



THE BRIDGE



FINDING THE CENTER

Formation at Mundelein Seminary



A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE



Walking the Three Paths

By Very Reverend Robert Barron

Starting next school year, there will be a new structuring logic to our formation program at Mundelein Seminary. We will lead our students down three great spiritual paths: finding the Center, knowing you are a sinner, and realizing that your life is not about you. There is nothing particularly new about these categories; indeed, versions of them can be found in practically every prominent spiritual writer in the tradition. But articulated in this way and according to this sequence, they always have struck me as an extremely helpful guide for thinking about the Christian life.

Path one was beautifully expressed by St. Paul when he remarked, “It is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me.” Paul was announcing that the center of his life was no longer his own ego, with its distinctive projects and plans, but rather Christ Jesus. Now everything in him – mind, will, passions, talents, etc. – would be in service to Christ and his purposes. Kierkegaard said that a saint is someone whose life is about one thing. He did not mean the saint lives a monotonous existence, but rather all of the elements

that constitute the saint’s being are gathered around, focused upon, the Lord alone. What this singular attention produces is the beautiful and integrated soul.

Path two – knowing you are a sinner – follows ineluctably from path one. It is precisely in the light of grace that one understands how far one has departed from the way of God. St. John of the Cross compared the soul to a pane of glass and observed that it is when the light is shining most directly on the glass that the marks and smudges on it are most apparent. Because St. Augustine could “confess” the praise of God, he also was able to “confess” his sin. If the consideration of the Christian spiritual life commences with sin, it gets rather quickly off the rails, devolving into pelagianism or puritanism. It begins indeed with grace, but then moves naturally to the acknowledgement of sin and the deep willingness to do something about it. Path two is, accordingly, the “purgative way” of which so many of our spiritual masters speak. One of the greatest guides on path two is the poet Dante. In his *Divine Comedy*, he recounts the journey that he made up the seven story mountain of Purgatory, coming to terms with all of the deadly sins. Anyone who is serious about guiding others on the spiritual journey has to be willing to undergo the “searching moral inventory” that is path two.

Having been purified, the Christian disciple is ready to be sent. In the Bible, no one is ever given an experience of God without being given, subsequently, a mission. Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Samuel, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Matthew, Peter and Paul: all of them are commissioned by the God of Israel to go forth. Path three – realizing your life is not about you – is all about this spiritual adventure. Hans Urs von Balthasar was gesturing toward this path when he spoke of making a transition from the “ego-drama” to the “theo-drama.” The former is the drama we write, produce, direct and, above all, star in; the latter is the drama written, produced and directed by God. Being the star of the ego drama amounts, finally, to nothing. Joseph Campbell said most of us climb the ladder of success only to find out it’s up against the wrong wall! But being even a bit player in the theo-drama – acting the role God wants us to play – is to discover the pearl of great price and the treasure buried in the field. Anyone who wants to be a priest of Jesus Christ must be willing to be an apostle, which is to say, someone who is sent. Anyone aspiring to the priesthood must, like the prophet Isaiah, say, “Here I am Lord! Send me!” He must, in a word, be willing to commit himself to path three, realizing in his bones that his life is not about him.

From grace through purification to mission: that is the threefold rhythm of the Christian spiritual life; that will be the pattern of our formation program.

■ Very Reverend Robert Barron is the Rector/President of the University of Saint Mary of the Lake/Mundelein Seminary

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On the Cover: Benediction in the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception at Mundelein Seminary. Photo by Scott Harter



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Father Barron Travels to Rome for Papal Election

Our own Father Barron traveled to Rome as an NBC commentator to cover the conclave electing our new pope, while Cardinal George took part in the conclave itself. When the white smoke was seen rising from the Vatican signaling an election, seminarians gathered together all over the Mundelein campus, eagerly awaiting the official pronouncement of the man chosen – Argentinean **CARDINAL JORGE BERGOGLIO**, who has chosen the name Pope Francis.



New Faculty Members

This year Mundelein welcomed three new faculty members:



PATRICIA KLEIN, a consecrated woman of the Regnum Christi movement, serves as an Associate Dean of Formation, Coordinator of the Peace and Justice/Gospel of Life Committee and Coordinator of the March for Life.



REV. BRENDAN LUPTON, an alumnus of Mundelein Seminary, serves as a Formation Director. He recently earned his doctorate in the area of Patristics and will assume a teaching position.



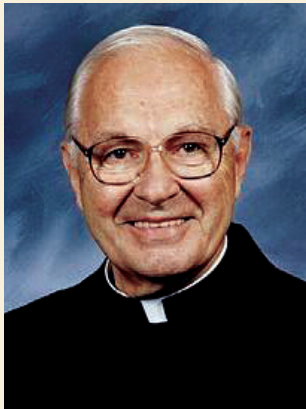
REV. ELMER ROMERO, an alumnus of Mundelein Seminary, serves as an Associate Dean of Formation, Director of Hispanic Ministry and Director of the Summer Language Program

In Memoriam

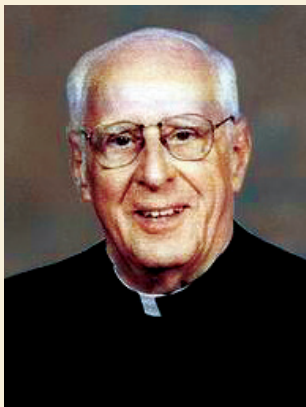
During the past year, three historic figures of Mundelein Seminary died



REV. MSGR. JOHN V. DOLCIAMORE, 86, earned his degree in Canon Law and served as judicial vicar for the Archdiocese of Chicago. He taught Canon Law at the seminary and continued to teach even after retirement. He died on November 22, 2012.



REV. RICHARD WOJCIK, 89, was appointed to the faculty at Mundelein Seminary in 1956. He served as director of music until 1990 and remained part of the faculty until 1994 when he retired from active ministry. He died on January 26, 2013. (See article on p. 24)



REV. RICHARD SCHROEDER, 92, was the procurator/ chief operations officer, of Mundelein Seminary from 1967 until he retired in 1991. He died on February 8, 2013.



Mundelein Basketball Tournament

This year Mundelein Seminary hosted a record 13 teams on campus for our annual seminary basketball tournament. The Mundelein Seminary Lakers played valiantly, taking second place. One month later the Mundelein Lakers traveled to Columbus, OH, taking part in the Pontifical College Josephinum Basketball Tournament, reaching the semi-finals.



Meyer Lecture

PAULA STANDARD, a former deputy general counsel and acting general counsel of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), delivered this year's Cardinal Meyer address on March 14-15, 2013. In light of the controversies over government rules and mandates concerning religious freedom, she offered an engaging consideration on individual and institutional rights and conscience protection.

■ David Neuschwander is a third-year theologian studying for the Diocese of Superior, WI.



UPCOMING EVENTS

EVENTS COMPILED BY
MATTHEW CLARKE

Matthew Clarke is a second-year pre-theologian from the Diocese of Springfield, IL.

2013-2014 PALUCH LECTURER

Rev. Wilson D. Miscamble, C.S.C., will be the 2013-2014 Paluch Lecturer at the University of Saint Mary of the Lake/Mundelein Seminary. A Notre Dame historian, Father Miscamble will live on campus, teach, and offer three Paluch lectures during the academic year.

2014 ALBERT CARDINAL MEYER LECTURER

Archbishop Arthur Roche, who serves as the Secretary of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments and is the former Bishop of Leeds in England, will be the 2014 Albert Cardinal Meyer Lecturer.

SUMMER SCRIPTURE SEMINAR

The annual Summer Scripture Seminar will take place **June 23–28, 2013**, at the University of Saint Mary of the Lake/Mundelein Seminary. Entitled “Hard Sayings in the Bible” this year’s lecturers include: Dr. Mark Smith, Dr. Anatheia Portia-Young, Sr. Maria Pascuzzi, Rev. Steven Lampe, Rev. Vincent Bataille, O.S.B., Rev. Laurence Dowling and Ms. Catherine Sims.

ALUMNI GOLF OUTING

The Mundelein Seminary Alumni Golf Outing will be held at Pine Meadow Golf Club on **July 11, 2013**. A reception will follow the golf in the USML refectory.

ANNUAL GOLF OUTING

The University of Saint Mary of the Lake Annual Golf Outing will be held **September 26, 2013**, at Pine Meadow Golf Club. This year’s outing will honor Mr. and Mrs. James Perry.

SUMMER SESSIONS

The Liturgical Institute holds its summer sessions from **June 10 – July 19**. Courses include:

- Liturgical Traditions East and West taught by Rev. Thomas Baima
- Ritual, Symbol and Worship taught by Mr. Christopher Carstens
- Reconciliation, Anointing and Death taught by Rev. Dennis Gill
- Music and Worship taught by Rev. John-Mark Missio

SEVERAL NEW APPOINTMENTS TO THE SEMINARY FACULTY INCLUDE:

- **Rev. Marek Duran**, who is currently completing his post-graduate studies in Rome, will become an instructor in the Department of Moral Theology.
- **Rev. Christopher House**, currently vocation director for the Diocese of Springfield, will become an Associate Dean of Formation.
- **Rev. John Kartje**, currently chaplain and director of the Sheil Catholic Center at Northwestern University, will become an assistant professor in the Department of Biblical Studies.
- **Rev. Carlos Rodriguez**, currently associate pastor of Saint Michael Parish, Orland Park, will become an Associate Dean of Formation.
- **Rev. Brian Welter**, currently vocation director for the Archdiocese of Chicago, will become an Associate Dean of Formation.

“Brothers, select from among you seven reputable men, filled with the Spirit and wisdom, whom we shall appoint to this task...” (Acts 6:3)

FEATURE ARTICLE



THE LEGACY OF Albert Cardinal Meyer

By Patricia Klein

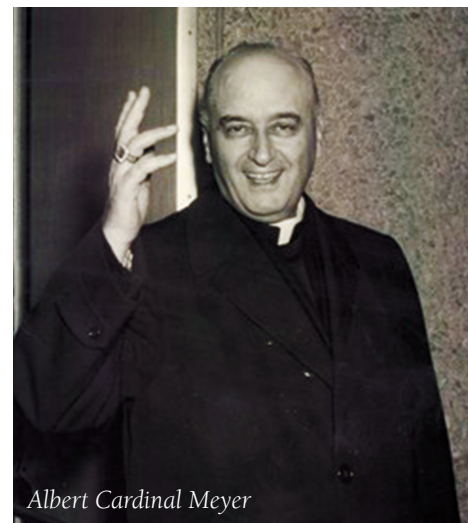
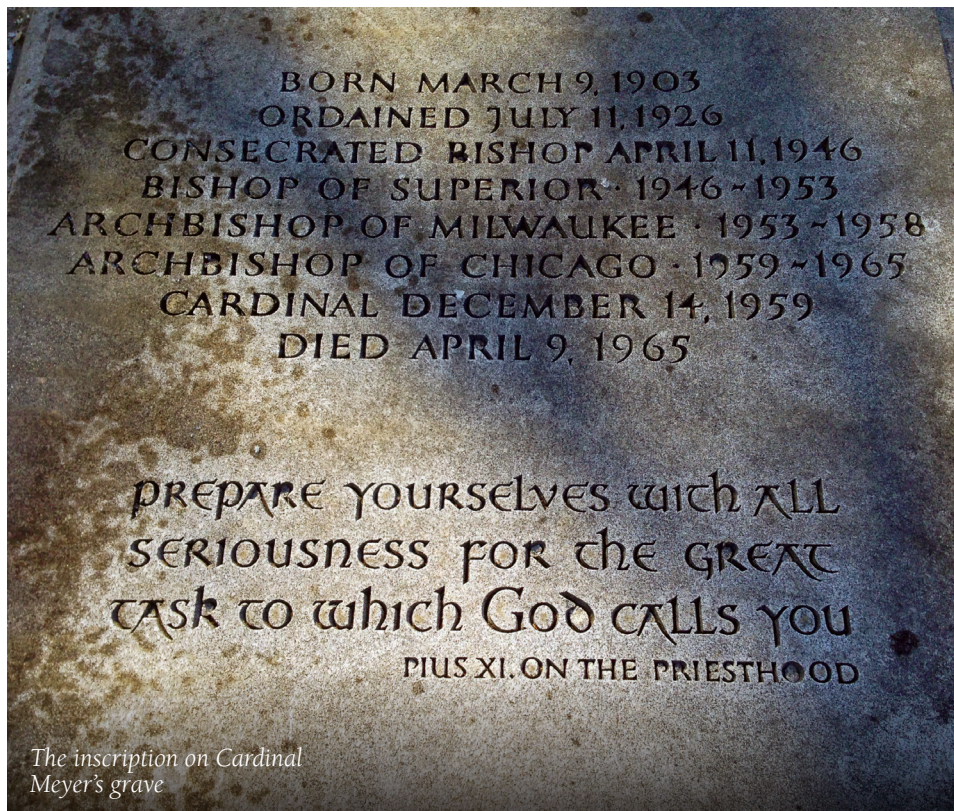
Albert Cardinal Meyer is the only Archbishop of Chicago buried in the cemetery at Mundelein Seminary. An inscription on the gravestone which he himself designed might give us a hint concerning why he chose to be buried here. From Pius XI's *Ad Catholici Sacerdotii* (1935), it reads: "Prepare yourselves with all seriousness for the great task to which God calls you." Cardinal Meyer was a man who loved and was thankful for the gift of priesthood. He also provided new insight on seminary formation and a heritage upon which Mundelein Seminary continues to build.

Albert Gregory Meyer was born in 1903 as the last of five children of a German immigrant family. His own priestly vocation was nurtured in his early childhood as an altar boy at the motherhouse of the Notre Dame Sisters in Milwaukee. The sisters quickly recognized in the young boy a love for God and a remarkable intellect. Since his family did not have means to send their five children for higher education, the Sisters found a benefactor for Albert who sponsored him through his entire education. He was ordained to the priesthood in July of 1926, and in 1930 Father Meyer received a Licentiate in Sacred Scripture at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome.

Father Meyer was then appointed to the Faculty of Saint Francis Seminary in Milwaukee, which was his *alma mater*. Named Rector in 1937, he implemented many important changes in the seminary's intellectual formation and administration. It is from this time most likely, that his choice of epitaph stems, for it is said that he quoted from *Ad Catholici Sacerdotii* on many occasions during his nine years as Rector. On February 18, 1946, he was named by the Holy Father as the sixth Bishop of Superior, WI. It was only reluctantly, with a true sense of obedience to the will of God, that he assented to leaving his younger brothers, the seminarians.

“He brought with him a new vision of seminary formation which was innovative for his time: he encouraged each seminarian that, before becoming a priest, he should first become a man and a Christian.”

Meyer went on to serve for seven years as Bishop of Superior, five years as Archbishop of Milwaukee, and in 1958 he became Archbishop of Chi-



Albert Cardinal Meyer

cago. On December 14, 1959, he was named cardinal priest of the Holy Roman Church with the title of Saint Cecilia by Blessed John XXIII. During the Second Vatican Council, he was chosen by the Pope to serve as one of the Cardinal Presidents. He spoke on several occasions during the Council and was especially influential in the debates concerning the schema on Divine Revelation and the resulting constitution, *Dei Verbum*. His presence was also very crucial for the Declaration on Religious Freedom, *Dignitatis Humanae* (a document which, following a long debate, was accepted by the Council only after his sudden death in 1965 from a brain tumor). Cardinal Meyer unwillingly, and even reluctantly, became one of the most respected

“He was in his heart and bones a priest, a mediator totally open to God and to men; the priest never got lost in the prelate.”

and listened to cardinals, not only among his American brothers but even among the Council as a whole: “We had better consult Meyer. His judgment is the most valuable,” remarked a group of French bishops discussing a crucial issue.

One reason for this respect might have been his flawlessly spoken Latin, one of the seven languages he mastered. It is more likely however, that it was his calm, somewhat shy personality, radiating human goodness, combined with his spiritual and intellectual depth. In fact, he was a prayerful man who maintained a supernatural view at all times in both practical and intellectual questions. It is, so his friend Bishop Cletus F. O’Donnell said, Meyer’s confidence and sense of obedience to

the Holy Spirit which led him to accept his role as a leader of the Council, a role that did not come naturally to him. His great sense of responsibility before God and men propelled him to make use of the authority entrusted to him. He used his authority not only for the spiritual benefit of the faithful, but also in service of the common good and rights of all. This is shown, for example, in his efforts toward promoting better education and the integration of the growing African American community in Chicago.

When Cardinal Meyer became the Archbishop of Chicago, he seemed to enjoy visiting the seminarians at Mundelein. He came as often as possible, probably remembering fondly his time at Saint Francis Seminary. He brought with him a new vision of seminary formation which was innovative for his time: he encouraged each seminarian that, before becoming a priest, he should first become a man and a Christian.

Meyer preached the importance of this formation of men on a natural level, what we now call “human formation,” not only with words, but also by example. He was a simple man. He did the dishes on his family visits, enjoyed a good joke, and practiced his favorite “apostolic hobby”: fishing. He liked to seek advice and was always ready to

listen openly to differing opinions. He lived consciously a life of virtue and was known for his great charity. In his dealings and speeches he was sure to make his point without attacking or hurting another's feelings – whether by demeanor or speech. He had a real interest in the person, and, though reserved by nature, personal relationships were vitally important to him. He did not relish small talk. Rather, he preferred deep conversations, especially about Scripture and the Church. He always strove to make himself available. He promptly responded to any of his priests who sought to speak with him, meeting either the very same day or on the following morning. During rough times, when he thought himself to be alone, he was sometimes observed weeping before the Blessed Sacrament in the chapel. He met the candidates to the priesthood, showing them true interest and affection. He actively sought to collaborate and promote the initiatives of his priests through his office as Archbishop.

All of his human efforts were imbued by his love for the priesthood. O'Donnell writes: "He was in his heart and bones a priest, a mediator totally open to God and to men; the priest never got lost in the prelate." Cardinal Meyer's first concern was Mass, which he calls during the Council the source of the apostolate of each priest: "The Mass, in fact, is the priest's whole life... as the Mass is, so is the priest and apostle ..." The motto of his episcopacy reminds us of how and for whom this man and priest lived: *ADVENIAT REGNUM TUUM!* (*Your Kingdom Come*)

Mundelein Seminary wants to form young men as priests of the New Evangelization: priests deeply rooted in Christ, with a great love for the Church and the Pope; priests intellectually well prepared; priests who love and know how to encounter and



The angel that stands over the resting place of Cardinal Meyer in the cemetery at Mundelein.

engage the men and women of our times; priests passionate about announcing the Gospel message of God's love and mercy, creative in methods and the use of the new media. Cardinal Meyer's life, thoughts and vision are still very inspirational for us today. The three-step path that Rev. Robert Barron has introduced to the seminary program underlines this very well: finding the center, knowing you are a sinner, realizing that your life is not about you. These three steps, naturally interwoven, will be present in all years of formation at Mundelein Seminary.

Cardinal Meyer's example, together with that of so many others, shows that Christ needs hearts and minds reflecting his love and care for his people and willing to serve them courageously. Mundelein Seminary is strongly committed to forming priests

for the New Evangelization. Following in the footsteps of many great men and women in our Church like Cardinal Meyer, it is a task that can only be faced and accomplished through a profound friendship with Christ.

Please keep these young men in your prayers, as well as those who are called to be their formators. The years of formation are a time of great joy, struggle and growth. It is a time of truth, solitude and brotherhood. It is a challenge, but above all a gift of love that the Lord makes to these men, his Church and all mankind, prolonging his own priesthood through them: "I am with you always until the end of the age." (MATTHEW 28:20)

■ Patricia Klein, a consecrated woman of the Regnum Christi movement, serves as an Associate Dean of Formation and as the Coordinator of the Peace and Justice/Gospel of Life Committee.



From Quarters to Semesters

*A change that is more
than meets the eye*

By Very Rev. Thomas A. Baima

In August 2013, Mundelein Seminary will change its academic schedule from quarters to semesters. This change is only the visible piece of a much more fundamental transformation in the seminary program begun more than two years ago.

Any institution of higher education enacts its mission through its curriculum. And each curriculum has a certain “shelf life,” meaning that it will be good for a certain number of years and then need review and revision. As Vice Rector for Academic Affairs, I and the Dean of Formation, Rev. Ronald Hicks, were charged to review Mundelein’s priestly formation program and to present the findings to the Faculty Council and the Seminary Administrators. The Office of Academic Affairs developed a process for faculty discussion and recommendation. Using it, we evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of the current curriculum.

For over a year, Father Hicks and I collected and interpreted data received from the faculty. At the same time, the Association of Theological Schools of the United States and Canada was conducting its 10-year accreditation review of the university. This process, led by our Associate Academic Dean, Dr. Christopher McAtee, documented every aspect of our program. The outside review gave a strong affirmation for the integrity of our program and its effectiveness. In this context, then, the faculty asked, “What can be done to make a strong program even better?”

The faculty review built upon the outside accreditation review and an extensive survey of our sending bishops by the University’s Board of Advisors. Both the accreditors and the bishops identified the pilgrimage as a signature program for Mundelein Seminary. Mundelein is the only seminary in the world to send its students to the Holy Land for an entire term. The salutary effects of this program on the spiritual preparation of men for



the priesthood are many, but the one most often mentioned involves preaching. Almost all our alumni report that the time spent in the Holy Land fundamentally changed their understanding of scripture. At a time when the top request from the faithful is better equipped preachers, Mundelein intends to continue this signature program.

Additionally, both the faculty review and the accreditation team identified our Pastoral Theology Program and the Internship at the midpoint of the four-year curriculum as important aspects of Mundelein which distinguish us from other seminaries. A full term of parish work in the middle of their studies allows the men to engage the second half of the curriculum in a practical as well as theoretical manner. Living in a rectory and working full-time on a parish staff as an intern, calls forth questions based in real-life experience upon return to the classroom. The quality of learning is thus enhanced.

The curriculum review and board survey identified two areas for seminary growth. First, students frequently reported to faculty that the pace and busyness of seminary were troubling. Additionally, faculty members were seeing more seminarians lacking the humanities background presumed by the Catholic Master of Divinity program.

To address these two areas of concern, Father Hicks and I set out with our separate departments to examine the scope and sequence of the human, intellectual, spiritual and pastoral formation. We looked at how the four different aspects of the curriculum supported our two departments. And we examined how academic department resources could assist in formation work and vice versa.

When Rev. Robert Barron was appointed as Rector, his insights and experience were brought into the process. Father Barron praised the formation program but noted that a clear, integrating logic uniting formation and academics seemed absent. As with academics, today's candidate often lacks the previous Catholic formation assumed in past seminarians. Some men come to Mundelein, filled with faith and strong in their vocation, but without formal Catholic education. For a few of our men, Mundelein Seminary is their first Catholic school. This requires of the formation program a greater degree of direction.

Father Barron and Father Hicks set about refining the Formation Program around three classical movements of the spiritual life using Father Barron's book, *The Strangest Way*, as their source. In the meantime, Rev. James Presta, the Vice Rector for Seminary Administration, chaired a committee on curriculum revision. All involved worked to see how the basics of intellectual and pastoral formation could be covered in sufficient depth and breadth so that graduates would possess a strong grasp of the content of the Catholic tradition and the skills

needed for effective ministry. After Father Presta's committee developed a new chart of courses, I organized the courses into a semester template because the seminary administrators judged that switching to semesters would address the pace and busyness of the old curriculum and provide a better platform for covering the basics in sufficient depth. Dr. Elizabeth Nagel joined the academic revision when she was appointed President of the Pontifical Faculty of Theology in the fall of 2012.

A key feature of the new academic curriculum is to provide a first year which is supportive of the formation program, giving the new men a solid foundation for priestly

“The faculty asked, ‘What can be done to make a strong program even better?’”

formation. The second year focuses on preparing men for their internship experience in a parish during second semester and in a hospital during the summer. This provides six months of internship half way through the M.Div. program. Third year prepares for diaconate ordination. The second semester pilgrimage is proximate spiritual preparation for ordination. Deacon ordination now occurs at the end of third year to allow a man to serve full-time in the summer in a parish and part-time during the school year, giving him a full year of preaching prior to his ordination as a priest. Fourth year focuses on the pastoral skills involved in reconciliation, sacred music and celebration of the Mass. Finally, the completion of advanced theology courses brings the deacon to his priestly ordination with a strong knowledge base and skill set.

The goal of the new curriculum is the same as the old: to form good, holy and well-educated priests for the Catholic Church. What that requires in the 21st century is more demanding than at any time in history. Father Barron has called the seminary to organize our efforts around the New Evangelization and the dialogue between faith and culture. Ours is to be an evangelical Catholicism, unafraid to proclaim Jesus to the world as risen from the dead and savior of all. This takes men who are well integrated and mature. It takes men with disciplined minds who can think deeply about the issues facing their parishioners. It takes men who have a deep spiritual life, so that they can guide the inner life of their people. And it takes men who are skilled as pastoral theologians, able to apply seminary lessons to the world in which parishioners dwell.

■ Very Rev. Thomas A. Baima is Vice Rector for Academic Affairs. He also serves as Vicar for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the Archdiocese of Chicago.



Father Walter Ciszek, S.J. SAINT OF SELF-SURRENDER

By Seth Brown and Jamie Mueller

Relationships often begin by coincidence. At least we think so at the time. Later however, and often at the moment we least expect, the thin curtains of chance and accident fall away, and our eyes behold the hand of God drawing all things together in Christ. Coincidences, then, are never coincidental: they are simply the everyday means God uses to introduce us to himself. This is how Rev. Walter Ciszek, S.J., discovered God and how we discovered Father Ciszek.

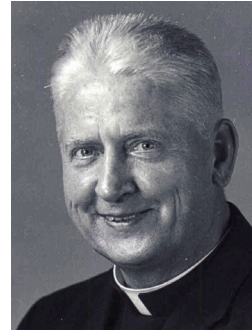
Born into a large Polish family in the densely populated coal-mining town of Shenandoah Pennsylvania in 1904, Walter Ciszek was known as a boy with determination bordering on stubborn. Although short, he was strong. He did not back down from confrontation, “taking it,

as well as dishing it out.”

His resolve only grew with age. When he decided to enter the Society of Jesus, he traveled to the Provincial House in New York and refused to leave until they agreed to admit him. During Ciszek’s second year of novitiate, Pope Pius XI called for missionaries to volunteer to serve in Russia. As soon as the novice master had read the pope’s appeal, Novice Ciszek stood up, walked over and promptly volunteered, saying, “God wants me there and I will be there in the future.” (Ciszek, *He Leadeth Me*, pg. 25)

In 1940 he entered Soviet Russia as a Jesuit missionary, ministering to Christians persecuted under Stalin’s Communist regime. Shortly after arrival, the secret police arrested him and kept him in solitary confinement for five years until, overcome by the strain of endless interrogations, he signed a spurious statement admitting to being a Vatican spy. Broken, discouraged and sentenced to 15 years of hard labor in the Siberian gulags, Father Ciszek blamed only himself: “I was totally despicable in my own eyes... My will had failed; I had proved to be nowhere near the man I thought I was.” (pg. 67)

Yet within the surge of self-accusation and bitter disappointment emerged that least expected moment, that instant when, in the darkness, God presents himself and all pretense, all ego falls away. Ciszek saw himself clearly: “I faced the truth that was at the root of my problem and my shame. The answer was a single word: I.” (pg. 68)



The independent willfulness of Walter Ciszek had gotten him through a lot: childhood, the Jesuit novitiate and even to Russia, but it could take him no further. Father Ciszek recognized his spiritual self-sufficiency for what it was – a myth – the myth responsible for his failure. “I realized finally, that I had asked for God’s help but had really believed in my own ability to avoid evil and to meet every challenge. ... I had relied almost completely on myself in this most

critical test – and I had failed.” (pg. 68)

With God, however, failure is never final. Often it is the means of grace. As he would go on to say, “that moment of failure was itself a great grace. ... I had learned, to the depths of my shaken soul, how totally I depended on [God] for everything ...” (pg. 70-71)

Father Ciszek had found the center, the absolute dependence on and trust in God to provide all, to be all, for him. Living out this reality transformed him from a well-intentioned and driven priest to a holy one, truly free from fear and able to discern God’s presence behind the coincidence.

After that transformative night in prison, Father Ciszek would spend another 17 years in Russia, working and ministering to its people until the State Department secured his release and return to the United States on October 12, 1963. He would live another 21 years sharing his message of radical dependence on God through talks, spiritual direction and care for all who came to him. He died on December 8, 1984, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, and his cause for canonization was opened in 1990.

■ Seth Brown is a third-year theologian studying for the Diocese of Springfield, IL. Jamie Mueller is a third-year theologian studying for the Archdiocese of Chicago, IL.



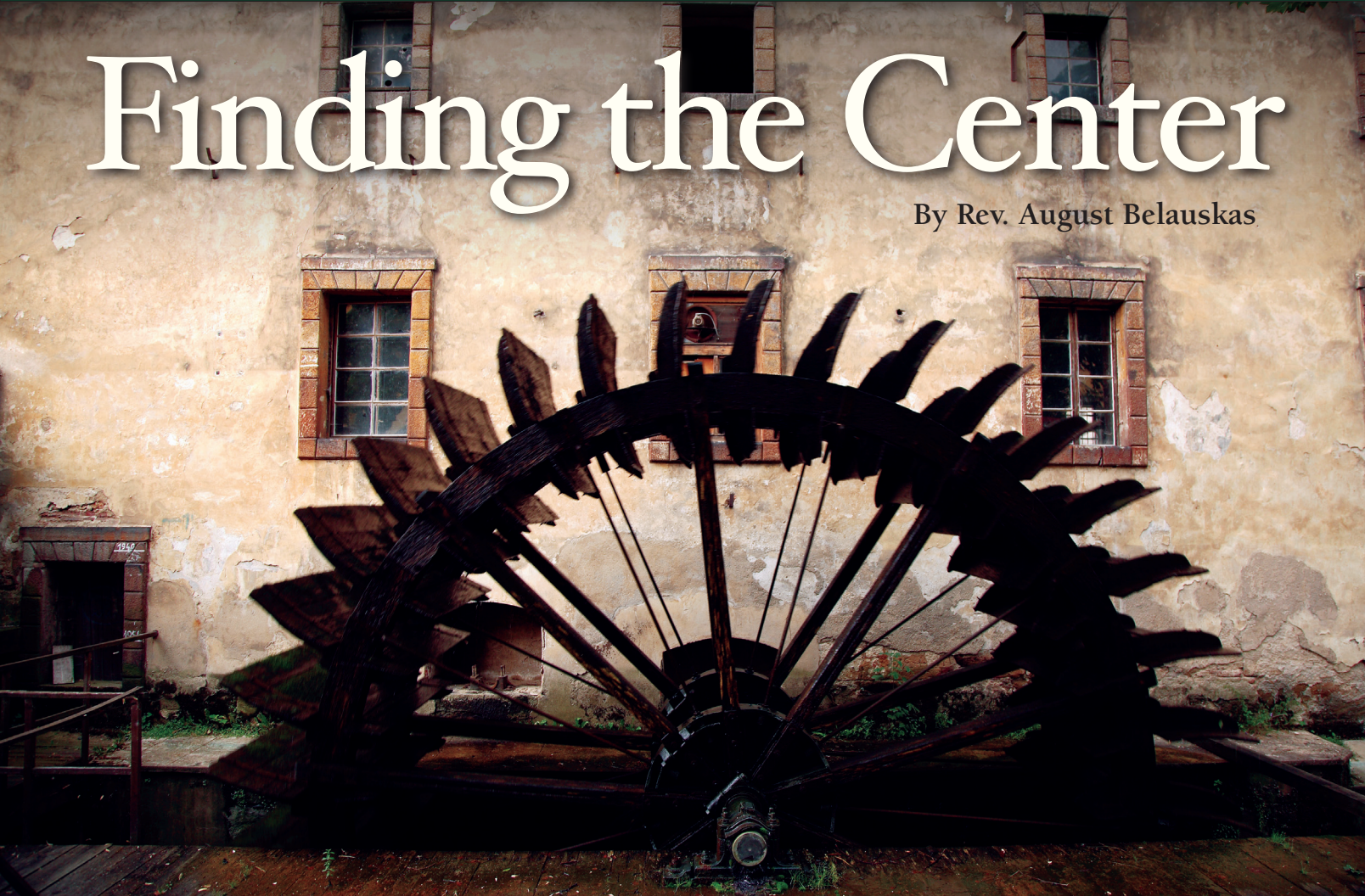
Seth Brown and Jamie Mueller jointly received the 2012 Msgr. Canary Grant to travel to the Rev. Walter Ciszek, S.J. Center in Shenandoah, PA, to further study his life and unpublished writings in hopes of furthering his cause for canonization. For more information about Father Ciszek, visit www.ciszek.org.

“Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.”
(Matthew 16:24)



Finding the Center

By Rev. August Belauskas



At the start of the school year last fall, our rector, Rev. Robert Barron, laid out for the community his vision of the spiritual journey we all need to take throughout our lives but especially for us here at the seminary. It is based on three themes, or paths. The first is “Finding the Center,” the second is “Knowing You Are a Sinner” and the third is “Your Life is Not About You.” Each of these paths requires steadfast and careful attention by those who would walk with the Lord, yet they constantly intertwine with each other and complement each other as we more and more commit ourselves to the Lord and His way.

Finding the Center

Let's take a look at the first path: Finding the Center. For anyone who has lived at or visited the seminary, an obvious visual

and architectural symbol of this is the very layout of the seminary grounds and buildings. It was a deliberate choice of Cardinal Mundelein, Father Barron suggests, that the center of the seminary is the Main Chapel. It is the heart of who we are and what our lives are all about. Our day should start and end by walking into the presence of the Lord. Radiating out from the chapel, all the other buildings represent the daily activities of our lives: studying, learning, eating, sleeping, exercising, sharing life with each other and even spending moments outdoors with nature. But every time, we must return to the chapel as the center of our whole day. It is a crisscross pattern of living which takes us out and brings us back, over and over all day long. So also we move in and out of our sense of God's presence, weaving a beautiful pattern of life. In a more mundane example, it's like the well-known game of Monopoly: We start at GO and then we keep moving around and around, each time passing GO (and collecting \$200) and so our playing brings us into more and more complex and difficult moves and decisions. Each time we get something to “invest” in what lies ahead.

These metaphors are helpful, and we might think of other ones on our own. The question is: why is this the first path on the spiritual journey? It is because we first need to get the “lay of the land.” Where are we? What is my part in life? What am I facing as I make this journey? We need a point of reference, something that shows me the overview. Having a Center point is like a base camp for a hiker and like a compass to a traveler. Without it, we can’t go down the other two paths of spiritual growth.

Can this Center be found?

It seems people spend their whole lives trying to find it. But it keeps eluding them. Maybe because they think of it as something to possess, like pleasure or honor, instead of as a place to keep visiting and then going back out into the world, giving ourselves away in love. So, what is this Center? For us Christians, it has to be God, the Triune God, who keeps forming us into His own image of relationship, love, mission and sacrifice. What else can substitute for this as our Center? So, maybe it’s better to say that we do not “find” the Center but we “re-find” it, for it is always hovering around us in its awesome transcendence and in its tender immanence.

How do you “re-find” this Center?

Prayer is the essential step. But not by piling up prayers during the day – “on your journey, do not take two staves or sandals.” We are not trying to impress God, but rather walk His path. Prayer though, is the focus without which we keep losing our way. But pray “always” as St. Paul says: seeing God in and out of our daily journeys, as nourishing us, refreshing us, forgiving us, rendering us speechless as we come across His beauty, speaking to us in the people, places and events of our lives.

For me, the Scriptural passages that keep me centered are: “follow me,” “do this in memory of me” and “get up, the hour has come.” All are commands. It means pausing during the day for formal prayer, for noticing what’s going on around me and for seeing what’s the next best thing for me to do (as the AA 12-step program urges).

Turning to the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber, I see the Center as “in-between,” in those crevices of life where I allow myself to speak to the Other and to be spoken to. It is when I step outside my small little world and enter the “between” of actually meeting life and the world and human persons and the divine. The Center is all over the place! Because the Center is where you “are found.”

Borrowing also from the Catholic philosopher, Gabriel Marcel, I see each of us as a wayfarer, guided by some central light that keeps pointing the way. We do not have



Mosaic Image of Jesus Christ at Hagia Sophia in Istanbul Turkey. Detail from the Deesis mosaics.

a map; we have a “light unto our feet.” We walk by fidelity, hope and love. The Center is that place we are “about” to walk into on the journey that, like your GPS, allows you to recalculate. The Center is not “over there” or “at some day in the future.” It is among us. Marcel shares this quote by Rilke

“We must return to the chapel as the center of our whole day.”

in one of his books: “You feel you are hedged in; you dream of escape; but beware of mirages. Do not run or fly away in order to get free; rather dig in the narrow place which has been given to you. You will find God there and everything. God does not float on the horizon; he sleeps in your substance. Vanity runs, love digs. If you fly away from yourself, your prison will run with you and will close in because of the wind of your flight; if you go deep down into yourself it will disappear in paradise.”

So we start with finding the Center. And we keep finding it, day after day.

■ Rev. August Belauskas is Chairperson, Instructor in the Department of Pre-Theology and Associate Dean of Formation.

“All your sons shall be taught by the LORD,
and great shall be the peace of your children.”
(Isaiah 54:13)



Msgr. Deutsch offers Mass for World Youth Day pilgrims in Cologne, Germany, in 2005.



Msgr. Deutsch blesses the new playground equipment at the parish school...

Focused Entirely on Christ

Internship with an alumnus

By Andrew Deitz

Last spring, I was blessed with the opportunity to take a break from my classroom studies and shift gears into learning on the job through an internship with an alumnus, Msgr. Dan Deutsch (Mundelein Class of 1994), at Holy Cross Parish in Batavia, IL. From the moment I walked through the front door, it was plain to see that this place was vibrant and dynamic. This was a truly exciting and formative time in my preparation for my future (God-willing) ordination.

My first day at Holy Cross, Monsignor gave me a tour of the parish grade school. We looked down from the second floor window into the gym where the kids were having lunch. He knocked on the window and every head in the room quickly swiveled up to our window. Sandwiches were dropped, one boy stood up on the table, and cheers of “Monsignor! Monsi-

gnor!” erupted. As we entered the gym, students ran from their tables to give their beloved pastor hugs. From that moment I was hooked. I wanted to be a part of this unique parish and to take the enthusiasm of the place with me when I left.

What made this place so different? I have often thought about this question in light of the conferences that our rector, Rev. Robert Barron, has been presenting to us this year. Father Barron has proposed the beginning of spirituality as “finding the center,” in other words, making Jesus Christ the source and summit of our every endeavor. This key to the spiritual life is clearly embodied in the daily life of Holy Cross and its mission to produce well-formed Catholics from their primary education through every stage of life.

I often asked Msgr. Deutsch what made this place so dynamic and his answer was always the same: “this parish and this school are focused entirely on Christ.” His

response prompted me to see the life of the parish in a new light. From daily Mass with the school children to the packed adoration chapel, it was clear that placing Christ at the center had transformed this parish into a beacon of his love, a witness to the community.

The school implemented this vision through emphasis on the importance of prayer and unity as a class in the pursuit of holiness. Each classroom was adorned with beautiful religious art, statues, and the banner of their “household.” The students of each class pick a saint’s name or another title that inspires them, such as the “Warriors of the Word” or “Saint Joseph’s Workers” to bring them closer to each other and our heavenly Father.

Every Friday afternoon, special class time is set aside for the observance of the “Lord’s Day.” This is a special opportunity to read the Gospel passage for the coming Sunday as a class and to reflect on it together in an effort to make the Mass a bigger part of their lives. Lord’s Day also affords the opportunity for the students to share their prayers of intention with each other in order that they might pray for their classmates and give them the support they need. The households cement the practice of finding the center, teaching the students to trust Christ and emulate His love to build up each other and the kingdom here on earth.

It was tough to leave Holy Cross Parish at the end of my internship. So many things seemed to make the place unlike any other, but the key to its success was actually pretty simple: having Christ as the center and the goal of its every operation. After reflecting on my experience for the past few months I have come to know with certainty that, when we are centered on Jesus Christ as our source and summit, there is no limit to the transformation that awaits us.

■ Andrew Deitz is third-year theologian studying for the Diocese of Rockford, IL.

“For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.”

(Romans 7:15)

Create a Clean Heart Within Me, O God

Knowing You Are a Sinner

By Dr. Elizabeth Nagel

The Bible presents a clear picture that all human beings sin (with the exceptions of Jesus and his mother Mary), or in biblical thinking “miss the mark” when it comes to living as God desires. Biblical sinners include Noah, the only “just” man on earth before the flood. After the deluge he is the first person ever to plant a vineyard, and he proceeds to get drunk. Moses, the most influential figure in the Israelite religion, apparently sins so greatly that God does not allow him to enter the Promised Land. And then there’s King David who, though he has the Old Testament reputation for being the Lord’s favorite, commits adultery with Bathsheba and tries to cover it up with the murder of her husband, Uriah the Hittite. Even God’s ardent apostle Paul laments the hold that sin has on him, “For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.” (Romans 7:15) And yet, in spite of this human inability to be perfectly faithful to God, the Bible does not encourage sinners to wallow in guilt or to dwell gloomily on their apparent powerlessness to behave differently.

What Scripture does urge us sinners to do is set out in the great penitential prayers Psalm 51. After begging God to remove sin from the record in the first part of the psalm, and incidentally, showing little if any contrition, the psalmist begs: “A clean heart create within me, O God.” (Psalm 51:12) These words convey the insight that unless God intervenes,

we sinners will continue to rebel. We will go on doing as we please, walking on in the rut of our routine transgressions, perhaps becoming bored into committing worse offenses against God.

What then does this imperative that God “create a clean heart” for sinners mean? We begin with what “a clean heart” means in the biblical world. There the heart is often, as it is in Psalm 51, the seat of the intellect – the mind where we reflect on our circumstances and make decisions. It is also the repository of our opinions, views of others and presuppositions about who is important and what is essential for a good life.

The Hebrew term for clean conveys the notion of scouring or sweeping. Taken with earlier imperatives in the psalm that God “wash out” (in Hebrew, to clean cloth by treading, kneading and beating) and “scrub away” the psalmist’s sins, the addition of “clean” invokes the picture of God as a divine housewife who is begged to go to work on the sinner’s heart-mind.

That God’s own intervention is required is conveyed by the Hebrew word used for “create,” namely *bara’*. Unlike the common term for “make,” *bara’* refers to an action that only God can perform. For example, it occurs in Genesis 1:1 in the declaration that God “created the heavens and the earth.” The rest of this account depicts this creating as “ordering” the formless wasteland and the darkness that covers the watery abyss in Genesis 1:2. This ordering begins with God’s command that there be light, and is followed by acts that separate the jumbled elements of the chaos: light from darkness, sea from dry land, etc. Then the air, sea and land are organized for the various types of creatures. *Bara’* is specifically used for the creation of the male and female who only, of all creation, are formed in the image and likeness of

God – a resemblance, however, that is blurred by sin.

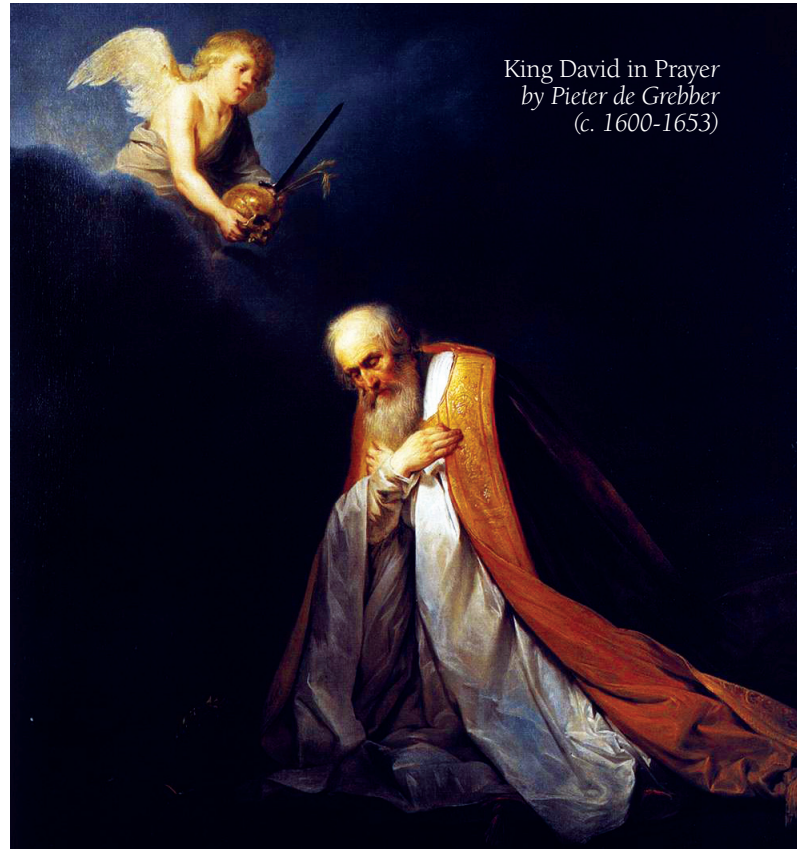
Applying these connotations of “create” in Genesis 1 to our phrase, “create a clean heart,” we can say that the sinner realizes that only God’s light and creative power can bring order to the “chaos” of a mixed-up disoriented mind, a mind besieged by darkness. Only the Creator can help the sinner separate behaviors that are divinely inspired from those that are motivated by self-interest. We Christians call this distinctively divine assistance “grace.”

The biblical understanding of the critical supplication, “create a clean heart,” is further illuminated by the usage of *bara’* (“create”) in Second Isaiah (Isaiah 40-55). The prophet uses *bara’* to underscore the “newness” that accompanies divine forgiveness and the ensuing process of becoming a new creation. He prophesied to Israel during the Babylonian Exile (597/586-538 BC). At this time, after their deportation from the land, the people were convinced that they had irrevocably broken the covenant. In addition to the land, they lost their king and the Jerusalem temple, the foremost signs of God’s presence with them.

Second Isaiah’s mission is to persuade the people that, not only does God forgive them, God has new plans for them. The prophet puts it this way: “I will lead the blind in a way that they know not, in paths that they have not known I will guide them. I will turn the darkness before them into light, the rough places into level ground. These are the things I will do, and I will not forsake them.” (Isaiah 42:16) These new paths will be filled with surprises. As the people trek along they are transformed into sharper images of their Creator. Wherever their feet trod, Isaiah claims, the desert will be transformed into a garden. In short, in and around the redeemed and recreated sinners themselves, other peoples will see the glory of the Lord who is still with them.

Applying Isaiah’s nuance of newness to the word “create” in Psalm 51 leads us to expect that as God creates a clean heart for us and rearranges our priorities and interests, new experiences enter our daily round. We old sinners make surprising choices and choose new ways to spend our time. We discover signs of God’s presence in the least expected people and in the most arid situations.

In the New Testament, Paul reapplies both the notion of creation as divine ordering in Genesis 1 and Isaiah’s emphasis on newness to the effects of Baptism when he writes: “... for whoever is in Christ is a new creation: the old has passed away and *look!* (the Greek word, *idou*, is like a finger pointing at something unexpected) new things have come to be. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.” (2 Corinthians 5:17-18)



King David in Prayer
by Pieter de Grebber
(c. 1600-1653)

“This means that we forgive others for the damage that their actions bring into our life – even when they are not sorry and seem not to deserve forgiveness. Only sinners who allow the Spirit of Christ to clean up and reorder their thinking can do this.”

Psalm 51 also mentions this ministry that the forgiven are sent to exercise toward their fellow-sinners. The psalmist writes: “I will teach the wicked your ways, so that sinners may return to you.” (Psalm 51:15) In Scripture, the most effective way to evangelize others about God’s ways is to do for them what God is doing for us. In the context of Psalm 51, this means that we forgive others for the damage that their actions bring into our life – even when they are not sorry and seem not to deserve forgiveness. Only sinners who allow the Spirit of Christ to clean up and reorder their thinking can do this. And, every time a single sinner allows this divine intervention, the light of Christ streams forth from within them, bringing order and newness to our chaotic world.

■ Dr. Elizabeth Nagel is President of the Pontifical Faculty of Theology and Professor in the Department of Biblical Exegesis and Proclamation

“Francis, repair my church, which you see is falling into ruin.”



Ut Boni Fiamus

That We Might Become Good

By Rev. Anthony Lajato, O.F.M. Conv.

The people of God exult in the gift of a new pope, and it is with even greater joy that Franciscans welcome the first Bishop of Rome named after their founder. In a time when the Church cries out for repair and renovation, our new pontiff has expressed his desire to follow the ideals and example of the *Poverello* of Assisi, especially through solidarity with the poor, and a spirit of simplicity and humility.

“The rule and life of the friars minor is this, to observe the holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Franciscans were not formed for a specific apostolate; rather, our mission is to follow in the footprints of Jesus. However, there has always been a challenge in determining how this Gospel life is supposed to take shape. From the outset, there emerged from within the Order varying currents relative to the way in which the one charism was interpreted and lived. Within a generation after St. Francis’ death, these tendencies sharpened and deepened to the point of becoming divergent trajectories in Franciscan history and spirituality.

As the Order experienced rapid and expansive growth it became quite evident that greater stabilization was needed. Broadly speaking, the “Friars of the Community” slowly accepted the accommodations that the Holy See granted to it for the purpose of guiding and ensuring the Order’s future. Thus, the Franciscans who lived in larger, urban friaries or convents with a more

The National Shrine of Saint Maximilian Kolbe/Marytown is next door to Mundelein Seminary.

structured common life; who embraced ecclesial, academic and apostolic activity, would come to be called *Conventuals*. This was in contradistinction to the friars who resisted papal privileges and opted for a more eremitical and austere lifestyle. In time, three branches sprouted from the one family tree of the First Order of St. Francis: the Friars Minor conventual, the Friars Minor (of the Leonine Union), and the Friars Minor Capuchin.

A defining characteristic of the Conventual tradition is its dedication to the *cura animarum* – the pastoral care of the faithful. Their large and beautifully decorated convent churches became centers for catechesis and liturgical renewal. In his address to the Conventual Franciscans gathered for the General Chapter of 2007 in Assisi, Benedict XVI reaffirmed this enduring feature of our community: “Francis was a great teacher of the *via pulchritudinis*. May the Friars imitate him in radiating the beauty that saves; may they do so in particular in this stupendous Basilica, not only by means of the art treasures preserved here, but also and above all in the intensity and decorum of the liturgy and fervent proclamation of the Christian mystery.” At the National Shrine of St. Maximilian Kolbe/Marytown, the friars strive to continue the conventual tradition of augmenting the life of the local Church; primarily by the witness of our fraternal life in common, as well as by providing opportunities to grow in faith through liturgical and devotional services; offering the Sacrament of Penance, spiritual direction, retreats and catechetical conferences.

The Franciscan intellectual tradition emphasizes such themes as the priority of love, radical Christocentrism, and a sacramental worldview. In a letter written to Anthony of Padua, Francis makes clear that it would be pleasing to him if his brothers studied theology. On the other hand, he warned that academic pursuits should never extinguish “the spirit of prayer and devotion.” Above all else, it was Bonaventure who exemplified this integration of study, prayer and Christian life. The Seraphic Doctor expressly stated that the study of Divine Truth is not merely an intellectual exercise, but principally *ut boni fiamus* – so that we might become good.

Accordingly, Franciscans regard theology as wisdom and engage in it as a privileged path to sanctity: a means of being completely transferred into God. I believe this approach can be of great assistance in the life of a seminarian because it protects theology from becoming an abstract and disconnected system and serves to situate intellectual discipline within the broader synthesis of human, spiritual, and pastoral formation. The Franciscan approach helps to foster the disposition proper to the Catholic theologian and simultaneously underscores the necessity of a praying theology and a theology that leads others to prayer.



Father Anthony (middle) stands with two Marytown friars studying at Mundelein. The Friars Minor Conventual of the Province of Saint Bonaventure have been sending some of their candidates for the priesthood to Mundelein Seminary since 2007. Currently, there are also friars in the S.T.L. and Doctor of Ministry programs.

“At the National Shrine of St. Maximilian Kolbe/Marytown, the friars strive to continue the Conventual tradition of augmenting the life of the local Church, primarily by the witness of our fraternal life in common.”

“Francis, repair my church, which you see is falling into ruin.” Pope Francis has indicated that it is once again a peculiarly Franciscan moment in the history of the Church. Men who come forward to answer the call to the priesthood today are faced with the task of repairing a Church debilitated by scandal, lack of faith and internal dissension. We live in an age strikingly similar to that of Giovanni di Bernardone. He and his followers renewed the Church of the medieval era not through a pessimistic or hypercritical attitude but through personal holiness and by enthusiastically carrying out the reforms of the Fourth Lateran Council. “Let all the brothers be, live and speak as Catholics.” Francis was a Catholic man, a man of communion. He shows us that in order to become effective (new) evangelizers we must be thoroughly ecclesial men and that the primary foundation for the rebuilding of the Church in every age is passionate conformity to Christ.

■ Rev. Anthony Lajato, O.E.M. Conv., is a graduate of Mundelein Seminary, Class of 2010.

“The kingdom of God ‘is as if a man were to scatter seed on the land.’” (Mark 4:26)



Pygmies in a Garden of Wonders

By Rev. Nicholas Blaha

Father Blaha's garden is dedicated to St. Fiacre, patron of gardeners.

The Catholic author G.K. Chesterton once told a fairy tale of two young boys, one of whom wished to be a giant and the other to be a pygmy half an inch tall.

One morning, as they played in the front yard, the milkman – who happened to also be a wizard – granted their wishes. The giant boy immediately strode off to see the world; to straddle the Himalayas and bathe at Niagara. He saw all the wonders of the world in an afternoon stroll. Yet he was soon bored, and when he lay down for a nap, a woodsman fond of Catholic philosophy cut off his head after remembering that the sin of pride consists in being all out of proportion with the universe. The other boy found himself in the front garden, surrounded with enormous wonders of green and crimson and gold. Invigorated by this apocalyptic landscape, he set off into the forbidding jungle of the front yard; and he still has not come to the end of his adventures.

It was the simplicity and beauty of growing food for my own table that awakened in me the desire to keep a vegetable garden ever since my youth.

It was not until the first year of my priesthood that this desire became a possibility for me. So I turned over a patch of lawn on the parish grounds and planted my vegetables. It was only after teaching eighth-grade religion for a few months that I began to wonder if it could make sense to put some of the students fidgeting through our theology class into another sort of classroom – God's Book of Nature. Of course, the promise of extra hands certainly didn't hurt, either!

Thus, the Fiacre League was born, taking the patron saint of gardeners as our namesake. Students came out during study hall to hoe weeds, turn compost collected from the kitchen waste of our school cafeteria, water transplants, eat tomatoes off the vine and frequently give in to the temptation to misuse the water hose. All the while, they got on their knees not so much to pray as to find in the closeness to the earth the “right proportion” of humility that the giant boy in Chesterton's fairy tale neglected. On their knees, they were given the chance to marvel at the intricacy and

variety of the plants that feed us and on which we tread without a thought. There, among the caterpillars and the catkins, we wondered with Seymour at how on this little square of soil are plants that “can turn the dead soil into a hundred flavors as different as horseradish and thyme, smells ranging from stinkhorn to lavender.” To say it another way, we became pygmies.

From our common labors, in which we worked side by side, trust sprung up alongside the seedlings we nurtured. Trust grows slowly, perhaps even more slowly than a squash; but in the garden, we had time for trust, as we did for squash. And with that trust came questions, conversation and chances to bless the Father of Mercies who sends the rain down and the sap up. The garden's lessons were far more fruitful than my clever PowerPoint presentations ever were.

On my part, I was surprised at how fruitful the attempt to allow my own interests and ambitions to become another means of evangelization could be. Yet this is natural, I suppose, given that we worship the word incarnate; priestly ministry must take on the flavor of the people that carry it out as much as that of the people to whom it is offered.

Chesterton observed that the bustle of our age takes great pains “to show how many extraordinary things a man may see if he is active and strides from continent to continent like the giant in [his] tale.” But he himself was more interested in showing “how many extraordinary things even a lazy and ordinary man may see if he can spur himself to the single activity of seeing.” We pygmies of the Fiacre League are convinced that “the world will never starve for want of wonders; but only for want of wonder.”

■ Rev. Nicholas Blaha is a graduate of Mundelein Seminary and currently serves as Associate Pastor at Most Pure Heart of Mary Catholic Church in Topeka, KS.

“The New Evangelization is about using new ardor, expression, and methods to invite modern people to discover real joy.” -Rev. John Muir



Father Muir was interviewed by a Chicago news crew at the election of Pope Francis, from which he sent several videos, tweets and blog posts.

New Evangelization, Even Newer Media *An interview with Rev. John Muir*

By Dr. Denis McNamara

Rev. John Muir, a priest of the Diocese of Phoenix, Arizona, studied at Mundelein Seminary and was ordained in 2007. After completing his Licentiate at Mundelein's Liturgical Institute, he returned to his diocese, fulfilling parochial, chancery and chaplain assignments. Since 2010, he has served at the All Saints Catholic Newman Center at Arizona State University in Tempe, AZ, and his YouTube video, *A Day in the Life of A Priest*, has had thousands of views around the world.

THE BRIDGE: *How have you embraced the New Evangelization?*

Father Muir: Though it sounds like a cliché, the New Evangelization is a way of life more than a particular activity. I try to find ways every day to witness to the Good News in concrete ways. The simplest way I do it is by wearing my priestly, clerical clothes and being my normal, joyous self. I'm honestly excited about Jesus, and telling people about Him and inviting people to know Him is what I would want to do even if I had a "normal" job. Wearing clerical clothes, as simple as it sounds, has really helped me to have countless worthwhile conversations about faith with students in coffee shops, on campus and in hundreds of other places.

THE BRIDGE: *Why do you embrace the New Evangelization?*

Father Muir: Because people are miserable without God. I want people to be happy, to know real joy. The New Evangelization is about using new ardor, expression, and methods to invite modern people to discover this joy. So many people – including many college students – despair that their lives have no purpose, meaning or direction. The New Evangelization helps them to discover, in coherent and convincing ways, God's love for them in His Son. When young people meet

priests and lay faithful who are passionate about the faith and aren't afraid to share it in attractive and coherent ways, there's a good chance those same young people will have fresh encounters with Jesus Christ Himself. And that's really the whole point of the New Evangelization, isn't it?

THE BRIDGE: *How have you used new media?*

Father Muir: I've made a number of YouTube videos. People seem to respond well to videos which show the human individuality of a priest, but also showing the greatness of the mission he is living out. The students at my university taught me how to use Twitter, and now I use that frequently to stay in touch with them, to teach and learn about what they are thinking and feeling. I also have found Facebook a great tool for communicating and building trust with people who perhaps are not comfortable with walking into a church or a priest's office.

THE BRIDGE: *How have people responded?*

Father Muir: Students love to discover that their priests can laugh and relate about simple human things, and Twitter and Facebook are good media for this. I think it makes them feel more personally connected to the Newman Center, so they show up at church more often and then are more receptive to teaching, preaching and guidance. Students will come to me for confession, prayer or pastoral guidance, and often I suspect that the ice was broken for them through social media. Or sometimes students will meet me in person and we'll just chat, and then later the questions about God and life come through social media. Recently I was chatting with a young man about his studies, about music and just joking around. Later that evening he Facebooked me and said he is considering a vocation to the priesthood. Social media can't replace personal contact, but students are amazing at using it to supplement personal contact.

THE BRIDGE: *Many people can be evangelizers. What is the role of the priesthood in this method of evangelization?*

Father Muir: Jesus Himself is the evangelizer par excellence because He is the Good News Himself. Priests are "other Christs," sacramental expressions of Jesus the High Priest. Like St. Paul, they are "concerned about the things of the Lord," and so their priority is preaching the Word of God. But the Church is structured so that the whole body – every member of the Church – evangelizes according to his or her own capacity, through baptism. I try to teach and encourage college students to see themselves as real missionaries to their friends, co-workers and classmates. Priests aren't just evangelizers; they are evangelizer-makers.

■ Dr. Denis McNamara is assistant director and faculty member at the Liturgical Institute of the University of Saint Mary of the Lake/Mundelein Seminary.

“How lovely your dwelling, O Lord of hosts!”
(Psalm 84)

The new Saint
Joseph Seminary
building.



THE NEW Saint Joseph College Seminary

By Rev. James Presta

In September 1961, Cardinal Albert Meyer, then Archbishop of Chicago, founded the college seminary in Niles, IL, “to form men, to form Christians and to form priests.” Cardinal Meyer housed the new two-year, undergraduate seminary program in the former St. Hedwig Orphanage for Polish children, staffed by the Felician Sisters. In January 1968, the college seminary would eventually become a four-year undergraduate program and affiliate itself with Loyola University Chicago. The program became known as Niles College Seminary.

In August 1994, Cardinal Joseph Bernardin sold the Niles College property and moved the undergraduate program to the Lake Shore campus of Loyola University. The program would be housed in a former dormitory of Loyola called “Campion Hall.” For the next 18 years the new Saint Joseph College Seminary would enjoy their new home conveniently located on the shores of Lake Michigan. It was my honor and privilege to serve as rector/president of Saint Joseph College Seminary for 14 of those years.

The only problem with renting a building from the university was that, at the end of the day, the Archdiocese had no property to show for all the money it was paying Loyola. In 2009, Cardinal Francis George asked me to set up a committee to look at the future of the



One of the beautiful windows in the seminary chapel originally from Holy Rosary Church in Roseland.



The new Our Lady of the Rosary Chapel at Saint Joseph Seminary.

“Cardinal Albert Meyer ... founded the college seminary in Niles ‘to form men, to form Christians and to form priests.’”



Cardinal Francis George consecrated the chapel of Our Lady of the Rosary.

college seminary. The Chairman of the Committee was Bishop Francis Kane, auxiliary bishop of Chicago. Msgr. John Canary, the vicar general of the archdiocese, also played a significant role in the work of the new committee.

Rev. Michael Garanzini, S.J., president of Loyola University Chicago offered to sell a piece of land to the Archdiocese on which to build the new college seminary. The land was directly behind Campion Hall and in the heart of the Loyola Campus on Loyola Avenue. Cardinal George blessed the land. The groundbreaking was on February 21, 2011. Designed by the architects, Solomon, Cordwell and Buenz, the archdiocese hired Henry Brothers Construction Company to build the new seminary. The building accommodates up to 68 seminarians and six

priests. The seminary has residence halls, office space, a library, recreational space and a dining hall. A new undergraduate seminary building has been a dream come true for me and for so many who believe in Saint Joseph College Seminary. I was honored to have a part in choosing the architect, engaging the builder, purchasing the land and even selecting the exterior brick. My successor as rector/president of Saint Joseph College Seminary, Very Rev. Peter Snieg, now moderator of the Curia, ensured that all the new building plans were completed.

The new Our Lady of the Rosary Chapel was consecrated on Aug. 28, 2012, by Cardinal George. The same day Very Rev. Paul C. Stein was installed as the new rector/president. The chapel features beautiful stained-glass

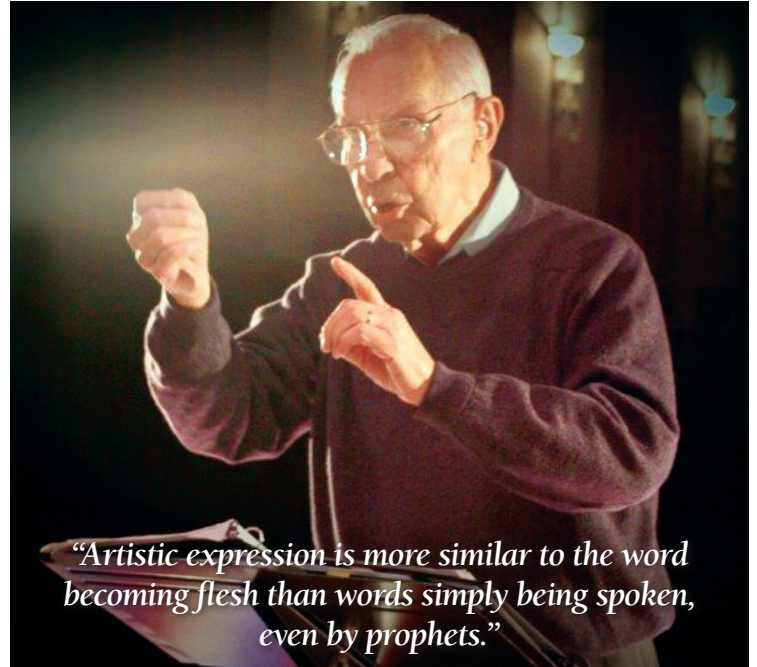
windows depicting various scenes from the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The chapel is named after Holy Rosary Church which was in the Roseland area of Chicago. Now closed, the church windows from Holy Rosary offer worshipers beauty and inspiration. The chapel is the heart of the college seminary program and an archdiocesan treasure.

For more than 50 years, the college seminary has been forming good, Christian men as holy priests for the Archdiocese of Chicago and beyond. The new college seminary building on Loyola's Lake Shore campus will insure that, with God's grace, the tradition of training and forming future priests will continue.

■ Rev. James Presta, S.T.D., is the Vice Rector for Seminary Administration.

REMEMBERING Father Richard Wojcik

By Austin Pagano, with contributions
by Ms. Linda M. Cerebona



“Artistic expression is more similar to the word becoming flesh than words simply being spoken, even by prophets.”

“Artistic expression is more similar to the word becoming flesh than words simply being spoken, even by prophets.” These are the words of the late Rev. Richard J. Wojcik, who was laid to rest on February 1, 2013 in Saint Mary of the Lake’s Cemetery. Father Wojcik always tried to transmit his belief in the power of music to reveal the Divine to his many students throughout the decades, perhaps no more memorably than in his famous song exercise. Ask any graduate of Mundelein in the past 40 years and they will tell you they remember the song they had to sing, all by themselves, in front of their whole class and whoever else had gathered in the auditorium to enjoy the spectacle.

“I sang, *That’s Amore*,” said Rev. Jim Presta, current Vice Rector for Seminary Administration and member of the Class of 1986. Once a student had completed their solo performance, he explained, everyone in the class had to evaluate them for pitch, timbre and presentation. Finally, Fr. Wojcik would chime in. “He told me I was good, but that if I ever wanted to go professional with the act I would have to better coordinate my steps with the words.”

Rev. Brian Welter, currently the Vocation Director of the Archdiocese of Chicago and a 2005 graduate of Mundelein, remembers some of the unorthodox methods employed

by Fr. Wojcik. He re-enacted how Fr. Wojcik would loudly unclip his brief case while a student was struggling to announce their piece properly. Out of his case he would pull a used wine cork, which he cut into quarter-inch thick discs to place between the molars of the back of a student’s mouth. This exercise was meant to loosen up the jaw muscles that restricted the seminarian’s ability to project. “I guess it worked,” Fr. Welter recalled. “Guys always sounded better after they took out the corks.”

Father Wojcik’s funeral Mass was celebrated this past February by Cardinal Francis George, while Rev. Robert Barron gave the homily, recalling other such classroom memories of Fr. Wojcik. The music that was chosen for the Mass consisted of chant and liturgical compositions that were written by Fr. Wojcik himself. These works were sung by seminarians in a tribute that corresponded to the fervor of their own vocations. There were numerous priests and bishops in attendance in a full chapel honoring the life of this great priest. Those in attendance were representative of the people who were personally impacted by Fr. Wojcik’s footprint on history. In his service to the Church, he influenced thousands of seminarians and priests through his teachings, and through them millions of lay Catholics all over the world.

Father Richard J. Wojcik was born on the southwest side of Chicago in the summer of 1923. He began his seminary studies at Quigley Preparatory and finished at our own University of Saint Mary of the Lake Seminary. It was at Mundelein Seminary – where he would later return for the

majority of his priestly life – that he finished his preparation for ministerial service to become a priest for the Archdiocese of Chicago. Ordained in May of 1949 by Cardinal Stritch, Fr. Wojcik served the archdiocese as a priest for 63 years. In his time of serving the archdiocese, Fr. Wojcik was a chaplain for the Air Force, an associate pastor, vice-rector, professor, director of music, composer, a choir director and a liturgical consultant on ecumenical hymnody.

Father Wojcik's first assignment was as an associate pastor of Saint Mary of Perpetual Help. This typical diocesan placement lasted for only one year, and after 1950 Fr. Wojcik would never again be officially assigned to a parish – though he did continue parish ministry throughout his life. Instead, he was taken down vocational memory lane when he was assigned to both the seminaries he attended as a young man following God's call – to teach men who were sitting where he sat only years earlier. Before beginning as professor of music at Saint Mary of the Lake Seminary in 1956, Fr. Wojcik received a Masters in Gregorian Chant from the Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music in Rome. After receiving his master's degree, Fr. Wojcik left Rome to journey back home to Chicago for what he assumed was going to be a routine trip. However, like life – and certainly the priesthood – there would be nothing routine about the SS Andrea Doria's voyage.

It was the evening of the July 25, 1956, and Fr. Wojcik was focusing very hard on how to optimally place his letters in a friendly game of Scrabble with a priest from Cincinnati. All of a sudden, "there was a jolt." The MS Stockholm struck the side of the SS Andrea Doria. The fog horn blasts started blowing, and passengers were alerted to go back to their rooms and practice the emergency protocols they had been instructed in. Father Wojcik returned to his room to find his bed ripped in half, recognizing that his late night double word score had saved his life.

While the passengers were waiting to be rescued, the priests on board wasted no time in hearing confessions and being present to the passengers as they feared for their lives. While praying the rosary, the passengers believed that they were literally asking the Blessed Mother to pray for them "... at the hour of their death." When asked decades later by Kyle Lee – a seminarian at the time

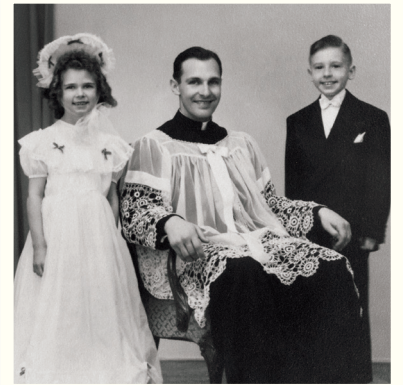
– how he responded to the tragedy, Fr. Wojcik recalled that amongst the terror: "You just be who you are, a priest. You try not to worry about yourself, just take care of the situation as best you can ... you are about taking care of people and their needs... we left everything else in God's hands."

After being rescued, Fr. Wojcik and his fellow priests celebrated mass for the survivors of the horrific accident. It was 7 in the morning and many weren't sure about receiving Communion because of the strict fasting rules of the time. But the priests assured the people that it was acceptable considering the circumstances. The event was surreal for those on board. Father Wojcik described feeling as if the travelers were part of a "gigantic movie." He saw in the terrifying fiasco God's providence – which is the lens through which he saw everything.

Up until his passing, Fr. Wojcik kept an enormous picture of the survivors of the SS Andrea Doria on the wall directly across from his bed. This image was a daily reminder for him of the power of God's mercy. "Things didn't work out the way we planned, but they worked out the way God planned." How fitting it is that those things which we don't set out to do tend to be the ones that shape us and stay with us the most as we travel through life.

The God that Fr. Wojcik knew was revealed to him in the arts, "The arts are the media of Revelation," he wrote in an article for *The Bridge* in 1988. "Music originated in time, but it transcends the time in which it was created." Indeed, transcendence is a theme common to both theology and the arts.

Although it is difficult to determine an exact number because some of his musical works are still being discovered, Fr. Wojcik composed around 200 original pieces of music, all of which he left to Mundelein Seminary. As remarkable as this achievement is, his greatest accomplishments as a priest live on in those whom he served. Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord. And let perpetual light shine upon him. May our beloved Fr. Richard J. Wojcik rest in peace. May his soul and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.



Father Wojcik with his cousins on the day of his ordination to the priesthood in 1949.



Father Wojcik with the seminary choir.

■ Austin Pagano is a first-year theologian studying for the Diocese of Atlanta, Ga. Contributions also from Ms. Linda Cerebona, Director of Music.



SEMINARIAN POETRY SELECTION

An Elegy for Father Wojcik | By Matthew Litak

Enwrapped tightly in notes and scales, psalms and songs, harmonies and hymns,
goodly servant of God, of seminary, and the fair phoenixed city
be at rest. Master teacher, mind the music of no more
dead toned men. Minister now the higher choirs.
Forage for fair chords in celestial land.

Go! Let our memories replay the giddy
B's and bereft E's. Let us loudly cry out "encore,
don't stop!" in minds warmed bright with recalled fires.
Foremost in mind, will be those special blazes sparked by your hand.
A glad lot will recall wobbly solos cracked out by men seeking bravery by chant.

Cantors will flip stumbles into smiles over advice you wisely, gently, briefly gave.
Deacons will, from practiced habit, recite orations until the voice tires.
Entire presbyterates will ably chant when Holy Saturday dims.
Father, your hand laid these bases on which many stand.
Glory then in these, take from this life nary a pity.
Account the world, the church, a firmer plant
because one lung and Andrea's sorry store
couldn't sink you. A graced wave
drove you instead to father priestly sires.
Enjoy much your wreath won in spiritual gyms.
Fill your ear with tunes you translated full and grand
gonged by men little known to you, but who with pretty
accord will sing your hymns learned from your lineage. Do grant
baritones and tenors yet unborn will sure wander through a song or score.
Calmly, calmly lay beneath far familiar ground. Await the Day of conquered grave.

Hindsight | By Kyle Manno

Absence of the cross, suffer in vain
Despair, lonely, trapped, immovable pain
Hours, days, years, how long must it last?
Waiting to see your gaze in the heavenly mass
Sorrow invades my bones, I wonder why?
Lying all alone, this time is dry
One last breath, the cross now ceased
Where I am now? Overcome by peace
He told me why, he showed me the list
Names I suffered for, so they could enter eternal bliss
Overcome by love for the souls I helped save
With Christ I would go back and suffer tenfold days

A Sonnet | By Jason Stone

A rose, the first the summer yields, pure white
And damp with dew as hands with oil when still
With linen bound, to announce that winter's chill
Has fled before the sun's expanding light.
Another rose, the season's last, still white,
But white with whispers of approaching death,
As when the twilight wind stills to a breath,
And, *Ite, missa est*, and all is night.

Sweet Lady, take these Masses, first and last,
And lay them gilded at thy Jesus' feet,
That, when all time for sacraments is past,
Thou mayest plead them at the judgment seat,
To snatch thy servant from the final wreck,
And show him rest beside Melchisedech.



Msgr. John F. Canary Announces His Retirement

The eighth rector/president of Mundelein Seminary begins a new chapter

By Mark Teresi

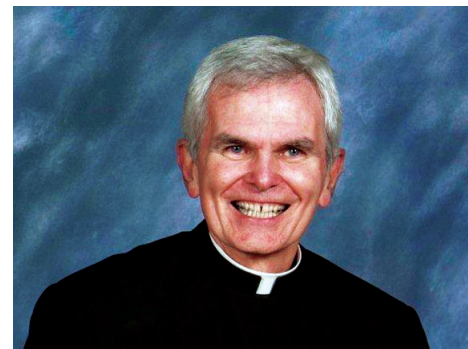
John Francis Canary, son of Francis Canary and Marcella Gibbons, was born and raised on the south side of Chicago with his sisters, Sheila, Nancy and Pat. All attended Christ the King Grammar School. John was one of 11 graduates to attend Quigley Seminary for high school. During his time in the college seminary, John Canary had big ideas and the ability to follow up on those ideas with action. This has become a “Canary trait” throughout his years as a priest. As the student coordinator of the Niles Concert Orchestra and Choir he suggested to the director, Rev. Stan Rudcki, that he thought the orchestra and choir were good enough to perform in Orchestra Hall. Father Rudcki, realizing the slim chance of this event ever becoming a reality, left the outcome in the seminarian John Canary’s capable hands.

A few years later, on a spring evening in 1968 at Orchestra Hall, the Niles Concert Orchestra and Choir performed the Chicago premier of Benjamin Britton’s *The War Requiem*, made possible, as Father Rudcki is convinced to this day, because of the vision, support and initiative of a young John Canary. Father John Canary was ordained a priest on May 14, 1969, in the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception at Mundelein Seminary. He completed his graduate work at the University of San Francisco where he studied the writings of Saint John of the Cross. He believes St. John offers much wisdom for us today as we live our lives in faith.

Vision and initiative have been the hallmark of Msgr. John Canary’s 44 years of priesthood while serving the people of St. Irenaeus Parish; the Niles College Seminary and Mundelein Seminary communities; his brother priests as Vicar of Clergy and as Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Chicago until his retirement this spring. During 28 years of his priestly ministry at Mundelein Seminary, among his many accomplishments, he oversaw the development and growth of

the formation and academic programs; the restoration of the Chapel of Immaculate Conception and the statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary in front of the chapel. He likewise worked hard for the expansion of the number of sending dioceses and the membership in the Advisory Board. During his tenure the restoration of the Feehan Memorial Library was initiated as well as the construction of the McEssy Theological Resource Center, the first new building on campus in over 68 years.

The Rev. Msgr. John F. Canary Theological Enrichment Fund was initiated in 2006 by the University of Saint Mary of the Lake/Mundelein Seminary Board of Advisors under the leadership of its then chairman, James Dowdle. Primarily this fund offered annual prizes in alternate years to a faculty member and then to a seminarian for conferences, research and other projects which would advance the quality of theological education at Mundelein Seminary. And secondly, this fund was established to provide an opportunity for the Board of Advisors, priests, alumni and other seminary donors to honor the



work of Msgr. Canary with ongoing periodic contributions to build this fund, thus enhancing its future impact.

Since 2006, as vicar general he has particularly focused his energies on supporting priests and pastors in their parish ministries. Throughout his priestly ministry, Msgr. John Canary has served a unique parish – a parish of priest alumni of the University of Saint Mary of the Lake/Mundelein Seminary, who for so many years have been encouraged by knowing him. Many, to this day, seek his spiritual direction and counsel as a priest mentor and a friend.

It is well known throughout the archdiocese that if a priest calls needing help, guidance or a bit of his time, Msgr. Canary makes that request his priority. Now a new chapter begins for him, as he recently announced his retirement from his downtown responsibilities. Knowing the creative energies and spiritual depth of this priest, alumnus and friend, who has spent a lifetime nurturing so many of our future priests and lay leaders, two things can be said: *Well done good and faithful servant* and *Ad multos annos!*

■ Mark Teresi is the Vice-President for Institutional Advancement at Mundelein Seminary

If you want to contribute to the Rev. Msgr. John F. Canary Theological Enrichment Fund, please call the Office of Institutional Advancement at 847.970.4817 or email mteresi@usml.edu.

“You are being enriched in every way for all generosity, which through us produces thanksgiving to God, for the administration of this public service... overflowing in many acts of thanksgiving to God.” (2 Corinthians 9:11-12)

To Our Benefactors From Our Newly Ordained

The Class of 2013 expresses its gratitude

By Mark Teresi



“It is with a full heart, and a heart on fire, that I express my gratitude and thanks for your continued and generous support, both financially and for your unceasing prayers for vocations. I have felt your prayers sustain me during these last six years of seminary formation and they have

strengthened me in my preparation for the priesthood. “So as we continue to journey together on the road to Emmaus, may we all come to recognize Christ in the breaking of the bread, and in the faces of our fellow travelers and our fellow pilgrims. May our hearts continue to be set on fire to continue the Lord’s work, and may we, as the disciples did, turn back on fire to Jerusalem, so that we may work together in the mission of the Church, so that all may know the love and salvation that comes from recognizing Jesus.”

- Rev. Kevin McCray, Archdiocese of Chicago, IL.



”How can I make a return to the Lord for all that he has given to me?” (Psalm 116). With gratitude for the financial and spiritual generosity of all those who made this education possible for me, all I can do now is offer myself more completely in service to the Church and the world as a

priest of Jesus Christ in whatever situation I find myself.”

- Rev. Thomas Byrne, Archdiocese of Chicago, IL.



“Your love for God and his Church is patently manifested in your desire to support the training of future priests, future ministers of the word and sacrament, and this is a most noble thing to do. The formation I have received from this reputable seminary has indeed prepared me well to be a

spiritual leader in God’s church and a caring pastor of souls. Thank you so much and may God bless you!

“Know that you are in my prayers – especially while I offer my Mass of Thanksgiving as a newly ordained priest – that the good Lord who is never outdone in generosity may be gracious to you and those you love.”

- Rev. Alvan Amadi, Diocese of Green Bay, WI.



“I wish to take this opportunity to extend my sincere gratitude for financial and spiritual support with which you blessed us during our time at Mundelein Seminary. As we go into ministry, we know it would be impossible making it to the altar without your help. Wherever we shall serve in our different dioceses,

you will be remembered in our prayers. May God who blessed us with your presence in our lives be your protector in carrying on the work you do for both the local church in the U.S. and the Universal Church, God bless you always.”

- Rev. Martin Luboyera, Archdiocese of Kampala, Uganda

DONOR GRATITUDE



“Your love for God and his Church is patently manifested in your desire to support the training of future priests, future ministers of the Word and Sacrament, and this is a most noble thing to do. The formation I have received from this reputable seminary has indeed prepared me well to be a spiritual leader in God’s church ...”

Rev. Alvan Amadi



“I want to thank you all for your support both financial and spiritual. This support has made my past six years at Mundelein possible.

“We have had the opportunity to live in a parish and gain first-hand experience of what life is like as a parish priest. We have served in

hospitals as chaplains and been able to follow in the footsteps of Christ on our pilgrimage to the Holy Land. All of this and so much more is made possible by your spiritual and financial support. We will cherish what we have learned and experienced at Mundelein and take it with us where ever we might go. You have helped not just the Church in Chicago but the Church all over the United States and indeed the world. Thank you so much for your contributions and know that you remain in our prayers.”

- Rev. Christopher Manning, Diocese of Knoxville, TN.



“When I look back, I realize that my journey to the priesthood would have never been possible without people like you holding my hand along the way; I am taking this opportunity to extend my gratitude to all of you for your ongoing financial support and daily

prayers. Because of your generosity, Mundelein Seminary is able to finance many programs that have helped me to grow

both spiritually and academically so that I may become a good priest of Jesus Christ. May the Almighty God keep bestowing many more blessings upon you and your families. I assure you of my prayers and I humbly ask that you continue to keep me in yours as well.”

- Rev. Rodlin Rodrigue, Archdiocese of Chicago, IL.



“The journey to the Lord’s altar is never traveled alone. It is only possible with help and companionship of others. For the same reason our Lord sent out the 12 two by two and also gave them an instruction to take nothing but a walking stick, no food, no sack, no money in their belts.

“For a little over five years before entering seminary I worked as a tradesman. I came to understand in that time the value of having the right tools for the right job. A priest also needs good tools for the same reason.

“I want to take this opportunity to thank both the spiritual and financial benefactors of Mundelein Seminary. I am very grateful to those who have contributed in any way to helping equip us with the tools that we need in order to be good priests today. I know as I begin the continuing ministry of Jesus Christ that I have what I need now in order to manage the things that may arise within the day-to-day life of a priest. So, I thank you with deepest gratitude for providing for our work as priests in the Church.”

- Rev. Michael Warden, Diocese of Green Bay, WI.

■ Mark Teresi is the Vice-President for Institutional Advancement at Mundelein Seminary



“Blest are they who wash their robes so as to have the right to the tree of life and enter the city through its gates.” (Revelations 22:14)

Thirty new Dutch Elm trees were planted inside the front gate entrance of the seminary. This was made possible through the generosity of Msgr. John Dolciamore.

The Return of the Dutch Elms *A Gift of Msgr. John Dolciamore*

By Rev. Kevin McCray

It all started with an off-handed remark to Stan Rys, vice-president of Facilities at Mundelein, who was paying Msgr. John Dolciamore one of his regular visits to chat and catch up with each other. They were talking about the recent planting of disease-resistant Dutch Elm trees along Principal Avenue, a feature of Cardinal Mundelein’s original landscaping plans.

Msgr. Dolciamore thought they were nice, but he responded with the statement, “But you put them in the wrong place – at least from how I remember them.” Stan was taken aback since these replacement trees, which were a gift from the William McEssy Family and the rest of the Board of Advisors, were shown on Principal Avenue in old drawings and in campus archive photographs. The board wanted to bring back some of the original landscaping features to the campus that had been in place in the 1920s.

Msgr. Dolciamore, who had been teaching at the seminary since 1989, and had been a seminarian there in the late 1940s and 1950s, said he remembered them being planted as an alley of trees at the entrance of the front seminary gates. So Stan started digging into other sources for photographs and landscaping plans and discovered that Dolciamore was also right.

The original trees of Mundelein’s grand landscaping plan fell victim to Dutch Elm disease, a pestilence that scourged American cities throughout the 1950s and 1960s. In some American towns, the main streets and downtown areas were entirely deforested of old growth Dutch Elm trees.

Armed with the new information and resources, Stan showed Monsignor that his memory of how the campus had looked was not faulty. Dolciamore, who was ordained by Cardinal Stritch in 1952, and had been both a parish priest and a canon lawyer on the Metropolitan Tribunal, then pledged the money to have those missing Dutch Elms replaced.



The main gate now.



The main gate in 1930.

With this generous gift, the seminary was able to purchase and plant 30 elm trees at the entrance gate in September of 2012. By that time, due to a decline in his health, he was residing in an assisted living facility in Chicago. The seminary tried to arrange for him to visit, so he could see the trees and bless them, but he wasn’t able to make the trip. The seminary then produced a beautiful program showing the before and after pictures of the trees inside the front gate. Msgr. Dolciamore was able to see pictures from the 1930s with the original trees and photos from now with the trees that his gift had provided.

After 60 years of service as a priest in the Archdiocese of Chicago, Monsignor died on Nov. 22, 2012, at the age of 86. Though missed by many, including his family, his many friends, the seminarians he taught and the parishioners he shepherded, his legacy of generosity will live on through the trees that continue to grow and welcome visitors to the Mundelein Seminary campus.

■ Rev. Kevin McCray was ordained a priest of the Archdiocese of Chicago on May 18, 2013.



By Connor Danstrom

My father converted to Catholicism when I was in high school. Shortly after his conversion, I remember him taking me to confession. I had not been there in years, even though I recently was confirmed and had attended religious education throughout my childhood. After coaching by the priest, I made a good confession. But when the time came for him to give me my penance, I had to make yet another confession: I did not know how to pray the Hail Mary.

Blessed John Paul II, the father of the New Evangelization, had an optimistic view of the Church. “The Church is not an objective institution that cramps its members but rather an organic body that throbs with divine life,” he said. This is a beautiful description of the mystical body of Christ, but my experience growing up Catholic often felt quite different. To this day, whenever I see a group of teenagers, whether in a Catholic school or at a mandatory confirmation retreat, I see myself, confused and bored by the faith. In those moments, I wonder if the organic body that should be full of divine life, as John Paul described, isn’t actually rather sickly and infirm.

A Pew Forum survey conducted in May 2010 revealed that “more than four-in-ten Catholics (41%) say the Church teaches that the bread and wine are symbols of Christ’s body and blood” as opposed to the other option, “they actually become the body and blood of Jesus.” While this might seem incredible, a classmate of mine at the seminary recently told me that it was not until a retreat during his junior year of college that he learned that the Eucharist is the real presence of Jesus. He grew up a Mass-going Catholic, but if anyone had told him about transubstantiation, he

said, it had never sunk in. Two years after he learned what the Eucharist really is, he entered the seminary.

For the Church to be who she is, a body pulsing with divine life, a people on fire with the Holy Spirit, her members have to know who the Lord is and what He has done for us. I felt that divine life rush over me in that confession years ago. For the first time, I glimpsed the great freedom of a son reconciled to God the Father and I treasured the small gift of instruction in prayer that I received from the priest. A year or two after my fateful confession, I read one of the Gospels for the first time. I was surprised by a lot of it, but I believed every word. It was the beginning of a journey that led me to Mundelein Seminary.

Father Barron’s vision for formation at Mundelein is meant to train men to go out and unleash the immense power of the Spirit, a power that lies dormant in the souls of all the baptized who have been bored by Christianity. “Find the center, know you are a sinner, and realize your life is not about you.” These are the ingredients of the life of an apostle. We relentlessly return to the center of our life, who is the Lord Jesus, to sit at the feet of the master who teaches us our hearts’ deepest desires and promises to fulfill them. We face our own fearful weakness and unreliability and, surrendering ourselves to the mercy of God, we obey His call to make disciples of all nations.

This radical call to discipleship, which costs a person nothing less than everything, is what we are all looking for whether we know it or not. Christianity is not boring. It is the most exciting story ever told, it is true, and we are all a part of it. We should not assume that people already have heard the story. Let us be bold in proclaiming the salvation won for us in Christ. And let us bring the story of that salvation to every man, woman and child, that they may play the part that God has planned for them.

■ Connor Danstrom is a third-year theologian studying for the Archdiocese of Chicago, IL.

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