

Illuminations

Comings and Goings:

Welcome, Dr. Ed Hahnenberg

In fall 2011, Dr. Edward Hahnenberg joined the faculty of the Department as the holder of the Breen Chair in Catholic Systematic Theology. An interview conducted by Kristen Pungitore follows.

Where are you from?

I grew up in Lake Leelanau, a small town in northern Michigan. I'm one of eight, and we lived on a cherry farm. My folks ran a farm market, so we were busy from spring to fall doing everything from tapping maple trees to planting potatoes to weeding strawberries to harvesting sweet corn. And, of course, picking lots and lots of cherries.



Where did you study?

I got my B.A. from the University of Notre Dame. I later went back there and got an M.A. and a Ph.D. in theology. All together I spent eleven years in South Bend, including time there as a visiting professor.

What led you to study Catholic Theology?

Religious questions were always important in our house when I was growing up. From an early age, I was interested in just about anything having to do with God, church, and faith. I didn't grow up wanting to teach theology for a living. I didn't even know it was something you could do for a living. I just wanted to teach, so I went into college as a math education major. I quickly realized that I liked my high school math teacher a lot more than I liked math! In my freshman year, I took a philosophy course that was amazing. The big philosophical questions eventually led me to theological questions and I knew I wanted to study theology.

What is your specific area of interest in Catholic theology?

In my doctoral studies, I concentrated on ecclesiology, the study of the nature and mission of the church. I minored in liturgical studies and history. My dissertation explored the emergence of lay ministries in the United States Catholic Church. After it was published I got invited to serve as an advisor to the U.S. Bishops' Conference, which in turn led to invitations to speak to ministers in dioceses all around the country. It was fascinating to see such immediate practical application of my research.

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Dr. Ed Hahnenberg (Continued)

“I didn’t grow up wanting to teach theology for a living. I didn’t even know it was something you could do for a living.”

What theologians have most influenced you?

Well, I will be covering many of them in the Introduction to Systematic Theology course, including Thomas Aquinas and Karl Rahner. I also admire Johann Baptist Metz and Jon Sobrino. My favorite theologian, though, is Yves Congar. He was a very influential figure at the Second Vatican Council and was instrumental in opening up Catholicism to dialogue with other Christians and for developing a positive theology of the laity.

What other fields or subjects were you interested in during your studies?

I was, and remain, very interested in history. I appreciate looking at ideas in their historical and cultural context. That’s important for how I do theology.

You recently published a book called *Awakening Vocation*. What is the book’s thesis?

Awakening Vocation is an attempt to develop a constructive theology of vocation in the Roman Catholic context. I understand vocation in its broadest sense: every life can be seen as a response to a call from God. The thesis is that the Roman Catholic understanding of vocation has been marred by a deficient and dualistic theology of grace. Our theology of grace went through a revolution in the twentieth century in a way that reshaped all aspects of theology. One of the few areas not touched was the theology of vocation. The book is an attempt to rethink vocation in light of this new theology of grace. It draws heavily on the Ignatian tradition of discernment, and explores Roman Catholic perspectives in dialogue with Protestant theologies. After a brief historical section, the book develops a theology of vocation in four parts: “God Calls,” “Me,” “Through Others,” “For Others.”

What are your future research interests?

I think I will probably do a more popular book on discernment or vocation, something less academic and more pastoral, something that would be helpful for lay people preparing for ministry. I would also like to work on something to do with lay agency. I am very interested in how the individual Christian interacts with the community we call church. I want to explore the rich literature out there on popular agency and popular religion, and find ways to affirm and encourage the active believer. I think there is room here—in the midst of a pretty significant institutional decline within the church—to develop a positive dialogue between Christian commitments and our post-modern culture.

How did you end up at John Carroll?

I taught for the last eight years at Xavier University. The Breen Chair seemed like the perfect fit for my interests and my work, so I applied. When I interviewed, I was impressed with the department and the school. It just felt right. It has been a happy transition and a warm welcome.

How does John Carroll differ from other universities where you have taught?

The small size is a real asset. John Carroll operates on a very human scale. You can get to know your students and the people in the department and in other departments. There’s a strong sense of community that comes from this.

What do you look forward to teaching here?

I’ve enjoyed teaching the Intro to Systematic Theology course this spring. Next fall, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council, I’ll be teaching a course called “What Happened at Vatican II.” Other courses I’d like to add would be “Saints and Society,” “Catholicism in a Digital Age,” and “Eucharist: History, Ritual, and Theology.” I want to try to expand the offerings in Systemic Theology

Dr. Ed Hahnenberg (Continued)

What is your favorite place to visit?

We love going back to Michigan. My wife grew up vacationing in my hometown, so she actually enjoys visiting the in-laws! We lived in Seattle when we were first married, and so we keep looking forward to getting back there for a visit. Honestly, right now, we're having fun exploring Cleveland.

In what ways are you and your family enjoying living in Cleveland?

Julie and I have three daughters, Kate (8), Meg (6), and Abby (4). They are a trip . . . and an endless source of theological insight! The move has just been great. We landed in a very friendly neighborhood with a lot of young families. The girls are so excited to have so many friends right on our block. Probably our favorite place so far is the University Circle area. The girls are taking art classes at the museum and piano classes at The Music School Settlement. The metro parks have been great too.

What do you like to do when you are not working?

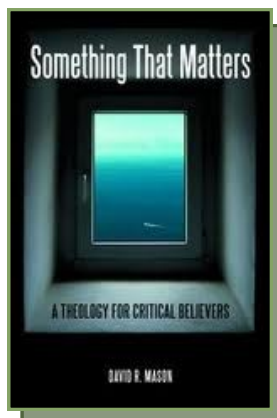
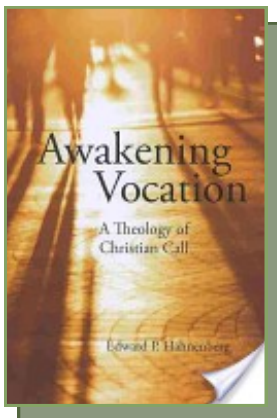
You mean besides giving interviews for *Illuminations*? I enjoy doing things with our girls. We play tennis and basketball and like to explore—anything outdoors and I'm happy. I also—surprise, surprise—love to read. I just finished a collection of short stories by Wendell Berry, one of my favorite authors.

What kind of advice do you have for graduate students?

The responsible answer is: work on your languages. Especially if you are interested in further graduate study, work on your languages. But more important than that is this: pay attention to what excites you, pay attention to what questions energize you, and follow those questions wherever they lead. For all the work (on top of work!), school is above all an incredible opportunity to be surrounded by people who share a passion for theology and religious studies. Take advantage of that opportunity.

“Pay attention to what questions energize you, and follow those questions wherever they lead.”

Recent Faculty Publications



Edward P. Hahnenberg. *Awakening Vocation: A Theology of Christian Call.* Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2010.

David R. Mason. *Something That Matters: A Theology for Critical Believers.* Santa Barbara: Praeger Press, 2011.

Paul Lauritzen. “Thinking Like a Mountain: Nature, Wilderness, and the Virtue of Humility” in *The Ideal of Nature: Debates about Biotechnology and the Environment.* Ed. Gregory Kaebnick. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011.

Paul Nietupski and Joan O’Mara, editors. *Reading Asian Art and Artifacts: Windows to Asia on American College Campuses.* Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 2011.

Joan Nuth. “Acatamiento: Living in an Attitude of Affectionate Awe—An Ignatian Reflection on the Unitive Way.” *Spiritus* 10.2 (2010): 173-91.

Zeki Saritoprak, “The Qur’anic Perspective on Immigrants: Prophet Muhammad’s Migration and Its Implications in Our Modern Society.” *Journal of Scriptural Reasoning.* [http:// etext.virginia.edu/journals/ssr/issues/ volume10/ number1/ssr10_01_e02.html](http://etext.virginia.edu/journals/ssr/issues/volume10/number1/ssr10_01_e02.html) 10.1 (2011).

Comings and Goings: Farewell, Dr. David Mason

After forty years of dedicated teaching and service, Dr. David Mason is retiring from the department. On Sunday, April 22, department faculty held a celebratory dinner in his honor. All the men (and Dr. McGinn) wore bow ties in deference to Dr. Mason's preference for that sartorial adornment. Subsequently Kristen Pungitore interviewed Dr. Mason and wrote up the following report of his memories.



When Dr. Mason first came to John Carroll in 1970, he was the first non-Catholic professor in the department. He remembers being interviewed for the position at an Academy of Religion meeting by a Catholic priest named Father George Kanoti who also worked in the department at the time. Kanoti saw something that he liked in Dr. Mason and got him an interview at JCU. Mason recalls coming to Cleveland for the interview in the winter and experiencing "typical Cleveland weather" for the first time. When he moved here the following fall, Dr. Mason recalls attending the wedding of Kanoti, who had since left the priesthood.

According to Dr. Mason, the department has really branched out in the forty years he has been here. With offerings in Islamic studies, Judaism, and all areas of Christianity, the Department of Religious Studies and Theology offers many different viewpoints and educational opportunities. Dr. Mason also notes that the faculty is more academically productive today, publishing numerous books and articles. He credits that, and the improved reputation of the University, to Father Tom O'Malley, SJ, the president of JCU from 1980-1988. "O'Malley encouraged us to publish. He really put John Carroll on the map. He was so smart that he would just talk to people and they respected him and thought we were all like that here." Mason recalls O'Malley's telling jokes in Latin and laughing because he knew Mason couldn't understand them.

One of Dr. Mason's favorite memories involves a conversation about "God language" that started in *The Carroll News* with a philosophy professor and ended with a debate on campus that one hundred students attended. Dr. Mason claims that he won the debate but Thomas Ick, the philosophy professor, is no longer with us to contest that fact. Another memory that sticks out in Dr. Mason's mind also has to do with *The Carroll News*. One afternoon, he was reading an article by a student whose name he recognized. It was about a professor who made boring subject material interesting, smiled a lot, and enjoyed getting to know students outside of class. While Dr. Mason speculated that the article might be about him, he wasn't sure until the student confirmed it a few weeks later.

Overall, Dr. Mason has had wonderful times with students, but some of his fondest memories concern graduate students who are often more interested in the kinds of things he does. He's had many wonderful experiences at JCU, published two books, and taught thousands of students.

Although Dr. Mason is leaving the John Carroll community, he doesn't plan on slowing down anytime soon. This summer, he will see his youngest son marry in Oregon and then continue on to Pasadena, California where he and his wife Margie will retire. Dr. Mason hopes to write more, to continue to teach part time at a community college, serve at a local Episcopal church, travel with his wife, and spend quality time with his children and grandchildren.

Comings and Goings: Welcome, new Graduate Assistants

Carson Bay

I am a 25-year-old married man who has spent his life in the Pacific Northwest. I have worked as a whitewater guide and a wildland firefighter and love Jesus, the outdoors, and all matters intellectual. I have a B.A. in Biblical Studies from Moody Bible Institute. At John Carroll I am looking forward to studying at a Jesuit school and getting fresh perspectives in a number of academic areas. I am very excited for the discussion and interaction with students and faculty in and out of class. I am not looking forward to the humidity. My interests are early Christianity/Patristic literature, Rabbinic literature and thought, biblical interpretation and a host of other areas. I plan on pursuing a doctoral degree in early Christian, Patristic and Rabbinic thought, but that could change.



Carson and his wife, Lindsay



Gillian Halusker

I grew up in Cleveland and received my Honors Bachelor of Arts from Xavier University, majoring in classics and history. Last year, I served as a Jesuit Volunteer in Detroit and I am currently serving as an Ohio Campus Compact Americorps VISTA at Hiram College. At John Carroll, I am most looking forward to being a part of the community and getting to know the students and professors. Also, after spending a year living in rural Northeast Ohio, I am looking forward to not having to drive 20 minutes to go anywhere. After years of being involved in service and social justice, I am particularly interested in religious ethics and the way that faith motivates action. And naturally, having majored in history and classical languages, I am also interested in church history.

Comings and Goings: Farewell, Jared and Shannon

Graduate assistants Shannon Edwards and Jared Ward have served the department well during the past two years. As they prepare for graduation, each is in the process of deciding what comes next. We wish them well.

In the upcoming year, Shannon hopes to pursue ministry in some form, possibly even Resident Ministry at JCU. She would also like to begin work on writing a book, research Ph.D opportunities, and bake the perfect cupcake.

Jared will be attending Akron University in the fall in order to pursue a Ph.D program and work as a Teaching Assistant. His interests involve Asian history and religion. After Akron, Jared would like to find a career teaching in an academic setting.

Notes on our alumni/ae

We asked three questions of several recent alums: What was your experience like in the MA of Theology and Religious Studies program at John Carroll University? What did you find valuable about the program and/or the degree? What are you doing now? Here are their responses.

Mark Bartholet

My time at John Carroll University was formative in many ways, both in and out of the classroom. The MA program specifically taught me the disciplines of research and writing. Professors like Sheila McGinn, Doris Donnelly, and Tom Schubeck expected, but also demonstrated in their own work, quality scholarship only possible through disciplined study and the learned practice of acute theological reflection. The courses which best prepared me for a career in pastoral and academic work always challenged me to move beyond my own hermeneutic into the viewpoint of "the other," whether that be the poor of El Salvador, women in the church and theology, or Muslims practicing in the United States.

The program allowed for diversity in our studies while still preparing us with foundations in scriptural interpretation, systematic theology, and ethics. Taking those essentials into the workplace allows me to dialogue with scholars in any field of religious studies and believers of all religious traditions.



Presently, I minister to the people of St. Peter Catholic Church, the Jesuit parish in Charlotte, NC, as the Pastoral Associate for Faith Formation. In my role I oversee the full spectrum of religious education in the parish, from our 3 to 12-year-old Montessori-style faith formation program to our Christian-Muslim Interfaith dialogues. Currently, I am most excited about my work with the Jesuit Collaborative's program "Contemplative Leaders In Action," which combines Ignatian Spirituality and leadership training to help young working adults be "men and women for others" in their workplace.

Megan Wilson-Reitz

Perhaps I could best describe my experience as one of "surprise." I had never attended a Catholic institution before, and was anxious that my political and religious views might be marginalized here. I was surprised to find that the faculty was so open-minded and accepting of diverse perspectives, backgrounds, ideas and values. I was surprised to find such a collegial work environment among my peers and my instructors. I was surprised by how very much there was to learn – I could never find enough time to do all the reading I wanted to do. I was surprised by my own passion about the material I was studying. I was surprised to learn that one really *can* live on canned soup, nuts and coffee. I was surprised by how much I loved the academic environment: the trading of ideas and opinions, the critical examination of others' ideas, the collaboration of scholars to build new theses. I was surprised that I could actually sleep in my office for days at a time without anyone noticing. (Of course, there weren't many of us inhabiting the Bohannon building at the time, so it was fairly simple to escape attention.) I was surprised to discover new interests in the field I wanted to enter. I was constantly surprised by the hidden treasures I discovered in my research. I was surprised to find that intelligent, thoughtful people could hold values and points of view that differed from mine, and I could still respect them for it. I was surprised, and glad, that many of my colleagues in the program became good friends.

I came to JCU because I wanted a thorough grounding in scripture and Catholic teaching and traditions. This program was valuable for me because I was able to focus my attention on coursework in those particular areas. I appreciated that the program structure is flexible enough to allow each student to build the program that s/he wishes. By far the most valuable part of this program for me was the academic rigor and attention to detail. My writing, research, and critical thinking all improved dramatically as a result of my studies at JCU. None of my instructors allowed me to get away with doing anything less than my best, and their close attention to my performance and improvement as a student was gratifying.



Megan with Olive and Isaac, her constant companions.

I would be remiss if I did not also mention the warmth and personal connection I have found in this department. While I was a student at JCU, I was also in the middle of some major life transitions – getting married and giving birth to my first child. All of the staff and faculty in the department were incredibly supportive of me while I navigated these life changes. I felt surrounded by a community who shared my joy in my new life.

My primary job description now includes: washing diapers, manufacturing milk, visiting playgrounds, potty-training, and cleaning up toys ALL. DAY. LONG. I also occasionally find time to teach a section or two of Introduction to Religious Studies at JCU, which challenges me to keep up with my studies and also encourages me to maintain a few articles of clothing without peanut-butter stains on them.

Sharon Bramante

Because I have experienced a call to pastoral ministry and catechesis, I chose most of my courses from the Catholic Studies subset of our program at JCU. I had the luxury of taking one class at a time over the course of four to five years, and this allowed me to delve into each topic in great breadth and depth. I found the professors affirming and encouraging as I discovered my voice expressing opinions on theological topics. The mix of graduate and undergraduate majors in each class was a great plus for me. Listening to them wrestle with questions of ethics, morality, human dignity, and commitment to religion, spirituality and the common good gave me great hope for the future. The generosity and compassion of John Carroll students amazed me. I am so grateful that I have had the opportunity to nurture their spiritual, intellectual, and academic growth by teaching RL 101.

My MA in Theology and Religious Studies has helped me land three jobs in the past three years. While I was still working on my degree, my husband discerned a call to go back to law school full time. Two weeks into the school year, Villa Angela-St. Joseph High School had a sudden need for a full time theology teacher. Since I had studied psychology and education as an undergraduate, the near completion of the theology degree was the clincher. The study of theology has also helped me grow in compassion and understanding of spirituality across religions and cultures. It has helped me perceive a deep spiritual kinship among traditions and among faith-filled peoples of all types. I have learned to listen and affirm what is good in a person's outlook, and that is always a good starting place in pastoral ministry and inter-faith dialogue.



My full time teaching position lasted only one year. Since then, I have taught theology part time at Beaumont High School, and this year I am the half time Coordinator of Religious Education at Communion of Saints Parish in Cleveland Heights. In addition, I engage in a variety of ministries in spiritual direction in the Ignatian tradition, and, of course, teach one section of RL101 here at John Carroll. I relish the opportunity to work with people of all ages.

The Department of Theology and Religious Studies at John Carroll

The Department of Theology and Religious Studies, with roots in the Jesuit and Catholic tradition, shares the mission of John Carroll University to reflect the value system of the Gospels. In particular, the Jesuit spirit brings to education a rationality balanced by human affection, an esteem for the individual as a unique person, training in discerning choice, openness to change, and a quest for God's greater glory in the use of the world's goods. The department offers courses that span a wide range of theological and religious thought and provide a context for ecumenical dialogue and study.

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www.jcu.edu/religion

Upcoming Courses

Summer 2012

- ◆ **RL 598 "Holocaust and Its Meaning"**
with Dr. Doris Donnelly.
May 14-18 MTWRF 8:00-12:00; and 1:00-5:00.
- ◆ **RL 529 "Early Christian Theology and Liturgy"**
with Dr. Joe Kelly.
May 21-June 1 MTWRF 8:15-12:30.

Fall 2012

Classes begin August 27

- ◆ **RL 400 "Introduction to Biblical Interpretation"**
with Dr. Sheila McGinn.
Tuesday 6:30-9:15
- ◆ **RL 539 "What Happened at Vatican II?"**
with Dr. Ed Hahnenberg.
Wednesday 6:30-9:15
- ◆ **RL 554 "Islamic Spirituality"**
with Dr. Zeki Saritoprak.
Monday 6:30-9:15