

# Russell Berrie Fellowship



JOHN PAUL II CENTER  
— for —  
INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

## Alumni Newsletter

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January 2019

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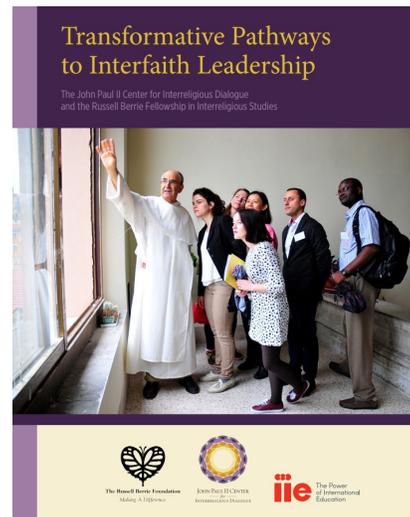
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### News and Upcoming Events



#### **2018-2019 Russell Berrie Fellows Announced**

For the eleventh consecutive year, the new Russell Berrie Fellows started their academic year in Rome by attending the orientation session. The 2018-2019 Fellows come from Ghana, Nigeria, Philippines, Russia, Ukraine, USA, and Zimbabwe. Please find bios of the new



#### **Transformative Pathways to Interfaith Leadership: Results of Evaluation on the Russell Berrie Fellowship in Interreligious Studies and John Paul II Center**

Please read the findings of alumni and other key stakeholders who have been involved in the John Paul II Center and Berrie Fellowship over the last ten years

Fellows [here](#).

and learn about the program's impact. Feel free to share this report with your colleagues. Please click [here](#).

## Save the Date!

### ***Education for Action: The Urgency of Interreligious Leadership for the Global Good***

Celebrating the 10th Anniversary of the Russell Berrie Fellowship in Interreligious Studies, the John Paul II Center for Interreligious Dialogue will be hosting a two-day event at the Angelicum in May 2019. The first day (May 7th) will be a public conference featuring the work of Berrie Alumni. The second day (May 8th) will be a private gathering of Berrie alumni to build skills, network and discuss the future of the alumni network. More information will be forthcoming shortly.

## Spread the Word!

### ***Call for applications for the Russell Berrie Fellowship Program in Interreligious Studies 2019-2020!***

On behalf of the Russell Berrie Foundation, IIE is pleased to announce the 12th consecutive year of the Russell Berrie Fellowship in Interreligious Studies, arranged at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas (Angelicum).

The aim of the Fellowship Program is to build bridges between Christian, Jewish, and other religious traditions by providing the next generation of religious leaders with a comprehensive understanding of and dedication to interfaith issues.

**The deadline for applications is April 19, 2019!**

Please click [here](#) to share this call with your friends!

## Alumni Activities

### ***Keeping the Faith against all odds: Berrie Alumnus' interfaith efforts in Nigeria***

Recently, the work of one of our alumni from Nigeria, Father John Bogna Bakani, (Cohort II) has been featured in the media. In addition to his priestly duties in the Catholic Diocese of Maiduguri, Fr. John has held several positions focused on religious education, specifically, the formation of pastoral and catechist agents. He is a member of the Diocesan and Provincial Interreligious Dialogue Commission. His current work and studies are focused on the conflicts in



Northern Nigeria between Christians and Muslims, to gain the tools that will help lead to peaceful resolution. He works and serves as the secretary of Maiduguri Diocese. And the main danger for establishing strong interreligious communication in that area is aggressive violent actions of the terrorist organization called Boko Haram. To read an article featuring Father Bakani, please click [here](#).

### ***Russell Berrie Fellowship Alumni Attend and Present at Parliament of the World's Religion Conference***



The following alumni attended the [Parliament of the World's Religions Conference](#) from November 1-7 in Toronto, Canada: Lidia Batig (Cohort VIII), A.J. Boyd (Cohort II), Elyse Brazel (Cohort VIII), Peter Dziedzic (Cohort VI), Allyson Zacharoff (Cohort VI) and Taras Dzyubansky (Cohort II). Several made presentations and participated in panel discussions on many important topics in IRD. They also promoted the Russell Berrie Fellowship Program at the John Paul II Center booth in the exhibit hall of the Parliament. It was

an excellent networking opportunity. About seven thousand people from all over the world

attended this year's Parliament of the World's Religions.

### ***Berrie Alumnae attended "Catholic-Jewish Emerging Leadership Conference" in Vilnius, Lithuania***

In July, a group of about forty young Catholics and Jews gathered in Vilnius, the capital city of Lithuania, for an interfaith event, the Emerging Leaders Conference. It provides an opportunity for young people from around the world to gather to have in-depth dialogue around issues important to these two communities.

A number of Russell Berrie Fellows have attended over the years, and the 2018 meeting had four Fellows represented: Lidiia Batig, Rebecca Cohen, Allyson Zacharoff, and Roksolana Zarytska. At the meeting, participants had the opportunity to talk about a number of documents that have been released by both the Catholic Church and a variety of Jewish groups over the years since Nostra Aetate was published during the second Vatican Council, conversations led by prominent scholars in the field. The visit to Vilnius also involved learning about the devastating history of Lithuania's Jews (particularly during the Shoah), a walking tour of the city, and a visit with the Vilnius archbishop, Gintaras Grusas.



### ***Berrie Alumna Presented at two Interfaith Gatherings***

In June 2018, Elena Dini (Cohort VII, Italy) was part of a plenary session panel on "How Can I Find God in the 'Other' Towards Responsible Citizenship" at the International Council for Christians and Jews conference in Budapest, acting in her capacity as a member of the steering committee of the International Abrahamic Forum. The paper is available [here](#). During the same conference, Elena presented at a workshop on "Responsible Citizenship in Multireligious Societies: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Multicultural Experiences"



On September 26, Elena also had the honor of speaking at the opening conference of "Journées Romaines Dominicaines" at the Angelicum, a four-day seminar organized every 3-4 years by the Dominican order? on the theme of interreligious dialogue. Her speech was entitled, "Called to be Church: What the Experience at the Heart of Islam Teaches Us," which dealt with the heritage of Msgr. Pierre Claverie, the bishop of Oran (Algeria) who was killed in 1996 and who was beatified on December 8, 2018 together with eighteen other martyrs.

### ***Russell Berrie Fellowship Alumna Awarded the Intercultural Achievement Award in Vienna, Austria***

On September 6, 2018, Lidiia Batig (Cohort VIII, Ukraine) received the prestigious [Intercultural Achievement Award](#) for her project, "[The School of Interreligious Journalism.](#)" This initiative was implemented as part of our Alumni Grant Program. Lidiia organized a series of lectures, conferences, and encounters for young journalists from various faith traditions in Ukraine. This initiative was measured against hundreds of other initiatives from all over the world. The Award is bestowed annually by the Federal Ministry of

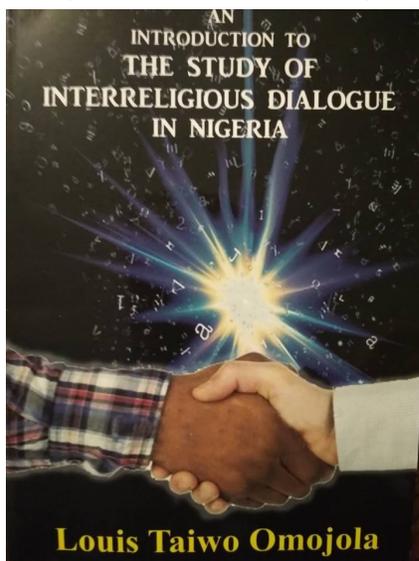


the Republic of Austria. According to Lidiia, "This award is an important recognition of the role of interfaith dialogue and its contribution to building a peaceful world."

## Interfaith Resources, Books and Book Reviews

### **Berrie Alumnus Publishes Two Books on Dialogue**

*Fr. Louis Omojola (Cohort II) from Nigeria has recently published two important books on Dialogue in his home country:*

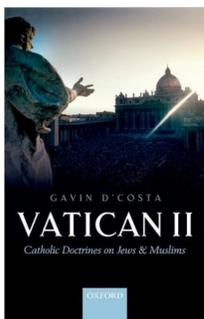


*An Introduction to the Study of Ecumenism in Nigeria* is published as introductory material on the study of ecumenism in Nigeria. The book examines the remote and proximate reasons which led to the first divisions in the East, when dogmatic formulae of the Ecumenical Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon were rejected. These include the separation of the Assyrian Church of the East and the Oriental Orthodox Church.

*An Introduction to the Study of Catholic Church's Perspectives on Traditional African Religion.* Many Africans and non-Africans have very little knowledge of traditional African religion. The work also presents the basic knowledge required for understanding the central beliefs of the adherents of traditional African religions: belief in God, belief in divinities, belief in spirits, belief in ancestors, and practice of magic and medicine.

### **Book Reviews by Berrie Alumnni**

*Two of our alumni have written reviews on interesting books that are related to interfaith dialogue. Please find the reviews below.*



*Vatican II. Catholic Doctrines on Jews and Muslims.* Gavin D'Costa (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, October 2016).

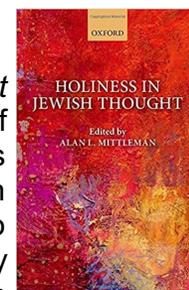
Review by A.J. Boyd (Cohort II, US)

Gavin D'Costa sets out to challenge the interpretation - whether applauded or lamented - that the Second Vatican Council represents, in its teaching on other religions, some "doctrinal discontinuity" with the previous magisterial tradition of the Catholic Church. He looks particularly at Judaism and Islam, given their theological proximity to and phenomenological prominence for the Church... *To read more, please click [here](#).*

*Holiness in Jewish Thought.* Editor(s): Alan L. Mittleman (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, April 2018).

Review by Taras Dzyubansky (Cohort III, Ukraine)

The collection of articles in the edited volume *Holiness in Jewish Thought* presents extensive research on the understanding of the concept of holiness in Judaism. In our postmodern (secular) societies, words such as "holy," "saint," or "sacred" might either sound too archaic to be used in daily life or are used with much sarcasm and irony. This book attempts to reassert the importance of the discourse on holiness in the contemporary Jewish theological tradition, which would certainly be incomplete if the concept of holiness were to be neglected... *To read more, please click [here](#).*



**We would like to hear from you! If you would like to share your interfaith activities or publications, please [contact us](#)!**

## Privacy Policy

At IIE, we are strongly committed to protecting the privacy of personal data that we maintain.

In accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which took effect in the EU on May 25, 2018, we have adapted our privacy policy to make it clear exactly how we manage your personal information. [You can read it here.](#)

You're receiving this email because you are a Russell Berrie Alumna/Alumnus, a member of the John Paul II Center network, or have expressed an interest in receiving updates from us about Russell Berrie Fellowship Alumni activity and opportunities related to interreligious dialogue. If you prefer not to receive messages from us, you can unsubscribe with the link at the bottom of the newsletter at any time.

Thank you for being part of our community. We look forward to staying in touch.

## Contact Information

**Please send us your feedback about the Alumni Newsletter!**

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