

**2021-2022 Season of Saint Susanna's Adult Faith Formation**  
**Annual Schedule**

*This AFF Season, like last season, will be presented using the Zoom video conferencing format.*

**September 20, 2021 - Mistranslated Words in the Bible** with Jared Abram Seltzer



Our Bibles are a compilation of ancient Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts authored by at least 40 different Israelites over a span of at least 1500 years, a compilation which was later translated into other languages like English for our reading pleasure and edification. Are any of the words in our

translations inadequately translated? It is true that every translation lacks something in some way, be it significant or quite insignificant, because it moves an idea from one culture and normative pattern of thinking to another. Jared will bring with him the expertise of a team of professors from the Israel Bible Center and speak on a handful of examples of words in the Bible that frankly are mistranslated that really need to be corrected or else we will miss the original meaning of the text.



Jared Abram Seltzer earned his BS in Religion and Linguistics and his MA in the Bible and ancient near-eastern history and culture from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. He is a contributor and research assistant with the Israel Bible Center, an academic institute that produces video courses which concentrate on Biblical and Jewish studies,

and which illuminate the texts, history, culture, languages, and beliefs of ancient Israel. Jared also professionally teaches Biblical Hebrew with the Israel Institute of Biblical Studies, which like the Israel Bible Center, is a subsidiary of eTeacherGroup. He is also a content writer and editor for a quarterly Israeli magazine that teaches about modern Israel and the Jewish context of the Bible as well as the intersection of nascent Christianity with Second Temple Judaism.

**September 27, 2021 - Social Media and Political Polarization:  
Addressing the Elephant in the Chat Room with Robert Brenneman**



Social media has been named as a major source of the polarization we see in this country. How big is the problem and can anything be done about it? The major social media platforms have increasingly become the social fabric by which billions of us around the world live and

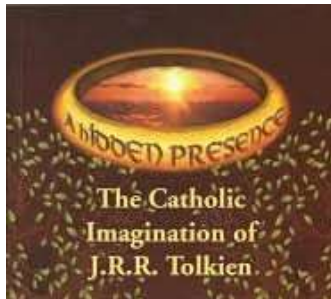
think. Under immense pressure to prioritize engagement and growth, technology platforms have created a race for human attention that has unleashed visible and invisible harm to society. You may remember Dr. Brenneman from 2018 when he captivated us all with his presentation on “Violence And Its Impact On Humanity” and from 2019 with his presentation “Social Isolation in the Era of Technology”.



Robert Brenneman holds a Ph.D. from the University of Notre Dame, is a recent Fulbright Fellow. Previously he was an Associate Professor of Sociology at Saint Michael’s College in Vermont. Currently he is a Professor of Criminal Justice and Sociology at Goshen College in Goshen

Indiana. He is also the Program Director of Goshen's CJRJ (Criminal Justice and Restorative Justice).

## October 4, 2021 - The Catholic Roots of Tolkien's "The Lord of the Rings" with Dr. Michael Corso



Many avid readers of J.R.R. Tolkien may be aware that he was a devout Catholic. He was known to be a daily communicant and carried a rosary. However, the particular pre-Vatican II, English Midlands “brand” of Catholicism that Tolkien grew up in had features that may be foreign to the modern reader of his fiction. Tuned to that era and ethos of

Catholicism, we can discern his devotion to Mary, his love of the Eucharist, and his abiding sense that God’s grace imbued the world. It surprised many who read Tolkien through a New Age or pagan lens to learn from his published letters that “*The Lord of the Rings* is of course a fundamentally religious and Catholic work; unconsciously so at first, but consciously in the revision” (*Letters* 142).

In this presentation, we will explore Tolkien’s Roman Catholicism and look for evidence that his faith informed his writing in *The Lord of the Rings*. We will pay particular attention to the powerful, elven Lady Galadriel as we explore the sources of her character in Tolkien’s devotion to Our Lady, Mary.



Michael J. Corso, Ph.D. is a lifelong Tolkien fan. He has earned a master’s degree from Signum University and has a doctorate in Theology and Education from Boston College. Dr. Corso is currently the chair of the theology department at Catholic Memorial - where he regularly brings up Tolkien to his students. “Mickey,” as he is known to family and friends, is married to Catherine, his wife of 35 years, and has

two daughters, Rebecca and Elise, who are themselves enthusiasts of all things Middle Earth.

## **October 18 & 25, 2021 – Heresies That Threatened The Early Church** with Dr. Nate DesRosiers



What is heresy and what is orthodoxy? How did the early Church navigate through challenges to the faith when diversity of belief and practice emerged? What theological and social strategies and advancements worked best that enabled the Catholic Church to resist internal trials and continue to grow? This class will explore some of the major heresies that threatened the church including the Marcionites, Donatists, Gnostics, and Arians and the Church's responses to these tests in the forms of church councils, the veneration of Mary and the saints, and high Christology.



Nate DesRosiers is a perennial favorite here at Saint Susanna Adult Formation. 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.



## November 1, 2021 – Voices From The Pews On Environmental Degradation, with Dr. Chris Swan and Mike Stover



Listen with us as we hear from Saint Susanna parishioners who work directly on environmental issues tell their stories. Anyone who is aware of recent news stories must know that climate chaos is rearing its ugly head. Wildfires, heat waves breaking records, floods and droughts are common occurrences now all over the globe. Many of us have made some lifestyle changes to reduce our carbon footprints but tonight we will hear from some who work much more closely with the issues surrounding the harm we are doing to the very planet which is our home.



Chris Swan is Dean of Undergraduate Education in the School of Engineering and an associate professor in the Civil and Environmental Engineering (CEE) department. He received a Doctor of Science (ScD) degree in Civil and Environmental Engineering from MIT in 1994 and both Bachelor (BS) and Master (MS) of Science degrees in Civil Engineering from the University of Texas at Austin in 1984 and 1986, respectively.

He currently performs engineering research on the development/implementation of reuse strategies for waste materials. Most notably, his research efforts focus on the development and use of an innovative construction aggregate made solely from coal fly ash from coal burning facilities combined with recovered waste plastics. The

resulting synthetic lightweight aggregates (SLA) can be used in place of traditional sand and gravel.



Mike Stover is an environmental engineer who has worked with indigenous communities for nearly 30 years, through the US Public Health Service, the Environmental Protection Agency, and Engineers Without Borders USA. Through his volunteering with Engineers Without Borders, he has worked on drinking water projects in El Salvador and Tanzania.

His passion for working to make lives better for others stems from his early formative experience as a faith community member of Covenant House, helping street kids, as well as the L'Arche community, working with people with disabilities.

## **November 8, 2021 – The Injustice of Excessive Punishment: Replacing life-without-parole sentences with Bob Marra**



Tonight, Bob Marra will help guide us in a discussion where we will perhaps reconsider some of our preconceptions surrounding the following subjects.

Who are those who commit the most violent crimes?

Who are the people harmed by these

crimes?

Why are these crimes committed?

Why do we punish those committing these crimes so much more harshly than is done in Europe and elsewhere?

How are we proposing to change this excessive sentence?  
And lastly, how might we become more involved?



Bob Marra has over 50 years in health care; as medical student; hospital/HMO administrator (Boston City Hospital); advocate/community organizer (Health Care For All); and presently part-time community health manager at Cambridge Health Alliance linking people returning from jail with health care, housing, and other services. In Coxsackie, NY with model youth prison for USA: New York State Vocational Institution at Coxsackie; research associate as third year MSU medical student at State Prison of Southern Michigan at Jackson, interviewing “lifers” and others; since 1997, visiting two people with life sentences in MA prisons; created two curricula for people in prison: 1): “A Different Person - Literally” focused on Animal Farm by George Orwell and two short stories of O Henry; 2): focused on the lives of Malcolm X, Dorothy Day and Giuseppe Garibaldi.

**November 15, 2021 – Faith In A Post Covid World with Dr Richard Gaillardetz**



We recognize that the Catholic Church had already been hemorrhaging membership, particularly among young adults, prior to the pandemic. However, the pandemic has certainly exacerbated this loss in church membership. How might the church emerge from this pandemic better equipped to make a case for continued church belonging?



Richard R. Gaillardetz is the Joseph Professor of Catholic Systematic Theology at Boston College and is also currently the chair of the theology department. He has published over 170 articles and authored or edited 14 books. He is the editor of *The Cambridge Companion to Vatican II* which was released in 2020. He is the recipient of many awards, including the Sophia Award from the Washington Theological Union for theological excellence in service of ministry (2000) and the Yves Congar Award for theological excellence from Barry University (2018). He is a past president of the Catholic Theological Society of America.

## November 22, 2021 – Non-Violent Communication with Eli McCarthy

A Pax Christi event co-sponsored by the Adult Faith Formation program



Eli McCarthy, Professor of Peace and Justice Studies at Georgetown University, will join us via Zoom. His topic will be "Compassionate Nonviolent Communication: A Cultural Shift in the Catholic Community toward Alternative Community Protection."





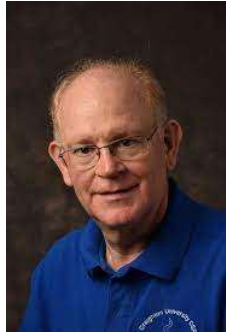
Eli is a member of the steering committee of the Catholic Nonviolence Initiative, a project of Pax Christi International, and from 2012-2020 was Director of Justice and Peace for the Conference of Major Superiors of Men, which is the leadership conference of all the U.S. Catholic men's religious orders. Since 2011, he has been the coordinator of the DC Peace Team which provides training in nonviolent communication, restorative justice, and bystander intervention. It also organizes unarmed civilian protection deployments. In his commitment to gospel nonviolence, Eli has been influenced by his many trips to Haiti and his work among the poor in Boston and D.C. He is the author of "A Just Peace Ethic Primer: Building Sustainable Peace and Breaking Cycles of Violence" (2020) and "Becoming Nonviolent Peacemakers: A Virtue Ethic for Catholic Social Teaching (2012), as well as a number of articles, some featured in America and National Catholic Reporter. Many are accessible online. Please join us as we engage our minds and spirits with the liberating invitation to deepen our understanding and practice of the nonviolent way of Jesus.

**December 13, 2021 - Having Difficult Conversations** with Fr. John Predmore S.J.



This session of "Having Difficult Conversations" will help a person respond patiently rather than to react quickly to aggressive statements by others. We will learn the value of breathing unnoticeably when listening to others in order that we can remain in inward peace while retaining a

positive relationship. We will find ways to remain separated from the nitty-gritty exchanges so that we more deeply understand the worries and fears of the other person. Our job is to help reduce suffering while working towards the longer-term goal of restoring a fractured relationship.



Fr. John Predmore S.J., is a Jesuit priest whose ministries include: chaplaincy to faculty/staff, parents, and alumni at Boston College High School, weekend parish supply in Cohasset/Hull, spiritual direction, and retreat ministry in the arts and spirituality. He has an art studio in Boston's SoWa (South of Washington, South End) district, where he runs an Ignatian Artist group. He forms spiritual directors at Creighton University in their summer program and he has developed online workshops to assist people in creating and maintaining compassionate communications.

## January 31, 2022 – On The East / West Schism with Dr Nate DesRosiers



What is the relationship between Roman Catholicism and the Eastern Orthodox churches (Greek, Russian, Armenian, etc.)? What are the differences between the east and west that keep them apart? This course will provide a basic introduction to Eastern Orthodoxy and its most important ritual, architectural, and theological elements. We also will examine the close similarities between Roman Catholicism and Orthodoxy as well as the long-standing historical disputes in theology, politics, and church

structure between the two that ultimately led the two sides to drift apart in 1054.



Nate DesRosiers is a perennial favorite here at Saint Susanna Adult Formation. 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.

**March 7, 2022 - Racism: Confronting our history, engaging our moment, and transforming our future.** with Sr. Patricia Chappelle and Sr. Anne-Louise Nadeau



In the symbol of Sankofa: If we do not understand where we have come from, we will never be able to move forward. The only way to understand the present and to move into the future is to see through the eyes of Sankofa. Sankofa embodies the spirit and attitude of reverence for the past, reverence for one's forebears, reverence for one's history, reverence for one's elders. The mythical bird effortfully bending its neck to reach back for the abandoned but precious egg signifies the diligence and effort required to pay due reverence to the past and give it its proper place in the current scheme of events. Sankofa is a gentle admonition that if even in our arrogance we overlook the gems from the past, when

we come to our senses, we should be humble enough to retrace our steps and make amends. As the popular saying goes, those who do not know history are doomed to repeat it. So are those who do not know or respect their roots and history bound to repeat its flaws and mistakes.



Sr. Patricia Chappell is a member of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur. She holds a master's degree in Social Work from the Catholic University of America and received her accreditation from the Academy of Certified Social Workers Incorporated. She is a licensed social worker in the District of Columbia.

From 1981-89, Sister was employed with Shalom, Inc. located in Philadelphia, PA doing extensive work in the field of substance abuse. Her primary emphasis was providing intervention services to African American youth and their families. Sister was also employed as a family therapist with Philadelphia Child Guidance Clinic.

Sister served as full-time President of the National Black Sisters' Conference from 1995-2001. The National Black Sisters' Conference under her leadership sponsored the first National Gathering for Black Catholic Women in July 2011. In July 2011, Sister served on the Provincial Leadership Team of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur in the former Connecticut Province. She was the first African American to serve in this capacity with the Sisters of Notre Dame. Sr. Patricia, having been trained by Crossroads, is co-chair of the Sisters of Notre Dame, USA Anti-Racism Team. She is committed to working with religious congregations on dismantling racism.

In 2011, Sister became the first African American Executive Director of Pax Christi, USA, the National Catholic Nonviolent Peace and Justice Movement located in Washington, DC.



Currently she serves on the leadership team of the US East-West unit of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur.



Sr. Anne-Louise Nadeau, SNDdeN is a native of Springfield, MA. She earned a B.A. in Sociology/Social Work from Annhurst College and an M.A. in Pastoral Ministry and Counseling from Emmanuel College.

As a Sister of Notre Dame de Namur she has worked extensively with young adults and adult learners at Sacred Heart University in Bridgeport, CT while serving in Campus Ministry, Director of the Personal Counseling Center and later as Associate Dean of Students. She has served on the leadership team of the CT unit of the Sisters of Notre Dame and continues to be the co-chair of the SND/USA Anti-Racism Team.

After re-locating to the MD area, she was Case Management Supervisor for the Families that Work Program at My Sister's Place Women Center in Baltimore, MD. She served 8 years serves as Director of Programs at Pax Christi USA in Washington, DC. Currently she works on a bi-racial team presenting, facilitating, and consulting with religious congregations on dismantling racism.

**March 21, 2022 - A presentation on Islam, specifically the Qur'an with Denis Hurley**



Three of the world's major religions -- the monotheist traditions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam -- were all born in the Middle East and are all inextricably linked to one another. Christianity was born from within the Jewish tradition, and Islam developed from both Christianity and Judaism.

While there have been differences among these religions, there was a rich cultural interchange between Jews, Christians, and Muslims that took place in Islamic Spain during the Middle Ages and other places over centuries.



Denis M. Hurley is a journalist and Professor of Journalism and Mass Communication. He has taught at several institutions, including the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism and the Boston University College of Communication. His interest in Islam began in 2001, when, after the events of 9/11, he began reading Qu’ran every night of the holy month of Ramadan – a practice he has continued every year thereafter. He has also studied—as an amateur -- the intersections and differences among the three Abrahamic religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, with a special interest in their theological and philosophical development during the Middle Ages.

**April 25, 2022 – Catholic Social Teaching, and Its Implications for Global Society with Sr. Mary Johnson**



This presentation will review the origin of Catholic Social Teaching and the key documents and principles that comprise it. We will also discuss findings from the book: “Solidarity for the Common Good: Women Engaging the Catholic Social Tradition,” (Erin M. Brigham and Mary Johnson SNDdeN, eds., Paulist Press, forthcoming June 2022).



Mary Johnson Sndden is Professor of Sociology and Religious Studies at Trinity Washington University in Washington, D.C. Previously she was on the faculty of Emmanuel College in Boston. Last year she held the LoSchiavo Chair at the University of San Francisco. Her most recent book is “Migration for Mission” with Mary Gautier, Patricia Wittberg and Thu Do (Oxford University Press, 2019).

**May 2, 9, and 16, 2022 – Father Steve’s Book Group.** As usual, Father Steve Josoma, Pastor of Saint Susanna Parish, will select a current book for discussion over three sessions. A discussion group format is used, with small discussion groups. Father Steve will announce the book shortly prior to the program, to ensure that we have a book well worthy of engaging us.