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Welcome Father Jon!

It is a joy for me to introduce, or re-introduce myself to you. I am Father Jon Seda (pronounced Shed-a). However, I am no stranger to STA/ISU, as I was associate pastor and campus minister from 1990 to 1998.

Raised on a family farm near Traer, IA, I am the fourth of five boys. All of my brothers have degrees from ISU. The only thing that made me unique in my family was not going to ISU. Now, I may be here longer than all of them put together. God is ironic.

I was educated at Loras College in Dubuque, St. John's University, Collegeville, MN, and Santa Clara University, Santa Clara, CA. So Dubuque priests, Benedictine monks and the Jesuits are part of my background, three very different flavors of the same ice cream!

I have served parishes in Waterloo, Ames, and five parishes east of Ames. Most recently I was pastor of Holy Family in Mason City and coordinator of Newman Catholic Schools. My gray hair comes from teaching freshmen religion at Newman!

I have a passion for helping people, young and old, figure out life, God and stuff. I love being a priest and am proud to be a priest of the Archdiocese of Dubuque for over 21 years.

I look forward to meeting and working with our students, faculty and alumni in the years ahead. Ad multos annos!



Parishioners welcome Fr. Jon after the July 19 Sunday liturgies

HONDURAN GUESTS VISIT STA

SUE STANTON, for *The Witness*

You always know it's spring in Iowa when family from out of state come to visit. Padre Efrain Romero, accompanied by John Donaghy, a former pastoral minister at St. Thomas Aquinas in Ames, came to Ames, both men bringing warm Easter greetings from their diocese in Honduras.

John left Ames two years ago to begin a parish-sponsored ministerial connection with the Santa Rosa de Copan diocese in Honduras where Padre Efrain serves.

Though slow in progress, the two men recently rejuvenated a diocesan level chapter of Caritas, a Catholic international aid organization, after seeing the needs of the 42 parishes across their diocese largely going unmet.

The diocese of Santa Rosa de Copan is located in the west of Honduras, bordering El Salvador on the south and Guatemala to the west. It extends almost 7,000 miles and has a million people who live there, making it the poorest area in Honduras.

In these times of global economic downturns, Father Efrain decided it was time to take greater action to help the hungry people of his diocese. Now assigned as head of the Caritas organization for the diocese, he envisions a more effective means of using existing organizations there and connecting them with organizations here through grant opportunities, foundations, and access to other Catholic relief agencies such as Catholic Relief Services.

But before he begins this quest, he had to come to Ames and thank the people of St. Thomas Aquinas for their continuing interest and support, while also encouraging all Catholic Iowans

to come and visit a family eager to greet them.

"It is a frequent question that is asked, 'Where are the Catholics?'" he says. "People see Protestant mission groups coming down there, but not Catholic ones. My people want to see you and meet you."

The corn silo project is still ongoing and successful; an effort that is designed to enable each home owner to construct and maintain a small silo next to his home to store and have corn for food throughout the year. Many families are participating in this project. A future project that Padre Efrain and John Donaghy hope to begin is one of sustainable agriculture.

"This is where the people of Iowa can be very helpful," Donaghy says. "Their knowledge over this area is what is needed in the diocese. Now we are beginning to distribute seeds to families for their own gardens."

St. Thomas sent a \$1,000 check to begin a demo plot right on the parish grounds of Dulce Nombre. So far 125 families have received seeds and training for their gardens. If this succeeds, it will increase the level of nutrition for people in the parish, but it will also serve as a pilot project that can then be used throughout the diocese.

"It's a way that we can do things with them," Donaghy smiles. "We are not doing it for them. We provide the training and they do the work."

Padre Efrain smiles as well. "The solidarity of parishes in the U.S. with those in Honduras will work to improve our pastoral work," he said. "It would improve the sub-human



Former campus ministry director John Donaghy and Padre Efrain Romero

condition that many of our people live in and it works to strengthen the universal church as well."

Providing strength for the universal church by planting a mere packet of seeds; what better proof of what Jesus originally proclaimed "Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground, it cannot have life."

And giving life to the people of Honduras is what corn silos and family gardens are all about.

St. Thomas Aquinas Alumni Website

Don't forget to take a look at the STA Alumni Website. Type the following web address into your web browser: www.staparish.net/alumni/ Continue to visit this site periodically for additional information and updates. Please email comments or suggestions to kris@STAparish.net.

MSGR. JAMES A. SUPPLE FALL LECTURE

“The Difficulty of Dating in the Hook-Up Culture”



Dr. Christine B. Whelan

The Msgr. James A. Supple Lecture will be at 8:00 p.m., Monday, September 14 at Iowa State University’s Memorial Union’s Gallery.

Dr. Christine B. Whelan is a professor, journalist and author. She is the author of *Marry Smart: The Intelligent Woman’s Guide to True Love*, *Why Smart Men Marry Smart Women* and a forthcoming book *The Virtues of Self-Help*. Dr. Whelan is a visiting assistant professor in the sociology department at the University of Iowa. She earned a master’s and doctorate from the University of Oxford.

Whelan has held teaching positions at Princeton University in the sociology and politics departments. She has been published in *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*. Currently, Whelan writes a bi-weekly relationship advice column for *Busted Halo®*, a young adult Catholic Web site. She has appeared live on television and radio programs across the nation.

She will present “*The Difficulty of Dating in the Hook-Up Culture*”, discussing changing dating and marriage patterns in the United States from a Catholic perspective. Using recent national survey data and insights from her bi-weekly dating and relationship column on *BustedHalo.com*. Dr. Whelan will explore the changes in dating and marriage, explore the myth of soul mates and talk about the implications of the hook-up culture for young Catholics.

Additionally, at 8:15 p.m., Sunday, September 13, Dr. Whelan will present a brief presentation on the topic and facilitate an informal discussion at St. Thomas Aquinas’ Lower Lounge.

OMAHA STUDENT SEND OFF PICNIC

On August 5, the first-ever Omaha area Student Send Off Picnic was held at Ed Zorinsky Lake and Recreation Center. Campus Ministry and Alumni Relations staff, along with STA area alumni, current students, parents and their families, respectively, welcomed incoming students, their parents and families to St. Thomas Aquinas. It was an opportunity for all to experience three different aspects of the STA community in one event – past, present and future.

The Alumni Relations and Development office plans to expand this event to other markets. Interested in

organizing a Student Send Off Picnic in your area next summer? Contact Kris Egan, Alumni Relations and Development Coordinator at 515.292.3810 or kris@staparish.net



Current and new students register for door prizes

Save the Date! STA Fall '09 Alumni Events

For more information regarding these events or to organize an event in your area, contact Kris Egan, Alumni Relations and Development Coordinator at 515.292.3810 ext. 18 or kris@staparish.net

Family Weekend Continental Breakfast

Sunday, September 27
Following 8:30 am Mass
Lower Lounge

ISU Catholic Faculty and Staff Social

Thursday, October 1

Iowa State/STA Homecoming Tailgate Party - Tent #11

Saturday, October 17
3 hours before game time - TBA
Iowa State vs. Baylor
Look for us on Tent Row!

“Last Supper for Graduates”

Saturday evening, December 5

Spring 2010 Events

Alumni Phone a Thon

February – Dates TBA

“Last Supper for Graduates”

Saturday, April 10

Alumni Days

Liturgy and Luncheon

Celebrating the class of 1960’s
50th anniversary!
Thursday, May 13

FRIENDS & ALUMNI

NOTES

Dr. Edwin Becker ('47) died on February 23, 2009. His widow, Catherine, wrote: "Edwin died of pulmonary fibrosis. He attended Iowa State College before enlisting in USAAF in 1942-43. After service, he returned to earn a BS in chemical engineering. He was an "energetic" member of Phi Kappa Theta while attending ISC. He was happy to support STA these many years."



Joan Young

Joan Young ('59) Last May, Joan attended STA's Alumni Days Liturgy and Luncheon. She sent this email: "Just a note to tell you how much Frank and I enjoyed our visit to the Newman Club and meeting you, Fr. Ev and the others. It was so nice to go to Mass and have that delicious lunch and hear stories from the other people." "... I can't believe how much the center has grown since my day. That time has gone so fast! Enjoy everyday! Frank was impressed with St. Thomas and ISU. Best of luck to you and everyone at the center. Thanks again for a wonderful time."

Dr. Terry Sullivan ('72) and his godson, **Eddie Slaughter**, visited Iowa State and St. Thomas Aquinas on August 21. Eddie is a potential fall 2010 ISU freshman. Terry and his wife, **Nancy ('70)** have fond memories of Msgr. Supple and their time at Iowa State and St. Thomas. "STA is still one of my favorite churches!"



Dr. Terry Sullivan ('70) and Eddie Slaughter

Former Peer Minister and current STA Director of Religious Education, **Kathy (Halstead) White ('83, MS '89)** sent this update: "My oldest daughter, Annette, graduated from Ames High in May and is a freshman at Iowa State. She plans to double major in biology and Spanish. My son, Patrick, enters eighth grade this fall. I am beginning my fifth year as STA's director of religious education and 19th year in church ministry."

Fr. Bryan Belli ('92) visited Ames in May during the "Odyssey of the Mind" World Finals competition held at Iowa State. He was ordained in 2002 in the diocese of Arlington, VA. Currently, Fr. Bryan serves as parochial vicar of Our Lady of Hope Church, Potomac Falls, VA.

Mary Oldham ('96) sent this update: "I am joining Maryknoll Lay Missioners in September and serving with them in Kenya from January 2010 to June 2013. I completed two years as a volunteer with Catholic Relief Services in Uganda and Los Angeles and found that I didn't get enough of East Africa. Blessings to you and the STA community!"

Sarah Uchytel ('96) attended the summer Kansas City area alumni dinner. "I am enjoying living in Kansas City. I am working as a consultant for Telwares. I stay active by volunteering with the Iowa State Club of Kansas City and Junior League."

Former Peer Minister and former STA Development Coordinator, **Jennifer (Fleihler '98)** and **Andrew Hlubek** are parents of a son, Nicholas William, born on May 24. Andrew recants Nicholas' birth: "We feel very blessed and excited! My little league team is slowly forming. :) Actually the quick story goes like this: Grilling out Sunday and eating as a family around 1:30 pm, not much after that we head to hospital and 31 minutes later baby arrives. Needless to say, I almost became a doctor at my house! This is also mostly due to Jennifer being a pretty strong person and didn't feel the "strong labor" until after lunch. I, of course, had to tell the on call doctor that he could go back home and flip his burgers since it only took 31 minutes!"



Jennifer, Andrew, Owen and Nicholas Hlubek



Chris, Faine and Vera Mende

Former Peer Minister **Chris ('98)** and **Faine Mende** are parents of a daughter, Vera, born July 2. "We're very happy. She's growing and learning every day. It's quite a change for us, but one we welcome

Former Peer Minister **Dr. Sara Brenner ('02)** was featured in the August 10, 2009 issue of the Des Moines Register for her work in nanotechnology. Currently, she is assistant vice-president for nanohealth initiatives and assistant professor of nanobioscience at New York University – Albany. Her career objectives are big: the early cancer detection and new treatments, tissue engineering and artificial organs. "We will be able to manipulate drugs to target a certain part of the body and make treatments that target specific types of cancer."

Marc Nicolas ('02) attended the summer Kansas City area alumni dinner. "I am currently a civil engineer for HNTB. I lived in Kansas City for seven years. After our July 24 wedding, I moved to New Haven, CT to pursue an MBA at the Yale University School of Management. It is a two-year program and I plan to graduate in 2011."

John Kenkel ('03) attended the summer Kansas City area alumni dinner. "I am working for Garmin, an engineering company, and taking evening classes for an MBA."

Fr. Gary Mayer ('03) was ordained by Archbishop Jerome-Hanus as an archdiocesan priest at Dubuque's St. Raphael Cathedral on May 23. He is associate pastor for Dubuque's Holy Spirit Pastorate.

Former Peer Minister **Tom Ruzicka ('04)** hosted the summer Kansas City area alumni dinner.

Jennifer Braden ('05) and **James Dunne (Ph.D '10)** were married at STA on July 3.

Former Peer Minister **Nicole Pfab ('06)** and **Wade Johnson ('06)** were married at STA on July 11.

Ryan Hackenmiller ('06) attended the summer Kansas City area alumni dinner. "Since May, '06, I have been working for Opus. I bought a house two years ago and spend time trying to fix things up!"

Jeff Van Dorn ('06) and Amy Runnenbaum were married on July 4 in Wichita, KS.

Former Peer Minister **Charles Bullis ('07)** attended the summer Kansas City area alumni dinner. "I recently moved from Parkville area to Shawnee suburb of Kansas City. I am working as a network solutions consultant for RSM McGladrey. I became engaged to Erin Hagerstrom last December. Our wedding is scheduled for April, 2010. Our daughter, Gabriella Ann, was born June 25."

Former Peer Minister, **Kristy Larsen ('07)**, sent this update: "Hope you are having a great summer so far. Mine is going fabulous, I have been very busy. This fall will be my second year of teaching second grade in the Des Moines Community School District. I am really excited for the year to begin! Hope you all are doing great. If you are in Des Moines, feel free to stop by. I would love to see you!"

Michelle Kozmik ('08) and **Jason Jirak ('09)** were married June 13 and reside in Minneapolis, MN.

Valerie Hentges (MS, '08) sent this update: "My new job relocated me to Columbia, MO. I work in the Jefferson City, MO area. In Columbia there are 3 different Catholic parishes here. None of them compare to the STA comfort and everything that goes along with belonging to a community. I hope it will all come in time, a new level of comfort and belonging, being a part of the Mass and community, not just being present. Take care. I just wanted to say thanks for my fellowship at STA while at Iowa State."

Aaron Ellensohn, ('09) sent this update: "I graduated with a degree in Ag Studies with an emphasis in agronomy. Now I am working for NEW Cooperative based in Clare and am living in Humboldt. I really miss Ames because it feels like home and I enjoyed my time there. I also miss going to St. Thomas because the atmosphere is a lot different than St. Mary's in Humboldt. I am looking forward to coming back to Ames one of these days to live and work there. Also I'd like to pursue more education and get my masters in agriculture."

Dave Kubik ('09) and Shelly Saforek were married on May 23 and reside in Madrid, IA.

Former Peer Minister **Sheila Lyon ('09)** will attend St. Ambrose University for graduate school this fall. "I just wanted to thank you for the St. Thomas community. My experience with this community over the last four years has been wonderful. I have learned a great deal about my faith and the role God plays in my life – a gift that I can always take with me. Thank you for your hard work, support and sharing your faith. God bless!"

Former Peer Minister **Maura McDermott ('09)** on August 1 became Community Events and Operations Director with the Susan G. Komen for the Cure – Austin, TX affiliate.

Matt Nelson ('09) will attend graduate school this fall at the University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls.

Mitchell Pohlkamp ('09) will begin graduate school at Iowa State in August.

JoAnna Ragazzo ('09) wrote "I plan to wait a year and hopefully return to Iowa State to pursue a graduate degree in family and marriage therapy."

Michael Rahe ('09) will attend veterinary school at Iowa State this fall.

Jenna Reinders ('09) and Alex Bishop were married on June 20th in Omaha, NE. Former Peer Minister, **Maura McDermott ('09)** was a bridesmaid. "Since our wedding, Alex and I moved to Peoria, IL. I am an intern at Peoria's St. Francis Medical Center in the dietetic department. St. Francis is a large Catholic hospital known for its trauma and excellent pediatric services."

Jay Roltgen ('09) and **Katie Bower ('10)** were married at STA on June 6.

Megan Sisler ('09) plans to enter the National Guard in April, 2010 to serve as a chaplain's assistant.

1st ANNUAL ALUMNI DAYS LUNCHEON



Dr. Jerry Shey ('54) shares a favorite STA memory. Seated is his wife, Jean.



Sheila Lyon ('09) serves Dr. Joe Stritzel ('49) his meal

2009 FALL STUDENT INTERNS!

New this fall at STA are three student interns. They are assisting staff in campus ministry, religious education and communications. The campus ministry and communications internships are newly created.

Communications intern is Emily Haydon from West Des Moines, IA. "Hi! I'm Emily, and I'm a senior at Iowa State University, majoring in journalism and mass communications with an emphasis in visual communications. I will graduate in December.

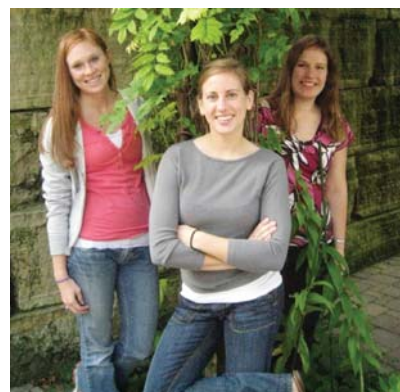
I was thrilled when I was offered the communications internship. My passion is designing Web sites and other forms of advertisements. Since late June, I've kept busy designing brochures, posters and an interactive church tour for the Web site! It's been very exciting so far, and I'm certainly blessed to have this great opportunity."

Campus Ministry intern is Mary McLoughlin from Fort Dodge, IA. "Hello! As an Iowa State senior, I am studying nutritional science and liberal studies. Upon graduating in the spring I plan to attend graduate school or pursue a job pertaining to issues of the developing world and in particular, women's issues.

As the campus ministry intern, I will be focusing on International student outreach. Our team will be planning various social events, discussions and portraying Catholicism as it is celebrated in the Church worldwide. I am incredibly excited for the growth this year has to offer both for St. Thomas, myself and the new community of faith we hope to build."

Religious Education fall intern is Jenifer Zwicky from Council Bluffs, IA. "I am a senior elementary education major with an endorsement in special education. This is my last semester in Ames and at St. Thomas. I will student teach near my hometown of Council Bluffs.

I am looking forward to my internship and learning about what it takes to be a religious education director. I will be using my elementary focus and lending a helping hand whenever I can!"



Left to right: Jenifer Zwicky, Mary McLoughlin and Emily Haydon

ALUMNI REFLECTION

by Michael Boersma ('82)

Many of the most transformative experiences of my life occurred at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Student Center.

When I arrived at Iowa State in 1978, I was a Catholic in name only. I was a pretty dedicated student and though I took part in many of the usual freshman activities – parties, dating, intramural sports – by spring semester, I was feeling empty and lonely and by the end that year, realized I had been so absorbed in my studies that I had not developed any significant friendships.

My father suggested I look into the Newman Center. I ventured to St. Thomas Aquinas Church. By chance, I started talking to a young woman, Teresa Gril- lot, about St. Tom's and the Catholic Student Center. Her openness, warmth and welcoming spirit helped me to see St. Tom's as a place where I could feel less lonely and feel part of a community. I got involved in St. Tom's and a rekindling of my faith occurred - a rekindling that took over my life.

I plunged into all aspects of St. Tom's life – Thursday night and weekend Masses; studying in the library, relaxing in the upstairs student lounge, serving as a lector and Communion Minister, taking Catholic Faith for Adults classes, helping plan and lead Antioch weekends and many other activities. I couldn't get enough. I tried many things – gained much self-confidence from the good experiences and learned humility from the goofy mistakes that a young, over-zealous, 20-something is prone to make. I had very good days, and very painful days, but through them all I felt alive, invigorated by re-establishment of a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Most important of all were the people I met – true friends who listened and shared with me through the challenges



Michael Boersma ('82) and family

every college student faces – and who allowed me to help them sort through those same challenges. These included the first Peer Ministers I met, the many friends I made and, most especially, Sr. Kathleen Dolphin, who led me to think seriously about ordained ministry. I also received inspiration from the priests who knew how to talk to college students and how to address the issues that faced them. My eyes were opened to a Catholicism that involved putting faith into action, encouraged a redirection of attention from self to others, and transformed “what kind of career should I have?” into “what am I called to do?”

Since then, I have tried to live the values nurtured at St. Tom's. Although I did not pursue ordained ministry, I continue to try to use the concept of “ministry” in the work I do. I currently work for Advocate Health Care, a faith-based hospital system in Chicago. In all my work, I have tried to keep my focus on how what I do benefits others.

I also nurture these values in my family life. My wife Lynn and I have been married for 21 years. We have two children – Joseph, 18 and William, 15. We are all active in our local parish, St. Nicholas Church, Evanston. St. Nicholas is very similar to St. Tom's – a welcoming, active parish where “faith into action” is very much a reality. My faith and my connectedness to this community of faith sustained me five years ago when my parents died of cancer.

Today, my Catholic faith is precious and meaningful to me, and for that, I am indebted to the transformative power of St. Tom's. I came to St. Tom's out of loneliness and learned that the solution to loneliness is not waiting for someone to reach out to me, but taking the initiative to reach out to others. I trust that St. Tom's will continue to be a place where such transformations are possible.

WELCOME ANGELINA WILLARD



St. Thomas Aquinas welcomes Angelina Willard as our new Youth Minister. A recent Loras College graduate, she received a bachelor's degree in religious studies and philosophy. Angelina and her husband, Greg are proud parents of a 5-month daughter, Perpetua. They reside in Des Moines.

“I hope to offer many opportunities for our middle and high school youth to grow more deeply in their faith. I look forward to meeting the students!”

NEWS & VIEWS SCRAPBOOK



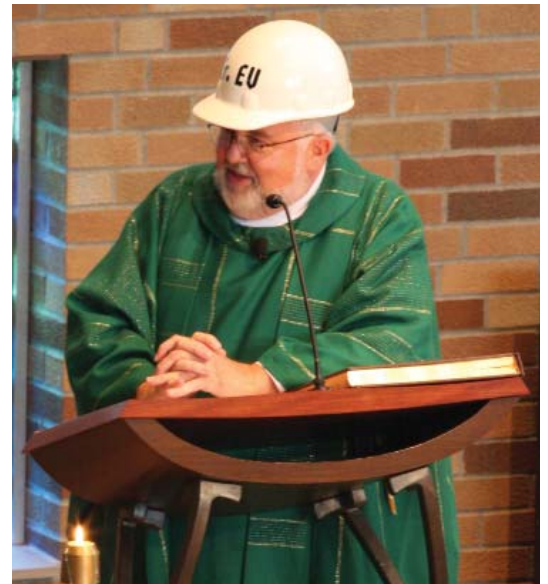
Thank you Iowa Knights of Columbus! Kris Egan and Fr. Dennis Miller represented STA at their state convention in Cedar Rapids. STA Campus Ministry received a \$6,000 check from the state council's educational fund.



Kansas City area Alumni Dinner held June 11 at Meyer House in South Kansas City



Dr. Peter Orazem, ISU economics professor, discusses the current economic situation at STA's summer Wisdom & Wine on July 31.



Fr. Ev gives his final homily as pastor on July 12. After the 10:30 Mass, 300 people bid him farewell.



Spring and summer 2009 STA graduates enjoy a meal and share STA memories at the annual "Last Supper for Graduates" on April 25.



Fr. Ev Hemann, former Peer Minister and senior Hillary Holmes, Maggie Mishler ('03 - former Peer Minister), Jennifer Kuesar ('03), Wade ('06) and Nicole (Pfaff, '06/ former Peer Minister) Johnson, Tom ('03) and Laura (Riley, '06) Kent (former Peer Ministers) celebrate with Fr. Gary Mayer after his ordination Mass at Dubuque's St. Raphael Cathedral.

INTRODUCING OUR 2009-10 PEER MINISTERS!

To introduce themselves, this year's Peer Ministers tapped into their creative talents by writing limericks.

Community Life Peer Minister is Bridget Horan. Bridget is a junior construction engineering major from Egan, MN. "There once was a ConE named Bridget. Her enthusiasm caused her to fidget. She led social team and was so happy she screamed, when she realized she wasn't the team midget."

Service and Justice Peer Minister Kate Hemker. Kate is a senior architecture major from St. Louis Park, MN. "The S&J leader is Kate. Her Arch major keeps her up late. She is looking for more and will fight for the poor, attempting to make this world great."

Liturgy Peer Minister is Cory Sents. Cory is a senior materials engineering major from Grundy Center, IA. "Liturgy team rules the day! Fearless leader is Cory, by the way. His humor's absurd. And he's kind of a nerd. But in the end, he's pretty O.K."

Outreach Peer Minister is Jeff Podolski. Jeff is a senior mechanical engineering major from New Lenox, IL. "Jeff Podolski likes to talk to God. His friends all call him "J pod." Leading Outreach oh-nine with two majors combined. Last year he studied abroad."



Counter clockwise from left: Bridget Horan, Cory Sents, Jeff Podolski. Seated: Kate Hemker

PEER MINISTRY REFLECTION

by Maura McDermott ('09)



2008-09 Outreach Peer Minister Maura McDermott ('09)

Looking back on my past year as the 2008-2009 Outreach Peer Minister, it is difficult for me to even know where to begin with my experience. From the moment I came to Iowa State University, even at freshmen orientation, I vividly remember being welcomed by the STA staff, and I knew it would be a fostering place for both my spiritual and personal life. I did not know at the time the impact STA would have on my life; nor did I realize that I would soon become one of those friendly, welcoming upperclassmen, known as the infamous STA Peer Ministers.

I had an inherent feeling since my freshman year that I would potentially like to become a peer minister. I hoped to give back in return the support and acceptance I felt upon coming to STA and ISU. I was absolutely elated when I found out in the spring of '08 that I would be the Outreach Peer Minister and yet could not even begin to fathom the experiences and opportunities I would have in the year.

The outreach team, which I was so blessed to work with, was an incredible group of energetic, driven and enjoyable students. I enjoyed working with, and empowering them, to reach students on and off campus, people of other faiths and parishioners; I felt my biggest reward was seeing each member grow within their faith and as a person. Also, the opportunity to live within the church truly is a once-in-a-lifetime experience. I felt incredibly fortunate to be able to foster and develop relationships with students, staff and residents of our community. It did not take long for me to realize that STA is an extraordinary parish; one that is alive, vibrant and filled with loving people who genuinely exemplified what Christ is to the Church. St. Thomas Aquinas has, and will always have, a very special place within me. I will never forget the people I encountered, the memories, as well as the personal and spiritual growths I made as a peer minister. After graduation, I relocated to Austin, TX, but I know that wherever God's path may lead me, I will carry the experiences, education, memories and relationships I developed as a Peer Minister and at St. Thomas Aquinas.

2009 HOMELESS SLEEP OUT

by Christina Blakley ('10), Service and Justice Peer Minister



Homeless Sleep Out '09 took place on Tuesday and Wednesday, April 8-9. The committee of five students started planning this event in February. They made several changes in a hope to better educate and inspire students and community members to get involved.

The first change was to organize a panel discussion on homelessness. They invited speakers from the Catholic Worker in Des Moines; Hope Ministries, Des Moines; the

Emergency Residence Project, Ames; the co-director of Ames' Matthew 25 house, who was homeless for seven years in Des Moines; and an Iowa State student who experienced homelessness in Washington D.C. during spring break.

The panel allowed students and community members the chance to discuss the problems of homelessness with individuals whom have experienced it or work with it daily. The panel members didn't agree on many issues; but by seeing various views, we can come closer to understanding the homeless and how to help them.

Also, new this year a documentary film, 'My Own Four Walls,' discussed how children are affected by homelessness. During the discussion, some audience members shared their stories from their youth. The entire group was able to reflect on the current issue of homelessness.

20 students slept out south of the Campanile. More than \$150 was raised in donations to help those in danger of losing their homes in Ames.

The Homeless Sleep Out '09 was a rewarding experience for all involved. The Homeless Sleep Out committee and the Service & Justice Team would like to thank all who participated or supported this event!



2009 SPRING BREAK IMMERSION REFLECTIONS

Washington, D.C. Trip

by Kendra A. Kavan ('11)

A group of eight student parishioners traveled to serve the homeless of Washington D.C. We volunteered at soup kitchens and shelters, spoke with Iowa Congressmen Latham and Grassley, and lived frugally. While we were there, half of our group (myself included) had the opportunity to walk in the footsteps of those we were serving by actually being homeless for 48 hours.

Although the whole trip was an incredible experience, my favorite part was the "Homeless Challenge."

The best metaphor I can think of to describe our trip is the story of St. Paul's (Saul) conversion, as told in the Acts of the Apostles 9:1-19. There are so many parallels to my experience in D.C.,

I was initially interested in the personal challenge of living alone on the streets for two days. Before I started researching the issue of homelessness, and even to an extent while I was researching it, I had a stereotype of the homeless.

On our journey, I had a calling too, one that shattered my perceptions of what it means to be homeless. In different versions of Paul's conversion story, it is relayed that Paul was knocked off of his horse onto the ground when Christ spoke to him. I think that detail is significant because the higher the place you fall from, the more it hurts! In that sense, I too was "knocked off my high horse" and onto the ground while doing the homelessness plunge. I wasn't actively seeking out and persecuting the homeless prior to the plunge, but I was persecuting them by treating the homeless I came in contact with as if they were below me - people that deserved my sympathy. While we were on

the plunge, I think I talked less than I ever have before in my life. I wasn't speechless, like Paul, but I was rendered quiet by the gravity of what we saw. My eyes had been closed to the issue and I needed a hand to guide me. Lucky for me, like Paul, the people who I'd been feeling sorry for "led me by the hand" to the place God wanted to show me.

While on our plunge, we had our very own Ananias. He actually appeared to us in the form of two men: Anthony and John. They were our guides for the nights we slept on the street. Both of them had been homeless and made it off of the streets into regular jobs and apartments. However, they came back to the streets on a regular basis to watch over college students on alternative spring break trips. They showed us where it was safe to sleep at night (underneath a metro station overhang); they woke us up in the morning and showed us the best places to get food and hang out during the



Kendra Kavan, Matthew Kruse, Denton Patrick and Bridget Horan during the Homeless Challenge

day so we could stay warm. Further than just their giving, they taught us so much! They didn't have to be as kind to us as they were—after all, the simple fact that we're college students denotes that we're pretty privileged—but their compassion was incredible. They, in a sense, helped me to regain my sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit. Through Anthony and John, we were empowered to be instruments for the homeless—just like Ananias empowered Paul—and I am anxious to follow in Paul's footsteps in speaking for those mistreated, in whatever God may so choose to lead me.

The highlight of our week was installing drywall for Mary, a Cedar Rapids resident. We were all frighteningly inexperienced. Luckily, we had the help of three men, a group of very generous and patient volunteers, to teach us how to get the work done. When we weren't busy dry walling, we spent time together reflecting on our time and work while growing together in our faith. By the end of the week, we had not only formed new, wonderful friendships, we had also learned about the amazing resilience of the people of Cedar Rapids and surrounding communities.



STA students installing drywall in a Cedar Rapids residence

2009 NEW STUDENT COOK OUT

Traditionally, the night prior to fall classes, the STA Outreach team hosts a new student cook out in the Ash Avenue parking lot. Approximately 150 students were welcomed by the Catholic student community.



Fr. Dennis Miller jokes with students

Cedar Rapids, IA Trip

by Taleen Brady ('08)

During my time at Iowa State I wanted to go on a service trip but it never worked out with my schedule. When I heard about the opportunity to go on a service trip to Cedar Rapids, I jumped at the chance. Luckily, Cody LeClaire was kind enough to allow me to come as an alumni.

Throughout the week, our team had an amazing time. We heard the personal stories of Steve Bowers, an employee of Cargill, and John LeClaire, an employee of Mercy Medical Center, and what they experienced at their jobs through the flooding and afterward. We also visited with the residents of Palo, IA - a town that was entirely flooded - and how they are coping with loss and rebuilding.

STORY CO. VOLUNTEER YOUTH AWARD



Left to right, Ryan Krafka, Tom Jantscher and Christina Blakley, Service and Justice Peer Minister, accept the 2009 Story County Outstanding Youth Volunteer Award, signed by Gov. Chet Culver. The award was given by the Volunteer Center of Story County on April 28.

2009 - 10 STA AMBASSADORS



The STA Ambassadors Program is an extension of the Outreach team. They promote the STA Catholic student community's activities and programs within residence halls and Greek houses.

LOOKING BACK: SPRING 2009

They say “time flies when you are having fun,” which explains why this Spring 2009 semester went by in a flash. Highlights of our semester ministry efforts include:

Service and Justice

- 10 student-members comprised the spring semester Service and Justice team
- 40 students participated in 4 spring break immersion trips (Washington, D.C., Cedar Rapids, IA, Honduras and Appalachia/Williamsburg, KY)
- Iowa Dialogue Center Muslim group students shared approximately 60 portions of “Noah’s Pudding” dessert with students at a February inter-faith social
- Iowa Catholic Conference Social Action Institute attracted 10 students among 16 parishioners attended.

Outreach

- Outreach Team – 10 members
- 90 participants and over 15 belief systems represented at the spring inter-faith potluck hosted by St. Thomas Aquinas.
- For five weeks, an average of 25-30 volunteers assembled and distributed 200 lunches on campus for five Fridays in Lent.



Students distribute Lent lunches on campus

Community Life/Socials

- 8 student leaders served on the spring social team.
- Approximately 195 resident and student parishioners attended 4 Sunday Night Suppers during the semester.
- 56 students attended various Friday night social events.



2009 STArry Night Spring Formal dance

Worship, Spiritual Growth and Liturgy

- 9 Liturgy Team members traveled to St. Paul, MN for their team retreat
- Theology of the Body – 30 participants; 31 men gathered for weekly Theology of the Body discussion group.
- 20 students attended an 8-week Bible study series on First Corinthians.
- The Spirituality and Dating retreat attracted 20 participants.
- 42 students attended Antioch between both semesters
- 14 men participated in priesthood discernment opportunities (i.e. Operation Andrew Dinner, Priesthood Discernment Discussion Group etc.)
- 2 men discerned to enter seminary in the fall.
- TNL “Pack the Gathering Space” with Archbishop Jerome Hanus drew approximately 130 students with photo coverage in *The Witness*, the Archdiocesan weekly newspaper.



- 5 to 6 students gathered to pray each Wednesday
- 16 students explored various prayer experiences through music as part of the spring 24 Hour retreat, “Notes to God.”
- 37 students served as Religious Education volunteer catechists.
- 166 students served in various liturgical ministries during the semester.
- During the 2008-09 academic year, 44 couples planning to be married at a different parish, met with our Marriage Preparation Coordinator to prepare for the sacrament.

Alumni Relations and Development

- “Last Supper for Graduates” The STA community celebrated with and bid farewell to 10 May and August graduates.
- Alumni Phone a Thon: 47 gifts of \$2,400 received during spring semester.
- Alumni Appeal: 220 gifts of \$17,500 received during spring semester.
- Parent Appeal: 203 gifts of \$15,000 received during spring semester.
- Iowa Parishes: 18 parishes from the four Iowa dioceses supported our mission during the semester with gifts totaling \$5,400.
- Our first-ever Alumni Days Liturgy and Luncheon attracted alumni and their spouses from the classes of 1949, 1954 and 1959.
- Alumni Relations and Development Committee – 3 residents and 2 students serve in an advisory role for short and long term plans for campus ministry and the parish.
- 1 student maintains the alumni webpage on a regular basis

We thank you for your time, talent and treasure invested in our ministry.

FROM THE PASTOR



Dear Alumni and Friends,

Ah, it is good to back in Ames! While I have enjoyed every assignment I have had, St. Thomas Aquinas has a special place in my heart. From past experience, I know the time students spend at ISU is full of great transformation, grace and change (hopefully for the better).

That is why the Catholic Church needs to be active and alive here. Many of our students grow significantly in their faith in these few years (more years for some than others). When I taught religion at Newman High School in Mason City, I felt like I was answering questions that were not being asked. Here they are. That is exciting for me.

As I write these words, Ames is filling up with people. Fr. Supple would sometimes joke that Ames would be a nice place to live if it weren't for the students. Of course, not many of us would be here if it weren't for the students.

It is a bit humbling to succeed the likes of Msgr. Supple, Fr. Geary, Fr. Knepper and Fr. Hemann. Fr. Supple was my hero and great friend during my first time here from 1990 to 1998. My first act as pastor was to visit his grave and ask for his intercession for my new mission.

I have no doubt he will fulfill my request. I also count on your prayers and help as we begin a new chapter and build on a great foundation at STA.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fr. Jon Seda". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Fr. Jon Seda

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SHARE WITH US YOUR NEWS AND VIEWS*

Name _____

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*Your update will be included in a future newsletter.
Please return to: St. Thomas Aquinas Church & Catholic Student Center, 2210 Lincoln Way, Ames, IA 50014-7184 or e-mail to kris@staparish.net