



## LEADERSHIP SOCIETY JANUARY 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!

As two long-time faculty members who have moved into senior leadership roles at Saint Mary's University of Minnesota, we strive to ensure academic quality and effective operations while continuing our focus on undergraduate and graduate enrollments. As academic leaders, we hold a strong commitment to Saint Mary's and to our Lasallian Catholic tradition.

In this month's letter to our Leadership Society members, we are pleased to share a brief look at some of the most interesting people on campus who are, not surprisingly, driving some of the important initiatives and projects at Saint Mary's.

As part of this Leadership Letter, you will find four brief outlines of intriguing and encouraging efforts under way at Saint Mary's:

**Marisol Martinez B'18, M'22** has returned to campus to lead our First Generation Initiative. As a first-gen student herself, Martinez is well-positioned for great success.

**Mary Jacobs, M.A.**, associate dean for the Graduate School of Business and Technology, launched a partnership this fall with Mayo Clinic in Rochester, providing financial business education to over 150 clinic leaders in operations, human resources, and administration.

**Sister Agnes Mary Graves, RSM, DNP**, the head of our growing nursing program, is preparing for graduation of our first cohort of undergraduate nursing students in May 2025.

**Pierluca Azzaro, Ph.D.**, is the Benedict XVI Chair and executive secretary of the Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI Vatican Foundation. In his role as the Benedict XVI Chair, Azzaro will contribute to Saint Mary's mission of fostering a deep and reflective understanding of the complementarity of faith and reason and the unity of knowledge.

Saint Mary's is a community where the many pieces of God's kingdom come together as one, united in the shared pursuit of learning, growth, service, and fellowship. We offer deep thanks for your many contributions to our cause. If you have not yet joined in our **Rooted in Faith: Growing Our Future** comprehensive campaign, please consider doing so. Your support makes a difference to our students, faculty, and administrators as we carry out our mission.

Blessings to each of you,

**Dr. Sue Hines M'01, D'07**

Vice President for Academic Affairs — Minneapolis, Rochester, Online

**Dr. Darren Row B'99, M'00**

Vice President for Academic Affairs — Winona

# Rooted in Faith: Growing Our Future

A brief sample of what philanthropy does on campus.

## Marisol Martinez B'18, M'22



**THE ROLE:** Saint Mary's is thankful that Martinez has returned to campus as the new director of the First Generation Initiative (FGI).

**WHO:** Martinez is a product of the Lasallian mission that transformed her academic and professional career. She grew up in Racine, Wis., and was a member of the first cohort of Countdown to College and a FGI Scholar at Saint Mary's.

**BACKGROUND:** She earned her undergraduate degree in psychology and her master's in counseling, both from Saint Mary's. Prior to returning to Saint Mary's, Martinez worked as a student success advisor at Carthage College in Kenosha, Wis.

**WHY IT MATTERS:** As a first-generation college graduate, Marisol knows first-hand how important building strong relationships and utilizing resources can be for student retention.

## Sister Agnes Mary Graves, RSM, DNP



**THE ROLE:** Sister Agnes Mary is the head of our new nursing program, which will graduate its first class – with 12 grads – in May 2025.

**WHO:** She is now in her fifth year on campus as the inaugural Jack and Mary Ann Remick Chair of Nursing. Sister Agnes Mary brings a broad range of nursing experience, including working as a fertility care practitioner at Mercy Fertility Care. She completed her BSN residency

program at the University of Kentucky Hospital.

**BACKGROUND:** Sister Agnes Mary earned her B.S. in Nursing from the University of Missouri-Sinclair School of Nursing and a Doctor of Nursing Practice-Family Nurse Practitioner Program at Winona State University.

**WHY IT MATTERS:** The program fills an urgent need for more nurses in the health care field, locally and around the nation. We also have 30 juniors in the program and following that should have two years of full classes of around 50.

## Mary Jacobs, M.A.



**THE ROLE:** Under Mary Jacob's leadership, Saint Mary's launched a partnership in fall 2024 with Mayo Clinic to carry out financial business education.

**WHO:** Mary worked in the airline industry for 19 years and has been involved in higher education for the last 11 years. She previously worked as director of the Center for Sales Innovation at St. Catherine University.

**BACKGROUND:** Mary leveraged her previous experience in industry-academic partnerships to identify and meet the workforce needs of companies.

**WHY IT MATTERS:** Saint Mary's has a long history of educating Mayo Clinic employees in several disciplines. This corporate training was important for upskilling the financial acumen of Mayo Clinic leaders and the participant's feedback was excellent.

## Pierluca Azzaro, Ph.D.



**THE ROLE:** Dr. Azzaro is the Benedict XVI Chair and executive secretary of the Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI Vatican Foundation.

**WHO:** The donor-funded chair position is named in honor of the late Pope Benedict XVI (formerly Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger).

**BACKGROUND:** Dr. Azzaro presented special chasubles to the Very Rev. James P. Burns, IVD, Ph.D., Saint Mary's president,

and the Most Rev. Robert Barron, S.T.D., bishop of the Diocese of Winona-Rochester. The chasuble is the sacred vestment worn by priests (including bishops and popes) during celebration of the Holy Mass, and these chasubles were worn by Pope Benedict XVI.

**WHY IT MATTERS:** The Benedict XVI Chair represents the first time the Vatican Foundation has partnered with an American university. In his role as the Benedict XVI Chair, Azzaro will significantly contribute to Saint Mary's mission of fostering a deep and reflective understanding of the complementarity of faith and reason and the unity of knowledge.