



Professor at a Glance

Dr. Diana Pasulka, Associate Professor



Education:

- Ph.D. Syracuse University
- M.A. Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley
- B.A. University of California at Davis

Promotion:

Dr. Pasulka was recommended for tenure and promoted to Associate Professor Fall 2008.

Previous University Appointments:

- Syracuse University
- Duke University TIPS

Why did she choose UNCW?

Dr. Pasulka applied and joined the UNCW community because her husband was living in N.C. and because she thought the campus was very special.

How long has she been at UNCW?

- 7 years

Academic Interests:

- Women and Religion
- Religion and Popular Culture
- American Religion
- Childhood Studies

Hobbies:

- Cooking
- Walking and swimming with her children and husband

Courses Taught:

- PAR 125: Great Books of the World's Religions
- PAR 225: Women and Religion
- PAR 344: Religion and Popular Culture
- PAR 400: Postmodernism and Religion
- PAR 495: Women in Early Christianity
- PAR 499: Honors work in Religion

Favorite Books/Writers:

- Friedrich Nietzsche's *The Gay Science*
- Hannah Arendt
- William Shakespeare

Favorite Movies:

- A Fistful of Dollars
- The Good, the Bad and the Ugly
- The Exorcist
- Eyes Wide Shut

Favorite Music:

- Radio Head
- Counting Crows
- Mozart
- Erik Satie

Quick Facts:

- Dr. Pasulka was on the Cross Country team at UC Davis.
- Dr. Pasulka ran a 5:40 mile.

Excerpt from an Unpublished Manuscript on Purgatory

On a foggy evening in 1888, as Father E. walked unto a train destined for Delaware, a strange and unaccountable feeling possessed him, as if “on this trip I was going to meet my death.” He could not shake this feeling of uneasiness as the train sped toward Delaware. He pulled out his copy of the Bible and said the Itinerarium (the clergyman’s prayer for a journey) with more than usual attention. A dull headache prevented him from sleeping. Instead, he drew out his rosary and commended himself and departed souls to god, and requested their help in banishing his uneasiness. About three hours into the journey, while other passengers slept, the train jolted to a stop. “There, suddenly with a repeated severe jolting and jumping of the coach all passengers hastily sprang from their

beds, the porter rushed in and bade us retreat to the rear of the car.” As Father E. looked through the train windows he beheld several cars tipped over into a river, and people frantically trying to escape while others were trapped inside.

Father E., the trainmen and several passengers immediately began an organized effort to rescue stranded and injured people, many of whom were Catholic. His first thoughts were of “the spiritual safety of the wrecked and from the platform I had pronounced absolution upon all those capable of receiving it.” The rescue effort took altogether about fifteen hours, and although several people, including the train operator, died, most of the passengers were saved. Many attributed the preservation of so many to the presence of a priest on

board. “I myself thanked the poor souls in Purgatory for my narrowest of all escapes, and, then and there, resolved to make a public acknowledgement of thanks at the first opportunity, and ever to invoke their protection on any future journey.”ⁱ

Father E.’s dramatic story illustrates the relationship between nineteenth century American Catholics and the deceased, which was a relationship of intimacy and mutual benefit. It was characterized by three ideas, that the dead and the living exist together in real time and space, the dead were potentially in intimate contact with the living and could intercede on their behalf, and the responsibility to publicly acknowledge this relationship.

ⁱ E., "A Wreck on the Banks of the Delaware " *The Poor Soul's Advocate* September 30 1888.