

# the boisi center report



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## from the interim director

At the Boisi Center we work hard to convene and sustain rigorous, civil, and constructive conversations about religion in public life, in pursuit of the common good of a religiously diverse society. We

frequently bring exceptional scholarship into dialogue with engaged citizenship and the creative arts, to produce meaningful exchanges that inform, challenge, and inspire. It's a collaborative effort, not just between our staff and the speakers, or between the speakers and the audience, but also between the Boisi Center and all universities, and I am pleased to announce that the Boisi Center will be convening a summit of academic centers on religion and public life in advance of the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion (AAR), which meets November 17-21 in Boston. We have invited leaders from fifty centers and institutes in North America, Europe and Africa, and will be joined by AAR senior staff and its next three presidents (who are elected three years in advance), plus members of the AAR's Committee on the Public Understanding of Religion (which I chair). Participants will share best practices, discuss common ends, and hopefully make a plan for some sort of collaboration in the years ahead. Although the meeting is closed to the public, we will provide a report in our next newsletter.

A number of other fall 2017 projects and events are taking shape as well. On October 11 we will host a high-profile conference marking the 50th anniversary of a seminal document in American Catholic higher education known as the Land O'Lakes Agreement, featuring the presidents of five Catholic colleges and universities. We're co-sponsoring a multi-day conference on "Educating for Modern Democracy" (November 7-9), and we have several lectures, seminars, and evening events that we'll announce later

University of Oklahoma professor Mara Willard will be in residence for the 2017-18 academic year as a visiting scholar, researching a book on communities of practice among Boston Catholics during the 2002 crisis in the Church.

Perhaps most importantly, this summer we welcome the Boisi Center's new director, Mark Massa, S.J. a distinguished historian of twentieth-century Catholicism and former dean of BC's School of Theology and Ministry. Mark and I have been in close contact this year and I expect the leadership transition to be seamless as we continue the Boisi Center's work in the years to come.

Finally, I note with sadness the departures of five (!) of our terrific staff members from this year. Undergraduate research assistants Ryan Duzy, Amelia Parker and Sylvia Waghorne are graduating; graduate research assistant Tom Fraatz will complete his dissertation this summer and receive his Ph.D. in Biblical Studies this fall; program coordinator Suzanne Hevelone, who earned her Ph.D. in our theology department several years ago, will start teaching in the beloved PULSE program here at BC. (See the back page for more about their next steps.) This crew has done an enormous amount of work this year to pull together our public events, web content and this newsletter, and I will miss them greatly. We'll have a new crop of research assistants in the fall (along with veteran Omeed Alidadi, who



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Ronald Ehrenberg (Cornell University), Scott Jaschik (Brooklyn College), and James Finkelstein (George Mason University) raised questions about money and transparency. Only a handful of our nation's private institutions have both need-blind admissions and financial aid policies. The necessity for donations must be tempered by flexibility in the use



The award-winning filmmaker Martin Doblmeier presented his film, *... ..*, at a screening and panel on February 1. The panelists, in addition to Doblmeier, were Lisa Cahill, professor of theology at Boston College; Andrew Finstuen, dean of the honors college and interim vice provost at Boise State University (and former Boisi Center assistant director); Mark Massa, S.J., former dean of the Boston College School of Theology and Ministry, and

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dorothy day: the world will be saved by beauty





# The Boisi Center for Religion and American Public Life

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

## staff updates: what's next?

Ryan Dwyer

Parker

Amelia

Sylvia Wagborne

Tom Fraatz

Suzanne Hevelone

## fall 2017 events

Oct 12 David DiPasquale ( )

Oct 4 Christine Helmer ( )  
500

Oct 11 Land O' Lakes at 50: The Future of Catholic  
Higher Education

Oct 2 David Decosimo ( )

Oct 7-10 Educating for Modern Democracy

Oct 16 Summit of Centers on Religion and Public Life

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