



## LEADERSHIP SOCIETY SEPTEMBER 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 a new academic year dawns, I am filled with joy as I welcome our students and renew our shared mission: to make Saint Mary's a university where *flourishing* is our focus and our promise. Flourishing for our students — in their studies, their extracurriculars, their friendships, and their faith. Flourishing for our faculty and staff — in their work, their families, their communities, and their faith as well.

Here at Saint Mary's, lives are transformed. Many students discover their deepest purpose within these halls, and we send forth alumni who live lives of meaning and service. As a university of human flourishing, we are forming habits of character that shape students into women and men who act justly, out of love. Our partner, the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues at the University of Birmingham, reminds us that flourishing is “not only to be happy, but to fulfill one's potential.” This aligns profoundly with our Lasallian Catholic tradition, which cherishes the dignity of each person and seeks the flourishing of the whole community.

To flourish as an institution, we must grow. Thanks to the hard work of our enrollment team, we continue to welcome more students into our mission — undergraduates on our Winona Campus and graduate and professional learners across our programs. This fall, 843 full-time students joined our College in Winona (another year of incremental growth), and many graduate programs celebrated year-over-year enrollment gains. I am deeply grateful to all of you who share Saint Mary's with those you meet — your witness is helping us grow.

Growth also means innovation. This year we launched the **School of Advancing Studies**, led by dean Holly Tapper, J.D., MBA — a former staff member returning to Saint Mary's with a wealth of experience and a heart for adult learners. With her leadership, we are building flexible, workforce-aligned programs: more online bachelor's degrees, innovative certificates, work-integrated learning, and even accelerated bachelor's pathways (with students now being able to start an undergraduate degree with no prior credits through our Minneapolis Campus). This school, made possible through the generosity of one of our alumni, is a bold step forward in serving today's learners while preparing for tomorrow's needs.

We are also leading nationally with the launch of our **Master of Science in Clinical Psychology** — the only program in the country to fully integrate Catholic faith with rigorous clinical training. Here, psychology and faith are not rivals, but partners in healing. A few weeks ago, I reminded our inaugural class that when psychology, faith, and formation are woven together, they are not just life-changing — they are *soul-changing*. This is our mission in action.

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

SAINT MARY'S UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

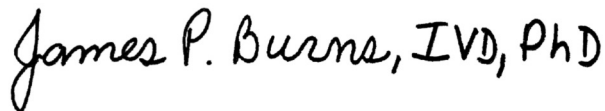
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Yet flourishing requires stewardship. Our Board of Trustees has called us to resolve our structural operating deficit by June 1, 2027. This is no small task, but we have already taken courageous steps: reducing costs through zero-based budgeting, consolidating cabinet-level roles, streamlining operations, and reinvesting through the sale of Brother Louis Hall in Minneapolis into our endowment. These are difficult decisions, but they build a stronger, more sustainable Saint Mary's for generations to come.

At our August gathering of faculty and staff, I renewed my oath of fidelity to the Catholic faith and to the Church's mission and her teachings. I invited our community to join me in reflection, in faith, and in recommitment to Saint Mary's. Together, we are a people of hope.

And so, I ask you: pray for our students, our faculty, and our staff as we journey through this academic year. Your loyalty, your prayers, your generosity, and your service are what buoy us in times of challenge. Thank you for standing with Saint Mary's — thank you for being faithful ambassadors of our mission. Together, we are building a university where human flourishing is not a slogan, but a lived reality.

Live Jesus in our hearts, Forever!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James P. Burns, IVD, PhD". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

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