

Diocese has ties to Belgian seminary

Last week I visited the American College at Leuven, Belgium. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops operates this 153-year-old seminary, which is open to seminarians from all the dioceses of our nation. We have two other such institutions — the North American College in Rome and Theological College at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C.

I have had the pleasure of serving on the USCCB Committee for the American College for several years. Recently, the seminary's rector, Father Kevin Codd of the Diocese of Spokane, with the support of our committee, developed a program to better acquaint the bishops of our country with the richness of the Leuven program. Bishop James Tamayo of Laredo, Texas, and I went to Leuven last week to experience the program and to offer our reactions to it.

While I will have a suggestion or two for minor adjustments, my overarching reaction to my days there is — Wow! I was deeply impressed by what I found — the mature and warm spirit of the seminary program and the quality of the academic opportunity at the Catholic University of Leuven.



Bishop Matthew H. Clark

Along the Way

The seminary community is a small one, but it has a strength about it that arises from a number of factors — at least as I observed the scene. The students are treated like mature adults. They are expected to work hard at their studies, to participate generously in the life of the community and to help in the daily upkeep and order of the house.

There is nothing forced about the atmosphere. The faculty holds the students accountable, but they do so as mentors who are interested in the growth of the students, not as bosses looking for mistakes they can correct. There is confidence there and trust. Such an environment allows the church's call to growth of the students to be an exciting invitation to discovery and

understanding rather than an onerous ordeal to be endured.

Bishop Tamayo and I also had some wonderful sessions with administrators and professors from the university, which is the oldest Catholic university in the world. These scholars could not have been more generous with us. Six times we met with professors to talk about themes of common interest in theology, philosophy, canon law and sacred Scripture. Their commitment to the college is quite evident. Their personal interest in the students is extraordinary. They care about each student and are ready to offer their personal assistance whenever they can.

I have been acquainted with the American College since the early '60s, my own seminary days at the North American College in Rome. But I came to know Leuven better during my years of service on the staff of my alma mater. In those years we had several joint programs in spirituality with our sister school — some in Leuven, some in Rome.

When we closed St. Bernard's Seminary in 1981, the American College was one of the programs to which we sent our seminarians. Fathers Gary Tyman, Brian Jeffers, Pat Van Durme and Joe Marcoux all did their theological studies in Leuven. In the '60s Father Ted Auble was sent to Leuven by one of the most famous of the university's alumni, Fulton J. Sheen, once Bishop of Rochester.

Our diocese has also contributed priests to serve on the staff of the

college — Fathers Frank Lioi, Dan Tormey and, currently, John DeSocio, who is vice rector.

Another Rochester connection: During the '80s our beloved Bishop Dennis Hickey served for several years on the U.S. bishops' Committee for the American College. In addition, 12 priests of our diocese have participated in sabbatical programs or summer study courses at the American College.

Among today's student body is Huan Dinh, a Rochester seminarian and our first Vietnamese theological student. Huan was born in Vietnam and came to us through the good influence of our chancellor, Father Dan Condon, while both were studying at the Catholic University of America.


At the November meeting, Bishop Tamayo and I will be happy to share our experience of Leuven with the other bishops on our committee. We'll encourage them to sign on for the program we enjoyed and which gave a new dimension to our already positive regard both for the seminary and the university.

Peace to all.

APPOINTMENT
 Bishop Matthew H. Clark has announced the following appointment to pastoral leadership effective Nov. 25:
 • Father William F. Lohr to pastor, St. Patrick, Seneca Falls, from pastor, Sacred Heart, Auburn, and St. Ann, Owasco.



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