Heritage Week Remembers Works of School Parton

By Dan Seifert
*The Minstrel*

The Salesian Center for Faith and Culture recently hosted the annual Heritage Week. Sunday, Jan. 18 through Thursday, Jan. 22 offered a series of speakers who contributed their talents and experience to the celebration. This year, Heritage Week marks the 400th anniversary of Saint Francis DeSales work, “An Introduction to the Devout Life.” According to Father Dailey via the DeSales website, “This work is considered his masterpiece and offers profound insight into how every person can live a life of faith and devotion, even in the midst of worldly pursuits.”

All information regarding the activities can be found on the DeSales University website. On Sunday, Jan. 18, DeSales welcomed the Rev. Msgr. Stewart Swetland, S.T.D., who is vice president of Mount Saint Mary Seminary in Maryland. Aside from beginning the series of lectures he was the guest homilist and celebrant for the 8 p.m. mass that was held at Connelly Chapel. According to Mount Saint Mary’s website he “has a B.A. and M.A. in Politics, Philosophy and Economics from Oxford; a M.Div. and M.A. from Mount St. Mary’s Seminary; and his S.T.L. and S.T.D. from the Pontifical Lateran University having studied at the John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family in Washington, DC.” The DeSales students were truly fortunate to have him share his experience and insight with them.

On Tuesday, Jan. 21, a roundtable discussion was held regarding DeSales’ work, “An Introduction to the Devout Life.” Rev. Bernard Bangley, author of “A Modern Interpretation of ‘An Introduction to the Devout Life’” offered his insight to the work and contributed greatly to the discussion. On Wednesday, Jan. 20, Raymond Arroyo, host of EWTN’s (Eternal Word Television Network) international news show “The World Over,” led a discussion on media and social communication. In regards to his talk, Junior musical theatre major Jeff Lanigan said, “I enjoyed what he had to say because he was such a powerful speaker”.

On Thursday, Jan. 22, the annual R. Wayne Kraft Memorial Lecture was held in the White Pavilion in the DeSales University Center. Author, philosopher and theologian Michael Novak was this year’s Kraft lecturer. His book, “No One Sees God: The Dark Night of Atheists and Believers” has had a large success. Peggy Noonan in her review writes, “This book is one of the most lyrical and moving reflections on God I have encountered. It is also remarkably generous,
both to believers and nonbelievers.”

Heritage Week has become an important part of being a DeSales student. Tim Gallagher, a junior theology major said, “Heritage week is one of our great traditions at DeSales. The week provides insight into all aspects of the life of St. Francis de Sales, and provides students the opportunity to grow in their understanding of our patron Saint.”

Senior English major Lauren Green said, “I think that in a school that has such profoundly important roots, Heritage Week is a perfect complement to the traditions our school is continuing to establish. The activities hosted by the Salesian Center are planned so carefully to benefit both the minds and souls of our students, and that’s so important.

Heritage Week gives us a chance to re-evaluate our reasons for being at DeSales University and to reaffirm why we chose a school with such a strong faith base.

This year marks the 400th anniversary of “An Introduction to the Devout Life.” This work holds very important ideas regarding Salesian Spirituality. According to the DeSales Website, the first basic idea of Salesian Spirituality is “All people are called to holiness, not just a select few. It is a “heresy” to banish the devout life from any career or lifestyle.” This holds particular importance to a university student. Everything that we do personally or professionally should be seen as a prayer.

The Ideas of Salesian spirituality are seen throughout the DeSales campus inside and outside of the classroom. Heritage Week proves as a time for students and professors of all disciplines to come together in celebration of Salesian spirituality.