ANNUAL REPORT
2019-2020

BERKLEY CENTER
for Religion, Peace & World Affairs
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY
This year the Berkley Center addressed ongoing issues at the intersection of religion and global affairs, and, as the COVID-19 pandemic spread around the globe, we focused scholarly attention on the role of religion in the global response to the crisis.

During the 2019–2020 academic year, the continued rise of authoritarianism and populism led to exclusionary policies toward minorities and vulnerable people worldwide. The assassination of Iranian commander Qasem Soleimani heightened tensions between the United States and Iran and sparked concerns of additional conflict in the Middle East. At home, the United States faced a polarized political climate with the impeachment of President Donald Trump and the upcoming 2020 presidential election. And global society experienced unprecedented health, social, and economic challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Berkley Center research, teaching, and outreach proceeded as usual during the first half of the year, including two major conferences on Russia in the global culture wars and on Catholic approaches to nuclear disarmament. Our work was initially disrupted when Georgetown transitioned to a virtual learning environment on March 11, 2020, with multi-day conferences postponed and international research complicated by travel restrictions. The center quickly adapted to the new virtual environment, sponsoring cutting-edge research on faith engagement in the COVID-19 pandemic and hosting online events to bring together experts for reflection on key political, ethical, and social issues in the coronavirus crisis and response.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic was widespread across the globe, and also on the Hilltop. Our student programs shifted focus to support students whose learning was disrupted, and we developed innovative ways to allow our students to continue their education even when they could no longer travel abroad for research and classes. We pivoted quickly to support faculty and students in online teaching and learning, utilizing the inclusive pedagogies that we have developed under the Doyle Engaging Difference Program.

In this report you will learn more about these milestones and other highlights from the past year, including the continued success of the Doyle Engaging Difference Program, which brings together faculty and students from across the curriculum to address issues that cut across religious, cultural, and other divides.

We thank you for your continued support and engagement, and we look forward to the center’s continued growth and expansion in the coming years.

Sincerely,

Shaun Casey  Michael Kessler
Director  Managing Director
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COVID-19: Religious and Moral Perspectives

The COVID-19 crisis presents faith communities around the world with unique challenges and opportunities to engage in work on global health, bioethics, religious freedom, and social welfare. Berkley Center research and programming continues to explore how religion both impacts and is impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Faculty have examined the critical role of religion in global health responses to coronavirus—as well as associated ethical, pastoral, legal, and theological challenges—through collaborative research, commentary in popular outlets such as the New Yorker and Religion News Service, and high-level events.
Religious Responses to COVID-19

The Religious Responses to COVID-19 project, led by Senior Fellow Katherine Marshall, is a collaborative effort between the Berkley Center, the World Faiths Development Dialogue, and the Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities to explore the responses of religious actors to the COVID-19 pandemic. The project launched in March 2020 with a consultation between faith actors, public health experts, and development practitioners, who considered how religious institutions, beliefs, and practices contribute to the COVID-19 crisis and response. Participants shared insights from the pandemic, drawing on the experience of faith engagement in past health crises, including Ebola and HIV/AIDS.

The initial consultation highlighted how systematic knowledge on faith engagement in the coronavirus pandemic was severely limited, even though religious communities played significant and varied roles in the pandemic. Marshall and her team then established the “Faith and COVID-19: Resource Repository,” a central location to collect and update reliable information on faith engagement in the COVID-19 crisis and response. The digital platform organizes resources so they can be quickly found and used by global health professionals, policymakers, aid workers, and religious actors. It is updated on a regular basis; additions are highlighted in a weekly email that reaches over 600 people.

Following the initial consultation, the project sponsored a series of events featuring the evolving experience of faith engagement in the coronavirus crisis. The series explored the challenges of faith response to COVID-19, seeking interreligious perspectives from health experts, policymakers, and development practitioners. Some events considered the challenges faced across faith traditions, such as religious gatherings, interfaith partnerships, and outreach to vulnerable populations. Other events explored the effects on specific communities and traditions, drawing on the insights of faith actors involved in on-the-ground response efforts.

In addition, Marshall contributed to a variety of other efforts to better integrate faith voices in global health response to the pandemic. Drawing on her past work on faith engagement on HIV/AIDS and Ebola, Marshall shared her insights on the coronavirus crisis with major policymaking and religious bodies. In April 2020, she contributed to World Health Organization guidance for religious leaders and faith-based communities in the context of COVID-19. Marshall also appeared in events with the Council on Foreign Relations and the World Council of Churches. By publishing commentary in popular outlets such as the Conversation and Religion.
News Service, Marshall highlighted the central challenges and possibilities of faith engagement in the pandemic for a more general public.

The Church and Coronavirus

Berkley Center faculty also explored the pressing ethical and theological issues raised by the coronavirus pandemic. The pandemic has exacerbated large-scale health care disparities based on demographics and income inequality, exposing severe shortcomings in social and political infrastructures. Michael Kessler, the center’s managing director, convened a conversation on “The COVID-19 Crisis and Challenges to the Common Good” to explore how moral thinking about the common good can critically challenge inequality worldwide. The conversation brought together leading ethicists from the Christian tradition to discuss how religious communities and theological ethics can shape global solidarity in a time of crisis. Participants included Lisa Cahill, Boston College; Senior Fellow Rev. David Hollenbach, S.J., Berkley Center; Grace Yia-Hei Kao, Claremont School of Theology; and Daniel Sulmasy, Kennedy Institute of Ethics.

Faculty also considered how the Catholic Church and Pope Francis have responded to COVID-19. Senior Fellow Paul Elie, in a daily comment for the New Yorker, examined how Pope Francis used ritual and imagery in his Urbi et Orbi address, delivered from a near-empty Vatican plaza in March 2020. Elie illustrated how the pope drew on key themes in his pontificate such as service, self-sacrifice, and humility.

In May 2020, Elie joined journalist Austen Ivereigh and Kim Daniels, associate director of the Georgetown University Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life, to discuss Pope Francis’ leadership during the crisis. The panel explored how Pope Francis understands the coronavirus pandemic not as a moment of fear but as one of conversion. They also highlighted his continued focus on the poor, the environment, and individual responsibility during the pandemic.

“This is what Francis is saying to us, and the paradox to this is, we pray for an end to this but, on the other hand, we also have to trust that it has a purpose and that we need to engage with that purpose for it to bear fruit.”

– Austen Ivereigh
Perspectives on Post-COVID Society

The Berkley Forum, a digital platform for public scholarship hosted by the center, invited over 30 scholars and practitioners to reflect on what role faith communities and religious ethics can play in continued action on structural issues raised by the COVID-19 pandemic. Topics included environmental health, social welfare, and vulnerable populations.

Coronavirus and Climate Change: The Collective Good in Question

“Rather than be distracted by the ‘ecological silver linings’ of the COVID-19 pandemic, this is a moment that demands we think deeply and seriously about the relationship between individual and collective goods. There can be no ‘climate benefit’ to the coronavirus crisis because these intersecting challenges should be measured by the same metrics. Our responses to climate change, like our responses to the present pandemic, are viable only so far as they envision and enact a future of collective human flourishing... One of the key reasons why the United States has struggled so mightily to respond to COVID-19 (or to climate change, for that matter) is that our dominant theologies center on the individual—the salvation of private individuals.”

– Evan Berry, Arizona State University

Religion During and After Coronavirus: Individualism or Inclusive Solidarity?

“As long as a large part of the American religious communities consider solidarity and aid in an individualistic way and grant it conditionally, social order will continue to erode. The United States seems currently to be almost on the road to social self-destruction, and the religious communities could only stop this if they could call for and contribute to a great ecumenical movement and to a mobilization of universal social solidarity... American society has always been able to unleash extraordinary dynamics and processes of change in times of crisis. Let us hope that this time, too, it will be possible to address also the religious roots of the current social crisis.”

– Frank Adloff, University of Hamburg

Disability and the Politics of Vulnerability

“Focusing our attention on the vulnerability of the body makes disabled people’s deaths seem inevitable. It obscures the social and political dimensions of risk. It lets us off the hook for the way we’ve built a world that makes certain people less likely to survive. For people with disabilities, the social risks of COVID-19 are stark. Many of us rely on care workers and personal attendants who work for low wages and few benefits, whose social safety nets are thin or non-existent. Many of us live in poverty, making it harder to stock the fridge and prepare for quarantine... These aren’t body problems. This is ableism in action, working hand in glove with capitalism and white supremacy.”

– Julia Watts Belser, senior research fellow, Berkley Center
Before José Casanova published *Public Religions in the Modern World* in 1994, he sent manuscripts of the book to the most prominent sociologists of religion in the country, “none of whom,” he says, “had heard about me.” He was up for tenure and needed prominent scholars to write reviews for him. But as someone who had taught for decades on secularization and modernization, slowly gaining a reputation as a careful thinker, he had no connections to speak of within the field of sociology of religion. Unsolicited requests for book reviews seemed like the only option available.
Some of the scholars who received a manuscript read it and were impressed. Very impressed. Martin Marty credited Casanova with coining the term “public religions.” David Martin called the book a “first class contribution” and “an exemplary instance of how one kind of sociology of religion ought to be conducted.” Twenty-five years later, the book continues to be cited as a classic in the study of the sociology of religion. It created nothing less than a paradigm shift within the field, reframing the way that religion and secularization are regarded in the modern world.

Casanova was born in 1951 in a small village in lower Aragon, Spain. Before his birth, his village—which produced a disproportionately high number of priests and university students—had undergone several major shocks: first during the Civil War, when 13 priests were killed, and then under the Franco regime, which saw both political repression and economic backsliding. For a time, Casanova himself considered becoming a priest and enrolled at a seminary. At the seminary, he became increasingly drawn to philosophy around the time that the Second Vatican Council began. At the council, Spain received another shock: the Spanish bishops travelled to Rome believing themselves to represent the ideal of a Catholic society, only to learn that Catholicism now supported democracies and that they were regressive figures. But in the aftermath of the council came a new wave of intellectual thought within Catholicism: Suddenly, “everything was thinkable and possible and readable.”

Casanova seized on this intellectual openness and moved to Austria to study theology. But at the same time that he was studying theology, he was drawn into the world of German sociology. He considered going to Germany to study but was told to go instead
to America. So he enrolled at the New School for Social Research in New York, where he completed his doctorate, began to teach, and eventually began focusing his attention on secularization theory, which formed a core element of German sociology in the 1960s.

The secularization thesis did not emerge in the 1960s, nor did its critics. The twentieth century, however, did see the rise of sociology as a formalized field, which brought a new confidence to the proponents of secularism. They now had the support of the scientific study of sociology, which was able to systematically demonstrate that certain cross-cultural patterns of modernization are shared, and that in every European society, religiosity was empirically being eroded everywhere that industrialization and education were rising. Since these trends were irreversible, so too was the loss of religion. By the 1960s, the secularization thesis was orthodox doctrine, confirmed by evidence everywhere (or nearly everywhere, if one ignored America, where modernization had not been accompanied by any major loss of religiosity).

Then came 1979, and religion stopped obeying the theorists. In the space of a single year, Iranian revolutionaries overthrew a monarch and instituted an Islamic theocracy, Solidarity was founded in Poland to resist the Soviet Union’s repression of Catholicism, Sandinista revolutionaries in Nicaragua were publicly supported by priests who grounded themselves in liberation theology, and the rise of the Moral Majority in the United States led to the election of Ronald Reagan. Religion had begun to resurge.

Problems emerged within the field of sociology too: newer studies began to reveal that the developing world was not following the course of Europe, and that although modernization was causing a rise in religious pluralism, religion itself was not disappearing from the public sphere. By the 1990s, scholarly consensus had begun to shift. Perhaps—it was thought—Europe is not, after all, the model of modernity which the rest of the world must imitate. Perhaps Europe is the exception to the rule, and not the rule itself—in which case, of course, the United States was the rule. There had to be a rule; the older theorists had simply been confused about where to find it.

It was in this context that Casanova set to work on *Public Religions in the Modern World*. Religion had begun to reenter conversation among serious academics. He recalls being brought onto the left-wing journal *Telos*, where “the return of the sacred” and the emancipatory potential of religion were being discussed. But after so long dismissing religion, few scholars seemed to have a...

**ABOVE**

Casanova moderates a session on interfaith dialogue during the Berkley Center’s tenth anniversary symposium.
coherent grasp on what it even was. Sociology of religion, so consumed with finding the true and singular model of modernization, could offer few productive contributions. “Americans didn’t know Europe,” he says, “so they could not understand what secularization meant, and Europeans didn’t know America, so every European who came to America, the first thing they did was to point out how religious this society is. How can it be both so modern and so religious?”

The book did not set out to find a single narrative about modernity. It did not argue whether religion was being eroded by modernization or not. Rather, it argued that religion was being *reshaped*. Modernization did not bring secularity per se, but it did bring a differentiation of social spheres so that no one religion could pervade all elements of social life. In Europe, differentiation simply meant the displacement of the church, which led to a decline in religion. But in America, and in much of the developing world, differentiation came with increased pluralism, and religions began to coexist and compete with one another for believers. The result was the rise of “public religions”: religions that had become privatized in a context where the state was increasingly separated from belief, but that reentered the public sphere to actively and vigorously shape political life.

*Public Religions* changed the paradigm for understanding secularization. Casanova’s subsequent work in response to criticisms of *Public Religions* helped develop the field’s understanding of “multiple modernities” and the different forms of secularism that exist around the world. For the next five years, he hopes to make a similar impact on our understanding of globalization. Then, perhaps, he will retire.

“But then, of course,” he says, as though worried that his talk of retirement sounds as though he plans to relax one day, “some people still write their best books when they are 80 or 90.”

*For the full profile of José Casanova, please visit the Berkley Center website.*
Religion and the Crisis of Displaced Persons

The Global Refugee and Migration Project, a two-year collaboration between the Institute for the Study of International Migration and the Berkley Center, closed with a November 2019 capstone conference. The Berkley Center has continued this focus through a center-wide effort that examines how religion factors into the current refugee crisis, considering its role in shaping conflict and peacebuilding, as well as how those on the ground manage the trauma of forced migration. Individually, center faculty have also continued to research the issue, and this past fall Rev. David Hollenbach, S.J., released *Humanity in Crisis: Ethical and Religious Response to Refugees*.

Hollenbach’s book explores the political, economic, and ecological factors that have led to the current refugee crisis, responsible for the forced displacement of nearly 80 million people worldwide. He examines major conflicts that have killed tens of millions of people and driven even more from their homes—from the Holocaust and Rwandan genocide to the ongoing civil war in Syria. Such humanitarian crises break the bonds that link people as brothers and sisters who share a common humanity, threatening the safety and well-being of individual people, entire nations, and future generations. Could these crises have been prevented? Why do they continue to happen?

The number of forcibly displaced people has reached a crisis level because there is a critical gap between the protections provided to refugees and the support they need, according to Hollenbach. That gap exists because the responsibility to aid those who are displaced is unevenly distributed. The economic and social challenges of refugee resettlement often fall on low- and middle-income countries in the Global South. Western countries, including the United States, play much smaller roles in addressing the refugee crisis, despite having a greater capacity to help. “How to achieve greater fairness in sharing the responsibility toward those affected by emergencies is perhaps the
greatest ethical challenge facing the humanitarian movement today,” says Hollenbach, who charts a new ethic of global responsibility-sharing on the refugee crisis in the book.

Hollenbach draws from the values of both the modern humanitarian movement and various faith traditions, including Catholicism, to highlight how the moral imperative to aid refugees emerges from respect for our shared humanity. “Respect for humanity means that when the lives and basic well-being of human beings are in serious danger, moral responsibilities reach across the borders of national, cultural, and religious communities,” he says. “There is a responsibility to help refugees who are in serious need when we have the capacity to do so without undue burden.”

Religion can play important roles in how people experience and manage the refugee crisis, according to Hollenbach. “Religious belief can help sustain those who are suffering the effects of crisis,” he says. “It energizes the work of those who seek to assist the displaced. The normative values of religious traditions also give faith-based agencies distinctive approaches to their work.” Action grounded in religious faith will continue to shape the global response to the refugee crisis, providing support to millions of displaced people worldwide through organizations such as Catholic Relief Services, HIAS, and Islamic Relief.

Sharing the responsibility to help displaced people gives Hollenbach hope for the future of the global refugee crisis. “If we mobilize people, church groups, human rights groups, other organizations and work together, we can make a real difference, and that gives me hope to say this is not an impossible crisis—it can be dealt with,” he says. The new book, a culmination of Hollenbach’s efforts to apply scholarship and activism in Christian social ethics to human rights and the global refugee crisis, is available from Georgetown University Press.

“The refugees are my teachers, as time and again, they impress me with their resilience and trust in God. It is they who give me reason to hope. This is not sentimentalism. It is what I have learned in more than 20 years of working for Jesuit Refugee Service: I persevere because of the refugees, because I get to know them and their stories, and because I witness their hope.”

— Danielle Vella, Jesuit Refugee Service

“Faith is what spurs me on...Having the belief that our actions in this life are not inconsequential and that those who suffer now will have better outcomes is central to this. As Muslims, we are taught this and that ‘with every hardship comes ease,’ meaning that ultimately the suffering of people will not be in vain. As humanitarians, we must think long-term and not treat those we receive as passive receivers of aid.”

— Haroon Altaf, Islamic Relief
Event Highlights: Anti-Racism

A Conversation with Sister Helen Prejean, CSJ
Faith and Culture Series
September 16, 2019

Speakers
Paul Elie (moderator), senior fellow, Berkley Center
Sister Helen Prejean, CSJ, author of Dead Man Walking and River of Fire
Cherylyn Branche, GU272 Descendants Association

“I never dreamed that I’d be going to death row. The waking up—that’s what I try to talk about in River of Fire—that grace wakes us up. And for a long time I resisted that dimension of social justice...When I got to St. Thomas [Housing Project in New Orleans], and I saw what people were up against, I went, ‘I’m not virtuous, I’m just protected and cushioned.’ And it woke me up.”

- Sister Helen Prejean, CSJ

Before Ferguson, Beyond Ferguson
December 4, 2019

Speakers
Emerald Christopher-Byrd (moderator), University of Delaware, Georgetown University
Wesley Lowery, Washington Post
Teddy Washington, Washington University
Richard Weiss, Pulitzer Center grantees

“[Black] people say they have ‘the talk’ with their children, and I feel like my parents did the same thing with me...my mom was like, ‘Just drive slow, be safe.’...When I was old enough to understand the things that they were talking to me about, it forced me to look at their role as parents, and what they were trying to do. They weren’t trying to make me afraid of the world, but at the same time, they wanted me to be prepared and aware.”

- Teddy Washington
The Amen Corner: The Life and Legacy of James Baldwin
February 25, 2020

Speakers
Terrence Johnson (moderator), senior research fellow, Berkley Center
Soyica Diggs Colbert, Georgetown University
Drew Lichtenberg, Shakespeare Theatre Company
Josiah Ulysses Young III, Wesley Theological Seminary

“What is really significant about this production is that it marks [the Shakespeare Theatre Company] being a color-conscious institution for the first time and the power of acknowledging the power of race as a political, philosophical, religious reality in American life.”

- Drew Lichtenberg

Free tickets to the show were given out to the first 40 Georgetown students, faculty, and staff who attended the event.

Listening to Black Clergy
July 1, 2020

Speakers
Shaun Casey (moderator), director, Berkley Center
Rev. Leah Daughtry, House of the Lord Churches
Cheryl J. Sanders, Howard University
Rev. Adam R. Taylor, Sojourners
Rev. Travis Winckler, Second Presbyterian Church, St. Louis

“I’m guarded but optimistic about the conversations that we’re going to have in our churches and from our churches...We have an assignment...we’ve got to be case managers for the soul of our communities, for the soul of our nation.”

- Cheryl J. Sanders

2019 Berkley Center Lecture
Vatican Diplomacy: Three Models
November 12, 2019

Speaker
Rev. J. Bryan Hehir, Harvard University

“I would argue these are three voices addressing Vatican diplomacy in each of their pontificates, and I would summarize it this way: with Pius XII you get the pope as a lawyer and diplomat, with John Paul II you get the pope as philosopher and statesman, and with Francis you get the pope as pastor and prophet.”

- Rev. J. Bryan Hehir
TOP LEFT

TOP RIGHT
Paul Elie leads a panel discussion following the screening of Flannery: The Storied Life of the Writer from Georgia.

CENTER LEFT
Jose Victor Chan-Gonzaga, consul general of the Embassy of the Philippines, answers a question about the relationship between faith and development in the Philippines.

BOTTOM LEFT
Author Melissa Rogers and Christianity Today’s Ted Olsen address white evangelical support for Trump during a panel discussion around Rogers’ book Faith in American Public Life.
Panelists discuss faith engagement in the fight against HIV/AIDS during “Two Possible Futures: Faith Action to End AIDS.”

Archbishop Borys Gudziak offers a keynote lecture on Catholic social thought and democratic civil society in Ukraine.

Panelists discuss the Church sexual abuse crisis and reform at “Confronting the Church’s Crisis,” organized by Rev. Gerard McGlone, S.J.

Author Danielle Vela shares stories of the forcibly displaced from Dying to Live: Stories from Refugees on the Road to Freedom.
Rev. Drew Christiansen, S.J., has worked on nuclear issues for several decades, dating to the U.S. Catholic bishops’ 1983 pastoral letter “The Challenge of Peace: God’s Promise and Our Response.” Since then, Christiansen has continued to focus on this issue, organizing convenings throughout his career and authoring commentary in outlets such as La Civiltà Cattolica and America. This past year, he co-edited A World Free From Nuclear Weapons: The Vatican Conference on Disarmament (Georgetown University Press, August 2020), and he is currently working on another volume with over 40 essays that offer pastoral moral guidance on security and nuclear issues for people in the military and defense establishment and those offering them counseling and training.

In addition, Christiansen has been instrumental in helping lead a collaboration between Georgetown, the University of Notre Dame, and the Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI) called the Initiative on Revitalizing Catholic Engagement on Nuclear Disarmament. The initiative is responsible for hosting an annual student summit in Washington, DC, to which students must apply, as well as other conferences and events. During the last academic year, the initiative hosted a two-day event on the Catholic Church and nuclear disarmament. On January 30, 2020, Archbishop Silvano Tomasi offered a keynote lecture titled “Pope Francis’ Vision of Peace: Disarmament, Development, and Inclusiveness in the Catholic Conception of Just Peace.” Joan Rohlfing, president and chief operating officer of NTI, and James Timbie, Annenberg Distinguished Visiting Fellow at the Hoover Institution, gave responses to the lecture.

In his lecture, Archbishop Tomasi analyzed the Church’s position on nuclear disarmament after Pope Francis denounced both the use and possession of nuclear weapons as immoral in November
“People of faith can—and must—take every action they can for nuclear disarmament on every level. We can neither defer nor delay our moral responsibility to end one the most devastating threats of our lifetime. The good news is there have never been so many opportunities to work for a nuclear-free world. Individuals can work at the most basic level to ensure their own finances and investments (and those of their congregations) reflect their values using resources like Don’t Bank on the Bomb. Local mayors or political leaders can commit themselves to promoting the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons by signing ICAN’s Parliamentary Pledge. Courageous acts of protest and civil disobedience are avenues to prick the conscience of our fellow neighbors, friends, and family into a greater commitment to a nuclear-free planet.”

– Emily Welty, Pace University

2019. The Vatican has translated scriptural ethos into policy action, such as its support for the 2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Support for the treaty is just one part of the Catholic approach to “integral disarmament,” a means to heal violence by building political and personal relationships.

Archbishop Tomasi highlighted the transformative potential of integral disarmament, remarking, “Through the promotion of human rights, integral disarmament can move us to transform a culture of injustice and violence to a culture of fraternal love that would take us beyond peace conventions and treaties to personal and communal conversion and change of heart.”

Effecting widespread cultural and political change will not be easy, a reality the archbishop acknowledged. “There is no illusion that the number of weapons will disappear as if by magic or after moral and legal condemnation,” he stated. “The Holy See is equally engaged in a step-by-step dialogue with nuclear-armed states whose commitment remains crucial to the achievement of any serious and realistic discussion of nuclear arms control.”

The following day, 20 experts on the Church and nuclear disarmament offered presentations at the conference “The Pope and the Bomb: Beyond Deterrence.” The workshop addressed the current state of nuclear geopolitics, alternative approaches to nuclear disarmament, and moral and pastoral implications of the Catholic Church’s evolving position on deterrence and nuclear disarmament. Jonathan Granoff of the Global Security Institute and International Law Section of the American Bar Association offered a call for action rooted in our common humanity in his conference remarks:

“We, as people of both faith and reason, are all called to doing far better than simply getting along with the status quo. We know too well the dangers of accepting the risks. Moreover, we actually believe that we are called to learn to love one another and thus become fully human. Let that calling be the magnet that moves the moral compass for the abolition of nuclear weapons. We can and will help move the world’s nations from the hazardous love of power to the life-giving power of love.”
Religion and the Nation

The relationship between religion and the state is complex, multifaceted, and deeply intertwined. Several Berkley Center fellows conduct research on aspects of this issue, most notably Senior Fellow Jocelyne Cesari, who studies how the development of the modern nation-state actively reshaped and was shaped by religion, and Senior Research Fellow Peter Mandaville, who considers how states integrate religion and religious outreach activities into their foreign policy and diplomacy as a form of soft power.

Politicization of Religion in Global Perspective

The Politicization of Religion in Global Perspective project, led by Jocelyne Cesari, explores the role of religion in nation-building around the world. The project uses qualitative and quantitative data to identify patterns in the relationship between religion and nationalism worldwide. An initial phase of the project explored how the modern nation-state shaped the development of political Islam, culminating in the book *What is Political Islam?* (2018). Current research expands these initial findings to analyze the politicization of other religious traditions in various national and international contexts, with a focus on five country case studies: China, India, Russia, Turkey, and Syria. Ongoing efforts include a new event series, launched in spring 2020, that brings Cesari together with regional experts to discuss religion and nationalism in the five country case studies. The main findings from the project will be accessible in a book authored by Cesari and published by Cambridge University Press in 2021.

Geopolitics of Religious Soft Power

The Geopolitics of Religious Soft Power (GRSP) project, a collaboration with the Brookings Institution led by Peter Mandaville and made possible with support from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, represents a multi-year, cross-disciplinary effort to systematically study the use of religion in foreign affairs. Through a global comparison of varying motivations, strategies, and practices associated with deployment of religious soft power, project research aims to reveal patterns, trends, and outcomes that will enhance our understanding of religion’s role in contemporary geopolitics. In December 2019, the project hosted authors of the forthcoming volume *Wahhabism and the World*, which focuses on better understanding Saudi Arabia’s impact on Islam worldwide. The two-day workshop provided a forum for chapter authors to present drafts for collective discussion. During summer and fall 2020, the project team will release policy briefs on the use of religious soft power in Russia, China, Turkey, India, and Iran as part of the lead up to the spring 2021 conference “The Geopolitics of Religious Soft Power: How States Use Religion in Foreign Policy.”
Event List

Lunch Series on Religion and Nationalism: India
March 3, 2020
Jocelyne Cesari, senior fellow, Berkley Center
Irfan Nooruddin, Georgetown University

Lunch Series on Religion and Nationalism: Russia
April 7, 2020
Jocelyne Cesari, senior fellow, Berkley Center
Kristina Stoeckl, University of Innsbruck

Lunch Series on Religion and Nationalism: Turkey
May 13, 2020
Jocelyne Cesari, senior fellow, Berkley Center
Ahmet Erdi Öztürk, London Metropolitan University

From the Forum

The International Politics of Religious Tolerance

“Treating Muslim religious texts as causing either aggression or tolerance reinforces the essentialization of Islam that contributes to Islamophobia while also overlooking how specific policy decisions and state repression motivate violent reactions and contribute to extremism. International summitry and the proliferation of declarations, as modeled by organizations like the UN, may appear as a relatively harmless opportunity to affirm the relevance of participants. However, while the UN may be able to retain legitimacy even if its declarations are not always effective, making a declaration on the basis of an overly simplified Islam that ignores the nuances of religious texts is likely to only appeal to non-Muslims, while alienating Muslims looking for real engagement with their religious tradition.”
– Annelle R. Sheline, Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft

A Strategic Realignment in the Muslim World?

“Insofar as [then Malaysian Prime Minister] Mahathir has been increasingly agitated with Saudi Arabia, it is premature to suggest that Malaysia has by extension given a ringing endorsement to Iran, Turkey, or Qatar. For one, Saudi Arabia still holds a significant tool of leverage over all countries with significant Muslim populations: hajj (pilgrimage) quotas. The Saudis have time and again been willing to impose hajj restrictions on governments that act in ways counter to their interests. If Malaysian Muslims encounter difficulties in going for hajj, opposition parties will not shy away from taking it out on the Mahathir administration... Additionally, the Saudis remain a far more important trade partner than either Iran or Qatar... It thus seems unlikely that Malaysia would perceive its relations with Saudi Arabia on the one hand, and the opposing bloc on the other, in zero-sum terms.”
– Prashant Waikar and Mohamed Nawab Mohamed Osman, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies
Center Welcomes New Senior Research Fellows

At the heart of the Berkley Center is a core community of scholars who drive our research and teaching mission. Recently, several Georgetown faculty joined the ranks of our senior research fellows:

**Erin Cline**  
*Professor, Department of Theology and Religious Studies*  
Erin Cline specializes in comparative philosophy and religion, with a special focus on classical Confucian and Daoist ethical, political, and religious thought. Her book *Little Sprouts and the Dao of Parenting: Ancient Chinese Philosophy and the Art of Raising Mindful, Resilient, and Compassionate Kids* was published in 2020.

**Amelia Uelmen**  
*Lecturer, Georgetown Law*  
Amelia Uelmen examines how religious values can shed light on tort law, legal ethics, and legal education. Her teaching focuses on how dialogue can inform debates about religion in the public square. She is the author of *5 Steps to Healing Polarization in the Classroom* (2018, with Michael Kessler).

**Julia Watts Belser**  
*Associate Professor, Department of Theology and Religious Studies*  
Julia Watts Belser explores gender, sexuality, and the body in classical Jewish texts. She is the author of *Rabbinic Tales of Destruction: Gender, Sex, and Disability in the Ruins of Jerusalem* (2018). Her current research examines the critical nexus of climate change, disability, and environmental justice.

**William Werperhowski**  
*Rober L. McDevitt, K.S.G., K.C.H.S. and Catherine H. McDevitt L.C.H.S. Chair in Catholic Theology*  
William Werperhowski studies modern Catholic and Protestant theological and moral traditions. His research interests include the relation between virtues, emotions, and Christian love; modern Catholic social thought; and the ethics of war and peace. He is the author of *Karl Barth and Christian Ethics: Living in Truth* (2014).
Q&A with Tobias Cremer

**Question:** Religion has often been closely tied to traditional conservative movements. Is the relationship between Christianity and right-wing populism different? If so, how?

**Tobias Cremer:** New national populist movements care comparatively less about Christian values and Christian beliefs. What is interesting is how Christianity in these movements really becomes not just a belief, but a form of a cultural identity—it’s often more about cultural belonging than theological beliefs.

One question I ask many of the religious and political leaders I interview for my research: What do you actually mean when you talk about Christian identity? It is really striking that if you ask mainstream politicians and clergy, they start talking about theology: the resurrection of Christ, the Trinity, and Bible verses.

Most national populists, however, start talking about history, tradition, and culture. Almost all of them also reference Islam in their definition of Christian identity.
What drew you to the Berkley Center to serve as director of student programs?

The Berkley Center was such a perfect fit for my experiences, interests, and academic training. I came from working in academic support and running student programs professionally, advising students in co-curricular spaces and overseeing university-wide initiatives. My research examines how Eastern Christian traditions understood the Quran and engaged with their Muslim neighbors—effectively addressing ecumenical and interreligious concerns. Additionally, I’ve been involved in ecumenical and interreligious communities in the United States, Germany, and Jerusalem, as a participant and as a research-practitioner recording oral histories. So the opportunity to support the work of the center in developing student programming focused on religion and intercultural engagement was too good to pass up!

What Berkley Center program most excites you and why?

I value the Doyle Engaging Difference Program as central to the Berkley Center’s mission to equip students with dialogical and interpretive skills across a diverse landscape of views, cultures, and experiences. The Junior Year Abroad Network (JYAN), for example, presents such a unique co-curricular opportunity for experimental and experiential learning. We changed the program to incorporate guided discussion boards among smaller peer cohorts and added in social media skills development. JYAN students create social media posts around the role of religion in culture, politics, and society, and produce a final reflection piece for publication, connecting their experiences to issues of diversity and tolerance on campus. We also recently held a workshop for our incoming Doyle Seminar faculty, and it was energizing to hear how they plan to integrate engaging differences into their courses, even in the face of some uncertainty about the upcoming fall semester. I’ve worked with Michael Kessler, managing director of the center, to help redesign our instructor workshop, integrating more research and writing support for Doyle Seminar participants.

What opportunities do you see for growth and expansion of student programs?

Much of our student programming happens in experiential learning spaces that foster inquiry and interdisciplinary knowledge integration. I want to expand on these strengths through mentored research, with more opportunities for students to showcase their achievements.
I’ve been most hands-on with our REWA students, helping them identify courses based on interest in a particular region, religious tradition, or theme to create a more cohesive minor curriculum. This coming year, I am looking to build on REWA’s success by expanding our focus on student research, integrating and involving students in our events, and creating an alumni mentorship network.

I’ve also been able to bring my own experiences as a researcher and oral history project manager to the ESJ Project, working closely with Andria Wisler, executive director of the Center for Social Justice Research, Teaching and Service. We celebrated 10 years of this program in February, which coincided with the approval for our fellows to receive academic credit for their summer fieldwork and final case study in addition to their research methods course. Moving forward, we have also changed the format of the final case study, asking fellows to create a dynamic long-form final report and presentation that integrates the latest in digital scholarship. The publication of research findings in engaging digital formats, from text mining tools and data visualization graphics to embedded videos, will allow fellows to develop highly marketable skills in research outputs.

Finally, we hope to expand the ESJ Project to be available to more students and to include new areas of research: global health, environmental stewardship, and migrants and refugees. We would rechristen the ESJ Project as the Promotio Fellowship to both reflect the Jesuit commitment to service and promotion of social justice, and also officially recognize participants in this program as fellows, underscoring the academic achievements of our student researchers.

What do you hope to accomplish as the first director of student programs at the Berkley Center?

The Berkley Center is already known for its excellence in speaking to matters of global significance and organizing events that bring scholars, practitioners, and policymakers together. I want our students to be recognized as equally excellent, no matter what vocation they choose to pursue. Across our curricular and co-curricular offerings, my plan is to integrate core competencies, from intercultural knowledge and ethical reasoning to skilled research and digital outputs, creating center-wide learning objectives that are in step with the Berkley Center’s mission and the values of the university.
Doyle Seminars

Doyle Seminars provide a focused learning space for exploring questions of national, social, cultural, religious, moral, and other forms of difference, and deepen student learning about diversity and difference through enhanced research opportunities. Faculty who receive Doyle support are asked to develop inclusive pedagogies and to experiment with innovative ways of getting students to engage with challenging and diverse perspectives.

The program offers instructors the chance to enhance their courses with experiential learning, through invited guests, outings to local museums or performances, and film screenings, coupled with an intensive focus on student research projects. This year’s Doyle Seminars cohort supported faculty collaboration between classics, Francophone and French studies, and English literature instructors who all explored issues of migration and mobility, in texts by ancient Roman, Caribbean, and U.S. Latinx authors.

Doyle Seminars Spotlight

Amelia Uelmen’s Doyle Seminar, Religion and the Work of a Lawyer (LAW J/G-1038), explored the ways in which practitioners think about legal questions and their own work as lawyers as related to their religious or spiritual outlook. This year, Professor Uelmen brought together over 100 alumni, faculty, and students to launch an alumni network for the seminar at a luncheon held during the Georgetown Law reunion weekend in October 2019.

Michael Fakhoury (L’19), a judicial law clerk, recognized how the seminar changed the way he viewed his responsibility for the world: “After 13 short weeks, Professor Uelmen creates a fostered community of individuals who can freely share their ideas with one another, and we realize that many of us go through these similar issues in life.”
The Religion, Ethics, and World Affairs (REWA) minor, administered through the Berkley Center, offers undergraduate students across Georgetown’s schools the opportunity to reflect on faith and values across three thematic areas: international affairs, politics, and history and culture. This academic year, the center launched REWA tracks—around key themes, regional areas, and religious traditions—to help students maximize their REWA minor in complementing various majors. Students take five electives and a capstone seminar to foster engagement on salient issues at the intersection of religion, ethics, and world affairs.

This year, the REWA capstone was taught by Michael Kessler in fall 2019 and Rev. Drew Christiansen, S.J., in spring 2020. Kessler’s course looked at the intersection of religion, ethics, and world affairs with a focus on questions of justice, particularly at the global and transnational level. Christiansen’s course emphasized the contemporary rise of xenophobia and “illiberal democracy” and the challenges these phenomena pose to faith-based and human-rights advocacy as well as humanitarian outreach. Students gained a broad knowledge of the role religion plays in contemporary international affairs and designed unique research projects examining the impact of specific religious organizations. Seniors presented their capstone projects in a virtual spring symposium that included a week-long digital poster session and an engaging roundtable discussion with faculty.
Part of the Doyle Engaging Difference Program, the Junior Year Abroad Network (JYAN) presents a unique co-curricular opportunity for experimental and experiential learning. Fall 2019 participants blogged about their experiences studying abroad on the Berkley Center’s website, sharing reflections on religion, culture, politics, and society in their host countries. In spring 2020, as study abroad students began to experience the impacts of the global pandemic, JYAN participants created social media posts around the role of religion and the response of their host country to the crisis. JYAN now offers guided discussion boards among smaller peer cohorts as a space for students to engage with diverse opinions and approaches, fostering community among participants and allowing students to process their experiences before creating public materials. Though these changes in program format were already in place at the beginning of the spring, having this online space was critical for the spring cohort, as many were uprooted from their host countries by the COVID-19 pandemic.
“Existing as Black in South Africa requires grappling with an anger that is not my own....My Blackness links me to this space, ties my foreign body to the history of South Africa, and allows me to feel this history on multiple levels. While my ancestral rage may occasionally overwhelm me, it is a lens through which I can complexify and more deeply engage with my experiences in South Africa.”

– Teak Hodge (SFS’21), Cape Town, South Africa

“JYAN is a wonderful initiative—I found my abroad experiences more meaningful through guided discussions and sought camaraderie with fellow cohort members. I am so grateful for the community support given throughout the process.”

– Amber Liao (SFS’21), Barcelona, Spain

“Since arriving in Berlin, my awareness of my Polish heritage, as well as the ways it influences my identity and thus contours my social interactions and my understanding of the world around me, has experienced a multi-level metamorphosis.”

– Anna (Ania) Zolyniak (SFS’21)

Berlin, Germany

Pulitzer Center International Reporting Fellowship

As a continuing element of the Berkley Center’s partnership with the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting, which began in fall 2017, the Berkley Center selected one Georgetown student to receive an international journalism travel grant for the summer of 2020. This grant supports a student to pursue a journalistic project that investigates the religious dimension of an international issue, bringing to light what is often overlooked, untold, or misunderstood. This year’s awardee was Rhya Evans (NHS’22).

Evans is an undergraduate student studying global health in the School of Nursing and Health Studies with a minor in science, technology, and international affairs. Evans’ project, delayed by the global pandemic, will explore the cultural and religious beliefs that influence menstruation, menstrual management, and its social and economic consequences among Rohingya women and girls. She will particularly focus on uncovering the intersection of these cultural and lived realities with Islamic beliefs and practices. Her global upbringing, including many years in Bangladesh, has fueled her concern for deep-rooted and complex health inequities. While leading the Period Empowerment Project at Georgetown, she has seen how this issue manifests in her own community. Rhya studied Bangla through the U.S. State Department’s Critical Language Scholarship during summer 2019 and hopes to engage with Bangladeshi humanitarian workers on the ground.
The Education and Social Justice Project (ESJ) provides Georgetown undergraduates summer research fellowships to explore issues at the intersection of education and society. Now celebrating its tenth year, ESJ has enabled 38 talented Georgetown undergraduate students to study a wide variety of institutions—including universities, primary schools, and health education initiatives—quite literally from Cambodia to Canada, Peru to Poland. No two experiences in the field look exactly alike, even for members of the same cohort. Take, for instance, 2019, when the program sponsored three fellows who each researched a different site: a secondary school in Malawi, a college in rural Thailand, and an urban university in Ireland.

What unites the individual research projects on such a range of organizations around the world is the unique focus of the ESJ Project, which was developed to produce knowledge that local communities could use to improve their programs. Fellows spend three to four weeks in the field conducting one-on-one interviews with organizers of and participants in programs that foster equity through education. The interviews serve as a space for community partners to reflect on the challenges and possibilities of running their programs. “It was really a practice of developing human connections, asking: What is needed? What are the challenges? How can other people help?” recalls Adam Barton (C’16), who studied Pastoral da Criança, a community health organization in Brazil, during summer 2014.

Learning about social justice through education shapes the personal development of fellows, who learn not only about but also from their host communities during the course of their ESJ experience. Fellows have cited the program as responsible for personal growth in a wide array of areas, and as cultivating the Jesuit precept of cura personalis (care of the whole person), a pillar of the Georgetown education.

“The idea of the whole person and how it can encompass solidarity with humanity and with your neighbors, friends, and loved ones was something that specifically came from the ESJ Project,” shared Barton. “That vision of human flourishing is what I took away from the program and has shaped how I want to impact the world through participatory design and co-creation for social change.”

As the ESJ Project has grown and developed over the past 10 years, so has the structure of the program and the increased demand for academic rigor among our fellows. From the outset, participants were guided by faculty and staff in research methods, trained in interviewing techniques, and coached through producing a final case study. Fellows now benefit from a one-credit spring-semester research
methods course, preparing them for all aspects of the research process, from interviewing protocols to digital scholarship design. In addition, ESJ fellows’ three to four weeks in-country conducting fieldwork during the summer and their creation and publication of a final product in the fall will now be recognized as one-credit courses, respectively.

Ultimately our ambition for the program is to extend our founding vision—to engage students and build knowledge about the connections between the global challenges of poverty and education—to new fields. We aspire to support research that explores the complex relationships between environmental challenges, voluntary and forced migration, disease and well-being, and poverty, allowing us to provide a greater number of fellowships to undergraduate students from across Georgetown’s schools and to better support our local partners’ missions as they work to promote social justice by addressing a number of interconnected global challenges.

For a deeper look into the past 10 years of the program and how the center plans to grow and develop the program in the future, visit the Berkley Center website.

2019 ESJ Fellows

In June 2019, Mackenzie Price (C‘20) traveled to Trinity College, Dublin, a renowned university in Ireland, to learn about the intricacies of ecumenical faith, religiously charged politics, and communal dialogue. Her consequent work investigated the history of Protestant and Catholic faith at Trinity College, and how members of the Christian faith who reside there are responding to the powerful trends of secularism that are sweeping the campus.

Allison Ross (NHS’20) spent three weeks at Xavier Learning Community (XLC) in Chiang Saen, Thailand, where she examined inclusion and inculturation. Ross’s final study focused on how XLC’s educational practices and Jesuit values create unity out of diversity, building an inclusive community for individuals from different nationalities, ethnicities, and religions.

In May and June of 2019, Isaac Kim (SFS’20) conducted research at Loyola Jesuit Secondary School, a grant-aided secondary school located in Kasungu, Malawi. His research focused on community building as a form of Catholic inculturation at the school and the formation of Ignatian leaders through the Jesuit educational experience.
“Today, I work as a researcher at an NGO in Cape Town, South Africa. The ESJ Fellowship definitely gave me the confidence to continue doing research. And I feel that the topic I studied (service-learning) also gave me the desire to work more on applied research. I loved academia; but I feel much more comfortable in the NGO space, where it is easier for our research findings to meet communities where they are.”

–Gianna Maita (C’15)
“I am currently a doctoral student in sociology at UCLA. ESJ was a formative step in my journey towards a career as a social scientist. … One of my ESJ advisors warned me that I was designing my project and framing research questions as if I already knew the answer. This feedback, which graduate students regularly receive and struggle over, opened my eyes to a core challenge of social science: fusing a critical mind and prior knowledge with humility, rigor, and a sense of wonder about the world around us.”

– Nicolas DiRago (C’14)
Student Employment at the Berkley Center

Berkley Center student assistants are integral to the work of the center, helping us achieve our mission through their contributions to faculty research projects, as well as their support of communications and outreach efforts. The center employs between 25 and 35 students every year, some of whom work directly with faculty members to provide book editing assistance; conduct research that informs reports, blogs, or policy briefs; or support classroom instruction. Other students support our center staff in projects ranging from foundation research to writing news content for our website and helping run our blog and social media accounts to researching methods to streamline and improve our student program offerings. In all cases, student assistants are given meaningful, content-rich work that develops knowledge and skills that make them strong candidates as they seek internships and enter the job market. Read profiles from some of our current and former student assistants below.

Alero Oyinlola (C’22)
Student Assistant, American Pilgrimage Project
Impact of Center Employment on Career: I became a student assistant as a freshman; my skills and experience were quite limited. In the past two years, serving as a student assistant has allowed me to develop skills in project management, including: research, outreach, and stakeholder engagement. Further, the center’s staff and fellows have provided me with opportunities for professional development and growth. This summer, I will be interning at Facebook and I am convinced that securing the internship is largely attributable to skills acquired at the Berkley Center.

Micah Musser (C’19)
Student Assistant, Faculty Research
Current Position: Currently working at the Center for Security and Emerging Technology, a policy think tank under the Walsh School of Foreign Service
Impact of Center Employment on Career: As someone who plans to pursue a career in the world of academia and think tanks, working at the Berkley Center provided me with invaluable research experience at a major research institution. I was able to interact with respected academics, develop my editing abilities, and learn about religion and international relations, all while helping the center in its mission of promoting research that can advance a more just and equitable world.
Elizabeth Pankova (C’20)

Student Assistant, Communications

Current Position: Interning at The New Republic magazine

Impact of Center Employment on Career: As someone pursuing a career in media, the Berkley Center was a perfect working and learning environment. I was able participate in so many aspects of the center’s media presence, from writing articles to helping manage the website. But more than that, working at the Berkley Center allowed me to interact with fascinating research, speakers, and faculty with whom I never would have crossed paths with otherwise.

Margaret Hodson (SFS’20)

Student Assistant, Student Programs

Current Position: I deferred an offer from Deloitte Government & Public Sector and will be completing a year of service as a naturalization legal assistant at Catholic Migration Services through Jesuit Volunteer Corps.

Impact of Center Employment on Career: Through my role at the Berkley Center, I gained exposure to the great work that faith-based organizations undertake in pursuing social justice. My experiences at the Berkley Center helped inspire me to complete a year of service with Jesuit Volunteer Corps.