ANNUAL REPORT, 2001-2002

The Salesian Center for Faith & Culture enjoyed its second year of operation. Its goals remain modest: to continue its successful programs, make its presence more widely known, and get additional people involved in its work. This report offers a glimpse of how the Salesian Center met and surpassed these goals. It also suggests directions for the future.

Program Highlights for 2001-2002

MISSION (concerned with promoting the interaction of faith & culture)

The director led “orientation” programs for three groups of personnel at DeSales University:
- new full-time faculty;
- new trustees;
- full-time staff in the athletics department.

The director spoke on “Tolerance and Terrorism” to all students at Northwestern Lehigh High School as part of their celebrations for cultural diversity week. The Times News in Lehighton gave feature coverage to the day’s events.

The director published seven (7) op-ed pieces in The Morning Call newspaper; one op-ed piece was published in several local newspapers in Philadelphia.

BACKGROUND (concerned with the tradition of Salesian spirituality)

The director spoke about Salesian spirituality at two Serra Club meetings, one for the Bethlehem group (on St. Leonie Aviat), one for the Allentown group (on the Salesian Center).

The Center announced the creation of the Aviat Lectureship on Catholic Education.

PERSONNEL (concerned with members, staff, and advisors)

The director organized and directed three meetings (Fall, Spring, Summer) of the Christian Humanism Committee of the President’s Council.
ACTIVITIES  (concerned with research, dialogue, and partnership programs)

Research Activities

The “Surgeons & the Spirit” research project was submitted for publication to the Bulletin of the American College of Surgeons. Word of its acceptance has been interminably delayed!

Fr. Alexander Pocetto, honorary member of the Salesian Center, crafted two research papers: one on the Spiritual Directory, one on Jean Pierre Camus. Both were written for the Salesian Research Seminar at Stella Niagara (NY), and both are now available on the Salesian Center’s web site.

The director presented two papers at national conferences: one on Pope John Paul II at the C.S. Lewis Faculty Forum, and one on “Believing in Baseball” at the Cooperstown Symposium on Baseball and American Culture. Both papers will be available on the Center’s web site.

The director drafted and submitted two grant proposals for research projects: one concerning the “Adopt a Monastery” program (denied), and one concerning altruistic service among high school students (currently under review).

Dialogue Activities

Five IMPACT breakfast meetings were held, with participation ranging from 15-45 persons. Topics of interest and featured guests were:

- terrorism  (Al Sproule – retired FBI agent & DSU faculty)
- just war  (Ervin Rokke – Moravian College president)
- marriage  (Fr. Joe DiMauro – Worldwide Marriage Encounter & DSU faculty)
- athletics  (Pete Lembo – Lehigh University football coach)
- education  (Diane Scott – Allentown School District superintendent)

Three versions of the afternoon Center Valley Forum were held, with an average participation of approximately 110 people. Topics included:

- terror in America
- security and student rights
- Enron and business ethics

A special evening roundtable discussion was held, with focus on the ethical dimensions in the debate over stem cell research. Over 150 persons attended.
The endowed Breakfast Club reading series was inaugurated this year. Two groups of faculty and professional staff (Fall = 7; Spring = 6) met monthly, discussed four books, and wrote brief commentaries (available on the Center’s web site).

**Partnership Activities**

In conjunction with the Enrollment Management office and with Academic Affairs, the director created a new honors program for the university. Supported by a substantial grant, the “Faith & Reason Honors Program” will begin with the freshman class in Fall 2002. Promotional materials are presently being produced.

In conjunction with the Dept. of Performing & Fine Arts, the Center sponsored the inaugural production in the “Faith on Stage” series. Two performances of The Kingfisher’s Wing were held on the arena stage of the Labuda Center for the Performing Arts.

In conjunction with the International Commission on Salesian Studies, the Salesian Online program is being launched. The ICSS funded a 2-day faculty development workshop on the DSU campus for 8 potential course facilitators. The first course in the program will be offered June 17 to July 25, 2002.

**LIBRARY (concerned with materials related to the work of the Center)**

The director penned the “On a Spiritual Note” commentaries for On the Boards, the playbill for the ACT ONE theatre and dance programs. These are now available on the Center’s web site.

Several new works were added to the “Salesian Studies” collection (available on the web site), including research papers, papal documents, devotional practices, and this year’s DSU commencement address.

With a generous donation, the “Carl & Peggy Frensky Collection” was named for the Center’s library. Acquisitions include both books and journal subscriptions.

**DEVELOPMENT (concerned with financing the work of the Center)**

For the first time this year, contributions to the university’s Annual Fund could be designated to support the Salesian Center. Donations amounted to approximately $90,000.

Funding for the Aviat Lectureship on Catholic Education has been started with gifts from the Oblate community at Wills Hall ($5,000) and the Oblate Sisters of St. Francis de Sales ($1,000).
The Oblate community at Wills Hall is considering a pledge of $100,000 from its annual gift to the university for the endowment of the Salesian Center.

The Christian Humanism Committee of the President’s Council is in the process of structuring a solicitation effort for the benefit of the Salesian Center.

**Objectives for 2002-2003**

In terms of **MISSION**, the Salesian Center seeks to provide further awareness of the tradition of Salesian spirituality. Two new events will be planned:

- orientation programs for student life groups (RA’s, ‘Dawgs, and emerging leaders)
- the inaugural Aviat Lecture on Catholic Education (September 16, 2002)

In terms of **BACKGROUND**, members of the Salesian Center will continue to investigate the rich resources of the Salesian tradition. Frs. Dailey and Pocetto will participate in the Salesian research seminar to be held at Stella Niagara (NY) in October. The Salesian Center will investigate the possibility of hosting these seminars in the future.

In terms of **PERSONNEL**, the Salesian Center seeks to broaden involvement in its work. In addition to increasing participation in its regular programs and activities,

- a Review Committee of faculty and staff will be established;
- plans will be devised to host Visiting Scholars in Fall 2003 and Spring 2004.

In terms of **ACTIVITIES**, successful programs from previous years will be continued and, hopefully, expanded (i.e., the Breakfast Club, the Center Valley Forum, the IMPACT series, and the Salesian Online program). New programs will be introduced, including:

- the inauguration of the Faith & Reason Honors Program
- the creation of the “Faith in the Public Square” polling process
- one or two “town meetings” for political candidates
- the Alacoque special interest housing in the “adopt a monastery” program
- an original drama written for the Center’s “Faith on Stage” program
In terms of **LIBRARY**, the Frensky collection will be expanded. In addition, an **electronic newsletter or journal** will be created.

In terms of **DEVELOPMENT**, both foundation and personal donors will be pursued.

- **grants** will be written to support the following programs
  - the Baranzano Society in science and religion
  - the Florimontane Films production series
  - the “Faith on Stage” dramatic series
  - an on-line program of studies in Catholic Social Teaching

- **fund-raising events** will be scheduled in conjunction with the political town meetings (Fall semester) and the arena stage production (Spring semester)

- plans will be devised for housing the Salesian Center in a **dedicated facility**