

SUMMER 2009
MAGAZINE

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Fountain in the Cortile of the Casa Santa Maria.

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The priestly ordination class of 2009 of the North American College.

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OF THE PONTIFICAL NORTH AMERICAN COLLEGE**



*Statue of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception
at the Casa Santa Maria
with the prayer "Vergine Immacolata, Aiutateci."*

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RECTOR'S CORNER

Rev. Msgr. James Checchio '92, C'97

*Diocese of Camden
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Pope Benedict XVI recently commented on the importance of seminaries in the life of the Church saying, “The seminary is a precious investment for the future, because it ensures that through patient and generous work the Christian community will not be deprived of shepherds of souls, of teachers of faith, and of zealous guides and witnesses of Christ’s charity.” We thank you for joining us in our efforts to faithfully fulfill this important mission, this “precious investment,” which is the Pontifical North American College. During this same visit, the Holy Father referred to seminarians as the “true hope for the Church.” How true this is. The North American College has so many signs of hope. After a visit to the College, guests often say that their hope for the future was bolstered by having spent time with our seminarians and young priests.

These visitors get to see what the rest of our faculty and I get to witness every day, this “patient and generous work.” We watch more than 200 men make their way to the Chapel early each morning for the Eucharistic sacrifice and entrust themselves to the Lord, emulating the laying down of His own life according to the Father’s will. We watch them go off to the various universities in the city to learn the truths of the faith and better understand the Truth. We watch them come to our community Holy Hour during Eucharistic Adoration and further take on the mind of Jesus by spending time with Him. We watch them go to various apostolic activities in the city to exercise the pastoral charity of Christ in acts of service. We watch them go to the Sunday Angelus to hear the teachings of our Holy Father and receive his blessing. We watch them practice fraternal charity by living in common, sharing their life experiences, and supporting one another in their vocations. And we watch them share and listen attentively to their spiritual directors, formation advisors, and pastoral formation staff, following the movements of the Spirit in their lives and working on their pastoral and human formation. How right our Holy Father is in calling this ministry both a “patient and generous work.”

Yes, it is an investment, one with very rich returns, which will affect countless lives as our men return home for priestly service to the flock entrusted to their care by their bishops. It has been taking place for 150 years here at the College, and our mission in recent years expanded to include continuing education and formation at our graduate house, the Casa Santa Maria, with seventy resident priests and our Institute for Continuing Theological Education with approximately thirty priests on sabbatical each semester. It is a wonderful time in the history of our College to be a part of this ministry which “ensure[s] that through patient and generous work the Christian community will not be deprived of shepherds of souls, of teachers of the faith, and of zealous guides and witnesses of Christ’s charity.” We are so grateful that we can count on your support of this “precious investment for the future...the hope for the future of the Church.” Enjoy this edition of the magazine which our students design, write, and layout so that you can learn more about their seminary formation, which is a gift to the Church.

- Rev. Msgr. James Checchio



Rev. Msgr. Francis Kelly, His Eminence William Cardinal Levada, and Rev. Msgr. James Checchio following the closing Mass for the 2008-2009 academic year at the Casa Santa Maria.



Seminary Life: Past & Present

by Adam Young '10
Diocese of Providence

Life at the North American College has certainly changed since its foundation 150 years ago. Generations of men have passed through the doors of the College to nurture their priestly vocations in the city of St. Peter and at the feet of his successor. One need only to ask students past and present about their experiences of the life at the College to see the impact it has had on their priestly lives.

Before the convenience and speed of air travel, young men traveled to Rome by sea, a trip that lasted several weeks. Leaving what was familiar behind, these new students were embarking on a four to six year journey. On this voyage the new classmates forged strong friendships as they looked forward to the unknown.



Arriving in Rome, students became acquainted with their new home. A common sight in the city was the students taking their daily walk required by the College's "Rule Book." Groups of seminarians would walk through the city

Above: Seminarians return to Rome following the end of the Second World War. The College closed during the war for the safety of the priests and seminarians. *Left:* The "new" Janiculum campus opened and dedicated in 1953.

Opposite page: (top) Seminarians wearing the traditional house cassock pose in front of St. Peter's. (middle) A group photo taken at the College's summer villa. (bottom) One of the many religious who have faithfully served the College over the years.

dressed in cassocks and sopranas (an outer garment that goes over the cassock). This sight earned the American seminarians the unflattering nick-name of *bagarozzi*, Italian for “cock-roaches,” because the fabric that fell from the shoulders, when seen from an upper story window, reminded the Romans of the thick-shelled insects.



One of the main reasons to be sent to the North American College has always been to earn a strong theological education at one of the pontifical universities in the city. When the College was founded, students initially studied at the Urban College of the Propaganda Fidei, which is located directly north of the current Janiculum campus and prepares priests for ministry in missionary countries. In 1932, the switch was made to the Jesuit-staffed Gregorian University.



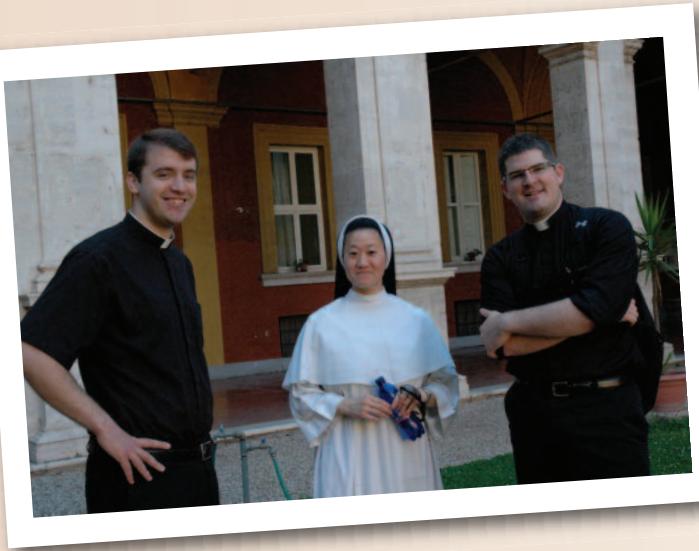
Up until the late 1960s, classes were conducted entirely in Latin, and the seminarians were responsible for taking notes in class. Upon returning to the College after school, they had the advantage of listening to the “Repetitor,” a graduate student who sat in on the Latin lectures and repeated them in English to the grateful seminarians. When the time came for exams, however, they did not have the bonus of the Repetitor’s help. Exams were conducted orally and entirely in Latin. Many stories can be heard of seminarians who had to repeat exams (much to their dismay) for adding an extra “and” or “but” in English to their halting Latin responses.



In the early days of the College, “villa summers” were part of the culture. The College’s villa, Santa Caterina, was located in the shadow of the papal summer residence of Castel Gandolfo. It offered the students a picturesque atmosphere to rest, unwind, and enjoy the cooler temperatures of the mountains outside of Rome. The rector would arrange for the students to be bussed out by class, with the newly ordained deacons having the privilege of being the first!

In its 150th year, it can certainly be said that life is different at the North American College. No longer do the Romans see the *bagarozzi* making their way to school each morning in orderly lines. A more common sight is groups of seminarians walking to school together discussing their upcoming lectures, enjoying a lively conversation, or praying the rosary. Today, seminarians in the First Cycle of Theology attend either the Pontifical Gregorian University, the Pontifical

University of St. Thomas Aquinas (Angelicum), or the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross (Santa Croce) – with even more universities available for students studying for advanced degrees.



Because the College no longer has the villa, seminarians have the opportunity to travel and make pilgrimages in Italy and throughout Europe during breaks in order to learn from different cultures and experience the Church more fully. During the summer between 1st and 2nd Theology, most students do not return home to the United States but instead engage in various types of ministries from parish work in England to missionary work in Ethiopia.



Students of the College today take advantage of the latest technological means to stay in contact with family and

friends in the United States. The use of computers helps them to remain connected and receive up-to-date news from home. One student who placed a telephone call home using a computer program expressed amusement after his grandmother exclaimed, “You’re in Italy? It sounds like you’re next door!”

Could the College’s founders have envisioned 150 years ago what the Pontifical North American College would be today? Throughout its history the College has engaged in the important work of educating and forming priests to meet the challenges of each passing era. In a 1974 interview for *Roman Echoes*, former rector (then) Bishop James Hickey said: “It



is the same College, serving the same Priesthood with the same tradition of dedication and joy. Older alumni and younger alumni will find the same tradition of joyful men eager to carry the work of the Church forward so that it can be an effective instrument for Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever.” Thirty-five years later, we at the North American College believe that the same could be said today.

Top: Matthew Kuhn '10 (St. Cloud) and Rev. Mr. Adam Rust '09 (Memphis) pose with Nashville Dominican Sister Jane Dominic during a break between classes. **Middle:** (from left) Matthew Wiering '10 (New Ulm), Philip Smith '11 (Toledo), Rev. Mr. Joshua Ehli '09 (Bismarck), Scott Pogatchnik '10 (St. Cloud) enjoy a view of the modern city of Jerusalem from the Tower of David during the annual Christmas pilgrimage to the Holy Land. **Bottom:** Seminarians hold signs for the Holy Father and wave American and Vatican flags at a Sunday Angelus, before the Pope's first trip to the United States in April 2008.

ELENA PANTI RECEIVES FOUNDER'S AWARD

On June 24, 2009 the Board of Governors of the Pontifical North American College presented Elena Panti, a beloved and long-time employee of the College, with the 2009 Founder's Award in Atlanta during the annual Alumni Reunion. Born in Friuli, Italy, Elena Panontin spent much of her childhood in Canada before returning to Italy as a teenager, where in 1968 she married Maurizio Panti (+1983), with whom she raised a son and daughter, Fabio and Silvia. In 1981, Elena began part-time work for the Institute for Continuing Theological Education at the Casa Santa Maria and for the parish of Santa Susanna. After her husband passed away, Elena became the full-time secretary of the vice rector, and her work moved to the Janiculum campus. In this position her responsibilities grew yearly as she brought to her job new talents and a seemingly untiring energy. From Italian residency applications to the Rector's Dinner, the diaconate ordination to the Pallium reception, Elena continually builds up the College community by her joyful and dedicated service. Her own living of the vocation to love selflessly and committedly makes Elena Panti a worthy recipient of the 2009 Founder's Award.



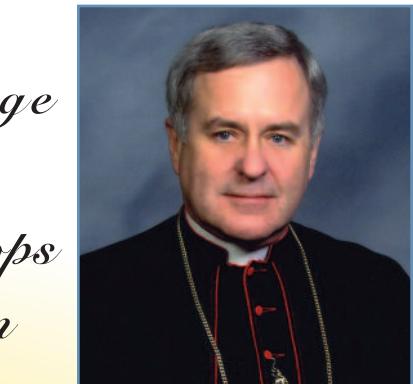
Elena Panti with Rev. Msgr. James Checchio, Rector, and Rev. Msgr. Robert Gruss, Vice-Rector for Seminary Life.



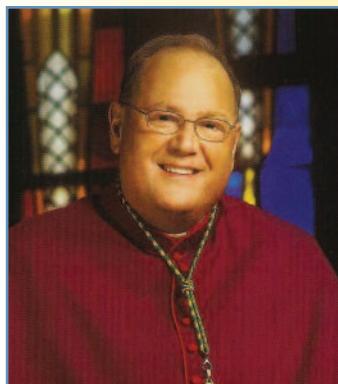
*The Pontifical
North American College
Congratulates
Metropolitan Archbishops
Receiving the Pallium*

Most Rev. Gregory M. Aymond
Archbishop of New Orleans

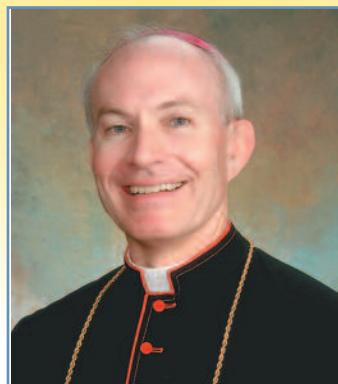
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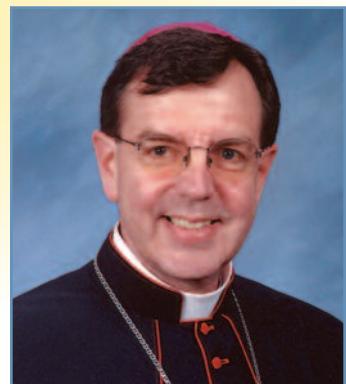
Most Rev. Robert J. Carlson
Archbishop of St. Louis



Most Rev. Timothy M. Dolan
Archbishop of New York



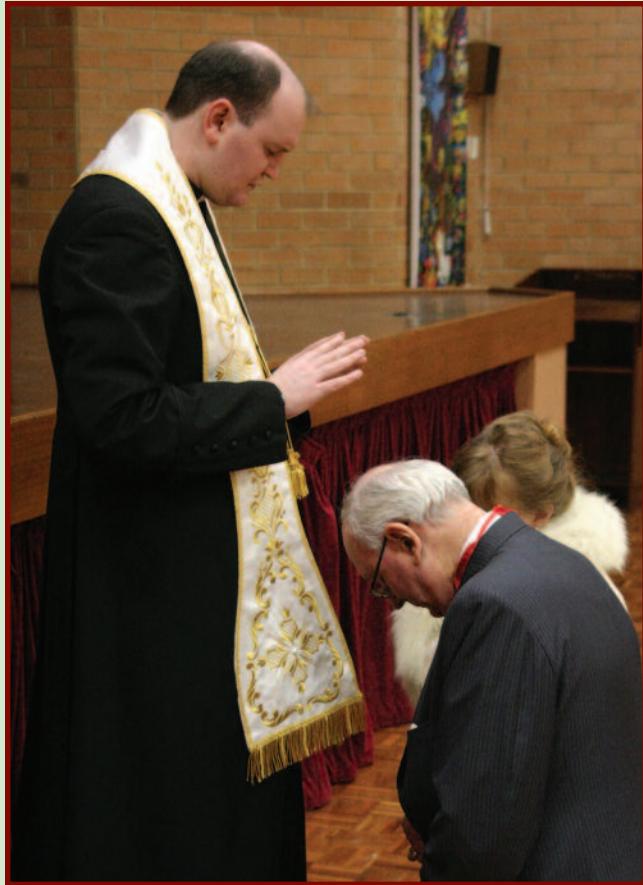
Most Rev. George J. Lucas
Archbishop of Omaha



Most Rev. Allen H. Vigneron
Archbishop of Detroit

AND THEY WILL BEAR FRUIT

New Class of NAC Priests Ordained



Above left: Rev. James McCarthy '09 (Sydney), ordained April 30, 2009 at St. Mary's Cathedral in Sydney, Australia, offers a first blessing to his parents following the ordination. **Above right:** Rev. Roberto Ortiz '09 (Newark) and his father Jaime, a permanent deacon, after Fr. Roberto's priestly ordination. Rev. Ortiz was ordained May 23, 2009 at the Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Newark. **Lower right:** Rev. Aaron Esch '09 (Milwaukee) prays intently before Bishop William Callahan lays hands on him during the ordination rite. Rev. Esch was ordained May 23, 2009 at the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist in Milwaukee. **Lower left:** Rev. Esch and five other deacons prostrate themselves prior to priestly ordination.



Above: The Most Reverend William Callahan, auxiliary bishop of Milwaukee and former College spiritual director, smiles after ordaining his first class of priests. *Left:* Rev. Aaron Esch offers first blessings following his priestly ordination. *Right:* His Eminence George Cardinal Pell lays hands on Rev. James McCarthy.



END OF YEAR TRADITIONS

Closing Banquet and Clap Outs



“As is custom here at the North American College...” The last days of a seminarian or priest at the College are full of many things from packing to studying for final exams. No one, however, ever forgets the great traditions that accompany one’s last days at the North American College. Each year the closing banquet includes a showcase of the chalices which will be used by those who are about to be ordained. At the end of the meal the Vice Rector invites all who are leaving the College for full-time ministry to stand, commissioning them by name, saying, “Sent to preach the Gospel.” On one’s last day at the College the bells ring and the seminarians and faculty gather on the steps outside of the Immaculate Conception Chapel to bid one final farewell to their brother in Christ.



From Rome to the Ends of the Earth

by Riley Williams '11

Diocese of Fall River

"You will receive power when the holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

With these words, the Lord directed the spread of the Gospel throughout the world to the early band of disciples at the beginning of the Acts of the Apostles. At the



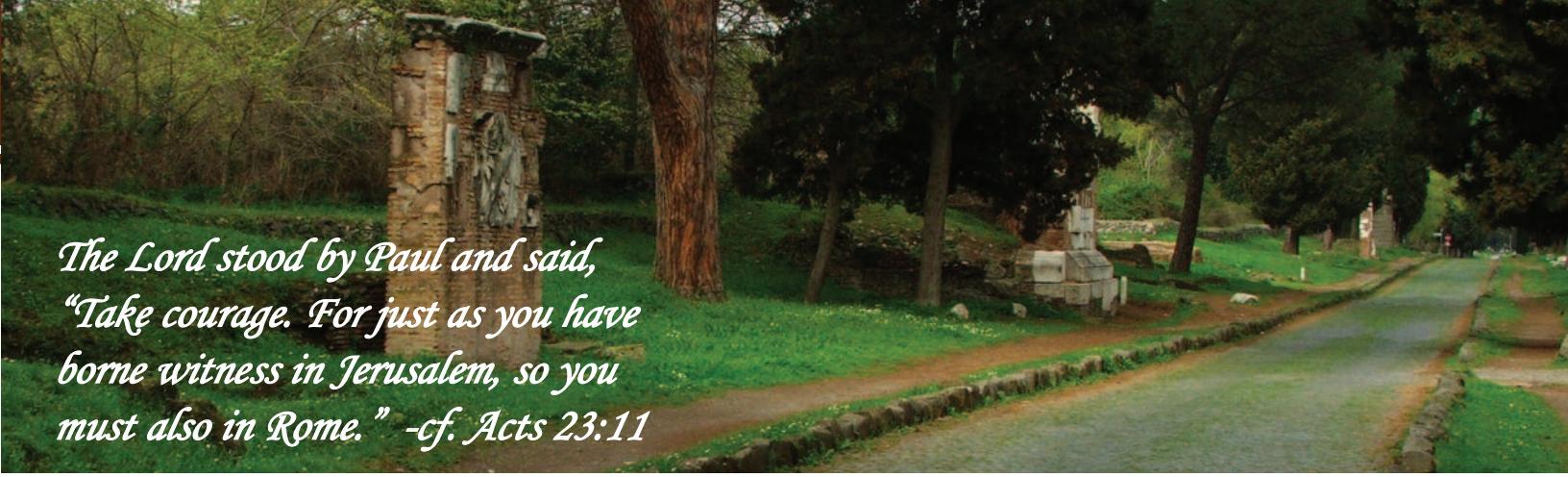
The Church of Santa Maria in Via Lata built upon the site where St. Paul may have resided in Rome.

end of that book the apostles' mission reaches its culmination with the arrival of Saint Paul in Rome, which was at that time the greatest city in the known world. One can only imagine the thoughts that went through his mind as he first set eyes on the grandeur of Rome, knowing that the message he bore went against many of the values of the pagan empire that was based here in the first century. Yet, through the grace of God, Saint Paul succeeded in his mission, and although nearly 2,000 years have passed since the voice of the great evangelizer have echoed in this city, there remain many places in which his memory lives.

We begin our journey to the Pauline sites of Rome on the Appian Way. Saint Paul would have walked this route into the city, along with some members of the early Church who had gone out to meet him (Acts 28:15). This road was originally built in 312 B.C. to allow the Roman legions to move rapidly across current-day Italy. As the excellent Roman transportation network had made many of Paul's earlier missionary journeys in the East possible, it seems only fitting that he completed his last journey on this famous Roman thoroughfare, referred to as the "Queen of Roads." With the trees still casting their shadows over the ancient pavement, the atmosphere on the road outside the city walls likely has changed little from the time of the apostle.

Upon reaching Rome, Saint Paul sought lodging for a stay that is recorded to have lasted two years (Acts 28:30). The church of San Paolo alla Regola, which was most recently rebuilt in 1728, is believed to stand over the location of his residence. The name of this church alludes to the nearby sandy bend of the Tiber River (*regola* coming from the Latin *arunela*, meaning "fine sand") where tentmakers cleaned and dried their material. It would make sense that Saint Paul

*The Lord stood by Paul and said,
“Take courage. For just as you have
borne witness in Jerusalem, so you
must also in Rome.” -cf. Acts 23:11*

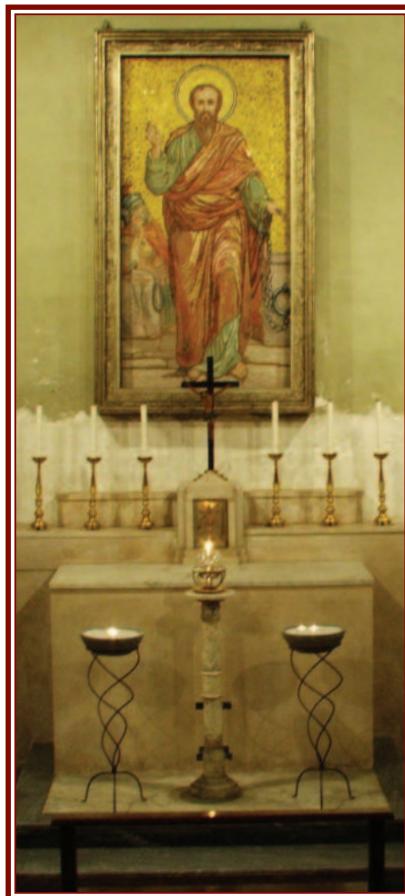


would choose to live near here, so as to be able to support himself during his stay. This location also has a long connection with the Jewish community in Rome, with the modern-day synagogue being situated just a few blocks away. Inside the church, to the right of the sanctuary, is a small chapel which marks the traditional site of Saint Paul's living quarters.

Just a few steps from Piazza Venezia, in the center of modern Rome, is located the church of Santa Maria in Via Lata. Although the current structure was built at the beginning of the sixteenth century, in its crypt can be found remains of a chapel from the early seventh century. An ancient tradition attests this to be another residence of Saint Paul in Rome; it also asserts that Saints Peter and Luke joined him here, at least for a time. In the chapel, a column recalls the imprisonment of Saint Paul with the inscription “the Word of God is not chained” (2 Tim. 2:9). This reminds us that, although Saint Paul's time in Rome was one of imprisonment and ultimately death, it was through the surrender of his life to Christ that this city was won for the Gospel message.

In the nearby Roman Forum is another site traditionally associated with the imprisonment of Saints Peter and Paul, the Mamertine Prison. Once the location of the cell in which high-ranking prisoners were kept, it now holds a small chapel

in memory of the apostles. Even though the latest research suggests that Peter and Paul, in fact, were not kept here (San Paolo alla Regola being the most likely candidate), it nevertheless provides a fitting place to reflect upon the imprisonment they faced before their execution.



Chapel dedicated to St. Paul in the Church of San Paolo alla Regola, another location where the saint is said to have lived.

When the hour for Saint Paul's supreme witness to Christ had come, he was led some distance outside the city to be beheaded – his “privilege” as a Roman citizen (as opposed to Saint Peter, a non-citizen, who was crucified). Today the Abbey of *Tre Fontane* (“Three Fountains”) marks this location. A small chapel identifies the spot of the martyrdom, an appropriate place to recall the apostle's words to his coworker Saint Timothy, “I have competed well; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith” (2 Tim. 4:7). Following the execution, members of the early Church buried him in a small tomb on the Via Ostiense, a short distance away. Here his tomb remains to this day, crowned by the Basilica of Saint Paul Outside-the-Walls, to which countless pilgrims have come to seek the intercession of the saint, in whose weakness and sufferings the power of God was made manifest – from Jerusalem to Rome and now to the ends of the earth.

This article is the final in a four-part series on Saint Paul during the Pauline Year.

ST. PETER'S TOURS: UNLOCKING ROME'S TREASURES

by Joshua Allen '11 Archdiocese of Atlanta

Why Rome? Why do we find the center of the Catholic Church in Rome instead of Jerusalem? After all, Jesus never visited Rome. Why not a place Jesus visited? These are some of the questions that North American College seminarians seek to answer in one of our most popular and rewarding ministries: the Saint Peter's Tour apostolate.

Hundreds of thousands of people each month visit the Vatican. None of them can fail to be affected by the aesthetic and spiritual feast that is Saint Peter's Basilica. The present structure, begun in the 16th-century Renaissance, is an intricate series of triumphant monuments, revealing both the glory and the humanity of the Church. Unfortunately, the vast majority of visitors to the Eternal City fail to grasp the full significance of the basilica's intentional design and decoration because they are without a qualified and faith-filled guide.

Responding to this need, the Visitor's Office of the North American College has arranged for seminarians to offer guided tours of the basilica to people of all faiths. Each afternoon, seminarians offer tours that often have intensely powerful effects on the pilgrims who choose to avail themselves of this opportunity.

Lasting around two and a half hours, each tour is truly an in-depth, reflective experience of the development of the faith under the protection and guidance of the Holy Father. After an adequate explanation of relevant Roman history, some reflection on Renaissance humanism, and a few interesting anecdotes, the tour moves to my favorite part: the moment when first-time visitors enter the basilica. The experience of the church's baroque interior has provoked powerful emotions from visitors for centuries. Truly Saint Peter's stands as a monument to 2,000 years of Church history: the history of the incarnate reality of Christ in the world.

Ultimately, a seminarian's goal is to give participants a positive, memorable impression. We do not expect visitors to remember all of the details; we are privileged just to share a little of the love that we have developed during our time in Rome for the Church. For this reason, the tour is one of our most rewarding apostolates.

So why Rome? Because Jesus chose to build His Church on the rock of Peter, a man of great faith but many human failings. The Apostle Peter died in Rome confessing his faith, and since then, pilgrims have venerated the site of his glory. We are so blessed to have the opportunity to share our love for his basilica, for the successor of Saint Peter, and for our Church with pilgrims to the Eternal City.

Editor's Note: The NAC St. Peter's tour was recently recommended in the travel section of the Tulsa World newspaper. The tour is free and runs every weekday (mid-October through May, excluding university holidays) at 2:15 p.m.



Ryan Creamer '11 (Rockville Centre) explains the interior of St. Peter's Basilica to pilgrims during one of the seminarians' daily tours.

Challenge of Interreligious Dialogue

by Rev. Mr. Charles Cortinovis '09 Archdiocese of Washington DC

Encounters between Catholics and non-Christians happen every day in workplaces, schools, and homes throughout our world.



While knowledge of one's own faith is essential in any dialogue, more fruitful interreligious discussion and understanding would be possible if both sides were familiar with the beliefs of the other as well. In *Nostra Aetate*, the Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions,

the Second Vatican Council encouraged prudent "discussion and collaboration" with members of other religious traditions. Since then, the Church has made continued efforts to promote dialogue between Catholics and members of other faiths.

In order to facilitate this collaboration and understanding between Catholics and members of non-Christian religions, the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas, with support from the Russell Berrie Foundation, has begun to offer classes in the area of Interreligious Studies. These classes focus on the beliefs of non-Christian religions and opportunities for dialogue between them and the Church. As I work towards a licentiate in Dogmatic Theology, I have had classes discussing Islam, Buddhism, and Taoism, to name but a few. This combination has enabled me to strengthen my knowledge of the Catholic faith as well as learn about the practices and beliefs of other religions.

For diocesan priests today, knowledge of other religious traditions is important for a variety of reasons. The United States and Australia are nations with tremendous religious diversity, with members of different world religions present in each diocese. Because encounters with non-Christians will inevitably occur, it is helpful for a diocesan priest to be familiar with other religious traditions in order to enable fruitful

and collaborative discussions, as well as to assist other Catholics in these encounters.

In his encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*, Pope John Paul II stated that while interreligious dialogue and proclamation of the Gospel are certainly distinct, they are linked in the mission of the Church to the peoples of the world (§ 55). By participating in discussions with members of other religions, whether individually or in a larger setting, this dialogue is also part of evangelization, both for priests and laity alike. Finally, as *Redemptoris Missio* states, interreligious dialogue can enrich both sides if it is done with truth, humility, and frankness, while remaining faithful to one's own beliefs. This fruitfulness can be achieved with docility to the Holy Spirit through inner purification and conversion. This dialogue can actually help one grow in one's own Catholic faith.



Rev. Mr. Charles Cortinovis with some of his classmates in the Interreligious Studies program at the Angelicum.

Diocesan priests have an important part to play in interreligious discussion and understanding, since they are representatives of the Church on a local level where many of these discussions actually occur. This program will be a help to me and my fellow classmates to begin the long process of learning more about other religious traditions, in order to promote greater interreligious understanding and collaboration, especially on the parish level.

CORPUS CHRISTI

ORVIETO & BOLSENA

by Rev. Ronnie Floyd '08

Diocese of Fall River

Rising at the crack of dawn on the feast of Corpus Christi, priests and seminarians of the College travel an hour north of Rome each year to the fortress city of Orvieto, joining its residents as well as students and pilgrims from the world over for the Mass of Corpus Christi and the procession through Orvieto's ancient streets. Together with the bishop, our priests and deacons carry and attend to the Blessed Sacrament, as well as the relic of the Eucharistic miracle in Bolsena. The Eucharist even passes before a formation of Italian troops, whose commander shouts in Italian, "Salute the Most Blessed Sacrament." The procession ends with Benediction in front of the magnificent cathedral.

After lunch with the bishop, we travel to the small town of Bolsena. It was here in 1263 that a German priest on pilgrimage to Rome who had begun to doubt his faith stopped in order to say Mass. As he was about to distribute Communion, his faith was renewed when the host began to bleed so profusely that it stained the altar cloths, the floor, and the altar itself. This miracle is the reason for both processions. Bolsena's celebration, though smaller, is arguably more beautiful. Each year the whole town turns out to "paint" beautiful mosaic rugs, made of flower petals, along the route the Blessed Sacrament will travel. By the end of the procession their work is gone, trampled by the bearers of the Blessed Sacrament, a piece of art offered totally to God. It is the same for the seminarians – exhausted as they travel home they feel trampled but happy, having offered this day totally to God, who offers Himself completely for us in the Eucharist.



Top: Seminarians, priests, and local residents participate in the Eucharistic procession in Bolsena, being careful not to tread on the intricate flower petal mosaics. **Left:** Rev. Mr. Ian McDole '10 (Covington) and Riley Williams '11 (Fall River) incense the Blessed Sacrament during the procession. **Right:** The people of Bolsena work tirelessly to decorate the streets with carefully laid flower petals.

College Bids Farewell to Fr. Tomasek



by Jacob Bertrand '10 Diocese of San Diego

The end of the 2008-2009 academic year marked the end of a five-year term for Rev. Richard Tomasek, S.J. as the College's Director of Spiritual Formation. Father Tomasek has faithfully spent his years at the College serving men as a spiritual director, leading spiritual formation conferences, and offering support and prayerful guidance to anyone who asked. He encouraged a firm commitment to making a daily holy hour as one's personal time with the Lord and the forming of fraternal support groups, both here at the College and after ordination back in our dioceses.

Father Tomasek will be remembered for his fervent and fatherly encouragement for seminarians to grow deeply in their masculine spirituality and participate in various forms of prayer, widening their hearts to be able to enliven the different charisms and spiritualities that will be found in the parish community. He constantly reminded us that when we encounter our human weaknesses we must know and trust that God's love is greater than they are.

Father Tomasek has touched the hearts of many men during his ministry here, and so we wish him well as he moves on to his next assignment. His fidelity to the Lord and his zeal for evangelization has made a great impact on our priestly formation and our community.

Ad Multos Annos!

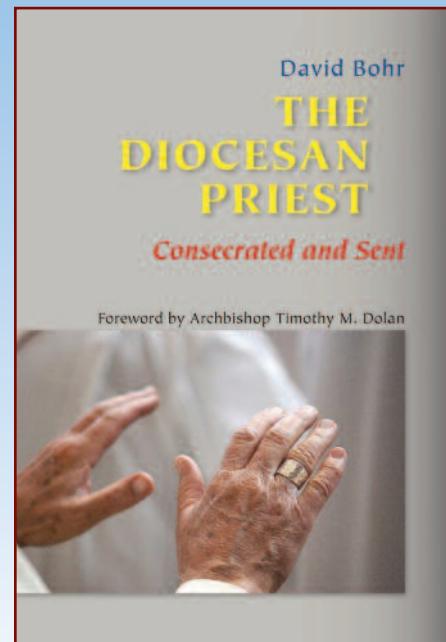


Former Academic Dean Writes on Diocesan Priesthood



Monsignor David Bohr '71, C'77 of the Diocese of Scranton, has recently authored a book on the theology of the diocesan priesthood entitled *The Diocesan Priest: Consecrated and Sent*. The work is dedicated to the seminarians of the Pontifical North American College, 2004-2007, the years during which Monsignor served as Academic Dean of the College. The book also includes an introduction by Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan, former Rector of the College and current Archbishop of New York, and promises to be a further catalyst in the renewal of the priesthood called for by Pope John Paul II and the Second Vatican Council. Liturgical Press describes *The Diocesan Priest: Consecrated and Sent* as "robust and engaging" and "a thorough review and timely reanalysis of the Catholic diocesan priesthood" insightful for "clergy and laity alike."

The Diocesan Priest: Consecrated and Sent, due to be published in August 2009, can be ordered from the Liturgical Press website: www.litpress.org.



SEVENTEENTH ANNUAL RECTOR'S DINNER

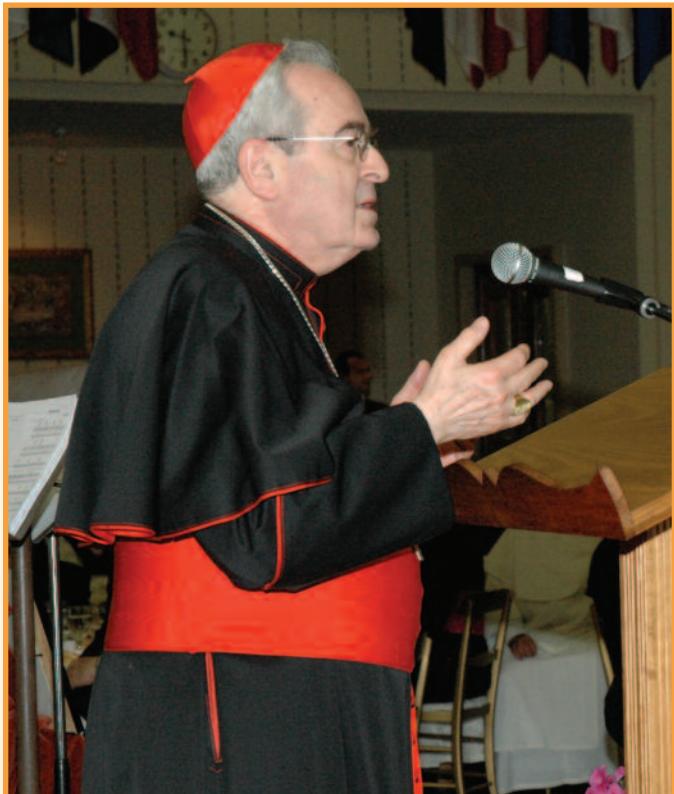


On Thursday, April 30th, Monsignor James Checchio and the students, staff, and priests of the North American College hosted the 17th annual Rector's Dinner. This event allows the College to welcome and thank many of its friends and benefactors, through whose generosity the College's mission of forming priests after the heart of Jesus is made possible. During the meal, the rector and the Chairman of the College's Board of Governors, the Most Reverend John J. Myers, presented the Rector's Award to His Eminence Justin Francis Cardinal Rigali, Archbishop of Philadelphia, and to the Honorable R. James Nicholson, former U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See, and his wife, Mrs. Suzanne Nicholson.

Above: Mrs. Suzanne Nicholson offers her acceptance speech after she and her husband, the Honorable R. James Nicholson, received the Rector's Award.

Right: Two of the College's esteemed guests, Their Eminences Angelo Cardinal Sodano and Francis Cardinal Arinze enter the Red Room prior to the Rector's Dinner.





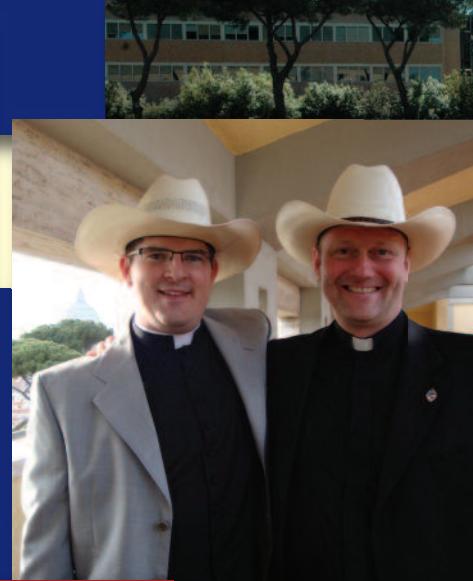
Ordained in 1961, Cardinal Rigali's years of dedicated service to both the Holy See and to local churches in the United States have given the seminarians and priests of the College an excellent model of love for Christ and His Church. Ambassador Nicholson and his wife, Suzanne, have worked tirelessly to spread the Gospel in the United States and abroad through their charitable works and commitment to holiness of life.



Top Left: His Eminence Justin Cardinal Rigali accepts the Rector's Award. *Left:* Nicholas Desimone '10 (Worchester) gives last minute instructions to waiters Scott Pogatchnik '10 (St. Cloud) and Ryan Connors '12 (Providence). *Above:* The Honorable Mr. and Mrs. Nicholson receive the Rector's Award from His Excellency John J. Myers and Rev. Msgr. James Checchio. *Below:* Sitting with members of the Embassy of the Republic of China to the Holy See include His Eminence Renato Cardinal Martino, His Excellency Brian Farrell, and Monsignor Peter Wells.



Life at the College



Top Left: Rev. Mr. David Kuttner '09 (Spokane) on deck for the softball game in the annual tournament between the College and the Legionaires of Christ. The College made a clean sweep, defeating the Legionaires in basketball, softball, and ultimate frisbee. **Top Center:** Rev. Mr. Adam Rust '09 (Memphis) and Rev. Msgr. Daniel Mueggenborg, Vice-Rector for Administration, pose together before the annual Southern Night dinner.

Top Right: Alex Roche '12 (Scranton), already sporting his game face, laces up before ultimate frisbee against the Legionaires. **Right:** Phillip Halladay '12 (Mobile) referees the basketball game between the College and the Legionaires. **Bottom Left:** Rev. Peter Purpura '07 (Brooklyn) attempts a jump shot over a Legionaire defender. **Bottom Right:** Charles Gallagher '10 (Washington) and David Nerbun '11 (Charleston) sit and enjoy some fried green tomatoes at Southern Night.



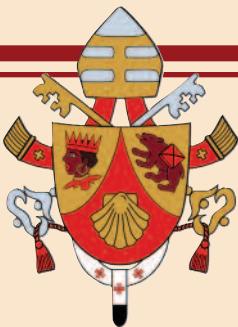


Top to Bottom: [1] David Rivera '10 (Camden) and Stephen Vrazel '11 (Mobile) toss a disc in preparation for the ultimate frisbee game. The College won 13-11. [2] Carmelo Morales '12 (Amarillo) and Mario Majano '12 (Washington) grill chicken for a Latino-themed STUAC fundraiser. [3] William Ruelle '11 (Fargo) provides entertainment for guests of the College during the Rector's Dinner. [4] Seminarians from various oriental backgrounds and ethnicities come together to celebrate Asian Night.



Happy Birthday Mr. Spiegel!

The Pontifical North American College
wishes our friend Marc Spiegel well
on the occasion of his **Ninetieth birthday!**



Papal Pilgrimage

by Jacob Strand '12
Archdiocese of Milwaukee

As seminarians of the North American College, we see him weekly at the Sunday Angelus in Saint Peter's Square. We listen to his homilies in person. We frequently attend papal liturgies. We study his theological works at pontifical universities. Through these and other privileged opportunities, we obtain a special insight into the life of our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI. As our understanding of him increases, so too does our love.

How, then, could we deepen our knowledge even more? Taking a hint from Pope Benedict's words, "I belong to the world, but my heart beats Bavarian," it would seem that the best way to further acquaint ourselves with the pope would be to spend a week absorbed in the same Bavarian Catholic culture that animated our Holy Father's early life and shaped him into the man who so effectively guides the Catholic Church toward truth and holiness. So that is what we did. Led by the College's Director of Liturgy, Rev. Kurt Belsole, O.S.B., twenty seminarians and I spent the Easter octave on pilgrimage, following the footsteps of Benedict by visiting the important places of his life while daily offering Mass and prayers for the Roman Pontiff and his intentions.

Our experiences were as profound as they were numerous. In the quaint Bavarian town of Marktl am Inn, we celebrated Pope Benedict's 82nd birthday at 4:15 in the morning – the precise time of his birth – in the very room where he took his first breath! We then processed by candlelight to the church where newborn Joseph Ratzinger was baptized on Holy Saturday with holy water that had been blessed just hours earlier during the celebration of the Easter Vigil. As Pope



Rev. Kurt Belsole, O.S.B., and all of the pilgrims at the Shrine of Our Lady of Altötting near the thanksgiving memorials for graces received through Our Lady's Intercession.

Benedict would later reflect, he would always consider it "a sign of blessing" to have had his "life immersed in this way in the Easter mystery." What a special Easter grace it was to share in the joy of this event ourselves!

In Tittmoning, the pope's childhood home for three years, we sensed the peacefulness that characterized the young Joseph's early childhood by repeating the same hikes that he and his family often had taken through the woods to the charming Ponlach Chapel and into neighboring Austria. We also tasted the strong devotional life of his family by staying for four days in Altötting, their favorite Marian shrine.

One of the most revealing stops on the journey was the quaint village of Aschau am Inn. As a mere five-year-old, Joseph first experienced the cold reality of the turbulent world around him when his family was forced to move here to avoid potential danger resulting from his father's outspokenness against Nazism. Despite living in the shadow of fear caused



Praying before the baptismal font in which Pope Benedict XVI was baptized in the parish church of Marktl am Inn.

by Hitler's spies and the many other visible reminders of the regime's anti-Christian ideology, the Ratzinger home radiated faith, hope, and love. The wellspring of such virtues was the Church, which so formed the life of his community that Benedict later explained, "No one could conceive of dying without the Church or experiencing the great events of life without her." After celebrating Mass in the simple but beautiful baroque church where Joseph received his first Holy Communion, we pilgrims reflected on the Holy Father's recent Holy Week homilies, but this time with a deeper understanding of his ability to masterfully unveil the depths of the

Paschal mystery. Since childhood, it has been the very fabric of his life.

Near the end of our pilgrimage, we stopped at the Freising Cathedral, a climactic moment for our pilgrimage. After rigorous theological studies, Joseph was forever changed here when on the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul in 1951 he was ordained a priest – an event he remembers as the "high point" of his life. Inspired by Pope Benedict's holiness, we humbly prayed for the grace to allow our own hearts to be so shaped by God's transforming love. Following the footsteps of Pope Benedict's priesthood led us to St. Oswald Church in Traunstein where he celebrated his Mass of Thanksgiving. After that momentous occasion, young Father Ratzinger recounted how the faithful saw him differently – as one "touched by Christ's mission and empowered to bring His nearness to men." How blessed we will be to be able to say the same one day!

In the end, what did we really learn about Pope Benedict? We encountered his joyful youth during a frightening period of history, his unyielding fidelity to the Church, and his priestly zeal for souls, but more importantly we encountered the very personal faith of the Holy Father. Learning more about his life brought us into a more intimate communion with God, for it is impossible to know and love the Holy Father without knowing and loving the One who is at the center of his life.



with his family from 1937 to 1943. Inset: The Shrine of Our Lady of Altötting, the major pilgrimage shrine of Bavaria which Pope Benedict XVI visited as a young boy and as pope on September 11, 2006.

NAC Martyrs Make Finals, Win Respect of “Soccer” Countries

by Luke Millette '12

Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston

For the past three years, the College has participated in the Clericus Cup, the Vatican-sponsored soccer tournament which pits teams comprised of priests and seminarians living in Rome against each other in healthy, fraternal competition. Last year our College team, the North American Martyrs, finished in fourth place, offering us a strong foundation to build on. With the addition of a New Man class of sixty-one seminarians this year, we knew the team would only be stronger and have a chance to make it all the way to the Finals. We were also helped by the new sports field, which allowed us to train harder than ever before. The coaching was taken over this year by goalie

Gannon Jones '11 (Perth), who was helped by the strong leadership of many other players.

There are many memories to take away from this season. The team quickly formed a deep sense of camaraderie, and

every practice was filled with laughter as well as drills. There was also something special in the way that we came together as men of faith, which was even more important to us than merely growing in the skills of the game.



Left: Together with the fans, the Martyrs celebrate their semi-final victory over last year's champions Mater Ecclesia. **Middle:** The team huddles before a game. **Right:** Gannon Jones '11 (Perth) is greeted by fans after the quarter-final victory. **Opposite page:** **Top left:** Daniel O'Mullane '10 (Paterson) clears the ball against Mater Ecclesia. **Top right:** Joao Kalevski tries to get the ball to Jimmy Morrison '10 (Mobile). **Center:** The team with its second-place trophy. **Bottom left:** The Martyrs thank their fans after the championship game. **Bottom right:** Joao Kalevski scores against Guanelliani Internazionale in the quarter-finals.





Ecclesia in the semi-finals, and once again the match ended in a shootout. This time, we missed an early goal, but an amazing save by player-coach

Jones gave us another chance at victory. After waiting arm-in-arm at half-field, we charged the goal after finally winning our first berth in the Finals.

We entered the Finals excited and focused. Playing possibly our best soccer of the season, we controlled most of the match's early action, only to see a poorly hit but well-placed shot trickle into our goal shortly before halftime. Despite several opportunities in the second half, we were unable to find the equalizing goal, falling 1-0 at the end of regulation. Though we were disappointed, the Finals definitely showed our place as one of the elite teams in the



competition. We look forward to returning to that stage again in the future.

The story of this season would not be complete without mentioning the support which we received from our community. Game after game, fellow seminarians came out to watch and cheer us on to victory. They came with flags and costumes and for every great play on their field, there was an even better cheer to follow. For every great play on the field, there was an even better cheer to follow. In the end, therefore, the true goal of the Clericus Cup was achieved: Rather than leaving as a soccer team, our entire house left as a strongly knit community – an even firmer foundation that we can build upon in the years to come.



The North American College Martyrs Soccer team was composed of Rev. Mr. James Adams '09 (Kalamazoo), Patrick Arensberg '12 (Mobile), Jacob Bertrand '10 (San Diego), Justin Bianchi '09 (Venice), Jeffery Eirvin '12 (Portland in Oregon), Charles Gallagher '10 (Washington), Victor Ingalls '12 (Mobile), Gannon Jones '11 (Perth), Joao Kalerkski, C.S.B., Richard Mastrogiacomo '11 (Rockville Centre), Rev. Mr. James Melnick '09 (Little Rock), Luke Millette '12 (Galveston-Houston), Jimmy Morrison '10 (Mobile), Daniel O'Mullane '10 (Paterson), Benjamin Ross '12 (Gary), Fernando Saenz '10 (Santa Fe), David Santos '12 (Newark), Philip Smith '11 (Toledo), John Solomon '11 (Wilmington), Rev. Julio Vicente Lopez '08 (Boise), and Emmanuel Youngen, O.M.I.

CASA SANT'ASMARIA

Restorations Unveil Casa's Charm



by Rev. Thomas Kunz '04, C'10 Diocese of Pittsburgh

Like so many of the little gems in the nooks and crannies of Rome, I must have passed the *bas-relief* of Our Lady's Assumption on the façade of the Casa Santa Maria a hundred times, not even offering it a glance. As

a seminarian at the North American College I often walked from the Gregorian University to the main entrance of the Casa Santa Maria for a visit or a meal with the Casa priests, passing under Our Lady without even noticing her. When I returned for graduate studies in September 2008, however, the façade of the Via dell'Umiltà side of the building had been renovated completely, and with it, the beautiful depiction of Our Lady's last moment on earth revealed.

The relief was executed by Vincenzo Felici during the second half of the seventeenth century for the Church of Our Lady of Humility, which at the time adjoined a Dominican convent. The overall plan of the original façade was engineered by the famous Roman architect Carlo Fontana but was later remodeled by Andrea Busiri.

Today the former Dominican convent is the Casa Santa Maria, the North American College's graduate house of studies for priests studying in Rome, with the Church of Our Lady of Humility serving as our main chapel. While the occupants of the buildings may have changed many times over the years, love for Our Lady remains.

According to one history of the chapel the *bas-relief* is considered "a simple work, easily understood; however, this does not prevent it from having an overall charm and beauty."

This charm and beauty lay hidden for many years under dirt and soot until its rejuvenation last year. It now serves to elevate the hearts and minds not only of us priests, but also of all who walk past it in the heart of ancient Rome.

The newly visible splendor of the *bas-relief* is part of a long-needed restoration of the exterior of the Casa Santa Maria – one of the benefits of the recent capital campaign by the North American College. After years of pollution and dust, amazing details now burst into sight from the front of the building, like the relief of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary.



The bas-relief depicting the Assumption of Mary above the main doors of the Casa Santa Maria on the Via dell'Umiltà.

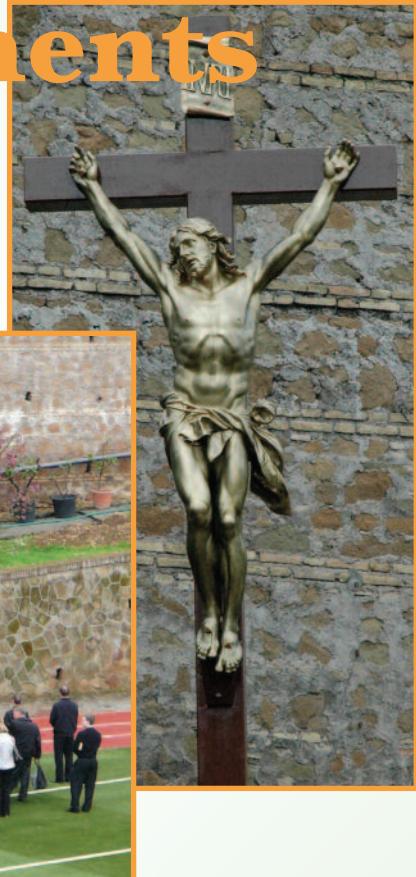
For the priests who live at the Casa Santa Maria, it is a blessing to have this as one of the many examples of artistic beauty which surround us as we pray and study. We are beneficiaries of so many generous people who support the College, and our spiritual lives are elevated by the beauty that surrounds us during our time away from home.

Facility Improvements

Refurbished Crucifix Erected on Sports Field

The Kardos Family Campo Sportivo received a welcomed addition with the recent installation of a crucifix on the hill overlooking the field. The eight-foot, cast-iron corpus originally rested across the street from the College, in the garden of the Torolonia Family Palace – a complex formerly used by various religious communities over the centuries. With the renovation of those grounds underway, the Torolonia family has donated various pieces of religious art to the College, including the newly-restored corpus of Christ. Approximately 150 years old, the corpus is contemporaneous with the College itself. Joined to a steel cross and refurbished through the generosity of the alumni of the Diocese of Providence, the crucifix now serves as a constant reminder of the centrality of the Paschal Mystery to every aspect of life.

Right: Overlooking the Campo Sportivo, the new crucifix provides a visual point of inspiration for all. Below: Msgr. Checchio blesses the crucifix.



Mr. Robert Wech of Munich installs and tunes the new organ.

New Organ in Assumption Chapel

Initiated by an Alumni Appeal on December 8, 2006, the project to equip the Assumption Chapel with a pipe organ has been recently completed. Designed and built by Mr. Robert Wech and his Munich-based company, the new organ is among the finest in the city of Rome, with every piece custom-crafted.

The organ has already increased the quality of liturgical music and prayer at the College. The consistency and clarity of its sound enriches not only personal and communal prayer, but also enables the College to provide beautiful liturgical music – an important example which seminarians can emulate in future diocesan ministry. Additionally, the organ is an investment in the formation of future generations, built to enrich the community for centuries to come. The College thanks the Cuneo Foundation, Randy and Jean Foutch, and Chris and Meredith Berry, whose generosity made this project possible.

Circle of Friends

THE PONTIFICAL NORTH AMERICAN COLLEGE THANKS Mr. & Mrs. Bill and Sue Cicherski

Bill and Sue Cicherski are among the Pontifical North American College's most passionate and vocal supporters. Their relationship with the College dates back to 1983 when, during a Serra International convention, they visited the College and were introduced to many of the fine seminarians and priests who were studying there.

Since then Bill and Sue have continued to make regular trips to the College and have spent time getting to know the rectors and a countless number of students. They always take special care to call on the seminarians from their own Diocese of Dallas because Bill and Sue feel it is important for those seminarians to feel supported by their community while they are away from home. Once the seminarians are ordained and return to serve in their local parishes, the Cicherski's continue to foster and value these friendships.

The Cicherski's are deeply committed to promoting vocations for the Catholic priesthood and religious life. Both Bill and Sue are past presidents of Serra International and also have been very involved with Catholic Charities and Holy Trinity Seminary in Dallas. Although they have many philanthropic interests, the College holds a very special place in their hearts. Bill says he has "always come away [from the College] feeling encouraged and spiritually motivated."

Beyond the great faculty and outstanding education that the North American College offers, he feels that the opportunity for the men to study in Rome, so close to the Holy Father, is an unimaginably powerful experience.



For the Cicherski's, visiting the College has become a family affair. On several occasions, Bill and Sue have brought their children and grandchildren to Italy so they also can appreciate the importance of the College for the Church in America. This commitment to the North American College extends beyond moral and emotional support. Bill and Sue financially

support the College because they believe that, through the seminarians and priests, "The Church is greatly enhanced. They provide us with a better understanding of how universal the Catholic Church really is."

As members of the College's Council for Institutional Advancement, Bill and Sue are active ambassadors who take every opportunity available to promote the College among the laity in the United States.

For their long-standing friendship and investment in the Pontifical North American College, we thank Bill and Sue Cicherski. The College's doors are open wide for your next visit!

INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT

Mary DiDonato

Executive Director of Institutional Advancement



Summertime affords us the opportunity to take a deep breath, review the events of the past year, and catch up on various tasks while planning for the future. Thus far, this sesquicentennial year has been both busy and exciting - and it's not over yet!

On November 7, 2008 we were privileged to honor Archbishop Pietro Sambi, Apostolic Nuncio to the United States, and Annette and George Strake of Houston, at the 7th annual Umiltà Awards. Nearly 250 alumni, friends, and benefactors gathered at the Willard Hotel in Washington, D.C. to pay tribute to these distinguished honorees for their outstanding dedication to and support of the North American College. Preparations for the 8th annual Umiltà Awards, on November 13th at the Willard, are currently underway. We look forward to honoring Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien, Archbishop of Baltimore, and Service Corporation International and its subsidiary, Dignity Memorial Network. We hope you'll mark your calendars now and join us for the College's stateside social event of the year, rivaled only by the Rector's Dinner held annually in Rome.

In December, we hosted a benefactors' pilgrimage to Rome to commemorate two special occasions – the College's feast day on December 8th and the launch of our sesquicentennial year. During their week in Rome, fifteen benefactors learned first-hand about the mission of the College. Their stay included guided visits to St. Peter's, the Vatican Museum, a Papal audience, the historical sites of Rome, and the graduate and undergraduate houses of the College. It was indeed a moving experience for them, not only to explore the Eternal City, but also to meet, pray, dine, and chat with the College's seminarians, priests, and faculty. We will be sponsoring another pilgrimage for benefactors in October, which will include attendance at the diaconate ordination in St. Peter's. We would be delighted if you could join us!

Throughout the year, in honor of our 150th anniversary, and to spread the word about the College among the laity here in the States, the members of the Council for Institutional Advancement have been sponsoring receptions in major cities across the country. To date, we've had the pleasure of meeting new friends in Venice (FL), Albuquerque, San Diego, Houston, and Washington, DC. Soon, we will be taking the College "on the road" to Minneapolis, Orange, Oakland, and New York City. We do hope you'll join us when we're in a city near you!

Most recently, at the 2009 Rector's Dinner in Rome, we honored His Eminence Justin Cardinal Rigali, Archbishop of Philadelphia, and the Honorable R. James Nicholson, former Ambassador of the United States to the Holy See, and Mrs. Suzanne Nicholson, for their tireless support of vocations to the priesthood. And at the annual alumni reunion held in Atlanta in June, the 2009 Founder's Award was presented to Elena Panti, a beloved member of the College family, for her dedicated twenty-seven years of service. In January 2010, in celebration of our 150th anniversary, the alumni will gather for Reunion Week at their *alma mater* in Rome. They'll have the opportunity to renew friendships and relive shared memories while viewing the many improvements to both campuses since their ordination or last visit.

We're so proud of the thirty seminarians who recently returned home to be ordained in their respective dioceses and warmly welcome them into our Alumni Association. As we look forward to welcoming a new class of seminarians who will immerse themselves in the unique North American College experience, we thank you for your ongoing support, and for being such an integral part of all that we do at the College. We invite you to stop by and visit the College if your travels take you to Rome or participate in one of the many activities being sponsored here in the States.

ECONOMO'S CORNER

Rev. Msgr. Daniel Mueggenborg '89

Diocese of Tulsa

Vice-Rector for Administration



This summer at the North American College, we continue to carry out the many long-term projects of the recently completed capital campaign. These include the restoration of the exterior façades of the Casa Santa Maria and the renovation of the Casa O'Toole. In addition to these ongoing projects, which will require several

more months to complete, we also are undertaking two important works which must be completed while the seminarians and priests are away for the summer. These projects include the restoration of the Hans Jakob and Ingela Gram Rare Book Room at the Casa Santa Maria and the replacement of the main floor pavement at the seminary campus. I would like to tell you a little about each of these important projects because pictures and simple captions do not adequately communicate their importance.

Hans Jakob and Ingela Gram Rare Book Room – One of the most beautiful rooms at the Casa Santa Maria is the old library. This room was built nearly 300 years ago by Italian craftsmen and artisans to be the private library for the Dominican Sisters who used this building as their convent before it became the home of the North American College. The wood cabinets and cases still function as a library for a collection of rare and antique books, some of which have been in the College's possession for more than a century. What makes this room particularly important is that the beautifully appointed, hand-crafted woodwork is as valuable and historic as the books resting on its shelves. The current library of the Casa Santa Maria may occupy an area nearly ten times the size of the original library but it is the rare books room which allows residents to enter into the physical history of the building and consult original texts for various fields of study, especially Canon Law. This summer, we will remove the rare books so that they can be professionally preserved for the future and protected

against the destructive forces of insects and the atmosphere. The antique wood cabinets will be strengthened and cleaned so that they can serve the needs of the College for another 300 years. The windows will be replaced with insulated, coated glass which will prevent harmful solar rays from damaging both



Antique books such as these found in the Hans Jakob and Ingela Gram Rare Book Room will be preserved for future generations of students.

manuscripts and cabinets. The entire area will be climate-controlled so to avoid temperature and humidity fluctuations. This project is one more important way in which the College is caring for the goods entrusted to it and preserving those goods for future generations of scholarly priests and seminarians. This restoration work is made possible thanks to the generous support of Hans and Ingela Gram, the Cuneo Foundation, the Homeland Foundation, Joseph and Karen Dutkowsky, George Strake, College Alumni, and the recently completed Vision for the Future Capital Campaign.

Main Floor Pavement Replacement – Some of the most commonly-used spaces at the seminary campus are the main-floor corridors. These grand corridors surround the central courtyard and look onto the forty-eight orange trees (recalling the number of states in the Union at the time when the Janiculum campus was built). This is the space where receptions are held and the public is welcomed to the College. These corridors connect the most important areas of College life: The chapel, the dining hall, the library, and the recreational

facilities. Thus, these corridors receive a lot of foot traffic each day. In fact, it is reasonably estimated that these floors will be traversed more than 1,800 times per day when the full community is in residence! These corridors are covered with the original artificial surface (a.k.a. linoleum) that was installed fifty-six years ago. As you can imagine, the most public area of the College is showing the signs of extensive wear and tear. Sections of the flooring have nearly been completely worn through. This summer, the College will receive a new floor in its main corridors – the first one in more than half a century. This time, we will use porcelain tiles to create an even more durable surface which will last well into the next century.

Thank you for your support of the recent capital campaign. We could not accomplish these many good and necessary works for the future of the College without your generous contributions. Should you be in Rome, please come and visit our campuses to see for yourself how these projects have transformed our facilities and greatly enhanced our community life. Please know that we receive all of your



The antique wood cabinets of the historic Hans Jakob and Ingela Gram Rare Book Room, located above the main library at the Casa Santa Maria.

gifts with a sacred trust to use them wisely and for the ministry of priestly formation. God bless you for your sacrificial generosity and for helping us prepare the next generation of priests for the future of the Catholic Church.

-Rev. Msgr. Daniel Mueggenborg





The Pontifical North American College

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For more information about the North American College, or to learn about opportunities for memorial gifts, contact Mary DiDonato at our Washington, DC, Office of Institutional Advancement:

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Email: nac@usccb.org
or visit our website at www.pnac.org

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NOVEMBER 13, 2009 UMILTÀ AWARDS

HONORING
The Most Reverend Edwin F. O'Brien
Archbishop of Baltimore

&
Service Corporation International
Dignity Memorial Network

Thomas Ryan, President

The Willard Hotel - Washington, D.C. For more information call 202-541-5403.