BFS Memberships March toward Goal of 1,000

Thanks in large part to the overwhelming success of the recently closed capital campaign - *Investing in Our Future, Preserving Our Legacy* - memberships in the Athenaeum’s Bishop Fenwick Society have increased significantly as have the commitments of many existing members.

For years, Mike Conaton, chairman of the Athenaeum Advisory Council’s Bishop Fenwick Society/Annual Fund Committee, has yearned for a BFS membership totaling 1,000 or more and $1 million or more annually.

Following the capital campaign Mr. Conaton’s dream is becoming much closer to reality. At the end of the 2008 fiscal year, BFS memberships totaled 506. By the end of the 2010 fiscal year there were 623 and by the end of the campaign, 645.

Among the most significant achievements, however, was creation of the new Cornerstone Circle giving level representing annual donors of $25,000 or more. To date, 14 Cornerstone memberships have been established representing more than $300,000 a year.

Memberships in the Founders Circle representing annual gifts of $10,000 to $24,999 total 9 with 29 Chancellors Circle donors giving between $5,000 and $9,999. There are now 35 President’s Circle memberships providing annual donations of between $2,500 and $4,999 and 458 Fenwick members giving $1,000 to $2,499.

Under the leadership of Athenaeum Advancement Director Jim Jackson, Archbishop Dennis M. Schnurr, and the Rev. Tom King, who chairs the pastors’ advisory council, a concerted push was made to increase the number of parish memberships during the campaign. Parish memberships have increased from 22 in 2008 to more than 50 by the end of the campaign. “Parish membership is significant to us because the Athenaeum forms the vast majority of priests who serve as pastors as well as the deacons and lay ministers so vital to the future of the Church today and in the future,” Mr. Jackson said.

In addition, the campaign reached out to bring a younger constituency into the BFS family. Prior to the campaign, the Generations Circle, representing BFS members 50 years old and younger totaled 44. Post campaign, Generations Circle memberships total 75.

The Athenaeum, through effective leadership to advance its critical mission of forming priests, deacons and lay ministers to serve the Church of today and the Church of tomorrow, marches forward in its quest to meet the challenge of Mr. Conaton and his Athenaeum Advisory Council committee.

Most people who commit to helping the Athenaeum financially discover it through a friend or acquaintance who invites them to visit. “In large part the Athenaeum sells itself. From its mission, to its library, to its art collection, to its chorale, to its landmark building and grounds, visitors are awed. But, we need to get them through our front door,” Mr. Jackson said.

“We encourage all Bishop Fenwick Society Members to invite a friend or two for a personal tour and experience all that The Athenaeum of Ohio offers.” To schedule an appointment for a potential donor, call Mr. Jackson at 513-233-6161 or e-mail him at jjackson@athenaeum.edu

Father Mike Seger of the Athenaeum faculty donated and decorated a new Christmas tree for the Westerfield Room (faculty lounge) this year.
A New Year’s Resolution 2011: “Keep the Faith”

Give generously to Him and do so without a grudging heart; then because of this the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you put your hands to. (Deuteronomy 15:10)

By the time you read this, we will have already celebrated Christmas and brought in the New Year. If you are like most, you have spent some time reflecting on the past, and more importantly, a renewed commitment to resolutions and changes for 2011.

Research has shown that less than half of New Year’s resolutions made are being kept six months later, and only 12 percent of resolutions make it a full year. These statistics validate Oscar Wilde’s statement: “A New Year’s resolution is something that goes in one year and out the other.”

Those who make a meaningful resolution are more likely to achieve their goal than those who make no commitment at all.

Michael York, a renowned goal expert, offers his explanation: “The reasons are simple. Most people don’t expect to keep a resolution while others don’t know how to set and keep goals.” Additionally, the American Psychological Association notes that people who explicitly make New Year’s resolutions are 10 times more likely to succeed with their goals than people who don’t.

The New Year is a perfect time to reflect on changes we need to make and our resolve to follow through on those changes.

I suggest you consider a simple but worthy resolution: “Keep the Faith.” Your membership in the Bishop Fenwick Society may have more benefits than just the impact it has on our ability to fulfill the mission of the Athenaeum — to prepare people to serve effectively as priests, deacons, and lay ministers for our Church.

Your membership may mean a happy ending for your New Year’s resolutions. Research has shown that rather than look at self-improvement, it may be better to look outward and try to improve the lives of others.

Science appears to back this up. “There is no question that it gives life a greater meaning when we make this kind of shift... and get away from our self-preoccupation and problems,” says Stephen G. Post, director of the center for Medical Humanities and co-author of “Why Good Things Happen to Good People”.

Dr. Christine Carter, executive director of the Greater Good Science Center at the University of California, Berkeley, has researched and proven that kinder people actually live longer, healthier lives. “Giving help to others protects overall health twice as much as aspirin protects against heart disease. People 55 and older who volunteer for two or more organizations have an impressive 44 percent lower likelihood of dying — and that’s after sifting out every other contributing factor, including physical health, exercise, gender, habits like smoking, marital status, and many more. This has a stronger effect than exercising four times a week. We feel so good when we give because we get what researchers call a ‘helpers high’. The act of making a financial donation triggers the reward center in our brains that is responsible for dopamine-mediated euphoria,” said Dr. Carter.

Additionally, a growing body of research notes that people who are more involved in religious activities are doing something that makes them feel better emotionally and lets them live longer and more healthy lives.

A recent study by Dr. Harold G. Koenig of Duke University Medical Center found that people who attend religious services at least once a week are 46 percent more likely to live longer than those who do not attend.

Acts of charity, such as your Bishop Fenwick Society membership, create a remarkable return lifting us physically, spiritually, and financially.

As members of the Bishop Fenwick Society, you can now move forward doing things that are good for your soul by embracing your New Year’s resolutions with your complete mind, spirit, and body. Consider your Bishop Fenwick Society as the “ultimate spa” for your physical, spiritual and emotional needs. Giving to the Bishop Fenwick Society impacts the Athenaeum community, of which we are grateful to have you as a member.

Happy New Year,

James W. Jackson

Keeping You Informed

When the idea of publishing “Insight” for our benefactors was first discussed, everyone on the staff at the Athenaeum thought it was a wonderful concept. Not only would it help us keep in better contact with our friends and supporters, but it also meant that we had another opportunity to reflect on the good things that are happening in this seminary and school of theology. At this writing we are celebrating the Christmas season, which is a time for families, memories and hopes. All these are an important part of the mission and ministry of the Athenaeum. You are members of this family; you are critical to our mission and ministry; your support gives us hope for a bright future for our priests, deacons and lay ministers who come here for their formation. This newsletter is one way to let you know how important you are to all of us. It is meant to keep you, our special benefactors, informed of all that is going on at this wonderful place. May the Lord take good care of you and your families. You are in the daily prayers of the faculty and seminarians. May God bless you always.

– Father Edward P. Smith, president/rector

Re-Accreditation Process Begins

The Athenaeum is now beginning a self study to prepare for re-accreditation. The Athenaeum is accredited by the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada (ATS) and the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (HLC). As the first step in the re-accreditation process, the Athenaeum will study itself in light of the ATS standards of accreditation and the HLC criteria for accreditation. The self study will be carried out by twelve working groups, each made up of faculty members as well as members of the board of trustees and/or students. The results of the self study will be reported to ATS and HLC in spring 2012. Teams representing each of these organizations will then visit the Athenaeum in autumn 2012. The reports of these visiting teams will be the basis for re-accreditation of the Athenaeum.

– Dr. Terrance D. Callan, dean of the Athenaeum
Bill and Joan Rohde:

Showering Generosity

For several years now, Bill and Joan Rohde have been showering their generosity on The Athenaeum of Ohio/Mount St. Mary’s Seminary – literally.

Most recently, the Rohdes donated 28 shower enclosures as part of an expansion project to increase the number of seminarian suites and upgrade two faculty suites. Previously, the Rohdes provided 44 shower enclosures for the original project.

As the founder and chairman emeritus of Mason-based Basco Manufacturing, a nationally recognized maker and supplier of shower enclosures, Mr. Rohde was well positioned to tackle the task.

It is interesting, however, that until a few years ago the Rohdes knew little of the mission of the Athenaeum to prepare men for the priesthood and diaconate as well as men and women for lay ministry service to the Church.

“The credit goes to Father Jerry Haemmerle. He is former pastor of our parish, Our Lord Christ the King (Mount Lookout), and then he was appointed president/rector of the Athenaeum,” Mr. Rohde said. “He invited a group of (select parishioners) to visit the Athenaeum. Until then, I did not even know how to spell it. Until Father Jerry invited us, I knew I had been by the building, but I didn’t know what happens there.

“We went out and saw all of the good work that was being done. We found out how the Lay Pastoral Ministry Program was training lay ministers to work in the Church,” Mr. Rohde said.

“We noticed how the seminary program was so very vital to the Church and its future.

“So we decided to become involved in the Bishop Fenwick Society,” said Mrs. Rohde. “We were able to make the shower enclosure donations and we are extremely proud of the way it turned out.”

The trip to the Athenaeum wasn’t the first fortuitous journey in the lives of Bill and Joan.

After earning a degree in business administration at Xavier University, Mr. Rohde thought he might be destined to work for his father, George, who owned the Rohde Funeral Home in Mount Lookout. His brother, John, owns and operates the mortuary today.

“I tried that for two years. About a year and a half into a two-year apprenticeship I knew it was not working out so I got out of the funeral business.

“I had a very good friend in California, a distributor. I told him I was getting out of the funeral business and I was looking around and I was invited to California to see their company. It was named Basco,” Mr. Rhode said.

The west coast business was doing well after the Second World War. They had three operations there and they asked me to come out to take a look at them.

“I’d never heard of a tub enclosure or shower enclosure before, but they were booming and looking for some sort of distribution center in the East. I asked, ‘What would be my territory?’ and they said everything east of the Mississippi River.” Mr. Rhode said.

“We went into business. I found my own place and manufactured (shower and tub enclosure) units. It was named Basco, but it was not an affiliate of the California company. The reason we became Basco was simply because they had all of the literature; so I did not have to pay money to print new catalogs.”

The company began in 1955 on Highland Avenue in Norwood. “I had one employee,” Mr. Rohde said.

“The biggest thing that ever happened to me in business was with a dealer who asked me if I was interested in an account he couldn’t handle. I went up to Minnesota. It was Montgomery-Ward and they had five distribution warehouses. They wanted 200 in each warehouse. That’s 1,000 shower enclosures and I had one employee. After that, we had 23.”

Basco’s Highland Avenue facility was enlarged and then the company moved to Virginia Avenue in Fairfax followed by a move to Blue Ash and finally to the Mason facilities where it has been located for a dozen years.

Also, Bill met Joan early in life. They were in the same first grade class. The couple has three children, two daughters, Terri Tobler and Carol Hinkley and a son, George Rohde III.

Sometimes, the Book IS the Story

In our rare book room is a small black leather book with a cover stamped with four gold letters: S.H.V.W. and a date: 1643. Inside are pages of prayers and chants, handwritten on animal skin and decorated with colored inks and designs. There is also a full page painting of a heart surrounded by a devotional poem in Dutch. Who wrote this lovely little book? With a little more examination and help from the Rev. Frank Voellmecke, we now know.

This was the private prayer book of Sister Hyacintha vanden Wyngaerde, a Dominican sister in the Cloister van Enghelendale near Amsterdam in the mid-17th century. At the back of the book, her handwriting records her profession of religious vows, given before her prioress, her bishop, and her community. This small treasure is among the great gifts that have been given to the Eugene H. Maly Memorial Library over its 150 years, a legacy for which we are most grateful.

– Tracy Koenig, library director

Seminarians/Permanent Deacon Candidates Admitted to Candidacy

The seminary formation program and the permanent deacon formation program celebrated the admission to Candidacy for Holy Orders during the month of December. Candidacy marks the beginning of a more intense period of preparation, discernment and scrutiny for those preparing for admission to Holy Orders. In the seminary chapel of St. Gregory the Great on the December 5, Archbishop Dennis M. Schnurr admitted 23 men from the Archdiocese of Cincinnati to candidacy for the permanent diaconate.

During the celebration of Mass on Sunday December 12 at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington Bishop Roger Foys admitted nine deacon candidates for the permanent diaconate to candidacy for the Diocese of Covington.

– Father Benedict O’Cinnsealaigh, formation director

Continued on back page
Seminary Begins Busy New Year

Mount Saint Mary’s Seminary began the new academic year with 37 seminarians, eight of whom are new men. The seminary faculty also welcomed three new members: Monsignor Frank Lane, the house spiritual director; the Rev. Paul Keller, OP, assistant professor of sacramental theology; and Dr. David Foster, associate professor of philosophy. The seminarians have been occupied with a life of prayer and study. The Rev. Nathan Cromly led the annual seminary retreat at Bergamo in Dayton in mid-November. In early December, the seminarians joined Archbishop Dennis Schnurr in evening prayer and a holy hour for nascent life. Many of the men sang in the schola cantorum for the annual Lessons and Carols service held on the vigil of the patronal feast of the Immaculate Conception. On the patronal feast, the six men in First Theology received Candidacy for Holy Orders at a Mass celebrated by Archbishop Schnurr. In January, the seminary community will welcome three seminarians from Tegucigalpa, Honduras. At the end of January, the seminarians will journey to Washington, DC, for the annual March for Life. Mount Saint Mary’s remains a vital hub of spiritual, liturgical, and academic activity.

– Father Earl Fernandes, academic dean

LPMP Students Focus on Field Education/Ministry Projects

At this time of year, LPMP students are typically busy not only with classes, but with field education work and the Project in Ministry. This year, students are engaged in 100 hours of supervised field education service in such diverse places as St. Vincent de Paul, hospice, hospitals, prisons, homeless shelters and crisis pregnancy centers. During the field education experience, they learn new skills, gain knowledge of how Catholic social and moral teachings are put into practice, develop effective listening skills, and grow in their ability to work effectively in challenging settings and situations. Once their hours are complete, they meet with their supervisor for feedback and evaluation, and then reflect on their experience in a written paper and in theological reflection sessions with other LPMP participants. Over the years, our 730 graduates have logged more than 73,000 hours of service in field education placements throughout the diocese. Often they continue to volunteer at their “field ed” site long after their 100 hour commitment is complete.

– Dr. Susan McGurgan, director, LPMP