

# PHILOSOPHERS IN JESUIT EDUCATION

## President's Welcome

by Tom Cavanaugh

PHILOSOPHERS IN  
JESUIT EDUCATION

ANNUAL LECTURE

Fr. Kevin Flannery (Pontifical  
Gregorian University,  
Faculty Emeritus) will  
deliver the Philosophers in  
Jesuit Education Annual  
Lecture on June 14th, 2023,  
at 1pm Eastern. The lecture  
will be entitled, "Conscience,  
Choosing, and Equity." All  
are welcome! Join us over  
Zoom at:

<https://luc.zoom.us/my/joseph.vukov>

*Pax et bonum* from the City of Saint Francis and its Jesuit University of San Francisco! On 19 November 2022, Philosophers in Jesuit Education sponsored the second annual Joseph Koterski, S.J. Lecture at the ninety-sixth annual meeting of the American Catholic Philosophical Association in New Orleans, LA. (Hosted by Loyola University of New Orleans and our colleague Professor Mark Gossiaux.) Professor David McPherson of Creighton University spoke on "Spiritual Alienation: What Is It? How Do We Overcome It?" Professor Matthew Shea (currently of Franciscan University of Steubenville formerly of the University of Scranton) responded to the stimulating talk attended by, amongst others, a philosophically curious medical student from Tulane University's medical school.

In this issue, we feature an interview with Fr. John Peck, SJ. For our edification and encouragement in our own teaching, research, and service, Fr. Peck reflects on distinctive challenges and questions that come with teaching in the context of Jesuit, Catholic institutions.

On Wednesday, June 14th at 1 pm (Eastern) Father Kevin Flannery, S.J., Emeritus Professor, Philosophy of the Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome, Italy will deliver a Zoom lecture entitled, "Conscience, Choosing, and Equity." You will want to tune in; mark your calendars!

Finally, we invite you to join us for the next annual gathering of PJE to be held as a satellite session of the November 16-19 American Catholic Philosophical Association's meeting in Houston, Texas. The 2023 ACPA theme is "The Human Person." In keeping with this theme, PJE will be hosting a panel session entitled "The Human Person and Jesuit Cura Personalis." We hope to see you there! Blessings on your good work of carrying out the Jesuit mission!

AMDG,  
T. A. Cavanaugh  
President of Philosophers in Jesuit Education  
Professor of Philosophy  
University of San Francisco



# Towards a Praeparatio Evangelica

by Fr. John Peck, S.J.

It's awkward when my Jesuit confrères ask about what I teach my students. At lunch yesterday, I fessed up to serving as an apologist for Galen Strawson's claim that belief in free will is an illusion one can't help having. Mind you, I'm not always trying to convince students of notions at odds with the Gospel. Why, a few weeks ago, I argued, à la Anselm, that it's contradictory to deny God's existence. To my discomfort, the next day I defended Louise Antony's argument that there is almost certainly no justifying God's ways to men.

My predicament: as a priest, my whole life is supposed to serve Catholic truth. Yet, in my undergraduate courses, I spend as much time building up the arguments of secular thinkers as I do those of Augustine, Aquinas, and Anscombe.

To join PJE or learn more, visit <https://pje.blog.fordham.edu> or contact: [jesuitphilosophers@gmail.com](mailto:jesuitphilosophers@gmail.com)

## **PJE Executive Committee**

President: Tom Cavanaugh, University of San Francisco; Vice-President: Joe Vukov, Loyola University Chicago; Secretary-Treasurer: Naomi Fisher, Loyola University Chicago; Executive Committee Members: Fr. John Peck, St. Louis University; Chris Kaczor, Loyola Marymount University, Lorraine Keller, St. Joseph's University, Past President: David McPherson, Creighton University.



FR. JOHN PECK, S.J.

Perhaps my tack is wrongheaded. Maybe the only answer to academe's aggressive and unapologetic secularism is to feed students a steady diet of classical theism, hylomorphism, and natural law ethics.

My friends know the delight I take in that menu. Yet, it may not be all the fare our undergraduates need. Even among today's educated, there can be little sensitivity to the intricacy of religious, social, and moral controversies. Often enough, parties to (what passes for) a debate put forward contestable propositions as axioms. In class I present contrary philosophical views, many of which run athwart my basic commitments. I then work with students to identify the crux of a philosophical disagreement. Although such analysis simplifies matters in some ways, it also throws a debate's complexities into relief. I hope that students, getting further into this thicket, will yearn for the truth hidden in it. Could that be a sort of *praeparatio evangelica*?