

President's ANNUAL ADDRESS

August 20, 2009

I want to welcome all of you to this, our 202nd academic year. We are privileged to serve at this wonderful University, dedicated to Mary, our Patroness. She serves as an example by giving herself to God and doing God's work with fidelity, courage, and great humility. Mary is not just the name of our University, and not just the golden beacon that overlooks our campus, but rather an inspiration for us all to be more like Mary by listening to God's call in our lives and willingly accepting the challenges God puts before us.

Our last academic year was an historic one. As we began our third century, we collectively paid respect to those who came before us through our on-going commitment to improving the University. To enhance our academic programs, we established a College of Liberal Arts and three schools. This was no small undertaking and I want to thank **Vice President Rehm** for his superb leadership throughout the process.

We are blessed with four new deans, each with skills and dedication to help us advance our academic mission:

Dean David Bushman
Dean William Forgang
Dean Joshua Hochschild
Dean Barbara Martin Palmer

Now the work really begins as we use the College and Schools to advance our academic programs in a manner that will strengthen our reputation for academic excellence. I ask all of you to work with the Deans and to follow their lead as they take us into new, deeper waters of academic innovation.

OUR FREDERICK CAMPUS

We also reorganized our Frederick campus, giving it a new name, the Center for Professional and Continuing Studies, headed by a new Director, **Joe Leberherz**. We are now in our 8th year of running programs in Frederick, and it is time we strengthen our presence there. We all have high expectations for our Center for Continuing and Professional Studies and for Joe and his team in Frederick.

WE HAVE MOURNED THE LOSS OF STUDENTS AND COLLEAGUES

This past year was particularly sad for us on campus. We lost several students, **Nicole, Joey, and Elizabeth**. We grieved for their families and for ours.

This past summer, **Professor Bob Kalas** died, and we mourned his death and remembered his influence on our campus.

A few weeks ago, **Fr. Bob Zylla**, a giant of the Mount, passed away at the age of 82. Fr. Zylla taught on our campus for 39 years and finished his last class this past spring.

We honor their memories by resolving to cherish this special gift of life we are given and to give of ourselves as they did.



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THE SUMMER MONTHS

As always, the summer months have been extremely busy. The joyful sound of construction was heard on all corners of our campus.

- **The Terrace renovation**, the largest building project in our history, is 60% complete. I expect that it will be fully finished a year from now.
- **The Delaplaine Fine Arts Center** is under full construction with an expected completion date of April, 2010. The Delaplaine Center will greatly enhance our academic programs for faculty and staff.
- **Our Veterans' Walkway** is also being completed. It will honor the women and men who have served our great country in the military. I thank two of our dedicated alumni, Admiral Tom "Tibby" Brown C'54 and Trustee General Tony Studds, C'60, for their leadership to complete this special plaza on our campus.

I am also very pleased to report that we have completed the fund raising for the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception. I want to thank **Phil McGlade, Debbie Powell** and **Vice Presidents Monsignor Steven Rohlfs** and **John Butler** for their leadership in securing \$2.5 million for the renovation. The Chapel, which will be re-named the **Monsignor Ken Roeltgen Chapel of the Immaculate Conception**, will be completed next summer. This summer we installed a new state-of-the-art organ and new beautiful woodwork in the choir loft.

We have also made great progress on the **Kane Chapel of our Lady of Lourdes in Dubois Hall**. If you have not been in this restored Chapel, I urge you to take a look at this sacred space dedicated to our students.

Thanks to a donation from **Erv and Ella Straw**, we have been completing a renovation of the women's softball field, now called **Our Lady of the Meadows Field**. And we have also renovated our track and rebuilt our tennis courts. This now completes a six-year effort to systematically upgrade our athletic facilities.

ENROLLMENT

We begin this year with record enrollment. 467 new freshmen, 34 transfer students and 44 seminarians. Given the economic climate, this is no small accomplishment. We need to thank **Dean Michael Post** and his wonderful team for exceeding our enrollment goals. Our job is now to retain these students and see them on to graduation.

SUMMER REFLECTIONS

During the summer I spent time reflecting on the Mount and our work together. Early in my career, as I thought about our academic work, I was too concerned with the simplicity of the litany of accomplishments and the enumeration of the challenges we face. Of course these lists have a place in measuring what we have collectively done and what we need to do; however, these lists do not get at the heart of our academic enterprise and the very nature of growing together as a campus community. Certainly, as a proudly Catholic university, there is something far more critical we need to reflect upon. Beyond our rhetoric, beyond our religious symbols, (although rhetoric and symbols are important), is the question, "How do we know that we are truly a Catholic university?"



"If we are to live lives worthy of our calling to serve at a Catholic university, we must serve in a manner that will allow the Holy Spirit to not only fill our personal lives, but to fill our campus with these fruits."

How do we know that the Holy Spirit is among us?

This summer I spent time learning from **Fr. William Byron**, a Jesuit teacher, scholar, and former president of Loyola College and Catholic University. He taught me about finding the Holy Spirit within us and on our campus. St. Paul in his letter to the Galatians urged them to live by the Holy Spirit in their lives, especially in their places of work (Galatians 5:22-23). St. Paul enumerated nine fruits for discerning the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives and in our work place. Nine attributes that are within our reach and can truly transform our lives and Mount St. Mary's.

We know the Holy Spirit is on our campus when we witness:

- **Love**—sacrifice in service to others;
- **Joy**—an inner assurance that our will is aligned with God's will—a balance and contentment in our lives;
- **Peace**—St. Thomas called this the “tranquility of right order.” It is a mature emotional life, full of real forgiveness and understanding.;
- **Patience**—How we receive unwelcome or unkind actions;
- **Kindness**—respect for all human life;
- **Generosity**—freely giving of ourselves to others;
- **Faithfulness**—dependability, reliability, friendship, commitments kept;
- **Gentleness**—not being arrogant. A place where gentleness is not weakness but strength; and
- **Self-control**—saying “no” to one's self. Not being trapped by momentary pleasures but in control in order to serve the larger good.

If we are to live lives worthy of our calling to serve at a Catholic university, we must serve in a manner that will allow the Holy Spirit to not only fill our personal lives but to fill our campus with these fruits. These are not virtues but rather the acts we must continually perform to enhance our campus community. St. Thomas Aquinas notes that these acts must be done with a sense of true pleasure and ease.

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Edward Marshall in his book, *The Way We Work*, suggested a Spirituality of Collaboration. This spirituality of collaboration recognizes that by working together in mutual respect for our varying roles and responsibilities, we can enhance our work place. Collaborating in this way shows that the Holy Spirit is alive within us and will truly enhance not only our campus, but our individual lives.

So, as we begin another year working together, I urge all of us to use these Fruits of the Holy Spirit as a personal and collective scorecard for the Mount. Each morning, let us examine ourselves and resolve to practice these Fruits and, each evening, let us reflect how we did, where we fell short and how we will strive to do better. I truly believe that embracing these qualities will help us improve our campus, well beyond any building project, new curriculum, or new landscaping. Our real task this year is about how we work together, how we collaborate with each other, and how we live as a community with Christ at the center.

CHARITY IN TRUTH

On July 7, Pope Benedict XVI issued his encyclical *Charity in Truth*. This newest papal teaching focuses on our ethics and virtues and how the lack of some of those virtues has led to the world's economic crisis. The key message from the Pope is that all of us need to put people before profits. All of us, even those of us in the academy, need to consider how our policies and practices have a direct effect on the dignity of humans and how we use our considerable good fortune to reinforce the dignity of the person, particularly the poor and vulnerable in our society.

The Pope reminds us that “charity is at the heart of the Church's social doctrine...Love is God's greatest gift to humanity, it is His promise and our hope.” The Pope cautions that economic decisions are not merely the domain of business and political leaders. All of us must understand that universal truths about



human dignity transcend geographic, economic, and political boundaries. Every economic decision has a moral consequence. We need to look for ways to use our profits and good fortune to serve the poor and the most vulnerable in our society. Our former Trustee and President of Catholic University, Fr. David O'Connell, noted that the new encyclical provides "a theological prism through which we can view the social teachings of the Church." He reflected that the new encyclical "builds on the Church's social teaching and the relationship between faith and reason, truth and freedom and the primacy of the human person in a communion of love."

The encyclical also addresses our relationship with the natural environment. The Pope writes that "nature expresses a design of love and truth" and thus we are all called to be good stewards of our natural world. The Pope has noted that the "way humanity treats the environment influences the way it treats itself and vice versa."

I hope that all of you will have a chance this year to reflect on this important encyclical and use it in your teaching.

THE WORK AHEAD

Now let me talk about the work ahead of us this year. This year we will continue to meet the goals and objectives as set forth in our Strategic Plan, *A Community Growing Together*. We will also begin to position the Mount for further growth academically and in so doing, we will strengthen our regional reputation for academic excellence.

VISION STATEMENT

Six years ago, we developed a *Vision Statement* to guide us in our work. In 2004, our Trustees approved that *Vision Statement* and asked us to pursue our aspirations with a sense of urgency. I am proud to say that we have accomplished many (not all) of the dreams we articulated in 2003. We have strengthened our Catholic identity, improved our student life programs, enhanced our enrollment, built new facilities, improved the appearance of the campus, enhanced compensation, increased fund raising and secured a stronger financial base.

It is now time to move forward with a new vision statement that will guide our collective work over the next five years. To that end, I have begun working with the executive officers, deans and directors on a new vision statement. I will appoint a committee to work with me and the Mount Council to develop a statement that we can present to the Trustees in March. Given the fundamental importance of the vision statement, we will have many opportunities to discuss this in small and large groups across campus. I will ask that all faculty, staff, students, alumni, and our benefactors join in the development of our new Vision Statement.

GOVERNING DOCUMENTS

Now that the academic reorganization is completed, we need to finalize the changes in our Governing Documents. This past summer I articulated the nature and scope of these changes, and we will begin working on them immediately. I ask that our Faculty Governance Committee make these changes a top priority for the coming semester. In the meantime, the Chairman of our Trustees, **Eugene M. Waldron, Jr.**, has made it clear that the intent of the Trustees is that the new academic deans will be actively involved in all decisions concerning faculty, tenure, promotion, hiring, contract extensions and other critical academic matters. The deans will be involved in all decision-making regarding their respective College or Schools.

PRE-LAW PROGRAM

We are all pleased that **Ed Egan** has joined us as the new director of our Pre-Law program. In this capacity, Ed will report directly to **Dean Hochschild**. Ed's charge is to recruit and support students who wish to attain a law degree. Ed will be working with law schools throughout the mid-Atlantic area. While we will never have a law school, it is within our reach to have the best pre-law program at any Catholic university in the United States. I have full confidence that Ed will provide the leadership to realize that goal.

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PRE-MEDICINE PROGRAM

Likewise, we have many students who come to the Mount seeking careers in medicine, dentistry or nursing. This year we will hire a faculty member in the School of Natural Science and Mathematics to serve as our Pre-Medicine advisor. Reporting directly to **Dean Bushman**, it is my hope that this faculty member will reassert our exemplary pre-medicine programs, recruit talented students and support them as they matriculate to medical, dental, nursing, or applied health schools.

THREE YEAR DEGREES

This year we will begin to recruit students interested in completing their undergraduate degrees in three years. All of our majors have now been designed for completion within a three year time period. This program, will, of course, be optional, and it has the promise of helping us recruit talented students who see the value in early admission to law school, medical school or graduate school. We will market this program aggressively.

SUMMER SCHOOL

Since completing a degree in three years will require summer school attendance, I will be hiring a full-time director of Summer School to work with **Vice President Rehm**, the deans, department chairs, faculty and our student life professionals to enhance our summer school experiences. I would like us to offer many more courses, workshops and seminars during the summer months. Being serious about summer school requires us to be serious about how we compensate our faculty for summer teaching. Next summer we will have in place a greatly enhanced compensation package for faculty who will teach during the summer.

AMERICAN INDIAN PROGRAM

This past summer, **Karl Little Owl**, **Professor Joe Vince** and **Dr. Tim Wolfe** worked diligently with the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs to develop a comprehensive program to recruit American Indian students from across the United States, to work with select Tribal Colleges, and to enhance law enforcement and public safety on Indian reservations throughout the United States. The grant is under active review and, if funded, it will be the largest grant we have ever received. The program directly relates to our mission, will enhance our campus diversity, and build our national reputation.

CALLINGS

We are continuing our Callings program under the direction of **Monsignor Stuart Swetland**, our Archbishop Flynn Chair of Christian Ethics. Now in its seventh year, this program is truly helping our students understand the responsibility of vocation.

CENTER FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOL EXCELLENCE

Last year we started the Center for Catholic School Excellence as a part of the School of Education and Human Services. Led by **Professor Liz Monahan**, the Center will focus its energy and resources on helping improve Catholic schools in the mid-Atlantic region. I have asked **Dean Palmer** to develop a new graduate degree for leadership of Catholic schools. I have asked her to have it in place by the start of next year. We will also see a number of special seminars and workshops on campus and throughout the area aimed at the improvement of Catholic school education.

FOUNDER'S DAY

This October we will inaugurate our first Founder's Day celebration. Building upon the success of our Bicentennial, we will host alumni, faculty, staff and friends of the Mount for a weekend of activities commemorating the founding of the Mount. **Vice President John Butler** and his team have the leadership of this event that promises to be both instructive as well as inspirational. I urge you all to plan on attending and incorporating Founder's Day as a part of your curricula.

THE COAL FURNACE

When I arrived on this campus in 2002, I made it my goal to get rid of the coal furnace. It is dirty, unsightly and not in keeping with our collective commitment to be good stewards of our planet. So, after some analysis, we shut down the coal furnace this summer and it will be dismantled. We will replace it with a high-efficiency natural gas furnace.

In the long-term, perhaps in a decade or so, we will see financial savings, but immediately, we will see the environment and aesthetic benefits from getting rid of the coal. It is estimated by our consultants that the elimination of the coal plant will reduce the University's carbon footprint by up to 42%. Naturally, this will require some sacrifice on everyone's part as this venture is expensive.

COMPENSATION PLAN

This year it looks likely that we will reach our overall enrollment goal of 1,435 FTE undergraduate students and we will see salary raises in January. In this economic climate, that is good news.

During the 2005-06 year, we undertook an extensive study of compensation for faculty, staff and administrators. Our Trustees approved a plan to add \$1.8 million dollars to base salaries over a 5-year period. To date, we have completed the second year of that 5-year commitment. The world's economic crisis led us to the prudent decision to not implement year 3 this year. However, this remains a goal for the University, and I remain strongly committed to fulfilling this promise. Know that I and the Trustees are committed to providing our faculty and staff with fair and competitive salaries.



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OUR ACADEMIC CORE

Our core curriculum, first developed in the late 1980's, has served our students well over the past 20 years. For the past several years, we have been talking about how to revise the core to ensure its vitality. There is no better time than right now to tackle this task.

The core is our largest and most important academic program. Revising it will be hard work and no doubt will lead to lively discussions on our campus. Given the importance and enormity of the task, I have asked **Vice President Rehm** to have a revised core curriculum to me no later than October, 2010, for implementation in the Fall of 2011. We have the time to involve everyone on campus, and we have the expertise to get this right! Naturally, we will use our internal campus committees to focus their attention on the academic core. We should also use this unique opportunity to bring in experts from other campuses, our alumni, and certainly our Board of Trustees to help us in this revision.

Rather than just asking for a general revision, I have written a memo to Dr. Rehm and the academic deans clarifying some of my observations about our current core and areas that I would like to see enhanced. The memo is not private, and I have asked the deans to share it with department chairs and faculty as a catalyst for discussions. Let me be very clear. No faculty lines will be lost in the revision. In fact, I see just the opposite. We need our core to be taught by our full-time faculty. While I respect and value the contributions of our part-time faculty, I do not believe that we should engage part-time faculty to teach the core. Likewise, we have no one with the direct responsibility to oversee the core on a daily basis. I have established a new faculty line, responsible to Vice President Rehm, to direct the revised core curriculum. I hope to have that person hired by April of this academic year.

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A SOCIAL TEACHING EXPERIENCE

As we consider revising the core, I am proposing that we give serious attention to including a special social teaching experience that would require our students to spend a semester working with people who are poor and vulnerable. In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus talked to his disciples about the final judgment "...come you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. ...I was hungry and you gave me food. I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me. Then some will say, 'Lord when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you a drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison and visit you?' And the Lord will reply, 'Amen I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me (Matthew 25: 34-40).'"

As we consider how to strengthen our core curriculum, I ask the faculty to seriously consider a grand curricular design which will integrate a substantial social justice experience for all of our students. I would like to see how we can put the Gospel of Matthew into action in a way that truly benefits our students and our society.

The tenets of Catholic social teaching are clear, and we want our students to leave the Mount fully understanding these teachings and their responsibilities to serve others. As Catholics, we believe in a preferential protection toward the poor. That means we make service to the poor a priority in our work. We uphold the dignity of all humans. We respect life in all its forms and stages. We believe in solidarity with others. We are indeed one family in a global community.

We know our students benefit immeasurably from our classes, from campus lectures, plays, concerts. We know our international trips expand our students' understanding of themselves and the world around them. So too, I believe it will greatly enhance their lives to be seriously apprenticed to social justice work with the most vulnerable of our society. Please note that I am not talking about spending an afternoon at a soup kitchen or a service trip with Habitat for Humanity (all good works). Rather, I propose a semester-long experience engaged in serious work to make the world better for the poor and vulnerable. Similar to requiring an internship in a professional discipline, I would like to see us establish our own Social Justice Corps. This will take our service-learning commitment and our community service programs to new heights. I am confident that in doing so, we can provide a model of national significance.

This year all of our new students are required to read Tracy Kidder's book, *Mountains Beyond Mountains*. While few of us will do the extraordinary work of Dr. Farmer, whose work is the focus of the book, all of us can and should use his example to sacrifice part of our lives in service to others. Let us not just talk about this commitment, let us lead the way. While I am confident that our students can change the world, I am more confident that such a learning experience will do more to change them and provide a foundation for a life-time of service to others.



A FINAL THOUGHT AS WE BEGIN THE NEW ACADEMIC YEAR

In June, I was walking across campus and someone asked me, "President Powell, when will all these changes on campus end?" While I am sympathetic to the disruption of new construction, new programs, new people and new positions on our campus, I simply said "Let us hope that changes never cease!" Cardinal John Henry Newman said it best, "To live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often."

We are a learning community, which requires us to continue to push boundaries and seize opportunities for new knowledge. Pushing on those boundaries, as we know, is uncomfortable at times. It is what we ask our students to do, and we should expect no less from ourselves. Change and quality improvement are our constant.

Today, I asked you to consider how the Holy Spirit is among us individually and as a community. I asked you to keep a personal score card on the fruits of the Holy Spirit that are evident in your lives and the life of our campus.

The score card that we should always keep is on how we are making a commitment to our mission, embodied in our four pillars.

- *What did I do today to strengthen my **faith** and the **faith** of others?*
- *What did I discover today? What did I do to help my students **discover** the truth?*
- *How did I **lead** today? How have I been a servant-leader?*

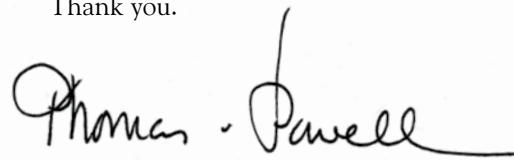
- *How did I enhance our Mount **community**? What did I do to make the Mount a **community** marked by truth and integrity, where we speak and listen carefully and respectfully to each other, where we prize our interpersonal relationships, and where we celebrate each other's successes?*

At Mount St. Mary's we transform lives, one sacred interaction at a time. We light our students' path to deepen their faith in God. We light their path to know the joys of our world; we light their path to be virtuous citizens; we light their path to be good stewards of our planet; we light their path so that they may serve others. Truly this is our noble work on our holy mountain.

Please know that I consider it a distinct privilege to be the President of Mount St. Mary's, and I will continue to strive to work in a manner worthy of your trust and respect.

May the peace and love of Jesus Christ be with you and your families forever.

Thank you.



Thomas H. Powell
President



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