

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

In the first months of my presidency at Belmont Abbey College, my thoughts constantly turn to a 12th-century writer, John of Salisbury, who commented that we are like midgets on the shoulders of giants; we can see further and we can do more things because of the foundations which our predecessors laid. I am indeed sensitive to the multi-splendored stones in the Belmont Abbey College tradition in the persons of Bishop Leo Haid, Abbot Vincent Taylor, Abbot Walter Coggin, Father Cuthbert Allen, Father John Oetgen, Abbot Jude Cleary, and Father John Bradley. To these predecessors we owe a debt of gratitude for sharing their vision, talents and spirituality to bring Belmont Abbey College into a position of prestige among private institutions of higher education.

At a time when I've just been uprooted from my mid-western family, friends, and home turf, I am especially appreciative of my roots; an uprooting is a time to take a new look at those roots and to develop new appreciations. The same is true in the life of a college. This will be the task which challenges the Belmont Abbey College community in this moment of history; we will take a new look at the rooty network upon which Belmont Abbey College stands today. There may be some infested barnacles which need to be lopped off; other tender roots will need to be nurtured; the main roots will be resoiled in contemporary earth to assume a healthy thrust into the twenty-first century. There need be no doubt that those main roots are the liberal arts, Christianity, the Catholic tradition, Benedictinism, and a deep concern for the physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual development of each person within the collegiate community. These main roots not only are the inheritance from our predecessors, but also should be the sparkling treasures which we entrust to our successors.

At the time of my appointment as President, a goal to



Fr. Neil W. Tobin

which I gave priority was the evolution of a system of internal governance which would encourage trust and confidence among the students, faculty, and administration of our College. As the Fall semester opens, our first efforts will be directed to that goal. So often in governance, smaller private colleges tend to mimic the stratified structures of larger universities which produce a separation, if not alienation, among the various constituencies in the college. With our Christian and Benedictine tradition -- a tradition so rich in its emphasis on community and sharing within community -- we need to evolve a system of governance which will encourage a blending of students, faculty, and administration into a community of believers who enjoy shouldering and sharing the responsibility for the welfare of our College. In such an environment we will be constantly calling one another to our next level of greatness.

As you know, the Academic Dean of the last eight years, Father James Solari, has left the College for pastoral ministry; we appreciate his many contributions to the development of our College. A search committee of students, faculty and administrators sifted through the many applications and recommended three candidates for my consideration. On 30 June, I appointed Dr. J. Patrick Lee Academic Dean; he joins us on 1 August, coming with experience in both the small private college and the large State university.

I am indeed grateful that the Lord has called me to Belmont Abbey College. I look forward to enjoying the pleasure of your friendship and the encouragement of your prayers as we work together for the welfare of our College.

Neil W. Tobin
 Father Neil W. Tobin
 President

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