

## **About John Pungente**

### **March, 2008**

John J. Pungente, SJ, a native of Thunder Bay, Ontario, entered the Society of Jesus in 1957. He has a Master's degree in English from Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington; a Master's degree in Film from San Francisco State University and a Master of Theology degree from St. Mary's University in Halifax. Thunder Bay's Lakehead University granted him an honorary Doctorate in May, 1999. St. Thomas University in Fredericton did likewise in May 2003. In November, 2006, Regis College, University of Toronto also granted him an honorary doctorate.

Following ordination in 1971, Pungente was assigned to St. Paul's, the Jesuit high school in Winnipeg, Manitoba, as teacher of Media, English, and Religion. He also served as Student Counsellor, Yearbook Moderator, and director of student drama. In 1972, he was named first chair of the newly formed Manitoba Film Classification Board, a position he held until his appointment as Principal of St. Paul's in 1976. In 1983, Pungente was assigned to the Centre for the Study of Communication and Culture in London, England, where he conducted a two year research project on Media Literacy around the world. The results were published in 1985 as *Getting Started on Media Education*.

Pungente has also co-authored *Media Literacy: A Resource Guide*, for the Government of Ontario in 1989, and *Meet the Media* in 1990, a text for 11 to 15 year olds. He has contributed to a number of international Media Literacy journals as well as written chapters for books on Media Literacy published by universities in Mexico, Japan, Spain and Canada.

He is also the producer of the award winning video *A Heart to Understand*, and the 1996 *Scanning Television*, a resource containing four hours of TV excerpts and study guides. *Scanning Television* won the Bronze Award at the 1996 Madison International Film Festival and the Gold Medal, Education Category, at the 1996 New York Festivals of International Non-Broadcast Media. *Scanning Television 2* – with 51 new excerpts from TV and film – was released in January 2003 and has won two first prize awards at festivals. Both resources have been sold around the world and there is a Japanese version available.

Pungente was creator, producer, co-writer and host of the award-winning media education national television series – *Scanning the Movies* – which ran from 1997 to 2007. His new media education television series, *Beyond the*

*Screen*, which he created, writes, produces and hosts, began airing in May 2008. Both series are designed to assist media literacy teachers in teaching about contemporary movies. Each show is accompanied by a study guide written by media educator Neil Andersen and posted on the MuchMusic Media Education web site.

In May, 1999, McClelland and Stewart published *More than Meets the Eye: Watching TV Watching Us* which Pungente co-wrote with Martin O'Malley.

In October, 2004, Novalis published *Finding God in the Dark* which Pungente co-authored with Monty William, SJ. A media critic and a spiritual counselor/retreat director combine a particular spiritual literacy (Ignatian) with media literacy to make mainstream movie-viewing a way to promote spiritual growth. The book took first place at the Catholic Press Association awards in 2005.

Since 1985, Pungente has served as the Executive Secretary of the Ontario based Association for Media Literacy and has worked on the organization of the first and second North American Media Education conferences. In 1992 he was one of the founders of the Canadian Association for Media Education Organizations (CAMEO).

Pungente has taught summer sessions in Media Literacy for CHUM Television in Vancouver, Victoria and London, and at the Faculties of Education at the University of Manitoba, Waterloo University and at the University of Toronto, as well as for the Surrey, BC Board of Education, Greater Victoria School Board and the British Columbia Teachers Federation. He also taught twice yearly night courses to teachers at the Hamilton Wentworth Roman Catholic Separate School Board. Currently he is a sessional professor of media literacy at Regis College, University of Toronto.

Since 1985 he has given over 1,000 presentations, workshops and lectures on media literacy across Canada and Australia, and in Britain, Spain, France, Poland, Austria, the USA and Japan. He has served as a consultant to a number of media professional groups including CHUM Television, Cable in the Classroom, the National Film Board of Canada, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, YTV, TVOntario, and Warner Brothers.

In 1995, he was elected president of the Canadian Association of Media Education Organizations (CAMEO) and was also named recipient of the Jessie McCause award given by the National Telemedia Council, Madison, for excellence in the field of media literacy. In 2001 he was named Canadian media educator of the year by Magic Lantern Corporation. He was co-organizer of SUMMIT 2000, an international conference which was

held in Toronto for media professionals and media educators in May 2000. Summit 2000 attracted 1,400 people from 54 countries..

Working with Face to Face Media, Pungente has developed an on line university course for Canadian media literacy teachers. The course – *Inside Plato's Cave* – will be available on line in the fall of 2009. The project was supported by City TV Vancouver and CHUM Television Ltd..

Pungente is Director of the Jesuit Communication Project in Toronto where he continues promoting media literacy across Canada.