A BFS Perspective:

The Viewpoint of the President/Rector

One of the tasks of the president/rector of the Athenaeum is to sign thank you letters to donors and the school’s annual Christmas cards to benefactors and friends.

It provides a means for the institution’s leader to give personal gratitude to those whose support ensures the existence of the seminary and graduate school of theology.

Yet the task also provides another important purpose.

“I saw the names of the people who are key supporters of the seminary and Athenaeum. I saw those names over and over again. In any job we take on in life we can at times feel out there all alone,” said the Rev. Edward P. Smith, president/rector for the past seven and a half years. Father Smith will step down July 1 when the Rev. Benedict O’Cinnsealaigh assumes the position.

“Signing the notes and cards always made me aware that there were people who support everything we do and who do not demand something back for it. They are Bishop Fenwick Society members because of a love of the Church and vocations and a love of their faith,” Father Smith said.

“It was a good thing also because it is a great example that I would hold up periodically to our seminarians and I still do. When you live in a seminary, it is easy to forget about the world around you at times. To know that people who have their own families, their own jobs, and have to deal with such things as the economy or whatever else it is at the time, still think enough of what is happening here to contribute, support, and show affection to us.

“This illustrates to the seminarians preparing for the priesthood that the people of God are profoundly supporting … the people who will serve the faith in the future,” Father Smith said.

Father O’Cinnsealaigh will feel the same emotions as he assumes office, Father Smith said.

“You walk into this office and you quickly realize that you are the president/rector. No matter what happens here, you have to answer for it. In this office, you need to look at the whole picture and deal with it.” The Bishop Fenwick Society provides you with a valuable feeling of confidence. You are not alone. The society exists to support what you are doing.

They believe deeply in the mission. As long as we keep to the guidelines of the mission this support will never waver,” he said.

“There is this sense that all of us are in this together. There are Bishop Fenwick Society members we have consulted. When you look at our board of trustees and advisory council, the finance committee – they are Bishop Fenwick members. When you go through the roster of members you cannot help but notice the extraordinary quality of these people who are there first and foremost because of their faith which prompted them to become supporters. We have members gifted in their businesses, gifted intellectually and they want to share that. These are not people who just happen to give money; they are people who invest themselves in our mission,” Father Smith said.

“Like any organization, we need young blood and our Generations Circle is providing new life to the society. These are young people who often see things in a new or different light … and the Church needs to hear that. These young members have great gifts and great insight and they are coming up with ideas and suggestions.”

Besides the generosity and devotion to

(Continued on back cover)
In brief

**Farewell Thoughts from Father Smith**

This is the last time I will write a message for *Insight* as the president and rector of The Athenaeum of Ohio/Mount St. Mary’s Seminary. The message is simple: Thank you. I am grateful for the example of Christian leadership and the generosity of heart from all of you who are members of the Bishop Fenwick Society. You have been constant reminders to me of the wider community of the Athenaeum, and of the love that so many of you have for this institution, as well as the priests, deacons, seminarians and lay ministry students who are formed here. For the past seven years, I have always known that I could count on you, and as I depart to become a first-time pastor, I am fortunate to bring with me all the good and holy lessons I have learned from you. May God bless you always, and I look forward to continuing with you as a member of the Bishop Fenwick Society.

—Rev. Edward Smith, president/rector

**The Swinging Door of Gratitude**

The library recently conducted a survey to measure how well we are meeting the needs of students, faculty, and guest patrons. We were encouraged by the strong response rate and the many comments that expressed gratitude for the library. We feel compelled to pass this gratitude on to the true source of library services: our benefactors. Through your generosity, we are able to give our students access not only to an impressively deep theology collection here at the Athenaeum, but to materials from libraries across the State of Ohio, including books delivered daily through a courier service and journal articles delivered electronically, sometimes within hours. In the previous capital campaign, funds were donated to make the library wing a welcoming and comfortable space. Our library patrons are rich indeed because of the many gifts of the good people of this archdiocese. The library doors swing both ways, and we invite you to come visit the wonderful resource you have given to the Athenaeum.

—Tracy Koenig, library director

**Marzheuser Lecture Announced**

During 2010-11, the Athenaeum sponsored two public lectures. In November, the Rev. Donald E. Henke DThM, gave the Gardner Lecture in Moral Theology “Persistent Unconsciousness and the Use of Assisted Nutrition and Hydration: Medical and Moral Reflections,” and in March the Rev. Dennis D. McManus DLitt gave the LeBlond Lecture “Patristic Characteristics of the Roman Missal.” The Athenaeum will present two more public lectures during the coming academic year. The first of these will be the Marzheuser Lecture on Jewish-Catholic Relations, to be given October 19 by Amy-Jill Levine, PhD “Misunderstanding Judaism/Relations Misunderstanding Jesus.” Jesus of Nazareth followed the Torah of Moses, found inspiration in the Prophets of Israel, and founded a community of fellow Jews. Yet often Jesus is misunderstood as rejecting Judaism, and first-century Judaism is misunderstood as legalistic, misogynistic, venal, and xenophobic. Correctly locating Jesus in his Jewish context not only brings new meaning to his parables, his politics, and his piety, it both prevents anti-Jewish teaching and opens a new path for Jewish-Christian relations.

—Dr. Terrance D. Callan, dean of the Athenaeum

---

**Rediscovering Our True Self**

*Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure; Whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things.* —Philippians 4:8

My two year old granddaughter, Grace, teaches me to live what I already know. She breaks down my walls and provides the freedom to be genuine me. She opens my expressions of love and quickly disarms my usually guarded thoughts and actions. When I am with her, I feel completely fulfilled and happy. She sees me as someone special and views my capabilities with much greater sights than I see in myself. She fills my body with renewed energy.

I come alive during my time with Grace and I am always in my glory when she looks up to me with her fun-filled blue eyes. She rescues me from reaching old age. To be sure, Grace is a very active two-year-old where bringing your “A game” is a requirement. From reaching old age. To be equally sure, Grace is a very active two-year-old where bringing your “A game” is a requirement.

In my short time as “Poppy”, I have rekindled a lot of qualities and emotions. I have had the opportunity to examine and rethink exactly why I am behaving and feeling the way I am. I have witnessed many Godly life-changing values: Sharing, manners, thankfulness, prayer, rituals, family, belonging, kindness, innocence, laughter, possibilities, enthusiasm, simplicity, trust, forgiveness, playfulness, and genuine and unconditional love.

Through my experiences with Grace, I have found a renewed sense of appreciation and awareness of God in my life. Grandchildren are the opportunity we are given by God to be “re-invited” into play, have fun, and give unconditional love. The tiny hand that finds mine, the tight hug around my neck and the quiet tears shed when we part have given me indescribable joy and happiness.

As members of the Bishop Fenwick Society, you too lend clarity to my faith journey. Your leadership sets an example of supporting the heart of our local church. Your actions display the many qualities listed above and your passion exudes an excitement that leads others to follow. Your tireless support, vision, and goodness has brought new life to not only me, but most importantly, to the students and graduates of our institution. You “re-invite” each student to serve Jesus in our world with compassion, humility and love. The Athenaeum/Seminary is richly blessed by your invitation.
The Rev. Lawrence "Stretch" Mierenfeld has been a parish priest ever since his ordination 1973.

He has served the past 10 years at Incarnation Parish in Centerville - a faith community with 4,000 families, an elementary school with 855 students and a religious education program for 900 youth.

The 63-year-old pastor and Price Hill native earned his nickname from his days as a semi professional and AAU basketball player and serves as chaplain of the basketball team at Alter High School in Kettering.

"I went to Elder High School for two years before entering the seminary. I did not play basketball for Elder," said Father Mierenfeld. "There was a series of things that got me to the seminary. Growing up in Price Hill, everyone is Catholic, so it's a very Catholic environment. I came from a good, strong Catholic family. I had excellent role models from the parish priests at St. Teresa of Avila and those at Elder High School.

"When I was in high school we probably had 40 priests there and four or five priests were assigned to St. Teresa," he said.

For several years, Father Mierenfeld has maintained a membership in the Bishop Fenwick Society (BFS) and Incarnation was among the earliest parishes to approve membership.

"I'm really not sure how I first became involved. It was probably because of one of the mailings (the Athenaeum) sent out that prompted me to do it. But, there are a couple of reasons I got involved. One is that I believe strongly in the mission of the Athenaeum and you tend to support things you believe in. Secondly, I got a good education there and I feel some responsibility to give back. That motivates me, too."

During his priesthood, Father Mierenfeld served the Dayton parishes of St. Helen, Ascension and Mary Help of Christians as associate pastor. He was pastor of St. Henry, Dayton, prior to being assigned to Incarnation.

Regarding the parish BFS membership, Father Mierenfeld said he approached the pastoral council with the proposal and they unaniously decided to join.

"It was clear that the parish has had a lot of exposure to the seminary. In the 10 years I have been here, we have had three seminary interns, three newly ordained priests for the diocese. The parish also has seen the quality of the men we've had here. We have two permanent deacons and a number of people who have gone through the Lay Pastoral Ministry Program (LPMP). All have benefited our parish. So, there was no hesitation to support the Athenaeum," Father Mierenfeld said. "I also believe more people are aware of the Athenaeum today than 10 years ago."

When not shepherding the flock, Father Meerienfeld often can be found on the golf course. "I play a lot of golf (at) Yankee Trace. I read a lot of history and I still play a little basketball but that's harder when you're my age."

He has a twin brother, Bob, of Finneytown, who works for the St. Vincent De Paul Society, Cincinnati, and formerly served a guidance counselor at Sycamore High School. Another brother, Gary, lives in Richmond, Va. and was senior vice president of Circuit City. His sister, Kathy, is an intervention specialist for Cincinnati Public Schools and lives in Delhi Township.

"I think every parish should be a member of the Bishop Fenwick Society," Father Mierenfeld said. "Not only is it our seminary, it forms our deacons and houses our special studies division and lay pastoral ministry program for our lay ministers. We have so much invested in the Athenaeum, we have to keep it going."

### LPMP Begins Satellite Program in Dayton; Bids Farewell to Sister Nancy

From the founding of the Lay Pastoral Ministry Program in 1975, providing lay ministry formation for men and women of the northern region of the archdiocese was a high priority. Six years after the first class met in Cincinnati, the first satellite location opened at Immaculate Conception in Dayton. Two years later, sites were opened in Monroe and on the west side of Cincinnati. On our tenth anniversary, we opened the first northern area site in Maria Stein. Since 1985, we have operated eight satellite locations in the northern deaneries, and nine satellite locations in the Montgomery and Warren county areas. In our 36-year history, 53 total calendar years have been spent at satellite locations. This mathematical miracle is the result of concurrently running locations. Over the years, we have met in high school biology labs, retreat centers, diocesan offices, parish meeting rooms and school libraries. Wherever they were located, these two-year sites, 29 of them in all, each became a temporary, but vital branch of the Athenaeum itself.

Since 1992, the task of coordinating the northern area program has been the responsibility of Sister Nancy McMullen, C.PPS. Her job includes coordinating student admissions, serving as faculty advisor, and working as the liaison between northern area constituents and the main office in Cincinnati. She has undertaken these tasks with great skill, humor and faithfulness, shepherding hundreds of students through program sites in Carthageena, Maria Stein, Springfield, Sidney, Vandalia and Dayton. She will be leaving the Athenaeum in July to take a position with her religious order, the Sisters of the Precious Blood. All of us wish her well in her new responsibilities and are grateful for her 19 years of dedicated service.

In the fall of 2011, Lay Pastoral Ministry Program locations will include the Pilarczyk Center in Dayton, Good Shepherd Parish in Montgomery and the main campus. For more information on programs, call 513-231-1200.

- Dr. Susan McGurgan, director, LPMP

Continued on back page
Ordinations, Installations, Faculty Changes Highlight Busy Quarter

The spring quarter began with the five men in Fifth Theology successfully completing the Master of Divinity Comprehensive Exam — the culmination of years of academic study. Seminarians attended the annual LeBlond Lecture, held at the Athenaeum in March. The Rev. Dennis McManus spoke on “Patristic Characteristics of the Roman Missal Texts” as seminarians prepare for changes to the Roman Missal. Also in March, Archbishop Dennis M. Schnurr celebrated the liturgy for the installation of first and second year theologians as lectors and acolytes. After assisting in their respective dioceses at Holy Week liturgies, seminarians continued their celebrations with diaconal ordinations. Four men were ordained as transitional deacons for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati on April 30 another later will be ordained by Bishop George V. Murry, S.J., of Youngstown. The year concluded May 22 with the priesthood ordinations of three men from Cincinnati and two men from other dioceses — Toledo and Youngstown — who will be ordained in June. The seminary is also preparing for a transition in leadership. The Rev. Edward P. Smith, who has served as seminary rector for seven years and a faculty member for more than ten years, will become pastor of Christ the King Church in Cincinnati. The Rev. Benedict O’Cinnsealaigh will succeed him as next seminary rector; The Rev. Anthony Brausch will assist him as vice-rector. Three new full-time faculty members also will be added: The Rev. Paul Ruwe will return from studies to teach spirituality; The Rev. David Endres will join the faculty to teach Church history; and Deacon Tracy Jamison will teach philosophy in the pre-theology program.

– Rev. Earl Fernandes, academic dean

A BFS Perspective: The Viewpoint of the President/Rector

(Continued from cover)

the mission, Father Smith said he has developed cherished friendships that will remain long after he leaves office.

“I count many Bishop Fenwick members as friends. People see me in parishes on weekends. People see me at events here at the Athenaeum and they are unfailingly joyful, happy, supportive, and kind. I have to say it was because of the impetus of the Bishop Fenwick Society that I was not afraid when we embarked on the recently completed capital campaign,” he said.

“They have been here for us over, and over, and over again. They are my friends and they are not fair weather friends.”