

*This story was originally printed in the September 2011 issue of New Earth, the newspaper for the Diocese of Fargo.*

## **New University of Mary initiatives celebrate, boost solidarity**

University of Mary president, Father James P. Shea, shared good news July 31 about several new initiatives anticipated to have a major impact on Catholic education and vocations throughout the region and beyond.

At an event on the Bismarck campus, which brought together more than 200 friends and supporters of the university, clergy from the Bismarck and Fargo dioceses, and the Benedictine Sisters of Annunciation Monastery, Father Shea announced the creation of St. Joseph's Hall for Men and St. Scholastica's Hall for Women, which will provide faith-oriented settings in which University of Mary students can live, learn and discover their calling in life.

He also welcomed Father Thomas Richter, Bismarck Diocese vocation director, who will take up residence in St. Joseph's this fall, and revealed that Bishop Paul A. Zipfel will make the University of Mary his home following his retirement. Further affirming the university's commitment to solidarity, vocational preparation and the liberal arts, Father Shea also announced the relocation of the Cardinal Muench Seminary classics program and its longtime director, Dr. Carol Andreini, to the university.

"At the University of Mary, we always want to do our part to serve the church in the ways a university can," said Father Shea. "In so doing, we carry forward the legacy of our founders and sponsors, the Benedictine Sisters of the Annunciation, who played a pivotal role in laying the foundations of the Catholic Church in western North Dakota. . . . One of the things we want with all our hearts to do is to foster vocations for the service of the church.

"We love our graduates, and we want the best for them," he continued. "And part of loving them is wanting a good number of them to discover that God is calling them to be priests and sisters and monks; so we pray, put up posters, and talk about vocations. . . . But we believe we can do yet more. Over the next two years, we will be opening two new residence halls where young women and men can live in a faith community and dedicate themselves to thinking seriously about their love of God and where he is leading them in their lives."

### **Bishop Zipfel to retire to Mary**

Students selected to live in the new residences will further benefit from the presence of exemplary mentors. A highlight of the evening was the announcement that the retiring Bishop Zipfel, for whom the university's Catholic Studies program is named, will be moving to the St. Joseph's men's residence when his successor arrives.

Beginning this fall, Father Richter also will make his home at St. Joseph's, continuing his work as vocation director for the Diocese of Bismarck, while providing a prayerful, inspiring presence for the young men who live there.

As plans for St. Scholastica's continue to take shape with the involvement of the Sisters of the Annunciation, there is also discussion about a number of possibilities for the sisters' presence there.

"We are exploring a range of ways in which the sisters can enrich and contribute to the deepening of faith that the community of young women in St. Scholastica's will experience," said Prioress Sister Nancy Miller.

"As Bishop Zipfel has graciously extended his pastoral care to this university over the years, now, in the spirit of the Benedictine Sisters of Annunciation Monastery, hospitality is extended to him," said the university's president emerita, Sister Thomas Welder.

"The more I think about it, the more living at Mary among the students is in keeping with what I wanted to do with my life here in Bismarck all along," Bishop Zipfel said. "I'm delighted to be able to respond positively to this wonderful opportunity to be here and to fulfill my own personal call to do everything I can possibly do."

Father Richter said it would be difficult to dream of something more ideal than the St. Joseph's residence.

"The opportunities and potential for promoting vocations is almost limitless," he said. "[But] the hall offers a more inclusive and extensive blessing than just increasing the potential for priestly vocations. . . . My hope is for St. Joseph's residence hall to be a place for a man to become friends with good men, with men of virtue like we see here tonight. And if that happens, that will be a blessing not only for that one man, but for all of those men. That will be a blessing for this entire campus."

Noting the support from many donors across the Diocese of Bismarck who "believe in this dream and what it will mean for vocations in North Dakota and beyond," Father Shea thanked Al and Karen Wolf for serving as lead donors for the project and for their steadfast support of priests and sisters throughout the years.

The new student residence halls are located on the second and third floors of the west wing of the Benedictine Center for Servant Leadership, in what were originally the sisters' quarters in the former Annunciation Priory. In addition to 30 rooms for students, St. Joseph's Hall includes two guest rooms, suites for the bishop and Father Richter and a meeting room.

The final configuration for St. Scholastica's is presently being planned. In the center of the men's hall is St. Anne's Chapel, where all students will be able to meet, pray and spend time with Christ.

### **Classics witness solidarity**

Another cause for rejoicing and affirmation of the university's support of the liberal arts and Catholic education was the announcement that Dr. Carol Andreini will be teaching the classics at the University of Mary this fall. Her move to Mary was prompted by the closing of Cardinal Muench Seminary in Fargo, where she carried forward the foundational work of Father Leo Stelten for 34 years, and made possible through the efforts of colleagues and alumni.

"The migration of classics and Dr. Andreini to Mary is a testament not only to her knowledge, skill and passion, but also to the fascination in her subject that she kindles in students," said Father Shea. "The study of civilizations which built the foundations of Western culture and the study of the great languages of the church, of law, of medicine and the Bible is of tremendous importance."

"In a year that saw the closure of more than 35 classics programs in colleges and universities around the country . . . I'm proud to say that the University of Mary is the only place I know of where classics are being brought on board. The migration of Cardinal Muench's outstanding legacy to our campus is a fitting addition to our founding sisters' unfolding vision of a strong liberal arts base for the professions. It will deeply enrich all that's happening on our new campus in Rome and is a fitting tribute to the long-standing and growing affection between the Diocese of Fargo and the University of Mary."

Bishop Samuel Aquila said: "The fact that Dr. Andreini . . . is going to be able to continue [her life's work] at the University of Mary is a tremendous witness, grace and union between the local churches of Fargo and Bismarck.

"The University of Mary is a tremendous gift for the Diocese of Bismarck and for the Diocese of Fargo."

Msgr. Gregory Schlesselmann, former rector of Cardinal Muench Seminary, said, "We are moved by the generosity and the solidarity that [the university's taking on classics and Dr. Andreini] reveals.

"The recently beatified Pope John Paul II . . . invited all to receive the highest form of solidarity, namely that personal communion with the divine persons of the Trinity, and from within that communion, to enter into deep fraternal bonds both in the church and with society. While we know that communion with God is the call given to all of us, it is not enough to simply know this truth; indeed, we need to experience it, to taste it in order for our hearts' longings to really and truly be fulfilled. . . . That is why this evening's event is so important.

"That is why this event [and its announcements are] so important . . . We are experiencing in a concrete way the mystery of solidarity and communion within the church . . . a communion of Catholic institutions of higher learning and formation centered on the person of Christ, a communion of the sister churches of Bismarck and Fargo, and, more specifically, a communion between those of us who have united in a common mission of inviting the next generation ever more deeply into the mystery of our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . In a world so fragmented and rent by division . . . this event . . . is a moment of . . . communion."