

Boston College
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AND MINISTRY
Continuing Education Encore Events

Transcript of
“ The Holy Spirit: Setting the World on Fire ”

Book Launch Presentation on November 2 , 2017 by
Rev. Richard Lennan, Dr. Nancy Pineda - Madrid, Dr. Francine Cardman,

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Thank you. "Thank you" is really the theme of everything I have to say, tonight. So let me start by thanking you all for being here. It's wonderful to see so many people here.

The other particular thanks about this evening go to Jane Regan, who coordinates the ongoing education for our school—Jane

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into groups of four, and the members of each group read each other's chapters and gave comments, and went away then and did a second draft. And we got back into those groups of four and reviewed the second drafts. And then most of what is in the book is really the third draft of everybody's work. And beyond that, there were lots of bits and pieces that we asked people to keep refining. And all through that, there's a wonderful spirit of cooperation. So we are most grateful for all of our authors, who have made the book what it is.

The other thing I'd like to reflect on for a moment before I introduce our panel, is just what this book attempts. It's become clear to me that with both of our books—with *Hope*, and now with this one on the Spirit—what we've tried to do is to develop aspects of Christian faith that really hide in plain sight. Hope is not an unknown idea; and yet, if you push people to try and articulate what hope means, it can be a difficult exercise. So what I thought we were able to offer, in the *Hope* book, is a whole series of reflections both on the nature of hope, and

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So what I want to look at, or talk with you about now, is what you might call bold speech,

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Another martyr account from the same time—well, it's roughly the same time, about 20 years later, that I talk about—is something called the martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicity. And I can only report on one part of that now. This is a group of martyrs in Carthage, in North Africa, and these are new converts, that were not yet baptized when they were arrested. They were released for a bit, or they were able to be and they were able to be baptized. And during the course of their imprisonment, Perpetua emerges as a leader among that group of martyrs.

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The Holy Spirit is at the heart of the moral life, and empowers persons and communities to discern, judge, decide, act, by promoting just relationships, as well as personal and social flourishing. Do we agree? For us, this sentence is not contentious. Since the Second Vatican Council, with its invitation to recognize the signs of the divine in history, we have been attuned to discern the presence, gifts, and action of the Holy Spirit.

Writing before the Council, however, a scholar lamented that, quote, "one of the surprising things that strikes the student of Christian ethics is the fact that ethicists almost universally ignore the essential relationship of the Holy Spirit to Christian morality." End quote.

Eventually, this has changed. Today, we affirm that in moral life, the Holy Spirit forms and informs our conscience. And by touching our hearts, the Holy Spirit strengthens our ability to make decisions and to act justly. But if it's true, when we reflect on ourselves as emotional beings, our emotions can unsettle, trouble, and overwhelm us.

Nonetheless, in the Christian tradition, many authors argue for a holistic approach that recognizes the importance of one's emotions to the moral life. It seeks to integrate them into living one's discipleship, and in announcing the Good News. These authors highlight how emotions contribute to articulate individual and communal moral life.

Here at Boston College, 12 days ago, on October the 20th, that Friday at noon, over 2000 students, faculty, administrators, and staff marched together across the campus in solidarity, protesting multiple racist incidents that occurred recently. It was both a personal and collective emotional response that manifested our commitment.

Both in the case of individuals and communities, how we live ethically could benefit from exploring how the Holy Spirit speaks out to us, by graciously illuminating our emotions.

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Moreover, emotions are also culturally mediated, or constructed experiences that are shaped by and depend on cultural forms of discourse, such as symbols, beliefs, and judgments. Consequently, emotions should be examined critically, and at the same time emotions help us to examine critically our culture and historical periods.

Racial discrimination and persecution stand as troubling and tragic examples of how racist cultures rely on emotions to foster discriminatory social attitudes and oppressive policies. Individuactici nvti vcyaa

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true because theologians have not done enough work on the Holy Spirit.
to, certainly, respond to that lacuna with our book.

And we're trying

So Codina dedica tes himself to exploring how we the faithful make ecclesial teaching our
own. So in otie 5.2,decyriad() w51(i)-20.1(a)10.5-1(.)4(e06)F7(C)06220510510476(w-0.84904)06718(0)04(6705)328.h

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going to first hear from Colleen Griffith, who contributed the first chapter. So please, Colleen.

Professor Colleen Griffith:

Thanks, so much. And as I'm first up, we've heard from our dean expressing his thanks, and our publisher for expressing his thanks to our editors on behalf of all of the faculty authors that are here tonight. Thank you to Richard and to Nancy, not only for choosing this wonderful topic, but also for seeing it through with utmost professionalism, and also shepherding us, because we sometimes are a bit of an unruly bunch.

In my chapter, I look at the Holy Spirit as signaling, really, the nearness of God. And I focus especially on the Indwelling Spirit. And with that, what the Indwelling Spirit suggests

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how medieval Christians understood the power of that presence. But also making a connection between the Middle Ages and the modern era — maybe speaking a little bit about 18.5 (176-185) 186

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God's agents to carry out their divinely appointed tasks. And so I survey some Old Testament texts that exemplify these two main characteristics.

The second half of the essay, though, I talk about the word of "ruah," in Hebrew, it means "spirit," but it also means "breath," and it also means "air." And it can be challenging. And so I chose a couple of texts in the Old Testament where it's not exactly clear which one we are looking at. You see ruah, and you don't . . . translators struggled to know whether this instance should be translated as "breath," "spirit," or "wind." And I draw an analogy to communities of faith today, that sometimes it can be hard for communities of faith, or for individuals, to discern what's truly from Spirit, and what's just wind, and what's just breath.

And so for me, that was a fruitful analogy to reflect on and to write about, how modern translators of the Old Testament engage in a struggle, engage in a certain ambiguity about the Spirit, that is not unlike the challenge that communities of faith face every day.

Dr. Pineda - Madrid: Thank you, Andrew. And Angela?

Professor Angela Kim Harkins:

