

# Quadruple book launch highlights talents at St. Joseph's College

It's a unique moment in the 94-year history of St. Joseph's College – a quadruple book launch.

In the last six months, four professors at the University of Alberta's Catholic college have published books on topics ranging from the ancient Hebrews and Greek philosophers to psychology and sports.

"This shows that St. Joseph's, as a Catholic college at a public institution, is matching its colleagues in ability, skill level, and talent," said Shawn Flynn, academic dean at the college.

"But we're also combining that with the Catholic intellectual tradition in a way that our colleagues can understand. This opens up the conversations about faith at a public university to a higher level."

"I don't think we as Catholics want to lose our voice as experts," Flynn added. "If we were to only write on catechism and theology, we would lose the ability to communicate with a lot of other disciplines. One way to draw people into conversation is to show our expertise in our fields."

Flynn says most of St. Joseph's professors produce a book every five to 10 years. Coincidentally, all four of these books were published between September 2019 and February of this year. The authors were honoured at a reception on Feb. 6.

"For a number of years there were only three professors here, so I would think this is not something that's happened much in our history," said Matt Hoven, professor of religion and education, and a contributor to *Sport and Christianity: Practices for the Twenty-First Century*.

"It shows the mix of research here, and that the faculty and mission of the college is growing in our different fields. We're a part of a major research university. It's a responsibility for us to be researching, engaging, publishing and meeting with other scholars."

Hoven is both an editor and contributor to *Sports and Christianity*, a compilation of essays on how the Christian tradition speaks to the world of sports today.

Shawn Flynn's new book, *A Story of YHWH: Cultural Translation and Subversive Reception Through Israelite History*, details how the Israelites' relationship with God was affected by the cultural, economic and environmental changes they experienced from 1200 BC to 530 BC.

Lorne Zelyck's research took him across Europe and the U.S. for his new book.

*The Egerton Gospel (Egerton Papyrus 2 + Papyrus Köln VI 255): Introduction, Critical Edition, and Commentary* analyzes and reconstructs the small fragments of an unknown gospel, dated between 150-250 AD, that retells seven moments in Christ's life. The small surviving snippets of this gospel, which predate nearly all manuscripts of the four Gospels in the Bible, is a vital piece of early Christianity and the early records of Jesus' life.

It's what Zelcyk calls "one of the most important Christian artifacts that you've never heard of."

"What I'm most proud of in this commentary is I've been able to compile the most accurate reconstruction of this text to date," said Zelyck, who teaches biblical studies.

"In the actual text only 1,082 letters are certain – that's all that survives. Yet my proposed reconstruction has 2,210 letters. Through linking to other gospels and scriptures, I've produced the most cohesive and complete version of the Egerton Gospel."

Philosophy professor Matthew Kostelecky is a co-author of *The Human Person: What Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas Offer Modern Psychology*, which bridges modern psychology with Greek philosopher Aristotle and Catholic theologian St. Thomas Aquinas.

Aristotle and his medieval counterpart Aquinas wrote extensively on religion, politics, poetry, ethics and the arts. As the only philosophy professor who contributed to the book, Kostelecky believes both men can bring some unity to divisions in psychology.

"Simply speaking, there is no unified theoretical approach to the many things that go on in psychology. This provides a unity that is lacking," he said.

"Aristotle and Aquinas provide a firm but flexible foundation from which you can build other ideas and other schools of thought. You can build contemporary psychology on top of the work of Aristotle, but also build physics on it too. It's not a closed system."

Flynn said the four books reflect the legacy of St. Joseph's College, which brings a Catholic voice to the research of public and secular universities. Published so closely together, the books mark a particularly prolific year in the college's history.