

Update!

University of
St. Jerome's College
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Introducing J.A. Loftus

With his first year of teaching at St. Jerome's behind

him, it is high time that grads and friends of the College were formally introduced to our newest faculty member: J.A. Loftus, s.j., Professor of Psychology.

Upon joining the St. Jerome's community, Loftus was named the first holder of the John J. Wintermeyer Chair. Established by the Wintermeyer family, the Chair honours the late John Joseph Wintermeyer, respected Kitchener lawyer, leader of the Ontario Liberal Party from 1957 to 1963, tireless community volunteer, and longstanding friend of St. Jerome's. Wintermeyer's dedication to public service and his belief that higher education should engage one's faith live on in the Chair established in his name at the College.

Loftus' background makes him well-suited to the position: the Wintermeyer Chair was created to allow a prominent scholar to explore topics of importance to the Church in the contemporary world. College President Doug Letson agrees. "The members of the College community are very fortunate to have among them a person of J.A.'s experience, stature, and commitment. He has clearly established himself as someone who works conscientiously and sensitively with people. These are qualities which will serve well both his students in the classroom, and the extended community beyond our campus."

A native of the United States who is now a Canadian citizen, Loftus holds a Bachelor's and a Master's degree in Philosophy from Fordham University, a Master of Divinity from Woodstock College, and a PhD in the Psychology of Religion from Boston University. He was ordained to the Society of Jesus in 1974.

Prior to coming to St. Jerome's, Loftus was the Executive Director of Southdown (Emmanuel Convalescent Foundation), a private hospital providing complete diagnostic, assessment, and treatment services for

religious professionals in need of emotional or spiritual care. In this capacity, he designed and implemented an internationally recognized programme of clinical research, and lectured worldwide on topics relating to psychology, mental health, and spirituality.



(Photo by D. Sachs)

J.A. Loftus presents the 10th Annual Grads' Association Lecture in October

Loftus' teaching experience at the undergraduate level comes from Loyola College in Baltimore where he also worked in Campus Ministry, and Boston College in Boston. At the graduate level, he was a sessional lecturer in the Faculty of Theology at St. Michael's College in Toronto from 1988 to 1994, where he taught Psychological Resources for Ministry.

"On the personal side of things," says Loftus, "my move to St. Jerome's has been everything I hoped for and more. The pace of academic life,

and the opportunity for reflection and reading has been refreshing. On the teaching side of things, I was relieved to discover – via Fall course evaluations – that at least I'm not a disaster!" Loftus also considers himself fortunate to have been able to work in his areas of specialization over the past year, teaching courses such as psychopathology, the psychology of religious experience, and human sexuality.

As was hoped with the establishment of the Wintermeyer Chair, Loftus has also been able to maintain contacts within the wider Church community in Canada through consultation with Church leaders and other institutions. His numerous activities outside of the classroom attest to this fact. During the Fall term alone – in addition to being the St. Jerome's Grads' Association lecturer – Loftus has given keynote addresses at the University of Toronto Medical School on "The Nature of the Healing Process", in Buffalo on "Putting Light into Burnout", in Elora on "Research on Sexual Abuse", and at Ryerson on "Spirituality in the Age of HIV/AIDS." In the coming months, he will facilitate week-long gatherings for religious orders, and address an international gathering of Roman Catholic bishops and caregivers in St. Louis, Missouri on the challenges in AIDS ministry. At the same time, he continues to consult widely concerning issues of sexual misconduct.

Now settled in Waterloo, Loftus hopes to unwind a little after his first year at the College, taking a breather over the summer while getting back into two favourite pastimes: playing the guitar and photography. "I have had an exciting and challenging year," acknowledges Loftus, "and the entire community has been so welcoming and open to my presence that I now feel very much at home at St. Jerome's." ♦

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