

## CCJS Mission and Background

The mission of the Saint Leo University Center for Catholic-Jewish Studies (CCJS) is to build mutual respect, understanding, and appreciation among Jews, Catholics, and all people of goodwill by providing opportunities for interreligious education and dialogue.

Inspired by *Nostra Aetate*, a declaration by the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) that provided a new and positive framework for the Catholic Church's relationship with the Jewish people, CCJS facilitates theological study and dialogue among Christians and Jews at the scholarly level, in the classroom, and in the local community.

The center was established in 1998 through the joint efforts of Saint Leo University, the American Jewish Committee, and several principal founders, including Rabbi A. James Rudin, senior interreligious advisor to the American Jewish Committee; Dr. Arthur F. Kirk Jr., president emeritus of Saint Leo University, Bishop Emeritus John J. Nevins, the Diocese of Venice; and Bishop Emeritus Robert Lynch, the Diocese of St. Petersburg. Given Florida's growing and diverse population, these leaders recognized the need in the state for an academic center devoted to the biblical and theological study of Catholic-Jewish relations and interreligious dialogue, as emphasized by the Second Vatican Council. In 2022, Pope Francis recognized the founder of the CCJS, Rabbi Jim Rudin, with a papal knighthood for his contributions to Catholic-Jewish relations, which included establishing the CCJS.

CCJS remains the only academic center of its kind in the Southeast.

YOU'RE INVITED

## SAINT LEO UNIVERSITY

Center for Catholic-Jewish Studies

### Event Committee

#### Event Co-Chairs:

*Jeffrey Berger, Immediate Past President of the Tampa JCCs and Federation*  
*Fr. Curtis Carro, Director of the Diocese of Saint Petersburg Office of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs and Pastor of St. Raphael Catholic Church*

#### Honorary Co-Chairs:

*Bishop Gregory Parkes, Bishop of the Diocese of Saint Petersburg*  
*Drs. Paula and Carl Zielonka*

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### CCJS Staff

Matthew Tapie, Ph.D.

*Director and Associate Professor of Theology*

*Laurie Silverman Gens, Administrator of Programs and Events*

For a list of the members of the CCJS Scholarly Advisory Board as well as for more information about CCJS programs and activities, please visit [www.saintleo.edu/ccjs](http://www.saintleo.edu/ccjs).

## SAINT LEO UNIVERSITY

Center for Catholic-Jewish Studies



***Reflections on the Challenge and Promise of  
Catholic-Jewish Relations Today***

**Sunday, November 15, 2026**

**5:15 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.**

**Higgins Hall at Saint Lawrence Catholic Church**

**5225 North Himes Avenue**

**Tampa, FL 33614**

Previous Eternal Light Award Recipients

Since 1999, the Center for Catholic-Jewish Studies' Eternal Light Award is presented to a scholar who has made significant contributions to Catholic-Jewish studies. These scholars are nominated by and voted on by the CCJS Scholarly Board. Previous recipients of the Eternal Light Award are listed below.

- Dr. Jan Karski** (1914-2000), Georgetown University
- Reverend John Pawlikowski**, Catholic Theological Union
- Rabbi Irving Greenberg**, U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum
- Dr. Deborah Lipstadt**, U.S. Department of State
- Most Reverend John J. Nevins** (1932-2014), Diocese of Venice, Florida
- Rabbi Sanford Saperstein** (1919-2005), Temple Beth Israel, Longboat Key, Florida
- His Eminence William Cardinal Keeler** (1931-2017), Archbishop of Baltimore, Maryland
- Rabbi A. James Rudin**, Saint Leo University
- Dr. James Buchanan**, Pope John Paul II and the Jewish People Exhibit
- Dr. Amy-Jill Levine**, Vanderbilt University Divinity School
- Dr. Arthur F. Kirk Jr.**, Saint Leo University
- Dr. Mary C. Boys**, Union Theological Seminary in New York
- Rabbi Abraham Skorka**, rector, Latin American Rabbinical Seminary, Buenos Aires, Argentina
- Dr. Philip A. Cunningham**, Saint Joseph's University, Philadelphia
- Dr. Ruth Langer**, Boston College
- Sister Celia M. Deutsch, N.D.S.**, Barnard College/ Columbia University
- Rabbi Dr. David Novak**, University of Toronto
- Dr. Eugene Fisher**, Saint Leo University
- Rabbi Dr. David Fox Sandmel**, former chair, International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations
- Dr. Joseph Sievers**, Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome
- Dr. Adele Reinhartz**, University of Ottawa

Bishop Gregory Parkes, Fr. Curtis Carro, Jeffrey Berger, and Drs. Paula and Carl Zielonka proudly present the Center for Catholic-Jewish Studies'

Eternal Light Award Dinner



**Reverend Dr. Dennis McManus**  
22nd recipient of the Eternal Light Award  
"Reflections on the Challenge and Promise of Catholic-Jewish Relations Today"



**With comments by Dr. Shira Billet**  
Assistant Professor of Jewish Thought and Ethics at the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) and the Academic Director of JTS's Hendel Center for Ethics and Justice

4:30 p.m. | Major Donors Reception – Meet & Greet with Speakers  
Visionary and Leader Sponsors – \$5,000 minimum contribution

5:15 p.m. | General Reception

5:50 p.m. | Doors Open to Ballroom

6:00-8:00 p.m. | Program and Dinner

To purchase tickets or sponsor a table see the enclosed RSVP card or visit [your.saintleo.edu/ccjs/elad](https://your.saintleo.edu/ccjs/elad).

2026

Eternal Light Award Recipient  
Reverend Dr. Dennis McManus

Reverend Dr. Dennis McManus is an American Catholic priest whose work has focused on Catholic-Jewish relations, the history of anti-Judaism in Christianity, and the theological and liturgical implications of Nostra Aetate. He is professor of theology at St. Patrick's Seminary in Menlo Park, California. Since 2009 he has served as delegate for Jewish Affairs for the USCCB (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops). From 2012 to 2021, he was visiting professor and associate director of the Center for Jewish Civilization at Georgetown University, where he remains senior research fellow in the Office of the President. Within the USCCB, McManus has served as staff secretary for multiple official Catholic-Jewish dialogues, including those with the National Council of Synagogues, the Orthodox Union, the Rabbinic Council of America, and Modern Orthodox Rabbis and Scholars. Select publications include "The Unfinished Reforms of Nostra Aetate: Five Areas for Further Consideration" (2017), "Sustaining a Quiet Revolution: Popes and Jews since the Shoah" (2024), and "Catholic-Jewish Dialogue: An Essential Process of Catholic Self-Understanding" (2025).