



On the Move to our "Oasis in the City"

A quantum leap: The Lay Centre has been offered a unique opportunity which will enable it to better carry out its mission in the years to come. This summer we will be moving to our new and more spacious home on the Caelian Hill within the Monastery of Sts. John and Paul, overlooking the Roman Forum and the Coliseum and surrounded by the largest private gardens in central Rome.

Many of you who attended our "Oasis in the City" evening series commented on the need for a bigger conference room – the overflowing crowd had to sit in the hallway or on the stairs and we could not fit everyone in the chapel for Vespers. The growing demand from students for hospitality also prompted us to look seriously into finding a bigger home.

With the move, we will be able to satisfy all these needs, so it is an opportunity that we could not pass up. With this move, we hope that the Lay Centre will become, for more and more people, truly an "oasis in the city". Please check our website regularly for progress on the move and for details about our 2009-2010 programs.

The Staff and Students of the Lay Centre will always be grateful for the warm hospitality of the Pontifical Irish College over the last eight years and we are delighted that we can still consider each other neighbors,

Spring 2009



An aerial view of the entire property on the Caelian Hill (above); view from the floor where the Lay Centre will be located, over the city of Rome (left).

even though we will be moving further up the hill. In the meantime, I wish each of you a blessed Eastertide, where you will discover more and more the "riches of the wisdom and the knowledge of our God" (Romans 11:33-36).

Donna Orsuto

The Lay Centre Announces Spring/Summer 2009 Study Programs

Women at the Well:

Witnesses to Contemplative Living

Sunday, May 31 - Friday, June 5, 2009

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Throughout the centuries, women have made a particular contribution to the spiritual legacy of the Church. During this study week, we will dialogue with some of these women, learn who they were, how they prayed, and how their lives continue to challenge us to live as Christians today.

- + Daily Liturgical Celebrations
- + Presentations & Guided Discussions by Dr. Donna Orsuto, Professor of Spirituality at the Pontifical Gregorian University & Author of *Holiness* (Continuum, 2006)
- + Guided Visits to Significant Churches & Sites Related to the Lives of Holy Women in Rome
- + Opportunities for Fellowship & Experiencing Roman Cuisine

Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord:

Called to Communion, Called to Mission

Wednesday, July 1 - Monday, July 6, 2009

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

In their 2005 statement "Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord," the U.S. Bishops stated that "communion and mission provide the foundation for understanding and carrying out lay ecclesial ministry." This Rome Seminar draws upon the unique historical, artistic, theological and spiritual resources of the Eternal City to offer lay ecclesial ministers an opportunity to learn, share and be spiritually nourished.

- + Daily Liturgical Celebrations
- + Presentations by Experts from Pontifical Universities & the Vatican and Discussions with Lay Ecclesial Ministers
- + Guided Visits to Significant Churches & Sites
- + Opportunities for Fellowship & Experiencing Roman Cuisine

For the latest information about either of these programs, including updated tentative schedules, please visit:

www.laycentre.org





Rev. J. Michael Joncas.

Oasis in the City "Sings"

Fr. Michael Joncas presented the Pauline Year "Oasis in the City" evening on 24 February. Fr. Joncas spoke about the musical elements in the Pauline writings, and helped bring them to life with demonstrations of his own musical settings. Before beginning his talk, Fr. Joncas played and sang with the packed audience his well-loved composition, "On Eagle's Wings," in English and Italian. He then shared with those gathered some exegetical tools that allow today's biblical scholars to identify probable psalms, hymns and spiritual songs woven into the letters of the New Testament. He showed how an historical study can bring new spiritual meaning to the words we so often hear. At the end of the evening, he performed "Song of God's Wisdom," based on Romans 11:33-36, a new piece he had composed after visiting the Lay Centre a few days earlier.

An Icon for the Pauline Year

The icon below, "Paul in Prayer with the Early Christian Community," was written by Co-Founder and Administrator of the Lay Centre, Riekie van Velzen, at the school "La Glikophilousa." It will be featured in an exhibition entitled, "Tralucere l'Infinito - Teologia e Vita del Apostolo Paolo" at the Santuario della Madonna del Divino Amore in Rome from 21 to 28 June 2009. For more information: www.piccoloeremodellequerce.it.



H.E. Ambassador Francis Campbell.

"Winter" Oasis in the City

His Excellency Mr Francis Campbell, the British Ambassador to the Holy See, joined us for the Winter 2009 "Oasis in the City" evening on 10 March. In his talk, he shared some professional and personal insights on the way "Faith and Foreign Policy" can and should interact. While the violent and divisive events of recent years have highlighted the problematic ways that religion can be used (or abused), Ambassador Campbell reminded the audience that we should not treat all religion as simply a negative force to be quelled, minimized, or contained. Religion is also one of the most powerful forces for the good that we have in the world. The evening was made even more dynamic by the ensuing dialogue which featured the insights of the Canadian and Irish Ambassadors to the Holy See, as well as the Chargé d'Affaires of the U.S. Embassy to the Holy See.



Rev. Michael Casey, OCSO.

Oasis in the City "On Time"

The 3 May "Oasis in the City" afternoon featured Rev. Michael Casey, OCSO, a monk of Tarrawarra Abbey in Victoria, Australia, who spoke about "FindingTimeorMakingTime:AspectsOfLesiure."



Jewish-Catholic Dialogue

Rabbi Jack Bemporad blessed the wine at dinner.

The Lay Centre spent an evening of reflection and discussion with Rabbi Jack Bemporad on 2 April.

The Lay Centre Celebrates the Pauline Year in Rome

The Vincent Pallotti Institute offered the annual Patrick and Mary Dorgan Memorial Lenten Retreat Weekend entitled, "To Walk in the Newness of Life" (Romans 6:4). Rev. Timothy Costello, SM, guided more than twenty participants over the course of the weekend at the Passionist Retreat House from 6 to 8 March. The weekend featured guided reflections and discussions on different aspects of the thought and spirituality of the Apostle Paul.



(Left photo) Rt. Rev. Edmund Power, OSB, Abbot of the Monastery of St Paul Outside the Walls preaches during a Celebration of the Eucharist; (Right photo) Rev. Donald Senior, CP, and program participants listen to Dr. Elizabeth Lev during a site visit to the Coliseum, the Roman Forum and the Mamertine Prison.

During the Easter Octave the Lay Centre sponsored a study program entitled "St. Paul the Apostle for Today: A Prayerful Study Program in Rome." From 14 - 19 April, a group of 15 persons from Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, the UK and the US traveled to Rome to learn more about the theology and biblical wisdom of St Paul as reflected in his letters in the New Testament. Renowned Scripture Scholar, Rev. Donald Senior, CP (President of Catholic Theological Union in Chicago and Member of the Pontifical Biblical Commission), along with Abbot Edmund Power, OSB, of the Monastery of St Paul Outside the Walls in Rome, led the participants in a week-long series of presentations and discussions. Rev. Edmund Ditton, OP, Dr. Elizabeth Lev and Robert White led seminar-style presentations at significant sites in Rome associated with the imprisonment, martyrdom and burial of St Paul.