

FOCUS ON JUSTICE

CSJ Center for Reconciliation and Justice

Loyola Marymount University
Spring 2020

21ST CENTURY TECHNOLOGY: CREATIVE POSSIBILITIES AND ETHICAL CONUNDRUMS



The 2020 Symposium in Retrospect

John Sebastian, Ph.D., Vice President for Mission and Ministry

In my capacity as what is sometimes referred to as the “chief mission officer” of a Catholic university, I spend a fair amount of my time trying to explain to people, from faculty and students to trustees and prospective donors, why faith-based higher education remains necessary in the 21st century, especially for non-Catholics but even for Catholics. Loyola Marymount University’s three sponsoring religious congregations were founded between 480 years ago at the oldest (the Jesuits) and 171 years ago at the most recent (the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary). My job is to help the people with whom I work appreciate that, when we talk about the Catholic character of a university like LMU, when we declare our commitment to the

service of faith and the promotion of justice as enshrined in our mission statement, or when we deploy scriptural language in asserting our desire “that all may be one,” we aren’t merely looking backward. Our Catholic identity isn’t just history or heritage or tradition, words that I often use in my line of work but that sometimes make me nervous because they imply that our mission is about the past when, in fact, it is as much or even more about the present and the future. We must seek to convey to our students and others that our mission is vital, vibrant, and creative and that the ongoing dialogue between faith and culture is an indispensable part of the human experience now and always.

continued on page 2

continued from page 1

My certainty about the importance and, indeed, the urgency of LMU's mission is what makes me especially grateful for the work of the CSJ Center for Reconciliation and Justice in mounting the annual symposium. The staff of the Center cast a wide net in thinking about what pressing issues of

“Our Catholic identity isn't just history, or heritage or tradition,...it is as much or even more about the present and the future.”

the day might well benefit from analysis undertaken through the lens of our Gospel values. With great intention, they also invite persons whose own faith commitments span a broad spectrum into the dialogue about these issues. In the course of planning the 2020 symposium on the topic of “21st Century Technology: Creative Possibilities and Ethical Conundrums,” I can recall sitting

in meetings with two Catholic Sisters and a Buddhist professor discussing the idea of bringing an agnostic colleague of mine to campus to participate in a panel. Consistently the prevailing sense in these discussions is that everyone has something to contribute to the conversation and that the quality of our reflection is only enhanced by welcoming all persons of good will.

The result is a symposium that is eclectic and timely and indisputably “catholic” in that word's literal sense of “universal.” At this year's symposium I heard talks on topics as seemingly distant from the primary concerns of the CSJ Center as advances in audio-recording technology and violence in video games. Yet both talks demonstrated the ways in which technology can color our experience of the world and can even disrupt or shape our own ethical principles and practices. The symposium thus manifests the enduring relevance of LMU's mission as a resource for casting

a critical eye on the many external forces, be they economic, political, social, technological, or cultural, that contribute to how we live in the world and with one another. It is also a testament to the vision of the Sisters of Saint Joseph and of their founders who recognized nearly four centuries ago that answering the

“The staff of the Center cast a wide net in thinking about pressing issues...they...invite persons whose own faith commitments span a broad spectrum...”

call to love the “dear neighbor” without distinction necessarily propels us to seek the transforming love of God in all corners of our inescapably complex, changing, and beautiful world.

I look forward to seeing you at next year's symposium!

Voices of Justice Takes Down the House

By Rachel Kaftan,
Junior, Theatre Arts

In February 2020, a group of three actors and I made the hour and a half long trek from LMU to California State UNiveristy, Fullerton, where we performed for a number of student artists, faculty, and staff at the annual Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival (KCACTF). My group

“The fact that a number of professors desired to implement the Voices of Justice model at their universities made me proud.”

and I performed pieces from a showcase we debuted in December as part of our Voices of Justice theatre course.

Voices of Justice offers students



the chance to expand their skills as performers as well as researchers and promoters of social change. This year, we interviewed members of Alexandria House, a transitional residence for homeless women and their children, and members of the Francisco Homes, another transitional housing organization that provides services

to previously incarcerated men upon reentry to society. We then transcribed the interviews and wrote performances to honor our storytellers' lives. Whether it was accomplished through acting, poetry, song, animation, or dance was entirely up to each student and their own artistic license.

continued on page 3

continued from page 2

What I found interesting performing at KCACTF this year, is that it made me realize how much I took Voices of Justice for granted as a theatre class. So many teaching artists and students from other colleges and universities were fascinated by the course and moved by our performances (even though we were acting under bright fluorescent lights in

a small, carpeted conference room). The impact of the storyteller's words and our delivery seemed enough to engage and provoke people. After the performance, numerous staff and student actors stayed behind to get our professor, Judith Royer's information, so that they too could explore ways of starting Voices of Justice programs at their schools.

To know that I played a part in their enthusiastic curiosity made me feel like I had done well by my storyteller. The fact that a number of the professors desired to implement the Voices of Justice model at their universities made me proud. I'm truly grateful for my university's emphasis on social justice.

CSJ Center 2020 Spring Programming



Installation by Yarn Bombing Los Angeles as part of the CSJ Center 2020 Symposium *21st Century Technology: Creative Possibilities and Ethical Conundrums*.



From Left to Right: Brian Stelter- Chief Correspondent and Anchor of *Reliable Sources*, Carol Costello – Journalism Professor, LMU, MaryAnne Huepper, CSJ – Associate Director, CSJ Center for Reconciliation and Justice, LMU and Stefani Mejia - Administrative Coordinator, CSJ Center for Reconciliation and Justice, LMU after the *Fake News is Hijacking American Politics* as part of the CSJ Center 2020 Symposium *21st Century Technology: Creative Possibilities and Ethical Conundrums*.



Cecile Forsyth Rios performing her senior thesis *Silence: Stories of One Nation, Under God, Indivisible, With Liberties and Justice For None* as part of the CSJ Center 2020 Symposium *21st Century Technology: Creative Possibilities and Ethical Conundrums*.



From left to right: Judith Royer, CSJ – Director, CSJ Center for Reconciliation and Justice and Michele Richards – Development Director, Alexandria House after the Voices of Justice Performance for Alexandria House.



Students from the Voices of Justice course performing for The Francisco Homes residents.



Judith Royer, CSJ and Doris Baizley behind the scenes during rehearsal.



Students from the Voices of Justice course performing for Alexandria House residents.



Letter From the Director

By
Judith Royer, CSJ

On behalf of the CSJ Center for Reconciliation and Justice and the Family of Joseph., we hope that this poem brings a sense of solace during this time of uncertainty.

Signs of the Times. Signs of Hope.

“Lockdown”

Yes, there is fear.

Yes, there is isolation.

Yes, there is panic buying.

Yes, there is sickness.

Yes, there is even death.

But,

They say that in Wuhan

after so many years of noise

You can hear the birds again.

They say that after just a few weeks of quiet
the sky is no longer thick with fumes

But, blue and grey and clear.

They say that in the streets of Assisi

People are singing to each other across the
empty squares,

keeping their windows open so that those
who are alone

may hear the sounds of family around them.

They say that a hotel in the West of Ireland
Is offering free meals and delivery to the
housebound.

Today a young woman I know

is busy spreading fliers with her number
through the neighborhood

so that the elders may have someone to call
on.

Today Churches, Synagogues, Mosques and
Temples

are preparing to welcome and shelter the
homeless, the sick, the weary.

All over the world people are slowing down
and reflecting.

All over the world people are looking at their
neighbors in a new way.

All over the world people are waking up to
a new reality.

To how big we really are.

To how little control we really have.

To what really matters.

To Love.

So, we pray, and we remember that

Yes, there is fear.

But there does not have to be hate.

Yes, there is isolation.

But there does not have to be loneliness.

Yes, there is panic buying.

But there does not have to be meanness.

Yes, there is sickness.

But there does not have to be disease of the
soul.

Yes, there is even death.

But there can always be a rebirth of love.

Wake to the choices you make as to how to
live now.

Today, breathe.

Listen, behind the factory noises of your
panic

the birds are singing again.

The sky is clearing,

Spring is coming,

And we are always encompassed by Love.

Open the windows of your soul

And though you may not be able to touch
across the empty square,

Sing.

Fr. Richard Hendrick, OFM
March 13th 2020



CSJ Spirituality Corner

Pt. 1

by
MaryAnne Huepper,
CSJ

For some time a number of LMU community members have asked to know more about the spirituality of the Sisters of St. Joseph. Having shared our spirituality with some of you at lunch time reflections both here on campus and at Loyola Law School, I hope this ongoing ‘corner’ in our newsletter will be another effective way to convey our spirituality and charisma.*

Where to start. We began in 1650 in Le Puy, France. Political and religious wars beset France which resulted in extreme poverty, economic instability, educational challenges, and spiritual wastelands. Enter

a group of six women desirous of serving the poor and Jean-Pierre Médaille, S.J., a gifted missionary, who saw in these women the potential for a new form of service. Women serving whomever they met in their community, looking after their physical and spiritual needs - something unheard of at the time as all women religious were enclosed in monasteries. While artists and scholars emerged among these women, they primarily engaged in various forms of prayer, contemplation, and manual labor. This new way of service became known as the “Little Design.” Médaille defined their ministry in terms of “the dear neighbor” whom they would serve “without distinction.”

Right now, that “dear neighbor” may be found in our virtual world of communication. Those family members, friends, and colleagues for whom the surprise telephone call, FaceTime, or Zoom meeting are significant means of connection, communicating that

“somebody cares,” and challenging me to go beyond my comfort zone. And finally, there are those “dear neighbors” with whom we are rubbing shoulders daily in our homes. Yet another opportunity to be that servant presence for and with each other. Who knew 17th century spirituality could be so relevant.

*A gift for others that reflects the lens through which we live out our call and mission.



Le Puy en Velay



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**CSJ Center for
Reconciliation
and Justice**



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