



LEADERSHIP SOCIETY MAY UPDATE

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

Greetings!

As Saint Mary's concludes another academic year, I have much good news about our students, alumni, and community to share with our benefactor community.

Higher education across the country is still facing strong headwinds, but for us, there is a lot of support moving us through these challenges to smooth water and open sailing (knowing something about this, having done a bit of sailing when I was younger with my godfather/uncle). Truly, Saint Mary's is in a prized place. We are among the 1 percent of institutions with a bright horizon, very evident not only to us but to any number of higher ed consultants and pundits. We are actively charting that smooth sailing course.

On Saturday, May 4, we celebrated with nearly 190 graduates during Commencement on our Winona Campus. At that same ceremony, I conferred an additional 40-plus degrees upon the first cohort of religious sisters from Saint Mary's Latin American Sisters Initiative (LASI), which I initiated when I came to Saint Mary's. I was also honored to be able to recognize two of our students as Outstanding Female and Male Seniors:

- **Riley Hall** of Dallas Center, Iowa, is a Health Sciences major in the 3+2 Physician Assistant Program with the Mayo Clinic School of Health Sciences. She was part of the Student Senate, the softball team, and the Future Health Professionals Club. She enjoys the small, homey feel of the campus and speaks highly of our faculty, sharing, "I'm a science major, so being able to make connections with professors is very important in my difficult classes."
- **Patrick Derleth** of Berlin, Wis., is a History major and vice president of the Brothers of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia (Music) Fraternity. In September 2022, Patrick wrote a testimony in the Winona Post that read in part: "During the summer, I struggled with perhaps the greatest moral, practical, and spiritual question of my life thus far — the question of whether or not to return to Saint Mary's University of Minnesota." Patrick began to search for a new school, and he received offers from several comparable institutions, but he concluded, "the bottom line is this: our students, faculty, and administrators; the city of Winona; and the Diocese of Winona-Rochester are all better off with a vibrant Saint Mary's."

I am grateful that Riley and Patrick chose Saint Mary's and stayed with Saint Mary's, making it all the stronger because of their witness and presence. Further, I am confident that we (faculty, staff, and administration) made ready these quality graduates to achieve success in today's workforce and, more importantly, for a well-lived life. They have been prepared in a wholesome environment with attention to building good character and they have also been prepared to be good, ethically guided employees. For example, a recent survey conducted by Career Services demonstrates the success of our Class of 2022 graduates.

- 94% of the respondents are working, in graduate school, serving in the military, or participating in a long-term volunteer placement.
- 81% said their jobs were relevant to the degree they received at Saint Mary's. Their employers include Best Buy, Fastenal, Watkins, Health Partners, Mayo Clinic, and UnitedHealth.
- 18% of these graduates are continuing their education either part-time or full-time.

On June 1, I will have the joy of celebrating another graduation event, this time in Minneapolis for the School of Graduate and Professional Programs. Our survey of recent alums of these programs finds that 94% were employed at the time of the survey. And 71% reported that their salary increased since enrolling in their program. We are doing what we do best: preparing our graduates for leadership and service.

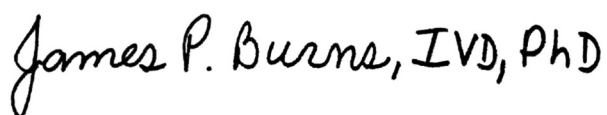
The successes of our recent graduates could not have happened without your support. I am happy to share that more alums and friends of Saint Mary's are giving — and they are giving more significant contributions than ever. In just the past few months, alums from the 1960s, '70s and '80s have made planned estate gifts to the university. A former and current trustee each made \$2 million in estate gifts. Two alumni each made \$1 million in gifts through their wills, and two additional alumni made gifts of \$200,000. These estate gifts help us toward our challenge to raise \$100 million in new gift commitments of \$50,000 or more.

With this kind of support, you are not only helping our students achieve a college education but also you are giving them a place to thrive and flourish. Over the last few months of the semester, I hosted many groups of students for dinners at my home in Winona, among them were the undergraduate peer ministers. They noted the increased number of students visiting our Campus Ministry, the energetic Community Nights they host, the services they are providing to local groups in need (whether Catholic or not), and how more and more students are participating in and finding personal meaning through prayer and devotions.

I am deeply grateful for the financial support from you, our benefactors. In fact, none of this would be possible without your support. In addition, I am well aware of the power of prayer and of the need for your enthusiastic promotion of Saint Mary's. So I ask you, first, to please remember our students, our graduates, and all our efforts in your prayers. Second, Saint Mary's relies on each of you, in every way, to share positive, good news about the university with your friends and on social media.

Thank you again for this amazing support, which manifests in so many forms, remembering "God will not be outdone in generosity. Whatever we give Him, He will give back more."

God bless you all! Live Jesus in our hearts, Forever!



The Very Rev. James P. Burns, IVD, Ph.D.
President, Saint Mary's University of Minnesota

P.S. Next month, June 21-23, join us for another friend-filled alumni reunion on Saint Mary's beautiful Winona Campus. All alumni are invited back, with particular emphasis on those alumni whose graduation year ends in a 4 or 9. More information can be found at smumn.edu/reunion.