



# AMEN: FAITH AND THE POSSIBILITY OF JEWISH-CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM TRIALOGUE

Delivered by the Reverend Patrick J. Ryan, S.J., Laurence J. McGinley Professor of Religion and Society

*“Can we Jews, Christians and Muslims acknowledge our common heritage of covenant with and fidelity to God, and God’s covenant with and fidelity to us, despite our radical differences?”*

THE LAURENCE J. MCGINLEY CHAIR IN RELIGION AND SOCIETY WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1985 TO ATTRACT DISTINGUISHED SCHOLARS INTERESTED IN THE INTERACTION OF RELIGION WITH THE LEGAL, POLITICAL AND CULTURAL FORCES IN OUR PLURALISTIC AMERICAN SOCIETY. THE CHAIR, FIRST HELD BY A VERY CARDINAL DULLES, S.J., FROM 1988 UNTIL HIS DEATH IN DECEMBER 2008, IS NAMED IN HONOR OF THE REVEREND LAURENCE J. MCGINLEY, S.J., WHO ATTAINED DISTINCTION AS A PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY BEFORE BECOMING THE 28TH PRESIDENT OF FORDHAM UNIVERSITY. FATHER MCGINLEY’S EDUCATIONAL VISION AND DEDICATION TO NEW YORK CITY DURING HIS TENURE AS PRESIDENT, FROM 1949 TO 1963, LED TO THE CREATION OF THE LINCOLN CENTER CAMPUS AND HELPED MAKE FORDHAM AN EVEN MORE INFLUENTIAL PRESENCE IN THE CAPITAL OF THE WORLD.

THE REVEREND PATRICK J. RYAN, S.J., THE SECOND PERSON TO HOLD THE MCGINLEY CHAIR, IS AN ACCOMPLISHED SCHOLAR, TEACHER AND ADMINISTRATOR. A NATIVE NEW YORKER, HE GRADUATED FROM REGIS HIGH SCHOOL IN MANHATTAN. HE ENTERED THE SOCIETY OF JESUS IN 1957 AND EARNED A BACHELOR’S DEGREE IN ENGLISH AT FORDHAM SIX YEARS LATER AND A LICENTIATE IN PHILOSOPHY FROM WOODSTOCK COLLEGE IN 1964. HE TAUGHT FOR ONE YEAR AT AQUINAS COLLEGE IN AKURE, NIGERIA, BEFORE RETURNING TO THE UNITED STATES, WHERE HE EARNED A BACHELOR’S DEGREE IN DIVINITY FROM WOODSTOCK COLLEGE IN MARYLAND.

FOLLOWING HIS ORDINATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD IN 1968, FATHER RYAN STUDIED AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY, WHERE HE EARNED A DOCTORAL DEGREE IN THE HISTORY OF RELIGION WITH A SPECIALIZATION IN ARABIC AND ISLAMIC STUDIES, WHICH HAS SERVED AS THE BEDROCK FOR HIS SUBSEQUENT ACADEMIC AND ECUMENICAL ENDEAVORS. HE RETURNED TO AFRICA TO SERVE AS A SENIOR LECTURER IN COMPARATIVE RELIGION AND ISLAMIC STUDIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, AND LATER HELD FACULTY AND ADMINISTRATIVE POSITIONS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST IN GHANA, HEKIMA COLLEGE IN KENYA AND THE PONTIFICAL GREGORIAN UNIVERSITY IN ROME. HE SERVED AS THE FIRST PRESIDENT OF LOYOLA JESUIT COLLEGE IN ABUJA, NIGERIA, WHICH OPENED ITS DOORS IN 1996. DURING HIS TENURE, THE COLLEGE FLOURISHED, RECEIVING APPROXIMATELY 1,800 APPLICATIONS FOR 120 OPENINGS EACH YEAR. IN 2005, FATHER RYAN RETURNED TO FORDHAM UNIVERSITY AS VICE PRESIDENT FOR MISSION AND MINISTRY, WHERE HE SUPERVISED THE CAMPUS MINISTRY, COMMUNITY SERVICE AND THE GLOBAL OUTREACH PROGRAMS.

AS THE LAURENCE J. MCGINLEY PROFESSOR OF RELIGION AND SOCIETY, FATHER RYAN WILL CONTINUE HIS EFFORTS TO FOSTER RESPECTFUL AND PRODUCTIVE DIALOGUES BETWEEN AND AMONG JEWISH, ISLAMIC AND CHRISTIAN SCHOLARS, HIS LONGTIME VOCATION AND A TASK THAT HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY URGENT IN RECENT YEARS. GROUNDED IN HIS PRODIGIOUS SCHOLARSHIP AND GUIDED BY HIS INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE, FATHER RYAN’S INAUGURAL LECTURE IS A PROMISING FIRST STEP IN FULFILLING THE LEGACY AND MISSION OF THE LAURENCE J. MCGINLEY CHAIR IN RELIGION AND SOCIETY.