

# BOISI CENTER REPORT



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## FROM THE DIRECTOR



Boisi had a busy fall, with a lively spring peaking over the horizon.

On October 17th, Diane Winston (professor at the University of Southern California)

gave the 6th Annual Wolfe Lecture on Religion and American Politics. Her lively presentation, “From Reagan’s Revolution to Trump’s Insurrection: The Role of the Religious Imaginary in American Politics,” was a condensed version of her well-received monograph, *Righting the American Dream*, published earlier last year. Starting her presentation with Reagan’s presidency, Winston showed how evangelical religion, the news media, and the current divisions in American society led inexorably to the rise of MAGA and the events of January 6th, 2021.

On October 29th, Boisi sponsored two panel presentations on “Christian Nationalism and the 2024 Election.” After a morning seminar for discussion among the presenters, the afternoon’s public panels were divided into two parts. The first, “Christian Nationalist Traditions,” was moderated by Mark Silk (Trinity College Hartford), and included Nancy Ammerman (Boston University), Cheryl Townsend Gilkes (Colby College), M. Cathleen Kaveny (Boston College), and Sarah Riccardi-Swartz (Northeastern University), who each offered riveting glimpses into the different parts of a dense forest that is Christian Nationalism – a fragile coalition of often very-dif-

ferent kinds of movements. The second panel, titled “The State of Play Today,” was moderated by Rhys Williams (Loyola University Chicago), and included Ruth Braunstein (University of Connecticut), Jack Delehanty (Clark University), Evan Stewart (University of Massachusetts Boston), and Aaron Weinstein (Fairfield University). The second panel focused on predicting how various Christian Nationalist movements would influence the 2024 elections. Their predictions proved to be cannily on the mark.

The Boisi Center partnered with Dan Joslyn-Siemiatkoski (director of BC’s Center for Christian-Jewish Learning) to host Robert P. Jones on October 8th. Jones is the founder and director of the Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI), an important online resource for scholars and students interested in how religion interacts with political culture in the United States. Jones is widely considered the “go to” expert on the numbers and size of religious groups and movements in contemporary American society. His presentation entitled, “Christian Nationalism, Religious Pluralism, and the 2024 Election,” offered detailed insights into the little-understood dynamics fueling contemporary antisemitism and anti-immigrant fears.

As is its custom, Boisi hosted a series of interesting lunch conversations that drew attentive listeners eager to engage the presenters in conversation. On September 10th, Rachel Gordan of the University of Florida presented several themes of her recently-published book, *Postwar Stories: How Books Made Judaism American*,

arguing that Jewish “middle brow” literature in the 1940s and 50s helped to shape post-Holocaust American Jewish identity. R. Ward Holder of St. Anselm College in New Hampshire and longtime friend of the Center, led a gripping conversation on the current political debates from the perspective of Reinhold Niebuhr’s “Christian realist” theological writings. In his presentation entitled, “Religious Enemies of Liberalism and the Christian Realist Defense: The Battle for the Soul of American Democracy,” Holder elicited passionate (and consistently interesting) responses from the standing-room-only crowd gathered for what one of the participants described as “lunch food for the brain.” Bernadette McCauley drew a broad mix of students, faculty, and university neighbors on October 22nd for her talk, “Our Stories Need to be Told: Memoirs of Former Nuns.” McCauley has spent most of her career at Hunter College of the City University of New York studying religious women – both those who stayed in the convent and those who left religious life – and is a scholar with the wonderful gift of vivid storytelling: she had those gathered for lunch under her spell three minutes into her talk.

On November 1st, I had the privilege of interviewing BC’s new (and wildly popular) football coach, Bill O’Brien. Several of the 150 or so students gathered in the large Devlin Hall lecture room arrived wearing sweatshirts with “In Bill We Trust” emblazoned on the front. Our hour-long conversation, titled “A Conversation with Coach Bill O’Brien about

(Continued on page 8)

## POSTWAR STORIES: HOW BOOKS MADE JUDAISM AMERICAN

*A luncheon colloquium with Dr. Rachel Gordan.*



*Rachel Gordan*

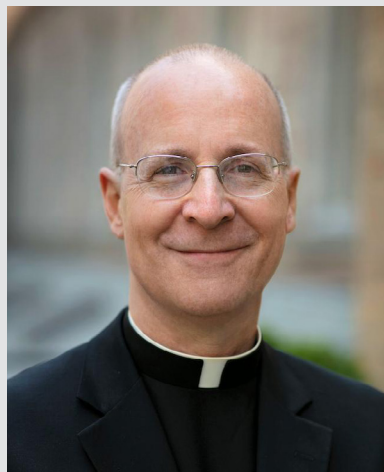
Dr. Rachel Gordan kicked off the Boisi Center's fall events with a presentation about American understandings of Judaism as expressed through Jewish novels in the post-World War II era. Gordan began the event by separating the novels into two categories: "anti-antisemitic" books and books that served as "introductions to Judaism." She described anti-antisemitic novels as a means to fight against antisemitic stereotypes and discrimination, while "intro to Judaism" novels took advantage of the former's popularity to explain what Jews actually believe to the largely Christian population of the United States.

In order to demonstrate the context, content, and impact of these novels, Gordon focused her attention on Laura Z. Hobson's famous work, *Gentleman's Agreement* (1947). The book-turned-film tells the fictional story of a non-Jewish journalist tasked with writing a piece about antisemitism. He lives his life pretending to be Jewish so that he can experience what antisemitism is like firsthand. This classic example of an anti-antisemitic novel was intended to give non-Jewish Americans a hint of the Jewish experience. Interestingly, Gordan explained that Hobson saw the novel as an American novel and antisemitism as an American problem, rather than as a novel for Jews about a Jewish problem. Gordan concluded the event by emphasizing the historical relevance of these novels and by engaging in a Q&A that featured questions about whether Judaism is best categorized as a race, religion, or culture. Different people may define Judaism differently, which seemed to be on the minds of audience members as they worked toward understanding the context of Gordan's authors and what it meant to be Jewish in the 1940s and in the contemporary U.S. context.

## A PODCAST ON THE SYNOD

*Fr. James Martin's reflections on the 2024 Synod.*

In this episode of Religion and American Life, James Martin, S.J. discusses his experiences at the 2024 Synod gathering in Rome. Host Mark Massa, S.J. engages Fr. Martin on the differences between the 2023 and 2024 meetings, the topics that were (and were not) discussed, moving moments, the process of implementing the Synod, and even the best Synod jokes. After giving this episode a listen, and to hear more of Fr. Martin's Synod experiences, check out the [recording of an event](#) we hosted on the 2023 Synod last spring.



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## CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM AND THE 2024 ELECTION

*A panel series on the role of Christian Nationalism in the U.S. political climate.*

On October 29th, 2024, the Boisi Center hosted a panel series entitled, “Christian Nationalism and the 2024 Election.” The event was comprised of two panels. Mark Silk, an emeritus professor of religion and public life at Trinity College Hartford, moderated the first panel on “Christian Nationalist Traditions.” The panel members included Nancy Ammerman, a professor emerita at Boston University’s School of Theology; Cheryl Townsend Gilkes, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Professor Emerita in African-American studies and sociology at Colby College, as well as an ordained Baptist minister; M. Cathleen Kaveny, serves as the Darald and Juliet Libby Professor with appointments in both the Law School and theology department at Boston College; and Sarah Riccardi-Swartz, an assistant professor of religion and anthropology at Northeastern University.

Silk’s questions were tailored to each panelist. He asked about topics like the rise and evolution of Christian nationalism as it relates to the Southern Baptist Convention, conservative Catholics, Black Christians, and international Christian nationalist groups. Ammerman, an expert on the Southern Baptist Convention, tied the growth of Christian nationalists in that denomination to the influence of community leaders and race relations. She also noted that only some members of the Southern Baptist Convention support Christian nationalism, with many more staying within the boundaries of historic Baptist teachings. Silk engaged Kaveny around the role of Catholics in the Christian nationalist movement. Similar to what Ammerman observed about



*(L-R) M. Cathleen Kaveny, Cheryl Townsend Gilkes, Mark Silk (moderator), Nancy Ammerman, and Sarah Riccardi-Swartz*

Baptists, Kaveny noted that Christian nationalism is not a widespread school of thought amongst Catholics in the United States. However, where it does emerge, it is often connected to concern with only one major ethical issue (e.g. abortion). Townsend Gilkes discussed the nuances of Black Christian support for aspects of Christian nationalism. She noted that the movement among Black Christians is distinct, as it does not often condone the violence associated with mainstream Christian nationalism. Riccardi-Swartz talked about the international movements of Christian nationalism and in particular, Putin’s embrace of nationalist sentiments. She noted how Putin has positioned himself as an ally for Christian nationalists in the United States who are opposed to American liberalization. Overall, the panel illuminated the multifaceted nature and influence of Christian nationalism in the United States.

The second panel, led by moderator Rhys Williams, focused on the contemporary relationship between religion and political ideology. The speakers on this panel were Ruth Braunstein, associate

professor of sociology and director of the Meanings of Democracy Lab at the University of Connecticut; Jack Delehanty, associate professor of sociology at Clark University; Evan Stewart, assistant professor of sociology at the University of Massachusetts Boston; and Aaron Weinstein, assistant professor of politics at Fairfield University. Their combined knowledge resulted in a fruitful conversation about trends in religious and political affiliation among Americans. Braunstein engaged with questions about proto-MAGA movements such as the Tea Party Movement and related it to the current state of American politics. On the other end of the political spectrum, Delehanty contrasted these movements by discussing the role progressive grassroots movements or “faith-based organizing” plays in the realm of political activism from a religious perspective. Weinstein looked at these two sides and related them to the highest office in the country. He explored the difference in approaches to religion between presidents like Joe Biden and Barack Obama, who embrace civil religion, and presidents like Donald Trump, who embrace political religion. Stewart weaved all of these ideas together through his expertise in survey data. By looking at recent research, he analyzed the trends in attitudes toward different ideologies related to religion and the state. This impressive cast of panelists interacted with each other in a very nuanced manner that sparked even more discussion after their own conversation had concluded.



*(L-R) Evan Stewart, Aaron Weinstein, Rhys Williams (moderator), Jack Delehanty, and Ruth Braunstein*

## “OUR STORIES NEED TO BE TOLD”: MEMOIRS OF FORMER NUNS

*A luncheon colloquium explored common themes from the stories of ex-nuns.*

Dr. Bernadette McCauley offered a thought-provoking presentation about the lives of former nuns. The Hunter College professor emerita shared that her project began because she read a book review about the memoir of an ex-nun. After many months of research, McCauley has now read over fifty memoirs. As these types of memoirs have grown in popularity in recent years, McCauley noted key distinctions between earlier publications and later publications. She described the context surrounding the exodus from convents in American society. A great deal of nuns left their cloistered homes in the 1960s and 1970s, but some told their story immediately after while others waited decades to write about their experiences. Memoirs from the 20th century often depict a great deal of anger and frustration and focus mostly on religious life,

while newer books tend to give a more holistic picture including details about life outside the convent, as well. McCauley emphasized the diversity of events that the authors documented. Some nuns grew up in mixed religious households, and others were raised Catholic without interreligious interaction. Some were extremely anxious about taking vows and others had joyful anticipation. For many women, the decision to write these oral histories came from the desire to set the record straight on what it was like to be a nun and to offer realistic portrayals of religious life, which has often been shrouded in lore.

McCauley ended the luncheon with an engaging question and answer session. One audience member asked about the social and cultural trends that might have influenced nuns' decisions to leave.



*Bernadette McCauley*

McCauley noted that the most common explanation was that the model of the convent was no longer relevant to the society in which it existed (for example, religious orders do not play as large of a role in hospitals or schools as they did in the past). McCauley and the luncheon attendees seemed to agree that the testimonies are vital for resisting the media's dramatized and unnuanced portrayals of religious life, and for allowing former nuns to tell their own stories.

## FROM REAGAN'S REVOLUTION TO TRUMP'S INSURRECTION: THE ROLE OF THE RELIGIOUS IMAGINARY IN AMERICAN POLITICS

*Diane Winston delivered our 6th Annual Wolfe Lecture on Religion and American Politics.*



*Diane Winston delivers the Wolfe Lecture.*

Dr. Diane Winston, professor at the University of Southern California where she holds the Knight Chair in Media and Religion, began her lecture with a joke about a pastor and politician in heaven. After the joke found a lot of laughs in the audience, Winston revealed that the joke was a favorite of Reagan's, and she used it to segue into an interesting discussion about the role of religion in Reagan's political vision. Winston high-

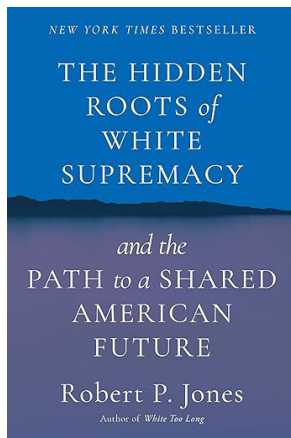
lighted the ways in which Christianity was an important element of Reagan's campaign, while also showing that it was used in a very different way than it has been by Donald Trump in recent years. Winston focused on the religious imaginary that each president crafted during their time in office. She noted that America has always had an implicit or explicit religious imaginary, but different presidents have taken this on in different ways. Reagan's religious imaginary portrayed the United States as a shining city upon a hill blessed by God, and the apex of the blessing can be seen in the individual economic freedoms of daily life. Reagan also used cosmic language in speeches (e.g. calling Russians evil for being totalitarian). Winston noted that the news media normalized this extreme language by circulating his rhetoric. Similarly, Trump's divisive rhetoric of white supremacy dominates the news cycle. However, Trump's language and use of

the Christian imagination has become radicalized and oriented toward stirring hatred against members of our own country. While many journalists are not buying into these harmful ideas, they are spreading the messaging and forcing it into the mainstream. An imaginary that in Reagan's time was marked by broad platitudes about the exceptional freedom of the United States is now marked by statements about individuals within who are "poisoning the blood of our country."

Winston's thought-provoking lecture sparked many questions from the audience. For example, one gentleman asked about the seemingly paradoxical solidarity of the radically individualistic MAGA movement. Winston responded by outlining Trump supporters' sense of shared connection about these individualistic beliefs. The rich question-and-answer session demonstrated the interest of the crowd in the role of the religious imaginary in American society.

# CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM, RELIGIOUS PLURALISM, AND THE 2024 ELECTION

Robert P. Jones shared informative research about trends in Christian Nationalism in the United States.



On October 8th, 2024, the Boisi Center for Religion and American Public Life and the Center for Christian-Jewish Learning co-host-

ed Robert P. Jones for a lecture titled, “Christian Nationalism, Religious Pluralism, and the 2024 Election.” Robert P. Jones is the president and founder of the Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI) and the author of several books, including a New York Times best-seller, *The Hidden Roots of White Supremacy and the Path to a Shared American Future*. His presentation unpacked data, polls, and demographics that are associated with the embrace of Christian nationalism.

Jones began by telling the audience that in the studies conducted via PRRI, he found that the most significant divide among Americans is not over policy but identity. One of the most interesting identity-based divides he found regards the question of if the United States should be a Christian nation. In a five-option scale that ranged from “agree” to “disagree,” polls engaged participants about the role of Christianity in government and law. The data showed that roughly thirty percent of Americans support or lean towards supporting Christian nationalism. Fifty-five percent of Republicans adhere to or sympathize with Christian nationalism, while only sixteen percent of Democrats do the same. There are also religious affiliations correlated with Christian nationalism, with both white evangelical Protestants and Hispanic protestants (both which lean Republican) having a majority that supports Christian nationalism. Inter-

estingly, he also noted that attendance of religious services is positively correlated with support of Christian nationalism. Finally, Jones’ research found that white Americans are more likely than Americans of color to support Christian nationalism.

Jones then presented data on the specific beliefs of Christian nationalists. On average, they are more likely to deny that systemic racism exists. They are also more likely to adopt Islamophobic and anti-Semitic beliefs as well as embrace the ideals of patriarchy. A high percentage of Christian nationalists that hold these beliefs are white and Republican. Jones also found that Christian nationalists are more likely to support far-right authoritarian regimes and political violence. State-by-state, Jones’ research found that states that voted Republican in the 2020 election scored the highest on scales of Christian nationalism. He also explored images of the January 6, 2021 insurrection and analyzed the religious imagery there in light of Christian nationalism.

He ended his presentation by urging attendees to recognize these harmful associations and to put to rest the inadequate and incorrect claim that the U.S. is a Christian nation for white European descendents.

After the lecture, Jones engaged the audience in a rich question-and-answer session. When asked about the foundations of Christian nationalism, Jones named the desire for power. He believes that the Christian nationalism in the United States today is concerned with keeping white Christians in power. Another question regarded the role of gender in affiliation with Christian nationalism; Jones said that partisanship is a much more significant factor than an individual’s gender when predicting views on Christian nationalism. Overall, Jones presented informative data about the nature of Christian nationalism in the United States.



Robert P. Jones presents to a crowded room in Gasson Hall.

## A CONVERSATION WITH COACH BILL O'BRIEN ABOUT FAITH, FOOTBALL, AND BOSTON COLLEGE

*The Coach joined Mark Massa, S.J. for a conversation about faith, football, and his lifelong love of Jesuit education.*



*Coach Bill O'Brien*

On November 1, 2024, the Boisi Center for Religion and American Public Life hosted Boston College head football coach Bill O'Brien for a conversation about faith, football, and BC with the center's director, Mark Massa, S.J. For the first half of the event, Massa interviewed O'Brien, then he opened up the conversation for question and answer with an engaged audience for the second half of the event.

The conversation centered around both football and what it means for O'Brien to work at a Jesuit school. The Jesuit values of the BC community was a central theme for O'Brien. He mentioned the power of having a Catholic mass before games, and that he wants to instill in his players the value of being "men for others." He noted that much of the team is active in serving the community.

Other dimensions of Boston College's culture were also discussed. O'Brien recognizes that BC has a culture of hard-working students, which he also expects from his players and uses as a selling point in recruiting. He emphasized that he is not looking for student-athletes who are concerned with making the most money, but rather those who want to work hard and succeed on multiple levels, including academically. He told the audience that he talks with his players often about the value of a Boston College education. Given that, statistically, most college athletes will not go on to be professionals, having an excellent education is important for their future success. Regarding football recruitment, O'Brien noted that he intends to bring in recruits primarily from high school programs and have them play for their entire collegiate careers at Boston College. He also said he intends to recruit from the Northeast in particular, as the local community can be a powerful source of support for athletes.

When asked about student engagement from BC undergraduates, O'Brien emphasized that the student body has been great at supporting the football program. He added that he would love to get students into the stadium earlier, which would require earlier tailgating so that students would come to the game before kickoff. This would provide an even closer connection between players and their fellow students.

Perhaps most poignantly, O'Brien reflected on his decision to come to Boston College. He told the story of when he found out the job had opened up, which happened when he was out to dinner with his wife and saw it on ESPN. He and his wife looked at each other at that moment and knew they would be moving to Boston. It was the perfect program for him, and the perfect place for his family. Overall, O'Brien spoke eloquently and thoughtfully about the BC football program. It was clear that in the way he coaches, recruits, and lives, he is an emblem of Boston College's mission as a Jesuit school.

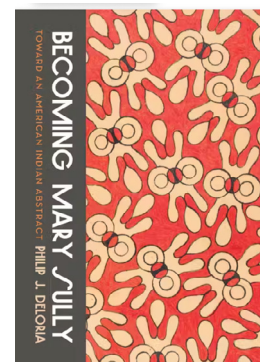
## BECOMING MARY SULLY: RECLAIMING A MODERN NATIVE AMERICAN ARTIST

*The Boisi Center co-hosted a lecture on the artwork of a 20th century Native American artist.*

The events of Fall 2024 culminated with a co-sponsored lecture by Dr. Philip Deloria (Dakota descent), the Leverett Saltonstall Professor of History at Harvard University. Most of Deloria's work focuses on American Indian history, but this event was particularly personal to him, as he discussed the work of his great-aunt, Mary Sully. He started by outlining the life and ancestry of Sully, whose real name was Susan Deloria, and then he delved deeper into her work. Sully's work was only discovered and shared with the public quite recently. After she died in 1963, the art was given to her sister, Ella, and then to other relatives. When Philip Deloria discovered the prints in a cardboard box in his mother's home, he was stunned by the talent they reflected. He set out to research his ancestor and prove the importance of her work.

A child of an Episcopal priest, Sully attended a mission school in her youth and an elite boarding school in her adolescent years. After her schooling, she followed her sister Ella to Kansas and New York where she developed her artistic ability through design. Sully also began producing her popular personality prints during this time. She would use stylistically similar methods to other Northern Plains Indian women artists, but she would use them to represent popular figures of the time. For example, her personality print of Fred Astaire contains shapes and colors abstractly reminiscent of steps on a dance floor. Traditional Northern Plains art uses shapes like squares and diamonds and styles like mirroring and dualism, which are also present in these prints. Later in her career, she took steps

toward more ethnographic and pictographic pieces, which were traditionally art made by men. Sully was not the first woman to step outside of gender categories, but she successfully used this style to design objects like suitcases and bags. Thanks to Deloria's research and advocacy, Sully's work has been featured in an exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and will continue to tour U.S. museums for years to come. Deloria's research on her art demonstrates the value his relative can bring to the U.S. artistic canon.



*Deloria's book on the life and work of Mary Sully*

## RELIGIOUS ENEMIES OF LIBERALISM AND CHRISTIAN REALIST DEFENSE: THE BATTLE FOR THE SOUL OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

*This luncheon presented an overview and analysis of various authors' works on Christian Nationalism.*

On September 30th, the Boisi Center welcomed back R. Ward Holder, a professor of theology and politics at Saint Anselm College, to host a luncheon colloquium titled “Religious Enemies of Liberalism and Christian Realist Defense: The Battle for the Soul of American Democracy.” Holder started the event by emphasizing the impact of Christian nationalism abroad and in the United States, and by offering examples of the rise of Christian Nationalism. For instance, he discussed Victor Orban, the Prime Minister of Hungary, who supports a “Christian Democracy” where equal rights are not guaranteed. He stated that Christian Nationalism is one of the most important current issues for theologians studying religion and public affairs.

Holder’s presentation focused on three American authors – Stephen Wolfe, David Gushee, and Reinhold Niebuhr – whose works concern Christian Nationalism and the role of religion in the United States. Stephen Wolfe, the author of the bestselling book, *The Case for Christian Nationalism*, is attempting to reinvigorate Christendom, grow cultural Christianity, and revolt against tyrants that promote secularism. In response to Wolfe’s arguments, Holder pointed to the contradictions in Wolfe’s belief in Calvinist teachings. According to Holder, the doctrine of the lesser magistrate is essential to Calvinism, and the idea of a popular revolution contradicts the very teachings of Calvin. Next, Holder discussed David

Gushee and his book, *Defending Democracy from its Christian Enemies*. Gushee offers three resources for defending democracy – the Baptist Democratic Tradition, the Black Christian Democratic Tradition, and the renewal of the Democratic Covenant. While agreeing with Gushee’s desire to argue against Christian nationalism, Holder pointed out flaws in all three resources. For example, Holder argued that the renewal of the Democratic Covenant did not take into account non-Christians who were part of the authoritarian movement or offer a critique of a Christian viewpoint.

Holder finished his presentation by discussing Niebuhr, the author of *The Children of Light, The Children of Darkness: A Vindication of Democracy and a Critique of Its Traditional Defense*. Holder emphasized Niebuhr’s insight about the conflict between self-interest and general interest, which requires balance. Niebuhr rejected Christian nationalism and thought of it as a form of “darkness” because it destroys the individual, harming the balance of self-interest and general interest. Niebuhr saw democracy as necessary because it holds self-interest and general interest together. Finally, Holder mentioned the two-fold test of



*R. Ward Holder presents at the Boisi Center.*

tolerance: Christians must make a stand based on their religion but must show humility and accept that their view may be wrong. For Holder and Niebuhr, a part of the solution to Christian nationalism is recognizing that religion needs humility; without humility, democracy fails. Holder also said that Niebuhr knows there is no final solution because human sinfulness will always persist, and humans need to establish democratic principles to combat this.

After his presentation, audience members engaged Holder about whether Christian nationalism is a new civic religion, whether democracy is too much to ask of fallen beings, and the role of mega-churches. The scope of the Q&A demonstrates the broadness of Christian nationalism and its wide-ranging impact.

### THE CONVERSATION ON CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM CONTINUES IN A PODCAST EPISODE

*In this episode of Religion and American Life, Mark Massa, S.J. interviews the theologian and Episcopal priest, Dr. Daniel Joslyn-Siemiatkoski, on the rise of Christian nationalism in the United States. Joslyn-Siemiatkoski discusses the roots of Christian nationalism, the complex ways that it appears in our culture, and what it might mean for the 2024 election. Join us for this important and timely conversation.*

Check out this episode as well as a podcast version of “A Conversation with Coach Bill O’Brien” on our [website](#) or by following *Religion and American Life* [on Podbean](#).

“Faith, Football, and Boston College,” included thirty minutes of conversation about how the new head coach saw BC’s Catholic and Jesuit identity fitting in with the football program, followed by thirty minutes of questions from the long queue of students who lined up behind the standing mic in the front of the amphitheater. The new head coach received long (and thunderous) applause at the end of the event.

The Boisi Center’s interdisciplinary faculty seminar – meeting monthly for dinner and lively conversation – drew faculty from many departments in the Morrissey College (history, sociology, political science, communications, international studies, theology) as well as from the Clough School of Theology and Ministry

and the Connell School of Nursing. And even by that group’s high standards, we had raucous, but always interesting, debates on a spectrum of readings and podcasts: Stanford University’s May 2024 “It’s in the Air’: Antisemitism and Anti-Israeli Bias at Stanford, and How to Address It”; *The Atlantic’s* podcast Autocracy in America, hosted by Anne Applebaum and Peter Pomerantsev; and Mara Einstein’s provocative essay, “Hoodwinked: How Marketers Use the Same Tactics as Cults.” Our two-hour conversations flew by, and a number of seminar participants lingered on long after the 8pm end of the meetings to continue the discussion and debate. BC is blessed with talented and committed faculty, and Boisi draws

some of the best to its faculty seminar.

Suzie Richard, Boisi’s wonderful administrator, makes all the trains run on time (not a trivial task, given all the stuff that goes on here in the course of a week). And Maddie Jarrett, our graduate research assistant in charge of a daunting array of tasks (publicity, event coordination, podcast production, etc.) makes her many duties look easy (they’re not) and even fun (sometimes they are!). Our two Undergraduate Research Fellows – seniors Joey Monti and Liam Adamczyk – are full of great ideas (like the Coach O’Brien event) and more than willing to take on the tasks that send them all over campus. I’m privileged to be part of a great team.

~ Mark Massa, S.J.

## COMING UP THIS SPRING AT THE BOISI CENTER

**JANUARY 28, 2025 | 6:00 - 7:15PM, [RSVP RECOMMENDED](#)**

“Russia’s War Against the West,” Ambassador John Sullivan

**FEBRUARY 6, 2025 | 12:00 - 1:00PM, [RSVP REQUIRED](#)**

“‘Under my Skin:’ Tattoos and Religion,” Gustavo Morello

**FEBRUARY 18, 2025 | 6:30 - 7:30PM, [RSVP RECOMMENDED](#)**

A Conversation with Coach Greg Brown on Faith, Jesuit Culture, and the BC Hockey Team

**FEBRUARY 20, 2025 | 5:00 - 6:30PM, [RSVP RECOMMENDED](#)**

22nd Annual Prophetic Voices Lecture, “Christian Antifascism in Charlottesville,” Eric Martin

**FEBRUARY 25, 2025 | 12:00 - 1:00PM, [RSVP REQUIRED](#)**

“American Religious Darwinism: Teaching Islam in American Protestant Seminaries during the Gilded Age,” David Grafton

**FEBRUARY 27, 2025 | 5:00 - 6:30PM, [RSVP RECOMMENDED](#)**

The Alfred and Melissa Di Leonardo Lecture Series, “Catholicism Represented: Democracy, Religion and Global History, 1789-2025,” with John McGreevy

**MARCH 25, 2025 | 5:30 - 7:00PM, [RSVP RECOMMENDED](#)**

Inaugural Nancy Marzella Lecture on Women and American Catholicism, “Enslaved to the Jesuits: What Women of the First U.S. Diocese can tell us about Women in the Church,” Jeannine Hill Fletcher

**MARCH 26, 2025 | 12:00 - 1:00PM, [RSVP REQUIRED](#)**

“Take Me to the Water: Black Madonnas and the Initiation of Possibility,” Amey Victoria Adkins-Jones

**APRIL 2, 2025 | 5:30 - 7:00PM, [RSVP RECOMMENDED](#)**

“Catholic Fundamentalism in America,” a panel event on Fr. Mark Massa’s latest book

**APRIL 5, 2025 | 9:00 - 3:00 PM, [RSVP REQUIRED](#)**

5th Annual Graduate Student Conference, “Accessing the Divine: Religious Sources of Resilience in an Age of Political Turmoil”

**APRIL 10, 2025 | 12:00 - 1:00 PM, [RSVP REQUIRED](#)**

“Muslim and Catholic Experiences of National Belonging in France,” Carol Ferrara

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THESE AND ALL OUR EVENTS, VISIT: [BC.EDU/BOISI](https://bc.edu/boisi)**