of rigid instructions for assembling a piece of furniture. With the dawn of the 21st century, however, things have changed. Father Folan discussed this change as part of a variety of new ways to think about the sacraments in the church today. He is a very captivating speaker, and has an incredible command of PowerPoint. He also had done his homework, as he constantly used the presentational trick of making a statement and then having it pop up on the screen. He did a wonderful job of showing us that there are far more dimensions to sacraments than we initially think of, although he stopped short of taking us to whether the old requirements about validity are still totally in effect. Those in attendance were quite pleased and the Q&A was a good dialog. Many of us learned a lot. For some the talk they had expected was some kind of intellectual analysis of the sacraments, but the talk we received was directed to our hearts rather than to our minds. Father Nolan did a wonderful job of re-kindling the sense of beauty in the sacramental and also of challenging our intellects as well. That he is a Michelangelo of PowerPoint is just frosting on the cake.

Prior to coming to Boston College, Father Folan held a faculty position at the University of Scranton, and he is a contributor to *America*, the national Jesuit magazine, and The Jesuit Post.

Carmelite Spirituality

March 13, 2017

Presenter: Joanne Mongeon, Ph.D.

Joanne enlightened us on Carmelite Spirituality as a part of our continuing series on meditation and spirituality in different faith systems (e.g., Buddhism, Eastern Centering Prayer). Carmelite Spirituality is Christian Spirituality, and is accessible to all. It centers on prayer, understood as loving friendship with God, and contemplation as a free gift of God. This interactive workshop focused on the source of Carmelite spirituality and the Rule of St. Albert, as well as the writings of the founders of Discalced Carmel, Sts. Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross. To quote Joanne's report: "I felt somewhat technologically challenged going from the Youtube to the Powerpoint and then getting to the Youtube at the end the other night, but I felt good about the presentation on the whole. Various people mentioned enjoying the variety of media, different voices reading from the various saints, and breaking into small groups for discussion. I particularly liked hearing the different voices reading from or about John of the Cross, Therese, Elizabeth and Edith Stein: made us pay attention more or something. Nicer than hearing just my own voice, and people seemed to enjoy the sharing at the tables-- everyone seemed engaged."

Joanne gave a very interesting overview of Carmelite spirituality, Joanne's "grace under pressure" regarding minor technical difficulties and her calm and relaxed manner throughout the presentation helped to keep the audience engaged. The way that she used different readers from the

audience to present the background info on John of the Cross, Therese, etc., was noted with approval. One veteran Commission member commented:

“I enjoyed the small group discussion/faith sharing time because I met someone I had seen at AFF but had never had an opportunity to talk to before. The handouts were very interesting and helpful for generating meaningful discussion.”

Several were left wanting to know more about The Interior Castle, their interest having been ignited.

Dr. Joanne Mongeon, OCDS, has been a Secular Carmelite for thirty years, and for much of that time, was Director of Formation or Director of On-going Formation for the Secular Carmelites of the Barrington, RI, Carmel. In that capacity she gave monthly talks on Sts. Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross, Therese, Elizabeth of the Trinity. She has been a director of RCIA for over thirty years, and is a published author with Sadlier and Benziger Publishing Companies. Her most recent books are *Chatting With Mother Mary*, for 23rd Publishing Co. and *St. Teresa of Avila: A Journal*. Having been a college English professor or high school English teacher for many years, she prefers an interactive teaching style to a lecture style presentation.

“One Man’s Pilgrimage to Standing Rock”

An Evening with Brayton Shanley.

March 20, 2017

A Joint Presentation of the Adult Faith Formation Commission and the Saint Susanna Pax Christi Committee, Pat Ferrone, Chair.

Brayton Shanley has just published a monograph entitled “A Pilgrimage to Standing Rock: After 500 Years of Oppression, All We Have Left Is Love.” In it

he discusses the impact of coming as a White Ally to the Native Americans after all this time: *“As the women speak, fighting back tears, I feel my own coming on. Approximately 4,000 or so “white allies” learn the lesson: our settler colonialist behavior is ingrained. The women recite the code of conduct here: prefer to listen, not to speak; to stand for prayer before and after all gatherings; to refrain from all criticism, opinion and gossip; to accept and follow what the Elders have established here as well-thought-out and trustworthy. Avoid settler, colonialist behavior, i.e., taking charge, taking over, looking to control, having everything figured out, quickly fixing everything that is wrong. Whew! I can feel too many of these impulses brewing within me as I listen.”*

In light of Pope Francis’s recent pronouncement on sensitivity to indigenous peoples, this talk could not have been more appropriate and timely.

A large group came to hear Brayton Shanley talk about his experience in visiting the site of the Standing Rock encampment in North Dakota. He was quite clear that it was the impact of the word "Sacred" with the encampment that totally captivated him, and there was little if any discussion in his talk of the pipeline protest itself. He spoke of the gatherings for prayer as powerful events each day, the complete cooperation to get everything done without anyone "taking charge." Particularly impressive to him was the feeling he had of letting go of the "White Man" urge to take charge and line things up, and bowing to the Native American method of allowing the sacred to take over and control the experience. In the presence of hundreds of Native American tribes from all over, most of whom had never met each other before, plus thousands of veterans who had come because of their disgust with the way the original protesters were being treated, and so many others, all came together in an almost perfect meeting of the minds. It was quite impressive to hear him speak this way, as he has attended scores of protests of every description, but saw this as wholly different and impacting on the soul.

Brayton Shanley earned his BA from St. Anselm College in New Hampshire and an MA in Pastoral Ministry from Boston College. He has taught college

courses on the Philosophy of Nonviolence at Worcester State University and as an adjunct professor at Anna Maria College in Paxton, MA and has been leading workshops, retreats and seminars on Prophecy and Peace, Gospel Nonviolence and Sustainability, simplicity and Resistance since the early 80's. His recently published book, *The Many Sides of Peace: Christian Nonviolence, the Contemplative Life, and Sustainable Living*, Resource Publications (Wipf and Stock, 2013), is used nationally by professors, students, & religious orders.

Living Simply

April 3, 2017

Presenter: Joel Boutin

Pope Francis has heavily stressed the importance of addressing the materialism in our culture which is causing damage to our earth and injustice to the less fortunate in the world. How can we contribute? We heard from a speaker who has decided to cooperate in a major fashion. The following is from a Boston Globe article on our speaker.

Joel Boutin lives in a 128-square-foot house built of two-by-fours on a trailer bed in the backwoods of Durham, N.H. There's no running water, sewer, heat, or electricity. He likes it that way. "There are only a few inconveniences, and they don't outweigh the benefits," said Boutin, 36, who moved into the so-called "tiny house" in August.

A teacher of global studies and psychology at [St. John's Prep](#) in Danvers, he's committed to living a simple, sustainable life close to nature.

Boutin was raised in Lawrence, where he attended [Central Catholic High School](#). He went on to [Merrimack College](#) in North Andover on a full scholarship, majoring in philosophy, and later earned a master's degree in

public health at Boston University. He spent two years serving with the Peace Corps in Tanzania. "That was my first experience with 'tiny house' living," he said. "I lived in a hut. And I learned it was possible to be happy and content with few material possessions. "What I needed for survival was a short list: food, clean water, shelter, appropriate clothing, friendships, and intellectual stimulation."

When Boutin returned to the United States, he said, "I felt life had a plasticity to it; there was something missing. I was curious to see if I could return to the lifestyle I had in Tanzania."

He joined a Jesuit prayer group, [Contemplative Leaders in Action](#) , which includes doing a capstone project to "help us live our values more fully." That's what led him to the tiny house in New Hampshire. The only drawbacks, he said, are the one-hour commute to work and being away from his circle of friends in Cambridge and Somerville, where he previously lived. On the up side, he said, he's more focused, sleeps well, and is "writing more letters and reading more books."

Boutin also hopes to inspire his students at St. John's. "A lot of my boys come from material wealth and define happiness as a bigger house or bigger car. I want to challenge that assumption and provide an alternative measure of success. That is a great joy."

Although no longer in residence in his tiny house, Joel reflected on his experience there and share his ideas on living simply more generally as well.

Joel Boutin was a very good speaker, incredibly real in his presentation, and very engaged with the audience, including the youngsters from our parish confirmation classes. He started off with a prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi which was quite topical for the evening, and after an enlightening talk invited all to get chatting with each other, including adults with students, which proved to be remarkably successful, the room abuzz with chatter. The evening went far beyond living in a tiny house, to several excellent

suggestions on how to get a handle on starting the process of living simply (for example, "One Hundred Items," the process of reducing one's possessions from the average householder's items in the tens of thousands down to some lower level, the 100 being a probably unrealizable ideal).

Father Steve's Book Group

May 1, 8, and 15, 2017

Book: **The Book of Joy** by the **Dalai Lama** and **Desmond Tutu**, along with Douglas Abrams.

Here is the Amazon review:

An instant New York Times bestseller

Two spiritual giants. Five days. One timeless question.

Nobel Peace Prize Laureates His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu have survived more than fifty years of exile and the soul-crushing violence of oppression. Despite their hardships—or, as they would say, because of them—they are two of the most joyful people on the planet.

In April 2015, Archbishop Tutu traveled to the Dalai Lama's home in Dharamsala, India, to celebrate His Holiness's eightieth birthday and to create what they hoped would be a gift for others. They looked back on their long lives to answer a single burning question: How do we find joy in the face of life's inevitable suffering?

They traded intimate stories, teased each other continually, and shared their spiritual practices. By the end of a week filled with laughter and punctuated with tears, these two global heroes had stared into the abyss and despair of our time and revealed how to live a life brimming with joy.

This book offers us a rare opportunity to experience their astonishing and unprecedented week together, from the first embrace to the final good-bye.

We get to listen as they explore the Nature of True Joy and confront each of the Obstacles of Joy—from fear, stress, and anger to grief, illness, and death. They then offer us the Eight Pillars of Joy, which provide the foundation for lasting happiness. Throughout, they include stories, wisdom, and science. Finally, they share their daily Joy Practices that anchor their own emotional and spiritual lives.

The Archbishop has never claimed sainthood, and the Dalai Lama considers himself a simple monk. In this unique collaboration, they offer us the reflection of real lives filled with pain and turmoil in the midst of which they have been able to discover a level of peace, of courage, and of joy to which we can all aspire in our own lives.

2015 / 2016

Human Freedom – Mind and Morality : What Does Science Have to Offer Here?

Oct. 5, 2015

Presenter: Brian Dwyer

In this presentation, we journeyed through the universe, through the body, and through experience itself to illuminate **How** things are and **Why** that really matters! Science really sets out to answer the **How** question. How is it that humans are able to be alive? How is it that the universe is as it is today? These types of questions scientists and their relative fields of study have been answering at various levels for centuries. Understanding how

things are in reality can be very useful and informative. If you knew how things are, would you not be able to use that information to help you answer other question types? Humans love the **why** questions. Why are humans alive or Why are humans the way humans are? Why is the universe here or why is the universe the way it is? Believe it or not, **answering How can really help answer Why**. Science looks at how things are. Interestingly, more and more aspects of what it is to be a human being fall under the “eye” of science. Topics like our thoughts and our free will open up into new realities when looked at with “How” glasses on. Don’t worry. Even if there is a fundamental scientific explanation for all things human, it does not remove our experience of what it is to be human; in this way our free will is safe (or maybe it is even more than that). Understanding How things are actually enriches human experience and invites us to be ever more aware of how we are human. **Brian Dwyer, Presenter**, has been working in the professional world of biochemistry and biophysics for over 15 years within academic, biotechnology, and pharmaceutical institutions. Presently, Brian is a Scientist at Shire Pharmaceuticals and a Ph.D. Candidate for a doctorate degree in Chemistry at UMass, Lowell, Department of Chemistry. In addition, Brian has co-authored articles in peer reviewed scientific journals.

Brian really put our brains to work as he set the scientific base for his talk and then introduced us to some theories that gave us plenty to ponder. It was lot to pack into two hours but all had plenty to talk about, and minds were opened to thinking about things not pondered before. That's what Adult Education is all about.

David Rothauser on the Nuclear Menace

Oct. 19, 2015

Rothauser, an anti-nuclear activist and film producer, spoke on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the recent Japanese nuclear disaster at Fukushima in

2011, which is currently spewing radioactive materials into the Pacific Ocean, and presented his film, “Hibakusha – Our Life to Live,” about survivors of Hiroshima/Nagasaki, which turned out to be a very professionally made film, highly informative and yet resisting the temptation to be overly gory or sensational. In fact, there was a peaceful, understated quality to the whole film. We learned about the witness given by those who survived the atomic bombings at Hiroshima and Nagasaki with the intent and purpose to never have such an event again. David had a good Q&A session after the film, with some incisive questions from an audience that obviously paid attention. **A co-presentation with Saint Susanna Peace and Justice Committee, Pat Ferrone, Chair.**

An Aramaic Perspective on the Sermon on the Mount

Nov. 2, 2015

Presenter: Peter Hartzel

This was a reprise of a presentation given several years ago here at Saint Susanna, returning by popular demand. It was a review of the most basic words of Jesus as rendered by Matthew, from an Aramaic cultural perspective, giving a new insight into Jesus’ teachings.

As usual, Peter attracted a good crowd for his presentation, and his PowerPoint show was avidly followed. Lots of those in attendance took away his handout with the nuances of Aramaic applied to the Sermon on the Mount and Our Father. The Q&A/Commentary period was busy and reflected careful concentration on the topic. A successful event.

Christian Ethics and the Wage Gap in America

(A Two Week Series)

Nov. 9, 2015 –Part I

A DVD from **Prof. Robert Reich** entitled **“Inequality for All.”** Here is a review from the LA Times: “Smart, funny and articulate, Robert Reich is the university professor we all wish we'd had. He's so accessible and entertaining he takes a subject that sounds soporific and makes it come alive like you wouldn't believe in "Inequality for All." That topic, as the title indicates, is the widening income gap in the United States between the hugely rich and the rest of us. Reich and documentary director Jacob Kornbluth turn out to be the ideal collaborators to tell the story of what that gap is, why it happened and why it's important, all in a totally engaging way. Kornbluth, for his part, employs his skills as a dramatic feature director to bring energy and vigor to the way this film is structured, making especially good use of lively animation and vivid charts.”

The DVD was just as predicted, a well done piece. He did a fabulous job, with charts and examples, of establishing that Economic Inequality has reached crisis proportions again, and is very bad for our economy and us as a people. It was interesting to note that, during the Questions and Comments period, several of younger audience reported they were puzzled by the subject matter. One thought that this topic had nothing to do with religion. Another thought that this was not a subject which students his age (high school) should be examining. There seemed to me to be an undercurrent of opposition to the ideas presented by Reich (which were well within what our Church teaches on the subject).

Christian Ethics and the Wage Gap in America

Nov. 16, 2015 - Part II

Presentation by **Scott Schaeffer-Duffy** of the Worcester Catholic Worker House. Scott focused on his personal experiences with the poor, and related those to some of the themes that Pope Francis has been stressing, but predominantly in the Gospels. One of Saint Susanna's favorite raconteurs, he delighted and at the same time educated his listeners on the subject of the relationship between money and happiness, particularly Christian happiness. Scott Schaeffer-Duffy has a million tales to tell and does so with conviction and humor. Most of his sagas began with the statement that he didn't have a dime to his name when all of a sudden... He was also unexceptionally clear that money does not produce the happiness we think it does/would/should. His was a great complement to Robert Reich's data-driven but equally convincing presentation the week before. This was a good series, as it seems we are not sufficiently educated elsewhere on the relationship between money and happiness, as well as the moral implications of economic decisions and capitalist efforts. It opened a few eyes for the members of the audience . A valuable series for our AFFC Program.

Presentation of the Film “Philomena.”

Nov. 30, 2015

In “Philomena,” Judi Dench’s portrayal of a stubborn, kindhearted Irish Catholic trying to discover what became of the toddler she was forced to give up as a teenager is so quietly moving that it feels lit from within. A major theme of this film from Stephen Frears is forgiveness. Ms. Dench’s Philomena Lee glows with the radiance of someone serene in her faith despite inhumane treatment by the church. That she makes you believe her character has the capacity to forgive provides the movie with a solid moral center. Ms. Dench’s dignified performance and the screenplay — adapted by her co-star Steve Coogan and Jeff Pope from Martin Sixsmith’s 2009 nonfiction book, “The Lost Child of Philomena Lee” — stabilize a volatile blend of ingredients.

No Room at the Inn

Dec. 7, 2015

A Special Event, a co-presentation with St. Susanna Peace and Justice Committee (Pat Ferrone, Chair) .

This was a particularly topical program as Christmas approached. **Haley House of Boston** presented the history and purpose of Haley House, a Boston resource for housing, training, and other services to the poor, homeless, and disadvantaged, as well as a discussion of the current economy and its impact on these affected populations. It was well worth attending.

Kathe McKenna, one of the early workers at Haley House, which is now celebrating its fiftieth year in operation, and Marylou Bozza, one of the newer staff, took us for a fascinating trip down Memory Lane to the beginning years of Haley House, then a soup kitchen and shelter, and then filled our audience in on how Haley House has grown to include low-income housing, training programs, and a Cafe and Bakery popular in the neighborhood. Several of our audience were particularly delighted to return to the early days when they first came to know of, and help at, Haley House. It was fascinating to hear of the offshoots into new ventures over the years as one set of problems led to the need for another set of solutions. The Q&A session indicated that the audience was listening and had been drawn to do some thinking about this hallowed institution. A pleasant and informative evening.

Jesus' Life and Times. (Two Week Series)

Jan. 4 & 11, 2016

Professor Nathaniel DesRosiers of Stonehill College presented on everyday life in first century Palestine with an eye towards filling out what we know about Jesus by way of the Gospels. Professor DesRosiers has appeared several times now at Saint Susanna Adult Faith Formation, and has become a

favorite due to his teaching style and profound knowledge of the subject matter. Professor DesRosier's presentation was a tremendous success in more ways than one. To no one's surprise, he was in complete command of this subject, had a great PowerPoint slide show, and had an easy way of conveying information with totally open access by way of questions from the student body. The first week he laid the groundwork for what things were like way back when, and the second week he inserted Jesus into the mix. The student body left raving about his presentation.

Sex and Violence in the Bible

Feb. 1, 2016

Professor Mary Joan Leith, Chair of Religious Studies at Stonehill College, provided us with new insights on the Bible from this perspective. Her course on Angels last season was a hit with all who attended, as she is a remarkable professor with a hilarious teaching style. Many who thought they wouldn't learn a thing about Angels changed their tune after hearing her presentation. As we expected, Professor Leith did a great job of presenting her topic this year. She always does her homework. She went several steps down deep into the text of the Bible to show the ancient sections dealing with the primitive idea of God who violently brought the earth into existence (from very early non-monotheist Creation stories); she dealt with the supposed violent takeover of the Promised Land from those dwelling there when the Israelites arrived (mostly made-up stories to show God's providing for his people); she spent a little time with the idea of exactly what else was taken off besides the heads of the enemy chiefs, and dallied briefly at the bedwarmers for King David. It was an informative and educational evening, and well received by those in attendance.

Saint Francis of Assisi, His Life and Times

Feb. 29, 2016

Peter Hartzel, presenter. This was a reprise from a presentation at St. Susanna Adult Faith Formation in the Fall of 2008. This time around, there was a focus on some parallels with, and meaning for, Pope Francis. As we have come to expect from Peter Hartzel, we were treated to a fact-filled presentation on Saint Francis and the background to his life and ministry, all with a light touch and a bit of humor. The talk set some groundwork for the upcoming April presentation on Pope Francis.

Women and the Church: Rome's Stained Glass Ceilings, Faithful Dissent and Prophetic Vision

Apr. 4, 2016

Presenter: Professor Catherine Mooney. Professor Mooney re-acquainted us with some well known women through the ages who had significant disagreements with church authorities. Today many are canonized as saints and/or recognized as Doctors of the Church. In recent times, a new narrative has taken root among some Catholics, one that suggests that criticism and debate have no place in the church. This presentation demonstrated how the church can only advance when people of good will faithfully take positions (often unpopular) that lead others in the church forward on new frontiers. Professor Mooney drew on the experiences of Hildegard of Bingen, Clare of Assisi, Catherine of Siena, Teresa of Avila and others from the present day to discuss how their thoughtful critiques and forthright disagreements have helped shape the Church. These women of the church got what they wanted despite the patriarchal system they were facing, and not always by using kind words either. They all were pretty up front with their needs and desires, and did well by persistence. Some of those in the audience were a bit put off by the fact that this was all ancient history, but the Q&A went well. Professor Mooney is hugely intelligent and knowledgeable, and did well in her task.

Catherine Mooney is Associate Professor of Church History at Boston College. Her teaching and research interests include women and gender in

Christian history. She has served on the boards of the Society for Medieval Feminist Studies and Monastic Matrix. While living in rural Argentina during its military dictatorship and “Dirty War,” she worked as a human rights advocate and taught in a seminary for *campesino* catechists and base community leaders. In addition to teaching and lecturing in universities and at scholarly conferences, she offers presentations and workshops in various pastoral venues and is active in several human rights efforts. Her books include *Philippine Duchesne: A Woman with the Poor* and *Gendered Voices: Medieval Saints and Their Interpreters*. In a few weeks her next book is due to appear, *Clare of Assisi and the Thirteenth-Century Church: Religious Women, Rules, and Resistance*. Professor Mooney holds a Ph.D. in medieval history from Yale University.

Pope Francis

April 11, 2016

Because Pope Francis is so new on the scene, there are few speakers with the depth of knowledge to speak on his papacy thus far. **Professor Richard Gaillardetz** of the Boston College Theology Department, one of the few with the necessary experience, agreed to make the presentation. A chaired professor of Catholic Theology with research interests in Vatican 2 and Authority in the Church, Dr. Gaillardetz this past year published two books : *An Unfinished Council: Vatican II, Pope Francis and the Renewal of Catholicism*, and *A Church with Open Doors* (as co-editor with Thomas Rausch). This event was nothing short of excellent in every way.

Professor Gaillardetz took control of his audience with his first few words. He speaks clearly and distinctly in understandable (and even at times a bit salty) language, and his analysis of what Pope Francis is trying to do with his papacy was beautifully and simply laid out. The professor went back in history to point out that popes historically almost never got involved with theology and doctrine, leaving that to the theologians to debate, and only making pronouncements when the difficulties had been fought out and resolved.

Pope Francis is 100% committed to approaching all current controversies with a pastoral mindset, reaching out to people where they are and asking what can I do for you in your current situation, even if it be irregular. The audience was completely smitten. The Q&A was active and productive. The professor commented on several occasions what a pleasure it was to speak to and with people who remembered the events and controversies so many years back, as opposed to his students at college for whom this is all confusing news.

- SPECIAL EVENT
“Opening to the Boundless Heart of Being” -
A Zen Buddhist Approach to Peace.

April 18, 2016

Saint Susanna Peace and Justice Committee, in conjunction with Adult Faith Formation, presented Kotatsu **John Bailes, interim Buddhist Chaplain at Wellesley College** for an evening of exploration into the heart of **Buddhist meditation**. John trained in Zen at the San Francisco Zen Center for 13 years, and was ordained a Zen Buddhist Priest in 1977. He lived and practiced in the Buddhist communities of Tassajari and Green Gulch in CA, returning to the East Coast to gain a degree in International Political Economy from Harvard University. He continuing his Buddhist meditation practice as an ordinary citizen, married and sailed around the world as a professional sailboat captain. He is the founder of **One Heart Zen** in Somerville, a meeting place for instruction and meditation whose mission is to “share the Zen attitude, spirit and practice with the world, working together to open the heart of the human person, joining life...” Besides leading meditation groups at Wellesley College and One Heart Zen, his work includes work with interfaith groups on meditation and contemplation. Our evening included a presentation by John, as well as a **short meditation practice guided by his instruction**, with time following for

reflection and sharing. This was a unique opportunity to listen, then sit with one another in the deep silence where we are joined as One. He has an interesting combination of a commanding presence and yet a calming and heartening approach, with a touch of self-deprecation and humor. The audience was rapt as he took us through the need-to-know basics of Zen and led us with a short demonstration of a Zen meditation, followed by a great Q&A session.

Father Steve's Book Group
May 2, 9 & 16, 2016

This year's book was **Why the Catholic Church Must Change: A Necessary Conversation** by Margaret Nutting Ralph. For the **first week** we discussed the Preface, the Introduction, and the first three chapters on Catholic Church teachings. In the **second week**, on May 9, we covered Chapters Four through Seven, on Contraception, Women's Ordination, Homosexuality and Abortion. On May 16 we **concluded** with Chapters Eight through Ten (Marriage, Social Justice and Employment, and Church Unity) and the Conclusion. There was much to be learned.

2014 / 2015

Suicide
October 6, 2014 (one session)
Speakers: Jan Brogan and Anne DiNoto

Suicide has been a topic that few people talk about, yet it is occurring and the prevalence is high. However, more and more people are now talking about suicide than ever before: the fact of suicide, suicide linked to psychological disorders or conditions like depression, suicide linked to sociological factors which range from economic to socialization are all discussed. Recently the Boston Globe featured the article, "Teen's brains

make them more vulnerable to suicide,” by **Jan Brogan**. This article seeks to develop an understanding as to the unique vulnerability a teenager could be at for suicide just because of their brain development at that time of life. Jan Brogan has been doing extensive research and has been in a working relationship with many of the top doctors in our local hospitals and universities regarding suicide.

Boston University is among those at the forefront of colleges with not only providing an infrastructure for institutional psychological care and socialization assistance programs, but also developing and hosting events like “International Survivors of Suicide Day,” which are developed and produced by dedicated college staff like **Anne DiNoto**.

Both Jan and Anne know of each other and presented together. They had personal and professional angles on this topic that are similar and yet very different.

Prophecy, Prophets and The Prophetic Imagination October 13, 2014 (One session)

An exploration of Old Testament Prophecy and the Prophets of Israel and their successors in the modern world. Working with the seminal writings of Heschel and Brueggemann, **Peter Hartzel** of the Saint Susanna Adult Faith Formation Commission, who has taught many church history courses over the years, cleared away much of the misunderstanding about the roles of prophets (e.g., “fortune-tellers”), and brought their role up to the present date. His presentation on Prophets and Prophecy was as thorough and entertaining as we have come to expect from Peter. The PowerPoint slides were packed with information, and the audience seemed quite interested, even bringing up questions and comments.

Becoming Disciples of Christ Jesus – “Christ in Our Lives” October 20, 2014 (One session) Presenter: Rev. Darrell Minnich

Rev. Minnich's presentation focused on the primary characteristics necessary for being a successful disciple of Christ Jesus. That is, living in a manner that reflects Christ's glory and nature. The study also highlighted some of the battles that hinder one's intention to follow Christ in a disciplined way. Due to the brevity of the evening, the presentation only "touched the surface" of this marvelous topic! There was time for Q & A.

Rev. Minnich has served as the senior minister of the Good Shepherd Christian Fellowship (in Needham) since the summer of 1994. Prior to this assignment he began and established a new Church in Hartford, CT (there for eight years) among Laotian refugees. Before that he served (for four years) as the associate minister with an evangelical Church in the Cleveland, OH area. Darrell and his wife recently celebrated their 35th wedding anniversary. They have two married sons and four grandchildren (with the fifth soon to be born)! Their older son lives in Newton with his family; their second son lives in southeast Asia with his family where they serve as "secret servants" (because the country is Communist and does not allow traditional church workers).

Veterans for Peace
October 27, 2014 (One session)
Presenter: Pat Scanlon

Pat Scanlon gave a great, and somewhat emotional, witness talk about his conversion from planning bombing missions to non-violence, adorned with a humorous PowerPoint slide show and a set of Peace folk songs. Everyone seemed to enjoy the talk, including Pat. His stories about local peace events, particularly the South Boston Saint Patrick's Day Parade, evoked many a chuckle. Pat is a member of Veterans for Peace. He was an Intelligence officer in the Vietnam War and subsequently realized that war and killing people was wrong. He spoke to us about how his thinking transitioned from war to non violence. The music he played is anti war songs that he writes himself. We therefore were treated to some folk singing. This was a co-

presentation with Saint Susanna Peace and Justice Committee, Pat Ferrone, Chair.

Special Event: Making Christmas Meaningful and Peaceful.

November 3, 2014 (One session)

Presenter: Chris Welch, Boston College School of Theology and Ministry

It was amazing how Chris Welch was able to make contact with all the Saint Susanna confirmation students and have them eating out of his hand for the whole session. He had all of those in attendance, full adults and confirmation students, working on collages made of cut-outs from magazines, and huge sheets of newsprint. In addition, he had panels of students constantly working on various parts of the program. If nothing else, the adults in the audience got a chance to work cooperatively with the youngsters and hear what they had to say about the Christmas Season, warts and all. Chris also did a yeoman's job of explaining the Nativity narrative, why there was one in the gospel to begin with, how this differed from a historical or biographical piece, what its purpose was, etc. It may well be that many of the kids and adults will, if even in a small way, modify how they live through future Advent seasons as a result of this presentation. They may consider the often-unnoticed messages in society that shape their experiences, and put those messages in conversation with the Church's tradition. Most essentially, each participant may draw out his or her own best hopes for him/herself and for society, and they may come to their own decisions about how they want to make those best hopes more real for themselves.

Chris Welch: After college Chris worked at a hospitality house and soup kitchen in the Catholic Worker tradition. He then received a Master of Theological Studies from the Weston Jesuit School of Theology, and subsequently taught theology at Fontbonne Academy for nine years. He is engaged in doctoral studies in the Theology and Education program at

Boston College, focusing his studies on developing a pedagogy for prophetic imagination that builds real hope in challenging circumstances. A co-presentation with the St. Susanna Confirmation Program.

Democracy and Catholicism
November 10, 2014 (One session)

Steve Krueger, an old friend of Saint Susanna's, Founding Executive Director of Voice of the Faithful and currently President of Catholic Democrats, a national advocacy organization, representing a Catholic voice within the Democratic Party, together with Thomas Groome and Marian Walsh made powerful presentations on the church's history of speaking for the poor and disadvantaged and the progress that has been made in some areas. Each speaker was enthusiastic and highly experienced, and had to be wrestled to the ground to stop passionate deliveries in order to stay on schedule. The entire program was very well received by those in attendance. **Professor Thomas Groome** is Chair of the Department of Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry at Boston College, author of *What Makes Us Catholic* and many other publications, and consultant **Marian Walsh** was for many years a member of the Massachusetts legislature, is the author of *Run*, a book about running for political office, and holds a graduate degree in Theology from Harvard Divinity School as well as a law degree.

DVD and Discussion - "Journey of the Universe"
November 17, 2014 (One session)

"Journey of the Universe" is an epic film that covers the sweep of time, beginning with life's origins 14 billion years ago, up to the present. It reverentially examines the evolution of cosmos and Earth as a "profound process of creativity, connection, and interdependence." Modern science is

combined with cultural wisdom to posit provocative questions about the effects of human behavior on the earth's body. The film was written by Mary Evelyn Tucker and Brian Swimme and produced by Tucker and her husband, John Grimm, professors at Yale University and founders of the Forum on Religion and Ecology. All three were strongly influenced in their work by the late Fr. Thomas Berry, cultural historian who urged us to address the ravages and disruptions of human hubris on the Earth and become its benign stewards. This was a co-presentation with Saint Susanna Peace and Justice Committee, Pat Ferrone, Chair.

**Divorce and Remarriage – Gay Marriage
How Does The Church Promote Jesus' Ideal of
Covenantal/Sacramental Marriage?
December 1, 2014 (One session)
Presenter: Michael Hartwig, Ph.D.**

Our theme this evening was to explore the relationship between Jesus' and Paul's teachings on marriage and contemporary patterns of marriage and to ask how the Church might advance these ideals in the contemporary context. From the Q&A session, it appears that most if not all of those in attendance had a personal interest in the topics under discussion. Dr. Michael Hartwig gave a scripture-based and fact-based talk on these topics which, of course, are all the more worthy of note from the fact that these exact topics were the subjects most in controversy at the recent Synod in Rome. There was no distracting emotionalism in his delivery. As we knew from his talk on Pilgrimage as Prayer last season, he is a good speaker, very engaging and understandable. Those who attended received a good outline of the issues as they now are being reviewed by Rome, and a good basis for cogent argument of the various positions. He had several points to raise which, in his judgment, would seem to call for a re-assessment of the position currently

taken by the institutional church on these highly important issues if the church as an institution hopes to remain relevant. The whole Galileo story was briefly reviewed, giving any reasonable person cause to re-think things. Michael Hartwig is an adjunct faculty member at Emmanuel College and Northeastern University. He holds the Ph.D. in religious ethics from Southern Methodist University. His specialty and expertise lie in the area of applied ethics – taking ethical theory and applying it to health care, business, environment, social justice and sexuality. His areas of publication have centered on sexual ethics. His current research is focused on the foundations of monotheistic ethics, namely how Jews, Christians and Muslims develop positions on controversial moral issues, particularly models of marriage, single adult sexuality, and same-gender sexual relationships. Hartwig serves as the in-house scholar at the Illume organization, a Boston-based organization that collaborates with schools, colleges, parishes and religious institutions to create group programs that involve travel to places of great historical and religious significance – such as Israel, Turkey, Greece, Italy, Spain and other destinations.

Emerging Christianity
January 5 & 12, 2015 (Two weeks)
Presenter: Timothy K. Snyder

Emerging or Emergence Christianity is a term given to a fluid and hard to define Christian movement. What is it and what impact has it had as a movement within the Christian world? To guide us through this topic we had Timothy Snyder who recently finished his Ph.D. in Practical Theology, with a concentration on Church and society, at Boston University. This two-week event was a pleasure to attend. Tim Snyder has an easy and casual way of presenting his material in a well thought out fashion. He held everyone's

attention as he presented on the many ways that traditional religious practice is being nuanced by those attempting to keep it relevant. Many were surprised to learn that they have often (without knowing it by any particular name) used several of the new techniques in their own practice of the Faith. We ended up the program forming a large circle as we listened to Tim and his friend Paul recall how much joy they gained from a spin-off of Lutheran practice for a college age group a few years ago. Needless to say, several of the variant efforts mentioned by Tim would not be a surprise to those who attend Saint Susanna on a regular basis. All were quite taken by Tim and his topic.

*“My own interests and experience have most often centered around community development and worship. For three years I pastored an emergent community in Austin, Texas and, of course, wrote about that experience in *The Hyphenateds: How Emergence Christianity is ReTraditioning Mainline Practice* (Chalice Press).”*

Tim’s research is a series of investigations into religious identity and authority in contemporary American life. Mostly recently, along with Ashley Theuring, he has conducted research on the public discourses and practices of memorialization that emerged in the aftermath of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shootings in Newtown, CT. Currently he serves as Director of Education at Faith Lutheran Church, Cambridge.

Thoreau and the Civil Rights Movement January 19, 2015 (One session)

Richard Smith, who portrays Thoreau in a one-man event, has been doing it for 15 years all over the country. The format is to appear in costume as Henry, speak one of his essays –such as “On Civil Disobedience”; respond to questions in costume, then switch to the real Richard to make connections

between Thoreau's writings and his influences on Tolstoy, Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Civil Rights movement. The youngsters in attendance were very attentive, and the Q&A session was immensely productive. People seemed quite interested in the arguments to be made for civil disobedience. Was this turnout somehow connected with the recent marches, traffic stoppages, lie-ins, etc., in connection with the shootings by police? Perhaps unlikely, but then there is no alternate explanation. Richard Smith, the Thoreau double, gave a forty minute talk, but he held everyone's attention. A co-presentation with Saint Susanna Peace and Justice Committee, Pat Ferrone, Chair.

Angels – Mesopotamia to Modernity
March 2, 2015 (One session)
Presenter: Prof. Mary Joan Leith

Prof. Leith's presentations are always a joy to attend. She is lively and fun, and she does her homework. She makes it clear that she invites questions and comments from those in attendance, so everyone feels valued. She brought with her a PowerPoint set of slides which tore apart our concepts about angels, including our belief that Cherubim were cute, tiny little guys, and that all angels have exactly two wings. The slides included statuary depicting the real cherubs, massive and hostile-looking, and paintings of six-winged Seraphim and unwinged angels, among many other items. She took us through numerous bible passages dealing with angels performing all sorts of missions, including a hilarious story about an angel seen by a donkey but invisible to his passenger. Our knowledge of the history of religious beliefs and certainly our supposed knowledge about angels were enormously enhanced. **Mary Joan Leith** is full of surprises. As an Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Stonehill College, Leith says that students often have preconceived notions about what they are going to learn in her classes. She likes to challenge these ideas. "I love surprising my students with crazy

stories,” she says. “I like seeing students come into a class and think, for instance, ‘It’s not really something I’m interested in.’ Then I see them get excited. I like turning on the light bulb.” Leith recently showed parts of the British comedy Monty Python’s Life of Brian to illustrate some of the facts about Jesus’ lifetime – and the students loved it. “I like to bring in unusual things, keep them on their toes; give the class the sense that it’s going to be worth it to walk into my classroom every day.”

Good Works in a Time of War
An Evening with Claire Schaeffer-Duffy.
(In our periodic “What Is Jesus Doing Nowadays?” series)
March 9, 2015 (One session)

Claire did a beautiful job of presenting the good works of charity being done during the chaos of multiple wars in the Mideast, narrating a story in slides of her visits to truly heroic people carrying out the work of Catholic Relief Services. No gory photos, mostly smiling ones in fact, of persons placing themselves at great risk at overwhelming odds to do what can be done for the dispossessed of the war zones. She made detailed mention of the enormous generosity of the neighboring nations in accepting millions of refugees, often amounting to 25% of their country's own population, asking us would we Americans be as accepting if, in our country of 300 million, we were asked to accept 75 million refugees. Claire's presentation was soft-voiced, and easy to listen to, without any preaching but with a powerful message nonetheless. She made a great impression. It was a great night for the Confirmation class to be present. The Q&A period went well, with

cogent questions, some from our youngsters, indicating that all of us had been listening.

Claire Schaeffer-Duffy lives and works at the SS. Francis and Therese Catholic Worker in Worcester, MA. For nearly three decades, the community has been offering hospitality to men and women in need and speaking out on issues of peace and justice. A free-lance journalist, Claire is an occasional contributor to The National Catholic Reporter and other Catholic publications. She is chair of the Board of Directors for Worcester's Center for Nonviolent Solutions, a newly created non-profit engaged in peace education in the city's schools. She and Scott are the proud parents of four and grandparent of one.

Being Well While Dying

Week One: Presentation by Good Shepherd Hospice of Newton

About Good Shepherd Community Care

March 16, 2015 (First week of a Two-week series)

Jennifer Sax, who is currently Good Shepherd Hospice Director of Communications, gave an in-depth description of the hospice process and its rationale. She came loaded with handouts, including a printout of all the PowerPoint slides she used. She showed video clips of Dr. Atul Gawande, an outstanding speaker on the subject, and presented facts and studies on the whole issue of dying with dignity while in control of the process. It was generally agreed that she was very good and extremely well prepared. Here, basically, is her message:

The first hospice in the state of Massachusetts, Good Shepherd Community Care has provided hospice and palliative care to the people of Greater Boston since 1978. It is an independent, non-profit, non-sectarian organization. Good Shepherd Community Care provides a range of services

and resources to people facing the final stage of life -- their own, or that of a loved one.

Hospice: A New Alternative, An Age-Old Way of Caring

When someone has a life-limiting illness, there are often profound feelings of isolation – sometimes fear and confusion. But in the final stages of life, there can also be dignity, comfort, peace and love.

Hospice is a philosophy and model for quality, compassionate care for people facing a life-limiting illness or injury. Hospice care focuses on pain and symptom management rather than curative treatment. Hospice utilizes an interdisciplinary team of healthcare professionals and trained volunteers to provide support to the person who is ill and his/her family and loved ones. At the center of hospice and palliative care is a goal to help people live as fully and comfortably as possible. This presentation is intended to help increase participants' comfort with conversations about end-of-life issues, wishes and care options.

Being Well While Dying

Week Two: Death - Finding Meaning Through Faith

March 23, 2015 – (Second of a Two-week series)

Presenter: Professor Melissa Kelley

Boston College School of Theology and Ministry

If “life is what you make it,” the same can be said for death. Dr. Melissa Kelley of Boston College’s School of Theology and Ministry offered a presentation on meaning-making at the end of life, through the lens of the Catholic faith.

Meaning-making – coming to a deep, personal understanding of one’s experience – is a common challenge as one nears the end of one's mortal life. But all meanings are not created equal, particularly through the lens of faith. This session explored how people might draw on faith to make helpful

and even transformative meaning – for themselves and with loved ones – while preparing for the great mystery of death.

Professor Kelley did a great job on this topic. She is extremely knowledgeable, has a great speaking voice, and has a very "up" attitude. She presented the psychological bases for what is happening with the dying process, and several different approaches for making it all meaningful, as well as the theological facets to the topic. A PowerPoint slideshow enhanced her presentation. Because she presented several alternatives, the audience was able to select from the menu, so to speak. Some were taken by one approach, while others tended towards a different one. The Q&A period was lively and meaningful, with plenty of input from those in attendance.

Melissa M. Kelley is associate professor of Pastoral Care and Counseling and the faculty director of the Professional Ministry Practicum at the Boston College School of Theology and Ministry. Previously, she was on the faculty of Weston Jesuit School of Theology in Cambridge, MA. She has many years of pastoral-clinical experience, including serving as a campus minister for 14 years at both Boston College and Emmanuel College in Boston. She holds a PhD from Boston University in pastoral psychology.

Dr. Kelley is a fellow and nationally certified pastoral counselor through the American Association of Pastoral Counselors. She is also certified in Thanatology: Death, Dying and Bereavement through the Association for Death Education and Counseling, the primary organization in the country for all bereavement researchers, educators, and clinicians. She is a pastoral formation guide with the Metropolitan Boston Association of the United Church of Christ and is the author of *Grief: Contemporary Theory and the Practice of Ministry*, published in 2010 by Augsburg Fortress Press.

The Gospel of Mark
April 6 & 13, 2015 (Two sessions)

Presenter: Professor Nathaniel DesRosiers

Professor DesRosiers revealed the Gospel of Mark, which is the gospel for this liturgical year. As with his presentation last season on Matthew, there was extensive audience participation and interaction. In his two week appearance with us he again endeared himself to our audience, as he is a very nice person, a clear speaker, patient and informative. He was loaded with plenty of material (including a slide show) on what it is you are looking for when you seek a gospel (Week One), and on Mark particularly (Week Two). At the beginning of the second week of the course, he was inundated by our inquiring audience, and spent more than twenty minutes answering questions. Professor DesRosiers is Associate Professor in Religious Studies at Stonehill College in Easton Massachusetts, where he teaches courses in Classics, New Testament, and Early Christianity. He received a Masters degree from Harvard University 1998 and a Ph.D. from Brown University in 2007. His research focuses on the issues of conflict and competition in the ancient world and the social and intellectual developments that helped to create and shape the religious movements and texts of antiquity.

Liberation Theology

April 27, 2015 (One session)

Presenter: Prof. Roberto Goizueta

Flatley Professor of Catholic Theology

Boston College Dept. of Theology

Those who read this past season's Book Group selection, Sister Elizabeth Johnson's "Quest For the Living God," will recognize Professor Goizueta's name from the multiple references to him in the chapter on the Hispanic/Latino quest for God. Once a highly questionable and controversial topic, Liberation Theology has come into its own. Nearly half the practicing

Catholics in the United States are Hispanic/Latino. The time has come to explore this theology more deeply.

Dr. Goizueta was extremely knowledgeable and in command of his subject. At times he expressed real emotion in telling us of the ups and downs of Liberation Theology. There are connections, of course, to the murders of Jesuit Priests and Maryknoll Sisters and many others, connections which have fingerprints of the United States on them in many instances. He clarified the non-existence of a connection between Liberation Theology and Marxism/Communism, despite charges to that effect from the powers that be in Latin American countries. He clearly spelled out the Preferential Option for the Poor, how it works, and where it is supported in the gospels. In sum, he gave two hours of real value to those in attendance.

Father Steve's Book Group
May 4, 11 and 18, 2015 (Three sessions)

As usual, Father Steve Josoma, Pastor of Saint Susanna Parish, selected a current book for discussion over three sessions. A discussion group format was used, with small discussion groups. The book: The Divine Magician by Peter Rollins, published by Howard Books of NYC (2015). It certainly led to lively discussion.

2013 / 2014

Reporting from the Ground: Building Understanding of the Israel/Palestine Conflict.

September 30, 2013 (one session)

Speaker: **Dr. Alice Rothchild**. A joint presentation with Saint Susanna Peace and Justice Committee, Pat Ferrone, Chair. Alice Rothchild is an obstetrician-

gynecologist who has worked in the health care reform and women's movements for many years. Since 1997, she has focused much of her energy on understanding the Israeli/Palestinian Conflict. In 1997, through her involvement in the Boston Workmen's Circle, a progressive secular Jewish organization, Alice turned much of her non-medical focus to understanding the Israeli/Palestinian conflict and its relationship to US foreign policy and American Jewry. She co-founded and co-chairs Visions of Peace with Justice in Israel/Palestine, now American Jews for a Just Peace – Boston and co-organized the AJJP Health and Human Rights Project.

The Pilgrimage as an Act of Worship, A Historical and Current-Day View

October 7, 2013 (one session)

Speaker: **Michael Hartwig, Ph.D.** Dr. Hartwig spoke about the importance of pilgrimage, the history of pilgrimage, how pilgrimage has changed over the centuries, and examples of contemporary pilgrimage with photos and sites to share. Dr. Hartwig is the in-house scholar at the Illume organization. He collaborates with educational and pastoral leaders to create unique and thoughtful programs that advance continuing education and ongoing faith formation through pilgrimage travel to places such as Israel, Turkey, Greece, Italy and other destinations. Michael teaches Religious Studies part-time at Northeastern University and Emmanuel College. His specialty is ethics and he teaches courses that include ethics from Christian, Jewish and Muslim perspectives particularly in the area of health care ethics, business ethics and sexual ethics. His work in the area of pilgrimage travel developed out of his expertise in religious history and spirituality and his having lived and studied in Spain, Italy and Germany. Creating successful pilgrimages is more than setting up a tour. It is a work of art – a way of inviting people to transformation by encountering other lands, peoples and traditions and visiting places where important changes in history inspire change today.

Keeping the Faith: Why People Stay Catholic (First of Two sessions)

October 21, 2013

In the first week of our two-part "Keeping the Faith" series, **Father Joseph P. Marchese** spoke on **Why People Stay Catholic**: Does the drop in Church attendance represent a diminishing faith and secularization of society, or is the cause more complex, and what are its elements? Father Marchese is the Director of Boston College First Year Experience. He received his bachelor's degree from Georgetown University, and performed his Master's and Doctoral studies at American University and Harvard University, respectively. Over the course of his career in higher education, Father Joe has served at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Mount Holyoke College, UMass Amherst, and is now in his twenty-eighth year at Boston College. In addition to his current post at FYE, he has held positions in the Theology Department and Campus Ministry. Under Father Joe's direction, First Year Experience runs the university Orientation program each summer, and is home to First Year Academic Convocation, the urban service-immersion *Freshman Leadership Project*, and Boston College's largest retreat program, *48HOURS*, which boasts a participation rate of nearly 50% of each incoming class. A specialist in Adolescent Developmental Psychology, Father Joe also oversees the freshman cornerstone seminar *The Courage to Know: Exploring the Intellectual, Social, and Spiritual Landscapes of the College Experience*.

Raising Catholic Grand/Children: IS IT POSSIBLE?

October 28, 2013 (Second of Two sessions)

Speaker: Sister Nancy Corcoran, CSJ. In this second week of this "Keeping the Faith," series, **Sister Nancy Corcoran, csj**, spoke on the issue of children and grandchildren pulling away from their Catholic roots. She addressed how parents and grandparents can help younger members cultivate faith and stay engaged with the Gospel message of Jesus. Sister Nancy touched on issues such as:

-How to navigate the challenges that arise when parents or grandparents themselves may be grappling with concerns over Church discipline or doctrine;

-Going beyond Mass or CCD to show children Catholicism in action and encourage meaningful engagement;

-How to leave a door open if children do choose to stop practicing.

Questioning religion as one grows and comes-of-age is not uncommon; this session provided perspective and insight into how we can keep our multi-generational faith family strong and encourage children and teens to be active, questioning, free-thinking, passionate members of the Catholic community.

Sister Nancy is a favorite of Saint Susanna Adult Faith Formation, at the same time both highly informative and humorous.

As the Director of Newman Catholic Ministry at Wellesley College, Sister Nancy Corcoran, CSJ serves as a chaplain to the students, staff and faculty of the College supporting the spiritual practices of a diverse community.

Understanding the most precious teaching of the Catholic Church to be the honoring of one's conscience, Sister endeavors to provide opportunities for each person's spiritual growth. Together with the resources abundant in such an educational experience, Sister Nancy facilitates rituals which reflect the multi-cultural realities of the truly universal tradition found in Catholicism.

Sister Nancy's understandings of the richness of a multi-faith world derive from her lived experiences in Hawaii, Missouri, New York, Alabama, Mississippi, Illinois, and her home state of Massachusetts. Her studies at the University of Hawaii, St. Louis University, Boston College, Xavier University, and Harvard Divinity School complement her commitment to intra-religious and inter-religious dialogue. Sister Nancy is a member of the Leadership Team of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet (St. Louis Province). She is the Founding Director of **grass/roots** Women's Spirituality Center whose mission is to *create community one conversation at a time*. She serves on the Leadership Team of the Weston Wayland Interfaith Action Group (WWIAG) and the Advisory Board of the RUAH spirituality Institute. Her book *Secrets of*

a Prayer: A Multifaith Guide to Creating Personal Prayer In Your Life was published in May of 2007.

Messianic Judaism

November 4, 2013 (one session)

Speaker: Rabbi Richard Nichol. It would probably come as no surprise to you that the earliest disciples of Jesus were faithful Jews who believed they had found the Messiah, the fulfillment of prophesy. We now live in an age when, due to the success of those early disciples, Christianity is largely a religion of the Gentile nations. That is not the whole story however and we were thrilled to have Rabbi Richard Nichol come and speak to us of the Messianic Jewish experience. Rabbi Rich leads a congregation of Messianic Jews in Needham and guided us in an exploration of what it means today to be a Jew and a disciple of Jesus.

Faith and Finances

November 18, 2013 (one session)

Does the use, misuse and abuse of money play a role in our faith experience? Should it? Do finances play too large a role in our lives as we seek to follow the teachings of Christ?

Speaker: John Bach. *"I'm the 'Friend in Residence' here at Friends Meeting at Cambridge, and I'd be happy to attend your program and speak from a Quaker point of view concerning our Peace Testimony and our embrace of Simplicity. I have been a Friend for over 35 years and spent three years in prison during the war in Vietnam. I'm the Quaker chaplain at Harvard and am involved in many issues of social justice and peace."* He spoke on how faithful people should think about earning and spending their money, and the role of money in a faith-filled family.

The Nuns on the Bus

December 2, 2013 (one session)

Sister Elaine Betoncourt, CSJ, one of the Nuns on the Bus, described her presentation in her own words: “I'm excited about the prospect of talking about Nuns on the Bus. What I would like to do is weave together a presentation that includes Catholic Social Teaching, the moral imperative for Immigration Reform now, Nuns on the Bus, and our present day call to justice as one of political activism and changing systems. I was a nun on the bus for three weeks from May 28th to June 18th, from New Haven Ct to San Francisco CA.”

She also spoke about the Network Lobby and invited people to become members and join in Network's advocacy for laws that promote the Common Good (which is what Catholic Social Teaching promotes). Sister Elaine is a Sister of St. Joseph from West Hartford CT. During her religious life she has been a teacher, a parish pastoral associate, and has held a variety of leadership roles in her congregation. She is currently serving as a member of a retreat team at Holy Family Monastery in West Hartford and involved in presenting weekend retreats to men and women. She is also on the boards of the Hartford Catholic Worker, the Spiritual Life Center (West Hartford) and the Hartford Archdiocesan Office of Social Justice Ministry. “I'm especially grateful for 6 years of ministry working with the poor in Appalachia from 1995 to 2001.” Her education includes degrees in Latin and Theology.

Whole Hearted Living

December 9, 2013 (one session)

Quietly, almost silently, Americans are realizing they are living lives that lack full meaning. At the forefront of this quiet dialog is Brene Brown and her concept of Whole Hearted Living. We can learn to ease into Whole Hearted Living with her book, *Daring Greatly* (as well as the other books she has written). We saw who whole hearted people are, what they do, why they do it, and how they do it. This was a walk with Brene Brown, each other, and a handful of other authors who cover other areas of living that fit nicely into a

discussion of America and its ever so quite awakening to Whole Heartedness.
Presenter: **Brian Dwyer** of the Adult Faith Formation Commission.

**Seizing the Nonviolent Moments: Reflections on the Spirituality of
Nonviolence. A Live Presentation by Nancy Small
January 13, 2014**

Nancy spoke on the subject of her soon-to-be-published book of that name. She is a 2013 Recipient of the Pax Christi of Massachusetts Peacemaker Award. She holds degrees from Boston College and Union Theological Seminary. This was a co-presentation with the Saint Susanna Peace and Justice Committee.

A Time of Two Popes

January 27, 2014. (First of two sessions)

For the first time in 800 years we have a pope resigning and a new pope elected, with both of them still alive and well in Rome. What is it about the papacy? Has it always been the way we know it to be now? What will it look like in the near, and far, future?

In the **first** of two weeks, **Peter Hartzel** of the Adult Faith Formation Commission introduced us to the pivotal points in the papacy and the popes involved. For several years now, Peter has given a number of courses at Saint Susanna in Church History. A PowerPoint presentation was utilized.

A Time of Two Popes

February 3, 2014 (Second of two sessions)

Deacon Larry Bloom continued the PowerPoint presentation and discussed current issues with the papacy, how they impact on us and the world, even though we may not realize it, and what may happen to address/change these issues. Deacon Larry has been an instructor in Adult Faith Formation for over thirty years, and has previously given many courses on the papacy and related issues.

Incarceration of Black Males: Issues of Disproportion and the Impact on Black Communities and All Communities

February 24, 2014

Our Speaker: **Rev. J. George M. Walters-Sleyon**. The United States leads the entire world in the rate at which it jails people, far more than Cuba, Russia, or Iran, for example. Within the prison population the percentage of black males as inmates is far out of proportion to the percentage of black males in the population as a whole. These facts impact heavily on black males as a group, on the communities from which they come, and on the general community. Rev. Walters-Sleyon, the Founder and Executive Director of the Center for Church and Prisons, Inc., a resource and research center, addressed these subjects.

He is a Ph.D. student at the University of Edinburgh. He holds a Master of Divinity (M.Div) and a post-graduate master: Master in Sacred Theology (S.T.M) in Philosophy, Theology and Social Ethics from Boston University. He is the Founder/Executive Director of The Center for Church and Prison, Inc.: a resource and research center working towards community revitalization through prison reform and strategic solution development and intervention in the high rate of incarceration and recidivism in the United States prison system. The Center for Church and Prison has organized two major conferences. They organized **The 2012 Strategic National Conference on Mass Incarceration and Reentry** from October 18-20 at Boston University School of Law Auditorium. Similarly, they hosted **The 2013 Strategic National Conference on Mass Incarceration and the War on Drugs** from October 3-5 at Boston University School of Law. Rev. Walters is the Author of: *Locked Up and Locked Down - Multitude Lingers in Limbo: Revised Edition* (A practical and prescriptive analysis of the high rate of incarceration of minority men, women and youths in the United States prison system), *The Criminal Is Still a Human Being*, *The "Ineffable Ethics," Mass Incarceration and the Black Family: A Tragedy Unfolding*, *The Role of Religion in Reducing Recidivism*. He has spoken at Harvard University on the topic: *Restorative Justice and Faith*;

at the New England School of Law on: *Why Are There So Many Black Boys in Jails*; and at a national forum organized by CLASP in Washington, D.C., on the topic *Higher Education as a Pathway to Success for Men of Color*. Rev. Walters has served as a keynote speaker at the National African American Drug Policy Coalition Conference at Howard University in DC., and as keynote speaker at the National Prison Summit on Incarceration at St. Mark United Methodist Church in Wichita/Kansas. He was a panelist at the National Urban League 2011 Conference in Boston where he spoke on the topic: "*Saving Our Sons: Surviving and Thriving of African-American Males.*" He was also a panelist on the panel to discuss the State of Black Boston- *2011 Criminal Justice Report*. He has also spoken at Northeastern University School of Law on the topic: *Making Parole a Reality* and at the 2013 Reform Conference of The Drug Policy Alliance in Denver Colorado. This was a co-presentation with the Saint Susanna Peace and Justice Committee.

Film: "The Way"
March 3, 2014

This movie was presented picking up on the talk by Dr. Hartwig on October 7, 2013, on The Pilgrimage as an Act of Worship.

The Way is a 2010 American drama film. It is a collaboration between Martin Sheen and his son Emilio Estevez to honor the *Camino de Santiago* and promote the traditional pilgrimage. Thomas Avery is an American ophthalmologist who goes to France following the death of his adult son, killed in the Pyrenees during a storm while walking the *Camino de Santiago* (the Way of St. James), a Catholic pilgrimage route to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in Galicia, Spain. Tom's purpose is initially to retrieve his son's body. However, in a combination of grief and homage to his son, Tom decides to walk the ancient spiritual trail where his son died. While walking the *Camino*, Tom meets others from around the world, all looking for greater meaning in their lives. He reluctantly falls in with three other pilgrims in particular. Joost (Yorick van Wageningen) is an overweight man from

Amsterdam who says he is walking the route to lose weight to get ready for his brother's wedding and so that his wife will desire him again. He is a warm extrovert who is the first to start walking with Tom. Sarah (Deborah Kara Unger) is a Canadian fleeing an abusive husband, who says she is walking the pilgrimage to quit smoking. Jack (James Nesbitt) is an Irish travel writer who when younger had desires to be great author like Yeats or Joyce but never wrote the novel he dreamed of. He is the last to join the quartet and has been suffering from "writer's block." As the pilgrims travel the *Camino*, they occasionally meet and talk with other pilgrims — two Frenchmen, a young Italian and an elderly priest from New York named Father Frank. Thomas occasionally sees his son alive and smiling among other people. On the pilgrimage, the group have various incidents such as when a young Romani steals Tom's backpack. Although the thief escapes, his father drags him back to Tom to return the pack with his embarrassed apologies and an offer to attend a street party in compensation.

Planning the Final Farewell: A Practical Guide through the Many Options of Celebrating a Funeral

March 10, 2014 (First of Two Sessions)

Father Steve Josoma made a presentation on how to plan a funeral (yours or a loved one's) in life-giving hope, transforming a time of sadness and grief into a moment of cherishing Loved Ones. Both sessions offered interactive learning where participants were amazed at how enjoyable and life-giving planning and praying our farewells can be.

Session 1: the many honest conversations and family planning options to consider before letting the funeral director and "the Church" determine "what ought to be done."

Planning the Final Farewell (Continued)

March 24, 2014 (Second of Two Sessions)

Session 2: the actual planning of the many options available, quite a few of which are unknown to the average person. For example: what are the “rules” on cremation?

Sacred Scriptures: Matthew’s Gospel

March 31, 2014 (First of Two Sessions)

Instructor: Professor Nathaniel DesRosiers of Stonehill College. Professor DesRosiers is Associate Professor in Religious Studies at Stonehill College in Easton Massachusetts, where he teaches courses in Classics, New Testament, and Early Christianity. He received a Masters degree from Harvard University 1998 and a Ph.D. from Brown University in 2007. His research focuses on the issues of conflict and competition in the ancient world and the social and intellectual developments that helped to create and shape the religious movements and texts of antiquity. Both sessions featured many examples from the texts and were designed for open discussion. No previous experience with Scripture Study is necessary.

Week One – "Matthew and the Synoptic Problem" focused on Matthew's relationship to other gospels and in particular his formulation of Jesus as Messiah.

Scripture Study: Matthew’s Gospel

April 7, 2014

(Second of Two sessions)

Week Two - "Matthew and the Law" covered how Matthew aimed to provide a guide for life in a newly formed Christian community.

Film: “Taking Root: The Vision of Wangari Maathai”

April 28, 2014

Wangari Maathai (1940-2011) was the founder of the Green Belt Movement and the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate. She authored four books: The Green Belt Movement; Unbowed: A Memoir; The Challenge for Africa; and

Replenishing the Earth. As well as having been featured in a number of books, she and the Green Belt Movement were the subject of a documentary film, *Taking Root: the Vision of Wangari Maathai* (Marlboro Productions, 2008).

Wangari Muta Maathai was born in Nyeri, a rural area of Kenya (Africa), in 1940. She obtained a degree in Biological Sciences from Mount St. Scholastica College in Atchison, Kansas (1964), a Master of Science degree from the University of Pittsburgh (1966), and pursued doctoral studies in Germany and the University of Nairobi, before obtaining a Ph.D. (1971) from the University of Nairobi, where she also taught veterinary anatomy. The first woman in East and Central Africa to earn a doctorate degree, Professor Maathai became chair of the Department of Veterinary Anatomy and an associate professor in 1976 and 1977 respectively. In both cases, she was the first woman to attain those positions in the region. (A co-presentation with Saint Susanna Peace and Justice Committee, Pat Ferrone Chair)

Father Steve's Book Group

May 5, 12 and 19, 2014 (Three Sessions)

In what is now a tradition, the group read and discussed a current book in the area of Faith and Religion, specially selected by **Father Steve Josoma**, Pastor of Saint Susanna Parish. Father Steve selected as this year's book **Quest for the Living God**, by Elizabeth A. Johnson, CSJ, Professor of Theology at Fordham University, New York (Continuum Publishing, 2007). It was originally last year's selection until the Marathon bombings led Father Steve to select the Kushner book dealing with issues of bad things happening to good people.

2012 / 2013

The Essence of Buddhism: Cultivating Inner and Outer Harmony
September 24, 2012 (one session)

What are the central tenets of Buddhism and how is this ancient wisdom relevant today? Presenter: **Wendy Garling**, a Tibetan Buddhist practitioner, holds an M.A. in Sanskrit Language and Literature from the University of California at Berkeley. She has been teaching Buddhist thought and practice in the Boston area for over ten years. In this overview presentation we learned about the Buddha's insights into human potential and his teachings on helpful ways we can view and navigate the world we live in. Wendy explored with us how we can use these tools to create a happier, more meaningful spiritual life. Coordinator: Jean Mudge

The Latter Day Saints: A presentation on the Mormon Church, its history and beliefs.

October 1, 2012 (one session)

Speakers: **Robert S. Wood**, a life-long figure in the LDS, including missionary service in France and South America, and leadership positions with the Church at its Salt Lake City Headquarters, and Mrs. **Dixie Leigh (Jones) Wood**. As Catholics who have lived through the anti-Catholic diatribes in both the Al Smith and John F. Kennedy campaigns for the presidency, we are called to a special awareness of this type of bigotry. Professor Wood and Mrs. Wood assisted in raising our awareness. Coordinator: Peter Hartzel

What are people saying about the Historical Jesus?

October 15, 2012 (one session)

Speaker: **Kelly Dunn**. In "The Quest for the Historical Jesus" Ms. Dunn discussed the questions: Who is the historical Jesus? How is that person different than the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith? Why is this important? The talk looked at the sources available for the person who wants to know the Jesus of history and the reliability of these sources, including the Gospels. Attention was paid to additional ways that one can come to better know and understand Jesus of Nazareth. Kelly Dunn received her MA in Theology from Boston College and an Advanced Certificate in Theology from

Weston Jesuit School of Theology. She was certified as a Catholic Chaplain in 1984 and has served in a variety of ministries, including Director of the Office of Health Care Ministry for the Archdiocese of Boston. She teaches Pastoral Care courses for that Office and the Office of the Permanent Diaconate. Since retirement she has taught a couple of courses for Regis College's retirement program including The Historical Jesus and Early Christianity. Coordinator: Dottie Parker

**Dorothy Day – Presentation by her granddaughter, Martha Hennessy
October 22, 2012 (one session)**

Ms. Hennessy describes herself as follows: “My name is Martha Hennessy and I live in Vermont with my husband Steven Melanson. My parents moved to Vermont in 1957 when I was two years old. Steven and I built our home across the field from where I grew up in Vermont and where our children were born. My grandmother, Dorothy Day was the co-founder of the Catholic Worker Movement begun in 1933. The Catholic Worker Movement has grown from one house in New York City to 180 houses of hospitality for the homeless around the world. As the seventh of Dorothy's nine grandchildren, I am committed to the Catholic Worker tradition of welcoming the needy, celebrating the dignity of work, and speaking out against war and injustice, all grounded on a foundation of prayer. In a spirit of gratitude I am available to give talks on the history of Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker movement and its most needed and relevant vision and application today. Through my travels to England, Mexico, Iran, Egypt, Iraq, the Rafah Border, and here at home in America I have come to know the suffering of the world's people and I take to heart the calling of my Roman Catholic baptism.” – a co-production with Saint Susanna Parish Peace and Justice Committee. Coordinator: Pat Ferrone

**America the Religious: Five Centuries Seeking the Promised Land – Puritans,
Politicians, Polemicists and Pragmatists
November 5 and 19, 2012, January 28, 2013 (Three sessions)**

In part a reprise of a course given several years ago, but updated and with an audio-visual enhancement. Instructor and Coordinator: Peter Hartzel.

November 5, 2012 -

PART I : COLONIAL TIMES: Native American Religion, Pilgrims and Puritans, Conservatives & Radicals, Witch Trials, 1st Great Reawakening, Independent Churches, Old Lights & New Lights.

November 19, 2012 –

PART II: REVOLUTION TO 1900: Millenaries, Communitarians, Revivalists, Civil War, African American Spirituality, Immigrants and the rise of American Catholicism.

January 28, 2013-

PART III: MODERN ERA 1890 -2000

Evangelicals, Fundamentalism, Social Gospellers, Pentecostalism, African American Churches/ Islam, War & Peace and Nuclear Age Issues, New Age Expressions, Catholicism broaches 21st Century

I Was A Stranger And You Welcomed Me (Matthew 25:35)

November 12, 2012 (one session)

Sister Patricia Andrews, CSJ spoke on Immigration in America. In her presentation Sister Pat cited some of the USCCB (bishops) comments and stance to give credence and a strong Christian/gospel response to this "hot bed" topic of comprehensive immigration reform. She also addressed some stereotypes and common misconceptions (e. g., drain on the economy; "why don't they get in line and come in like our relatives" [**there is no line!]), and gave emphasis to the efforts to pass the DREAM Act. Since 2000, Sister Pat has been Director of The Literacy Connection, which offers literacy programs and citizenship preparation programs, and holds a Master's Degree

from Suffolk University. She received the ABCD Community Award in 2010 for her work. A co-presentation with Saint Susanna Parish Peace and Justice Committee. Coordinator: Eileen Gorman

Documentary Movie - BAND OF SISTERS

November 25, 2012 (one session)

"Band of Sisters" follows the story of Catholic sisters from different congregations across the U.S. in their work for civil rights, women's rights, immigration reform, environmental justice and other causes. It also covers how the sisters increasingly find themselves on a collision course with more conservative elements in the church today. "I did exactly what the church asked me--and now, the church is looking at me like, where have you come from... who are you?" says Sister Nancy Sylvester, IHM, in the movie. The film coincides with the recent investigation of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) as well as the 50th anniversary of the second Vatican Council. **SPECIAL ADDITION TO THE SCHEDULE.** Coordinator: Tricia McKenna

Will the Real Nuns Please Stand Up

November 26, 2012 (one session)

A panel of sisters presented on a particularly timely issue, the Roman Catholic religious women in America, their history, their mission, their future. There was a panel of three nuns and one associate.

Sr. Anne Fahey, Sister of Charity, Halifax spoke on community.

Sr. Mary Jane Cavallo, Sister of Notre Dame, spoke on ministry.

Sr. Barbara Reney, Sister of St. Joseph, spoke on prayer and spiritual direction.

All three also talked about the rules of their founders and why they are different.

Jean Brown, as an associate of the Sisters of Charity, spoke on the role of the associate.

Oddly enough, even though many in our audiences had sisters as teachers or otherwise have interacted with women religious, the big picture is not there. At a time when the sisters are under investigation by the Vatican, this could not have been more timely. Coordinator: Jean Brown.

**Music as Worship: Congregational Psalms and Songs
from East and West**

December 3 and 10, 2012 (Two sessions)

“The Church knew what the psalmist knew: Music praises God. Music is well or better able to praise him than the building of the church and all its decoration; it is the Church's greatest ornament.” Igor Stravinsky

In a series of two lectures, Professor Andrew Shenton looked at Christian congregational singing, especially chant, and traces its use to the present day. Chant from East and West traditions was the springboard for a wide-ranging discussion exploring the huge legacy of music for worship and especially how it can be used in today's church to praise God and to enhance worship. **Presenter: Professor Andrew Shenton** of Boston University's Program in Sacred Music. Dr. Shenton is a scholar, prize-winning author, performer and educator based in Boston, Massachusetts. Born in England, his first professional music training was at The Royal College of Music in London. He holds a B.Mus. degree from there, a Master's degree from the Institute for Sacred Music, Worship and the Arts at Yale University and a Ph.D. in musicology at Harvard University. He has given recitals in such venues as King's College, Cambridge, Westminster Abbey, St. Paul's Cathedral, London, St. Thomas Church Fifth Avenue (New York debut), and Washington National Cathedral. His teaching specialties include sacred music, sacred art, and music of the world's religions. He is the James R. Houghton Scholar of Sacred Music and Director of the Master of Sacred Music program at Boston University. Coordinator: Deacon Larry Bloom

DVD – “The Saint of 9/11, the True Story of Father Mychal Judge,”

January 7, 2013 (one session)

The film is a biography of Father Mychal Judge, OFM, Chaplain to the New York City Fire Department, who gave his life at the September 11, 2001, disaster. In an enduring photograph of 9/11, a team of rescue workers carry a Franciscan priest's body from the World Trade Center. The world came to know Father Mychal Judge, in death as a symbol of courage and sacrifice. Saint of 9/11 represents the turbulent, restless, spiritual and remarkable journey of Father Mychal. Compassionate champion of the needy and forgotten, and a beloved New York City Fire Department Chaplain, he was a humble priest who wrestled with his own private demons while touching others in powerful and miraculous ways. Saint of 9/11 weaves interviews with friends, colleagues, and congregants and archival footage with Mychal's words and shows the full humanity of a special life interrupted. Narrated by Sir Ian McKellen. Features interviews with famed author Malachy McCourt and former New York City Fire Commissioner Thomas Von Essen.
Coordinator: Dottie Parker

Revisiting the Death Penalty and Sentencing in Serious Cases

January 14, 2013 (one session)

Presenter: Judge Paul Chernoff.

Capital Punishment keeps returning as a supposed cure-all to certain ills of society, despite its being abolished by a majority of the States in the U.S. and most of the civilized world, and despite its being deplored by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. In addition the goals of sentencing and the fashioning of an appropriate sentence raise very difficult moral and ethical issues. For example, "fairness" and "justice" may be mutually exclusive concepts and goals in sentencing. Also discussed was what a judge should do when the law requires one result, but that result would lead to a severe injustice. Mandatory sentencing also raises many important issues particularly in light of the June 2012 United States Supreme Court's 5 to 4 decision prohibiting mandatory life sentences for juveniles. **Jesus has called**

us as Christians to pay special heed to those in prison (“For I was in prison and you visited me.” Matthew 25) Judge Chernoff is a former Chairman of the Massachusetts Parole Board, and a retired Justice of the Massachusetts Superior Court. He served as a judge for 36 years and is now involved in mediation and arbitration work. He also is on the faculty of Boston College Law School. He previously addressed capital punishment at Saint Susanna Adult Faith Formation in November, 2006. Coordinator: Dottie Parker

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Visionary of a New Church

February 4, 2013 (one session)

Bonhoeffer was in the midst of envisioning an entirely new concept of church in the twentieth century when his life was tragically cut short by the Nazis. We were very fortunate to have as our **Presenter Professor Clifford J. Green**, who is widely recognized as a world expert in Bonhoeffer, was founding president of The International Bonhoeffer Society (English Language Section), and is Executive Director of the Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works (English Edition), the definitive multi-volume compendium of Bonhoeffer’s works. Coordinator: Peter Hartzel.

DVD - Richard Rohr, OFM

February 11, 2013 (one session)

This DVD presentation focusing on Father Rohr’s book, “The Naked Now” is a good introduction to Father Rohr’s work for those who are not acquainted with him. Learn to see as the mystics see! The enlightenment many are seeking in other religions has been present in Christianity from the very beginning. Richard Rohr in his book “The Naked Now, Learning to see as the Mystics See” helps us to recognize the forces at work that separate us from our true selves. Drawing from the Gospels and the traditions of the greatest Christian contemplatives, Fr. Richard shows us what it means to become spiritually awake and to open our hearts to the deeper meaning of Jesus’ teachings. Coordinator: Tim Sullivan

DVD - "Scarred Lands and Wounded Lives"

February 25, 2013 (one session)

The Environmental Footprint of War. In an on-line description of the film, these are some of the comments: "What prompts this film is recognition of our deep dependence on the natural world and the significant threat to that world posed by war and preparations for war...In all its stages, from the production of weapons through combat to cleanup and restoration, war entails actions that pollute land, air, and water, destroy biodiversity, and drain natural resources. Yet the environmental damage occasioned by war and preparation for war is routinely underestimated, underreported, even ignored. The environment remains war's "silent casualty." A co-presentation with Saint Susanna Parish Peace and Justice Committee. Coordinator: Pat Ferrone

DVD, "Monsenor Romero,"

March 4, 2013 (one session)

March is the anniversary month of Archbishop Romero's martyrdom. In El Salvador in the late Seventies, one man was the voice of the *campesinos*, the poor, the disenfranchised, and the Disappeared -- all struggling under the corrupt Salvadoran government. Appointed Archbishop in early 1977, Monsenor Oscar Romero worked tirelessly and in constant personal peril until the day he was assassinated in March 1980. Inspired by his friend Monsenor Rutilio Grande, himself murdered for speaking out against the social injustice around him, Romero broke off ties with the military and aligned himself with the poor, delivering messages of hope in weekly sermons which became national events. Encouraging direct action against oppression from his unique position in the Catholic Church, Romero preached a gospel of Heaven on Earth and a powerful version of Liberation Theology that directly impacted political events in El Salvador that still have meaning to this day. With rare recordings and film footage from Romero's

own collection and a wide range of interviews from those whose lives were changed by Archbishop Romero, including church activists, human rights lawyers, former guerrilla fighters and politicians, *Monsenor: The Last Journey of Oscar Romero* is a timely portrait of one individual's quest to speak truth to the rich and powerful forces which dominated his government. A co-presentation with Saint Susanna Parish Peace and Justice Committee.
Coordinator: Pat Ferrone

DVD: "Budrus"

March 11, 2013 (one session)

This documentary is an excellent presentation of real conflict being resolved with carefully conceived methods of nonviolence, sustained by a Palestinian community over a period of 10 months. It might be another good example of thoughtful activism following the Romero film which elaborates on Archbishop Romero's own spiritual transformation and subsequent prayerful and outspoken resistance to the powers-that-be in El Salvador. Presented in cooperation with the Saint Susanna Peace and Justice Committee,
Coordinator: Pat Ferrone

Sacred Scriptures: The Gospel of Luke

April 22 and 29, 2013 (Two sessions)

Luke's Gospel is the gospel for this liturgical year. The place and role of Luke in the New Testament was examined and explained. Each evangelist offers unique visions of Christ and composes his gospel with precise and passionate skill. Each strives to make Jesus' love real and powerful. How does Luke accomplish this? How can we respond to this love in a way that is faithful to both Luke's vision of Christ and to the relevance of this vision today? These are some questions explored in this presentation. The goal: to allow this Jesus who guides Luke's heart and hand to speak to us in surprising ways. A PowerPoint presentation was included as well as prayerful reflection and

discussion. **Instructor: Maria Costa.** She is a professional teacher of religion with a Master's Degree from Boston College, and has several years' experience in teaching the gospels. She is a parishioner of Saint Susanna Parish. Coordinator: Deacon Larry Bloom

Father Steve's Book Group

May 6, 13 and 20, 2013 (Three sessions)

In what is now a tradition, the group read and discuss a current book in the area of Faith and Religion, specially selected by Father Steve Josoma, Pastor of Saint Susanna Parish. In light of the Boston Marathon bombings, Father Steve decided it was important to explore the issues raised by this tragedy. We studied **The Book of Job: When Bad Things Happened to a Good Person** by Harold S. Kushner (Nextbook/Schocken, New York, 2012). Some may have read Rabbi Kushner's seminal work **When Bad Things Happen to Good People**, which came out a number of years ago, and this new book is a scriptural approach, based on the classic tale from the Scriptures. Kushner is Rabbi Laureate of Temple Israel, Natick, and author of more than a dozen books. Coordinator: Father Steve Josoma

Father Helmut Schuller: A Catholic Tipping Point

July 17, 2013

In **The Catholic Tipping Point: Conversations with Helmut Schüller** Father Schuller presented his call for inclusive and transparent changes to Church governance, including lay leadership of parishes and relaxing the restriction of priesthood to celibate males. Fr. Schüller, who once served Cardinal Christoph Schönborn as vicar general, is a priest in good standing of the Archdiocese of Vienna. (Added as a Special Event to the schedule, jointly presented with Voice of the Faithful. The talk was held at First Church and Parish, Dedham.) Coordinator: Deacon Larry Bloom

2011 / 2012

Updating Theology: What Catholics Believe Now, and Why

October 24, 2011 and March 19, 2012 (two sessions)

Father Joe Nolan, Boston College Professor and an old friend of Saint Susanna Parish, a frequent speaker at AFFC, who is poet, raconteur, professor, liturgist, had a very interesting program to present about baptism and original sin, the importance of symbol and myth, eschatology, ecumenism, the Mass, the new status of the laity, lay theologians, etc.

Brief Outline of Father Nolan's Lecture

The subject for discussing is UPDATING THEOLOGY:

What Catholics Believe Now, and Why

About...

baptism and original sin.

biblical scholarship (accepted by the Church since 1943)

the importance of symbol and myth..

eschatology (judgment, heaven, hell, purgatory. the influence of language and culture)

ecumenism - the opening to other religions. the end of anti-Semitism.

the Mass - sacrifice? yes. sacramental meal? yes. Adoration? Offering?

different models (or ways to think) about salvation

the new status of the laity. the Sant' Egidio movement. Lay theologians.

an example: what do these people (all orthodox believers!), Thomas Aquinas,

N.T. Wright, Josef Ratzinger, Karl Rahner, Brian Hebblewaite, Gerald

O'Collins, think about death and what really does happen?

These topics should be discussed because the church is divided into two large

groups: one thinks that truth is unchanging, it must be taught with authority,

and unquestioned. The other group does not think truth is relative but part

of what is called historical consciousness; time and culture influence our

beliefs and church teaching The church is far more aware now of two factors,

experience and empathy, that influence the way we believe.

[Coordinator: Deacon Larry Bloom]

Women and War: The Lineage of Women Peacemakers

November 7, 2011 (one session)

Speaker: Suzanne Belote Shanley, Peace Activist, Poet, and Educator. She completed her MA in English at the State University of New York at Buffalo and a post-Masters Degree (MPhil) in English at Simmons College in Boston, MA, where she taught in the late 70's for three years. Suzanne has taught college courses at Worcester State and Anna Maria College in Paxton, as well as courses at the Paulist Center in Boston, workshops and seminars at colleges throughout New England. She is co-founder of the AGAPE Community in Central Massachusetts, a lay Catholic residential community committed to sustainability, prayer, non-violence and witness. Suzanne's presentation is offered in college and university graduate and undergraduate programs, including Gender Studies, Women's Issues Classes in Women's Studies Programs, Peace and Conflict Studies courses, as well as in parishes. Her presentation included perspectives on women and war--philosophical, spiritual, feminist and psychological. (For more info visit:

www.agapecommunity.org.)

[This was a co-production with Saint Susanna Peace and Justice Committee, Pat Ferrone, Chair.]

The Interaction between Islamic Values/Ethics and Western Culture

November 14, 2011 (one session)

Professor Shari Lowin of Stonehill College spoke on this compelling current subject, using as her reference the concepts of suicide and martyrdom. Dr. Lowin is Associate Professor of Religious Studies, and holds a Ph.D. from the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, University of Chicago (2002). She does research on comparative aspects of early Islamic and rabbinic intellectual thought, focusing mainly on scriptural exegesis. Her book, *The Making of a Forefather: Abraham in Islamic and Jewish Exegetical Narratives* (2006), traces the mutual influences the traditions exerted upon one another as each created the forefather Abraham in their own image. Her current project, *Sex and God*, examines the use of Biblical and Qur`anic

characters made by erotic poetry-writing Jewish and Muslim religious scholars in medieval Andalusia. At Stonehill, she teaches various courses on Islam and Judaism, including a team-taught LC course that travels with the students to Europe. Dr. Lowin also directs the Middle East and Asian Studies Minor.

[Coordinator: Peter Hartzel]

The Faces of Homelessness

November 28, 2011 (one session)

The Massachusetts Housing & Shelter Alliance sponsors the Faces of Homelessness Speaker's Bureau program. The Bureau is comprised of homeless or formerly homeless individuals who share their experience with members of the community. The purpose of this presentation was to break down existing stereotypes as well as get more people actively involved in the fight to end homelessness. Two speakers (mother and daughter) who were victim of homelessness, shared their story and perspective. They were phenomenal, real, and put a human face on an issue that a semester of classes could not capture or convey. Two additional speakers (Andrew and Samantha from the Alliance) filled the audience in with the data and statistics. There was very good discussion at the end with much participation.

There is no doubt that no one there that evening will ever look at homelessness as they did in the past. (Part of our "What is Jesus Doing Nowadays?" series.) [Coordinator: Deacon Larry Bloom]

Eyewitness Gaza

December 5, 2011 (one session)

Skip Schiel, photo-journalist and peace activist, did a photo/video-based program based on his Quaker faith and his experiences in Palestine/Israel, documenting the violence and inhumanity of the Palestinian and Israeli conflict.

[Coordinator: Pat Ferrone. A co-production with the Saint Susanna Peace and Justice Committee]

The Ignatian Volunteer Corps
December 12, 2011 (one session)

As a part of our “What is Jesus Doing Nowadays?” series, we learned about a lay group of persons who dedicate themselves for a period of ten months at a time to doing as Jesus has asked us to do. IVC is mature men and women sharing their skills, talents and life experiences with organizations that directly assist people who are poor. At the same time they grow deeper in their Christian faith by reflecting and praying in the tradition of the founder of the Jesuits, St. Ignatius of Loyola. Dave Hinchey (Regional Director of the IVC), Jim McCarthy (Cassidy House), Ann Bersani (Hearth, Inc.) and Dave Sheehan (Irish International Immigrant Center) spoke about how this program has changed them, especially from a spiritual viewpoint.

[Coordinator: Deacon Larry Bloom.]

“Of Gods and Men”, A Film
January 9, 2012 (one session)

The monks at the Trappist monastery in Algeria seem almost to exist outside of time, so it may be a while before we recognize the 1990s as the setting for *Of Gods and Men*. And old traditions cannot escape new warfare in this stirring movie, based on a true story that happened at a remote enclave of peaceful, studious priests. These Christian monks minister to the largely Muslim (and very poor) villagers in their vicinity, a balance that is threatened by Algeria's Civil War. When nearby radical-Islamist insurgents begin killing foreigners, the monks must face a choice. Will they flee to safety--a perfectly rational and understandable decision that will leave the villagers without their only source of health care--or will they stay on, secure in their spiritual calling despite the possibility of abduction or murder? Director Xavier Beauvois makes an absorbing film from this question, and it's not at all difficult to understand why it became an unexpected box-office smash in

France (and ended up winning the Cesar award for best film of 2010). The film is beautifully cast, and sometimes Beauvois simply trains his camera on the lined, weathered faces of his priests, as though allowing those lines to tell the story. Heading the cast is Lambert Wilson (of *Matrix* fame), who leads his men with an almost regal bearing, and veteran actor Michael Lonsdale, who quietly inhabits the role of the physician in the group. The film takes time out for quiet contemplation, as though understanding that the priests' suspenseful situation is only half the story. The wordless climax, which allows the men to be animated by the earthly pleasures of wine and Tchaikovsky, is something of a spiritual journey of acceptance all on its own. It's a moment you'll find very difficult to forget.

[Coordinators: Linda Bates, Nancy Bates]

Mahatma Gandhi: The Man, the Mahatma and His Legacy

January 23, 2012 (one session)

Gandhi is one of those featured in Saint Susanna's Peace Chapel. Under the guidance of Peter Hartzel of our Adult Faith Formation Commission, we learned about this fascinating world figure, one of the most important people of the Twentieth Century. [Coordinator/Instructor: Peter Hartzel]

- "As It Is In Heaven," A Film

February 27, 2012 (one session)

Nominated for Best Foreign Film at the 2005 Academy Awards, *As It Is In Heaven* is the story of Daniel, a successful international conductor who returns to his childhood village in Sweden. Soon thereafter, the local church choir seeks him out to solicit his advice. He can't refuse, and nothing in the village is the same again. As the amateur choir develops and grows, he is drawn to the people of his old hometown, makes friends and finds love... A beautiful and engaging film, *As It Is In Heaven* is a wonderful story about life and love that is sure to inspire and delight.

[Coordinators: Fr. Steve Josoma, Linda Bates, Nancy Bates]

The Primacy of Conscience
March 5, 2012 (one session)

What happens when our own conscience will not allow us to defer to supposed teachings of our church? You'd be surprised! Father Bill Kremmell spoke on this vital topic. Fr. Kremmell discussed what is required in the formation of an "informed conscience" as well as the integrity needed to act on one. In a 1968 commentary by then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (now Pope Benedict XVI) on the Vatican II document on The Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et Spes*), he wrote "Over the pope ... there still stands one's own conscience, which must be obeyed before all else, if necessary, even against the requirement of ecclesiastical authority" Fr. Bill is a retired Pastor from St. Athanasius Parish in Reading and leads retreats and workshops on Spirituality.

[Coordinator: Dottie Parker]

Methods of Prayer
March 12, 2012 (one session)

: Jean Brown is a Consultant on Life Topics to the Sisters of Charity of Halifax as well as the Ursuline Sisters, and deals extensively with spiritual and religious issues with the sisters she works with. She has years of experience as a Master Teacher and Parish Health Minister, and holds a certificate in Spiritual Direction, and she has spoken on many occasions on methods of prayer. She has recently joined the Adult Faith Formation Commission. Jean presented on some of the many ways we can converse with God.

[Coordinators: Jean Brown, Deacon Larry Bloom]

"Updating Theology: What Catholics Believe Now, and Why,
March 19, 2012 (Part Two)

Father Nolan's course, commenced in October, concluded. See the October 17, 2011, course description.

Father Steve's Book Group

May 7, 14, and 21, 2012

An annual tradition. The book selection this year was

Insurrection - To Believe is Human, to Doubt, Divine, by Peter Rollins.

[Coordinator: Father Steve Josoma]

A Sampling of Book Reviews: In this incendiary new work, the controversial author and speaker Peter Rollins proclaims that the Christian faith is not primarily concerned with questions regarding life after death but with the possibility of life *before* death.

In order to unearth this truth, Rollins prescribes a radical and wholesale critique of contemporary Christianity that he calls *pyro-theology*. It is only as we submit our spiritual practices, religious rituals, and dogmatic affirmations to the flames of fearless interrogation that we come into contact with the reality that Christianity is in the business of transforming our world rather than offering a way of interpreting or escaping it. Belief in the Resurrection means but one thing: *Participation in an Insurrection*.

"What Pete does in this book is take you to the edge of a cliff where you can see how high you are and how far you would fall if you lost your footing. And just when most writers would kindly pull you back from edge, he pushes you off, and you find yourself without any solid footing, disoriented, and in a bit of a panic...until you realize that your fall is in fact, a form of flying. And it's thrilling."

--Rob Bell, author of *Love Wins* and *Velvet Elvis*

"While others labor to save the Church as they know it, Peter Rollins takes an ax to the roots of the tree. Those who have enjoyed its shade will want to stop him, but his strokes are so clean and true that his motive soon becomes clear: this man trusts the way of death and resurrection so much that he has become fearless of religion."

--Barbara Brown Taylor, author of *Leaving Church* and *An Altar in the World*

"Rollins writes and thinks like a new Bonhoeffer, crucifying the trappings of religion in order to lay bare a radical, religionless and insurrectional

*Christianity. A brilliant new voice—an activist, a storyteller and a theologian
all in one—and not a moment too soon.”*

--John D. Caputo, Thomas J. Watson Professor of Religion Emeritus, Syracuse
University

2010 / 2011

**Adam and Eve: Rising Apes or Fallen Angels: Theology and Biology on
Evolution**

September 20, 2010, one session

A live presentation by Dr. John Hart, Professor of Christian Ethics, Boston
University School of Theology, who enlightened us on the new and exciting
subject of the relationship between Evolutionary Science and Theology. Does
Darwin threaten Faith? Can Genesis and dinosaurs co-exist? Coordinator:
Peter Hartzel

Melting Mountains, Burning Bushes: Global Warming and Faith

September 27, 2010, one session

A live presentation by Dr. John Hart, Professor of Christian Ethics, Boston
University School of Theology, and consultant to the U.S. Conference of
Catholic Bishops. A must for those trying to reconcile their beliefs with the
new developments in science. Is re-cycling a moral imperative? Are tree-
huggers the new prophets? Coordinator: Peter Hartzel

Worship Practices and Moral/Ethical Practices: Which is the Cart and Which is the Horse?

October 18 and 25, 2010 (Two sessions)

Live lecture series by Father Joseph Nolan, Professor, Boston College, author of many books, the latest being “Rediscovering the Mass.” Does our worship and liturgical practice lead us to be good people, or do good people choose these types of worship? The two Monday night talks by Fr Joe Nolan explained, in depth, how symbols work, and their relation to liturgy. He learned this as a student under Raimon Panikkar at Harvard, but he presented an understandable (even an exciting) theology. It is, for example, completely wrong and now outdated to say of something that “it’s only a symbol.” How does all this (expressed in our Mass, for example) motivate us to happier lives and building a better society? Or fail to do so? Is the family meal a key symbol? Why is baptism, in one sense, the failed sacrament? “What’s a parish to do?” The answer he gives – fourfold – is all related to the coming of the kingdom – Jesus’ favorite metaphor – and what that really means. Another big theme is the quality of listening – to written as well as spoken words – and this is a powerful statement, drawing upon a great Italian novelist, and Elie Weisel, and the challenge to turn an “objective Christian” into a subjective (involved, passionate) Christian. Interspersed with examples and humor.

Kathy Kelly: “The Cost of War, the Price of Peace” – A Live Presentation

November 15, 2010 (One Session)

Kathy, who prior to this presentation had just come back from trips to Afghanistan and Pakistan, is a devoted peace activist, pacifist and author who has been nominated three times for the Nobel Peace Prize. She was a founding member of Voices in the Wilderness and is currently a co-coordinator of Voices for Creative Nonviolence. She has been part of more than 70 delegations to Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Gaza, bringing

medicine, relief and comfort to people in areas of extreme conflict and distress. Kathy has spent time in federal prison for planting corn on a nuclear missile silo site and for crossing the line at Fort Benning's military training school. Studs Terkel, remarking on her travels and passion for peace, writes, "Her hosts have been the men, women and children whose homes have been under constant fire. Her pilgrimages have one purpose: to reveal the lives of war's innocent victims." She and her companions embrace the belief that nonviolence necessarily involves simplicity, service, sharing of resources and nonviolent direct action in resistance to war and oppression. (A Joint Live Presentation with St. Susanna Peace and Justice Committee) **This is the first in a three-part series on Modern Day Prophets**

Rethink Afghanistan, a film

November 29, 2010 (One Session)

Established documentarian Robert Greenwald ("Iraq for Sale: The War Profiteers" & "Outfoxed: Rupert Murdoch's War on Journalism") brings his polemic attacks on US administration policy into the Obama era with this six front attack on the new President's decision to continue and even escalate the war in a region Al Qaeda has long since vacated.

The six distinct parts cover such broad subject areas as the cost of the war, security and civilian casualties with the usual mix of talking-heads and archive footage with some particularly shocking revelations coming out on the status of Afghan women, the potential destabilisation of Pakistan and the futility of an Iraq style troop surge. Professors Robert Pape and Andrew Bacevich head up the battalion of experts which includes Brave New Films alumni Pratap Chatterjee of CorpWatch, as well as Robert Baer and Graham Fuller of the CIA, and a host of fascinating new comers including author Stephen Kinzer, retired Russian general Ruslan Aushev and prospective Afghan president Ramazan Bashedost.

The reinvented television director wisely steers his impressive assemblage of

experts away from the origins of the war in the dark days of the Bush regime to expose the continuing myths and misunderstandings which continue to drive the policy of the incoming administration to make more of the same mistakes. (A Joint Production with St. Susanna Peace and Justice Committee)
(One session)

"Jesus Camp," a film

December 6, 2010 (One Session)

An insight into the impact religion makes on the lives of the young. REVIEW: The feverish spectacle of a summer camp for evangelical Christian kids is the focus of *Jesus Camp*, a fascinating if sometimes alarming documentary. (Shortly after its release, the movie gained a new notoriety when Ted Haggard, president of the National Association of Evangelicals, who appears near the end of the film, resigned his post amid a male prostitute's allegations of drug use and sexual misconduct.) For most of the film, we follow a charismatic teacher, Becky Fischer, as she trains young soldiers in "God's Army" at a camp in North Dakota. Some of the kids emerge as likable and bright, and eager to continue their work as pint-sized preachers; elsewhere, the visions of children speaking in tongues and falling to the floor in ecstasy are more troubling. Even more arresting is the vision of a generation of children home-schooled to believe that the Bible is science, or Fischer's certainty that America's flawed system of democracy will someday be replaced by a theocracy. (In one scene, a cardboard cut-out of George W. Bush is presented to the children, who react by laying their hands on the figure as though in a religious procession.) Filmmakers Heidi Ewing and Rachel Grady maintain neutrality about all this, maybe too much so (they throw in some interviews with radio host Mike Papantonio to provide a liberal-Christian viewpoint) and one would like to know more about the grown-ups presented here. Power broker Haggard is the creepiest person in the film, an insincere smooth talker whose advice to one of the young would-be campgoers comes across as entirely cynical. Time will tell whether the film's Christian soldiers will be marching onward. --Robert Horton

Etty, a live dramatic presentation.

January 24, 2011 (one session)

Susan Stein performed her one-woman play called "Etty" based on Etty Hillesum's writings (a brilliant, young Jewish woman caught in the midst of the Holocaust who wrestled with God, and ultimately accepted the death that came to her). The play has run in New York and internationally.

DESCRIPTION: *ETTY* is a touring one-woman theatrical play based on the diaries and letters of Etty Hillesum, adapted and performed by Susan Stein.

Directed by Austin Pendleton. Using only Etty Hillesum's words, Susan Stein's adaptation brings us to 1943 when Etty, a young Jewish woman, is about to be deported out of Holland. As she prepares for the three day journey eastward, she digs deeper into her soul to understand this piece of history and root out any hatred or bitterness, believing that humanity is the best and only solution for survival. Etty's words, insights and beliefs reach out from the Holocaust and allow us to see the power of hope and individual thought in the most extreme circumstances. In her gentle yet forthright way, Etty asks us not to leave her at Auschwitz but to let her have a bit of say in what she hopes will be a new world.

(A joint production with St. Susanna Peace & Justice Committee.)

The second in our Modern Day Prophets series!

Dr. Alynne MacLean. A live presentation.

February 14, 2011 (One session)

Alynne MacLean quit her job to follow her dream and bring hope to doctors in developing countries. In December 2000, Alynne quit her research job at Biogen, Inc. to start Science with a Mission, a non-profit organization that creates low-cost diagnostic tests for use in the developing world. The idea, says Alynne, is to develop tests for kidney disease and other ailments that are as simple to use as home pregnancy tests. Because of donations from U.S. pharmaceutical companies and initiatives by the World Health Organization, doctors in countries like the Dominican Republic have access to

the drugs they need to treat many diseases. But they don't have the tools they need to diagnose those diseases. After finishing her degree at Gordon College, Alynne knew she wanted to go on and get her doctorate in chemistry. First, she worked for two years and stayed home to help her mother after her dad died during her senior year of college. While looking at graduate schools, Alynne wanted to find a program that would allow her to help people as well. "In the background was always this concern," she says. "I even prayed and asked if I was supposed to be a missionary. I told God, 'O.K., you gave me this passion for chemistry and this desire to help people in the developing world. Tell me what I am supposed to do.'" Yet she says "I am not suffering for the Lord—I am doing something I love. I love being in the lab and seeing it all come together."

A joint presentation with St. Susanna Peace and Justice Committee. **The third in this year's Modern Day Prophets series**

Why Four Gospels?

March 14 and 21, 2011 (Two sessions)

Deacon Larry Bloom presented on the interesting questions: Why Four? Why not One? Why not Eleven? A live presentation on the many scriptures in existence during the early centuries of the Church, how some were accepted and some were rejected, and why.

"'Heaven's Bottom Rung is Heaven': Spiritual Ecumenism in a Time of Fragmentation"

March 28, 2011 (One session)

A live presentation by **Dr. Mark S. Burrows, Professor of the History of Christianity, Andover Newton School of Theology**, who presented on a spiritual approach to Christian Unity. Mark Burrows, Ph.D., joined the faculty of Andover Newton Theological School in 1993, where he is currently Professor of the History of Christianity and director of the program in Worship, Theology, and The Arts. Author and editor of numerous books and more than fifty articles, his writings explore a range of topics related to

medieval mysticism, aesthetics, poetics, and contemporary culture. He is an ordained minister of the United Church of Christ, and serves the denomination in its ecumenical partnership with the Protestant church in Germany. He is also an oblate at Glastonbury Abbey in Hingham, MA, where he regularly teaches a course on the poetic theology of Bernard of Clairvaux.

Catholics in America: Four Centuries Looking for the Kingdom

April 4 and 11, 2011 (Two sessions)

A review of the Catholic presence in America from the colonial period to the present. Peter Hartzel, presenter.

Seder Supper

April 19, 2011

Rev. Stephen Josoma

Father Steve's Book Group

May 2, 9 and 16, 2011 (Three sessions)

An annual tradition. This year's selection was **Tattoos on the Heart: The Power of Boundless Compassion**, by Gregory Boyle (Free Press, a Division of Simon & Schuster, Inc., New York, 2010).

Fr. Steve Josoma was Discussion Leader.

Reviews of the Book: From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. In this artful, disquieting, yet surprisingly jubilant memoir, Jesuit priest Boyle recounts his two decades of working with homies in Los Angeles County, which contains 1,100 gangs with nearly 86,000 members. Boyle's Homeboy Industries is the largest gang intervention program in the country, offering job training, tattoo removal, and employment to members of enemy gangs. Effectively straddling the debate regarding where the responsibility for urban violence lies, Boyle both recounts the despair of watching the kids you love cooperate in their own demise and levels the challenge to readers to stand in awe at what the poor have to carry rather

than stand in judgment at how they carry it. From moving vignettes about gangsters breaking into tears or finding themselves worthy of love and affirmation, to moments of spiritual reflection and sidesplittingly funny banter between him and the homies, Boyle creates a convincing and even joyful treatise on the sacredness of every life. Considering that he has buried more than 150 young people from gang-related violence, the joyful tenor of the book remains an astounding literary and spiritual feat.

"An astonishing book . . . about suffering and dignity, death and resurrection, one of my favorite books in years. It is lovely and tough and tender beyond my ability to describe and left me in tears of both sorrow and laughter." —

ANNE LAMOTT, AUTHOR OF GRACE (EVENTUALLY)

"Sometimes we are allowed to see in our own lifetimes what we were supposed to see in the life and ministry of Jesus. Read, and let your life be changed!" —FATHER RICHARD ROHR, O.F.M., CENTER FOR ACTION AND CONTEMPLATION, ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

2009 / 2010

Can Morality Be Legislated - And At What Price?

September 14 and 21, 2009, two week series

Theme: What is "morality" anyway? Why are some "bad" things perfectly legal, and some "good" things prohibited by law? Why are some things fine in one country and severely prohibited in another? Why not have the legislators just make everything that is bad illegal and then send them home for good? Who benefits from having bad things be perfectly legal? Why are moral codes and legal codes not exactly the same, wouldn't that be easier on all of us? These and many other questions were addressed in this

course. The Instructor: Deacon Larry Bloom, who holds a Doctorate from Harvard University with concentrations in ethics and legal history, and has been teaching in adult formation for over thirty years.

Coordinator: Deacon Larry Bloom

Meditation: Nexus of the Secular and the Spiritual

October 5 and 19, 2009, two session series

This course provided access to two tried and true avenues for approaching God and reaching inner peace, long known as effective and uplifting but sadly not often explored or utilized in our modern Western culture. Featured Speakers: Prof. Christopher Ives, Chair of Religious Studies, Stonehill College, spoke October 5 on Meditation; Father Harvey Egan, SJ, Dr. Theol., Professor of Theology, Boston College, spoke October 19 on Christian Mystics.

Coordinator: Peter Hartzel

Can the Church Keep its Young People?

October 26, 2009, a one session program

Featured Speaker: **Sister Nancy Corcoran, CSJ**, Catholic Chaplain at Wellesley College and author. Ever hopeful in the face of overwhelming odds, Nancy shared stories, insights and possibilities she has gained in the last twenty years as she reflected on the thoughts the younger generation share with her on a consistent basis. Nancy Corcoran, csj is the Catholic Chaplain at Wellesley College and a Provincial Counselor for the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet (St. Louis Province). Her academic background includes Regis College, St. Louis University Divinity School, Boston College, Black Catholic Institute, Mexican American Cultural Center, Dar al Islam, and finally she ended up at Harvard Divinity School. Coordinator: Deacon Larry Bloom

St. Peter's Basilica, the Church's Church, from Constantine to the Imperial Papacy

November 9 and 16, 2009, two week series

A study of St. Peter's Basilica, from the original basilica donated to the pope by Emperor Constantine in 326 C.E. to the second basilica's "completion" in the mid-1600s. Included among many topics was a look at the Renaissance Papacy, the role of the pope as a secular ruler of the Papal States, the unfortunate results of the squandering and rampant corruption in the church's construction, the many artists and other geniuses who contributed to the final result, and the connection between the fundraising "indulgence scandal" and the beginnings of the Protestant Reformation. Featured Speaker: Deacon Larry Bloom

Renewing the Earth: Catholic Documents on Peace, Justice and Liberation

November 30, 2009 a one session program.

(Produced jointly with Saint Susanna Peace & Justice - Outreach Committee) Featured speaker: David J. O'Brien, Ph.D., Loyola Professor of Roman Catholic Studies at the College of the Holy Cross, Worcester, who spoke on his seminal work on this subject.

The Diary of Sacco and Vanzetti

December 7, 2009, single session

Video presentation with comments from and discussion with the writer/director/producer. David Rothauer of Brookline has produced a docu-drama about the Sacco-Vanzetti case, titled The Diary of Sacco and Vanzetti, that has been broadcast on WGBH-TV. Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti were two Italian immigrants to America who were executed in 1927 after they were convicted of killing two people during a robbery at a shoe factory in South Braintree, Massachusetts. The trial took place right here in Dedham. Their controversial trial became a

political firestorm fueled by the anti-immigration hysteria that gripped post-World War I America. Many will see a parallel with today's anti-immigrant rhetoric. In this unique docu-drama, shot on location around Boston and Dedham where the actual events of the case took place, Rothauser portrays Vanzetti and uses Vanzetti's own letters, speeches and documents to revisit one of the nation's most notorious criminal cases. Mr. Rothauser, who was with us in person on the evening of December 7 for commentary and discussion, began his career as an actor while living in Paris, France. As a writer Mr. Rothauser was awarded a First Place Massachusetts Artists Fellowship for his stage play THE FIRST ALL-AMERICAN PRESIDENT, and won a Blue Ribbon at the American Film Festival in NY for A GOOD EXAMPLE: Bertolt Brecht and HUAC. David is a recipient of the Sacco-Vanzetti Social Justice Award from the Community Church of Boston for this film.

Origins of Christian Traditions and Beliefs: Zoroaster

January 11, 2010, a one session program

A presentation in lecture form on the influence of the ancient faith of Zoroastrianism on the Christian faith system. Course Description: Did you ever wonder why God passed on such great teachings and stories just to this little group of Israelites, and then to this even smaller group of Christ-followers, by way of the Bible? But wait! What if it turns out that many of these teachings and stories WERE given to others, maybe in slightly different form, maybe exactly as given in the Bible, sometimes centuries before they ever showed up in the Scriptures? Wouldn't you like to learn more about that? If so, then this program is right for you, as we begin a potential series of programs on precursors to Judaeo-Christian beliefs.

Featured Speaker: Peter Hartzel.

On the Waterfront

February 8, 2010, a one session program

An Audio-Visual Presentation in DVD form, "On the Waterfront," a classic film in which Marlon Brando and Karl Malden play out the Christian ethical dilemma in a modern setting. Cited as the premier performance of Karl Malden. Discussion followed.

Early Christianity

March 8 – 22, 2010, three sessions

A three part series providing insight into the cultural, social and theological cauldron in which Christianity took form in the post Apostolic period (64-311 C.E.)

- The Roman Persecutions / Christian Martyrs - March 8
- Evolution of Creedal Christianity - March 15
- 1st Century Roman and Jewish Culture- March 22

Presented by Professor John Lanci of Stonehill College and Peter Hartzel of the Saint Susanna Adult Faith Formation Commission. Professor Lanci (along with Professor Mary Joan Leith) was with us last season in the multi-part series on Saint Paul, which all found revealing, worthwhile - and hilarious. He has written extensively on the early Church. Peter Hartzel is one of the experienced instructors on the Saint Susanna Adult Faith Formation Commission. He has taught several series in our programs, including courses on Christian Agents of Change, The Crusades, The Inquisition, Religious Symbolism and the Religious Experience in America.

Seder Supper

March 30, 2010

Rev. Stephen Josoma

Film: Pray the Devil Back to Hell

April 12, 2010, single session

“Pray the Devil Back to Hell” has won multiple awards and rave reviews. This program was presented in collaboration with the St. Susanna Peace and Justice Committee. The film is about women from Liberia who, non-violently and creatively, stand up to the government.

Emerging Christianity

April 19, 2010, single session

We presented a video of the very dynamic Fr. Richard Rohr, O.F.M. followed by a discussion moderated by Dr. Don Pachuta, who attended both national conferences sponsored by Fr. Richard. The Emerging Church is reputed to be the most exciting and inspiring movement in Christianity in the last 500 years.

Eastertide Scripture Study Program: The Hebrew Scriptures

April 26, May 3, 10 and 17, 2010, four session program

Each week we hear readings from what we call the Old Testament, and this was an opportunity to learn about them in depth in this course. Cited were the numerous references to these scriptures by the New Testament writers and we examined whether they had anything to do with Jesus of Nazareth. We looked through the eyes of Jewish scholars to see if there really is a Judeo-Christian heritage. Featured Speaker: Dr. Don Pachuta.

A Special Presentation: Sister Nancy Kehoe, Ph.D.

Presentation and Book Signing

April 29, 2010, single session

Noted author **Sister/Doctor Nancy Kehoe, RSCJ**, of the Harvard Medical School faculty spoke on the topic of her latest book, **Wrestling with Our Inner Angels: Faith, Mental Illness, and the Journey to Wholeness**. Anyone with mental health issues in the family or among one's friends would find this

topic immensely helpful, as it explores the until-recently unexamined relationship between faith and mental health.

Father Steve's Book Discussion Group
How Big Is Your God? The Freedom to Experience the Divine
By Paul Coutinho, SJ

June 7, 14, 21, 2010, three sessions
Discussion Leader: Father Steve Josoma

2008 / 2009

Christian Agents of Change

September 22 through October 6, 2008, three week series

- Francis and Clare of Assisi: Heralds of Modernity
 - Martin Luther: Monk in the Middle
- Pierre Teilhard deChardin: Toward the Future

Instructor/Coordinator: Peter Hartzel

Islam

October 20 and 27, 2008, two week series

Dr. James Morris, Professor of Islamic Studies at Boston College, has previously taught at Princeton University and the Sorbonne in Paris. He has published many books in the field, three since 2004, and has another in print.

Professor Morris led off the course with the basic teachings of the Qur'an and hadith in an introduction to the religion of Islam, entitled "**Surrendering to Peace**": the Qur'an and Foundations of Islam. He was followed in the second week by Riham Bahi, Ph.D., from the faculty of Cairo University, a

visiting professor at Bryant University in Rhode Island and a Fulbright recipient, who spoke on **“Contemporary Islam in the Middle East Region.”**
Coordinators: Linda & Nancy Bates

The Life and Work of St. Paul

November 3, 10 and 17, 2008, three sessions

Professors Mary Joan Leith and John Lanci of Stonehill College in a Socratic dialogue format presentation. Topics:

11/3 Paul’s experience of/understanding of Jesus ~ Paul’s understanding of his mission ~ Paul as a missionary of Christ in the Greco-Roman world and its challenges

11/10 Paul and Women ~ Paul and the question of Jews and Gentiles

11/17 Paul and the Roman Empire ~ Peter and Paul

Coordinators: Betty Murray, Sally Gould, Arlene DiPhillipo, MaryBeth Kabat

Film: For the Bible Tells Me So

December 1, 2008, single session

A significant film on a topic of great importance in the current age. The film, 98 minutes, was followed by a voluntary discussion period. Winner of the Audience Award for Best Documentary at the Seattle International Film Festival, Dan Karlake's provocative, entertaining documentary brilliantly reconciles homosexuality and Biblical scripture, and in the process reveals that Church-sanctioned anti-gay bias is based almost solely upon a significant (and often malicious) misinterpretation of the Bible. As the film notes, most Christians live their lives today without feeling obliged to kill anyone who works on the Sabbath or eats shrimp (as a literal reading of scripture dictates).

Through the experiences of five very normal, very Christian, very American families -- including those of former House Majority Leader Richard Gephardt

and Episcopal Bishop Gene Robinson -- we discover how insightful people of faith handle the realization of having a gay child. Informed by such respected voices as Bishop Desmond Tutu, Harvard's Peter Gomes, Orthodox Rabbi Steve Greenberg and Reverend Jimmy Creech, FOR THE BIBLE TELLS ME SO offers healing, clarity and understanding to anyone caught in the crosshairs of scripture and sexual identity.

Coordinators: Nancy & Linda Bates

Ethnicity, Race and Religion: The Rwanda Experience

January 26, 2009 – Single Session

A presentation with audio-visual material by Carol Geyer of The Paraclete Foundation, who recently spent several months in Rwanda in connection with the work of the Foundation, which works with the education of the poor in both South Boston and Rwanda. A nice counterpoint to our more academic programs. The presentation was packed with interesting and emotion-laden facts on faith and religion enmeshed in race and politically engendered genocide.

Coordinator: Peter Hartzel

Celtic Christianity: A Sacred Tradition, A Vision of Hope

March 9, 2009 - Single Session

Father Timothy Joyce, OSB, Sub-prior of Glastonbury Abbey, presented on a subject well known to him, the topic of his recent book. He spoke on the relevancy of the Celtic beliefs and culture for today's Christians and with a world-wide view for all religions.

Coordinator: MaryBeth Kabat

Current Christian Anti-Semitism

March 16, 2009 - Single Session

Father Walter Cuenin, STD, Catholic Chaplain at Brandeis University, discussed a topic which is particularly timely, given the current controversy between the Jewish community and the Vatican over the remarks of Bishop Williamson, recently relieved of his excommunication by Pope Benedict.

Unfortunately, anti-Semitism within the Christian churches is not just historical fact but a current reality. Father Cuenin spoke from his own personal experience of many years as an active participant in the Jewish-Christian dialogue.

Coordinator: Verona Mazzei

Faith Communities and The Spiritual Imperative of Environmentalism

March 23 and March 30, 2009 - Two Sessions

On March 23 we presented the award-winning documentary film "Renewal", which depicts faith communities – Christians, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists – and how they tackle environmental problems around the country. The producer of the film, Marty Ostrow, came and spoke as well as answering questions. On March 30, Dot Walsh of the Peace Abbey appeared with a short film and presentation on food choice as a spiritual practice that contributes to the healing of the planet. Father John Dear's publication on this topic was available as a handout that evening.

Coordinator: Pat Ferrone

A Special Night with Father Joe Nolan

March 26, 2009 - Single Session

Father Joe Nolan, Emeritus Professor at Boston College, Liturgist, Poet, Raconteur, presented on his new book, **A Life in Liturgy: Rediscovering the Mass**, which recounts his life in the liturgy and the liturgical changes since the Second Vatican Council.

Coordinator: Christie Syner

Seder Supper

April 7, 2009

Rev. Stephen Josoma

Bible Study:

Are the Six Gospels and the Eastern and Western Churches talking about the same Jesus?

April 27 - May 18, 2009 – Four sessions

Yes, we have at least six gospels if you count the source Gospel Q and the Gospel of Thomas. A marked difference exists in the Jesus of each gospel and between them and the Christ of Paul's Epistles. Since the Eastern Churches were established first, why are there such drastically different ideas, interpretations, and theology from the West? Instructor/Coordinator: Dr. Don Pachuta.

An Evening with James Carroll and His New Book, *Practicing Catholic* Presentation and Book-Signing

April 30, 2009, single session

PRACTICING CATHOLIC is a personal history of the American Catholic Church during Carroll's lifetime. *Practicing Catholic* is for the millions of practicing, questioning, or lapsed Catholics and others who are searching for a way to reconcile the acts of Church leaders with the faith and the Church they still want to claim as their own. James Carroll is a columnist for *The Boston Globe* and a bestselling author. His 2001 book, *Constantine's Sword: The Church and the Jews: A History* (2001), was a *New York Times* bestseller and was honored as one of the Best Books that year by the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, and others. Coordinators: Christie Syner, Linda Bates

Father Steve's Book Discussion Group
James Carroll's Practicing Catholic.
June 1, 8 and 15, 2009, three sessions
Discussion Leader: Father Steve Josoma

2007 / 2008

Faithful Dissenters

September 10 - October 1, 2007 - Four week series

Father Steve Josoma and guest speakers presented on those valiant and courageous Catholics who, despite vigorous opposition from the church hierarchy, present different views of the church while remaining within it.

September 10 – *Historical and current struggles within the Church* - Fr. Stephen Josoma, St. Susanna's Parish and Attorney Sharon Harrington, St. Albert the Great Parish (Weymouth, Ma)

September 17 – *The Liberation Theology Movement* - James B. Nickoloff, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Religion, Holy Cross College

September 24 – *A Matter of Conscience* - Fr. James Keenan, SJ, STD, Professor of Theological Ethics, Boston College

October 1 – *Women in the Church: Crises and Controversies* - Mary Ann Hinsdale, IHM, Ph.D., Professor of Theology, Boston College

Coordinators: Fr. Steve Josoma, Linda Bates, Pat Ferrone

Special Event: Author Nancy Corcoran, CSJ

September 18, 2007

Author Sister Nancy Corcoran spoke on her book,

Secrets of Prayer: A Multifaith Guide to Creating Personal Prayer in Your Life

Coordinator: Christine Syner

What is Jesus Doing Nowadays?

October 15 – 29 - Three week series

October 15 ... Scott Schaefer-Duffy's presentation on "Becoming a Peacemaker: An Evening with International Peace Activist and Catholic Worker Scott Scaeffler-Duffy

October 22 ... "Gospel Walking With the Poor" presented by Sister Nancy Braceland

October 29 ... Lou Maloof on the Situation in Palestine
Producers: Arlene DePhillipo, Pat Ferrone

Issues and Events in Church History

November 19, 2007 – January 7, 2008, plus June 2, 2008 (snow date) (Seven week series)

November 19 – The Churches Founded by the Apostles: What a Difference Millennia Make

Presenter: Dr. Don Pachuta

November 26 – From Community to Creeds: The Development of Authority, Dogma and Doctrine

Presenter: Dr. Don Pachuta

December 3 – The Crusades: Islam Meets the West – Success or Failure

Presenter: Peter Hartzel

December 10 – Heresy and Inquisition

Presenter: Peter Hartzel

December 17 – Missionaries, Conversion and Proselytism

Presenter: Patrick Provost-Smith, Ph.D., Professor of the History of Christianity, Harvard Divinity School

January 7– Divisions in the Church – Part One: The Chalcedon Split and the Great Schism

Presenter: Deacon Larry Bloom

June 2, 2008 (Originally scheduled for January 14) – Divisions in the Church

Part Two: The Reformation
Presenter: Deacon Larry Bloom
Producers: Peter Hartzel, Don Pachuta, Deacon Larry Bloom

Religious Symbols: The Real Deal

January 28, 2008 – February 11, 2008 (Three week Series)

January 28, 2008 – Symbolism and the Modern World

Presenter: Dr. Ann Wetherilt, Professor and Chair, Dept. of Religious Studies,
Emmanuel College

February 4, 2008 – An Overview of Symbols

Presenter: Peter Hartzel

February 11, 2008 – Use of Greek Characters in Church Symbolism and
Church Symbolism of Early Twentieth Century

Presenter: Deacon Larry Bloom

Producer: Peter Hartzel

Celebrating Women

February 25 – March 3, 2008 (Two Week Series)

February 25, 2008 – Sister Patricia Norton Speaking on Her Life as a Minister
And Her Hopes for the Future

March 3, 2008 – “Don’t Call Me A Saint” - A video presentation
of the life of

Dorothy Day, Founder of the Catholic Worker Movement

Program Coordinators: Betty Murray, Sally Gould

Seder Supper

March 18, 2008

Rev. Stephen Josoma

A Resurrection People

March 31 and April 14, 2008

A Two-Part Presentation by Noted Author and Emeritus Professor at Boston
College

Father Joseph Nolan

Producer: Betty Murray

Religious Environmentalism

April 7, 2008

A Lecture Presentation by

Professor Roger S. Gottlieb, Professor of Philosophy, Worcester Polytechnic
Institute

And Author of A Greener Faith: Religious Environmentalism and Our Planet's
Future

Producer: Linda Bates

Book Discussion Group

April 28 through May 19, 2008 – Four week series

CALLED TO QUESTION: A SPIRITUAL MEMOIR

By Sister Joan Chittister, OSB

Discussion Leader: Rev. Stephen Josoma

Special Event: Bishop Geoffrey Robinson

May 29, 2008, single session

A lecture by Bishop Geoffrey Robinson based on his book
Confronting Power and Sex in the Catholic Church: Reclaiming the Spirit of
Jesus

Co-Sponsored by Boston Council, Voice of the Faithful

Co-Coordinator for St. Susanna Adult Formation: Christine Syner

Co-Coordinator for Boston VOTF: Sharon Harrington

2006 / 2007

Forbidden Books

September 11, 18, 25, 2006 – Three week series
The Gospel of Judas, the Gnostic Gospels of Mary Magdalene, Philip and
Thomas, other Gnostic texts,
and comparative review of The DaVinci Code
Producer/Presenter: Deacon Larry Bloom

Evenings of Scripture Study

Periodically throughout the Fall, 2006
Producer/Presenter: Don Pachuta, M.D.

Gospel Non-Violence: The Great Failure, the Only Hope

October 16, 23, 30, 2006 – Three week series
Speaker: Rev. Emanuel Charles McCarthy, Nobel Prize Nominee
[Co-Presented by Parish Outreach Committee, Pat Ferrone, Chair]
Coordinators: Linda Bates, Nancy Bates.

Major Issues in Catholic Ethics

November 6 – November 27, 2006 – Four week series
November 6.....End of Life Care - Speaker: Edwin Cassem, SJ, MD, Chief of
Psychiatry, Mass. General Hospital
November 13.....Stem Cell Research: The Global AIDS Epidemic, Presented
by: Don Pachuta, M.D.
November 20.....Capital Punishment: Legal and Moral Issues – Speakers:
Honorable Paul Chernoff, Associate Justice, Massachusetts Superior Court,
and Rev. Stephen Josoma

November 27.....The Moral Teachings of the Catholic Church: The Challenge
of Interpretation- Speaker: Rev. Walter Cuenin, STD, Catholic
Chaplain, Brandeis University
Coordinator: Don Pachuta, M.D.

A Day of Scripture

(Based on Introduction to the New Testament by Rev. Raymond Brown)

November 11, 2006

Producer/Speaker: Don Pachuta, M.D

America the Religious: Mayflower to the Moral Majority

January 8, 22, February 5, 12, 2007 – Four week series

A Study of the Religious Experience in America

Produced/Presented by: Peter Hartzel

The Sacraments: History & Practice

March 5, 12, 26, 2007 – Lenten series – Three week series

Speakers: Rev. Walter Cuenin, STD, Catholic Chaplain, Brandeis University,
and Rev. Joseph Nolan, Emeritus Professor, Boston College

March 5.....Overview of History of the Sacraments – Fr. Cuenin

March 12.....Baptism and Confirmation, and other Sacraments – Fr. Cuenin

March 26.....Eucharist and Reconciliation, and other Sacraments – Fr. Nolan

Coordinators: Elizabeth Murray & Sally Gould

Special Event: Resurrection Chorale

March 30, 2007

Oratorio by St. Patrick's Players

Coordinator: Christine Syner

Seder Supper

April 3, 2007
Rev. Stephen Josoma

Cosmology: Fundamentals of Creation - Mysteries of the Universe, Long Ago and Far Away

April 16, 2007

Speaker: Prof. Alessandro Massarotti, Department of Physics, Stonehill College

Coordinators: Teri Seeley & Peter Hartzel

Scripture Study: Controversies in Scripture

April 23 – May 21, 2007 – Five week series

April 23. The Place of the Jews in scripture and for the next two millennia. An in-depth look at the history of the Jewish people, especially in regard to their treatment by Christians, then and now.

Speaker: Rev. Walter Cuenin, STD, Catholic Chaplain, Brandeis University

April 30. Women in the New Testament the Early Church, and now. Jesus above all, upheld the dignity and importance of women, at a time when all the cultures of his day held them as nothing more than slaves to men. This is especially so in the gospels of Luke and John. We explore the scriptures and the writings of the early and later fathers and doctors of the Church, as well as the errors in translation, deliberate or otherwise.

Speaker: Don Pachuta, M.D.

May 7. Secrets of Scripture. For millennia and today, people search for hidden meanings in the bible. Of all the many controversies in the interpretation and exegesis of scripture, translation lies at the source of most. We explore the historical context of some key books, as well as major errors in translation of Hebrew and Greek. We explore the nature of sin and evil, in an attempt to answer everyone's burning question of why is there

evil in the world, and to examine how these concepts overtook love as the dominant theme of our religion.

Speaker: Don Pachuta, M.D.

May 14. The scriptural and early fathers' interpretation of the Incarnation, Ministry, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus. Why we believe what we believe. What is the critical difference between the early church, the early fathers, and the present time, on how these sacred mysteries at the heart of our religion are held?

Speaker: Don Pachuta, M.D.

May 21. The Book of Revelation . We conclude this year's scripture with the last and most controversial book of the New Testament. This book belongs to a genre called apocalyptic literature. Is this book prophetic, historical, imaginary, a warning, or a combination? Why did early Christian communities reject it? Why do most people not want to read or study it?

Speaker: Don Pachuta, M.D.

Book Discussion Group

June 4 – 25, 2007 – Four week series

THE PRACTICAL PROPHET by Bishop Ken Untener

Discussion Leader: Rev. Stephen Josoma

2005 / 2006

Hot Buttons for Catholics

September 19 – October 24, 2005

Five week series

September 19.....The Papacy - Professor Patricia deLeeuw, Boston College

September 26.....The Priesthood of the Laity - Fr. Walter Cuenin Pastor

Our Lady Help of Christians Parish, Newton, MA

October 5.....The Church and Sexuality - Fr. Joe Marchese, Boston College

October 17.....Emotional and Psychological Implications of Being a Catholic in
an

Age of Transition – Fr. James Burns, Ph.D., McLean Hospital

October 24.....The Changing Face of the Church in Boston 2000-2005 –
Discussion Panel

Steve Kreuger- Co-founder VOTF

Senator Marian Walsh

Fr. Robert McMillan, S.J., Archdiocesan Planning Office

Sister Mary Ann Doyle, CSJ, Planner, Archdiocesan School Office

Rev. Stephen Josoma

Coordinator: Don Pachuta, M.D.

Women in the Church

November 21 – December 12, 2005

Three week series

November 21.....Mary Magdalene – Video and discussion

November 28.....Great Women of The Church - Professor Patricia deLeeuw,
Boston College

December 12.....The Future of Women in the Church - Mary Jane England,
M.D., President, Regis College

Coordinator: Sally Gould

Special Event: “A Dancer’s Christmas”

December 12, 2005

Boston Liturgical Dance Ensemble at Robsham Theater, Boston
College Coordinator: Christine Syner

Inter-Faith Understanding Series

January 9 – February 13, 2006

Five week series

January 9.....Protestantism - Professor James Weiss, Boston College

January 23The Orthodox Church - Very Rev. Fr. John K. Teebagy,
St. John of Damascus Syrian Orthodox Church

January 30.....Judaism - Professor / Rabbi Ruth Langer, Boston College

February 6.....Islam - Imam Ibrahim Sayar and Salih Yucel, Boston Dialogue
Foundation

February 13.....Buddhism - Professor Christopher Ives, Chair, Dept. of
Religious Studies, Stonehill College

Coordinator: Peter Hartzel

Discovering Spirituality: An Introspective

March 13, 20, 27, 2006 – Three week series

Presenters: Sister Betsy Conway, CSJ, Susan Troy, M.Div., Betty Murray and
Deacon Larry Bloom

Coordinator: Elizabeth Murray

Seder Supper

April 11, 2006

Rev. Stephen Josoma

Special Event: Author Angela Bonavoglia

April 28, 2006

Author Angela Bonavoglia speaks on her book,
GOOD CATHOLIC GIRLS,

A “Top Ten Women’s History Books of 2005” selection

Coordinator: Christine Syner

Bible Study: The Gospel of John

April 24 – May 15, 2006 – Four week series

An in-depth study of “The Mystical Gospel”

Emphasis on light and darkness, treatment of women

Reference text: The Gospel and Epistles of John, by Rev. Raymond Brown

Instructor: Don Pachuta, MD

Book Discussion Group

May 22, June 5, 12, 19, 2006 – Four week series

THE SINS OF SCRIPTURE by Bishop John Spong

Discussion Leader: Rev. Stephen Josoma

2004 / 2005

Day of Healing

September 18, 2004

Don Pachuta, M.D., and Rev. Stephen Josoma

Workshop: Lay-led Communion Services

October 24, 2004

Producer/Presenter: Deacon Larry Bloom

Biblical Exegesis Explained

October 28 - November 1, 2004

Three week series

Presenter: Peter Hartzel

Bible Study: Gospel of Matthew

November 8 – 22, 2004

Three week series

Presenter: Deacon Larry Bloom

One-Woman Dramatic Presentation on Mary

December 2, 2004

Coordinator: Elizabeth Murray

History of Catholic Church

January 10 - February 7, 2005

Five week series

Presenters: Deacon Larry Bloom, Don Pachuta, M.D.

Keynote Speaker: Professor Patricia deLeeuw, Boston College

Jesus and Paul

February 28 – March 14, 2005

Peter Jennings video– Three week series

Coordinator: Elizabeth Murray

Seder Supper

March 22, 2005

Rev. Stephen Josoma

A Time for Healing

April – May, 2005

Four week series

In-depth exploration of Healing and Prayer, Spirituality, mind-body connections

with Meditation and other practical exercises

Producer/Presenter: Don Pachuta, M.D.

Book Discussion Group

May 16 - June 6, 2005

Four week series

IMAGINING A NEW CHURCH, Bill Huebsch, editor

Discussion Leader: Rev. Stephen Josoma

2003 / 2004

The Contemporary Church in Light of Vatican II

October 2 – 23, 2003 (four week series)

AIM Lecture Series

Eileen Snow, Lecturer

The Vision of Vatican II for Today

November 3 – December 1, 2003

Five week video series

Recorded Lectures by Fr. Michael Himes – Boston College

Coordinators: Sally Gould and Deacon Larry Bloom

Lay Ministry Workshop

January 18, 2004

Demonstration of Liturgy of the Hours – Antiphonal – lay-led

Demonstration of Communion Services – lay-led

Deacon Larry Bloom, Instructor/Coordinator

Day of Healing

February 21, 2004

An Exploration of the Nature of Healing in Scripture, Prayer, Meditation

Presenters: Rev. Stephen Josoma, Don Pachuta, M.D. and Deacon Larry

Bloom

From Jesus to Christ

March 1-24, 2004

Four week video series

Coordinator: Betty Murray

Seder Supper

April 6, 2004

Rev. Stephen Josoma

Acts of the Apostles

April 26 -May 17, 2004

Scripture Study with Background and History

Four session series

Presenters: Deacon Larry Bloom, Don Pachuta, M.D.

Book Discussion Group

June 4 – 25

Four week series
TOMORROW'S CATHOLIC by Michael Morwood, MSC
Discussion Leader: Rev. Stephen Josoma

2002 / 2003

Bus trip to Holocaust Art, McMillan Art Museum
And
Lecture by Cardinal Walter Casper,
President of the Pontifical Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews
November 6, 2002
Coordinator: Deacon Larry Bloom

Soup with Sister Bridget Haase
March 10 – April 17, 2003
Five Weeks of Lenten Reflections
Coordinators: Rev. Stephen Josoma, Karen McDougall, Deacon Larry Bloom

Seder Supper
April 14, 2003
Rev. Stephen Josoma

Revised: April 20, 2017