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SAVE the DATE

The 2007 Eternal Light Award

Honoree Announced

Rabbi A. James Rudin

The 2007 Eternal Light Dinner, the Center's annual fundraising event, will be held at Michael's On East in Sarasota on Sunday, February 18, 2007. Cocktails will begin at 5:00 p.m. with dinner at 6:00 p.m. The honoree for the eighth annual event will be Rabbi A. James Rudin.

A native of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, the Rabbi grew up in Alexandria, Virginia. He attended Wesleyan University where he received a B.A. degree with distinction and then received his Masters degree and rabbinical ordination from Hebrew Union College.

With experience as a United States Air Force Chaplain and having served congregations in Kansas City, Missouri and Champaign, Illinois, Rabbi Rudin brought real life encounters to the study of interfaith relations. He is the past chairman of the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations and has participated in ten meetings with Pope John Paul II. Rabbi Rudin has served as Senior Interreligious Advisor for the American Jewish Committee (AJC) and retired in 2000. He was a catalyst and founding father of the Center for Catholic-Jewish Studies and has provided both spiritual and temporal guidance to that

organization for over nine years. He was also founder of the National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry and a member of the Camp David/Presidential Retreat Interfaith Chapel Committee and the Martin Luther King, Jr. Federal Holiday Commission.

In 1997, Rabbi Rudin received a "Person of Reconciliation Award" in Warsaw, Poland from the Polish Council of Christians and Jews and for Ten years has been a consultant on Passion Plays in Oberammergau, Germany. He continues to serve as a member of the AJC's Board of Governors and as a member of the New York State Task Force on Life and Law. Rabbi Rudin is also a Visiting Professor at Saint Leo University and is a noted author and writes a weekly column for the Religion News Service.

Rabbi Rudin is married to Marcia and they have two daughters and a granddaughter.

For further information on the dinner, please contact The Center For Catholic-Jewish Studies at 352-588-8597. Details are also on our web site at www.centerforcatholicjewishstudies.org

SISTER ROSE THERING DIES AT 85



(RNS) Sister Rose Thering, a Roman Catholic nun internationally recognized for fighting anti-Semitism and improving ties between Catholics and Jews, has died. She was 85.

Sister Rose died of kidney failure Saturday (May 6) while living at the Siena Center of the Sisters of St. Dominic in Racine, Wisconsin. Thering returned to her native state after she retired last year from Seton Hall University in South Orange, New Jersey, where she was professor emerita of education and the namesake for the sister Rose Thering Endowment for Jewish-Christian Studies.

"For a half century she was an uncommon, inspired voice of reconciliation and dialogue among Christians and Jews," said Monsignor Robert Sheeran, Seton Hall's president.

"Her support for the nation of Israel, her determination to root out anti-Semitism wherever it exists, and her commitment to educating new generations about the evils of the Holocaust form her lasting legacy."

Thering was born August 9, 1920, in Plain, Wisconsin, the sixth of eleven children in a German-American Catholic family. Raised on her parents' farm, she joined Racine's Siena Center at sixteen, training to become a nun in the Sisters of St. Dominic. As a teacher, Thering discovered religious texts that portrayed Jews as Christ-killers. Those depictions,

appalling to her, were the subject of her doctoral dissertation at St. Louis University in 1961.

A year later, the study was used by Cardinal Augustin Bea to draft portions of the Vatican document "Nostra Aetate," which ruled that Christ's death "cannot be charged against all the Jews, without distinction, then alive, nor against the Jews of today."

Thering's crusade continued in gestures big and small. She received more than 80 humanitarian awards, and was the first woman to be given the Anti-Defamation League's Cardinal Bea Interfaith Award in 2004.

She was the subject of "Sister Rose's Passion," a short documentary nominated for an Academy Award in 2005. She presented a menorah to Pope Paul VI in 1974, and wore a Star of David fused to the cross around her neck.

"She was a one-woman wrecking crew," said Rabbi James Rudin, senior interreligious advisor for the American Jewish Committee, and a friend of Thering's for 36 years. "What she helped wreck was 2,000 years of the teaching of contempt, which was built into so much of Christian teaching. I can only describe her as an original, and there will never be another like her."

Thering is survived by six siblings, two brothers and four sisters.

—Piet Levy

Course Offered for Spring Semester

In support of CCJS higher education objectives, Dr. Michael Tkacik, director of Saint Leo University's Master of Arts in Pastoral Studies (MAPS), has announced that in spring semester 2007 the MAPS Program will offer a Special Topics REL 400/700 course focusing on Christian-Jewish interreligious dialogue. The eight session course, titled "Abraham's Tent: Christians and Jews in Dialogue," will be held on the Saint Leo campus from 1-5 p.m. on alternating Saturdays beginning January 6th. The course is designed to serve both graduate and undergraduate students, and will be team taught by Dr. Tyson Anderson, Linda Taggart, and visiting lecturers from the Jewish community. Inquiries and enrollments are welcome.

To enroll, contact Peter Marian in Graduate Admissions at (352) 588-7485.

COMMENTS

By Rabbi A. James Rudin

Sister Rose Thering, a Dominican nun, died in early May at the age of 85. She was my close friend and colleague for more than 35 years, and was an internationally known Christian leader whose life-long commitment to improving Catholic-Jewish relations long before the Second Vatican Council is the stuff legends are made of.

In the 1960's, Sister Rose, in cooperation with the American Jewish Committee and Saint Louis University, conducted a ground breaking study of text books used in Roman Catholic parochial schools. As a direct result of her study, significant positive changes were made, and her study clearly documented how Catholic teaching materials inaccurately and inadequately treated Jews, Judaism, the Hebrew Bible, the Holocaust and the state of Israel.

Sister Rose led 54 Christian study missions to Israel that always included Catholics, Protestants, and Eastern Orthodox Christians. She taught two generations of graduate students at Seton Hall University in New Jersey where she was a beloved faculty member for more than thirty years at the Institute for Judeo-Christian Studies.

Sister Rose participated in many public human rights campaigns, including hunger strikes, in behalf of Soviet Jewry. During a visit to Vienna, she denounced then Austrian President Kurt Waldheim for covering up his World War II Nazi record. As a result of her actions, she was strip-searched at the Vienna Airport. But, Sister Rose turned the tables on her tormentors and made the humiliating incident international news.

In addition to her teaching responsibilities, she founded the National Christian Leadership Conference for Israel, a broad based membership group that builds Christian public support for the security and survival of Israel.

In September 2004, the American Jewish Committee awarded Sister Rose its Jan Karski Moral Courage Award for her lifelong commitment of Christian-Jewish relations, her unwavering, inexhaustible support for Israel and her relentless opposition to anti-Semitism.

A Beautiful and moving 38 – minute film about her life, "The Passion of Sister Rose," was nominated for an Academy Award in 2004.

"Shalom haverim! Peace, my friends. Indeed I stand with you today and always," Sister Rose said in April 2002 during a huge rally for Israel in Washington, D.C. That was the spirit of Sister Rose.

She was a vigorous champion of these causes through the years, and will remain a remarkable inspiration, an authentic role model for thousands of Christians and Jews. Sister Rose defined her generation of Catholics. Most of all, she changed history; something few of us will ever achieve.

Reflections of a Couple of "Old Timers"

By Carol and Mort Siegler, Founding CCJS Board Members and Co-Chairs from 2004 to 2006



The Formal agreement which established the Center for Catholic-Jewish Studies (CCJS) was signed, in our home, some nine years ago, by representatives of the American Jewish Committee (AJC) and Saint Leo University (SLU). We have been involved with the activities of this critically relevant organization from that day of its birth. Now that we have completed our two year term as Co-Chairs, we write this in response to a request that we "reflect" upon those past years.

The originally stated objectives of this group of remarkably dedicated Catholics and Jews, in a dynamic partnership have been consistently pursued without deviation. The Center's efforts to develop mutual respect and foster warm relationships between members of our two faiths has produced tangible results. From the start, we all recognized that we were embarked upon a significant and worthy mission and so it has proved to be.

The inter-personal relationships among our individual board members have been

warm, productive and void of conflict. We recall no occasion wherein there was less than the full, enthusiastic support of every board member in the pursuit of the objectives or the choice of the subject and scheduling of the programs. The diversity of our board members has been most interesting, and has provided a healthy vitality to our deliberations. We have had the benefit of viewpoints presented by priests, nuns, rabbis, business executives, bankers, community activists and a retired Marine Corps General, Tom Draude, who so capably chaired this organization just prior to our term.

The American Jewish Committee has provided CCJS with an internationally recognized inter-religious affairs specialist, Rabbi A. James Rudin, as senior religious advisor. Rabbi Rudin has offered wise counsel and guidance from the time of our inception. Father Michael Cooper, S.J. of Saint Leo University, has served us well as Rabbi Jim's Catholic counterpart.

Dr. Arthur Kirk, President of Saint Leo University, has been a consistent supporter of CCJS and has shown a strong commitment to our mission.

The University has provided us with financial support, as well as staffing and office facilities. As an ex-officio member of our board, Dr. Kirk has made himself available to us as we have often sought his advice and counsel.

The principle focus of the board's efforts has been education, accomplished through conferences, town hall meet-

ings and the like. They covered issues relevant to our mutual interests, for example "Wisdom, Ancient and New: How Jews and Catholics Make Moral Decisions (2001) and "Jews and Catholics: The New Beginning, 1965-2005," a series of community discussions commemorating the 40th anniversary of "Nostra Aetate." Each wonderful event has been presided over by distinguished scholars.

Our annual Eternal Light dinners have honored individual Catholics and Jews who have been outstanding leaders in inter-religious affairs. Each has been a source of inspiration. We are particularly excited by the selection of CCJS' own Rabbi Jim Rudin as the honoree for the 2007 Eternal Light Award to be held on February 18, 2007.

CCJS's future is a bright one! The newly elected leadership is in the capable hands of Gail Whiting, Chair, Linda Taggart, Vice Chair, Paul Sper, Treasurer and Tom Buckridge, Secretary. We will continue as members of the CCJS Executive Committee. Our new administration is enthusiastically moving forward toward the fulfillment of the CCJS mission to "build mutual respect, understanding, and appreciation between Jews and Catholics and all people of goodwill by providing opportunities for interfaith education and dialogue." As we step aside from our leadership role, we leave with the confidence that the organization is in the hands of a formidable talented group of individuals who will guide us into the future with wisdom, energy, creativity and devotion of all emboldened by a wealth of passion.



CHAIR reflection

Dear Friends of the Center for Catholic Jewish Studies:

At a time when there is so much turmoil in the world, it is refreshing to be part of a group that not only preaches, but also practices, peaceful, respectful and fruitful dialogue.

Thanks to the networking of our able Program Chair, Linda Taggart, we are collaborating with Deacon Pat Macaulay and Dr. Joel Kreiss to bring the exciting "Walking God's Paths" program of "Candid Conversation" with Christians and Jews, funded by the Catholic Communication Campaign and the National Council of Synagogues, to our/your communities. Plans

for a course in Catholic-Jewish relations are progressing at Saint Leo University; Deacons in the Dioceses of Venice and St. Petersburg are learning techniques for Catholic-Jewish dialogue; our annual Eternal Light Dinner on February 18, 2007, will honor the beloved Rabbi Jim Rudin with much more to come.

With our professional and enthusiastic Interim Director Tom Buckridge at the helm, we expect this year to be our best ever.

Blessings/Shalom,

Gail Whiting