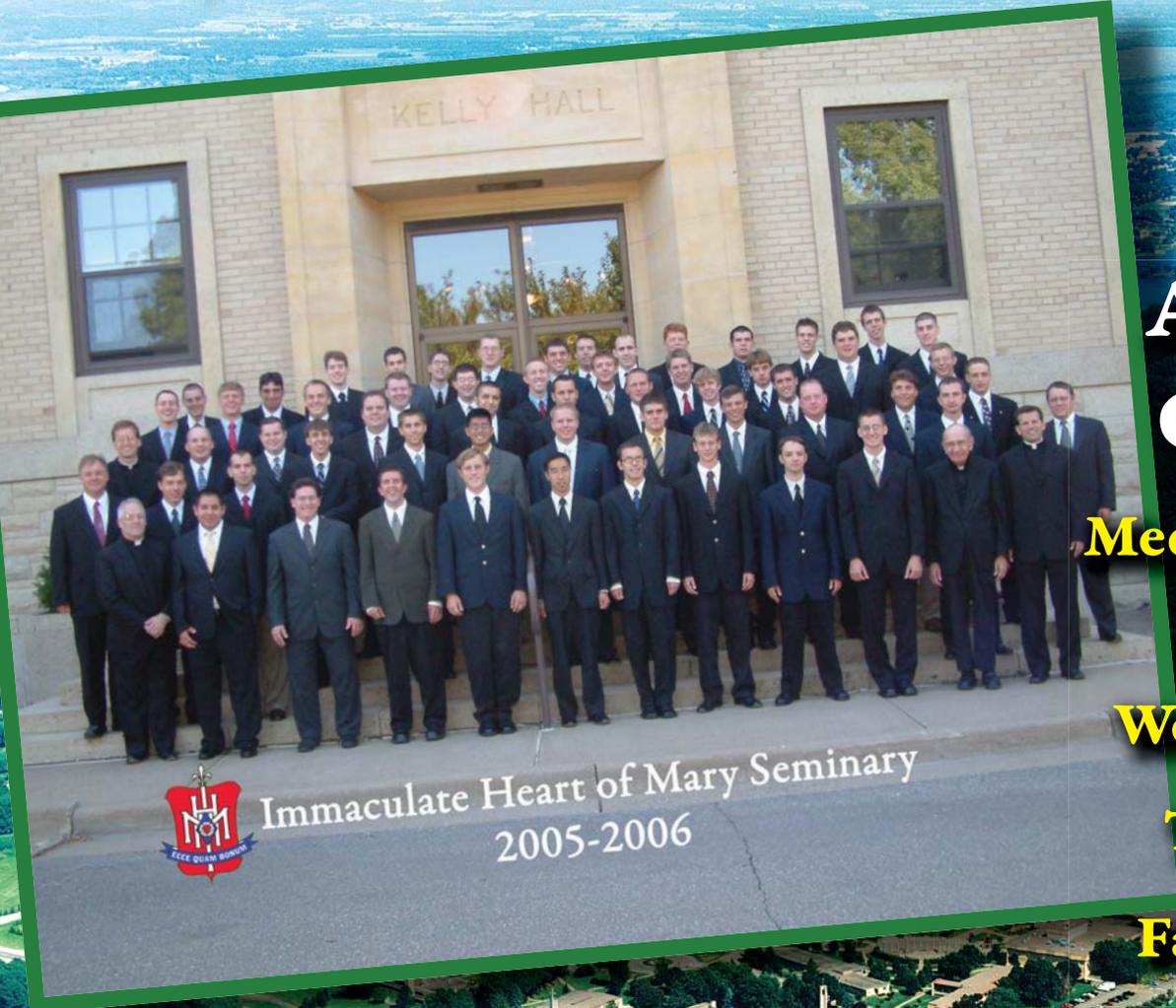




# IHM News

Fall 2005

IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY SEMINARY



**Answering  
God's Call**

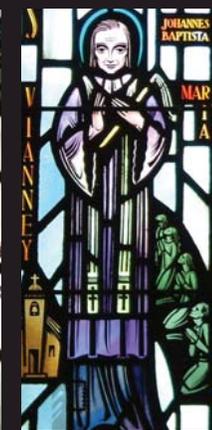
**Meet the Fifty-five  
Men of IHMS**

**World Youth Day**

**The Hurricanes**

**Family Weekend**

ECCE QUAM BONUM





Dear Friends of Immaculate Heart of Mary Seminary,

Another year is under way at IHM Seminary. In fact we are half way through the first semester already and the Spirit of God is very much alive in the house. I am very proud of the fifty-five seminarians in the community this year. They are focused, well-balanced, bright and faithful young men. They have responded generously and courageously to God's call at a very difficult time in our Church and amidst a very suspicious scrutinizing society.

One might think that the recent scandal and continued bad press about clergy sexual abuse would thin the numbers in the seminary and oppress a positive and fervent attitude among those left within her halls, but the contrary is true. Immaculate Heart of Mary Seminary, as many other seminaries, has an increased enrollment this year. In addition, the quality of men is high and the morale is even higher. These men are alive with the spirit, committed to the Church and dedicated to doing the will of God.

They feel the weight of reality and all of its consequences, but they keep their eyes fixed on the Lord. Their attitude is positive and their perspective is healthy, holy and real. Jesus says, "Anyone who puts their hand to the plow and looks back is not fit for the Reign of God." These men are fit!

We as a people of God need to support and affirm these men along this road to the priesthood of Jesus Christ. Under normal circumstances it is not an easy road. In this day and age it holds even greater challenges and obstacles. We need to ask, where is our focus; what is our attitude and perspective on the Church, the priesthood and for seminarians striving to do God's will? It best be on God and His will, not only for these men, but for ourselves as well.

As I have said before, crisis is a time of great opportunity. What an opportunity we have to live in God's reign and to help build up this very kingdom as we build up each other, especially the men God has chosen to be tomorrow's leaders in the Church.

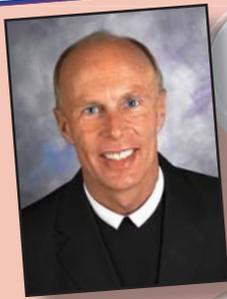
Know of our prayers for you as we trust in yours for all of us at IHM Seminary.

Sincerely in the Peace of Christ,

Very Reverend James Steffes  
Rector

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**Br. Craig J. Franz, FSC, Ph.D.**

The IHMS Community welcomes and congratulates Br. Craig J. Franz, FSC, Ph.D., who was inaugurated 12th President of Saint Mary's University of Minnesota on September 30th, 2005. IHMS is blessed by its association with SMU and joins Br. Craig in "Embracing the Future". Together, IHMS and SMU

will continue preparing and guiding today's men to become tomorrow's priests.

In the spirit of Saint John Baptist de La Salle, the founder of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, Brother Craig is dedicated to the mission of Saint Mary's University — to awaken, nurture and empower learners to ethical lives of service and leadership.

To learn more about Br. Craig, visit SMU's website [www.smumn.edu/sitepages/pid1058.php](http://www.smumn.edu/sitepages/pid1058.php)





## 2005 World Youth Day

Before the 48 of us pilgrims left from the Diocese of Madison for WYD Bishop Morlino asked us to be open and pray for a gift. He said a gift will be given to those that look with eyes of faith upon Pope Benedict XVI as St. Peter or the disciple upon whom Christ will build His church. I was blessed to see the Pope on a couple of occasions: one was the world gathering of seminarians and formatters, and the other was at the vigil and mass of WYD. At both times I experienced the pope not as a person, but more as a disciple through whom Christ guides His church. In no way could any human being bring together so

many young people and affect them as they were affected. The reactions of young people in the presence of the Holy Father varied from tears to silent awe all leading people to the Lord. Pope Benedict guided us young people by the words he spoke and the gospel that he preached. I came away with a great gift of humility by seeing the fullness of the church.

The greatness of the church was evident in the number and diversity of young people, the unity during adoration and mass, and the humility of Pope Benedict XVI. The Holy Father was a gentle reminder of the unworthy roles that Christ calls each one of us to and the gifts he bestows upon His faithful servants. The known and the unknown gifts that were poured



out by the Holy Spirit at WYD in Cologne, Germany were many. Thanks be to God!



## Our Response: Hurricane Katrina

With winds reaching 175 mph and gusts up to 215 mph, hurricane Katrina tore through the southern United States, leaving in its wake thousands dead, millions homeless, and billions of dollars worth of damage. The Louisiana city of New Orleans was hit hardest, being completely overwhelmed and flooded. Katrina was the costliest and most destructive natural disaster in U.S. history. It seemed to temporarily cast America into utter chaos. In it's wake, many are asking the question why? Why is something like this allowed to happen? Why now? And the question that we

here at IHM asked of ourselves, what can we as people of God, especially as seminarians, do to respond?

Some confusion always seems to arise after a disaster in which lives are lost and so many are left homeless and displaced. In the midst of so much disorder, people find themselves not only questioning what can be done to help, but also why such an evil event could be allowed to happen to so many people. It can be hard to understand and even harder to explain to people. But, we as Christians, know that God only allows suffering when an even greater good can come from it. It may be too early yet to see what God has in store, but I think it is safe to say one good thus far has been the response. People from all over the country and even from foreign countries have done their part to help in the rescue, and care of those who survived.

Either by giving of money or time, thousands have already participated in the recovery of the Katrina ravaged areas of this country.

IHM was also quick to respond by taking up a collection to help financially. We also extended a welcome to our brother seminarians from New Orleans who were displaced by offering them housing in our extra rooms here at IHM seminary. But we also have understood that the power of prayer was not to be underestimated. We have been praying for our brother seminarians and for all those affected by Katrina. The IHM community still continues to offer our prayers for the victims. Praying, not only for their physical well being, but also for their spiritual well being. May this suffering not dishearten the faithful but instead strengthen them as they seek the divine assistance of God. •

# Behold

how good and splendid...

Immaculate Heart of Mary Seminary (IHMS) is a Roman Catholic college seminary located amidst the natural beauty of the peaceful Mississippi river town of Winona, Minnesota. Building upon the rich two thousand year history of the Catholic Church and its Program of Priestly Formation, IHMS in conjunction with Saint Mary's University of Minnesota, progressively strives to deliver first-class spiritual and academic resources which engrains an outstanding foundation of Prayer, Philosophy and Theology in our men.

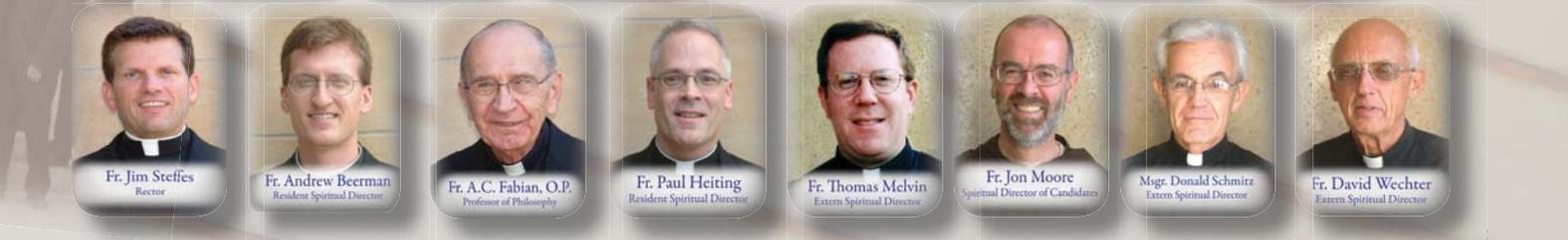
For over a half century the programs at IHMS have been forming men of mature human quality and deep spirituality. IHMS is more than a place. It is an experience...an opportunity for men to follow Christ. As Pope Benedict XVI defines any seminary, IHMS is where a man experiences the beauty of God's call in a moment of grace which could be defined as "falling in love."

## where brothers dwell as one... Psalm 133

**Vision Statement** ~ Always focused on the mission of God's Church, Immaculate Heart of Mary Seminary is a beacon of Christ Himself, inviting men to follow His call, preparing a new generation of priests for leadership and service.

**Mission Statement** ~ Flowing from its responsibility to build God's Kingdom on Earth, Immaculate Heart of Mary Seminary nurtures and heartens a man's calling from God to the ministerial priesthood. IHMS strengthens and deepens the seminarian's personal commitment to Jesus Christ with the highest quality programs of spiritual, intellectual, pastoral, and human formation. While supporting and encouraging the development of each man's natural gifts, IHMS strives to help the men discern and answer God's call with hearts on fire!





**Jeff Austin**  
Diocese of Winona

**Drew Braun**  
Diocese of Duluth

**Tom Brechtel**  
Diocese of Rapid City

**Paul Carlson**  
Diocese of Peoria

**Ronald Caroll**  
Diocese of Peoria

**Timothy Chupp**  
Diocese of Ft. Wayne/S. Bend

**Terrence Coonan**  
Diocese of Ft. Wayne/S. Bend

**Scott Curtis**  
Diocese of La Crosse

**Christopher Deaver**  
Diocese of Rapid City

**Guthrie Dolan**  
Diocese of Des Moines

**Dan Duling**  
Diocese of Wichita

**John Fogliasso**  
Diocese of Wichita

**Jeremy Frechill**  
Diocese of Peoria

**Joe Frein**  
Diocese of Des Moines

**Josh Gardner**  
Diocese of Peoria

**Luke Genthe**  
Diocese of Madison

**Daniel Gifford**  
Diocese of Peoria

**Alan Guanella**  
Diocese of La Crosse

**Timothy Hepner**  
Diocese of Peoria

**Adam Hofer**  
Diocese of Rapid City

**James Hoogerwerf**  
Diocese of Peoria

**Patrick Hutt**  
Diocese of Peoria

**Greg Ihm**  
Diocese of Madison

**Jason Kern**  
Diocese of Winona

**Mitch Knutson**  
Diocese of Madison

**Chad Koopmeiners**  
Diocese of St. Cloud

**Christopher Lapp**  
Diocese of Ft. Wayne/S. Bend

**Jeremy Laws**  
Diocese of Peoria

**Brendan McGreevy**  
Diocese of Wichita

**Tony Monahan**  
Diocese of Winona

**Brandon Moravitz**  
Diocese of Duluth

**Nathan Morris**  
Diocese of Peoria

**Thomas Otro**  
Diocese of Peoria

**Jeffrey Pedretti**  
Diocese of La Crosse

**Dustin Pfannenstiel**  
Diocese of Wichita

**Joel Phelps**  
Diocese of Peoria

**Scott Potthoff**  
Diocese of Peoria

**Patrick Reinhart**  
Diocese of Peoria

**Theo Riese**  
Diocese of La Crosse

**Jacob Rose**  
Diocese of Peoria

**Lucas Rossi**  
Diocese of Peoria

**Nathan Schilz**  
Diocese of Peoria

**Brian Smith**  
Diocese of Rapid City

**Thomas Smith**  
Diocese of Winona

**Nathan Sparks**  
Diocese of Rapid City

**Andrew Truty**  
Diocese of Peoria

**Jake Vecimcik**  
Diocese of Peoria

**Jeremy Vidmar**  
Diocese of Peoria

**Carlos Villanueva**  
Diocese of Peoria

**John Vishnfski**  
Diocese of Wichita

**Andrew Vogel**  
Diocese of Winona

**Mathew Walz**  
Diocese of St. Cloud

**Michael Wolfbauer**  
Diocese of St. Cloud

**Joshua Wondra**  
Diocese of Peoria

**Leonard Young IV**  
Diocese of Peoria

**Fr. Jim Steffes**  
Rector

**Fr. Andrew Beerman**  
Resident Spiritual Director

**Fr. A.C. Fabian, O.P.**  
Professor of Philosophy

**Fr. Paul Heiting**  
Resident Spiritual Director

**Fr. Thomas Melvin**  
Extern Spiritual Director

**Fr. Jon Moore**  
Spiritual Director of Candidates

**Msgr. Donald Schmitz**  
Extern Spiritual Director

**Fr. David Wechter**  
Extern Spiritual Director

## In A Class Of His Own

*IHMS Alumus Fr. Milo Ernster*

*Celebrates 50th Anniversary*

The IHMS Community congratulates Fr. Milo Ernster for 50 years of dedicated service to the Church.

Fr. Ernster, who was part of the first group of seminarians to live in our beloved Kelly Hall and part of the first class to



graduate from the newly built seminary, recently reflected upon his experience at IHMS.

“Ours was the first class ordained to have lived in Kelly Hall,”

proudly states Fr. Ernster. “We saw it go up...we were there at the ground breaking,

we were there when the footings were poured, and we watched those bricks laid one on top of the other. We were so excited...we knew when we came back for our senior year, we would be in the brand spanking new Immaculate Heart of Mary Seminary!”

But as fate would have it, the building was not ready at the start of the school

*continued on page 8*



Jeremy Vidmar  
Diocese of Peoria

## Senior Perspective

After four years at IHM Seminary, I am finally a senior! However, just a few days ago I found myself asking one of the new men what time we were needed to be in the Chapel for Vespers. One would think that after four years of the same schedule I would not have these questions. Often times in the hustle of the day it is easy to lose sight of what really matters.

Every year I look forward to hearing

the vocation stories of the new men. There are some so truly amazing that one could compare them to those of the Saints. No matter what their story is, they all have something to share about God speaking in their lives and the way that they came to respond to the call. Often times I wonder how it is that I am suppose to be the senior when they have so much to teach me.

Pope John Paul the Great loved to be around the youth. He would often tell the young that were gathered to not be afraid, and particularly to not be afraid of their youthfulness. To not be afraid of their zealous desire to follow Christ.

It is sometimes easy to lose sight of God's actions in our lives. I am utterly thankful to all who follow the promptings of the Holy Spirit. They are a source of refreshment, a source of youthfulness that reminds me of my own calling and enlivens the Spirit within me all over again. It seems to be a paradox to desire youthfulness, but this seems to be exactly what God wants to give us.

Maybe by the end of this year I will not have to ask what time I am to be at Chapel for Vespers, but I hope that I will always ask how I can be filled with the youthful energy and zeal to serve the Lord.●



Brian Smith  
Diocese of Rapid City

## Sprechen Sie Deutsch?

In the spring semester of this last academic year I found myself searching for a different summer experience. In past summers I had always returned home to western South Dakota to put up hay on my family's cattle ranch. Driving a tractor in circles for endless hours, I had time to contemplate the deeper mysteries of life. And, with no cab or a/c I could work on my tan! But being a seminarian, my tanning days were quickly fading into the past. I had an urge to cut loose from the ranch and see the world. But what could a ranch hand from western South Dakota do in such a complex world? To begin my search I began asking myself “who am I?”

In my seminary classes I had grown fond of philosophy. I also had an interest in the German language. So I thought it would

be interesting to take summer courses in these topics. Dr. Poling, one of my philosophy professors, told me that when he was in college he had studied German at the Goethe Institute in Germany!

Curious, I began an enquiry on what it would take. One advantage of studying in Germany was that I was planning to be there in August for World Youth Day with my diocese. I could sign up for the July session at the Geothe Institute and then meet my diocese in Munich to go to WYD.

All seemed to be falling into place... financial aid was available, I could continue the German studies at a local university when I returned to the states, and I could enjoy WYD with my diocese. Yet, amidst all the positives, anxiety and fear set in. But, by the grace of God, I happened to tell this to a couple of my professors. They both said that I would never regret learning a new language

and experiencing a different culture. With their encouragement, I began to re-question my purpose for going to Germany. I knew I was a seminarian and that I loved studying philosophy. But in what direction was my life heading? Well, the obvious answer was that I was heading towards God. And, during my time at the seminary, it seems that God has been directly me more specifically to teaching. How does one become a better teacher? I concluded that learning a second language and seeing a new culture would be an experience that would add to my ability to express ideas and broaden others experiences. With these thoughts in mind, I went to Germany.

This experience turned out be one of the most growing and revitalizing times of my life. But this only came about by identifying who I was, where I was headed, and then taking a risk and trusting that God will get me where he wants me.●



## A Freshman's View

I've been at IHMS for a little over a month, and so far it's been better than I could have imagined. I can

already see how the Seminary is helping me to gain a better prayer life and a closer bond with my fellow seminarians. The IHM Seminary does an excellent job of stressing the importance of these two things.

I came to the Seminary without a very structured prayer life. I had a lot of questions about what I should do, and at times I would struggle to keep a normal prayer routine. One of the first things we did at IHMS was to learn about prayer. We pray the Divine Office together and have a community rosary once per week. We begin each day celebrating Mass together. My prayer life has also been guided during spiritual direction, which has been excellent for me so far. I now have a much larger focus on prayer in my discernment and have a much better idea of how to pray.

The other thing the seminary stresses is a strong fellowship among the seminarians. So far, I have been able to get to know some excellent young men, who are all going through the same struggles as me. We all eat dinner as a community each night, so we get to know each other in a very open and friendly setting. We also have a lot of free time on weekends and during free weekends to do things outside of the seminary. I know that many of the friends I make here will be friends for the rest of my life and their support will help me make it through many of my struggles in the seminary. I love the seminary! I am looking forward to the next four years of my life! •

Mark your calendar now for  
The 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual  
*Rector's Dinner*  
April 23, 2006

## Thanks to Our Gracious Donors

October 18 marks my sixth month at IHMS. Each day I continue to be enlightened by the gifts God has given each man at IHMS. The men here represent many different dioceses and states. They come from diverse walks of life, each man carrying a unique vocation story. One thing, however, binds them together as a strong united community. It is the love of Christ and their faithfulness to follow His Calling to the priesthood. They live as one with hearts on fire for Jesus Christ.

Priestly Formation. The Seminary. For some people these words are mysterious. For others, they are reverent and holy. Most imagine a solitude life of prayer, shrouded by the cloak of the Church. But for those familiar with IHMS, the words mean much more. Light, life, energy, burning devotion, faithfulness, and vitality! This is IHMS! A community of young men walking, laughing, discerning, thriving, and living an active life in the footsteps of the apostles, following a call which can only be the Voice of God.

Indeed, prayer is central in a seminarian's life, as is obedience, reverence, virtue, hard work and challenge. The men of IHMS expect no less in their journey to the priesthood. They've committed their lives to the world's salvation! It is our responsibility to steward their fidelity to the teachings of the Catholic Church and continue to fervently support them through our prayers and offerings.

It is awesome and overwhelming to witness the dedication of these young men. It is equally inspiring to witness your support for them. On behalf of the entire IHMS community, THANK YOU for your prayers and for your financial support!

Your annual support helps make the formation of these dedicated men possible. Your contribution enables IHMS to minimize the expense that is passed on to the students and their families through room and board fees. This is very important since part-time jobs are out-of-the-question due to the seminarian's busy schedule. In addition, your support helps us maintain and constantly improve the beautiful buildings and grounds, which these men call home. Finally, your support aids the men directly by building our Seminarian Assistance Fund. A fund used to help offset the tuition costs of the top-notch education the men receive from Saint Mary's University of Minnesota.

November begins our annual giving season aptly named *Hearts on Fire!* Our men have a burning desire to serve the Lord and His people! This is your opportunity! Help build God's Kingdom with your *Hearts on Fire!*



Watch your mailbox for a special invitation to support IHMS, or support the men today by returning the enclosed envelope.

Joel Hennessy  
Director of Business & Development  
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Currently IHMS is Proudly Serving the Dioceses of:

Des Moines, Duluth, Fort Wayne/South Bend, La Crosse

Madison, Peoria, Rapid City, Saint Cloud, Wichita, and Winona



*Family Weekend!*  
Thanks for coming!

*Ernster continued from page 6*

year and Fr. Ernster and “thirty-some” young men were squeezed into a single family home which the diocese had purchased as part of the land acquisition for construction of the present day Cathedral of the Sacred Heart. “I don’t know how we survived that year...it was so crowded,” recalls Fr. Ernster. But survive they did and in March of 1951, the first group of seminarians moved into Kelly Hall. Father Ernster adds, “One thing wasn’t ready...there were no curtains or shades on the windows. I had one of those corner rooms with windows on three sides; it was like living in a bird cage. Every couple of days, [Fr.] Speltz would remind us how important it was to turn off the light before we got ready for bed.”

Six young men, including Fr. Ernster, graduated from IHMS that first year. But in the end, Fr. Milo Ernster was the only man of the group that was ordained. He is the Class of 1955!

As Father Ernster gave a speech as the guest of honor at the Diocese of Winona’s Annual Clergy Days, he bragged about the Class of ‘55, “Now, let me tell you about the Class of ‘55. This is a good class! There’s a...a closeness that I don’t think any of you experience with your class. The Class of ‘55 is just as big, and alive, and active today as it was fifty years ago! There has been no one who died from the Class of ‘55. This is a good class.”

Father Ernster continued his speech by expressing his gratitude to God and to all those who have shared his journey. He closed his remarks as only Father Ernster could, “I’m grateful for so many things. But, what really excites me today is knowing that this great Class of ‘55 selected me to speak on behalf of the entire class today. It’s a good class!”

Indeed it is. Congratulations Father Milo Ernster! Joel Hennessy