

Dear Friends of the Lux Center for Catholic-Jewish Studies at Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology,

Since the tragic murders of the 11 Jewish individuals at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh Pennsylvania last Saturday, there have been many who have sent messages of solidarity with the Jewish community. I would like to share the thoughtful and heartfelt words of hope written by Fr. Thomas Knoebel who is the President/Rector of Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology. His support of the Lux Center allows its work to make a difference in our chaotic world.

With blessings,
Bonnie Shafrin

"My dwelling, like a shepherd's tent, is struck down and borne away from me."
Is 38:12

My brothers and sisters,

Once again all people of good will are troubled by last Saturday's senseless bloodshed at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. While it is true that hateful speech and despicable violence have been present in the human race since its very beginning, such acts are particularly poignant when they are directed at brothers and sisters who, like us, pray the psalms faithfully and look to the words of Isaiah for comfort and direction. Once again, an act of hatred and cowardice has touched an innocent gathering of peaceful worshippers, leaving communities - religious and secular - confused, enraged, in mourning, and in pain.

Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology is particularly affected by this most recent tragedy. As a Roman Catholic Seminary we are privileged to have The Lux Center for Catholic-Jewish Studies as an integral part of our seminary mission in service to the Church and to humankind. Bonnie Shafrin, Director of the Lux Center has already shared her heartfelt reflection after this past weekend's tragedy with many of you. As she stated: "The caring messages of friendship [I received from Bishop Richard Sklba and Bishop Jeffrey Haines] emphasize the reality that we all share in this world, and that we need to continue to work toward understanding and friendship to possibly neutralize those who are so filled with hatred."

Surely recent events demonstrate that dedication to interreligious relations is not simply an "add on" to the content of our Catholic faith, but an

essential and ever-important element needed now more than ever. How blessed we are to provide a home for such a critical institution as The Lux Center at Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology. Now is the time to encourage interreligious dialogue and explore the commonalities we hold so dear, for it is through understanding that we may inspire appreciation. Communication must continue to be a cornerstone of our faith - in humanity and in God.

I've often quoted Jeremiah 29:11-12 over my time as President-Rector of Sacred Heart. "For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope." **A future with hope.** Indeed, with our diversity of experiences, cultures, languages, talents, and beliefs, Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology will be the beacon of hope that our city, country, and world needs, now more than ever.

Sincerely,

Fr. Thomas L. Knoebel
President/Rector
Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology

Bonnie Shafrin
Director

Lux Center for Catholic-Jewish Studies
at Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology
7335 South Hwy 100
Hales Corners, WI 53113-0429
414-529-6966
bshafrin@shsst.edu