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Winter 2006

Mission Matters, Winter 2006

Center for Mission Education and Reflection

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Mission Matters

SACRED HEART UNIVERSITY

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

Winter 2006

✧ Inaugural Issue ✧

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MISSION MATTERS
is a quarterly publication of the
Center for Mission Education
and Reflection.



SACRED HEART UNIVERSITY

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Mission Matters . . .

There is no doubt in my mind that our mission *matters* at Sacred Heart University. A hymn we often sing at University liturgies captures for me something of the lived experience of the way the faculty members, administrators and staff strive to embody the University's mission:

*Let us build a house where prophets speak, and words are strong and true.
Where all God's children dare to seek to dream God's reign anew.*

*A house where hands will reach beyond the wood and stone,
To heal and strengthen, serve and teach, and live the Word they've known.*

*Built of hopes and dreams and visions, rock of faith and vault of grace . . .
Here the love of God through Jesus is revealed in time and space . . .*

All are welcome in this place!

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I was particularly pleased to see that Pope Benedict XVI's gave his powerful encyclical the title *Deus Caritas Est*, God Is Love,* because that's what lies at the heart of the educational mission of Sacred Heart University: making God's love visible in time and space. As the hymn proclaims, the way we experience that love is through people—wonderful individuals who reach out to heal a broken world and to reveal God's unconditional love to each one of us. And I experience this miracle every day in my interactions with you, the faculty, administrators and staff of Sacred Heart University.

I welcome the arrival of *Mission Matters* as yet another way for us to celebrate the good things that are happening in the daily life of Sacred Heart University. Thank you for all you do to make our mission a reality in the lives of our students.

Anthony J. Cernera

Anthony J. Cernera, Ph.D.
President

* This first encyclical of Pope Benedict, dated January 25, 2006, is available online at: www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/encyclicals/index_en.htm

Destination: **Aleppo**
El Salvador
Mississippi
North Carolina

Spring Break
2006

Where will the University's "hands" reach during Spring Break 2006?

More than 65 students, faculty and staff will spend their Spring Break (March 4-12) in volunteer service in four locations:

Alabama: a work week with Habitat for Humanity in Tuscaloosa.

El Salvador: nine days working with the villagers in Tierra Blanca.

Mississippi: clean-up and rebuilding in three hurricane ravaged communities in Lakeshore.

North Carolina: a work week with Habitat for Humanity in Wilmington.

For information on ways that **you** can support any or all of these service efforts, please contact Margaret Casey at 365-4710.

■ All donations are tax deductible. ■

Community **U**nderstanding and **R**eflection **T**hrough **I**nnner-City **S**ervice = **CURTIS** Week

During their January break, 14 students and 3 staff members spent a week living at St. Charles Urban Center in Bridgeport and volunteering in the neighborhood. They worked at Prospect House, Caroline House, Bridgeport Rescue Mission, the Thomas Merton Center, Golden Hill United Methodist Church Community Suppers, the handicapped accessible Habitat house build, City-Scan (a blight documentation project), and Marin and Garfield schools. They also visited the CO-OP program for ex-offenders, an African American mosque Al Aziz Masjid, and participated in the Latino Mass at St. Charles Church and the Martin Luther King, Jr., celebration at Mount Aery Baptist Church.

"It's one thing to read about the working poor. It's another to eat supper across from a guy whose salary

leaves no money for food after his rent went up," said Phyllis Machledt, director of the University's Office of Service Learning and Volunteer Programs.

The CURTIS Week program is now in its seventh year. Named in honor of Sacred Heart University's founder, the Most Rev. Walter W. Curtis, it is part of the University's ongoing commitment to serving the needs of the local community.

The University ... has a responsibility to share its resources and its special gifts and talents for the betterment of the human community. All members of the University community are encouraged strongly to participate in the wider community through service to others, especially the poor.

— Sacred Heart University Mission



CURTIS Week participants gather at St. Charles Urban Center on Bridgeport's East Side.

In addition to their volunteer service activities, the students keep a journal about their experience and participate in discussions about poverty, social justice and discrimination. One of the goals of the week is to provide students with an opportunity to explore their own prejudices and stereotypes.



The **Young at Sacred Heart** Mentor Program will be hosting the second annual **Young at Sacred Heart** day on Friday, April 7, 2006. Third grade students from Bridgeport elementary schools will come to Sacred Heart University and engage in educational, physical and artistic activities all run by the students, faculty and staff of the university community. This day will introduce the children to the possibilities of a future college education as well as give the members of our university the opportunity to be mentors and make a difference in the lives of others.

"Gang" Priest to speak on March 29

Father Greg Boyle understands what it means to put his faith into action. For over 20 years, Father Greg Boyle, a Jesuit priest, has given back to his native community of Los Angeles. He served as the pastor of Dolores Mission Church, the poorest parish in the Los Angeles Archdiocese, from 1986 to 1992. However, it has been his work since then as the founder and director of **Homeboy Industries/Jobs for a Future** that has made a profound impact on the community.



Fr. Greg Boyle, SJ

On Wednesday, March 29, Father "G" will share his story with the University community at 2:00 PM in the Edgerton Center for the Performing Arts. His inspiring "Putting Your Faith Into Action" will be a first-hand account of the day-to-day work he does with at-risk and gang-involved youth from East LA. This program is the sixth and final presentation in the **Student Affairs Lecture Series**, 2005-2006.

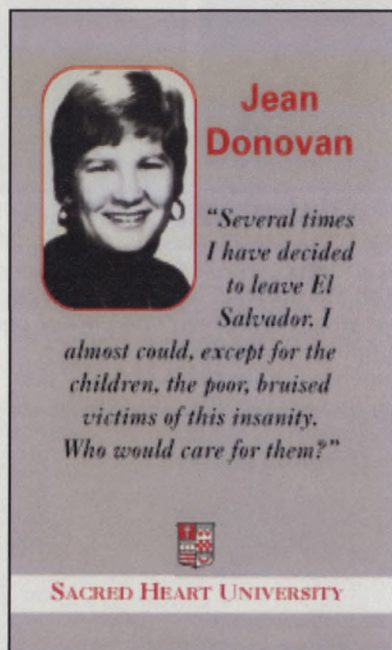


OUR HOCKEY TEAM at the GARDEN

No, not "Madison Square," but . . . the entire Sacred Heart University hockey team worked with the Laotian community on Bridgeport's East Side at the Hallett Street Community Garden.



Did you know . . .



Jean Donovan, the lay missionary who was among the four Catholic churchwomen martyred in El Salvador on December 2, 1980, was a native of Westport, Connecticut. According to her brother Michael, Jean was a frequent visitor to our campus. (Her boyfriend was a student here!)



Jean Donovan Hall, the front building of Christian Witness Commons.

New Center Provides Help for Not-for-Profit Organizations

The University recently announced the official formation of the **Center for Strategic Planning for Not-for-Profit Organizations** within the MBA program at the John F. Welch College of Business. The Center will provide business assistance to qualified groups at no cost, while giving business students practical field experience. Contributing to the University's mission, the Center is engaging in five projects this academic year.

"The Center really serves a great purpose for the non-profit community and it serves as a great experience for the students, themselves. It gives them the opportunity to see first-hand what these organizations do and the challenges that they face," said Deacon Daniel J. Ianniello, one of the Center's founding members and a current member of its advisory board.

Originally associated with the Global Management Integration capstone course at SHU, the Center is the brainchild of Dr. Rawlin A. "Pete" Fairbaugh, professor of Management, who asked Deacon Ianniello and third founding member William Joyce to come on board and jumpstart the project with SHU graduate business students in 2002.

According to Dr. Fairbaugh, the program has become so popular within the community and so important to the school that he finally asked the University to approve the formalization of the Center.

Now operating with nine advisory board members and a number of graduate students, the Center serves as a crucial component of the University in furthering its mission of community support and involvement. Dr. Fairbaugh adds that everyone involved—the students, the school and the not-for-profit groups—gains something positive from the relationship.

This year, graduate students involved with the Center will tackle five projects for three separate clients, including the United Way and Amos House.

"Eventually, we would like the opportunity to expand the scope of our activities," said Mr. Joyce about the Center's long-term goals. "We would like to see more students involved with more charitable institutions."

"We want to involve undergraduate students in the future and maybe even take on internships and work studies," added Deacon Ianniello.

Mission Matters to me . . .

A Personal Viewpoint

By Jeffrey Cain, Ph.D.
 Associate Professor of English

What is the experience of Sacred Heart University's Catholic identity like for a non-Catholic faculty member? For me, it hasn't been a sudden or dramatic spiritual change. Instead, I have found that teaching here has led to a barely discernable yet steady growth toward identification with the mission.

When I arrived in 1999, I was invited by Dr. Margaret Palliser to a series of faculty conversations on the University's Catholic Identity and its commitment to the liberal arts and Catholic intellectual tradition. I came to the conversations during my first year simply because I was invited, but I returned in later years because of the tangible wisdom and energy the sessions provided. I quickly learned that the CIT involves patience and tolerance for others' views. I found that, far from being the insular—dare I say "parochial"—affairs that I had expected, the conversations encouraged an open exchange of ideas. Even my rather straightforward secular doubt was welcomed.

I still attend the conversations whenever possible and have invariably found them to be excellent for re-connecting with my reasons for becoming an academic and a teacher in the first place: to deepen my understanding of the textual history and processes of human thought, to keep intellectual discourse vibrant, and most of all to invite students to join the discussion.

The **Faculty Conversations Series** was initiated in 1998 to assist new full-time faculty members and academic administrators to the University as they orient themselves to the University's mission and culture. Participants often cite the six "Conversations" as a significant factor in their coming to an appreciation of the nature of the Catholic intellectual tradition and its relationship to their teaching, scholarship and service.

A Pair of New SHU's: A View from the Trenches!

ELIZABETH ANN SETON HALL - Greetings esteemed colleagues and friends!

To begin with, we're new here. We, **Mark and Mandy Pittman**, joined the Sacred Heart University staff in July 2005 and are getting acclimated to our new home. We recently celebrated our third wedding anniversary, which, I am sure you can imagine (and in some cases directly relate to), places us in a very unique circumstance when it comes to work. To make matters all the more intriguing, we live in Elizabeth Ann Seton Hall right here on campus. Mark is the Area Coordinator for First Year Experience for the Office of Residential Life, so Mandy, who works in the Campus Ministry Office, has to walk past a host of freshman men with all their charms and graces to get home every night.

Living so entrenched with the Class of 2009 has its ups (read: ridiculously short commute) and downs (read: fire alarms at 4:00 in the morning), and at the very least begets a unique perspective on Sacred Heart University.

Part of what attracted us to Sacred Heart was, in all honesty, the fact that we both got job offers here. A close second, though, after spending three years in the state college system in Colorado, was to come back to Catholic higher education in a place that we could come to call "home." In looking at various colleges and universities throughout the country, Sacred Heart stood out for us for several reasons, not the least of which is the University Mission Statement. Imagine a place that aspires to develop young scholars to be "knowledgeable of self, rooted in faith, educated in mind, compassionate in heart, responsive to social and civic obligations, and able to respond to an ever-changing world." What a great place, and what a tall order to fill!

Given such an admirable yet daunting task, we realize that we cannot fill this order without first reflecting upon those whom we were brought here to serve: the Sacred Heart University students. We realized that we needed to come to understand students in their wholeness so that we could address them appropriately as complete, complex creations of God.

In the Mission Statement, the student is somewhat compartmentalized into mind, spirit, body, and his or her ability to respond to the community and environment. For the sake of getting the idea on paper, that works fine, but one caveat is critical: we must remember that our students neither come here nor leave here so conveniently packaged.

Conversely, universities are by nature compartmentalized, better yet, de-partmentalized, which seems a counterintuitive way to serve a population of people who are decidedly not so. A friend and colleague from our previous college often pointed out what he referred to as "silos," a phenomenon that he observed over the course of 40 years working in colleges and universities. Each sector of campus seems to occupy its own silo, the corn stays with the corn, the wheat with the wheat, and the barley with the barley, with little or no interaction. But we have realized that the problem with this approach is that our students need the nourishment and unique flavor of multi-grain bread!

*... our students need
the nourishment
and unique flavor of
multi-grain bread.*

All this is not to devalue specialization. We have each studied and practiced our specified field, know our own office paperwork, and we likely have a propensity for our respective lines of work. By all means, Mark is not going to be planning liturgical celebrations, nor will Mandy be adjudicating those who violate campus policies. However, there are aspects of our lines of work that overlap, often with the student riding that line of demarcation.

As we read in the Romans 12:4-6, "Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts according to the grace given us." However, since "each member belongs



Newcomers: Mandy Pittman, M.A., and Mark Pittman, M.A.

to all the others," we have realized that what happens in one part of our campus community affects the student in other parts of his or her life, and we employ and explore this idea frequently in our day-to-day dealings with students.

Consider a student who does miserably on a test and then comes back to his residence hall and gets in a fight with his roommate, or, after a rough field hockey practice, the young woman who struggles to find the energy to study. So many more connections exist in our on-campus ecosystem in and of itself, and when home life and involvements beyond the borders of Sacred Heart University are thrown into the hopper, we get an extraordinarily complex intermingling of experiences that, when strung together, will create the student's experience at our University. We try to bear this connectedness in mind because we realize that we may have a profound effect on any student with whom we interact. As husband and wife we have a rather apparent bridge from silo to silo, but it is not maintained in the absence of conscious effort.

We realize that not everyone can share our accursed blessing of living and working so closely with one another, as well as the students. But we know that you, friends, do share the commitment we hold to the betterment of students as whole persons, which requires the unified effort of us all. And if you ever want to have that full-blown in-the-trenches experience, we have a lovely pull-out sofa bed in our apartment in Seton Hall!

We look forward to working with and getting to know you! We'd be happy for your thoughts on the SHU community and how we can make it better by working together.

— Mark and Mandy Pittman

New Center Springs from the University's Faithfulness to Its Founding Spirit

Founded in 1963 to be led by laity, Sacred Heart University continues to embrace its founding inspiration by sponsoring a center to promote the **spirituality and ministry of laity**. The mission of the newly-created Center for Spirituality and Lay Ministry is to assist laypersons in embracing and articulating their participation in formal ecclesial ministry as well as their vocation to be *leaven in the world*.



The Center's staff (l.-r.): Matt Boyle, Dr. Catherine Almeten, Rosa Rodriguez, and Fr. Antony Gatt, Ph.D.


According to its executive director, Dr. Catherine Almeten, the Center will provide "opportunities for dialogue between the faith commitments of lay life and the disciplines and professions represented in the academy, bridging the gap between the world of work and the world of the spirit." Through educational programs, special events, and scholarly research and publications, the Center will seek to fashion and support a vision of lay spirituality and ministry within the Church and in society.

A few of the Center's upcoming offerings are listed at the right. More information on these and other programs and events can be found on the Center's website:

www.sacredheart.edu/csmlm.cfm

Inquiries may be directed to the Center's office at (201) 371-7843.

CENTER FOR SPIRITUALITY AND LAY MINISTRY

 SACRED HEART UNIVERSITY

☞ Spirituality and Healing Series ☞

Listening for God's Voice

Retreat/Workshop: March 24, 2006, 9:00 AM - 4:30 PM

Mid-life Transition . . . Now What!

Friday evening seminar, April 21, 2006, 7:00 - 9:00 PM

Saturday morning workshop, April 22, 2006, 9:00 AM - Noon

☞ Evenings of Reflection ☞

Finding God in All Things

April 6, 2006, 7:00-9:00 PM

*How to Live a Grace-filled Life in the
Midst of Trauma and Stress*

May 25, 2006, 7:00-9:00 PM

☞ Summersong Music Camp ☞

Day Camp for Children Grades 4-8

July 31-August 4, 2006

☞ Pilgrimage to Sacred Sites in Ireland ☞

Prehistoric and Early Christian Sites on the Emerald Isle

September 15-24, 2006

Water Integrates Art, Science and Religion

The Elements: Water, the first in a series of four shows (water, earth, air, and fire) is now open at the Gallery of Contemporary Art. The exhibition of artworks also incorporates both religious and scientific texts about water solicited from various professors in the disciplines of religious studies and biology. In addition, the exhibit featured several associated multidisciplinary events: a panel discussion on aesthetic and spiritual dimensions of water with artists Sandy Gellis, Ann Chernow and Jane Sutherland and Dr. Catherine Almeten, executive director of the Center for Spirituality and Lay Ministry; a water ritual led by Barbara Jean Daly Horell, director of Campus Ministry and Dr. Almeten; and two scientific talks, "Shaped by Water: Biodiversity in the Tropics" by Dr. Twan Leenders, visiting professor of Biology, and "Shaped by Water: Life Within" by Dr. Mark A. Beekey, associate professor of Biology.

Depicting water in all its varied forms—such as clouds, falling snow, a tsunami wave, rainwater, lakes, rivers, ponds and swimming pools—provides vastly diverse works. Exhibiting artists include such internationally known figures as Lee Bontecou, Alex Katz, Christo & Jeanne-Claude, Sandy Gellis, Pat Steir, and May Stevens.

Water's spiritual significance is shown through creation myths in most cultures that refer to a great flood as the beginning of life. "Water is fundamental in the language, symbols, and rites of all spiritual traditions and religions. It is used in rituals to cleanse and purify, to symbolize new birth, to ensure abundance in agriculture and to invoke the needed rain to keep the earth fertile. Water is used to bless new babies and new unions, and to prepare the dead for burial," according to Dr. Almeten.



Table Mountain I, II, III by Cassandra James, 2004
Oil on canvas, triptych, 66" x 34" each, 66" x 102" overall

"Water controls the collective consciousness of humankind. From the worldwide devastation caused both by too much water (tsunamis, hurricanes and floods) and by too little water (crippling droughts), water demands our focus and attention. In fact, the United Nations has declared the decade between 2005 and 2015 as *The Water for Life Decade*," commented Sophia Gevas, director of the Gallery.

The Elements: Water runs through February 23.

On the horizon . . .

○ NEW BLUEPRINT FOR MISSION



The University's **Strategic Plan 2006-2011** will be the "blueprint" for our living out the University's mission over the next five years. A 35-member Strategic Planning Committee, appointed by President Cernera, has begun the initial phase of developing strategic initiatives around major themes from Dr. Cernera's vision for the University in the future. Open Forums in mid-February will allow for reactions and suggestions from all members of the University community.

○ LEADING BY EXAMPLE

Faculty and **staff** know both the strengths and the needs of our University better than anyone. The remarkable developments on this campus over the last 43 years are living testaments to the selflessness of our employees and the philanthropy of generous donors. It is crucial for our faculty and staff to **lead by example** in supporting the future of Sacred Heart University if we expect our alumni and friends to do the same. As education professionals, we can demonstrate our commitment to our students, to Sacred Heart University and to higher education by providing funds for the very things we work so hard for—student scholarships, professional development, technology resources and academic initiatives. Your gift to the 2005-2006 Faculty-Staff Campaign **Leading by Example** will be a vote of pride and confidence in Sacred Heart University from someone who knows us best. Watch your mail in the weeks ahead for information on the many options for making your gift.

Unity in Diversity

During the **Week of Prayer for the Unity of All Christians**, January 18-25, 2006, Campus Ministry sponsored several ecumenical prayer services, welcoming clergy from First Presbyterian Church in Fairfield, Golden Hill United Methodist Church in Bridgeport, Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in Bridgeport, United Church of Christ in Bridgeport, Salem Lutheran Church in Bridgeport, and United Congregational Church in Bridgeport.

To mark the 40th anniversary of the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), we are invited to revisit the documents of the Council in which the University has its spiritual, pastoral and intellectual roots. The week of prayer for the unity of all Christians was an occasion to focus on the Decree on Ecumenism *Unitatis Redintegratio*, to reflect upon the achievements of the ecumenical movement and to outline major challenges for the future in dialogue with other Christian Churches.

During the ecumenical prayer services of the week, visiting ministers witnessed eloquently to the self-understanding and spirituality of their various Christian denominations. The students, faculty and staff members present were invited to understand the different denominations as they understand themselves. The shared reflections were truly catalysts for each participant to clarify one's understanding

of his or her own faith tradition. As a result of the mutually enlightening experience, Campus Ministry is planning to sponsor further encounters with other local Christian faith communities. For example, the University will host a monthly ecumenical service to be led by different non-Catholic ministers, during which all members of the University community will be invited to gather in prayer and to discover each other's tradition.

Inspired by the ecumenical spirit of the Second Vatican Council, Sacred Heart University welcomes men and women of all religious traditions and beliefs who share its concerns for truth, scholarship, the dignity of the human person, freedom, and the betterment of human society. It values religious diversity as enhancing the University community and creating opportunities for dialogue in the common search for truth. Through its curricular and co-curricular activities and campus ministry programs, the University provides the context in which students have the opportunity to appropriate in a critical fashion their own religious traditions.

— Sacred Heart University Mission Statement

As our Mission Statement highlights, Sacred Heart University has never confined itself in a denominational ghetto. We not only welcome students, faculty and staff from different faith traditions, but we are committed to carrying forward the Catholic intellectual tradition with "due regard to the ecumenical point of view" [UR 10], welcoming different perspectives, always proceeding "with love for truth, with charity and with humility" [UR 11]. This is the great legacy of our founder, Bishop Walter W. Curtis.

The Second Vatican Council also invited Catholics to develop "cooperation in social matters" [UR 12] with other churches and all people. Since our founding, social responsibility has been a true hallmark of the University's curricular offerings, events and student activities.

- Rev. Jean Ehret, Ph.D., Chaplain

Dolls for Mississippi

"These dolls are not for sale at any price," says Dr. Linda Strong, assistant professor of nursing and co-director of the **Sacred Heart University-St. Charles Health and Wellness Center**. "They are bound for the kids in Lakeshore, Mississippi."

Each one an original, the "stitched-with-love" dolls are the creations of participants in the **"Aging with Grace"** project, an initiative sponsored by the Health and Wellness Center and funded by a grant from the State Department of Aging. Seniors ranging in age from their early 60s to their mid 80s are crafting rag dolls for children of the Gulf Coast who lost all their belongings in the hurricanes. The women, some of the neediest people in one of Connecticut's poorest cities, meet at St. Charles Urban Center to sew and stuff the homemade cloth dolls for Hurricane Katrina victims in a Mississippi city that has similar demographics to Bridgeport.

The SHU/St. Charles Health and Wellness Center serves breakfast and lunch to participants in "Aging with Grace," a program that provides medical, social and psychological monitoring for seniors. The participants, who number around 40, get regular blood pressure tests, diabetes management plans and help sorting out the side effects of the medication their doctors prescribe, according to Donna Bowers, instructor of physical therapy, and Mary Ellen Bowen, head of automation services at the Ryan-Matura Library, both of whom volunteer at the Center.



Sacred Heart University opened the Health and Wellness Center in 1999 as a joint effort with St. Charles Borromeo Parish on Bridgeport's East Side.

The Center is located in the St. Charles Urban Center (the former

Dr. Strong brought a first batch of dolls with her when she visited the devastated Gulf Coast area in December with Eilene Bertsch, assistant vice president for academic affairs, Dr. Donna Dodge, vice president for mission and planning, and Dr. Terry Neu, assistant professor of education. As a result of their trip, the University will be sending a delegation of students, faculty and staff to the town of Lakeshore, MS, for clean-up and rebuilding during Spring Break and again in May. More dolls are being readied to accompany these delegations.

"I wanted to make these dolls for the children in Mississippi. They need them. They are so poor. And they have lost so many, many things."

— Manuela Vadi, 84
Aging with Grace participant

The Sacred Heart University-St. Charles Church Health and Wellness Center is a collaborative initiative designed to meet the unmet health and wellness needs of the parish while promoting the education, service, and research goals of the University. The Center melds the assets of contemporary health care practices with cultural and traditional health practices of the parishioners and residents.

The Health and Wellness Center is an interdisciplinary endeavor of students and faculty in the Health Profession programs, providing opportunities for clinical, service-learning and student internship experiences. Students from Nursing, Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy and related disciplines work with and learn from the cultural communities of St. Charles Church and neighborhood residents.

Donna Bowers (1,7), Mary Ellen Bowen (4), and Dr. Linda Strong (2,7) work with Aging with Grace seniors as they prepare the homemade cloth dolls are readied for their journey to Mississippi.

Aging with Grace Project



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Mark Your Calendar...

Human Rights Lecture



Dr. William F. Schulz, Executive Director of Amnesty International, will speak on Wednesday, February 15, at 7 PM in the Edgerton Center for the Performing Arts.

Based on his latest book, **TAINTED LEGACY: 9/11 and the Ruin of Human Rights** (Nation Books, 2003), Dr. Schulz's lecture will examine the relationship between the growth of terror around the world and the violation of human rights.

In his presentation, Dr. Schulz will focus on the effect the war on terror has had on current events, human rights and foreign policy. He will also talk about the importance of religious freedom and tolerance in today's day and age.

An ordained Unitarian Universalist minister, Dr. Schulz has been Executive Director of Amnesty International (USA) since March 1994. Throughout his career he has been outspoken in his opposition to the death penalty and in his support for women's rights and racial justice.

This event is being sponsored by the John F. Welch College of Business and the Hersher Institute for Applied Ethics. The lecture is free of charge and open to the public.

Mission Matters

The following prayer by one of our students appears in the Sacred Heart University Prayerbook, *Prayers from the Heart* (Sacred Heart University Press, 2002).

A Time for Prayer

*I pray for a time when we all shall embrace
the teachings of compassion and the philosophy of grace.*

*I pray for a century when we are all gentle and kind,
a span of collected moments in which we all are color blind.*

*I pray for a decade when we are not at war
over religious beliefs and cultural differences,
and we authentically ask the question: what are we fighting for?*

*I pray for a year when tragedy does not strike,
neither by the ugliness of human hand nor by nature's might.*

*I pray for a month when not one child
goes hungry, nor dies from starvation.*

*I pray for a week when we all shall grow strong
on the journey toward right in our triumphant battle over wrong.*

*I pray for the day when we all shall value and uphold
the teaching of Mahatma Gandhi and Jesus, more than we do
earthly treasures such as diamonds and gold.*

*I pray for the hour when we all shall decree our mission
is to love without fear, measure, labels, shame, an end, or condition.*

*I pray for the minute when we all shall gain a true innerstanding
that life is a beautiful and enjoyable flight,
but at times may also include an emergency landing.*

*I pray for the second when we all shall
feel his touch and in his peace find rest,
knowing his love for you and me is as immeasurable
as the distance held between the east and the west.*

*I pray for a time when we all shall embrace
the teachings of compassion and the philosophy of grace.*

- Brandon M. Graham, Class of 2002

The cover illustration for *Prayers from the Heart: The Sacred Heart University Prayerbook*, is a detail from the Maria Mater Boni Consilii (Mother of Good Counsel) stained glass window in the Sacred Heart University Chapel. Designed and executed in 1954, it is the work of a disciple of the famous muralist, Diego Rivera. The lamp is the symbol of wisdom, knowledge and understanding, while the Alpha and Omega represent Christ, "the beginning and the end" and source of all counsel. Copies of *Prayers from the Heart* are available for purchase in the University Bookstore.

