Villa Olier Blessed by Archbishop Lori

On Tuesday, September 20, a day deliberately chosen when almost all of the new residents had moved in, St. Charles Villa officially became “Villa Olier” with an evening blessing service celebrated by Archbishop William E. Lori of Baltimore.

During the course of the service, the Archbishop prayed for the Lord’s blessing on the Sulpician Fathers who had been retired there for some time, those who had recently joined them, and on their newly renovated residence. In his reflection, he invited the residents to engage in a ministry of prayer so that Villa Olier in a very real way continue to be what it has always been, since the foundation of St. Charles Villa in 1971, a “House of Prayer.” In so doing, he asked the Fathers to call upon the Lord to be always present and to gift the house with his peace, compassion, and hospitality so that authentic Christian fraternity might be maintained and developed.

The service was followed by cocktails and hors d’oeuvres served in the open air outdoor courtyard. The evening concluded with the residents and their guests enjoying a banquet together in the newly freshened dining room.

Fr. John McMurry, PSS, noted that with the building being renovated along with the community being comprised of Michael Barre, Mel Blanchette, Joseph Bonadio, Jerry Brown, Cale Crowley, John Kselman, John Mattingly, Louis Reitz, and Addison Wright, it is the nicest place he has ever lived.

The province’s seasoned members certainly deserve that as a reward, as they begin a new chapter in their lives after selflessly giving decades of faithful service to the Church.

Dan Doherty, PSS, Director of Villa Olier

Photos on pages 12 and 13

Updated: Winter 2017
In the first Book of Kings, God invites Solomon to ask for whatever he wants. In response, Solomon asks for the gift of wisdom and understanding—a request that pleases God greatly. God grants Solomon this gift of wisdom. Through the ages God has continued to grant this gift of wisdom and understanding to a select group of women and men so that they may serve God’s people.

Over the last forty years, those of us who have known Fr. Ulshafer have seen this gift of wisdom operate in his life of service in seminary formation and in the United States Province of the Society of St. Sulpice. As a seminarian at St. Charles, Paca Street, and Roland Park, then-seminarian Tom Ulshafer was a respected member of the seminary community, in the view of both faculty and students. As a graduate student in ethics and theology at Princeton Seminary, he gained the technical knowledge needed to support his natural gifts of knowledge, understanding, and good judgment. In his years as a seminary faculty member at St. Mary’s Seminary and University, he served as a teacher of moral theology as well as Dean of Students, Vice Rector, and Vice President for Administration and Finance. From the early 1990s, he served as a member of the Provincial staff. From the late 1970s, he served as a Provincial Consultor for almost thirty years. He then became Provincial from 2008 to 2014.

In all of these roles of service, Fr. Ulshafer was known for his insight into complex problems as well as careful and prudent judgments and a calm manner. He brought a sense of right judgment and a pacific presence to tense situations. Those of us who worked closely with him over all of these years benefitted greatly from his insights as well as his style and delightful sense of humor.

Most recently during his well-earned sabbatical, Fr. Ulshafer published a thoughtful book about the American founder and first superior of St. Mary’s Seminary, Fr. François-Charles Nagot.

It is in light of all of these contributions to both St. Mary’s Seminary and University as well as the Society of St. Sulpice, that St. Mary’s has awarded Fr. Thomas R. Ulshafer, PSS, the Olier Distinguished Alumnus Award.

Thomas Hurst, PSS
Former Rector of St. Mary’s

St. Mary’s Awards Fr. Ulshafer the Olier Distinguished Alumnus Award

Left: Fr. Ulshafer and Fr. Phillip Brown.
On the cover: Archbishop William E. Lori of Baltimore blesses the renovated Villa Olier, formerly St. Charles Villa.
Photos by Larry Canner
“All this,” said the docent with a broad sweep of her hand, indicating the gently sloping green of St. Mary’s Park, “was the first Catholic seminary in the United States of America.”

With the stipulation that the City of Baltimore create and maintain a passive green space within the site of the seminary, the Society of St. Sulpice, Province of the U.S., gifted the grounds of the seminary to the people of the City of Baltimore in 1975, after the Paca Street campus closed and the last students transferred to the Roland Park campus in 1969. The seminary on Paca Street was founded in 1791, at the invitation of Bishop John Carroll, by Rev. Francois Nagot, PSS, and his small contingent of Sulpician priests.

As both a gift to the visitors of the park and the City of Baltimore, and as part of the year-long commemoration of the 225th Anniversary of the Province of the United States, the U.S. Sulpicians commissioned three outdoor park story boards to highlight both the seminary and the inspirational men and women who studied and discerned their vocations there. The first story board describes the seminary here and answers the question, “How This Park Got Its Name.” The second story board, “Sons of St. Mary’s,” highlights some of the prominent students of the seminary. The final story board introduces the three “Holy Women of Paca Street”—Mother Elizabeth Ann Seton, Mother Mary Elizabeth Lange, and Mother Theresa Maxis Duchemin.

At the dedication ceremony on October 1, 2016, Very Rev. John C. Kemper, PSS, Provincial Superior, honored the long history of service represented by the site to the Church, the City of Baltimore, and the residents of the surrounding Seton Hill neighborhood—a history of service going back to when this was a Haitian enclave in the late 18th century. Director of Baltimore City’s Department of Recreation & Parks, William Vondrasek, spoke of the Sulpicians’ inspirational example of partnering with the city and local municipalities, while District 11 Councilman Eric Costello lauded the long and steadfast commitment of care and service offered by the Sulpicians to this Seton Hill area of the city, named after the first American-born saint of the Catholic Church.

Blaine Carvalho
Adm. Assistant at St. Mary’s Spiritual Center & Historic Site
On Tuesday November 15, 2016, the U.S. Province of Sulpicians brought to a close at St. Mary’s Seminary & University in Baltimore its year-long celebration of the Province’s 225th anniversary. The Province was founded in 1791 when the Sulpicians in France accepted the invitation of Bishop John Carroll, the first bishop of the Diocese of Baltimore (founded in 1789) to come found a seminary in order to train local clergy. St. Mary’s is thus the oldest Catholic seminary in the country.

The commemoration was held during the semi-annual meeting of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, which enabled many bishops to come to the Seminary for an academic ceremony held in the Seminary chapel to honor Cardinal Marc Ouellet, PSS, Prefect of the Congregation for Bishops and President of the Pontifical Council for Latin America. Cardinal Ouellet received a Doctorate of Divinity honoris causa in recognition of his multiple contributions to theology, evangelization, priestly formation, and Church leadership. He delivered a detailed talk on the priesthood that has recently been published.

Among those attending the festive ceremony were the new Papal Nuncio for the United States, Archbishop Christophe Pierre, Cardinals Donald Wuerl (Washington), Justin Rigali (emeritus, Philadelphia), Edwin O’Brien (Knights of the Holy Sepulchre), and another forty Bishops. The seminarians and faculties from nearby Theological College in Washington, D.C., and Mount St. Mary’s Seminary in Emmitsburg, Maryland, also attended the gala, which was hosted by the President Rector of St. Mary’s, Rev. Phillip J. Brown, PSS. The Provincial of the U.S. Province, Very Rev. John C. Kemper, PSS, introduced the ceremony, and the Superior General from Paris, Very Rev. Ronald D. Witherup, PSS, closed the assembly with a brief word of thanks and a closing prayer.

As a gift to the Bishops attending, the U.S. Province distributed by mail copies of the new biography of the first Sulpician Superior in Baltimore, François Charles Nagot, which was written by the former Provincial, Fr. Thomas R. Ulshafer, PSS. The richly illustrated book recounts the largely unfamiliar story of Nagot’s remarkable influence on the growth of seminary formation in the U.S. The Society of St. Sulpice congratulates the U.S. Province on this milestone. Ad multos annos!

Ronald D. Witherup, PSS, Superior General
“Nothing does more to strengthen communion among the Church’s various communities than the humble awareness that we all participate in the communion of the divine persons. The priesthood of Christ unfolds in the mode of fruitful communion.”

—Cardinal Marc Ouellet
Appointed by the Provincial Council of the US Province of the Society of St. Sulpice with the approval of Baltimore Archbishop William E. Lori as well as the Holy See, Fr. Phillip J. Brown, PSS, was installed on Thursday, October 6, 2016, in the St. Mary’s Seminary Chapel as the sixteenth President of St. Mary’s. Fr. Brown takes the helm on the 225th anniversary of St. Mary’s Seminary and the Sulpician fathers in the United States.


Among the more than 150 guests joining the seminary community for the liturgy and reception were seminarians, priests, and well-wishers from the Archdiocese of Baltimore and Archdiocese of Washington, where Fr. Brown had most recently served as Rector of Theological College, the national seminary at The Catholic University of America. With his appointment as President-Rector, Fr. Brown returns home to St. Mary’s where he served as a faculty member from 2001 to 2006 and the Dean of the School of Theology from 2004 to 2006.

In his homily, Archbishop Lori drew upon his love of the French School of spirituality and the writings of Fr. Olier, founder of the Sulpicians, to underscore Fr. Brown’s responsibility to insist on “the centrality of Christ in the lives of priests and future priests” in scholarship as well as in service. In continuity with the long Sulpician tradition of priestly formation, Archbishop Lori emphasized that “formation requires a spirit of adoration, cooperation, and communion with Christ’s mysteries that leads to a deep and abiding dwelling of Christ in our persons.”

After the Mass, Fr. Brown thanked all those who attended his installation and who have been sources of hope and inspiration throughout his priesthood. He reminded everyone that his service as President-Rector will need their continued support. Looking over to the Archbishop, Fr. Brown said, “I feel your support every day and it is deeply appreciated.”

A reception followed in the Laubacher Hall.

Richard M. Gula, PSS, Director of Personnel
On this page, Archbishop Lori, Fr. Brown
Photos by Larry Canner
On Monday, October 24, 2016, Gerald D. McBrearity, PSS, was officially installed as the sixteenth rector of Theological College during a special Mass held in the crypt church of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. Donald Cardinal Wuerl, the Archbishop of Washington, DC, presided, accompanied by more than thirty other priests. John Garvey, the president of CUA, and many other university officials and faculty members joined with the seminary community and McBrearity’s family and friends to observe this joyous occasion.

But this was not the first time that Fr. McBrearity had celebrated an important milestone in the crypt church. In his opening remarks, Fr. McBrearity recalled that he had been ordained a deacon there in 1972, with many of the same family members in attendance. Cardinal Wuerl picked up on this in his homily, connecting the experience of Fr. McBrearity’s diaconate ordination with the beauty, uniqueness, and challenge of being a priest of Jesus Christ. The Cardinal also thanked Fr. McBrearity for accepting this call, and commended him in his new role as a true shepherd to his flock at Theological College.

The wonderful Theological College Schola, under the direction of Dr. Gerald F. Muller, accompanied the community in worship, while a string quartet serenaded them at the reception after mass. That
celebration was held in Olier Hall, and featured rich hors d’oeuvres set among lovely flowers, stunning ice sculptures, and beautifully carved fruits. A fabulous dinner followed, expertly prepared by Chef Sunder Michael and the Sodexo team. Everyone seemed touched by the community’s hospitality and joyful spirit.

The true highlight of the celebration, however, came after dinner when Fr. McBrearty definitively declared that “I am the Rector!” The community affirmed this declaration with great enthusiasm and cheer. Cardinal Wuerl and President Garvey also joined in, adding their own expressions of support for and gratitude to Fr. McBrearty and Theological College.

Hy K. Nguyen, PSS, Vice Rector

Left, Fr. Gerald McBrearty. Top right, Cardinal Donald Wuerl Photos by Dave Scavone.
These two pages show photos from the Villa Olier dedication and the reception that followed. The renovations to the Villa include a therapy pool and exercise room, a guest dining room, library, and enlarged chapel.
Whatever you do or dream you can do—begin it. Boldness has genius and magic in it.” So wrote the German writer Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. And so it was a hundred years ago that the American Province of the Society of St. Sulpice first considered responding to an invitation to establish a seminary in Washington, D.C.

From 1917 until a formal contract was signed between the Sulpicians and The Catholic University of America in 1940, there was an active discernment about the possibility of a Sulpician seminary becoming an integral part of the mission of a university. In 1940, the Sulpician Seminary became Theological College, the national seminary of The Catholic University of America.

Also in 1917, Theodore Basselin, a businessman from New York, left a bequest to endow a scholarship intended to prepare seminarians to be gifted preachers informed by the study of philosophy. After its establishment in 1923, the Basselin Scholars Program has continued to offer opportunities for intellectually gifted seminarians to achieve a License in Philosophy through the School of Philosophy at The Catholic University of America.

The Sulpicians had a dream that they set out to make a reality, and the boldness of the dream had genius and magic in it. One hundred years later, Theological College remains an integral part of the mission of Catholic University. Over this century, generations of seminarians have received an extraordinary education from the School of Theology and Religious Studies, the School of Philosophy, and the School of Canon Law.

The history of Theological College is marked by the characteristics of continuity and change. The seminary continues to conform to the vision of Fr. Jean-Jacques Olier, the founder of the Sulpicians, which includes a commitment to the priesthood and in particular diocesan priesthood; the cultivation of an apostolic spirit; an emphasis on spiritual formation; the progressive initiation of each seminarian into the spiritual life through prayer and spiritual direction; and the creation of a formation community that exercises collegiality. These hallmarks of a Sulpician seminary have remained central to the mission of Theological College during times of war and peace, social upheavals, and the dramatic consequences of the Second Vatican Council on all aspects of the life and ministry of priests.

Yet, throughout the century, Theological College read the signs of the times and adapted its program to better serve the needs of the Church in the United States. For example, Theological College was one of the first seminaries in the United States to establish an external forum formation relationship, which accompanies the seminarian during his years of formation, assisting him and his diocese to discern his suitability for priesthood and his readiness for ordination. In the late 1960s, Theological College was also the first to create a pastoral program in an effort to better prepare candidates to assume the responsibilities of a parish priest.

Theological College has always benefitted from the support and guidance offered by the Provincial Council of the American Province of the Sulpicians, which serves as the seminary’s Board of Trustees. The many efforts of Catholic University to incorporate Theological College into its mission and the enthusiastic support of the deans of the School of Theology and Religious Studies, the School of Philosophy, and the School of Canon Law have been a continuing blessing. Finally, it is important to note the encouragement Theological College has received from the Ordinaries of the Archdiocese of Washington. In good times and bad, various Archbishops and Cardinals have made their support for Theological College as the seminary of Catholic University their priority.

Theological College begins its second century by building on the dream that led to its establishment one hundred years ago, guided by the dream of Fr. Olier to foster vocations to the priesthood, inviting future priests to live totally for God in Christ Jesus.

Gerald McBrearty, PSS
Rector
On Saturday, September 24, 2016, the retirement community of Sulpician Fathers kept an “open house” to celebrate our beautifully renovated new residence, Villa Olier. It was a wonderful afternoon when at least 125 people came for a visit. To keep an open house is an English tradition and in keeping with that tradition, we offered hospitality to everyone. An open house really is a social event in which hospitality is extended to all, and our guests ranged from infants, children, young people, and some senior citizens. They were greeted by us and given a tour of our home.

Our new building is very attractive, and our guests were delighted to see and view the individual suites that we have. These suites consist of a large bedroom, spacious living room, and a very well equipped bathroom suitable for older priests who are in the third phase of life. In addition to the individual suites, our Villa has a very small but adequate library and office space where some of the priests offer spiritual direction. The Villa also has a very practical area for washing machines.

The Villa Fathers are blessed with 24-hour nursing care, and the nurses are not only very competent but also compassionate to us. Our meals are served in a beautifully decorated dining room featuring four tables, each with four chairs. Décor includes a painting of our Lady, Seat of Wisdom, created by our own Fr. Peter Gray, PSS, and, of course, a depiction of the Last Supper.

Our conversation at meals is usually lively, very interesting, and many times filled with old stories about our former lives as seminary professors and spiritual directors. At other times, we speak with great admiration of those Sulpicians who were residents at the pre-renovation Villa, when it was called St. Charles Villa.

Lastly, and most importantly, is our chapel, which is very conducive to our daily liturgies. It is open and spacious and has a very powerful mural of Jesus healing the paralytic, who was told to pick up his mat and walk. It commands the attention of everyone, and provides an inspiring visual dimension to remarkable healing.

What gives Villa Olier a sense of openness to our beautiful surroundings is a rectangular courtyard. It is beautifully landscaped and has a cooking area with grill plus a large seating area.

In France, the Sulpicians are known as the Gentlemen of St. Sulpice, and the Sulpicians at Villa Olier lived up to that tradition when we kept an open house.

Melvin C. Blanchette, PSS (Retired)
Frs. Emmanuel Ichidi and Peter Kwaleyela are pursuing undergraduate studies in philosophy at St. Bonaventure University College in Lusaka. They have been enrolled at the university since January 2016 and should be completing their program in May 2017.

Their studies in philosophy are a direct response to a need, described by the Zambian bishops, for qualified lecturers of that subject at St. Augustine’s Seminary. Since the mission of St. Sulpice is to be of service to the bishops in the area of formation and ongoing training of diocesan priests, the Fathers are delighted because they will have a lasting presence offering philosophy at the national seminary. Many Zambian diocesan priests who trained at the graduate level in philosophy have either not joined the faculty at St. Augustine’s or they lecture for a while and are recalled back to their dioceses. Therefore, the Fathers’ current studies at St. Bonaventure are a preparation for graduate studies and are eventually expected to add depth to the curriculum at St. Augustine’s with the teaching of philosophy.

St. Bonaventure University College is a Franciscan-run philosophy institution found in the capital city of Lusaka. It is close to an hour’s drive from Emmaus. It is affiliated with the Pontifical Antonianum University in Rome. The institution comprises many religious seminarians of the Franciscan family and other congregations.

Commenting on the program of study, Fr. Kwaleyela stated, “It was quite hard in the beginning

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“...they will bloom with abundant flowers, and rejoice with joyful song... the tongue of the dumb will sing... those whom the Lord has ransomed will return and enter Zion singing” (Isaiah 35:2.6.10).

For Isaiah, the return of song on the lips of the people is one of the signs of the joy of redemption. If so, then Fr. Martin Burnham must have seen the Lord’s visitation. Gifted with a good voice, he loves to sing. When not singing, he whistles. He loves American musicals—Les Misérables, his favorite, is itself a powerful story of redemption. His joyful disposition also manifests itself in an easy smile and in friendly banter. He loves to host people, always ready with a Guinness in summer and a hot toddy in winter. He makes a perfect caprese salad and would always delight in a plateful of eggplant parmigiana or chicken pot pie. Wasn’t his Lord called a glutton and a drunkard?

Fr. Martin is a full-blooded Irishman. He loves Ireland and everything Irish. But he is a native of Baltimore. He loves the Archdiocese of Baltimore and Maryland sports teams, especially the Orioles. He attended Thomas More College in Kentucky. Otherwise, the rest of his educational and professional life has been spent in Maryland. He holds a Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology from Loyola University in Maryland and worked for six years in Child and Family Psychiatry at Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center. He entered St. Mary’s Seminary and University in 1997 and was ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of Baltimore in 2002. Subsequently, he served as associate pastor in two parishes, and as pastor for four years of St. Andrew by the Bay in Annapolis. He was released to the Society of St. Sulpice in July 2011. After a three-year assignment at Theological College in Washington, DC, he became a temporary member of the Society (2013) and was sent for further studies in Psychology, again at Loyola University.

In the Sulpician way of formation, modeling the priesthood is considered the most effective. If so, then Fr. Martin is especially disposed for the Sulpician ministry. He loves being a priest. The Eucharist is the center of his life and contemplative prayer sustains his priestly spirituality. His pastoral approach is kindly, welcoming, and selfless. He finds nourishment in sharing spiritual insights and experiences with his fellow priests. Besides his personal and priestly traits, Fr. Martin’s training in psychology is an additional gift he brings to the Sulpician ministry. His doctoral studies are keeping him away from formation work, but he admits to missing working one-on-one with seminarians.

Rooted in his theological convictions and made urgent by the current national and global climate, certain causes are close to Fr. Martin’s heart. Foremost among these are respect for all human life and racial harmony. Care for our common home and stewardship of God’s creation are also causes he strongly advocates. He believes that these should be inculcated in future leaders of the church.

Renato Lopez, PSS

(Continued from previous page)

to switch from formation into full-time students. Added to this was pressure that came from studying with young people still in formation. Most students found it unusual to learn with priests. Gradually, we all seem to have adapted to the change and the program is running smoothly.”

Fr. Ichidi, evaluating his experience, remarked, “Our experience with the university has been positive. Through interaction with the students and staff, our horizon in formation and teaching has broadened.”

Fr. Kwaleyela’s long essay paper is on economic philosophy, where he analyzes Karl Marx’s labor theory of value in relation to the minimum wage in Zambia. Fr. Ichidi is also doing research based on Karl Marx. He focuses on the decline in numbers of the middle class in Zambia. His arguments are based on Karl Marx’s critique of capital.

Both Frs. Kwaleyela and Ichidi are resident at Emmaus Spirituality Centre. When away from academics, they each have a handful of spiritual directees with whom they meet twice every month.

Frs. Emmanuel M. Ichidi & Peter M. Kwaleyela, PSS
“As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you will be buried at a good old age.” (Gen 15:15)

These words that Yahweh spoke to Abram could well be spoken to Fr. Claude Henry Dukehart, who enjoyed the benefits of God’s grace for seventy-three years as a priest and ninety-nine years of life. When he died, he was the oldest priest in the Archdiocese of Baltimore and second oldest Sulpician in the world.

Fr. Dukehart was born on August 16, 1917, in Baltimore, Maryland, to John and Rose (Huesman) Dukehart. He was one of nine children: John Cyril (who was also a Sulpician), Paul, Edward, John, Charles, Mary (Musser), Betty (Quinn) and Joseph, who survives him.

Fr. Dukehart was ordained for the Archdiocese of Baltimore on June 8, 1943. He earned his undergraduate degree in philosophy from St. Mary’s Seminary on Paca Street in Baltimore in 1939. He went on to do his theological studies at St. Mary’s Seminary in the Roland Park neighborhood of Baltimore, where he earned his STB in 1941 and the STL in 1943. He then completed the MA degree in philosophy at The Catholic University of America in 1947, and then his STD in dogmatic theology in 1950.

As a Sulpician candidate, he served for two years (1943–1945) on the high school faculty of St. Charles College in Catonsville, Maryland, where he taught Latin, French, and Religion. After completing Solitude (1945–1946), he was admitted to the Society of St. Sulpice in 1946. After completing graduate studies at The Catholic University of America, he returned to St. Mary’s Seminary and University, Roland Park, to teach dogmatic theology, canon law, and Greek (1949–1960). He then went to teach dogmatic theology at St. John’s Seminary, Plymouth, Michigan (1960–1967), and at St. Thomas Seminary, Kenmore, WA (1967–1968).


Fr. Dukehart loved to follow professional sports, especially golf, football, and baseball. As his eyesight faded while in retirement, he had to give up playing golf and even watching it on TV. Though his eyesight failed him, his hearing did not. He was able to follow the Orioles and Ravens by listening to the games since he could not watch them.

In his retirement community at the Villa, Fr. Dukehart loved to join his confreres for daily “vespers,”—evening gin with cheese and crackers before dinner. Though he had to cope with losing his eyesight as he aged, he refused to surrender his memory. He was sharp to the end with his recollection of past experiences, names, and sports memorabilia. With that he brought vitality to the retirement community and its gatherings with his stories and his always ready sense of humor. When asked on his ninety-fifth birthday if he had anything to say about his life, he chuckled, “If I had known that I was going to live this long, I would have taken better care of myself.”

Living as long as he did, Fr Dukehart saw many of his peers pass on to death. He did not seem to fear death, even as it approached as a slow-moving train, lumbering down the tracks into the station after a long run. And at ninety-nine, as they would say in the theater, “Harry had a good run.”

Fr. Dukehart died on September 14, 2016, at St. Charles Villa, Catonsville. The Mass of Resurrection was celebrated on September 19, 2016, in Our Lady of the Angels chapel with the Provincial, John C. Kemper, PSS, as celebrant and homilist. Burial followed in the Sulpician Cemetery, Catonsville.

The psalmist once prayed, “Do not cast me off in time of old age. Do not forsake me when my strength fails.” (Ps 71:9) Fr. Dukehart could well make this his prayer, too, as he enjoyed ninety-nine years of life. He did indeed live with the sense of God’s care for him to the very end. His gracious spirit will remain his lasting witness to God’s enduring love in old age.
“God desires to confer benefits on those who persevere in his service.” This quote from St. Irenaeus is a fitting caption for the life of Vincent dePaul McMurry, who enjoyed the benefits of God’s grace for sixty-nine years as a priest and ninety-one years of life.

Fr. McMurry was born on October 1, 1924, in Nashville, Tennessee, to Vincent and Augusta (Delaigre) McMurry. He is survived by his brother, Fr. John McMurry, PSS, his sister, Mary (Hoenigman), two nephews, John and Vincent (Hoenigman), and one niece, Ammon Marie (Hoenigman).

Fr. McMurry was ordained for the Diocese of Nashville in 1949. He earned his undergraduate degree in philosophy (1945) from St. Mary’s Seminary on Paca Street in Baltimore, and then his STB (1947) and STL (1949) from St. Mary’s Seminary, Roland Park. He completed the MA in history at The Catholic University of America in 1951 after writing a thesis titled “The Catholic Church During Reconstruction, 1865–1877.”

As a Sulpician candidate, he served for one year (1950–1951) on the high school faculty of St. Charles College in Catonsville, Maryland, where he taught Greek, Latin, English, French, and Religion. After completing Solitude (1951–1952), he was admitted to the Society of St. Sulpice in 1952. For the next eighteen years (1952–1970) at St. Thomas Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, Fr. McMurry taught English, History, Public Speaking, Religion, Science, and French. He also served as librarian and Master of Ceremonies. He holds the distinction of being the only Sulpician to remain on the faculty continuously during the eighteen years that the school was in existence. Those years at St. Thomas were the golden years of his life. He was even awarded the honorary title “Kentucky Colonel” by the Governor of Kentucky for his faithful service. So he was sad to see the school close in 1970.

After a sabbatical year (1970–1971), he was assigned to St. Mary’s Seminary College in Catonsville (1971–1977) to teach History and English and also serve as secretary to the faculty. When the college closed, he was assigned to St. Mary’s Seminary and University in Baltimore (1977–1993) to moderate the pre-theology program and teach History. He retired in 1993 and lived in retirement for the next twenty-three years, first in residence at St. Mary’s Seminary and University for six years (1993–1999) and then at St. Charles Villa in Catonsville, where he lived for seventeen years until his death in 2016.

When asked by his brother, John, on the occasion of his fiftieth anniversary of priesthood, what was the high point of his life, Fr. McMurry unhesitatingly declared, “To be a priest and a Sulpician.” His love for being a Sulpician priest was foreshadowed as a seminarian when he was given the nickname, “Mr. Sulpician.”

During his Sulpician ministry, Fr. McMurry embodied the old Sulpician adage, “Gardez la residence,” for he was known as the one “who stayed home and did his work.” Fr. McMurry was a gracious priest, a host of other people’s souls. He is well remembered for creating hospitable space for the seminarians for whom he served as an advisor or spiritual director, as well as for many lay and religious who not only crossed his path but also sat down and stayed a while to talk heart to heart. During his later years, he stayed in touch with many via e-mail.

Fr. McMurry died on July 24, 2016, at St. Charles Villa in Catonsville. The Mass of Resurrection was celebrated on August 3, 2016, in the Villa chapel with the Provincial, John C. Kemper, PSS, as celebrant and Fr. McMurray’s brother, Fr. John McMurry, PSS, as homilist. Burial followed in the Sulpician Cemetery, Catonsville.

During his sixty-nine years as a priest, Fr. McMurry fulfilled the vision of St. Irenaeus: “The glory of humankind is to persevere and remain in the service of God.” He did indeed persevere, and in doing so has given glory to God through his service in the Sulpician community.

Richard M. Gula, PSS
Director of Personnel
These aspects of the Sulpician charism have distinguished a Sulpician seminary from other models of seminary formation for the past 225 years that we have been in the United States and for the 118 of those years that we have been at St. Patrick’s. However, the Provincial Council had to face the reality that our charism is not compatible with the vision of the Archbishop of San Francisco for the seminary. It is only right, then, that we not commit our personnel to a seminary that has no chance of being Sulpician. The decision to withdraw from St. Patrick’s Seminary was difficult, indeed. But sometimes you need to do the right thing, because it is the right thing to do!

We wish St. Patrick’s seminary all the best as they begin this new chapter in their history, building upon the foundation laid by the Sulpician Fathers.

John C. Kemper, PSS
Provincial Superior

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