

November 5, 2007

I am writing this note early on Monday morning.

Yesterday Christians celebrated All Saints Sunday. The church I attended had hung black and white photographs of some two dozen saints on the walls of the sanctuary. These included people from centuries past—saints such as the gospel writers, Mary, Augustine, and Francis. It also included people from more recent days—Mother Teresa, John Paul II, Martin Luther King, Dorothy Day, and Sojourner Truth.

On Saturday I joined a group of North Park University students to visit a museum in the Pilsen neighborhood with a special exhibit to celebrate the Mexican observance of Day of the Dead. The exhibit featured several altars, each dedicated to one or more people who had died during the past year or so. These included aging parents who lived in Mexico, a woman who had immigrated to Little Village many years ago and had been active in community development in the Chicago Latino communities, a poet and literary icon, and several others. The altar which brought tears to my eyes, however, was one dedicated to much younger saints—young children from the Chicago Public Schools who have died from street violence in our neighborhoods. Number 17 in the list was a young boy, a student at the Budlong Elementary School on Foster Avenue who was killed this past spring in front of a neighborhood store just blocks from our campus.

Earlier in the week I traveled to Seattle to visit with a small number of friends of the University. Numbered among these were several graduates of North Park. I visited with a couple of pastors, a nurse, a video game designer, and several business people. Each told me about their time at North Park. Inevitably these discussions focused on the faculty and staff who were part of the University during their student days. And in each case, our graduates identified one or more individuals who had a very significant impact on their lives. These people were exemplars, mentors, teachers, counselors—people who came alongside them during these important years of personal, intellectual, and spiritual development.

Learning takes place best in the community of others. Our task as educators is to form such a community. We must be present in the lives of our students. Certainly we have tasks assigned to our specific responsibilities—we teach classes, organize activities, keep records, counsel and advise, coach teams, maintain buildings, pay bills, and care for the thousand other things required to keep the University in good stead. But the core of our work is to foster learning—in words from our mission statement, “to prepare students for lives of significance and service.”

Years from now, as our present students reflect back on their time at the corner of Foster and Kedzie Avenues, they will recognize us as saints. We will be numbered among the cloud of witnesses which helped them to learn by our good example, by our instruction, by our encouragement and care, by our presence in their lives.

SAVE THE DATE – Though I don't want to rush us forward to the Christmas season, I do want to give members of our faculty and staff advance notice of two evenings of holiday celebration we have planned near the end of the fall semester.

On Wednesday and Thursday evenings, December 12 and 13, Linda and I will host a Christmas Holiday Reception in our home for faculty and staff members, along with your spouse or guest.

A formal invitation, along with specific details for the reception, will be provided in the near future. For now, please save one of these two dates so you are able to join us.

And while we're discussing Christmas gatherings, we should also note that on Tuesday, December 11 we'll gather mid-day for our traditional faculty and staff holiday luncheon. Mark your calendars for this as well.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING – The Board gathered on campus on October 25-27 for its annual fall meeting. Summary comments from the meeting include the following:

- The Board welcomed Joe Jones as the University's new provost.
- A professional development workshop was organized for the Board on the topic of "The Role and Responsibility of the Board in a Fundraising Campaign." The workshop was facilitated by Brenda Asare and Falona Joy both of the Alford Group.
- The Board received a report from a task force appointed at the last meeting regarding the potential for a new fundraising campaign. The Board expects to consider a campaign proposal at the February 2008 meeting.
- A presentation was made by architects from VOA Associates regarding work-to-date in preliminary design for a University Commons. (The Commons is a building for which significant donor interest has been expressed and around which a fundraising campaign might be focused.) Early questions considered in this work include building location, footprint size and shape, and building program. The architects were commissioned to further refine the preliminary design for purposes of establishing a cost estimate for the project.
- The Finance Committee met with and received a report from the University auditors. A clean audit was reported for fiscal year 2007.
- The Finance Committee also recommended a revised policy regarding budget spending and contract authorization. On-campus budget managers already have been informed of these changes as appropriate to their respective responsibilities.
- On recommendation of the Development Committee the Board agreed to a resolution supporting active Board involvement in achieving the University's development goals. The resolution included three objectives: (a) that every member contribute to the Annual Fund; (b) that combined contributions by the Board to the Annual

Fund exceed \$150,000; and (c) that a process be developed that more effectively engages all Board members in development matters according to their specific interests and availability.

- On recommendation of the Seminary Committee Phillis Sheppard was promoted to the rank of associate professor.
- On recommendation of the Academic Committee Marisa Reyes was granted tenure.
- The Board also approved sabbatical leaves for the following individuals, to be scheduled during the 2008-2009 academic year:
 - Liza Ann Acosta
 - David Bennett
 - Alan Bjorkman
 - Paul Bramer
 - Richard Carlson
 - Mary Chase-Ziolek
 - Susan Rabe
 - Teree Shofner-Emrich
 - Sandie Soldwisch
 - Kelly VanderBrug
 - Tom Zelle
- The Board also voted to grant faculty emerita status to Alice Iverson.

FACULTY AND ADMINISTRATIVE SEARCHES

– Several personnel searches have been approved, with most appointments expected for the coming academic year. These include:

Faculty Positions

- Biblical and Theological Studies (replacement for Genevive Dibley)
- Biology (replacement for Larry Knipp)
- Biology (replacement for Robert Marseilles)

- French (one-year appointment replacing Christian Dogbe)
- Missions (ongoing appointment to replace the current two-year structure in the seminary)
- Nursing (previously approved position for fiscal year 2008)
- Nursing (replacement for Virginia Schelbert)
- Psychology (replacement for Haddon Klingberg)

Administrative Positions

- Dean of Academic Life – Seminary (replacement for Steve Graham)
- Dean of the School of Education (replacement for Diana Hernandez-Azcoitia)
- Dean of the School of Music (replacement for Neale Murray)
- Dean of Diversity and Intercultural Programs (replacement for Kazi Joshua)
- Technical Support Coordinator for Distance Learning (new position previously funded for fiscal year 2008)
- GOAL Academic Advisor (replacement for Ron Matthews)
- Director of Institutional Effectiveness (new position)

THANKSGIVING – We're told that this great American tradition was intended as a means to give thanks for the "fruits of the earth in their season and for the labors of those who harvest them." And so we give thanks...for the bounty we enjoy, the personal security our life affords, and the opportunity to give to those in need. Above all we thank God for divine care and guidance and for the opportunity to be numbered among the great cloud of witnesses at North Park University.