According to the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (C.A.R.A.), from 2005 to 2012 the total number of diocesan seminarians in US theologates increased by over 15%. In Sulpician seminaries in the US, the increase has been more than 20%. This is a very encouraging trend. Nevertheless, seminaries now need larger formation teams to work with larger numbers of seminarians, especially to meet the requirements of personal one-to-one formation. Added to this is the fact that in the current edition of The Program of Priestly Formation (2006), our bishops increased the number of seminary positions that should be or must be filled by priests. Yet research done by Sr. Katarina Schuth, OSF, shows that

Planned and coordinated by the General Council of the Society of the Priests of Saint Sulpice, an inter-provincial symposium on the Roman Catholic Priesthood was held from July 8-18, 2012, at Le Grand Séminaire in Montreal. Each province chose eight delegates to attend the symposium. In addition, the five members of the General Council and the three Provincial Superiors were ex officio delegates.
from 1987-2010 the percentage of semi-
nary faculty mem-
bers who are priests fell from 73% to
57%.

It is more difficult
today to find and
place qualified
priests in seminaries
for the following rea-
sons. First, the total
number of diocesan
priests in the US
continues to decline
largely because there are more retiring
than being ordained. According to
C.A.R.A., the total decline in diocesan
priests from 2005 to 2012 was about
7%. So there are simply fewer dioce-
san priests available for seminary min-
istry.

Second, the decline in the total number
of priests who are members of religious
communities has been even greater.
Diocesan seminaries can no longer
count on religious communities to sup-
ply as many additional faculty mem-
bers as in the past.

Third, demographic shifts in the
Catholic population and the availabil-
ity of fewer priests have posed serious
challenges for many bishops. Around
the country many parishes with small
congregations are being closed or
swallowed by other parishes. This usu-
ally leads to a better use of resources,
especially priests. However, it also
makes some bishops more conscious of
and concerned about the personnel
needs within their own dioceses, and
thus more reluctant to let priests serve
outside their dioceses, e.g., in seminar-
ies usually located in other dioceses.

Fourth, research done by the late Dr.
Dean Hoge shows that bishops have
permitted fewer priests to get higher
education, except in Canon Law. From
1990 to 2005 the percentage of
priests in higher education full-time and
part-time declined from 43% to 25%.
Thus the diocesan priests who are
available are less likely to be qualified
to teach on the graduate-professional
level, something that most seminary
formators are expected to do.

These trends will tend to weaken semi-
nary formation over time. The solution
is not to “let the big dioceses staff the
seminaries” or “let the Sulpicians do
it.” Almost everyone is in the same
boat. Even in some large dioceses that
are responsible for their own seminar-
ies, relatively few of the seminary for-
mators today are local diocesan
priests.

Closing small seminaries or merging
seminaries may help some, but like the
possible restructuring of seminary pro-
grams internally, these things are not
normally under the control of seminary
administrators.

In sharp response are some appeals
from our two most recent popes.
Deeply concerned about the quality of
priestly formation, they have urged
bishops to allow their most capable
priests to work in seminaries. As a
result, many bishops are in a bind. If
they heed these papal appeals, they
risk facing more complaints at home,
something more vexing than com-
plaints at a distance. If they fail to
heed them, they risk receiving new
priests who are less well-trained at a
time when the demands of priestly
ministry are growing.

It is my hope and prayer that many
bishops will continue to support the
Sulpicians by giving us priests to help
us meet the increasing demands of our
ministry.

Thomas R. Ulshafer, S.S., is Provincial
Superior of the Society of St. Sulpice,
Province of the United States.
Recent Episcopal Appointments

Over the course of 2012, there were three major episcopal appointments which relate very directly to the ministry of the US Province of the Society of St. Sulpice. Two of these appointments took place in the United States, the other in Zambia.

Archbishop William E. Lori was installed as the 16th Archbishop of Baltimore on May 16, 2012. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1977 for the Archdiocese of Washington, and he served as Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Washington from 1995-2001. From 2001 until he was appointed to Baltimore, Archbishop Lori was the Bishop of Bridgeport, Connecticut. In his role as Archbishop of Baltimore, Archbishop Lori will serve as the Chair of St. Mary’s Seminary and University’s Board of Trustees. The trustees, administration, faculty and seminarians extend their prayers and best wishes to Archbishop Lori as he begins his new ministry.

Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone was installed as the 9th Archbishop of San Francisco on October 4, 2012. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1982 for the Diocese of San Diego. In 2002 he was ordained as Auxiliary Bishop of San Diego and in 2009 he was appointed Bishop of Oakland. In his service as Bishop of Oakland he was a member of the Board of Trustees of St. Patrick’s Seminary and University and he will now be the Chair of that Board. Through his service in Oakland he is already well known to the St. Patrick’s community. As in Baltimore, everyone connected with St. Patrick’s extends their prayers and best wishes to Archbishop Cordileone as he begins his new ministry.

In Zambia, Bishop Benjamin Phiri, who is currently the Auxiliary Bishop of Chipata, has been named the Episcopal Director of Seminaries. The entire seminary system in Zambia is under the supervision of the Zambia Episcopal Conference (ZEC), meaning that the role of the Episcopal Director of Seminaries is crucial for the ministry of the Sulpicians at the Emmaus Spirituality Centre and for the assignment of Sulpicians to other seminaries in Zambia. Bishop Phiri served for a period of years as the rector of St. Dominic’s Seminary in Lusaka and he is well known to the Zambian Sulpicians. All those who are part of the Sulpician ministry in Zambia are pleased to be working with Bishop Phiri in his new role.

In this painting she wears a gray blanket with a single pale red horizontal stripe which was native to her people. Her hair is pulled back, and parted in the middle which was the custom of her tribal female ancestors. She stands between two mountains; these are the symbols of the two countries which claim her, the USA and Canada. She is not only a bridge to and from these lands, but the faith journey itself to freedom. Her compass is her cross. The hand-made wool rosary beads wrapped tightly around her hand were the only heirloom from her Christian mother who died, leaving her orphaned when she was 4 years old.

Peter Wm. Gray, S.S. is an internationally-renowned artist who painted this tribute to St. Kateri Tekakwitha.
The two main presenters were Monsignor Kevin Irwin of The Catholic University of America and Father Bernard Pitaud, p.s.s., Provincial of the Province of France. Three bishops accepted the invitation to offer their reflections from the perspective of priestly formation and their episcopal experience: Monsignor Albert Giraldo Jaramillo, p.s.s., Archbishop Emeritus of Medellín; Monsignor Georges Soubrier, p.s.s., Bishop Emeritus of Nantes; and Edwin Cardinal O’Brien, Archbishop Emeritus of Baltimore and Grand Master of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre.

The theme, “Forming Priests for Today: Priesthood in the 21st Century in Light of the Traditions of Vatican II and Saint-Sulpice,” proved substantial both in the quality of the presentations and the conversation that the presentations stimulated. As Ronald Witherup, S.S., Superior General of the Society, subsequently related to the members, “I am happy to report that all of the evaluations of this interprovincial meeting indicate what a huge success it was. Suffice it to say that the five presentations by the two main presenters and the three bishops were well received and provided an excellent orientation to the small group discussions and plenary sessions. We thank them sincerely for their hard work! I also thank Father Robert Maloney, C.M., for his skilled facilitation of the symposium, the translators (Sulpician Fathers Lawrence Terrien, David Brawand, Robert Gauthier, and Sr. Della Gaudet) for their labors!”

The symposium was a success on two levels, theological and fraternal. The magisterial, theological, and pastoral grasp of the theme by the theologians gathered as presenters and participants, as well as the depth of insight gleaned from Fr. Jean-Jacques Olier’s writing on the topic, as deftly presented by Father Pitaud, p.s.s., and the rich Sulpician tradition of priestly formation proved to be the benchmarks of the event. The fraternity among Sulpicians, friends and confreres, old and new, was excellent as well. And the setting was perfect: Montreal and Le Grand Séminaire.

The organizers’ hope was that such an international meeting would also offer something of value to all Sulpicians, and especially to those currently engaged in the ministry of initial and ongoing formation. To that end, with the initial redactions provided by the delegate “reporters,” the Generalate took on the task of synthesizing the main elements from the discussions. Subsequently, a summary of the event was posted on the Generalate’s website: www.sulpiciens.org.
Two centuries ago, the US began its “second war of independence,” a war that lasted until February 1815, only a few months after Baltimore was unsuccessfully besieged by the British. Not widely known is the fact that during that war a Sulpician priest was arrested by the British and held in present-day Canada. His name was Father Gabriel Richard.

Richard was born in La Ville de Saintes, France, in 1767, and was ordained in 1791. With the Sulpicians under persecution at that time, he was sent to the US almost immediately, where he taught mathematics at St. Mary’s College on Paca Street in Baltimore until 1798. That year, when he was only 31, he was sent by Bishop Carroll and his Sulpician superiors to evangelize what today we call the Midwest. Eventually he became known as the “second founder” of Detroit, co-founder of the University of Michigan, and the first priest to serve in the US Congress.

During the War of 1812, Richard served as chaplain to the citizens of Detroit as they tried in vain to hold off the British army and its Indian allies. It was said later that because of his influence, Detroiters stayed loyal to the United States.

After the capture of Detroit, legend says that Richard, known for his pro-republican sentiments, refused to swear allegiance to the British crown. In any event, he was arrested and imprisoned at Fort Malden in present-day Windsor, Ontario. At Fort Malden he met Tecumseh, the chief of the Shawnee and a powerful ally of the British. Richard may also have ministered to some of the Indians there. Tecumseh told the British commander General Brock that he and his people would not fight for them unless Richard was released. So Brock sent him back to Detroit.

For a long time, Richard was known for his pastoral concern for Native Americans. Later in life, he gave his reason for entering Congress in 1823: “The principal motive I have in accepting this charge is to work efficaciously for the good of religion and above all to procure the knowledge of the Gospel to the poor Indians.”

Richard died in Detroit in 1832 and is buried there at St. Anne’s, the parish where he became pastor in 1798.
On September 8, 2012, a celebration was held for the official reopening of the Chapel of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Temple, the historic seminary chapel at St. Mary’s on Paca Street. With a special midday prayer led by Bishop William C. Newman, retired Auxiliary Bishop of Baltimore, Sulpicians, donors and other invited guests reopened the newly renovated historic chapel. The celebration was enhanced by the prayerful music provided by the Schola of Theological College, Washington, DC and the liturgical assistants of the seminarians of St. Mary’s Seminary & University in Baltimore, MD. All in attendance enjoyed a delightful lunch on the south lawn of the Historic Site provided by Rouge Fine Catering.


John C. Kemper, S.S. is the Director of St. Mary’s Spiritual Center and Historic Site. He is a member of the Provincial Council of the Society of St. Sulpice, Province of the United States.
The newly renovated interior of the Chapel

(l-r) Very Rev. Thomas R. Ulshafer, S.S., Bishop William C. Newman (Baltimore), Bishop Denis J. Madden (Baltimore), Bishop W. Francis Malooly (Wilmington) and Fr. David Thayer, S.S.

(1-r) William Cardinal Keeler (Baltimore), Mark Potter, and Patricia Chalfant

Fr. John C. Kemper, S.S., Director of St. Mary’s Historic Site on Paca Street with Mr. Brian Greenan, Representative of the Mayor of Baltimore and his daughter Fatima

Sulpician Fathers Victor Mwanamwambwa, S.S., Raulo Lopez, S.S. and Rafael Ramiro

Mr. Rob Judge, Executive Director, National Shrine of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Emmitsburg, with his daughter Ellen

Fr. Albert C. Giaquinto, S.S. and Sister Reginald Gerdes, O.S.P.
Meet A Sulpician Candidate

In the last two issues, Update introduced you to four of the five Sulpician candidates accepted for 2011-12. The fifth candidate is profiled here.

Father Leonardo (Leo) Gajardo was born on December 8, 1980, in Santiago, Chile, and lived there with his family until he was nine years old. At that time the family moved to Chicago and his father started a small painting company. Fr. Gajardo’s parents are in good health and his sister, now married, has a daughter and a son.

Upon finishing his secondary education, Fr. Gajardo applied to the Diocese of Gary, Indiana, and was accepted into the college seminary program at Sacred Heart Seminary in Detroit. Upon finishing his studies there, he transferred to Theological College in 2002. He did not have any Sulpicians as professors, but his positive experience of the formation program was attractive to him and led him to begin considering a vocation to the Society. In his first year at Catholic University, his bishop informed him that he would like to see Fr. Gajardo pursue a degree in Canon Law. He began to work towards a licentiate after finishing his S.T.B. Upon ordination in 2006, he returned to his diocese and served in two parishes, one a formerly Polish parish whose population had shifted over the years to include a considerable number of Spanish speaking parishioners. He also helped out in a nearby parish consisting mostly of Hispanics. In addition he began to work in the diocesan tribunal. He returned to Washington in the summer of 2009 to continue his work in Canon Law and finished his degree in the spring of 2010. At that time he went back to his diocese to work as a parochial vicar with a Spanish-speaking community and took up once again his work in the tribunal.

In 2011 his Bishop granted permission for him to become a candidate for the Society of Saint Sulpice and he began working at Saint Mary’s in Baltimore, where he is now teaching an introductory course in theology to the new pre-theology students and Canon Law to seminarians in their third year of theology studies. He also serves as associate director of liturgy for the seminary. He has been very well received and is much appreciated. It is a great blessing to have another bilingual member of the formation team, especially one who helps to reduce the average age of the formation faculty. His congenial manner, good sense of humor, great organizational skills and enthusiasm have helped him settle in quickly. He is certainly making an important contribution to the seminary program.

At vacation times he regularly returns to Hobart, Indiana to see his family. For recreation he enjoys reading works of literature and history, attends the occasional symphony concert or movie, and, weather permitting, he likes to ski.

Lawrence B. Terrien, S.S., is a faculty member at St. Mary’s Seminary and University, Baltimore. From 1996-2008, he was Superior General of the Society of St. Sulpice.
John Lawrence Bitterman was the first child born to Ferdinand L. and Minnie (nee Vienna) Bitterman on April 16, 1942 in Stockton, California. He is survived by his younger sister, Susan Johns Rigley and brother-in-law, John Rigley as well as a nephew, Gregory Johns.

During his years at home, Fr. Bitterman's life was connected and interwoven with that of the local parish. He attended Saint Agnes Grade School and St. Joseph College High School, Mountain View and later graduated from St. Mary's High School, Stockton in 1960. Following high school, Fr. Bitterman returned to Mountain View where he entered St. Joseph College Seminary.

In the summer of 1962, he and his parents traveled to our Nation's Capital, Washington, DC, where he was to begin his studies at Theological College, the seminary program of The Catholic University of America. As a young Basselin Scholar and, later, as a theology student, university studies ignited Fr. Bitterman's intellectual life in a new and imaginative fashion. He received a B.A. in Philosophy (1964), an M.A. in Intellectual History (1965) and an S.T.B. in Sacred Theology (1968). All these degrees were granted by The Catholic University of America, Washington, DC.

He returned to the Diocese of Stockton and was ordained a priest on February 15, 1969. While he had been at Theological College, the Most Rev. Hugh A. Donohue, Bishop of Stockton, had given permission for Fr. Bitterman to enter the Society of St. Sulpice, Province of the United States.

Most of Fr. Bitterman’s early ministry was in California high school education and administration. The list of high schools where he served includes: St. Joseph and St. Francis (Mt. View), Notre Dame (Sherman Oaks) and Archbishop Mitty (San Jose). Later on, Fr. Bitterman also served in other capacities: Dean, Rector, Vice Rector and Director of the Sulpician Retirement Community.

Fr. Bitterman spoke about four assignments that gave him a special sense of accomplishment and pride: his years at Notre Dame High School, Sherman Oaks (1980-1987); his services as Academic Dean at St. Joseph’s College during the Loma Prieta Earthquake (1989); his contribution to the Sulpician mission in Zambia (1992-2003); and his service to our senior Sulpicians as Director/Superior of St. Charles Villa (2007-2012).

One of Fr. Bitterman’s gifts to the Society at St. Sulpice is his detailed chronicles of the early days of Sulpicians in Zambia. His attentiveness to the details of the day-to-day life is a good resource for the archives and future historians.

Appreciation for Fr. Bitterman’s contributions to the Sulpician foundation in Zambia was seen during his Wake Service held in St. Martin’s Chapel on October 8, 2012. Fr. Calé Cloughly, himself a U.S Sulpician who served in Zambia, led the Service. Fr. Victor Muwanamwamba, S.S., a Zambia Sulpician and former student of Fr. Bitterman delivered the reflection. Fr. Muwanamwamba and Frs. Cliff Fumbelo and Royd Mweemba, two other Zambian priests currently studying in Baltimore, spoke affectionately of Fr. Bitterman’s ministry in Zambia and his care for the Zambian students.

Fr. Bitterman’s final assignment was to serve as Director/Superior of St. Charles Villa, the Sulpician Retirement Community. His generous and respectful care of the senior members was evident to all who visited St. Charles Villa. This final assignment was his first assignment on the East Coast and he had no connections in the area. He made himself totally accessible to the needs of the senior members. Often, this dedicated service went both unnoticed and unrecognized. On evennights when the night staff was absent, Fr. Bitterman would sleep on the couch near the nurse’s desk so as to hear Fr. John Ward’s call bell if he was in need or discomfort during the night. This is just one example of the care that Fr. Bitterman showed to the senior men at St. Charles Villa during his five years as Director.

During his 43 years as a priest and member of the Society of St. Sulpice, Fr. John Bitterman was a good and faithful servant of the Gospel. With creative and untiring energy he faithfully undertook his various assignments for the building up of the Kingdom of God.

John C. Kemper, S.S. is the Director of St. Mary’s Spiritual Center and Historic Site. He is a member of the Provincial Council of the Society of St. Sulpice, Province of the United States.

In Memoriam
Continued from p. 9

John Wesley Bowen III, S.S., 1924 - 2012

By Richard M. Gula, S.S.

In the biblical idiom, the servant who uses well the gifts entrusted to him by the master is regarded as a “good and faithful servant” (Luke 19:17). These same attributes can be used for Father John Bowen, S.S. who died on May 6, 2012.

Born June 24, 1924 and raised in Baltimore, Maryland, Fr. Bowen was the eldest of three children.

He was educated in Baltimore parochial elementary and secondary schools, St. Charles College, a minor seminary in Catonsville and St. Mary’s Seminary at Paca Street. He completed his theological studies at St. Mary’s Seminary in Roland Park after which he was ordained to the priesthood on June 4, 1949 for the Archdiocese of Baltimore at the then Cathedral of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Fr. Bowen immediately joined the Society of St. Sulpice.

Attending The Catholic University of America, he earned his Licentiate in Sacred Theology (1952) and an M.A. degree in church history (1962). He wrote his M.A. thesis on the Basilica (formerly Cathedral) of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Baltimore, a subject on which he remained an expert for the rest of his life.

After ordination Fr. Bowen returned to the high school division of St. Charles College as a Sulpician. In 1963 Fr. Bowen was assigned to St. Edward’s Minor Seminary in Kenmore, Washington where he taught English and American History and served as the high school principal for ten years.

Transferred to Baltimore in 1980, Fr. Bowen became the historian for the Society of St. Sulpice, Province of the United States and joined Rev. Vincent M. Eaton, S.S. in organizing the Province’s archives in the lower level of Our Lady of the Angels Chapel in Catonsville. Together they transformed it into a model program for religious archives. Fr. Bowen soon became noted for his encyclopedic knowledge of the history of the Sulpicians, the alumni of their institutions, and the Archdiocese of Baltimore. He shared his knowledge generously with researchers who combed through diocesan newspapers to track the assignments and accomplishments of alumni. For his contributions, in 2011 he was awarded the Olier Medal as an outstanding priestly alumnus by St. Mary’s Seminary & University.

Fr. Bowen officially became a retired Sulpician in 1995 and moved to St. Charles Villa Retirement Community. But retirement did not slow him down. He maintained active in ministry until the very end of his life. He gave more than thirty years of service to St. Mark’s Parish in Catonsville, more than twenty years of service to the Christian Brothers at Calvert Hall, and twenty years of service as weekday chaplain at the Motherhouse of the Oblate Sisters of Providence.

Fr. Bowen had a special commitment to the Oblate Sisters by serving as Vice-Postulator for the canonization cause of Mother Mary Elizabeth Lange (c. 1784-1882), foundress of the Oblate Sisters of Providence, the first religious community for women of color in the country, and a community that has had close ties to the Sulpicians over its history. From 1982-2009, he served as priest-moderator to the Board of the Mother Seton House on Paca Street, Inc., a group that restored and maintained the Sulpician-owned house where St. Elizabeth Ann Seton lived from 1828 to 1809. The Mother Seton House is located on the grounds of the original campus of St. Mary’s Seminary (est. 1791), and Fr. Bowen frequently gave tours of the house and the historic site to its many visitors.

Fr. Bowen was awarded the Cross Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice, a papal honor recognizing his distinguished service to the church.

On May 6, 2012 Fr. Bowen died unexpectedly at St. Agnes Hospital in Catonsville, Maryland. On May 15, 2012, Fr. Bowen was buried in the Sulpician Cemetery in Catonsville, Maryland following three funeral liturgies that were filled to overflowing. He had one funeral at the Motherhouse of the Oblate Sisters of Providence, one at St. Mark’s Parish, and a third at the Chapel of Our Lady of the Angels where he had prayed as a seminarian and young Sulpician. At his Mass of
John's Gospel tells us that Jesus, upon seeing Nathanael coming toward him, declared: "Here is a true Israelite. There is no guile in him.

A similar declaration could be made of Eugene Konkel, S.S., who died on September 14, 2012. Father Konkel's priesthood was characterized by a deep integration of and practical devotion to the Sulpician charism, which he lived in a humble, generous, trustworthy, and guileless way.

Born on March 7, 1931 in Milwaukee, Fr. Konkel entered the Basselin program at The Catholic University of America in 1950, where he was granted an M.A. in philosophy in 1953 and an S.T.L. in 1957. He was ordained to the priesthood for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee on May 25, 1957.

After ordination, Fr. Konkel was assigned to St. Charles College in Baltimore. He was admitted to the Society of St. Sulpice in 1959. He served at St. Charles College for an additional four years, and he received an M.A. in English from Marquette University in 1963. He was also granted the Patriarch Award from St. Patrick's Seminary & University in 1998 and Theological College's Alumnus Lifetime Service Award in 2011.

In 1964, Fr. Konkel was transferred to St. Thomas Seminary in Louisville. He later served on the faculties of St. Joseph's College in Mountain View, California, and St. Stephen's Seminary in Kaneohe, Hawaii.

In 1976, Fr. Konkel became the Director of the Vatican II Institute for Clergy Formation. In the course of his 26 years as Director, Fr. Konkel welcomed over 2,000 priests to the Institute's widely acclaimed sabbatical program. He warmly and compassionately attended to the priests who participated in the program. The sabbatical program anticipated the emphasis on the four pillars of priestly formation in Pastores Dabo Vobis by nearly 20 years and inspired a growing commitment to ongoing formation of priests within the US Province of St. Sulpice.

Fr. Konkel remained at St. Patrick's Seminary upon his retirement, serving as spiritual director for many seminarians and priests, deacons, and laity. He continued to assist in parishes in the region and give retreats and days of recollection for priests. In recognition of his commitment to the welfare and renewal of priests, Fr. Konkel was granted the National Federation of Priests' Council's Touchstone Award in 2004.

On September 24, 2012, Reverend Thomas P. Demse, Fr. Konkel's nephew and a priest of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, was the presider of the Mass of Resurrection. John C. Wester, Bishop of the Diocese of Salt Lake City, served as homilist. Fr. Konkel was interred at Gate of Heaven Cemetery in Los Altos, CA. Fr. Konkel's funeral liturgies were held in the chapel of St. Patrick's Seminary. The large congregations that assembled for both the Vigil Service and the Funeral Mass served as a testimony to the impact that Fr. Konkel had upon the lives of seminarians, priests, and laity, to his effectiveness as a formator both within and beyond the seminary, and to his remarkable capacity to establish and maintain friendships across a lifetime. The funeral rites offered a fitting tribute to "a true Sulpician, in whom there was no guile."

James Myers, S.S. served as assistant director of the Vatican II Institute under Fr. Konkel and later became director himself. A member of the Provincial Council, he is currently on sabbatical at the University of Notre Dame.

By James Myers, S.S.
In Memoriam  Continued from p. 10

and St. Mary’s Seminary in Baltimore. He was for seven years a faculty member at Emmanuel Spirituality Centre and St. Dominic’s Major Seminary in Lusaka, Zambia (1995-2002). After retiring in 2002, he resided in Baltimore and died on June 18, 2012.

The above is a list of some facts about Fr. Lardner. The following are “Reflections on Wisdom and a Friend” which derive from my homily at his Funeral Mass.

I first met Fr. Lardner in the fall of 1970 when we were on the faculty at St. Joseph’s High School Seminary. I saw in him a desire to take students on a journey. It was a search for human wisdom and knowledge. Fr. Lardner was always looking for a way to make learning more attractive, exciting and engaging both in the classroom and outside. He knew the importance of a good education to do well in this world; he also knew the importance of truth, wisdom and knowledge to make us better people. Most of all, I saw him enjoy, in his great extroverted manner, the success of learning among his students.

In seminaries in the United States and at St. Dominic’s Seminary, Zambia, Fr. Lardner sowed the seeds of knowledge and understanding in the minds and hearts of students who sought to be priests.

But there was more for Fr. Lardner. Knowledge was also a way to God, who is the source of all wisdom. Fr. Lardner understood that when we are open to the wisdom that comes from God and is of God, we are led to God. Fr. Lardner wanted his students to find God in the midst of their learning.

Life was not always an easy path for Fr. Lardner. There were struggles on his journey of wisdom and faith. Supported by the wisdom of others, he continued his journey to the Lord. On this journey Fr. Lardner knew he was not alone. He was a son of God and a brother of Jesus, who promises comfort and rest to those who trust in Him.

On June 23, 2012 at Our Lady of the Angels Chapel, Very Rev. Thomas R. Ulshofer, S.S., Provincial, presided and Rev. Thomas R. Hurst, S.S., was the homilist at Fr. Lardner’s Mass of Resurrection. Our Lady of the Angels Chapel is the chapel where Fr. Lardner prayed as a young seminarian. He is buried nearby in the Sulpician Cemetery, Catonsville, MD.

In the end, with its burdens of illness, Fr. Lardner drew on this knowledge of God to understand what was happening. He drew upon his friendship with the Lord to find comfort and assurance. And so we pray, “Eternal rest grant unto him O Lord.”

Thomas R. Hurst, S.S. is President-Rector of St. Mary’s Seminary and University, Baltimore

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