THE SALESIAN CENTER
FOR FAITH AND CULTURE

ANNUAL REPORT
2003-2004

June 2, 2004
In October of 2003, the Church celebrated the 25th anniversary of the papal election of John Paul II. During the 2003-2004 academic year, the Salesian Center for Faith & Culture, which owes its inspiration to the pope’s theology of culture, enjoyed its fourth year of operation.

In March of 2004, the Salesian family celebrated the 400th anniversary of the first encounter of Francis de Sales and Jane de Chantal. During this academic year, the Salesian Center, which is founded on the spiritual heritage of these saints, took up residence in its own meeting space in a converted house on Landis Mill Road.

The report that follows offers a glimpse of how the Salesian Center continued to sponsor successful programs and introduced special events. The annual review is structured according to the following components:

- **Mission & Background** – concerned with promoting the interaction of faith and culture in the tradition of Salesian spirituality
- **Personnel** – concerned with members, staff, and advisors of the Center
- **Activities** – concerned with particular programs sponsored by the Center in areas of
  - research
  - dialogue
  - partnership
- **Library** – concerned with resources related to the work of the Center
- **Development** – concerned with financing the work of the Center

It also suggests directions for the future growth and development of the Center in terms of the areas noted above.

Further details about what is reported here can be found on the Salesian Center’s web site at www4.desales.edu/SCFC.
Program Review for 2003-2004

MISSION & BACKGROUND

Seeking to fulfill Pope John Paul II’s call to dialogue with culture, the two members of the Salesian Center engaged in **writing and presentations** on related themes.

- The director and the senior scholar fulfilled 17 speaking **engagements** for a variety of groups on- and off-campus.

- The director wrote 6 op-ed **publications**, which were published in *The Morning Call* newspaper (Lehigh Valley, PA) and *The A.D. Times* newspaper (diocese of Allentown). One publication also appeared in *The Catholic Week*, the newspaper of the archdiocese of Mobile, AL.

- The director penned 5 **commentaries** that were published in *On the Boards*, the playbill for the ACT ONE theatre and dance programs.

Two **special events** were held in celebration of the Salesian Center’s distinctive mission:

- a day of activities (10/18/03) – including a video presentation, panel symposium, Mass, and cocktail reception – to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the papal election of John Paul II

- an Open House and dedication of the new site for the Salesian Center (1/22/04), attended by 79 guests

PERSONNEL

**Staffing** for the Salesian Center is minimal:

- Operations are conducted by two **members**: FR. THOMAS DAILEY, a professor of Theology, serves in the half-time position as Director, and FR. ALEXANDER POCETTO, a retired vice-president, serves as the Senior Salesian Scholar.

- There is no **support staff**, though the director is occasionally assisted by work study students.

- Students in the “Faith & Reason Honors Program” are considered junior members of the Center. Presently 24 students participate in this program.

During the 2003-2004 academic year, the Salesian Center was blessed with the presence of two **Visiting Salesian Scholars**: 
- **FR. JAMES CRYAN**, OSFS, former provincial superior of the Toledo-Detroit province of the OSFS, worked in the Center from September ’03 to April ’04 on research into the growing phenomenon of globalization. He offered two public presentations:
  - “Principles for Intercultural Dialogue” (12/8/03 - 14 in attendance)
  - “Ethical Action in an Age of Globalization” (4/26/04 - 22 in attendance)
- **Prof. WENDY WRIGHT**, who holds the Kenefick Chair in the Humanities at Creighton University, visited the campus for a week in March ’04 and offered
  - a presentation to the Wills Hall community and Oblate associates on the Salesian tradition;
  - a conversation with residents of the Alacoque House on St. Jane de Chantal;
  - a public lecture on “The Passion of a Sacred Heart” (32 in attendance).

The Salesian Center is served by several advisory groups that meet each semester during the academic year, including

- The **Community Council** (a sub-committee of the DSU President’s Council) added 3 new members and adopted as new tasks the sponsorship of a national conference on bioethics and the development of a comprehensive institute on leadership.
- The **Alumni Task Force** (a sub-committee of the DSU Alumni Council) added 5 new members and adopted as new tasks the establishment of a philodemic (debate) society on campus and planning for an immersion experience in Salesian spirituality.
- The **Review Committee** (select faculty and staff at DSU) supervised admission of 14 new students to the Faith & Reason Honors Program.

Each of these advisory groups also reviewed and suggested revisions to a draft of a new 5-year plan for the Salesian Center.

**ACTIVITIES in RESEARCH**

The “Surgeons & the Spirit” project, a pilot study on the connection between religious belief and clinical practice among surgeons, was revised and accepted for publication in the Winter 2004 issue of the *Journal of Religion and Health*.

The **Alacoque House** welcomed 6 new students into this special housing program. Together with the faculty advisor (Fr. Dailey) they meet twice each semester to discuss the history of Salesian spirituality and the religious order of the Visitation of Holy Mary. During the Fall semester, the students also spent a weekend of contemplative retreat in the Visitation monasteries in Tyringham (MA) and Brooklyn (NY).
The **Faith & Reason Honors program** welcomed 14 new members from the class of 2007. Two new “conversation” seminars – on God (LS 402) and on the World (LS 403) – were offered for the members from the class of 2006. The Salesian Center also hosted an end-of-the-year reception for the students, faculty, and review committee members associated with the program.

The Salesian Center worked with the **Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE)** chapter at DSU to begin planning for an annual survey on “ethics across the generations” (in collaboration with *The Morning Call* newspaper). With the director serving as one of the panelists, the Salesian Center also co-sponsored the group’s annual symposium on business ethics, in which more than 30 persons participated.

**ACTIVITIES in DIALOGUE**

In terms of the dialogue between faith and culture, the Salesian Center sponsored several presentation activities.

- The director of the Center led five (5) *orientation workshops* for new trustees, new faculty, and select staff (from the ACCESS program, the Business office, and the Development office), in which 42 persons were introduced to the Salesian tradition of education at DSU. In addition, the Enrollment Services staff held their end-of-year retreat at our new site, with the Center’s director providing Salesian insights.

- The Salesian Center supported and published two *annual lectures* for the university and the general public:
  - The *Aviat Lecture on Catholic Education* (9/15/03) was delivered by SR. ROSE MARIE DECARLO, general superior of the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, on the subject of “Myths, Realities, and Dreams from a Passionate Practitioner’s View” (44 in attendance).
  - The *Kraft Lecture on Higher Education* (2/4/04) was delivered by WILLIAM SAUNDERS, senior fellow and director of the Center for Bioethics and Human Dignity at the Family Research Council, on the subject of “Bioethics and Human Dignity” (85 in audience).

- The special event of the Fall semester focused on the 25th anniversary of the papal election of John Paul II. Two guest experts (Dr. MARGARET MELADY and Dr. ROBERT ROYAL) joined the director of the Salesian Center in a symposium on the pope’s contribution to Social Communications, in which 22 people participated.

Dialogue about faith and culture continued through the discussion groups sponsored by the Center:
• The Breakfast Club met monthly over the course of the Fall semester. Seven members of the faculty and staff discussed three books and wrote essays about their experience that appear on the Center’s web site. There was not sufficient expressed interest for a group in the Spring semester.

• The Center Valley Forum took place in three sessions over the course of the year:
  o “The Future of Same Sex Marriage” drew 49 participants
  o “Athletes as Role Models in Society” drew 52 participants
  o “Passionate about Mel Gibson’s The Passion” drew 90 participants.

• The IMPACT series held five breakfast meetings, featuring
  o Jim Martin – Lehigh County District Attorney (27 participants)
  o Robert LaFrankie – educational author (20 participants)
  o Steve Donches – National Museum of Industrial History (25 participants)
  o Larry Chapp – DSU faculty in Theology (27 participants)
  o Mark Plaushin, OSFS – U.S. Army, Operation Iraqi Freedom (23 participants)

• At its new site, the Salesian Center hosted two meetings in the “Theology on Tap” series sponsored by the Campus Ministry Office, in which students discuss contemporary issues on theology while sharing refreshments. Average attendance was 6 students.

Finally, the Salesian Center fosters dialogue by way of the communication arts and media:

• The Center sponsored its annual “Salesian Spirit” essay contest in which one of our business faculty (Dr. JAY LACKE) won the award for best essay, which was published on the Center’s web site.

• As the special event of the Spring semester, the Center brought to campus the national traveling production of Thérèse: The Story of a Soul, a one-woman dramatic performance featuring a DSU alumna (MARGARET LITSCHI MASNY) in the lead role. The audience numbered over 90 people.

ACTIVITIES in PARTNERSHIP

The Salesian Center continued to offer educational enrichment through its Salesian Online program. Three courses were repeated, three new courses were developed, and one additional course will be offered in May-June:

• Everyday Holiness (16 participants)
• The Salesian Spirit (11 participants)
• Salesian Spiritual Direction (5 participants)
• Salesian Christian Humanism (3 participants)
• Spiritual Friendship (6 participants)
• The Treatise on the Love of God, part one (14 participants)
• A Salesian Approach to Personal Identity (8 participants)
The first affiliated institute of the Salesian Center is The Baranzano Society, a group of university scholars, corporate professionals, and healthcare professionals in the region who meet regularly to discuss bioethical concerns. The society, which was inaugurated during this academic year, is supported by a three-year grant from the Metanexus Institute on Science and Religion.

- The director of the Salesian Center, in collaboration with the university’s director of publications (Tom McNamara), set up a dedicated web site, produced promotional brochures, and published news stories in local and national publications.

- The Society sponsored three “talking circles” events that fostered public dialogue about contemporary issues. The topics for discussion were:
  - “Elixir of Life: Are Pills the Remedy to Our Ills?” (46 participants)
  - “Managing Our Mortality: Patient Autonomy at the End of Life” (108 participants)
  - “The Bioethics of Beauty: Does Individuality Need Surgical Enhancement?” (83 participants)

- The Society conducted an end of year “retreat” in late May in which 15 members participated.

- The Officers of the Society (Fr. Peter Leonard and Fr. Thomas Dailey) are presenting a paper at the annual Metanexus Conference in June at the University of Pennsylvania.

The director of the Salesian Center has also had discussions with the staff of the Catholic Leadership Institute in Philadelphia to begin an affiliated leadership program with a distinctive Salesian dimension.

**LIBRARY**

Through the Carl & Peggy Frensky fund, the Salesian Center continued to procure resources for its library. In addition, gifts from the Barbieri families in honor of Marie Crampton enabled the Center to acquire works focusing on marriage and the family.

Print publications of the Salesian Center include the annual Aviat Lecture on Catholic Education and (forthcoming) a translation of a series of essays on St. Francis de Sales as patron of journalists.

The Salesian Center has also taken the first steps toward producing an electronic work to be called Florilège: A Journal of Faith & Culture. A national editorial board has been created and a policy statement produced. Publication is expected to begin in the near future.
DEVELOPMENT

The operation of the Salesian Center is funded primarily through income from endowments. The status of these funds is noted below:

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<th>Salesian Center funds</th>
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<th>gifts &amp; grants</th>
<th>investment income</th>
<th>book value (6/30/04)</th>
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Contributions to the Salesian Center came in several ways (figures as of 4/30/04):

- DeSales University’s *annual fund* drive received just over $10,000 in contributions designated for the Salesian Center’s general endowment.

- Contributions outside the scope of the annual fund amounted to $9,075, which went to the Salesian Center general endowment.

- *Dedicated endowments* received direct gifts:
  - The Breakfast Club endowment received $5,850 in contributions.
  - The Library endowment received a special gift of $300.

The Salesian Center continued to receive installments of multi-year *grants* to fund

- the Faith & Reason Honors program ($15,000)
- the Baranzano Society on bioethics ($10,000)

- A supplemental grant application, in the amount of $10,000, has been submitted to the Metanexus Institute; decision is pending in June.

The Salesian Center sponsored one fund-raising *event*, a reception in conjunction with the Aviat Lecture on Catholic Education, which brought in $790. Costs for the event still exceed endowment income and donations.

Through the generosity of the Performing & Fine Arts department, each issue of *On the Boards*, the playbill for the Act One performing arts series (drama and dance), contains a full-page *advertisement* that promotes the work of the Salesian Center.
Looking Ahead to 2004-2005

The Salesian Center has already instituted successful programs and activities, yet is also seeks to develop more ways in which to bring faith and culture into fruitful dialogue. While the following areas offer potential for growth, the success of these objectives will depend greatly on the extent to which present staffing levels are ameliorated.

In terms of MISSION ...

objective #1 – participate in and publish the members’ contributions to the Salesian Research Seminar at Stella Niagara (NY) in October 2004.

objective #2 – develop and implement a comprehensive program of orientation in Salesian spirituality for all full-time employees of DeSales University

In terms of PERSONNEL ...

objective #3 – enlist the services of a part-time administrative assistant to support the operations of the Center

In terms of ACTIVITIES ...

objective #4 – expand the Faith & Reason honors program by introducing two new seminars and by admitting new students from the class of 2008.

objective #5 – collaborate with the SIFE chapter at DSU and/or the Diocese of Allentown to develop a survey of public attitudes in the region

objective #6 – inaugurate a philodemic (debate) society on campus

objective #7 – develop plans for and pilot the Salesian Leadership Institute

objective #8 – pending reception of a grant, host a national conference on bioethics and a regional ethics colloquium for family practice residency programs

In terms of the LIBRARY ...

objective #9 – pending enlistment of necessary personnel (to provide editorial and technological assistance), launch the publication of an electronic journal

In terms of DEVELOPMENT ...

objective #10 – create and begin to implement a plan for development that includes strategies for solicitation, grants, special events, and public relations