



Thanksgiving and The Promised Land

Thursday, October 10, 2019, gave us a blue sky and delightfully warm weather as a prelude to Thanksgiving weekend. Everyone in the school was in the mood to celebrate our good fortunes, our beautiful campus, our cozy school and above all, the many blessings we share in this beautiful country. We were also blessed to have Raphael Ma (2005) now Father Raphael Ma, return to Del to celebrate Mass for the students sitting in the very seats he sat in after he arrived here in 2001. As noted in an earlier report for the Alumni news, his call to the religious life grew stronger and stronger with each passing year at Del. It culminated in his eventual ordination to the Congregation of the Resurrection, following seven years of study in Theology and Philosophy. He came to us on that beautiful day from his current assignment at St. Mary's Parish in Kitchener.

It would not be an exaggeration to claim Father Ralph has a modest, humble charisma. His youth, quiet exuberance and his devotion to his mission were evident to all, making it very easy for the students to share the enthusiasm he has for his work of sal-

vation. His palpable emotion captured the imagination of the congregation, which responded with careful attention to his brief but compelling homily on the notion that moral failure is no trivial matter at any place or at any time. Pure conviction always carries weight and did so again. Such natural belief reminds us of the eminent Carl Jung, who, when asked if he believed in Heaven, replied that he didn't have to believe - he knew. In his easy manner, Father Ralph calls forth that kind of ready belief.

After Mass, Principal Lundy recalled Fr. Ralph to the stage to present him with mementos of his visit - a warm Del hoodie and baseball hat, for he does enjoy his baseball. Mr. Lundy then ended the celebration reflecting on the importance of the Thanksgiving Mass, dwelling on the lasting value of the friendships formed here for which, in future times, we will always be grateful.

To conclude his visit, the Administration invited Fr. Ralph, and his father, to Heritage House for refreshments. As he chatted about his weekly duties, he explained how his work could

include anything from the instruction of elementary school children in the basic tenets of their faith to guidance and consolation to lighten the load of parishioners who are sick, worn or burdened. As we listened to him speak of his efforts to ameliorate the pain of suffering souls, it was clear to us that his soothing manner exuded a comfort created by his belief in the usefulness of his efforts. In short, you feel that Heaven is close to you.

These are challenging times, complicated and competitive, in need of "a bridge over troubled waters." Father Ralph's aura of humble confidence couples with an overpowering grace provides such a bridge that bestows the readiness to follow his lead to a better place. So on Thanksgiving, we gave thanks that a young Del student found an infusion of grace and the balm of conviction to journey with those who seek the Promised Land.

We have attempted the difficult task of expressing the intangible, so visit us at Heritage House and see the picture of Fr. Ralph and Br. Domenic, just inside the front door on the right side. The intangible will reveal itself. Stay tuned.

A Fall Message from Brother Domenic



Dear Alumni,

Greetings. It is time again for us to begin the annual campaigns to reach out to the community to assist us with our fundraising efforts for this academic year.

The “Forever DEL” campaign is dedicated to serving both current and future generations of students of the school. There are many exciting opportunities for you and our extended community to participate in such an important campaign. I am hoping that you will strongly consider making a pledge or a donation to one or more of the following initiatives:

1. The “Oakleaves” Campaign

This campaign involves repurposing and refurbishing the De La Salle Centre to create modern science labs and innovation spaces. It is our hope to begin construction during this school year.

As well, funds for this campaign are directed to the construction of the new John Hunt Health and Wellness Centre.

Efforts at finalizing this very important initiative continue with our architect and the city of Toronto. The proceeds from the sale of the property on the lower campus will finance most of this project, but I anticipate the need for additional funding to complete this venture.

2. Scholarships and bursaries

An integral part of the Lasallian mission is providing access to an education of excellence to young people from all socio-economic groups. Many parents and alumni have responded and continue to respond very generously to our efforts in providing funds for deserving students. Your donation will help deserving young people and their families receive a quality Catholic education in the Lasallian tradition. This commitment to finding monies for scholarships and bursaries is a collaborative effort that sees the Brothers, the parental and alumni communities and rentals from the arena, gymnasium and field, all providing funds for this school imperative.

3. Academic and programming support

De La Salle’s tuition remains accessible - this is our commitment. Future programming as it relates to equipment, support for students and general curriculum needs require the College to be innovative with its resources. Your donation to a program of your choice will provide additional financial support to ensure that despite our tuition levels, our students receive programming of excellence, which is real, meaningful and relevant.

Your support has allowed us to refurbish our cafeteria, auditorium, and the playing field without placing the school in financial debt and ensuring that tuition levels remain constant.

This year as we phase out our voluntary tuition program and observe a tuition increase of less than three percent, I ask you to demonstrate your appreciation for the school’s effort at responsible stewardship by considering a financial contribution. As parents, you are aware that the school works hard to keep tuition levels reasonable and in reach of families. I believe it is important to acknowledge this deliberate decision, keeping in mind as well that the College is able to provide all families with a healthy donation tax receipt each year for the religious portion of the tuition. Once this is taken into due consideration, it is fair to state that all families are receiving additional tuition relief.

If there is some worthy area to which you would like to donate that is not listed on the “Forever DEL” campaign form, please contact the Development Office of the College and share your ideas. Do not hesitate to contact me with any questions and/or concerns.

The mission and vision of our school community are extremely important in today’s world. A world that needs what we have to offer. Your financial support keeps our school vibrant and creative. I ask each and every family in whatever way possible to contribute from your goodness and concern for our greatest treasure - our young.

May the Good Lord bless your generosity. Best wishes.

Yours respectfully,

Brother Domenic Viggiani, FSC

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Brother Domenic, fsc". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

President

Perseverance

Freud, among many others, left us his version of an old axiom, which stated that “great ideas do not drop freely formed from Heaven.” They must also be polished or finished in the workshop of human effort. This same notion is also valid for exceptional careers, adventures, valuable discoveries, researches and explorations. It seems there is no easy way to find Eldorado or climb Mt. Everest. In short, perseverance breeds success.

As ever though, our efforts must also be blessed with the smiles of Heaven, as well as with good health, fortunate opportunities, helpful friends and family, and encouraging social and political environments. Without all these influences coming together, we would probably never get anything done. This is never easy as Hippocrates knew so many centuries ago when he cautioned those who followed him “to do no harm” for the balance in health between good and ill is delicate.

Peaks of achievement require peaks of risk to our tranquillity as well as to life and limb. Fortunately, there’s “husbandry in Heaven” that contrives to conserve useful, needed progress in human endeavours. At Del, we are blessed that so many of our graduates have met and overcome significant challenges to attain stature and position in our culture for the benefit of society and to enhance our way of life. In this report, we celebrate the success of Amanda Ciccolini (2007), who has blazed a sparkling course through the choppy waters of Ontario Universities for 13 full years after her time Del. While here, she fashioned a sterling academic record peppered with some impressive action on the soccer field.

Amanda began university by choosing Health Sciences at McMaster for four

years. She then studied Physiotherapy for one year to keep her options open. This was followed by four years of medical school at the University of Ottawa. It should be noted; there are only about 720 places for first-year medical students in Ontario. One does not just wander in given the competition. Next, Amanda chose Queen’s for her residency of three years in pediatrics. She chose the school because it was “smallish” – indeed, there are only six places in the first year of the program. Now, what to specialize in. The answer was two more years studying pediatric allergies, after which she wrote her last exam in this long odyssey in 2018.

At last, having reached the Promised Land, Amanda began to practice medicine, joining a group of community doctors, which included ten general practitioners and some specialists like herself. She sees both adults and children, and in time she may venture into private practice. However, she is trained and talented, serving her patients, saving and healing in the ceaseless struggle against microscopic invaders, lurking in little dark places ready to pounce. They are not inclined to be merciful since usually, our loss is their gain in the endless struggle for survival. The revelation of our woes, trials and tribulations is not child’s play, as we know only too well. Thankfully, Amanda is on the front line in this nasty war, which Hamlet lamented, describing it as “the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to.” We take consolation in the talent and energy that, to this day, generates Amanda’s perseverance.



The Fall 2019 Signum Fidei issue is brought to you by:

Joseph Pupo

Director of Alumni Affairs and Development Department

Nick Cipriani

Co-ordinator of special events

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Advancement and Development Associate

Stefan Slovak

Communications Officer

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Joe Snidero

Memorial Scholarship

Martin Luther King wrote that “we are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny.” This interdependence was made obvious in a recent event at Del that illustrates the “inescapable network of mutuality.” It was brought to our attention, because of its serendipity, by two Del staff members who recognized the importance of why it should be shared with a wider audience. It is a little story about Mary Snidero, a woman who can reveal a few chapters of Del’s history that we may not know about that are telling and even magical. There are many grads from decades ago who are indeed actively wrapped in the “single garment of destiny.” We should know them, for they are keepers of our living memory, with much to share with us from their experience.

In the 1960s, Del fielded championship teams year after year. Titles kept coming, defying logic, probability and misfortune. It was magical: the teams, the Brothers, the students and the culture of our little school formed a unique, durable spirit in our athletics and in our classes. The quality of the teams was astonishing, reflecting, of course, the quality of the individual players. No opponent was sacred, no hill too high. They merely charged ahead and kept getting better at it. At one point, the 1967 team, with a perfect record very near the end of the season, returned to class (all of them) on Monday after a Sunday game, glum and disconsolate. Had they finally lost? No, but a certain school down St. Clair had scored on them. They were competent and confident, but never arrogant.

Most of the team graduated that spring, and many of the players went on to play in starting positions at well-known uni-

versities. Another team then moved up to senior football to claim another championship. This is magical but not endless. It lasted for a glorious decade, not often repeated anywhere.

Valuable memories, translated into history, become the essence of intelligence, experience and culture, all given life by such integrated sequences. History requires continuity to blossom into full meaning. History warns us that cultures without written books, usually languish or vanish. For example, we know so much about Rome because, for eleven centuries, they wrote down everything that happened to them, both laudatory and cautionary, to instruct and inspire generation after generation.

Mary Snidero’s brother Joe played on those great football teams, teams that included his friends Les Szendrovits, Jim Blainey, Paul Sullivan, and Larry Iaccino, to name a few. Sadly, Joe passed away in 2010 from cancer. He was a diligent student, a great athlete and always a gentleman. His worthy example must be known to be emulated, so Les and the teammates are making that happen. Joe’s friends have started a scholarship in his name to provide a welcome boost to deserving students who may, in time, be able to follow their example. Also, the solace felt by Joe’s family is not easily measured.

Our story continues on Prize Day, June 5, 2019. This is Mary Snidero’s report from that event in her own words.:

Hi Les and Sharry,

As you know, I work on Tuesdays and Thursdays at my church, Our Lady of Peace. Before I start work, I attend the 9:00 a.m. Mass. This morning was no different. At the end of the Mass, a woman I knew because her husband

and children are regulars and who are also active volunteers came up to me. She started to talk to me and asked me if I had been at De La Salle on Friday. I told her that I had and asked her if she had been there also. In my mind, I knew there weren’t any parents attending, and as she started laughing, she said she wasn’t there either, but she had a picture where I was presenting an award to students. She said to her daughter, that’s the lady at the church. What is she doing there? I then explained to her that my brother had attended Del, but passed away and that his friends created this scholarship and asked if I would present it on their behalf. She then said that one of the two recipients happened to be her daughter Stephania De Martin. I told her I was nervous about giving my little speech but that the name did stick out in my mind because I didn’t know too many De Martins, and they were all so tall, which her kids and husband all are. You could have knocked me over, what are the odds, and how wonderful a parishioner she is of Our Lady of Peace and from a lovely family. She also went on to say how very appreciative they were and what help the money would be. Please pass it on to the guys because I’m sure they will be pleased, as I have no doubt Joe must be smiling.

This little anecdote proves that the “inescapable network of mutuality” is busy and effective. Mary’s merry band of donors may be “small in number, but they are big in commitment.” How sweet it is that the family our grads helped are active members of Mary’s parish, a wonderful family whose children attend Del. Thus, invisible connections are made visible as our Alumni community continue to cross paths. They are like a



vast forest where much more goes on than meets the eye. It is a community that flourishes and continues to grow a network of vegetation. The thick forest canopy saves refreshing rainwater as the cooling shade allows the water to percolate deep into the earth, avoiding evaporation, to supply water for rivers, ponds, wells and aquifers. This green

network of mutuality” is an apt metaphor for our Alumni community. It is a rich blend of past and present, individuals and groups, all bound by the ideals of St. Jean-Baptiste de La Salle. These ideals, perennial, worthy and Catholic, are embodied in our injunction “Enter to Learn. Leave to Serve.” The “Serve” speaks of our obligation to our fellow

citizens who may need a helping hand from time to time. The Joe Snidero Scholarship and other means of financial aid, provide opportunities for young students on bursary with their excellent Del education thanks to the gifts of our generous community.



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Celebrating a Successful Season of Debate

The tradition of debating at De La Salle remains very strong, in large part, as a result of the many debaters who have gone before to establish our reputation and set the bar very high for our up and coming debaters. Our current students know very well that when we compete, we are not doing so just for this year's team, but we compete as part of the tradition of great debate teams from years past. As debate alumni, you will be delighted to know that we continue to perform well.

At the final Fulford competition, our senior team finished 4th overall, led by a strong top 3 finish from Ashley Costa (2019). If we ever needed confirmation that our debate program is alive and well, you need to look no further than the Junior team of then Grade 10 students Catherine Tsisis (2021) and Maja Vlahovic (2021) who finished 1st and 2nd respectively, securing 1st place overall.

On Saturday, April 27, 2019, De La Salle qualified teams in all three age divisions to the Ontario Pro-Con Debating Forum Finals at Michael Power CHS. Doing so is an impressive accomplishment in its own right, as only the schools that ranked in the top 4 after the four debate competitions of the year make it to the finals. To qualify one team is great – to qualify three is excellent!

It was a very tight competition. For example, in the Junior Division, all four teams finished with a 3 - 3 record, and the difference between 2nd and 4th was only 0.7! All our debaters performed admirably, and the Novice team finished 2nd in their division.

Once again, our Senior Team excelled at the competition. Individually, Ashley Costa (2019) finished 2nd overall, and Isabella Spensieri (2020) finished 1st! It is with great pride that we can announce that two of these debaters, along with fellow Senior team members Christian D'Ambrosi (2019) and Lilian Yoffe (2019) finished 1st overall and brought home the trophy!

Congratulations to our competitors and all other team members who came to practice to prepare arguments and lines of questioning. Thank you to the parents who came out to assist us with judging – they were able to enjoy some excellent debating! It was a great year of debating at De La Salle.

As we now look at 2019 - 2020, the team is healthy and ready to compete. We have a good group of new Grade 9's that have joined our rank. If it is any indication, our first Pro-Con saw the Novice and Junior teams finish first in their divisions.

This year De La Salle has been asked to



host the Winter Fulford Debate. It will take place at the College on Saturday, February 22, 2020. Our entire debate team will be present to coordinate the event, serve as timekeepers, run the tabulations room and to host our visiting teams. The most significant demand on our community will be securing enough judges for the event. To be fair to the debaters, we need a minimum of three judges per room. On average, that works out to about 36 - 40 judges. We are appealing to our parent and alumni communities to come out and help us to run a smooth tournament. Judges are needed from 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

If you think you can judge three rounds of debate, please send an email to Bertha Carreco (bcarreco@delasalle.ca) to sign up. There will be lunch and plenty of refreshments to keep you going throughout the competition.



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