



MOUNT ST. MARY'S SEMINARY

# Seminary News

## GOD, GRANT HIM MANY HAPPY YEARS

By Thomas J. Doyle Jr., Third Theology, Diocese of Rockford



THE LENGTH OF OUR DAYS IS SEVENTY YEARS—  
OR EIGHTY, IF WE HAVE THE STRENGTH  
—PSALM 90:10

If Psalm 90 is correct, then the **Rev. Robert Zylla, O.S.C.**, qualifies as one of the world's toughest men.

On Jan. 22 Fr. Zylla celebrated his 80th birthday, which the seminary community commemorated the following Sunday with Solemn Mass, Vespers and dinner. Two of Fr. Zylla's Crosier classmates and friends, the Fathers Bud Scheets and Bob Rossi, joined the seminarians in honoring (and roasting) him for his dedicated service as priest, servant and professor to untold numbers of men here at the Mount and elsewhere.

As revealed by the stories shared during dinner, Fr. Zylla's soft-spokenness, white hair and small stature hide profound depths of wisdom, a rigorous mind and a rapier wit that men decades from now will still talk about.

Fr. Zylla was the main celebrant of the Mass, which began with the majestic chorus of "Lift High the Cross." Fr. Rossi, Fr. Zylla's former provincial, preached the homily. Taking his cue from Luke's account of Jesus' preaching in Nazareth, he spoke of the importance of living the prophetic vocation. The church is called

to "stand up and tell the world the truth, in a time when pluralism has led to relativism, life is disregarded, economic injustice rages, and the world is destabilized," he said. The challenge, he reflected, is to do so in a salvific and gracious way.

Fr. Rossi then pointed to Fr. Zylla as a model of speaking the truth graciously. Not many people can do this, Fr. Rossi remarked, but Fr. Zylla is one of the few who has "grown up" and made the call to "stand up and tell them graciously" the "motive of his life." He speaks the truth patiently, kindly, unselfishly and calmly in the mold of Christ Himself and St. Thomas Aquinas, whose feast day happened to be "hidden" by the Sunday celebration. Fr. Rossi thanked Fr. Zylla for his good example and his struggle to remain true to the gospel of Christ.

After Vespers the community gathered in the Seminary Dining Room to hear toasts and roasts from faculty and friends. The Fr. Daniel Mindling, academic dean, reminded the men of Fr. Zylla's timeline: he professed as a Crosier in 1946, was ordained five years later, and arrived at the Mount in 1971.

Since then, Fr. Mindling said, Fr. Zylla has seen eight popes and six rectors while literally welcoming every single faculty and staff member currently at the seminary. "To all of us Fr. Zylla is our friend," Fr. Mindling toasted.

Student Government President Rev. Mr. Ben Holdren (Lincoln, S'07) presented a toast on behalf of the seminarians. Referring to Fr. Zylla's penchant for odd-colored clothing, Deacon Holdren said, "He's the only man who can make a salmon cardigan look good." The seminarians loudly agreed. While Deacon Holdren represented the current student body, Monsignor Stuart Swetland, S'91, offered his reflections for the almost 1,000 priests that Fr. Zylla has formed during his time at the Mount. He's a teacher, Monsignor Swetland said, who is a healer, thinker, sage, maestro, guide, torchbearer and believer: "He introduced to many men what they would encounter in their priestly work."

*If you watched Fr. Zylla for a week you would see what it means to be a priest."*

—Seminary Rector Monsignor Stephen Rohlfs

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## NEW SEMINAR ENHANCES PRE-THEOLOGY PROGRAM

By Tom Crowe, *Second Pre-Theology, Archdiocese of Arlington*

A good thing got better this year! The seminary's pre-theology program, already a solid primer in seminary life and preparation for theology, became more "user friendly."

Last August the USCCB published a new Program of Priestly Formation, making two years of pre-theology and 30 hours of philosophy mandatory. In response, Monsignor Stuart Swetland, S'91, joined the faculty to implement the new program and coordinate the seminary's efforts to make the Mount's pre-theology program a gold standard.

The principle feature of the new program is a seminar course organized and taught by Swetland. This weekly seminar was designed to lay before the new pre-theologians everything they need to know during their transition from the world into the seminary. Though Swetland was the primary presenter last fall, other priests on the faculty and in the administration came by to present their particular area of formation and to field questions.

Prayer topics included how to pray the breviary, meditative prayer, contemplation and liturgical prayer.

In the area of human formation, Swetland led discussions on the virtue of manly friendship and its importance in society, but especially in the priesthood. The men read John Eldredge's "Wild at Heart" to spur discussion and thought.

In academic formation, the men discussed academic integrity. They addressed anxieties among some of the new men who have been out of an academic atmosphere for many years. The Catechism was opened to demonstrate how philosophy feeds into theology and how theology, since it makes use of revelation, fulfills the pursuits of philosophy.

The men visited a soup kitchen in Harrisburg, Pa., to meet some of the people working to bring the Gospel to the most abject in our society.

"The seminar was one of the most important parts of first pre-theology," said Jason Burchell (1st pre-theology, Arlington). "It sort of walks you through a whole year of seminary ... it calms the fears you have."

## AD MULTOS ANNOS, FR. ZYLLA!



"If you watched Fr. Zylla for a week," Seminary Rector Monsignor Stephen Rohlfs said, you would see what it means to be a priest. "He's the quintessential priestly gentleman." Monsignor Rohlfs also shared letters from four bishops taught by Fr. Zylla, sending their congratulations: Mount Bishops William Lori, S'77, Kevin Rhoades (rector, 1997-2004), Paul Coakley, S'83, and Harry Flynn (dean, vice rector and rector, 1965-1979). All recalled fond memories of picnics at the Crosier farm and how Fr. Zylla was "a spiritual father ... a walking Summa."



The seminary presented Fr. Zylla with a large crucifix, while Dr. Thomas Powell, president of Mount St. Mary's University, presented to him a framed print and announced that the board of trustees will be presenting him an Honorary Doctorate in Humane Letters at the end of the year. Frs. Scheets and Rossi also shared humorous memories about Fr. Zylla's time with them and how he always provided warmth and humor in many situations. At the end of the evening, Fr. Zylla thanked everyone, commenting that if all the plaudits he received were not true, they should be. Someone asked him, "How does it feel to be 80?" Fr. Zylla's only response was a hearty chuckle.

# “DESEGREGATING THE ALTAR”

*By John Rapisarda, Third Theology, Archdiocese of Baltimore*

On Oct. 26, Dr. Stephen J. Ochs, a historian, teacher and author from Silver Spring, Md., presented the seminary’s Fall Academic Symposium, entitled “Desegregating the Altar.”

Dr. Ochs focused on the history of black Catholics in the United States, especially the relationship between the white American clergy and the black Catholic. Sadly, this relationship was marred by the racism that is found in much of American history, and it was not until the early 1900s that the first African-American priests were ordained in the United States. Fortunately, the work of pioneering priests and seminarians, the influence of lay black Catholics, and pressure from Rome brought the change needed for the black Catholic to be accepted into the American clergy. Dr. Ochs also hailed the religious communities founded for black Catholics, notably the Sisters of Divine Providence and the Josephite Fathers.

In order to prepare for the symposium, the seminarians were asked to read a biography of Captain Andre Cailloux, one of the first black military heroes of the Civil War. At the end of Dr. Ochs’ presentation, he fielded questions from faculty and students.

The history of black Catholics in America is one that is marked with both racism and heroism. While there are certainly drastic improvements in the life of the church in the United States, there is much healing that needs to happen as well.

Dr. Ochs is the chair of the history department at Georgetown Preparatory School in Washington, D.C. He is the author of “Desegregating the Altar: The Josephites and the Struggle for Black Priests, 1871-1960” and “A Black Patriot and a White Priest: Andre Cailloux and Claude Paschal in Civil War New Orleans.”

# NOTED THEOLOGIAN SPEAKS ON CHRISTIAN SEXUALITY

*By John Rapisarda, Third Theology, Archdiocese of Baltimore*

On Nov. 14, 2006, Christopher West, a theologian and noted speaker, gave a series of conferences on Christian sexuality and celibacy to the seminary student body. He gave these in the context of Pope John Paul II’s monumental work, “Theology of the Body.” The Holy Father points out that too often sexual morality has been presented as a list of what we can’t do. In “Theology of the Body,” Pope John Paul reflects on the Scriptures, seeking a positive understanding of Christian marriage and sexuality; the gift that it is and the dignity that it has.

Within this work, the pope also sheds light on celibacy. Far from being a mere renunciation of marriage, celibacy affirms the goodness of marital love and gives profound witness to the love of God, available on earth and completed in heaven.

Christopher West has authored several books on the theology of the body and Catholic teaching on marriage and sexuality. Among these are “Good News About Sex and Marriage: Answers to Your Honest Questions about Catholic Teaching” (Servant Press, 2000) and “Theology of the Body for Beginners” (Ascension Press, 2004). More information about “Theology of the Body” and Christopher West’s audio and video resources can be found at [www.AscensionPress.com](http://www.AscensionPress.com).

Christopher and his wife, Wendy, have three children and live in Pennsylvania. He is the director of the Theology of the Body Institute and is a visiting professor at Creighton University in Omaha, St. John Vianney Seminary in Denver, and John Paul II Institute in Melbourne, Australia.

# LIVING THE CALL OF CARITAS

By Thomas J. Doyle Jr, *Third Theology*, Diocese of Rockford



Msgr. Parent opened up the current academic year with a memorable homily at the opening Mass of the Holy Spirit, exhorting each student and seminarian to live intensely a life of caritas.

the scenes. In particular, monsignor served as vice rector and director of formation from 2003-05 before moving to the college side. He was instrumental in maintaining the stability of the seminary during the search for a new rector after the departure of Bishop Kevin Rhoades to Harrisburg.

After becoming vice president for Catholic identity and mission, Monsignor Parent made himself available to the seminarians for spiritual direction and confession. Someone deeply committed to deepening the spiritual lives of the men, he once commented that the whole point of formation and direction is “to help people recognize Christ’s presence in their lives, especially in their prayer.” He also opened up the current academic year with a memorable homily at the opening Mass of the Holy Spirit, exhorting each student and seminarian to live intensely a life of caritas.

Before coming to the Mount, Monsignor was the vocations director for the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C. He returns there to become pastor of St. Peter’s Church in Waldorf. Before his departure at the end of the fall semester, a special Mass and reception was celebrated in his honor. In his homily—filled with his characteristic energy, insight and wit—monsignor called for greater unity between the college and seminary. This message was indicative of a priest truly living his priesthood authentically and unreservedly.

The Mount wholeheartedly wishes Monsignor Parent great joy and peace as he reenters parish ministry. May he who formed men here at the Mount to serve as parish priests faithfully serve the people of his own diocese in truth and caritas.

Seminaries like the Mount often see many of their administration and faculty members called back to their home diocese at a moment’s notice. This past semester, the seminary was informed that Monsignor Bill Parent, former seminary vice rector and university vice president for Catholic identity and mission, was called back for pastoral duties in Washington, D.C.

Monsignor Parent, who was appointed this past year as chaplain to His Holiness by Pope Benedict XVI, served the seminary community in many vital capacities, both in front of the camera and behind



## JOINING THE MARCH FOR LIFE

By Patrick Reilly, *First Theology*, Diocese of Wichita

On Jan. 22, Mount seminarians, as well as many of the faculty, joined the annual “March for Life” in Washington, D.C. The March for Life commemorates all those who have been killed by abortion.

This year, as in years past, the seminarians listened to speakers before the start of the march. Because the speeches take place almost a mile away from the Mount’s banner at 7th and Constitution, seminarians brought along a portable satellite radio and listened to the speeches on EWTN’s radio broadcast. Although the radio was intended to help the seminarians, many of the other marchers benefited from it and expressed their appreciation to the seminarians.



*“[The whole point of formation and direction is] to help people recognize Christ’s presence in their lives, especially in their prayer.”*

—Msgr. Bill Parent

## ADMISSION TO CANDIDACY

The Most Rev. Michael O. Jackels, bishop of Wichita, celebrated Mass with Admission to Candidacy at Mount St. Mary's Seminary on Nov. 17. Among the 25 seminarians of the third theology class admitted to candidacy for ordination as deacons and priests were Anthony Joseph Killian from the Diocese of Arlington; Juan Fernando Areiza, Henry Amingwa Atem, Neil Michael Dhabliwala, James Raymond Flanagan Jr., Timothy Joseph Gallagher, Roberto Herrera-Castaneda and Daniel Patrick Ketter from the Archdiocese of Atlanta; John Christopher Rapisarda from the Archdiocese of Baltimore; Richard Allen Chenault Jr. and Bryan William Jerabek from the Diocese of Birmingham-in-Alabama; Saul Fonseca-Martinez and Jose Elias Mera-Vallejos from the Diocese of Cajamarca; Tri Vinh Truong from the Diocese of Charlotte; Stanley Lisska Dailey from the Diocese of Columbus; William Michael Sylvia from the Diocese of Fall River; Gary Wayne Blake Jr., Geoffrey William Horton, Kevin Mark Lucas and Dustin Paul Schultz from the Diocese of Peoria; Brother Benedict Grant, F.P.O., from the Franciscans of the Primitive Observance; Mariusz Karol Fuks from the Diocese of Savannah; Juan Rafael Esposito-Garcia from the Archdiocese of Washington; Adam John Keiter from the Diocese of Wichita; and Frederick Daniel Fraini III from the Diocese of Worcester.



## INAUGURAL SEMINARY FAMILY WEEKEND A BIG HIT!

The inaugural Seminary Family Weekend was held at the Mount, Oct. 20-22, 2006. An invitation was extended to all seminarian family members – parents, brothers, sisters and grandparents. The response was beyond expectations, with 160 family members of 56 seminarians participating. In addition, 22 of the seminary's 33 sending dioceses were represented. The purpose of the weekend was to provide family members with the opportunity to learn more about a seminarian's journey in preparation for the priesthood. Faculty presentations focused on the academic program, spiritual life, human formation, pastoral field education and seminary life.

Monsignor Steven P. Rohlf, STD, rector, has announced that the dates for next year's weekend will be Oct. 19-21, 2007.

*The seminary has reserved 25 rooms at the Sleep Inn – Emmitsburg (301-447-0044) and 25 rooms at the Courtyard Marriott in Gettysburg (717-334-5600). When calling for reservations, family members should mention they are with the seminary. For more information, contact Phil McGlade (301-447-5017 or mcglade@msmary.edu).*

**Above: All in the family! Brothers and sisters of the Rev. Mr. Jesse Bolger (Baltimore) provided the entertainment. The family includes: (L-R) Shelagh, Jesse, Judd, Tommy and Maggie.**



## SAVE-THE-DATE

FAMILY WEEKEND  
OCT. 19-21, 2007

## MOUNT 2007

# “Do Whatever He Tells You”

By Peter Sharpe, Second Theology, Diocese of Fargo

*“When you can literally take Jesus Christ, present in the Holy Eucharist, and walk through the crowd of young adults who are hurting, suffering, who are beat up from living in this culture, and give them the opportunity to be within a few feet of Our Lord—there simply are no words that can adequately capture the privilege of being God’s instrument in that way.”—Deacon Jon-Daniel Schnobrich*



The 12th annual youth Eucharistic prayer festival was held at the Mount on Feb. 24, 2007. What originally started as preparation for the year 2000 Jubilee continues on with a new name but a similar format and (with God’s help) the same success. This year around 1,800 young people and chaperones from more than seven states were instructed on how to be more authentic Christians by a witness team lead by the nationally known chastity speaker Jason Evert and by FOCUS director Sean Dalton. Bishop William Lori of Bridgeport and Bishop Kevin Rhoades of Harrisburg preached at Masses on Friday and

Saturday. Monsignor Stuart Swetland, the seminary’s new director of pre-theologians, gave the final Sunday homily and encouraged the youth to follow the example of the saints.

Deacon Jon-Daniel Schnobrich, Fourth Theology, who was the event MC and monstrance bearer during the Eucharistic procession, commented on his experience: “When you can literally take Jesus Christ, present in the Holy Eucharist, and walk through the crowd of young adults who are hurting, suffering, who are beat up from living in this culture, and give them the opportunity to be within a

few feet of Our Lord—there simply are no words that can adequately capture the privilege of being God’s instrument in that way.”

During the weekend, 33 priests heard more than 1,000 confessions! “The theme for this year’s Mount 2007 retreat was ‘Do Whatever He Tells You,’ and the response by the youth to that Marian call was clearly evident this weekend,” remarked Jim Flanagan, Third Theology, who was the main organizer of the retreat this year. One new innovation was to have separate vocations talks for the men and women. At the end of the final Mass, many young people indicated their interest in pursuing a

religious or priestly vocation, and were encouraged to write their names down on a card so they might be remembered in prayer.

The seminarians, with the help of the staff and some of the Mount collegians, once again provided most of the labor for the retreat. At the end, most of them were rather worn out but thankful that once again God had given grace for a unique weekend. They were also thankful that Monsignor Steve Rohlfs, rector, cancelled seminary classes on Monday for a day of rest!



## ALUMNI NEWS

**Monsignor Richard Tofani, S'79**, is currently pastor of Our Lady Queen of Peace Church in Hainesport, N.J. He was recently named the episcopal vicar of Burlington County and also serves as the diocesan director at the Office of Missions in Trenton, N.J.

**Rev. Michael Peltzer, S'80**, Diocese of Wichita, is pastor of St. Joan of Arc Parish Community, which consists of three Kansas churches: St. Patrick, Harper; Immaculate Conception, Danville; and Sacred Heart, Anthony.

**Rev. Peter Ryan, S.J.**, member of the seminary faculty, reports that his brother, the Rev. William Ryan, S'80, Archdiocese of Washington, is currently serving as pastor in Lome, Togo, West Africa, and thoroughly enjoying his ministry.

**Rev. Robert Smolley, S'82**, has been assigned to Protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary Ukrainian Catholic Church in Manchester, N.H. He was also the homilist at the Mass of Christian Burial for fellow Mount St. Mary's Seminary alumnus, the Rev. Robert Pohley, S'75, Diocese of Bridgeport, who died on Nov. 23, 2006.

**Rev. James Decker, S'85**, Diocese of Manchester, is currently serving as a U.S. Air Force chaplain in Germany, and was stationed in Iraq until September 2006.

**Rev. Kevin Cusick, S'92**, has been named parochial vicar at St. Philip the Apostle Parish in Camp Springs, Md. He served as a U.S. Navy chaplain for 11 years. He is a member of the Archdiocese of Washington.

**Rev. Daniel Rupp, S'98**, Diocese of Burlington, reports that in August 2006 he raised money for a trip to Rome for his parish teachers and staff by driving in a demolition derby at a local county fair in Vermont. He raised more than \$7,500!

## IN MEMORIAM

### **Monsignor Anthony J. Norkunas**

Diocese of Scranton  
College Class of 1940  
Seminary Class of 1944  
Jan. 6, 2007

### **Rev. Thomas E. McCann**

Diocese of Scranton  
Seminary Class of 1959  
Jan. 12, 2007

### **Rev. Robert L. Strome**

Diocese of Harrisburg  
Seminary Class of 1955  
Feb. 11, 2007

### **Rev. Theodore J. Macunas**

Diocese of Allentown  
Seminary Class of 1964  
Nov. 17, 2006

### **Rev. Robert G. Pohley**

Diocese of Bridgeport  
Seminary Class of 1975  
Nov. 23, 2006

### **Rev. Philip J. Cascia**

Archdiocese of Hartford  
Seminary Class of 1977  
Jan. 16, 2007

*May they rest in peace.*

## CALENDAR SAVE THE DATE!

For more information, contact Phil McGlade, director of seminary development and alumni relations (301-447-5017 or [mcglade@msmary.edu](mailto:mcglade@msmary.edu)).

### UPCOMING SEMINARY ALUMNI EVENTS

#### April

**19 Archdiocese of Washington Alumni and Seminarians Reception**  
St. Jane Frances de Chantal Parish Rectory, Bethesda, MD

#### June

**18-22 Seminary Alumni Summer Retreat**  
Retreat Master – Msgr. James J. Mulligan (former Seminary Dean of Studies)

#### October

**2-3 Priest Alumni Reunion Homecoming Mass**  
**Celebrant** - Bishop William E. Lori, S'77, Diocese of Bridgeport

#### BICENTENNIAL EVENTS

#### October

**20 New York City Gala**  
Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral followed by dinner at the New York Athletic Club; alumni priests will be invited to concelebrate

#### June 2008

**16-20 Seminary Alumni Summer Retreat**  
Retreat Master- Archabbot Lambert Reilly, OSB (retired archabbot, St. Meinrad's Abbey)

#### October 2008

**8-9 Priest Alumni Reunion**  
**9 Festival of Mary Lecture**  
**11 Campus Closing Gala**



### MSGR. JAMES J. MULLIGAN TO LEAD SEMINARY ALUMNI RETREAT

Msgr. Steven P. Rohlf, STD, S'76, Rector, has announced that **Msgr. James J. Mulligan** will be the Retreat Master for the annual Seminary Alumni Summer Retreat to be held at the Mount June 18-22, 2007.

Msgr. Mulligan served the Seminary from 1963-1987 as Dean of Studies and Professor of Systematic Theology, Moral Theology and Homiletics. He is also a highly respected spiritual director, scholar, author and columnist.

*For more information or to make reservations, please contact Phil McGlade, director of seminary development and alumni relations (301-447-5017 or [mcglade@msmary.edu](mailto:mcglade@msmary.edu)).*