message from the provincial

Dear Friends,

We have waited several years for the completion of renovations at St. Charles College, and now, with tremendous gratitude for our partners and colleagues, we celebrate the renewal of this sacred place.

Beyond the fresh paint and updates, St. Charles College also has a renewed mission, one that is already inspiring important relationships between our men in formation and our senior Jesuits at the college. Traditions, stories and lessons are shared, and a new generation of Jesuit vocations is kindled.

We also celebrate the service of 22 Jubilarians who do God’s work in our apostolates and international missions. In their diverse roles – retreat directors, campus ministers, writers, pastors and professors – they work for the greater glory of God. Preparing to do the same are the nine Jesuits who recently professed first vows and continue on the formation path to a lifetime of service.

All of this is made possible by the prayers and generosity of so many friends named in this issue. You are Companions in ministry.

This joy we celebrate together prepares us for Advent and for still greater joy to come. With hearts of gratitude, we pray with “confident hope,” as Fr. Donald Hawkins writes in this issue, for the coming of our Lord and Savior.

Please remember us in your prayer this Christmas season, and be assured you are in our prayers. As you read about our men and ministries, remember to include yourself in our story. Remember that your support and prayer has enabled this work, sustains the Ignatian tradition and promotes a faith that does justice.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Mark A. Lawrin, SJ.
The Southern Jesuit is a publication of the Jesuits of the New Orleans Province.

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Cover: Novice Brendan Love and Fr. Paul Schott at St. Charles College, Fall 2013
First Provincial Selected for New U.S. Central & Southern Province

Fr. Ronald Mercier has been chosen to lead the Jesuits of the United States Central and Southern Province – a unification of the New Orleans and Missouri Provinces which will be established on July 31, 2014, the feast of St. Ignatius Loyola. He will begin his six-year term on that same date, succeeding Fr. Mark Lewis of the New Orleans Province and Fr. Douglas Marcouiller of the Missouri Province.

Currently, Fr. Mercier is a theology professor at Saint Louis University specializing in theological ethics, bioethics and social ethics. He also does sacramental ministry at the College Church and at St. Mary’s Assumption Ukrainian Byzantine Catholic Church.

Previously, he was executive director of the Jesuit Collaborative, a network linking ministries in Ignatian spirituality from North Carolina to Maine. Earlier, he served as dean and professor of ethics at Regis College, the Jesuit theology faculty of the University of Toronto.

He holds degrees in theology from Regis College and the University of Toronto as well as degrees in Slavic Studies and Russian history from Yale, Columbia and Harvard. Originally from Holyoke, Mass., Fr. Mercier entered the Society of Jesus in 1975 in Boston. He was ordained a priest in 1987.

New Province Assistants Appointed

Mary Baudouin, who has been the provincial’s assistant for social ministries in the New Orleans Province since 2003, will extend her work to include the social ministries of the Missouri Province when the two provinces are united next summer. Baudouin also handles the New Orleans Province’s socially responsible investment program and the annual Ministry of Management seminar for Jesuits and lay leaders of Jesuit works. She worked for 14 years in social justice ministries with Catholic Charities and the Office of the Social Apostolate of the Archdiocese of New Orleans.

John Fitzpatrick has been chosen as the provincial’s assistant for advancement of the New Orleans and Missouri Provinces. He will direct the advancement staffs in both provinces and oversee the ongoing work of unifying the two operations by 2014.

New Leadership at Spring Hill College

The Spring Hill College Board of Trustees announced a new leadership structure in November. Former president and current chancellor Fr. Gregory Lucey will assume the presidency of Spring Hill College in December. He will be joined by John Barter who has been named chief operating officer. Barter will oversee daily operations of the college and lead the college’s cabinet. Fr. Richard Salmi, who has served as the college’s 38th president since June 2009, will step down at the end of the academic semester to pave the way for this new structure.

Jesuit Guiding Students in Space Station Experiment

Cristo Rey Jesuit College Preparatory School of Houston is one of three schools in the nation selected by the Center for the Advancement of Science In Space to participate in a program to
Six Jesuits Ordained to the Diaconate

In preparation for priestly ordination next year, six Jesuits were ordained to the diaconate in October at Masses in Chestnut Hill, Mass., and Santa Clara, Calif. Archbishop of Boston, Cardinal Seán Patrick O’Malley, O.F.M. Cap., ordained Robert Murphy and Michael Rozier who are completing theological and ministerial training at the Boston College School of Theology and Ministry. In studies at the Jesuit School of Theology at Santa Clara University are Nathan O’Halloran, Quang Tran, Dong Vo and Christopher Schroeder, who were ordained as deacons at Santa Clara University’s Mission Church by Auxiliary Bishop Robert McElroy of San Francisco.

KUDOS

Br. Ferrell Blank was recently recognized for his 52 years of service to Spring Hill College when its trustees named a campus road in his honor. Br. Blank has served as the college plant engineer and befriended many students over the years, some of whom have established a scholarship in his name. He continues his work at Spring Hill College and is a member of the Coast Guard Auxiliary, Knights of Columbus and the Men of St. Joseph.

Fr. Flavio Bravo professed final vows as a Jesuit on September 17 during Mass at Strake Jesuit College Preparatory in Houston, where for 12 years he has worked as a teacher, chaplain and the director of pastoral ministry.

Scholastic Kevin Cormier successfully defended his thesis and completed requirements for his doctorate in biochemistry at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas. The title of his doctoral dissertation was “Exploration of Chemical and Biochemical Mechanisms of Catalysis.” In September he began theology studies at Regis College in Toronto, Canada.

Fr. Michael Gallagher was one of four alumni inducted into the Nolan Catholic High School Hall of Fame in Fort Worth, Texas. Fr. Gallagher, who is the United Nations representative for Jesuit Refugee Service, spoke about his work during presentations to faculty and students.

TRANSITIONS

Fr. Donald Bahlinger is providing pastoral assistance to immigrants in El Paso, Texas, at Sacred Heart parish. He spent the summer working with Hispanic migrants in Mobile,
Ala. Fr. José Mesa, who left his post as parochial vicar of St. Augustine Church in Gainesville, Fla., is assisting with Hispanic ministry for the Archdiocese of Mobile.

Fr. Warren Broussard will be installed as pastor of Immaculate Conception Church in Albuquerque, N.M., at the end of the year. Current pastor Fr. Rafael Garcia will move to Kansas City, Mo., where he will serve as pastor of St. Francis Xavier parish.

Replacing Fr. Broussard as the provincial’s assistant for pastoral and retreat ministry is Fr. Mark McKenzie, who assumes the post after 12 years as pastor of St. Matthew the Apostle Parish in St. Louis, Mo.

Fr. Stephen Rowntree is an associate pastor of Holy Name of Jesus Church in New Orleans. He has been a philosophy professor for more than 25 years and recently worked at Loyola University’s Office of Mission and Ministry.

in memoriam

Fr. Thomas Griffin

Father Thomas A. Griffin passed from this life on September 29, 2013, at Our Lady of Prompt Succor Nursing Home in Opelousas, La. He was 95 years of age, a Jesuit for 66 years and a priest for 55 years. A funeral Mass was celebrated at St. Charles College in Grand Coteau, La., and he was buried in the Jesuit cemetery at the college.

Fr. Griffin was born on August 14, 1918, in Youngstown, Ohio, and raised in New Mexico. He attended St. Mary’s School in Albuquerque and after high school worked on the Navajo Reservation for the U.S. Indian service in New Mexico and Arizona. He served in the U.S. Army for three and half years during World War II, for two years in the Persian Gulf Command in Iran with the 334th Engineer Regiment and as a sergeant major at the prisoner-of-war camp in Lordsburg, N.M.

He entered the Society of Jesus at St. Charles College in Grand Coteau, La., on July 30, 1947, and pronounced first vows on July 31, 1949.

Fr. Griffin attended Spring Hill College in Mobile, Ala., earning a B.A. in philosophy in 1954. He studied theology at St. Mary’s College from 1955-1959 and was ordained a priest at Spring Hill College on June 18, 1958.

He began a long career in pastoral ministry, serving in a variety of assignments in Tallahassee, Fla., Miami and Lafayette, La. In 1968, he was assigned as chaplain at Jackson Memorial Hospital, Cedars of Lebanon Hospital and at the Dade County Jail in Miami. For 37 years he attended to the spiritual needs of the hundreds of patients.

Fr. Griffin noted in a reflection on the occasion of his 50 years in the priesthood that his was a rewarding apostolate, that it “was common to anoint twenty people in a day,” and that he was grateful his good health allowed him to walk through the “twenty-nine floors in eight buildings.”

In 2011 he was missioned to Ignatius Residence in New Orleans to pray for the Church and Society; he moved to St. Charles College in Grand Coteau, La., in May 2013.

Donations in memory of Fr. Griffin may be made to the Senior Jesuits Fund of “The Jesuits,” 710 Baronne St., Ste. B., New Orleans, La., 70113 or at www.norprov.org.
Twenty-two Jesuits celebrated milestones of service within the Society of Jesus and the Catholic Church at the Jesuit Jubilee on July 28, the Sunday closest to the feast day of founder of the Society, St. Ignatius of Loyola.

The honors began with a special Mass at Holy Name of Jesus Church in New Orleans followed by a jazz reception at Loyola University where more than 400 guests offered congratulations.

Together, these Jubilarians celebrated a total of 1,085 years of service as priests and Jesuits:
70 Years in the Society

60 Years in the Society
Fr. W. Peter Bayhi, SJ, praying for the Church and Society, Fusz Pavilion – St. Louis, Mo.
Fr. Marvin Kitten, SJ, campus minister, Spring Hill College – Mobile, Ala.
Fr. Louis Lambert, SJ, associate pastor, Sacred Heart Church – El Paso, Texas
Fr. Edmundo Rodriguez, SJ, retreat and spiritual director, Montserrat Retreat House – Lake Dallas, Texas

50 Years in the Society
Fr. Alfred Kammer, SJ, director of the Jesuit Social Research Institute, Loyola University New Orleans
Fr. David Lawrence, SJ, parochial vicar, St. Bonaventure Catholic Community – Concord, Cal.
Fr. Clyde LeBlanc, SJ, assistant to the director, St. Alphonsus Rodriguez Pavilion – Grand Coteau, La.

50 Years in the Priesthood
Fr. David Borbridge, SJ, professor of theology and history, Spring Hill College – Mobile, Ala.
Fr. John Stacer, SJ, professor, Arrupe College – Harare, Zimbabwe
Fr. Andrew Whitman, SJ, writer in residence, St. Alphonsus Rodríguez Pavilion – Grand Coteau, La.
Fr. Oren Key, SJ, associate pastor, Immaculate Conception Church – Albuquerque, N.M.
Fr. Rodney Kissinger, SJ, writer and online retreat director, St. Alphonsus Rodriguez Pavilion – Grand Coteau, La.
Fr. Charles Leininger, SJ, trustee of the Jesuit Dallas Museum, Jesuit College Preparatory School of Dallas
Fr. John Schroder, SJ, praying for the Church and Society, St. Alphonsus Rodriguez Pavilion – Grand Coteau, La.

25 Years in the Society
Fr. Bernard Barry, SJ, treasurer – New Orleans Province
Fr. Mark Thibodeaux, SJ, novice master, St. Charles College – Grand Coteau, La.

25 Years in the Priesthood
Fr. Warren Broussard, SJ, provincial’s assistant for pastoral and retreat ministry, New Orleans Province
Fr. James Goeke, SJ, socius to the novice master, St. Charles College – Grand Coteau, La.
Fr. Gregg Grovenburg, SJ, campus minister, Loyola University New Orleans

Notes of congratulations and honorary gifts to the Jesuit Seminary Fund may be sent to The Jesuits 710 Baronne St., Ste. B New Orleans, La., 70113, or via www.norprov.org.
DISCERNMENT RETREATS

December 16-20, 2013    January 2-6, 2014
St. Charles College, Grand Coteau, Louisiana

WHO IS INVITED?
Any man, whether young or middle-aged, considering a vocation to ministry in the Church – especially anyone considering the Jesuit way of life as a possible choice.

WHY ATTEND?
To learn more about the Jesuit way of life. To meet and live with Jesuit novices and other men in the discernment process. To spend some time in prayer, reflecting upon the call to priesthood or brotherhood.

COST
No costs other than travel. (Some financial assistance is available for those whose budgets are limited.)

FORMAT OF RETREAT
Each man attending will be assigned a Jesuit director with whom he will meet daily in private direction for guidance through this silent experience of prayer. The discernment retreat also includes time for meeting and socializing with Jesuit novices and Jesuits in formation.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Fr. Paul Deutsch, SJ
Vocation Director
4511 West Pine Boulevard, St. Louis, Missouri 63108
314-361-7765

Fr. Drew Kirschman, SJ
Coordinator for Vocation Promotion
4511 West Pine Boulevard, St. Louis, Missouri 63108
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www.beajesuit.org
vocations@jesuits-mis.org
Nine novices concluded the introductory two-year phase of Jesuit formation in the novitiate at St. Charles College with the profession of first vows.

In preparation for a vowed life of poverty, chastity and obedience, the nine Jesuits have spent the last two years living in community, studying and completing the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, taking pilgrimages and performing ministerial “experiments” to test their vocations.

Now Jesuit scholastics in first studies, the second phase of formation, they have begun two years of graduate study in philosophy and theology at universities in St. Louis, Chicago, New York or Toronto.

Tucker Redding, 29, from Corpus Christi, Texas, said the experiments revealed a breadth of Jesuit ministries that will inspire his studies.

“With each new experience, I have found that instead of being drawn to a particular field or ministry my interests have only grown wider and deeper. I look forward to spending my life in the Jesuits, discovering new interests and talents and using them for the greater glory of God.”

Chris Kellerman’s teaching experiment took him to a Jesuit high school in Belize, where the 28-year-old Texas native made a conscious effort to be fully present to his sophomore students.

“It felt like it was the moment in which all of the graces of novitiate came together to help me be completely devoted to serving others,” he said.

It sparked Kellerman’s interest in teaching.

“There is so much value to a Jesuit presence at our schools, and the kids so desperately want good teachers and good role models to help show them how to live the Christian life.”

David Kiblinger, a 27-year-old physics and math diplomat, was also on experiment in Central America. During a prayer service for newly-elected Pope Francis at a parish in rural Guatemala, he had the fantastic revelation that he was part of something much larger than his novice class.

“During the service, I noted that gathered together to praise God were the Mayan people, a Spanish Jesuit, two Guatemalan Jesuits and two U.S. Jesuits. It was an overwhelming display of the true Catholicity of the Church.”

Kiblinger said that revelation encourages and strengthens his desire to live out the Jesuit ideal of availability to serve anywhere the Church has need.

“I don’t know what my future in the Jesuits holds, but I feel as though I’ve been adequately prepared to spiritually labor for the good of the world and bring others to Jesus Christ.”

The nine novices surround the altar during the vow Mass at St. Charles Borromeo Church in Grand Coteau, La.
The notion of availability attracted Thomas Croteau to explore a Jesuit vocation. The 24-year-old Denver native cites the saints’ heeding of Jesus’ call to “Go sell all that you have, give it to the poor and come follow me” as a great influence.

“Their example made me want to follow Jesus that closely, too,” he said. “By offering my vows to the Lord I hope to grow in union with Jesus and service to His Church.”

**2013 Novitiate Vow Class**

**Thomas Croteau, 24**
Hometown: Denver  
B.A., Classics and Early Christian Literature and Philosophy  
Ave Maria University  
In studies at Saint Louis University

**Christopher Farrell, 26**
Hometown: New Orleans  
B.A., French  
B.S., Public Accounting  
Washington and Lee University  
In studies at Regis College at University of Toronto

**James Erler, 28**
Hometown: St. Louis  
B.A., History  
University of Chicago  
In studies at Loyola University Chicago

**Jonathon Polce, 26**
Hometown: New Haven, Conn.  
B.A., History  
University of Dallas  
In studies at Regis College at University of Toronto

**Tucker Redding, 29**
Hometown: Corpus Christi, Texas  
B.S., Political Science  
Texas A&M University  
In studies at Saint Louis University
While novices generally navigate their individual vocations with the guidance of novitiate staff, an important component of the novitiate experience is living and working as a community.

On one experiment in Kansas City, Kan., the novices bunked in cramped quarters, juggled carpool plans, prepared meals together and worked at a dozen different community apostolates, including hospitals, shelters, schools and a prison.

James Erler, 28, said this experiment revealed the value of the community experience, both within and outside of his novice class.

“At the very end, when we invited people from all of the places where we worked, it was clear that we had reached a lot of people through our work, and it was wonderful to take it all in,” he said.

Bonds created with the communities they served and the solidarity nurtured within his novice class brought a new dimension to his 30-day retreat.

One evening while sitting in the novitiate chapel, Erler had the sensation of being a part of something beyond himself and his own particular circumstances. He realized he was praying the same prayers as St. Ignatius Loyola, St. Francis Xavier and other notable Jesuits. His thoughts spread to his Jesuit teachers at St. Louis University High School and other Jesuits that he had come to admire.

“I’ve never forgotten that spirit of camaraderie, and it has only grown to include my own community,” he said.

“For me, first vows have meant a much closer acceptance of that reality...so that I can go out and set the world on fire in the same way that other Jesuits have before me,” Erler explained.

“I don’t know what my future in the Jesuits holds, but I feel as though I’ve been adequately prepared to spiritually labor for the good of the world and bring others to Jesus Christ.”

Occupying the former rooms of the newly-vowed scholastics are six new novices who entered the novitiate the day prior to vow day. They join the new second-year novices at St. Charles College on the path to first vows.

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Christopher Kellerman, 28  
Hometown: Arlington, Texas  
B.A., Political Science and Music  
Texas Tech University  
M.A., Theology  
University of Dallas  
In studies at Saint Louis University

David Kiblinger, 27  
Hometown: Cape Girardeau, Mo.  
B.A., Physics  
B.S., Mathematics  
Truman State University  
M.A., Theology  
Villanova University  
In studies at Saint Louis University

Juan Ruiz, 25  
Hometown: Baltimore  
B.S., Business Administration  
Saint Louis University  
In studies at Loyola University Chicago

Brian Strassburger, 29  
Hometown: St. Louis  
B.S., Mathematics  
Saint Louis University  
In studies at Fordham University

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To support Jesuits on the path to priesthood or brotherhood, donate online at www.norprov.org, or call 1-800-788-1719.
Renewing a Sacred Place:
Jesuits restore novitiate, senior community and spirituality center at St. Charles College

By Brooke A. Iglesias

Since this summer, the common sight at St. Charles College has been Fr. Rodney Kissinger, 98, taking his brisk walk down the pine-lined drive, not far from retreatants easing into Adirondack chairs under nearby oaks or from the Jesuits in formation who buzz through the college corridors. It’s the fruit of a two-year $16 million renovation that has formed the 104-year-old college into an anchor of Ignatian spirituality in the southeastern United States.

With the spring addition of Fr. Kissinger’s senior community of 28 Jesuits, St. Charles College is home to 43 Jesuits assigned to five different apostolates, said Fr. Jim Bradley, rector of St. Charles College.

“This is one of the more complex Jesuit communities in the province, maybe in the country,” he said. “We are one Jesuit community serving five different ministries: the senior pavilion, the on-site Jesuit Spirituality Center, the neighboring Jesuit parish and retreat house, and our novitiate.”

Ten of the residents are Jesuits beginning formation at the novitiate. There is a complementarity in the unification of the novices and senior men under one roof. The “granddads,” as one novice affectionately calls the

Bishop Michael Jarrell blesses the new cornerstone during a September renewal Mass.
senior Jesuits, share in the formation of the novices and can aid with retreats. Novices are learning from an earlier generation of religious in preparation for their own ministry, and retreatants have no shortage of Jesuits for spiritual companionship.

The mission of St. Charles College has continuously adapted since it was established in 1837, when the Bishop of New Orleans asked Jesuits of the Lyons Province of France to establish a Catholic school for boys in Louisiana.

Fire destroyed the original 90-year-old structure in 1907. What stands today is its 104-year-old replacement, a sturdy brick structure with high ceilings, long corridors, transoms and open spaces described by architects as a gem of symmetry and proportion.

The novitiate moved to St. Charles College in 1921 when its home in Macon, Ga., burned to the ground. Then in 1972, on the heels of Vatican II, the Jesuit Spirituality Center was established at the college.

In 2005, the college adapted yet again when Hurricane Katrina forced province office operations to St. Charles College, and where many Jesuits, province staff and their families took shelter, some staying for several months. It was a particularly stressful event for the senior community who endured a twelve-hour evacuation from New Orleans to Grand Coteau, normally a three-hour drive.

Three years later, during the building’s 2009 centennial celebration, the first joint novitiate class of the New Orleans and Missouri provinces entered in August, a decision made by the two provinces in anticipation of their unification into the Central and Southern Province in 2014.

As the college community expanded, decaying plumbing and unstable wiring began to interrupt ministry and required frequent repairs. Also outmoded were dormitory-style bathrooms that limited retreats to one gender in the college’s Jesuit Spirituality Center wing. Other corridors of the building were empty, yet unfit to house Jesuits and retreatants.

Fr. Mark Lewis, provincial of the New Orleans Province, began a province-wide discussion with Jesuits and lay colleagues about the college’s future. It was in dire need of basic improvements and safety code updates, but he knew it had plenty of space to accommodate additional retreatants and an expanded Jesuit community.

“We had a responsibility to adapt,” said Fr. Lewis. “We needed to eliminate evacuations of our senior men, and we needed to renew the college to serve the Church today and tomorrow.”

With the help of tax credits, private donations and contributions from Jesuit communities, century-old electrical and plumbing systems were replaced, and fire...
safety mechanisms were installed. The assisted living pavilion was created on the second and third levels of the eastern wing, complete with a nurses’ station and its own elevator. Additional rooms were added in the novitiate corridor to accommodate the larger novice classes. New rooms were added in the retreatant corridor and outfitted with private baths to accommodate guests of both genders.

The two-year project was completed in phases to minimize disruptions of programs and residents.

Senior Jesuits joined the St. Charles Community in May, and the Jesuit Spirituality Center reopened with a full schedule of programs in July. In August, six new men were welcomed to the novitiate by the second-year novices, forming a class of 10 men, the first to share the college with the senior Jesuits in the renovated college.

The novices and senior Jesuits share a pre-dinner social every Monday and have most meals together with the rest of the Jesuit community. They enjoy watching football games together, and the more melodic novices lead music at Sunday morning Mass in the pavilion chapel.

Novice Director Fr. Mark Thibodeaux paired each novice with a senior Jesuit, a “spiritual grandfather” who prays for that novice and provides advice and support.

“The novices are edified by the men and appreciate hearing their perspectives on their many years of service in the Church in many different parts of the world and in a much different era,” said Fr. Jim Goeke, novice formation assistant.

“And, they have a lot of fun chatting with them on a regular basis, enjoying observing some of the freedom that comes with old age to say and do things without worrying so much how they might be received.”

While veteran and novice Jesuits are pioneering these new formation relationships, retreatants are returning to St. Charles College for spiritual direction in the Ignatian tradition.

Luz Restrepo of Arlington, Texas, recently completed a five-day directed retreat at the renewed spirituality center, her fourth visit to the college. As an employee of the Jesuits’ Montserrat Retreat House in Lake Dallas, Texas, she prefers to make retreats elsewhere to avoid distractions.

“The directors and staff are so welcoming and always are available when I need them,” she said. “I find it to be my favorite place to find the silence and peace that I need.”

Trent Angers is a long-time retreatant and the author of “Grand Coteau: The Holy Land of South Louisiana.” He identifies St. Charles College as a peace center for the southeastern United States.

“The college and its surrounding area have been visited by several people venerated by the Church, including Katherine Drexel, Rose Philippine Duchesne, Cornelia Connelly and an apparition of John Berchmans at nearby Academy of the Sacred Heart,” said Angers.

“This holy ground is an ideal place for prayer and contemplation, where the beauty of God’s handiwork is easily observed and where God’s presence is unmistakably felt.”

This inviting sanctuary creates

Novices lead music during a renewal Mass and cornerstone blessing in September.
a prayerful opportunity, something retreat and spiritual director Jan Tate says is particularly important as technology increasingly intrudes on quiet time for reflection in everyday life. She has participated in and given retreats at St. Charles College for more than 30 years.

“I’m afraid we are losing the ability to listen to the voice of God inside of us because of all the dings and pings we hear,” she said. “There just aren’t too many places that you can go to and find that kind of beauty, silence, reflective atmosphere, and standing on the wisdom and presence of others who have gone before us.”

Fr. Mark Lewis said that wisdom and tradition will be shared continuously with Jesuits and retreatants who come to St. Charles College.

“St. Charles College, in its renewed mission, holds both the harvest and the seeds, the history and the future of what will soon be the Central and Southern Province,” he said.

He noted an interesting historical point: St. Charles College, though founded from the New Orleans Mission, passed to the Missouri Province and then back to its original jurisdiction.

“So in a real sense we share a history through St. Charles College,” he said. “Now, as our provinces reconfigure, we share a future with our many colleagues in ministry.”

More information on St. Charles College and its renovation can be found at www.norprov.org, or by contacting Michael Bourg at 1-800-788-1719 or mbourg@norprov.org.

Playing the Back Nine at St. Charles College

By Fr. Paul Schott, SJ

Recently, a friend sent me an email comparing the last years of life to playing the back nine holes of golf. It struck a chord with me. I am literally playing the back nine of my life here at our new home in Grand Coteau, designed and constructed for all of us who are playing this last nine together. And what a beautiful course it is! Of course, the front nine of life was a good round, in fact, a magnificent round. But God seems to have saved the best for last.

The community and spectators are a great support. With the staffs of the spirituality center, the parish, the retreat house and the novices, we are one big family – the youngest 20, the oldest 98. And all of us are served kindly and efficiently by a dedicated lay staff of nurses, aides, chefs and housekeepers.

To us who began the front nine 70 or 60 years ago, the novices are a special gift. They are the grandchildren we never had; they are the future Society we will never see. But their goodness, intelligence, zeal and enthusiasm assure us that things will be in good hands when we finish the game. They will be the pros who will perform as well or even better than we have. God has blessed us with these men, and the gifts he has given them are many.

Nor do we forget you, our benefactors who line the course and cheer us as we walk toward the eighteenth green. None of this would be possible without you. But so much of what we have here as we play the back nine will remain for generations of players to follow us. May God bless you abundantly and help you to play your back nine with as much joy and gratitude as we play ours.

Fr. Paul Schott with novice Brendan Love
Preparing for the Alpha and Omega

By Fr. Donald Hawkins, SJ

Well before the celebration of the Christmas feast, Yuletide decorations and gifts have made their appearance on store shelves. Even before Trick or Treat, merchants endeavor to entice the public with visions of turkeys and cranberries.

Major celebrations in the Church calendar have similar periods of anticipation and preparation. Easter, our principal liturgical day of the Church year, only arrives after the penitential Lenten preparation. Our second-ranking liturgical feast of Christmas is only celebrated after the prayerful anticipation of Advent.

There is more to Advent, however, than serving as a time to prepare for the Christmas celebration of the birth of the Lord Jesus. Advent—the word means “coming”—not only refers to the Lord’s coming in the flesh at Bethlehem but also his coming as king at the end of history.

As the Season of Ordinary Time draws to a close, the focus of the readings changes to a consideration of the end times. On the Thirty-third Sunday, the gospel reading from Luke speaks of “wars and insurrections” and also of the persecution of the Christian community connected with the end time. In fact, such persecutions have already occurred in New Testament times: Stephen, James, Peter, and Paul, among others, have already died for witnessing to Jesus.

The Church celebrates the Solemnity of Christ the King on the following Sunday during which the emphasis is on the reign of Jesus Christ as universal king, a role that he will assume at the end of time. That day’s second reading from the Letter to the Colossians paints a picture of Christ as one who has already taken his seat at the right hand of God.

The First Sunday of Advent is reluctant to abandon the theme of the Second Coming of the Savior. The first reading from the prophet Isaiah announces the time of justice and peace that will occur when Jesus returns. The gospel of Matthew speaks of the last days of the “Son of Man,” thus offering a climax to the consideration of the end times.

With the Second Sunday, attention turns to the preparation for the birth of the Lord. No figure is better suited for center stage than John the Baptist. A fearsome figure dressed in clothing made of camel’s hair, straight from a sojourn in the desert, John confronts his hearers with a baptismal call for the acknowledgement of their personal sinfulness. He denounces the Pharisees and the Sadducees for their refusal to reform their ways.

On the Third Sunday Jesus himself testifies to the greatness of John the Baptist. John is often characterized as the last prophet of the Old Testament and, in a sense, the first prophet of the New Testament. John’s disciples bring him Jesus’ message, allowing John to meet, although indirectly, the one whom he has prophesied. Jesus then reacts by reflecting on John’s role in salvation.

The birth of the Messiah is central to the Fourth Sunday of Advent as we move closer to Christmas. The reading from the prophet Isaiah points to the virgin birth of “Emmanuel.” Matthew’s gospel repeats Isaiah’s message in an account of a dream that Joseph, Mary’s betrothed, experiences. Joseph follows the angel’s command, and the stage is set for the birth of the Messiah.

While the Sundays preceding and during Advent illuminate the second coming of the Lord at the end of time and the first coming of the Lord in history, the focus of our preparation is to create in invitation to our Lord to come into our own hearts. We can observe that kind of advent by our own personal prayer and reflection as we await the Christmas celebration. After all, the Lord is always willing to come into our hearts, but we must be open to him. Advent is a good time for that kind of openness of heart and life.
“A stone that has been tested, a precious cornerstone as a sure foundation; he who puts his faith in it shall not be shaken.” — Isaiah 28:16b

Dear Friends in Christ,

These words of Isaiah ring true. What God has built by grace in Grand Coteau has been renewed by his continued blessings. The renewal of St. Charles College has been a testament of God’s blessing on us throughout the years of planning, building and renovation. Blitch Knevel Architects created the plan to bring the Jesuits’ vision – a fully modern facility that honors its century old heritage – to life. Then there were bankers from Whitney, Capital One and First NBC and attorneys who assisted us with putting together a complex but secure funding structure utilizing historic and new-market zoning tax credits.

A true grace for us has been our contractor – J.B. Mouton, LLC. These men of Acadiana brought a devotion to their craft and a respect for the history and mission of this space that shows through in the finished product – taking our 100 year-old building and making it a “sure foundation” for the Jesuit presence in the South and Southwest. Their skills have renewed this sacred place.

Overseeing this work has been Br. Lawrence Huck, SJ, the province’s representative for the restoration. Br. Huck has completed the project on budget and ahead of schedule while also caring for the craftsmen. In both managing this project and ministering to those involved, the Jesuits owe a debt of gratitude to Br. Huck for his sure-handed leadership.

Mrs. Evangeline Vavrick has worked tirelessly to rally volunteers and benefactors. She led the effort to raise $3 million towards our $5 million goal. The blessings of so many generous friends of the Jesuits are yet another sure foundation that has made the renewal possible. I ask you to review the listing of those who have supported the campaign, starting on page 21.

If you have not yet supported the Renewing a Sacred Place Campaign, I urge you to visit our website, www.norprov.org, to find out how you can help us reach our goal, view the remarkable renovations and consider the remaining naming opportunities.

I wish to mention one other “sure foundation” – our Jesuit Companions listed on the following page. These folks bless the Jesuits with their prayerful and financial support year in and year out. This close association between the Jesuits and the laity is one that aids our vocations work, cares for our elder Jesuits and supports our international ministries.

We recognize so many of you as the foundation which God has placed beneath our feet. Thank you.

Peace,

Michael Bourg
Executive Director for Advancement
Jesuit Companions

(This report reflects gifts from July 2012-June 2013. Gifts made afterward will appear in the next report.)

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