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Final gathering for seminary alumni was June 19

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Three events marked the end of the seminary program and the closing of Cardinal Muench Seminary in Fargo. May 5, a staff and faculty appreciation Mass and banquet took place. May 26, Bishop Samuel Aquila celebrated a thanksgiving Mass and June 19 CMS alumni and friends gathered.

A story about the thanksgiving Mass can be read at www.fargodiocese.org/news/June2011/CMFinalMass.pdf or in the June issue of New Earth.

Father Leo Stelten was the homilist for the June 19 alumni and friends Mass on Father's Day, making his words about fathers especially fitting. "The Spirit of Pentecost has indeed gone out with you from our midst here at the seminary," he said to the priests and lay alumni at the Mass.

"You are part of the Pentecostal Spirit. Whether priest or laymen there is no doubt that you brought the light of Christ into your sphere of influence. Today, on this feast of the Holy Trinity, that window on your right may have more significance to you now than when you were here praying, or maybe dusting and mopping the floor of the chapel. Christ is there in that window on the right. He is there giving the commandment, 'Go, make disciples of all nations.' The dove of the Holy Spirit and the eye of God complete the Trinitarian symbol.

"That sign of the cross made with holy water as you daily entered this chapel years ago was such a common and regular reaction then. I pray, as do all priests who were your teachers, that the cross of Christ still reigns high in your lives. There are Fathers — spelled with a capital F — and there are fathers. Some of you former students fit into one class, most of you fit into the other. The cross of Christ is still significant. With it those who are ordained bless their people. With it you, the un-ordained fathers, bless your children," he said.

Father Stelten also spoke of the joy of alumni visiting the seminary and the sadness of its closing. "There are none of us who want to sing Alleluia today, but I think we can all agree that this is indeed a building the Lord has made, and we can certainly rejoice that so much good has been done here," he said.

"At one time or another," he said to the lay alumni, "you thought of being a shepherd of God's flock. We pray that your preparation here was of service and benefit so that all of you have been and will continue to be shepherds for the people of God in one way or another."