

PHILOSOPHERS IN JESUIT EDUCATION

President's Welcome

by Tom Cavanaugh

PHILOSOPHERS IN JESUIT EDUCATION ANNUAL LECTURE

Professor Roosevelt Montás (Columbia University) will deliver the Philosophers in Jesuit Education Annual Lecture on May 22, 2024, at 12pm Eastern. The lecture will focus on his new book, *Rescuing Socrates: How the Great Books Changed My Life and Why They Matter for a New Generation*. All are welcome!

Join us over Zoom at:

<https://usfca.zoom.us/j/82442467946>

Pax et bonum from the City of Saint Francis and its Jesuit University of San Francisco! Philosophers in Jesuit Education sponsored the third annual Joseph Koterski, S.J. satellite session on 17 November 2023 at the ninety-seventh annual meeting of the American Catholic Philosophical Association in Houston, TX. Professors Lorraine Keller (Saint Joseph's University, Philadelphia), Joe Vukov (Loyola University, Chicago) and Tom Cavanaugh (University of San Francisco) addressed the topic of "Cura Personalis and the Human Person." Respectively, they spoke on cura personalis as bearing on the pedagogy of Saint John Newman, AI, and philosophy of the human person.

In this issue, we feature an interview with Kelsey Boor (Boston College). For our edification and encouragement in our own teaching, research, and service, Amy Seymour (Fordham) offers her thoughts.

On Wednesday, May 22nd, at 12 pm (Eastern) Professor Roosevelt Montás of Columbia University will speak about his recent book, *Rescuing Socrates: How the Great Books Changed My Life and Why They Matter for a New Generation* (Princeton University Press, 2021). As noted in the Los Angeles Review of Books: "Rescuing Socrates can be the beginning of a wider conversation between teachers. ... [it] places the educational values of the liberal arts at the center of an ongoing debate." You will want to tune in; mark your calendars! See the Zoom link in the box to the left.

Finally, we invite you to join us for the next annual gathering of PJE to be held as a satellite session of the November 14-17, 2024 American Catholic Philosophical Association's meeting in Chicago, IL -- aptly hosted by Loyola University, Chicago! Our satellite session will be a panel on "text recommendations for the core". Come and learn about readings that work in core classes. We hope to see you there! Blessings on your good work of carrying out the Jesuit mission!

Thomas Anthony Cavanaugh
President of Philosophers in Jesuit Education
Professor of Philosophy
University of San Francisco
AMDG



Discipleship and the Life of the Mind

By: Amy Seymour (Fordham)

One of my favorite things about my students is their burning curiosity. I also admire their desire to treat others rightly—at a Jesuit institution, we’re all called to care for the whole person.

Jesuit education offers a place to explore the relationship between these two motivations. To know how to treat others well, we must answer central questions about what the world is like. Why is the world so messed up? How do we fix it? An advantage to Jesuit education is that religious questions are taken seriously, but there is no particular response from students that is assumed or expected. My students come from a wide variety of backgrounds and have a multitude of perspectives, which allows for rich discussion.

Philosophy offers students a unique opportunity to explore their doubts and concerns. Students need a place to think through the issues and be trained in charity and rigor, while being allowed to follow the arguments where they lead.

This rigorous exploration is sometimes incorrectly taken to be at loggerheads with the goals of salvation and discipleship. But discipleship requires answers, and the life of the mind. It is a good thing to test our commitments. The stakes are high; a rightly ordered life (and, potentially, afterlife) is on the line.



AMY SEYMOUR

The example of “doubting” Thomas is instructive since it’s easy to get his story entirely wrong. Thomas disbelieves that Jesus is alive, but—importantly—he did not have the same evidence as the rest of the disciples. Unlike them, he had not yet seen the risen Christ. It was entirely reasonable to doubt! And significantly, God does not hold Thomas’s asking against him—instead, Jesus offers Thomas all of the evidence he requested.

This relates to why I purposely don’t share my own views in my freshmen seminars—I don’t want them to just take my word for it. I do hope my students reach particular conclusions! But it’s important that they get there themselves.

In the end, I hope the right reasons win out (for all of us, the professor included!). I think my students are deeply loved and valued by God. So, a goal for my students is to gain something much more (and long-lasting) than a grade in my class. The life of the mind is, if all goes well, a long-term project.

Member Profile

Kelsey Boor (Boston College)

1. What is one guiding idea/concern behind your current projects (in teaching or research)?

The question of formation is one that I keep circling back to, in my research and especially my teaching: how is this forming the mind? How is this forming the heart? How can this work bring us closer to the goodness and truth present in reality? I am thinking not only about the minds and hearts of readers and students, but also about my own mind and heart. It is difficult (and sometimes feels impossible!) to approach every single thing in one's life as a formative opportunity. But I am very grateful that academic work presents a simple, daily path to be intentional in this way.



KELSEY BOOR

2. You went to a Jesuit institution for your graduate education (Fordham) and are now working at one (BC). What do you believe is distinctive about a Jesuit education?

My first thought: the Ratio Studiorum of 1599! I am not sure I could do that document justice in just a few hundred words, though. My second thought: a Jesuit education is unafraid. Before arriving at Fordham for graduate school I was apprehensive about many things, but especially the prospect of working in a pluralistic environment. I knew I could peacefully coexist with people unlike me, but could I collaborate with them fruitfully, as colleagues? Could we be friends? The answer to these questions was a resounding "yes," rooted in a shared dedication to the Jesuit commitment to "finding God in all things." This has been the case at Boston College, too. Although my colleagues and I often come from very different positions or backgrounds, we are pointed in the same direction: we seek the good together, and we are open to discovering it in places we did not expect to find it (perhaps, even, in each other's views!). This common dedication to the truth sets us free, and the result of this freedom is the absence of fear. If God is to be found in all things, what is there for me to be afraid of? I am reminded of Psalm 27: The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? Jesuit education embodies this spirit.

To join PJE or learn more, visit <https://pje.blog.fordham.edu> or contact: jesuitphilosophers@gmail.com

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