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Religious Diversity Theme of Upcoming IWU Chapel Programs

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.--The diversity of religions around the world is the theme of 17 programs slated for Illinois Wesleyan University's weekly chapel hour and other special services and events from January to April.

These programs--open to the public with no admission fee--will focus on Protestant, Roman Catholic, Islam, Taizé, Baha'i, and Jewish faiths.

Most of these programs are slated for the University Chapel Hour, Wednesdays at 11 a.m. in Evelyn Chapel, 1301 N. Park St., Bloomington.

"We hope students and others from the Bloomington-Normal community who attend these programs gain a better understanding of the richness and variety of religious tradition in our midst," said Dennis Groh, university chaplain and professor of humanities and archaeology. "In many ways, these programs will introduce us to the diverse world in which we live."

Here is the program schedule (all events are in Evelyn Chapel at 11 a.m. unless otherwise indicated):

- Jan. 20--Catholic Mass, with the Rev. Ron Palmer, director of the St. Robert Bellarmine Newman Center in Normal, IWU associate chaplain, and advisor to IWU's Catholic Newman Association.

"This is the first time," Groh said, "that IWU is hosting a Roman Catholic mass during the Chapel Hour. About one-third of IWU students who express a religious preference are Catholic."

- Jan. 27--Christian Worship in the Taizé Way with Tim Welch, organist and choirmaster at the Immanuel Lutheran Church, Chicago. "This style of worship," Groh explained, "features instrumental music

--flute, oboe, guitar, violin, and viola--as well as chants. A member of IWU's religion department is interested in starting a Taizé chapter at the university." Taizé is a tiny village in the hills of Burgundy in the eastern France. Since 1940, it has been home to an ecumenical community of brothers whose prayer, three times daily, is at the center of their life.

When Brother Roger came to Taizé during World War II to found the community, his house became a haven for refugees, especially Jews, fleeing the Nazis.

The Taizé community has brothers representing various Protestant denominations and Catholics. Its 80 brothers come from 20 nations. There are Taizé communities outside of France, including New York City. The community explains its goals this way: "Taizé's vocation is to strive for communion among all. From its beginnings, the community has worked for reconciliation among Christians split apart into different denominations. But the brothers do not view reconciliation among Christians as an end in itself: it concerns all of humanity, since it makes the Church a place of communion for all."

- Feb. 3--Worship in the Islamic Way with Ebrahim Moosa, associate professor of religious studies, University of Cape Town, South Africa, and visiting associate professor at Stanford

University. Moosa also is director of the Centre for Contemporary Islam at the University of Cape Town. He was a political writer for the Cape Times, covering anti-apartheid activities and parliamentary politics.

Moosa will deliver a homily on "Gender Rights in Islam."

"Professor Moosa," Groh said, "is an expert, respected worldwide, on Islamic law, especially human and gender rights."

- Feb. 17--Joint Protestant/Catholic Ash Wednesday Service with the Rev. Ron Palmer, director of the St. Robert Bellarmine Newman Center in Normal, associate chaplain, and advisor to IWU's Catholic Newman Association, and University Chaplain Groh.

"This will be a traditional Ash Wednesday opening Lent," Groh explained, "a service of prayer and readings ending with placement of an ash on worshippers' foreheads--an action symbolizing penitence."

- Feb. 24--Program to be announced.

- March 3--Worship in the Baha'i Way, featuring representatives of the Spiritual Assembly of Baha'is of Bloomington.

The Baha'i faith, Groh said, originated in Iran--then Persia. It recognizes a variety of paths to God.

"The Baha'i faith," he explained, "is a worldwide religion, espousing the unity of religious truth. It is based in Haifa, Israel, and there is a Baha'i house of worship in Willmette, Ill., in the north suburbs of Chicago, located a long Lake Michigan.

"The Baha'is," Groh added, "have been heavily persecuted in Iran and treated as a breakaway sect from Islam."

- March 9--"Magic and Medicine in Byzantine Galilee: A Bronze Amulet from Sepphoris," is the title of a lecture by C. Thomas McCollough, a professor at Centre College in Danville, Ky. McCollough was a National Endowment for the Humanities Distinguished Professor at Centre College in 1991-94. He is the author of two books, five journal articles, and four book chapters, as well as other works. He has presented more than 25 papers at professional meetings.

The archaeological dig at Sepphoris is operated by the University of South Florida. IWU Chaplain Groh is associate director of the USF project.

The lecture will be at 4 p.m. in C-102 (first floor auditorium) of the Center for Natural Sciences, 201 E. Beecher St., Bloomington.

- March 10--"Cain, Abel, and the Resolution of Violence" with C. Thomas McCollough, a professor at Centre College in Danville, Ky.

- March 24--Faculty Credo: Teodora Amoloza, IWU associate professor of sociology and director of the International Studies Program. One of nine children born to a poor family in the Philippines, Amoloza received a bachelor of science degree in agriculture in 1971 and a master of science degree in statistics in 1976 from the University of the Philippines at Los Banos.

After working as an agricultural statistician and instructor of statistics at Los Banos for nearly a decade, Amoloza entered the graduate program in sociology at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln, where she specialized in statistical studies of fertility, completing her doctorate in 1988.

In 1993, she began a series of surveys on women in rice-farming for the International Rice Research Institute in Los Banos, where she has spent the last several summers.

Amoloza teaches courses focusing on Introduction to International Studies, Population and the Environment, Women in Development, Methods of Social Research, Social Statistics, and Senior Seminar.

- March 25--Jewish Seder and Passover service and dinner with Rabbi Theodore Gordon, IWU associate chaplain.

Passover marks the exodus of the Jews from bondage in Egypt under the leadership of Moses.

This program is scheduled for 5 p.m., Main Lounge, Memorial Student Center, 104 E. University St., Bloomington. Pre-registration is required. For more information, call the IWU Chaplain's office at 309/556-3005.

- March 31--"The Wall--A Tragicomedy in One Act." The play is written by Richard Lauchman and directed by Don Shandrow. The production features Hosaia Brown and Gary P. Thompson II, an IWU theatre major from Normal who will graduate in 2001.

"The Wall," Groh explained, "is a play for Holy Week and it revolves around a dialogue between two thieves who will be crucified with Jesus. It is powerful."

- March 31--"The Living Stations of the Cross," will be presented by student members of IWU's Catholic Newman Organization. It is a dramatic reenactment of the various steps of Jesus on the way to the cross. The program will be at 7:30 p.m. in Evelyn Chapel.

- April 7--A Multi-Faith Service of "Sending Forth."

- April 18--Family Day Service, "Connecting with a College Home," with IWU Chaplain Groh. This program will take place at 10:30 a.m. in Evelyn Chapel. The IWU chapel program also is sponsoring monthly ecumenical Christian dinners and Holy Communion on Sundays at 6 p.m. in the Evelyn Chapel Gallery (basement level). They are scheduled for Jan. 24, Feb. 21, and March 28.

"These dinners and Holy Communion," Groh said, "are open to anyone in the community."

About IWU

IWU, founded in 1850, enrolls about 2,000 students in a College of Liberal Arts, and individual schools of Music, Theatre Arts, Art, and Nursing. Since 1994, these facilities have been added to the IWU campus: a \$15 million athletics and recreation center, a \$25 million science center, a \$6.8 million residence hall, and a \$5.1 million Center for Liberal Arts.

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