

**The Tenth Anniversary
Celebration of the
Inauguration of Monsignor
James P. Shea, President of the
University of Mary**

Thursday, September 19th, 2019

MASS READINGS

First Reading

1 Timothy 4:12-16

Read by Sister Janet Zander

Beloved:

Let no one have contempt for your youth, but set an example for those who believe in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity.

Until I arrive, attend to the reading, exhortation, and teaching.

Do not neglect the gift you have, which was conferred on you through the prophetic word with the imposition of hands by the presbyterate.

Be diligent in these matters, be absorbed in them, so that your progress may be evident to everyone.

Attend to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in both tasks, for by doing so you will save both yourself and those who listen to you.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 90

R. Fill us with your love, O Lord, and we will sing for joy!

Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain wisdom of heart.

Return, O LORD! How long?

Have pity on your servants!

Fill us at daybreak with your kindness, that we may shout for joy and gladness all our days.

Make us glad, for the days when you afflicted us, for the years when we saw evil.

Let your work be seen by your servants and your glory by their children; and may the gracious care of the LORD our God be ours;

prosper the work of our hands for us!

Prosper the work of our hands!

Gospel

Luke 7:36-50

A certain Pharisee invited Jesus to dine with him, and he entered the Pharisee's house and reclined at table.

Now there was a sinful woman in the city who learned that he was at table in the house of the Pharisee.

Bringing an alabaster flask of ointment, she stood behind him at his feet weeping and began to bathe his feet with her tears.

Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them, and anointed them with the ointment.

When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who

and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, that she is a sinner."

Jesus said to him in reply, "Simon, I have something to say to you."

"Tell me, teacher," he said.

"Two people were in debt to a certain creditor; one owed five hundred days' wages and the other owed fifty. Since they were unable to repay the debt, he forgave it for both. Which of them will love him more?"

Simon said in reply, "The one, I suppose, whose larger debt was forgiven."

He said to him, "You have judged rightly."

Then he turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? When I entered your house, you did not give me water for my feet, but she has bathed them with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You did not give me a kiss, but she has not ceased kissing my feet since the time I entered. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she anointed my feet with ointment. So I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven; hence, she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little."

He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

The others at table said to themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?"

But he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

MONSIGNOR CHAD GION

Homily

Bishop Kagan, good Sisters of Annunciation Monastery, brother priests, my brothers and sisters in Christ, it is wonderful to be with you today as we celebrate the 10th anniversary of Monsignor James Shea being inaugurated as president of the University of Mary.

Ex Corde Ecclesiae notes that the Catholic University is born from the heart of the Church and exists to serve the truth. This service to the truth redounds to the benefit of the Church and the whole of the human community. Necessarily, then, one element of the healthy functioning of a Catholic University is the ability to diagnose the illness manifest within a community and to prescribe a treatment that aids the return to health. Of course, this requires the ability to see into the heart of whatever community in which a Catholic University finds itself functioning and to diagnose what ails that community. It is a prophetic role that requires vision and courage.

I have recently been reading Mary Eberstadt's new book, *Primal Scream*. The subtitle is "How the Sexual Revolution Created Identity Politics," so that's fun. Dr. Eberstadt draws her readers' focus to what she identifies as

the central question plaguing us: who am I?

In our time, we are told we have the ability to define ourselves entirely, that "at the heart of liberty is the right to define one's own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life." How could one not be overwhelmed? Some years ago, I spoke with a National Guard soldier fresh back from Afghanistan. He described his life of military simplicity. Basically, he did, ate, and wore what the Army told him to do, to eat, and to wear for nine months. Upon his return, he walked into Walmart and felt the beginnings of a panic attack. There were dozens of peanut butter options. This didn't include the almond, cashew, pecan, hazelnut, sunflower, soy, and sesame options also available. The seemingly endless options were, in fact, anxiety-inducing. This soldier discovered that excessive nut-based sandwich spread options can jangle the nerves. How could we not find ourselves much more profoundly shaken when we are told that determining the meaning of everything is on us, each of us, as we stand in the purpose and meaning aisle of the Walmart of human heritage? Right and wrong, meaning and value, and truth itself is left entirely to each individual to evaluate and determine.

This approach to truth and meaning recalls for me well-intended parents in parishes I've served who choose to forego baptism and religious instruction for the purpose of affording their child the opportunity to "choose for themselves" what they believe – as if the child will, basically unprompted, begin to sift through the entire religious and philosophical inheritance of the human family and piece together a coherent vision uniquely their own. That's never going to happen! It's really hard to comprehend and integrate a fully formed system, no less to create one. Instead, that child will be strongly inclined to play Fortnite until he or she is confronted with a real existential crisis, in which he or she will either drown or build a raft of meaning from the flotsam and jetsam around him or her in the cultural sea. Fewer and fewer are climbing aboard the ship of some established system of meaning for refuge. At the same time, mental health struggles, addiction issues, and suicide numbers in the US are as high as they have ever been since we've started keeping those statistics. Causation or correlation? Hard to determine. I'm confident, though, that it's no coincidence.

The question "who am I?" was never a question we were meant to answer on our own. The answer flows from a powerful milieu of family, community,

religious belief, self-reflection, and much more.

Why do I think Monsignor Shea is such an effective pastor, teacher, and University president? Glad you asked. For one, it's because he very much so has his finger on the cultural pulse of our time. He sees many philosophical and theological pitfalls and trains the students of this University to think, pray, and act so as to avoid those pitfalls.

But that leadership becomes particularly prophetic when several of the pitfalls are, in fact, widely regarded as wisdom. I have heard Monsignor Shea speak about the cultural currents of our time and how challenging they are to navigate as the leader of a University. On a couple of occasions, Monsignor Shea has spoken about some of the national organizations he is required to participate in as a Catholic University president. He will share some of the frustrations and challenges of working with these organizations. We'll talk about the dynamics of the meetings, some of the personalities at work. The description of the events will seem to be leading up to a statement like, "If I never have to be involved in that organization ever again, it will be too soon." Instead, Monsignor will conclude by finally sharing that he's been chosen to serve on the leadership

committee of the organization being discussed.

This leads me to another quality I believe is indispensable to Monsignor Shea's leadership – he models for you and me a winsome joy in response to the challenges of our time, not a grumpy, sullen, bunker mentality. To paraphrase Saint Teresa of Avila, "God save us from sour-faced saints." Does this mean he is immune to the impatience and frustration that can accompany the effort to implement a vision? Certainly not. But on the whole, his actions and words are a rolling drumbeat of fearless joy as we push into the headwinds of our time. And this tends not only to grant him access to conversations and circumstances that would often not be allowed a Roman Catholic priest but also has him chosen for leadership in those very same organizations. It is a big-heartedness that I admire and seek to imitate.

I point this all out only to highlight what it is the University of Mary has provided throughout its history and continues to provide with ever greater focus under Monsignor Shea's leadership. The University of Mary is flourishing not because it tells students they can be anything but because it helps them to search out the answer to the question that Dr. Eberstadt says haunts us. Who am I? Who am I? A human creature with a particular

nature, with particular needs that do not change, regardless of time and place.

Who am I? A person created in the image of God; fractured in mind, body, and spirit; redeemed and renewed in the love of God poured out on the Cross. Who am I? The beloved of the Father.

These truths comfort us not because they are pleasant fictions to get us through the day. These truths correspond to the reality of how things are. To introduce students to these truths and the health and peace that follows in their wake is the work of a University fully realized. It is the work the University of Mary has engaged and will continue to engage under the inspired leadership of Monsignor James Shea. Lord, prosper the work of his hands and the hands of all who serve the mission of the University of Mary. Prosper the work of their hands!

JEROME RICHTER

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your attention please. I am Jerome Richter, VP for Public Affairs here at the University of Mary, and I have the privilege to serve as the emcee tonight. Ten years ago today, the University of Mary inaugurated its sixth president, Monsignor James Shea, and we are honored to be able to celebrate this day with him.

Each of us know Monsignor Shea in our own particular way: sibling, friend, colleague, teacher, president. Joe and Pat, you even have the great blessing of calling your son "Father!" But to all of us, Monsignor, you have been an inspiration.

Monsignor, you have always inspired me and taught me that a life fully alive is a life given away in love. I must admit, though, ten years ago today was one of the most inspiring moments you ever gave me, and I can prove it. [Show the picture.] This picture, as you know, was taken shortly after your inauguration, and my heart was pounding with gratitude and encouragement for you, but most importantly, gratitude for what I knew the Lord and the Blessed Mother were going to do through you. I mean, who greets a newly inaugurated president by grabbing their face! I wish I could

promise that I will never grab your face in public again, but you and I both know me too well to be sure of that.

So what has Monsignor been doing the last ten years, besides getting out of milking cows? Under Monsignor Shea's leadership, we have established . . .

1. a campus in Rome, which has since welcomed more than 500 students.
2. We created a Catholic Studies program, which went from being non-existent to being the second largest program of its kind in the nation.
3. We launched Vision 2030, completing Phase I with over \$101 million raised.
4. We created the Year-Round Campus program, allowing our students to complete a bachelor's degree in 2.6 years and a master's in 4.
5. We built the new Fieldhouse, Roers Residence Hall, the beautiful Lumen Vitae University Center, and of course our beloved Grotto.
6. We added 3 doctorate programs.
7. We partnered with FOCUS to bring 900 of their missionaries onto our campus every summer for their annual training.
8. We established our School of Engineering.
9. We created a Bioethics master's program.

10. We established the St. Joseph's and St. Scholastica Residence Halls and began the tradition of hosting an annual Vocations Jamboree, fostering a spirit of discernment among our students.

11. We entered into a groundbreaking and unprecedented partnership with Arizona State University, establishing Mary College at ASU.

12. We developed an Athletic Strategic Plan entitled "Greatness through Virtue," offering our scholar-athletes the resources they need to flourish fully and for the rest of their lives.

13. And last year, in testament to our growth and development under Monsignor's leadership, we had record enrollment numbers, getting the opportunity to welcome over 500 students to the University of Mary as our largest incoming class ever.

SISTER NICOLE KUNZE

“Listen carefully, my child, to the master’s instructions, and attend to them with the ear of your heart.” (RB Prologue:1)

This is the first sentence from the Rule of Saint Benedict. This sentence begins a small book that has guided the lives of professed Benedictine sisters and brothers, Benedictine lay oblates, and other seekers of God for over 1500 years. Saint Benedict founded the Benedictine order in Italy in the early 500s. Through the past 15 centuries, women and men have used his Rule, which is steeped in sacred scripture, to provide a framework for their life lived together in community.

In his Rule, Saint Benedict provided suggestions to the community on electing a leader, caring for the sick, admitting new members, setting up its prayer schedule, and serving others. The Benedictine order was not established to do a particular type of work or serve a specific group of people. For centuries, Benedictine communities have worked creatively to meet the needs of the people living near the monastery.

Benedictine Sisters from Minnesota, the foremothers of our community of Annunciation Monastery, traveled west on the train to Bismarck in Dakota

Territory in 1878 to teach at St. Mary’s Academy. Seven years later, more sisters came to establish the only hospital between Seattle and Minneapolis, St. Alexius Hospital. These sisters weren’t prepared to provide medical care. Benedictines hadn’t been involved in healthcare until that time, but they came to meet the need. Over the next 70 years, Benedictine Sisters continued to come to North Dakota to staff the many schools and hospitals throughout the Diocese of Bismarck. By the time Annunciation Monastery was established as an independent community in 1947, the people had come to know the Sisters in their response to need as well as in collaboration with them to serve in health care and education.

In our monastery mission statement, we say that we strive with others to respond to the challenges of the times. The people of Bismarck needed teachers and schools and the sisters responded. The people of Bismarck needed a hospital and the sisters responded. The sisters saw the need for a Catholic college in Bismarck that would serve the needs of their young community and provide a new option for higher education in western North Dakota and the sisters responded by founding Mary College in 1959.

In all our endeavors, we Sisters have always collaborated with outstanding

women and men to provide education and healthcare to others. We never have and never will do it on our own. We have relied on friends like you to assist us in carrying the mission forward, continuing the healing and teaching ministries of Jesus Christ, the ultimate servant leader. In this collaboration, we are working side by side, together, all of us, to bring about the kingdom of God. We are stewards of the gift that has been given to us by our founding sisters. We are tending this gift and preparing to pass it on to those who will follow us.

Throughout our 60-year history, the University of Mary has been blessed with exceptional leadership. Tonight we gather to thank Monsignor Shea for his unwavering commitment to the Christian, Catholic, and Benedictine tradition of this place, for taking what has been entrusted to him, tending and cultivating it, so that this University will continue to serve those seeking to become leaders in the service of truth for many years to come.

May the wisdom of Saint Benedict and the commitment of the Sisters of Annunciation Monastery guide Monsignor Shea and the University of Mary as it continues to serve the needs of the people of this region and beyond.

SISTER THOMAS WELDER

An Irishman was interviewed by a professor conducting a survey in literacy; he asked him the difference between a collision and an explosion. The Irishman answered:

“In a collision there you are, but in an explosion where are you?”

Well here we are, not colliding, but celebrating a remarkable servant leader who has brought the explosive energies of his entire being to this Christian, Catholic, and Benedictine school on the prairie.

Where were we ten years ago, September 2009? We were on this campus, Our Lady of the Annunciation Chapel, inaugurating the new president of the University of Mary, the youngest president in our country. In his inaugural address, Father James Patrick Shea wasted no time in bombarding us with an explosion of new initiatives. He'd probably been on campus a few months and was already re-structuring the academic divisions into schools, establishing a campus in the city of Rome, and hinting at a campaign for student scholarships.

We saw it then and we celebrate it tonight. The gift Msgr. James Shea bestows on the University of Mary, the Church, and the world is large and life-giving.

It is large, because it is saturated with God's grace; it began with a farm boy saying “yes” to an interior stirring, the call to priesthood. If you ask college students, “What does a priest do?” well over half will say he is a “spiritual leader.” If you ask children, they will give you specifics, like this 7-year old who reported, “Priests come to class to see us. We have to stand up when he comes. Then he blesses us and we're holy for a little while. At least until recess, I think...but that's what priests do for a living. They make people holy.”

That's what Monsignor Shea does for us. His preaching and teaching is a “pedagogy of love.” His living is a witness to the beautiful truth that holiness is possible and that Mary, our Mother and patroness, will hear us when we beg from her holiness of life.

Other things come large when Monsignor Shea is around. Have you ever tried to match his stride or have you ever seen the feasts he'll put on a table? Or heard his stories and songs enlarged by the myths and outlandish exaggeration of the Irish?

But largest of all is his breadth of vision, a vision that honors the dreams of the founding Sisters: to prepare students to become leaders in the service of truth.

Monsignor Shea knows that you can only lead as far as you are willing to go

yourself and he's not afraid to go inward, to that place where he can listen to the wisdom tradition of the Benedictine Sisters of Annunciation Monastery, our founders and sponsors.

Under his visionary and tireless leadership, Monsignor Shea is shaping a new future for the University of Mary. We, all the constituents of Mary, have a part in the goals of Vision 2030. But it's his signature, his bold and courageous leadership that are pivotal to its success.

When Monsignor puts his hand to the task, the vision becomes life-giving. Education at the University of Mary is education for life. Everyone, locally, nationally, is noticing that there is a greatness of spirit in Monsignor Shea's leadership. How else can we explain record-breaking enrollment, students' desire to live on campus, a world-class scholars community, a Catholic Studies program, a student success center, new doctoral programs, a virtue based approach for our scholar athletes, and an amazing expansion and renovation of campus facilities, to include new and renovated chapels, the Marian grotto, and this place, the Lumen Vitae University Center? This Center is the hub for all student activities, the place to be seen, the place where hospitality meets the student, the guest, and the benefactor at the door.

For faculty and staff, the University of Mary is fertile ground for new ideas, for generative energy, and for the conviction, "I am called to this place."

Your presence here this evening is profound witness to your loyalty, friendship, and support of the selfless service of our leader over the past decade. A responsive and humble listener for the voice of God everywhere in life, especially in each of you, in colleagues, in students, in benefactors, Monsignor Shea often prays, "May the tender mercy of the Lord our God be upon us!" And we add our voices, "Prosper the work of our hands, O God, prosper the work of our hands."

FATHER PAUL HOESING

Hi Monsignor Shea. I'll say your name as "Jim" perhaps a few times in this occasion, and I send greetings here from Saint Louis Missouri at Kenrick Seminary. My name is Father Paul Hoelsing and Jim would know me as "Paul."

It's good for all of you to realize that there were beginnings to Monsignor Shea. And I was privileged to be a part of some of those beginnings at seminary. We'll start at 2002 – it was June – and we had a final banquet. One would say that's the end of seminary. At that final banquet, our names were called – "Father Paul Hoelsing, sent to preach the Gospel in the Archdiocese of Omaha. James Patrick Shea, sent to preach the Gospel in the Diocese of Bismarck." And so that's been happening in the last 17 years, "sent to preach the Gospel."

And, Jim, in a particular way you've been preaching the Gospel at the University of Mary. And you did it in your high school work, in your parish, and I've been privileged to see a great flourishing in that. I take this occasion just to say congratulations . . . and thank you. Thank you for your work and for your friendship. So I'd like to say two words about that – your work and your friendship.

There was a wedding in which the maid of honor said this about her sister. Her sister was always kind of nervous and unsure of herself until she met her husband. And this maid of honor, who's a philosophy major, caught on that as soon as she had fallen in love with her husband and moved into an engagement, her sister changed. And the couple was going to move far away. And this sister said, "While I know that you're moving far away, I know that, when I see you, I will see more of you, because as you've fallen in love, you've become more yourself."

And in so many respects, Jim, I've seen your engagement with the University make you come alive in ways that are incredible to see. And so while further apart, when I do see you, I see more of you. Because you've been engaged, there, for 10 years.

When a man pours out his life, he comes alive. That's the rule of the gift. And that gift is brought to life, really, by friendship. And I work in a seminary where, day in and day out, I work with men who don't know the gift of Jesus and his friendship. And I pray everyday that they will encounter a friend that will bring alive that gift for them. In many ways that happened when I was in seminary because I had good friends, and that's huge, and you've been a good friend.

I was looking for that quote from Sirach today: "A faithful friend is a sturdy shelter." And I found this little bookmark with Monsignor's nice print. And it said this: "Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in his wonderful face, and the things of earth will grow strangely dim, in the light of his glory and grace." That was in a Bible that you gave to me twenty years ago. And the world has grown strangely dim, because of Jesus and his friendship, and because I've watched you build a University, a civilization of friendship. And I see as the mission of the University of Mary to raise up a whole universe of friendship. So on this tenth anniversary, enjoy the friendships of this day. Enjoy the friendships of the University. And enjoy friendship with Jesus. I'm praying for you, I'm praying for the University, and I'm so grateful. Congratulations.

FATHER GREGORY CRANE

When Jerome Richter asked me if I could say a few words this evening, I was deeply honored. It's a huge honor to get to talk here. He asked if I could just share some memories from my time working for Monsignor Shea. I was happy to do it. As I started to think about it, though, I realized that it was actually pretty tough to come up with things . . . because I've repressed most of those memories [pause for laughter]. Austin, I have a good counselor if you need one [more laughter].

No seriously, it actually wasn't always easy working for Monsignor, but that's not because he was a bad boss or a bad president. It's because Monsignor Shea is deeply zealous for the Gospel. And that zeal drives him to pour out his whole self everyday.

One of the great gifts that Monsignor Shea has that he has brought to this job and that really impacted my life is his faith. Monsignor truly believes that God is the Lord of the universe, that he sent his Son, Jesus Christ, into the world to save us and that he has called Monsignor to be a priest and to be president of this University. And that's it. It's that simple. So from day one, Monsignor knew what he was doing and where he was going because of this conviction, because of his faith.

This faith really affected me personally. When I came out here to work after college I was sort of running from the call to the priesthood, basically because I was worried that as a priest I'd be unhappy. But being around Monsignor, this faith really rubs off on you. It began to change me and to change my heart. It eventually brought me to a place where I could trust too, where I could relax and say yes to the call to the priesthood and let go of the fear. Because if God is really Lord of the universe, then he won't call us to something that will make us unhappy.

When I drove out here nine years ago, Monsignor, I never dreamed that there would come a day when you and I would be concelebrating Mass up in the sanctuary in Our Lady of the Annunciation Chapel. It was an honor to be next to you there this evening, and it has been an honor and a privilege working for you and getting to know you.

Your faith is a gift to this University, to all of the people that it has impacted, and to me. Thank you for your faithfulness to the Gospel, and to Christ.

AUSTIN HOLGARD

Thanks so much for coming tonight to celebrate 10 years of Monsignor Shea as president of the University of Mary!

I want to share with you something that I've been reflecting on these days leading up to this happy anniversary, but it takes some setting up:

A little over 10 years ago, Monsignor Shea, then Father Shea, just finished an incredible tenure at St. Mary's where he was much beloved by students, parents, and teachers alike, some of whom are in the crowd this evening.

Then it was off to the wilder west of Dickinson and Killdeer with all its bad lands and good people. Those years out there were for him a time of great and deep joy.

Why was this?

When a man discerns a call to the priesthood, he is not attracted by the prospect of administration (if he is, something is very wrong!). Rather his heart is moved by Christ to be uniquely his own as a pastor for his people. And really, if you boil it down, his heart is receiving from Jesus a call to a particular type of fatherhood. There in Killdeer, Monsignor was for the first time in his priesthood, a pastor of his own parish, a father to those people, and still doing at Dickinson Trinity the one thing that he loved: teaching young people. After

years and years of seminary formation dreaming, preparing, and longing to do precisely this work, he was doing it.

However, two years later he was called to the University of Mary to serve as the youngest University or College president in the nation. After two years of doing what he had been preparing a lifetime to do, he was being asked to leave and do something that had never been done before with no formal training to do it.

On the surface of things, it looked as if he was being called to leave behind the life of a pastor and take on a role and duty far less romantic: the role of administrator. It must've been so difficult if not painful to muster the courage to answer that particular call. But every father knows that a father has often to do things they do not want to do for the good of those being entrusted to them.

And so Father Shea went, leaving behind the life of a pastor, the life of a father, the life of a priest.

Everyone, that last line, of course we know isn't true!

In 10 years at the University of Mary, we've seen tremendous, tremendous growth under Monsignor's leadership and ability. But if there's one thing that hasn't happened at the University of Mary in this time, it's that Monsignor

Shea has become any less a priest, any less a pastor, or any less a Father.

Monsignor, I'm convinced that there is no priest in the nation serving as a president of a University, doing what we're doing, that sits as many hours in a confessional as you do, or celebrates and preaches as many Masses, or offers as much spiritual care to the thousands – THOUSANDS – of students who've walked onto campus since you began here. Your priestly presence has comforted and guided the many families who've moved here, planted roots here, celebrated life's joys here and suffered its sorrows too, mine one of many. Everyone, the very passion that motivates him in this work flows directly from his father's heart, a priestly heart.

Truly, Father, although it may not feel like it in the midst of budget committee meetings and the many, many dinner speeches, your priestly fatherhood is alive, vibrant, fruitful and felt by us here who get to share in this work together with you.

Everyone, if the simple passage of 10 years does not make a man old, there's aspects of this work that certainly will. Monsignor, it is true that you're older, in many ways, than in those elysian Killdeer days. But I'm reminded of a quote you have taped to your desk, words from another priest that you

jotted down. They serve as a reminder to you daily and for us tonight:

"A priest's heart is always young."

"A priest's heart is always young..."

Please raise a glass with me:

Everyone, to the young pastor, the young father, the young priest,
Monsignor James Shea! *Ad multos annos!*

MONSIGNOR JAMES SHEA

I've spent ten years giving speeches on behalf of the University of Mary, and I told myself I would take tonight off.

This summer Bishop Zipfel died. Ten years ago he released me for service to the University of Mary, and before that – going back to the beginning of my priesthood – he sent me to teach in our Catholic high schools. I'm very grateful to him.

I'm grateful also to Bishop Kagan, who has allowed me to continue.

Without our Benedictine Sisters, the landscape of North Dakota – not only the Catholic landscape but the whole cultural, religious, and educational fabric of our time and place – would be very different. My life would be very different.

At the beginning I pledged to them and to all of you to pour the vigor of my youth and the energies of my heart into the great mission of Mary's University, and I've tried to do that.

Someone recently expressed to me surprise that she was receiving an honor. She said, "I've only ever done what I was supposed to do."

I haven't even done that!

But I love what I do, I love the students, and there's no one else I'd rather be. Everything that's happened ... we've

done it all together, and the good that's come is because of our friendship: with God, and with each other.

Thanks to Jerome Richter for putting all of this together. He's really great. You all are. Thanks so much for the scholarship. Thanks for your prayers and kindness. I love you all very much.

God bless you. Mary loves you.

BISHOP DAVID KAGAN

Pope Benedict XVI began his "Address to Catholic Educators" by saying: "Education is integral to the mission of the Church to proclaim the Good News. First and foremost, every Catholic educational institution is a place to encounter the living God who in Jesus Christ reveals His transforming love and truth. This relationship elicits a desire to grow in the knowledge and understanding of Christ and His teaching. In this way those who meet Him are drawn by the very power of the Gospel to lead a new life characterized by all that is beautiful, good, and true: a life of Christian witness nurtured and strengthened within the community of Our Lord's disciples, the Church."

The Benedictine Sisters established Mary College to do exactly what Benedict said is its unchanging purpose and its enduring contribution to the larger Church. The Benedictine Sisters exercised great courage, foresight, and abiding trust in God's holy will by choosing a young priest now some ten years ago to not only continue the Church's mission here but to shepherd this great Catholic institution to new and even more compelling heights of Catholic faith, hope, and charity.

Monsignor Shea became the youngest University president at that time, and even after ten years, he has retained that

vigorous youthfulness and enthusiasm for Jesus Christ and His Church, and for that I am personally grateful. I speak for the entire Diocese of Bismarck with some assurance that we are all most grateful to him for his unwaveringly Catholic leadership, which he pursues only with the constant support of the Benedictine Sisters.

Monsignor Shea strives to be a priest after the heart of Christ. I know this is evident to all of you. This is an evening of joyful and grateful recommitment to Jesus Christ, and each of you should bear witness to the hope which you nourish by your prayers, your most generous support and good works for this University, and your prayers for Monsignor Shea, that he be able to lead in witnessing to the Truth who is the One Teacher of us all.