



Loyola Marymount  
University

## Jewish Studies



ANNUAL KRISTALLNACHT COMMEMORATION

**VOICES OF HOPE, ACTS OF KINDNESS:  
MUTUAL ASSISTANCE IN THE HOLOCAUST**

MONDAY, NOV. 9, 2020 | 5 P.M.

# Program

## Host

Dr. Holli Levitsky  
*Director of Jewish Studies*

## Invocation

Fr. Michael Engh S.J.  
*Chancellor, Loyola Marymount University*

## Student Reflection

Erica Sadeghani '22

## Candlelighting Prayer

Morley Feinstein  
*Rabbi Emeritus, University Synagogue*  
*Past President of the Board of Rabbis of Southern California*

## Candlelighters:

Gerda Seifer, John Benfield, Renee Florsheim,  
Ron Salcer, Rachel Kaftan '21, Nessia Hausman '23

## El Male Rachamim

Shelly Fox  
*Academy of Jewish Religion*

## Student Reflections

Jonathan Amiri '22, Robyn de Leon '21, Shane Murray '22

## Speaker Introduction

Dr. Evan Gerstmann  
*Professor of Political Science and International Relations*

## Keynote Speaker

David Silberklang  
*Senior Historian in the International Institute for Holocaust Research, Yad Vashem*

## Or Chadash

Composed by: Amy Robinson Katz  
*Academy of Jewish Religion cantorial student*  
Performed by: Academy of Jewish Religion & Loyola Marymount University community

## Student Reflection

Victor Hernandez '21

## Conclusion

**Invocation**  
**Michael Engh, S.J.**  
**Chancellor, Loyola Marymount University**

Holy One of Israel, Most Merciful One,  
Grant perfect rest under your tabernacle of  
peace to those who suffered on Kristallnacht and perished in the Shoah:  
fathers and mothers, sisters and brothers, rabbis and teachers, neighbors and children,  
the named and the unnamed, all whose lives were cut off by brutal and vicious violence.  
May they find peace in the world to come.  
Let us all say: Amen.

Remember the survivors who have since passed away,  
I recall Anna Fischer who once shared her story of the Holocaust with my classes here on campus.  
Let us all say: Amen

Remember the virtues of your people who have died at the hand of malice in every generation.  
We remember the works of their hands and the messages of their hearts.  
Let us all say: Amen.

Bless the defenders of Israel and the righteous of all nations who provide  
protection, shelter, and comfort to the Jewish people.  
Let their deeds be a source of favor in heaven  
and healing on earth.  
Let us all say: Amen.

Hasten to put an end to anger, hatred, and fear,  
and lead us to a time when no one will suffer at the hand of another.  
May the memories of all who faced these horrors be sanctified with joy and love.  
May their souls be bound up in the bond of life, a living blessing in our midst.  
Let us all say: Amen.

Finally,  
as we remember them, O Holy One, lead us also to engage  
every day in *tikkun olam*, the repair of the world,  
the world You created in love.  
Let us all say: Amen.

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**Student Reflection**  
**Erica Sadeghani '22**

I was introduced to this short story by Rabbi Diamond. I loved the story, and I thought it was very touching, which is why I want to share it with all of you. This story is attributed to Hillel Goldberg and found in the prayerbook Siddur Sim Shalom:

"There was one non-Jewish peasant woman. I do not know her name. I do not know her face. But she helped my mother save two children. There was the work camp. And the wire fence. On that day, my mother could not bribe. On that day she had no choice. She could not bribe. If she left us in the barracks, they would take us away. And she had to go to work. No choice. She handed her children through the fence to the peasant woman...My sister and I are here. That means the peasant lady kept us for whatever length of time and then she returned us to our mother."

I chose to share this with you all because it shows how important acts of kindness are. This story shows that lending a helping hand to those who need it will go a long way. In times where we feel hopeless, there will always be someone in the community who is willing to help, like the non-Jewish peasant woman in the story.

Thank you.



**Candlelighting Prayer**  
**Morley Feinstein**  
**Rabbi Emeritus, University Synagogue**  
**Past President of the Board of Rabbis of Southern California**

May these candles' flames recall the destruction on Kristallnacht, 1938, when the forces of darkness overcame the forces of light.

May these candles' flames honor those whose lights were extinguished, whose dreams, hopes and lives were shattered forever.

May these candles' flames shine both on our survivors and those who died with their families annihilated, for whom we say Kaddish.

May these candles' flames uplift the Righteous Among the Nations who risked their own lives to help Jews when others abandoned them.

May these candles' flames illuminate the courage and bravery of the soldiers who liberated the camps and helped the survivors walk through the valley of the shadow of death.

May these candles' flames motivate us to care for the poor, the marginalized, the threatened, for each person is a unique miracle of creation.

Amen.

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**Student Reflection**  
**Jonathan Amiri '22**

Welcome, and thank you for coming to our commemoration of Kristallnacht, the night of broken glass. My name is Jonathan Amiri, and I am a student in Dr. Feinstein's Literature of the Holocaust class.

On November 9, 1938, years of Nazi antisemitism finally manifested into action when they took to the streets to terrorize defenseless Jews, destroy their livelihoods, and vandalize their synagogues. While the authorities looked on with silent approval, the countless shards of broken glass littering the streets told Jewish Germans everything they needed to know: they were no longer safe in Germany. For many, Kristallnacht had become the worst night of their lives, but as we now know, the Nazis had barely scratched the surface of their sinister plans.

Tonight marks 82 years since the Germans launched their nationwide pogrom against the Jews, and so tonight we remember both the pain they suffered as well as the perseverance they carried with them. I will now pass the spotlight over to my colleague, Robyn, who will introduce you to the work our class has done in partnership with the David Labkovski Project for this night of remembrance.



## Student Reflection

Robyn de Leon '21

Good evening! My name is Robyn De Leon and I am speaking on behalf of my cohort to highlight the art of Jewish painter David Labkovski. We have collectively been working on curating this exhibit since the start of September, and I invite you all to check it out this evening.

A link to the exhibit will be shared in the chat for your viewing!

In this exhibit, we observe the stories within stories that are portrayed by Labkovski's art. From colorful watermelons adorning tables to the grey and grim expressions of Holocaust victims, Labkovski displays an all-encompassing understanding of the Holocaust from his perspective. Many of the themes his paintings embody include the dissolution of environments, communal resilience, internalized pain, and hope following adversity.

The appearance of these themes makes it evident that Labkovski used art as a mode for catharsis, but also as a means of documenting his experiences and surroundings. Though Labkovski does not shy away from displaying the reality of life at that time, his artistic documentation is not always heavy with depressive implications. Labkovski witnessed and was able to capture community even amidst the horrors that were inflicted upon his people and town. His openness in his work becomes very valuable for viewers who are unaware of the rippling effects of the Holocaust.

Through Labkovski's work, viewers might better understand humanity and tragedy and how they inevitably tend to collide.

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## Student Reflection

Shane Murray '22

In light of the evening's theme, Voices of Hope and Acts of Kindness, I think it is important to reflect upon ourselves, and recognize that we, as individuals, can be voices of hope in our communities through acts of kindness and love. Here's a short prayer that captures this feeling:

May I be a guard for those who need protection,  
A guide for those on the path,  
A boat, a raft, a bridge for those who wish to cross the flood.  
May I be a lamp in the darkness,  
A resting place for the weary,  
A healing medicine for all who are sick,  
A vase of plenty,  
A tree of miracles,  
And for the boundless multitudes of living beings, may I bring sustenance and awakening, enduring like the earth and sky, until all beings are freed from sorrow.



## Student Reflection

### Victor Hernandez '21

Time after time, humanity has made the mistake of believing that atrocity committed against the other has and will not have any applicable effects on themselves. The infamous tragedies committed during Kristallnacht and throughout the Holocaust demonstrated this type of ignorance, as countless Christians stood by, and in many instances, even participated themselves in an organized system of barbarism and death, one which they saw as simply targeting the Jewish “other”.

Yet behind the backs of these Christians, Nazi Chancellery Head Martin Bormann had issued a decree calling for the eventual elimination for all religious thought, leadership, and influence in Germany in order ensure complete nationalistic loyalty in the fascist state itself.

One must realize that barbarism and hate is a wildfire, one which given time, will spread its flame far and wide to places and people far beyond the first spark. We all live in the flammable brush, and should we fail to extinguish the distant flames that are immediately threatening someone else, we should not be surprised when the flame eventually spreads to us, and we are consumed by the fire. These flames were permitted to burn for far too long during the Holocaust, and we should commit ourselves to ensure that all flames burning today and in the present are extinguished as soon as possible.

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## Painting the Holocaust: The Work of David Labkovski

The David Labkovski Project uses the art of Lithuanian-Israeli artist David Labkovski (1906-1991) as a tool for engaging students with history. LMU Students have curated a virtual exhibit as a product of the engaged learning component in the course, Literature of the Holocaust with Professor Margarete Feinstein, Ph.D.

Please visit the exhibit [here](#)

For more information about the David Labkovski project, please visit: <https://www.davidlabkovskiproject.org>.

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The 2020 Kristallnacht Commemoration is presented in partnership with the Academy for Jewish Religion California and Yad Vashem.



# Jewish Studies at LMU

Jewish Studies is an academic, interdisciplinary minor designed to study and explore Jewish history, culture, faith and practice. Housed within the Bellarmine College of Liberal Arts, the Jewish Studies minor can easily be incorporated into any curriculum a student wishes to pursue. Students who enroll in the minor will find themselves immersed in the rich culture and history of the Jewish people.

For more information about the Jewish Studies Program at LMU please visit: [bellarmine.lmu.edu/jewishstudies](http://bellarmine.lmu.edu/jewishstudies)

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