



LEADERSHIP SOCIETY NOVEMBER UPDATE

You are receiving this letter because you are a member of Saint Mary's Leadership Society, a family of givers who generously contribute \$1,000 or more annually to the university.

Greetings!

Autumn is in its twilight already, and the bite in the air reminds us winter is on its way. It is a season of gratitude and reflection. These annual reflections recall those who came before us, those who paved the way for our own journeys and successes. It is a time to pause for a moment and count our many blessings. Recall what brought you to this moment, realize what you are truly thankful for, and hold onto that gratitude. I find devoting intentional moments to quiet reflection or prayer to be grounding, affirming, and essential.

As senior vice president and special advisor to the president, as well as executive director of the Hendrickson Institute for Ethical Leadership, I am grateful for the opportunity to serve and advance, in a small way, the legacy of Saint Mary's. As a Christian Brother, I am among hundreds of Brothers who have served the university. On Oct. 14, we celebrated the service of two of our finest: Presidents Emeriti Brother Louis DeThomasis, FSC, Ph.D. and Brother William Mann, FSC, D.Min. As part of our university's 110th anniversary, our current president, Father James P. Burns, IVD, Ph.D., recognized their rich legacies of service to Saint Mary's.

A prolific scholar and leader, Brother Louis oversaw the opening of the Schools of Graduate and Professional Programs (SGPP) on the Minneapolis and Rochester campuses, which continue to serve thousands of students annually. Just this past year, our School of Health and Human Services celebrated the accreditation of the Master of Social Work program, as well as the reaccreditation of the Doctor of Psychology in Counseling program. In the success and relevance of these programs, we witness the living legacy of Brother Louis. His deep, Lasallian belief that education should be linked to practicality and utility — to achieving real outcomes — laid a foundation for success that our professional and graduate programs continue to build upon.

Like Brother Louis, Brother William Mann left a visible, enduring legacy on our university. Emphasizing the Lasallian charism, Brother William oversaw remarkable growth in philanthropic resources for Saint Mary's, making significant programmatic and facility investments possible. This includes launching the successful First Generation Initiative (FGI) in 2010, a program that helps ensure academic success for first-generation college students. Today, the university's First Generation Initiative serves 28 Scholars who receive significant scholarship support made possible through the generosity of our benefactors.

Generosity means different things — sharing gifts of time, of expertise, and of material blessings. Pope Francis illuminated this idea: “Lord, help us to live the virtue of generosity, to love without limits.” I find myself particularly drawn to this definition — “to love without limits.” Presidents Emeriti Brother William and Brother Louis certainly exemplify that, as do our benefactors, who bring legacies to life through their investments in our university.

Generosity can also mean the dedication and influence of our extraordinary faculty members. This August, we honored the life, decades-long service, and legacy of the late Dr. Richard Kowles, a beloved biology professor. Just 48 hours after his passing, Saint Mary’s dedicated the Dr. Kowles Genetics Laboratory. The laboratory is possible thanks to a generous \$500,000 leadership gift, as well as \$100,000 in matching gifts from Dr. Kowles’ former students. Through this space, Dr. Kowles’ legacy lives on. Current Saint Mary’s students and future generations will make discoveries, learn together, and start their own careers in science, medicine, research, and education. In both Dr. Kowles’ tireless service to Saint Mary’s and in the gifts made by his students we see a “love without limit.” We see generosity, love, and philanthropy.

November is a time to reflect on, and be grateful for, those who came before us. I am truly blessed to serve Saint Mary’s and to have served with such remarkable leaders, past and present, of our university. This work is especially meaningful as an alumnus — to give back to an institution that has given me so much. I am grateful to all of our benefactors, like you, who through your love and generosity, make Saint Mary’s a remarkable place to learn and grow.

Thank you for your continued investment in our university and our mission.

Live Jesus in our hearts, Forever!

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Bro. Robert Smith". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Brother Robert Smith, FSC B’76, Ph.D.
Senior Vice President and Special Advisor to the President
Executive Director, Hendrickson Institute for Ethical Leadership

PS: For those who have not yet made an annual gift, I wanted to let you know we will be sending out our solicitation letters soon. We hope you will consider Saint Mary’s in your end-of-the-year giving plans. Please be on the lookout for that mailing; or get a head start at connect.smumn.edu/leadership-society.