



# Λόγος LOGOS



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## A MEDITATION: *Winter's Grace*



he day after Christmas and a nor'easter bears down, a wind driven slurry of snow and sleet. The Grotto angels are caped in white while a single crow stands atop the cross above Harkins. Most creatures are burrowed and huddled against the storm. Those that do venture out make a quick business of necessity. There is little inclination to tarry when winter imposes its will.

Yet despite its fury, the storm is a reminder that winter has its graces. Time is one of them, for the day is unhurried, and silence is another, as the snow dampens the sounds of the city. Then there is solitude. The break from life's ordinary rounds invites us to stand apart, to see and hear things anew, and perhaps to divine them at a deeper level. As the poet Wallace Stevens wrote in *The Snow Man*, "One must have a mind of winter" to behold the "Nothing that is not there and the nothing that is."

Winter of a kind comes to us all. It has many guises but its most common appearance is as old age. Slowed by age and infirmity, and often politely ignored by those immersed in the busyness of life, the old have time and silence to spare. For some it is too much. They fill their days with noisy distractions from the loneliness they fear. But for those who are able and willing, solitude can be wrung out of long, quiet days. When it is, the old develop "a mind of winter" and see deeply what most see only superficially. They may even see what Gerard Manley Hopkins called the "inscape", the distinctive nature of things, and so have the privilege of seeing as God sees and of seeing God in all things.

A number of Dominicans in the Priory have entered their winter years. Most have done so with uncommon grace. Largely unknown to the present generation of students and faculty, they now bear a different and in many ways deeper witness than they did in their youth. Once it was the eloquence of their words or the force of their personalities that defined them; now it is the gentleness of their



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mien. Some once traveled far and wide, befriending the famous or serving the poor in mission lands. Now they are quietly generous to those close at hand. They write a note to someone bereaved, offer an encouraging word to a young friar wearied by the cares of the day, or pay a visit to an alumnus who is old and ill, or one young and lonely.

Yet they bear their most important witness by their prayer. There is the Mass and Office, to be sure; but it is their private prayer that impresses most. It is something they rarely speak about and nearly always deliberately do quietly and out of public view. But here and there, and on the off chance, one catches glimpses of it. The rosary threaded through fingers on a walk down a familiar path or across a parking lot. The quick visits to the Blessed Sacrament, the well thumbed pages of a prayer book, or the rubber banded collection of holy cards. Often it is unexpected: in the chapel early in the morning, head bent, or late in the day in the chapel balcony, eyes fixed on the tabernacle. Coming upon them at such times one feels like an intruder who would do best to leave quietly. That, or learn from them and do the same.

Doing so is not easy. Sr. Ruth Burrows, a Carmelite nun, makes a point of saying that prayer is a very simple thing to do but because it is, it is also a very hard thing to do. Hard because we are used to being busy, to seizing the initiative and doing what must be done: good things, worthy things, certainly necessary things. But the simplicity of prayer requires us to do just the opposite. To let God have the initiative, to wait on his will and grace, and so let him do what he wants to do with us. Prayer therefore is less something one does than a response to what God does; less a matter of technique than an inclination, a disposition or tending of one's being in the direction of God. For us, the readiness is all; anything else is God's to give and do.

That is why we often fail to pray, despite our best intentions, or grow frustrated when we do: so little useful seems to get accomplished. The mind wanders, we grow sluggish and sleepy, and nothing seems to happen: no revelation or insight; no sense that we are doing it right or are pleasing

to God; and no apparent changes in ourselves or in the circumstances of our lives. Truth be told, it can seem a waste of time. Better to do something useful, we think.

Perhaps that is why prayer is a particular grace of winter. For on a snowy day or in the latter years of our lives, there is time to waste on prayer: little else to be busy about, and little to be accomplished. There is time for waiting and time for silence, time enough to grow familiar with solitude, and so time to listen; time even to be less than useful, as the world accounts utility. And in those long winter hours, grace upon grace: eyes seeing anew, and more deeply; beholding him.

If this is true of the winters imposed upon us, is it not also true of those we elect? To set time alone each day to wait on God in quiet, unhurried with rosary, or bible or clear view of field and ocean, may well seem like a waste of time. It certainly will not accomplish much. The mind may wander and we may grow listless; no matter, that. For it is not a matter of what we do but of what he does. And in his time and way, he will always grant us a "mind of winter" with which to see, if only dimly, what we had not seen before or else not seen clearly: "inscape", things as they are, God in all things.

We may feel like intruders now, stumbling on our elders in prayer. But if we learn from their witness we can do what they do, and long before winter imposes its will. For no doubt it would be their fondest hope that we would learn early what they perhaps learned only later: the time wasted on prayer is the most important time of all.

Fr. Joseph J. Guido, O.P.  
*Vice President for Mission and Ministry*

## NEWS & UPDATES

### *On the Road*

The accompanying calendar suggests the range and number of activities occurring on campus this semester, which is certainly impressive. But students and others also will be busy living out the mission of the College far from River & Eaton.

In January, two busloads of students will make their way to the annual March for Life in Washington, DC, where they will be hosted by the Dominicans at St. Dominic Priory. Others will spend a week in New Orleans on the annual NOLA Immersion Trip, helping to rebuild the city and care for those still affected by hurricane Katrina. Still others will spend time working with the poor of southeastern Massachusetts through My Brother's Keeper Urban Plunge. In March, more than 130 students will spend their spring break volunteering to build and renovate houses for the needy through Habitat for Humanity, sponsored by Campus Ministry. Later still, up to ten Fr. Phillip A. Smith, O.P. Student Fellows will travel abroad to study and serve at Dominican sites throughout the world.

While the students are busy in these ways, Fr. John Peterson, O.P., Chaplain to the National Alumni Association, continues to minister to alumni/ae near and far both in good times—at weddings, anniversaries and alumni receptions—and in times of need: during sickness, at death and in bereavement. We are also beginning to consider ways to expand our outreach and service to alumni/ae. Through the good efforts of Mike Verzino '07 of Institutional Advancement, we hosted our first teleconference on Faith after PC for younger alums. We hope to have a second teleconference this semester, and to provide streaming video via the internet for those unable to participate.

Finally and in something of a reverse form of outreach, we will be bringing five Dominican student brothers to campus in early March. They will assist with a student retreat and sample the many and varied ministries at the College. As these young men are preparing to be

Dominican priests, we hope that having been exposed to the possibilities for ministry at the College, and the very real need of students for a viable and informed faith, they will consider an assignment to the College after their ordination.

### *Strategic Planning*

As many of you know, we are in the process of revising the division's strategic plan, *Cor ad cor loquitur: Heart Speaking to Heart*. Central to this process has been an extensive consultation with members of the Providence College community: students, faculty, administrators and staff, trustees, and alumni. Indeed, to date we have variously interviewed, surveyed or spoken with more than 850 people about their experience of the mission of the College; their hopes for the future; and the religious and spiritual needs of the community going forward. Although we will be spending considerable time analyzing the data this winter, several trends are evident.

First and foremost, there is a general and strong agreement that what we are doing we are doing well. The vast majority of respondents endorse the range and quality of the programs we offer, whether lectures, retreats, liturgies or service opportunities. If anything they want more of them: more opportunities to learn about the faith, to serve others and build community on campus, and more occasions to get to know Dominicans outside of the classroom and chapel.

Second, they want more opportunities to learn about and understand what it means to be a Catholic and Dominican college. While this entails a good measure of intellectual exploration, many are quick to point out that it has to be more than this: "More than St. Thomas," as one respondent put it. Indeed, it would seem that there is an aspiration for an experience of things Catholic and Dominican, in addition to knowledge about them: "heart as well as head," as one person said. Moreover, there is a desire for a community on campus that can be thoroughly Catholic but also charitable and welcoming of all.

Third and in light of the above, there is evidence that we



need to do a better job of communication, generally, and of advertising our programs to reach a broader audience, specifically. This is especially true with regard to people who are currently uninvolved or disaffected, and those who feel unwelcome. Part of the challenge is practical—how does one reach people in an age of multiple and rapidly changing forms of social communication?

But part of the challenge is responding to the increasing divide in matters of faith. The traditional broad middle of Catholic culture in America is disappearing and is being replaced by smaller, segmented and in some ways divisive sub-cultures: the devout, the disengaged and the seekers. It is not surprising, therefore, that a number of respondents expressed concern that those of tentative or questioning faith may not feel welcome at programs and activities sponsored by the largely devout students associated with Campus Ministry. As one person noted, there is a need to “get out of the Chapel basement and into the residence halls” if we want to reach those of wavering faith. We couldn’t agree more. The problem is how to do this with a staff that is already stretched to the limit.

One of the most insightful responses is perhaps also the most challenging: “Providence College should be everything that Brown is academically, and everything that Brown is not in terms of faith and spirituality.” Just so, for the compatibility of faith and reason, and attention to the whole person – mind and heart, body and soul - is central to the Catholic tradition and the mission of the College.

### *Ten Years Since the Towers Fell*

In light of the upcoming tenth anniversary of September 11, 2001, we have established a committee to plan the College’s commemoration of that fateful day. Chaired by Fr. Gabriel Pivarnik, O.P., Director of the Center for Catholic and Dominican Studies, the committee consists of faculty, administrators and a student. In addition to the memorial Masses, Vigil and Book of Remembrance already planned, we anticipate that the College’s commemoration will include lectures and discussions about the tragic events, their aftermath, and issues of the moment.

We are especially concerned to remember and honor those who died and those who mourn their passing. This includes students and alumni who died in the attacks, the relatives of students and staff who did, and alumni who gave their lives in service to their country as members of the armed forces.

### *From 1216 to 1917: Anniversaries of the Order and College*

The Dominican Order will be 800 years old in 2016, and the College will celebrate its 100th anniversary the following year. To mark these occasions and to encourage reflection about the Order’s mission and that of the College, we are in the process of establishing a standing committee. The mandate of the committee will be broad—to recommend appropriate commemorations—and ongoing, for it is not only a matter of celebrating the actual anniversaries but of cultivating a habit of reflection and conversation about what it means to be a Dominican college.

It is the expectation that in addition to celebratory events, the College will sponsor lectures, liturgies, visual displays, publications and artistic works. Moreover, we hope to provide the College community and the general public with a visually and intellectually rich archive of materials pertaining to the history of the Order and College, as well as the anniversary celebrations, and to do this both in print and online.

## REFLECTIONS

### *Let Us Rest in You: The Challenge of College Life*

Gail Beth Berkowitz

*Campus Minister for Spiritual Life*

“Our hearts are restless until they rest in you, O God.” Do not let the familiarity of this quotation from St. Augustine diminish its significance for our lives. It reveals to us a great truth about our need to slow down and make time for the Lord.

In our Fall 2010 issue of LOGOS, Fr. James Cuddy, O.P. brought to light the desire that all humans have to “be fully alive.” As college students, young people are just beginning to experience that deep desire and wrestle with the questions of meaning and purpose in their lives. However, life as a college student can often be overwhelming and the “big” questions get lost amidst the busyness of campus life. It can be difficult for students to find the time to simply “be still” and rest in the Lord. (Psalm 46:10)

Being away from home for the first time and doing laundry; sharing a small space with roommates; staying up late writing papers and studying for exams; working part-time jobs, participating in half a dozen different activities, and maintaining healthy relationships with new and old friends: the life of a college student actually can be quite rest-less. There is often literally no time to rest for a moment, let alone seek God in that moment.

Even when students do find the time to sleep in on a Saturday morning and rest their weary minds and bodies, they can find a sense of restlessness remains. This restlessness can only be satisfied by the one whom we were made to know, to love, and to serve. We must quiet our hearts and look to the Lord to nourish our souls. As the Lord says in the Gospel of Mark, “Come away by yourselves to a quiet place and rest a while”(6:31).

It is for this reason that we encourage students to participate in a retreat while they are at Providence College. A retreat invites students to withdraw from the busyness of their lives for a weekend, a day, or just a few hours and to encounter God through prayer and reflection. When

students make time for a retreat, they are invited to explore the deepest longings of their hearts and discover who God is calling them to be. It allows God to nourish their souls and sustain them as they face the everyday expectations and trials of college living.

There is no greater joy than seeing the impact a retreat can have on a student’s life. It reminds me that God cares for us deeply and will pursue us until our hearts are truly resting in Him. I hope that the following reflections by our students on retreat will encourage you in your pursuit of God, just as they have sustained me in mine.

*“This weekend has shed much insight and strength for my life and faith. It has made me see things or think about Christ and my relationships in new and positive ways”.*

*“The most helpful part was the alone time. It was something that I would never have done if I hadn’t been on the retreat”.*

*“I’ve taken away a lot from this retreat- a greater sense of peace, a greater sense of community and a renewed relationship with Christ”.*

*“I had priceless time to reflect on my journey and encounter God”.*

*“It is rare to have quiet time scheduled and I truly enjoyed encountering and reflecting on Christ on walks and in my own time”.*

*“I enjoyed getting away from campus and being able to reflect upon myself now and my relationships with friends and God”.*

*“I truly valued the time away from campus where I could relax and quiet my soul”.*



### *The Value of Immersion Experiences*

Richard Lumley

*Campus Minister for Service and Social Justice*

We were immersed from the outset, flying into the city during the worst storm since Hurricane Katrina. As we left the airport in rental vans, rain pounded on our windshield. Streets were transformed into riverbeds. And stalled vehicles with hazard lights blinking served as occasional reminders of what could happen to us if we hit a deep patch of water. This was my hectic introduction to New Orleans. I was the staff leader for a group of 13 student volunteers.

Thankfully, the group safely made it to where we were staying. The next day we visited the French Quarter for Sunday morning mass at St. Louis Cathedral followed by beignets at Café du Monde. We toured parts of the city that afternoon with a group called Contemplatives in Action. We stopped in the lower 9th Ward and in St. Bernard Parish, seeing desolate neighborhoods that contrasted sharply with the vibrant French Quarter. We talked with local leaders who explained how Katrina disproportionately affected poorer communities in the area. They also talked with us about their courageous work to rebuild the city.

On Monday morning, we arrived at Catholic Charities ready to get to work. The staff informed us that we would work on a house in the lower 7th Ward. Over the course of a couple of days we installed laminate flooring and tiling for a single shotgun house. This was also a privileged time for our group to get to know each other better. We sang songs together while we worked, and we talked about our families and backgrounds over lunches.

During our last day working on the house, we met the homeowner, a Vietnam War veteran. We heard his story. His neighborhood was submerged six feet under water at the height of the flooding. Like many in the city, he didn't have flood insurance when the levees broke. Lacking the means to rebuild himself, he was forced to rely on a patch-

work of volunteer efforts to rebuild his house. Four years after Katrina, he was on the verge of moving back into this house.

Immersion trips are now quite common on college campuses, and Providence College is no exception. This year 14 students will travel to New Orleans at the end of Christmas Break. During Spring Break, approximately 130 students will travel to 13 different sites in New England and the mid-Atlantic to work on houses for Habitat for Humanity. And others will sign on for service learning trips through the Feinstein Institute.

Students have different motives for participating on immersion trips. Some of these motives are better than others, and there is certainly a place for critically examining these trips, particularly in terms of their impact on local communities and their lasting effects on students. Still, I remain convinced that service learning experiences can have a transformative impact on student participants and should play an important role at Catholic institutions of higher learning.

The Church has a deep tradition of social teaching, which is grounded in scriptural mandates to serve the poor and vulnerable. Over the past 120 years, the Church has expanded its teachings with papal encyclicals and other documents to address some of the major social issues confronting us, from the threat of nuclear war to the consequences of unrestrained capitalism. Moreover, figures like Dorothy Day and Oscar Romero provide inspirational models of how our faith calls us to work actively for social justice. In its social teaching the Church stresses the importance of solidarity, the ability to view those around us as part of a human family. As the parable of the Good Samaritan reminds us, we are our brother's and sister's keeper.

In a vivid and profound way, traveling to a place like New Orleans should remind immersion participants of the Church's call to solidarity. There is no way to know exactly how working on a house or listening to someone's

story will affect a participant on an immersion trip. And immersion trips are only a part of a broader process to break down prejudices and biases that separate us from others. But, at their best, they can play an important part of that process. For in one way or another, no one comes home unchanged: at a minimum, students return more aware of themselves, the needs of others, and the importance of Catholic social teaching.

### Masses and Confession on Campus

#### St. Dominic Chapel (when school is in session)

Masses for Sunday 4:30 p.m. Saturday (Vigil)  
4:30 p.m. Sunday  
7:00 p.m. Sunday  
10:30 p.m. Sunday

Weekday Masses 11:35 a.m.  
4:30 p.m.  
9:00 p.m. (Monday-Thursday)

Confessions 3:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. Wednesday  
8:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. Wednesday  
3:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. Saturday

#### St. Thomas Aquinas Priory (when school is in session)

Mass for Sunday 11:00 a.m. Sunday

Weekday Mass 7:25 a.m. (Monday-Friday)  
8:00 a.m. (Saturday, w/ Morning Prayer)

## OFFICES

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