Former Student/Now Faculty

Shares on Dr. Lartey’s History of Healing Racial Wounds

Dr. Beth Toler sat in classes with a mentoring teacher, who today speaks and writes on intercultural understandings. She shares:

On a clear, August night, on a mountain top in the Northeast Georgia mountains. I set up camp in the dark. With only the light of my headlamp and a million stars shining above me, I set out to finish reading a book I had been assigned by my professor, Dr. Emmanuel Lartey. The name of that book was Race, Colour and the Processes of Racialization: New Perspectives from Group Analysis, Psychoanalysis and Sociology by Farad Dalal. Up until this mountain top moment, I was fairly confident in my awareness of matters around race, gender, and culture. My experiences in college and seminary had baptized me into consciousness about what it means to be a white, southern, woman in the United States and the world. But on that August night, via the wisdom of my professor, I was invited to contemplate the idea that race not only matters, but it impacts and influences the entire therapeutic process. My whole framework and perspective about the nature and aim of therapy and my presence immediately shifted.

The next day, I hiked down the mountain and ambled another eight miles, contemplatively chewing on the ramifications of my new found perspectives. The following week, I carried that book into Dr. Lartey’s office and began a conversation and journey that continues to this day. In the course of that conversational journey, Dr. Lartey helped me understand the societal function and prophetic import of pastoral counseling. He gave me courage to see the therapeutic process partly as a space that helps us name and confront the impact that racism has on our lives. He gave me tools to create transformative conversations that help. Heal the wounds of racism and mitigate its effects.

Dr. Lartey has an ability to see, name, and clearly define the ways in which society constructs the idea of the “other” for the purposes of dominance, division, and subjugation. His gift, however, lies in his ability to compassionately engage those constructs and create opportunities for healing, grace, and authentic community. The PCMCH department hopes you will join us on Saturday, October 14 as Dr. Lartey shares his gifts and builds on his remarks from last year’s homecoming, Lartey will continue to engage the notion of interpathy and help us all imagine new depth for pastoral care and counseling.

All members of the Pastoral and Spiritual programs welcome and congratulate Dr. Chris Domes!
From Chef to Clinical Director
Houton Returns to Achieve Next Step in His Dream: Ph.D.

John Houton started in the restaurant industry at the age of 15, going on to complete his Bachelor’s degree in Hotel and Restaurant Management. Continuing on this path, working in different phases of the hospitality industry, including as a chef apprenticing in Italian and French cuisine, he finally became an owner of a bistro-style Italian restaurant. Feeling burned out from the intensity of owning and managing the restaurant, he sold his successful business in 2000. He decided to take some time and discern where God was calling him at this point in his life. John ended up getting hired as the chef/food service director at Covenant House Pennsylvania, an organization that serves homeless and runaway youth in Philadelphia, PA. While there, he not only supervised the foodservice department, but started to work with the kids training them in the Covenant House’s Culinary Arts Vocational Training Program.

His supervisor began encouraging John to return to school to work on a Master’s Degree so that I would be eligible for promotion within the organization. However, John states that he protested saying “I did not like school the first time around and was sure I would like it even less 10 years later.” The logical degree would have been a Master’s in Business Administration (MBA), but the thought of that left him uninspired. Meanwhile, a co-worker was looking at Neumann’s Master’s in Pastoral Counseling and Care and encouraged John to apply “just to get more information”. He filled out the on-line application and received several phone calls from S. Suzanne.

He finally scheduled an interview with the primary purpose of hearing her out but also to explain that he was sure Neumann’s program was not a good match for him. He left that interview in the Bachmann Main Building conflicted and said a prayer out front asking God to give him a clear sign. He got into his truck, drove the 22 minutes home, and parked in front of his house. As he walked to the front door, the mail-carrier walked up, handing him his mail with a letter from Neumann on the top. As John opened it, he says he went weak in the knees as it was a letter of acceptance signed by S. Suzanne, affirming, “Thy will be done – I guess I’m going to Neumann.” He quickly realized that he was in the right place, and graduated from the master’s program in 2006.

After graduating from the PCC program with a master’s degree, John moved to Lancaster, PA and began working in a Residential Treatment Facility for troubled kids and later joined a clinic that specialized in treating kids with Attachment Disorders. His journey as a counselor then took him to an Inpatient Substance Abuse treatment facility where he is currently working. John is also pursuing a Ph.D. in Pastoral Counseling at Neumann University and states “As soon as I set foot back on Neumann’s campus I knew I was back where I belonged.”
The church, Blessed Virgin Mary [BVM], stands on the corner of Main Street and McDade Boulevard, a huge Gothic structure that dates from 1930. Having begun as a house of worship for immigrants from Ireland, Poland, Italy, Germany and England, the parish, looming large on the western boundary of Philadelphia, still opens its doors to those coming from far. These days the church counts among its parishioners newcomers from Africa, India, Vietnam and some from islands bordering on the U.S. While the number of families is 955 or about 2400 persons, on any Sunday morning the church is full for the morning Eucharist. The current parish secretary explains the attendance, by calling BVM, “a special place to be.” a worship place where former parishioners who had moved away return and even those who geographically belong to other parishes come to celebrate and pray.

A large part of the reason for such loyalty comes in the person of the parish’s current pastor, Rev. Joseph Corley. Father Corley has “shepherded” BVM since 1998 and, if it is up to him, he will continue to serve the people of Darby for a long time to come. Previous to his move to BVM, Father served as parish priest in several Philadelphia churches and for a time as the director of the Neumann Youth Center. His position at BVM is not the only “hat” which Rev. Corley wears in the diocese. Along with his position as Pastoral Dean of Deanery #1 which covers most of Delaware county, in May 2017 Father was appointed Rector, pro-temp, Villa St. Joseph, Darby, the retirement home for priests who have served in ministry to the persons of Philadelphia and its surrounding counties. Here Father notes he finds many friends: fellow priests along with former teachers, associates and pastors.

At one point Father Corley, who already held a Master of Divinity as part of his education at St. Charles Seminary, decided to add another degree — one that strengthened his sense of being the “shepherd.” To do so he completed the Master of Science degree in pastoral counseling from Neumann University. Father uses the wisdom and learning that he gained in pastoral courses, not only to support and guide his parishioners, but to provide special outreach for particular groups. One such is his ‘Boys to Men’ mentoring program that Father began to “support positive Christian values . . . and talk to the boys about what it means to be a man.” Through group discussions, speakers and one-on-one support Father works to confront some of the issues he sees affecting his parish community, including drug and alcohol addiction. In 2014, he installed a shrine whose centerpiece is “Our Lady of Light,” the picture by Brother Mickey McGrath, OSFS. This depiction of Mary is one that features her as an intercessor for those with addiction problems. This is a project close to his heart since Father served in the past as a detox counselor at a VA hospital and mourns the many young persons he saw as victims of the drug epidemic.

With all of his years of service to God and God’s people, it is not a wonder that Father has been chosen as the recipient for the Neumann Division of Education and Human Services award at the Hall of Fame dinner to be held October 14 as part of Homecoming. In receiving the award, Father gives a name to several of the criteria for it. In terms of Father Corley representing “a graduate whose career is characterized by continuous and exemplary contributions to society” along with his ongoing outreach and care, Father has served in multiple roles in high school and at the seminary. He “exemplifies the values of Neumann and its dedication to education” in his commitment to keep BVM Darby school open, welcoming all who need its services. Finally, in terms of “living with the Franciscan spirit”, the blessing learned from his dedicated mother, were strengthened by his time at Neumann. We join in echoing Father’s favorite expression: Who loves us? God loves us. When does God love us? ALL THEM TIME!
Since the Spring Newsletter, the Ph.D. Program in Pastoral Counseling has celebrated three more dissertation defenses:

June 9: Meredith Hardee successfully defended her dissertation entitled: *Invisibility, Distorted Love, and Abandonment in the Substance Use Disorder Population: An Intervention to Reduce Shame and Increase Spiritual Sentiments*. Meredith continues to work with the substance use disorder population at the Caron Foundation in Wernersville, PA. She states she is looking to add to her data and continue with the research on Soul Evolution Theory.

July 20: Anna Sollenberger also successfully defended her dissertation entitled: *LGBT Religious Identity Integration: A Phenomenological Study of the Process of Religious and Sexual Identity Integration*. Anna is the co-owner of Growing Edges Counseling in Wilmington, DE.

July 27: Linda Murray Branco defended her dissertation successfully. Linda’s research, entitled: *The Lived Experience of Moral Distress in Critical Care Nurses*, examined this contemporary construct related to trauma experiences. Linda continues to serve as the Director for the Pastoral Care Services at St. Francis Hospital in Wilmington, DE, moving to part time to allow her to start a private practice.

The Ph.D. Program Welcomes Its Fifth Cohort

Looking ahead, the PhD Program is pleased to announce its fifth cohort that began on August 25. Members include the following:

- Fr. Augustine Emeh
- Brian Rajcok
- Eileen Kelly-Warner
- Jacqui Hurwitz
- Marcia McIntosh
- Shannon Ayers
- Sharon Banks

This brings total enrollment of Ph.D. students to 39. Dr. Jim Houck notes “how very proud all in the Ph.D. and among the faculty and staff of the pastoral programs are of our students and how much we look forward for great things to come!”
This October 25, the PCMHC and SFD programs will join with other graduate programs across campus to provide the Community Learning Experience scheduled for each semester. Gathering, prayer and input will take place along with some great hors d’oeuvres and deserts. The focus of the input will be on Suicide Prevention with a panel of speakers representing different experts who deal with this social issue called the mental health crisis of our time.

“Place your hand over your heart, can you feel it? That is called purpose. You’re alive for a reason so don’t ever give up.” — Unknown

Lecture Series Offerings —

Death, Dying, Bereavement on October 27 and 28 with Barbara Price-Martin and Jackie Williams

ACES, Resilience and EMDR on December 1 and 2 with Suzanne Mayer, ihm.

Neumann Programs

In the interreligious movement, Oct. 27, 1986 stands out as a landmark moment when Pope John Paul II convened representatives of the world's religions to gather at the Church of Saint Francis of Assisi, Italy to pray together for the first time in history. On October 27 of this year, Neumann will rekindle the spirit of that moment when persons of all faiths and beliefs came together to pray for peace. At the close of last year’s first gathering Rabbi Abraham Skorka, a longtime friend of Pope Francis, said, “The spiritual fire lit then gathers us today, The hope of peace, which is the core of Jewish, Christian and Islamic faiths, continues palpitating in the hearts of many.”

At Franciscan Spiritual Center

Carol Hart Metzker is the author of Facing the Monster: How One Person Can Fight Child Slavery. She will address the plight of the world’s children who live a life of modern slavery. She will share her experiences and provide us with actions to make a difference. This program is offered on October 18, 2014. It begins at 10:00 a.m. and ends at 3:00 p.m.

Special Announcement

Taking the NCE is stressful – good preparation is the key to success! Join Barbara Price-Martin and Jackie Williams for a comprehensive NCE Preparation Course. We will meet on two Saturday mornings and provide study materials that will boost your confidence and teach you how to prepare. The cost is $150 (plus a non-refundable materials fee of $25 that is payable when you register). Be sure to register early, as classes fill up quickly.

Dates to prep for the 2018 test are scheduled for January 6 and 20, 9 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
Dr. Tim Hanna has had a submission accepted to an edited manuscript on Experiential Activities for Teaching Social Justice and Advocacy Competence in Counseling, entitled, “Personal Perspectives: A Social Justice and Religion/Spirituality Developmental Timeline.” He has also recently accepted the role of facilitating Neumann Faculty Teaching & Learning Circles as a member of the Neumann Faculty Development Committee. He has further continued his professional development by attending local and national conferences hosted by the American Association of Pastoral Counselors (AAPC) and the Association for Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Values in Counseling (ASERVIC).

With the start of the new semester, Suzanne Mayer, ihm, Ph.D., has begun classes with a group of new members of several religious orders in the Philadelphia area. The course on Human Development is being presented to 12 candidates for religious life, male and female, to support their formation experience through spiritual, intellectual and social engagement. Over the summer months, she offered a series of retreats for women in various religious communities. Her work with the Daughters of St. Paul took her twice to the Boston area for both a directed retreat and a Cinema Divina. She headed west to St. Louis to give a retreat/workshop series to the cloistered Sisters, Servants of the Holy Ghost, also called the “Pink Sisters.” Finally, in a sort of both ends of life view, on Saturday, September 30, she offered two reflections to the senior sisters of her own community when she spoke at the IHM Spirituality Center on female icons of aging from Old and New Testaments.

Dr. Sophia Park’s book review on The Dean’s Demise: Sexual Harassment in a Divinity School by Richard Fletcher was published in Reflective Teaching, Wabash Center’s journal online. She presented Self-reflection Process in Strategies for Classroom Management at the 2016-17 Teaching Workshop for Early Career Theological School Faculty in Crawfordsville, IN on June 16. She was a recipient of Wabash Teaching Fellowship Grant in September, 2017. Her project, Critical Reflection: Cultural Self-Awareness in Counseling Training, will be carried out in the academic year of 2017-18. With Sr. Suzanne Mayer, she also co-presented a workshop A Franciscan Call to the Underside of Grace: Use of Theological Reflection in the Face of Life’s Realities at the AAPC Atlanta Regional Conference at the Maritime Conference Center, in Linthicum, Maryland on October 7.

Contributing to a book (in press) entitled Franciscan Women: Medieval and Modern, Dr. Beth Toler’s chapter focuses on Angela of Foligno and her contribution to contemporary clinical models of religious and spiritual integration. She also co-presented at two professional venues this summer. The first, a paper presentation at the College Theology Society at Salve Regina, covered the topic of Competencies and Identities: Ecumenism, Pluralism, and Interfaith Engagement. The second was a workshop presentation at the National ASERVIC Meeting in Richmond, VA, speaking on the issue of Faith and Domestic Violence: Resource or Roadblock?

Sr. Diane Tomkinson, OSF, organized two sessions of papers and facilitated the business meeting of WIFI/Women in the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition, during the 52nd International Congress on Medieval Studies, May 10-12, 2017, in Kalamazoo, MI. In addition to organizing the WIFI session on “Franciscan Women and Material Culture,” Sr. Diane presided at a session co-sponsored by WIFI and the Franciscan Institute of St. Bonaventure University, entitled “Renewed in Each Sex: Women and Men in the Rediscovered Life of St. Francis of Assisi” (by Thomas of Celano).
Dr. John Kruse who recently published his book, Discovering the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition: A Life-giving Vision (2017) through Franciscan Institute Publications. This new publication offers an accessible introduction to how the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition engages “the big questions of life.” Dr. Kruse brings his expertise in the Franciscan and other spiritual traditions to our graduate students in the Spiritual Formation and Direction program.

After 28 years — Spiritual Formation and Direction Program to Close

Since 1990, Neumann University has offered preparation for the ministry of spiritual direction through our various certificate and degree programs in Spiritual Formation and Direction. Originally conceived by Neumann professors Eileen Flanagan and Joann Conn, in collaboration with Sr. Kathleen McAlpin, RSM, and Sister John Koliss, OSF, Neumann’s program has provided quality spiritual direction training within an academic setting. In recent years, the program has experienced declines in enrollment related to changing needs and resources of potential students and the University. As of Fall 2017, Neumann University stopped accepting applications to its two current certificate programs, in Spiritual Formation and Direction and Spiritual Formation & Direction Supervision. The SFD program will close in May 2018, when the present cohort of students will complete its studies.

As we announce this difficult decision, we want to celebrate the community of people who have participated in Neumann University’s Spiritual Direction programs since 1990. Any one and all of the many graduates, supervisors, or faculty members who have participated in any of the Spiritual Direction certificate or degree programs are invited to save the date of April 14, 2018 to gather with current students, faculty and staff to celebrate the contributions of Neumann’s Spiritual Formation and Direction Programs over the years. The gathering, from approximately 10:00 a.m. to noon, will include prayer, brunch and an opportunity to reconnect and share with one another. Please watch for further details in early 2018.
Meet the Three Incoming Officers for Alpha Omega Nu

Kasey, Lori

and Jennifer [as in Seltner, Heeney, and Pope] — these three young women represent the leadership for Neumann’s chapter, Alpha Omega Nu, of the national honor society for graduate counselors in training — Chi Sigma Iota. In order of their photos, they are the president, the vice-president and the secretary-treasurer. Elected last May, the three took up their positions at the opening of the Fall semester and have already initiated plans for the year.

“Gathering and getting to know each other” was first on the list of to-do’s for the “take it on” three and a date has been set. Save the date of December 2 — yes, when assignments are in, grades are being posted, and before the holiday daze begins — from 10 through 1 when meet and greet partners with get to know. Along with social time for newcomers to get introduced to the veteran members, time will be allotted to learn some of the vital pieces of information for surviving after graduation through mini-workshops.

Look forward to another imperative for honor society members as the three plan for some creative and important service projects.

Pledging Prayers

Members of the Pastoral programs of Neumann University pledge prayers and support for all who were devastated in the recent hurricanes in Texas, Florida and the islands. In a special way, we are remembering the responders who are supporting survivors and sufferers.

In addition, with the most recent tragedy, the massacre in Las Vegas, we pray for a coming of peace and respect of human life for all.

We support with hope and promise, in particular, Lorette Ayers, one of our Ph.D. students, who as part of the Red Cross Spiritual Care Providers, is assisting on the ground among those hurt, grieving and traumatized in the shooting.

In a tragedy closer to home, we also pledge prayers to Jamela Graves and her family. Jamela, a new student in PCMHC, is grieving her nephew Ronald Lundy, killed in a drive-by shooting on his way home from Chester High School Monday, September 18.

Eternal rest to all and consolation and healing to all whose hearts are heavy.