



Founders' Day Convocation

SAINT MARY'S UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Tuesday, March 17, 2026

1:15 p.m.

Page Theatre

FOUNDERS' DAY CONVOCATION

March 17, 2026

Prelude

Minuet

George Frederick Händel

Saint Mary's University Wind Ensemble

Processional

Ubi Caritas

Maurice Durufle

Saint Mary's University Concert Choir

Directed by Zoraida Oyola Rebaza, D.M.A.

Invocation

Eamon Naughton

Director of Campus Ministry

Emcee

Ann Merchlewitz M'95, J.D.

Senior Vice President and General Counsel

President's Remarks

The Very Rev. James P. Burns, IVD, Ph.D.

Saint Mary's University Distinguished Lasallian Educator

Recipient: Matthew Klosky, M.A.
Assistant Professor of Business and Communications;
Director of the Kabara Institute
of Entrepreneurial Studies

Presenter: Dean Beckman, M.S.
Associate Professor and
Chair of Business and Communications

Musical Interlude

Bogoroditse Djevo

Sergei Rachmaninoff

Saint Mary's University Concert Choir

Directed by Zoraida Oyola Rebaza, D.M.A.

Bishop Patrick Heffron Award

Recipient: Ann Merchlewitz M'95, J.D.
Senior Vice President and General Counsel

Presenter: Timothy Gossen B'01, M'05, D'14, Ed.D.
Senior Director of Admission and Early College

Outstanding Seniors Awards

Alma Mater

Saint Mary's University Concert Choir

Directed by Zoraida Oyola Rebaza, D.M.A.

Words and music by Patrick M. O'Shea, D.M.A.

Arranged by A. Eric Heukeshoven, M.S.

(music on page 16)

Benediction

Father Kevin Stolt, IVE, Ph.L., M.Eng.

University Chaplain

Postlude

Trumpet Tune

Henry Purcell

Saint Mary's University Wind Ensemble

*You are cordially invited to a reception in the Ben Miller Lobby
of the Performance Center following Convocation.*

PREVIOUS DISTINGUISHED LASALLIAN EDUCATOR AWARD RECIPIENTS

2025	James Bedtke, MBA
2024	Robin Wisniewski, Psy.D.
2023	Andrew Robertson
2022	Paul Kotz, Ph.D.
2021	No award given
2020	Matthew Nowakowski, Ed.D.
2019	Alisa Macksey, M.A.
2018	John (Jack) McClure, Ph.D.
2017	Alison Block, Nicholas Winecke
2016	Nicolette Richmond
2015	Sarah Wanger
2014	Richard Tristano, Ph.D.
2013	Tony Piscitiello, Simon Wachira
2012	Mary Catherine Fox, Ph.D.
2011	Roxanne Eubank, Ed.D.
2010	Brother Stephen Rusyn, FSC, Ph.D.
2009	Jane Anderson, Ph.D.

MISSION

Enriched by the Lasallian Catholic heritage,
Saint Mary's University of Minnesota
awakens, nurtures, and empowers learners
to ethical lives of service and leadership.



Approved by the Board of Trustees
October 5, 2012

PREVIOUS BISHOP HEFFRON AWARD RECIPIENTS

2024	Tracy Lehnertz, M.A.
2022	Deborah Nahrgang
2020	Karen Hemker
2018	Susan Hines, Ed.D.
2016	Joseph Tadie, Ph.D.
2014	Donny Nadeau
2012	Roger Peckover, Ph.D.
2010	Mary Becker
2008	Alan Joswick
2006	Linka Holey
2004	Francis Speck
2002	Brother Jerome Rademacher, FSC, Ph.D.
2000	Kenneth Pellegrini
1998	Darlene C. Paulson
1996	Joan M. Costello
1994	Marilyn Frost, Ph.D.
1993	Anthony M. Piscitiello
1992	Brother John Grover, FSC
1991	Jeffrey R. Highland, Ph.D.
1990	James Hanzel
1989	Helen Galloway, Ph.D.; Brother Francis Walsh, FSC, Ph.D.
1987	Brother Leonard Courtney, FSC, Ph.D.
1986	Brother Paul Grass, FSC, Ph.D.
1985	Kathryn P. McDermott, Robert F. McDermott
1984	Christian Brothers of SMC
1983	William Ammentorp, Ph.D.
1982	Rev. Robert Taylor, Msgr. Bernard Mangan
1980	Brother J. Leo Northam, FSC
1979	Msgr. Roy E. Literski, Ph.D.
1976	Brother George Pahl, FSC, Ph.D.
1973	C. Bernard Jacobs
1970	Dr. Jon J. Kabara, Father Paul Nelson
1969	John D. Lamon; Brother H. Charles Severin, FSC, Ph.D.; A.J. McGill
1968	Msgr. J. Stanley Hale; Brother Leopold J. Dodd, FSC; Michael Galvin; Thomas Coughlan
1967	Frank D. Biesanz; Rt. Rev. Msgr. Ambrose Layne; Judge E.D. Libera
1966	John A. Metcalf; Joseph C. Page; Thomas H. Skemp
1965	Charles P. Biesanz, Rev. Frank McMahan, Rt. Rev. Msgr. Julius Haun, Rt. Rev. Msgr. Bernard Kramer

OUTSTANDING SENIOR PROFILES

The following were selected by the Class of 2026 and the faculty and staff of the College as nominees for the Outstanding Male Senior Award.

Jacob Fiala

Jacob Fiala, son of Rodney and Ann Marie Fiala of Welcome, Minn., is a philosophy major and seminarian at Immaculate Heart of Mary Seminary (IHM), studying for the Diocese of Winona-Rochester. During his time at Saint Mary's, Jacob has served two years on Student Senate representing the IHM Seminary community and continues to serve as a proxy for absent members. He has been a member of the Saint Mary's Knights of Columbus Council #5202 for four years and also served one year as a new student orientation leader. Within the seminary community, Jacob played on the Seminary basketball team during his first year and served as head coach for IHM's 2026 Team at the Annual Tournament in Milwaukee, Wis. He has also assisted with Tri-State Tournaments by officiating basketball games hosted at Saint Mary's. After graduation, Jacob plans to attend The Saint Paul Seminary in Saint Paul, Minn., to pursue a Master of Divinity degree and eventual ordination to the priesthood.

Noah Lahner

Noah Lahner, son of Kevin and Jessica Lahner of Waukesha, Wis., is a psychology major. At Saint Mary's, Noah played baseball for three years, served on Student Senate's Executive Board for two years, and was president of the Pre-Law Society. He is a member of Delta Sigma Epsilon, Psi Chi, and Chi Alpha Sigma Honor Societies. After graduation, he plans to attend law school and hopes to work in appellate litigation once he becomes an attorney.

Javier Rodriguez Cifuentes

Javier Rodriguez Cifuentes, son of Jose Rodriguez and Cecilia Cifuentes of Austin, Minn., is a biology major in pre-physician assistant (PA) studies. At Saint Mary's, Javier has served as a resident assistant in the Office of Residence Life, vice president for campus affairs on Student Senate, and as both an intern and volunteer for the Makerspace, and has competed in various intramural sports. After graduation, he plans to pursue his Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies (MSPAS) from Northwestern College in Iowa, eventually pursuing a career as a compassionate and skilled healthcare provider in Minnesota.

Garrett Rotzien

Garrett Rotzien, son of Paul and Patty Rotzien of Coon Rapids, Minn., is a double major in accounting and business intelligence and analytics. At Saint Mary's, Garrett served as president of Student Senate, participated in Accounting Club and Club Hockey Commentary, and competed in various intramural sports. After graduation, he plans to find a fulfilling job in accounting or business intelligence that complements the morals he learned at Saint Mary's.

Colin Tushie

Colin Tushie, son of John and Tami Tushie of Prior Lake, Minn., is a data science and computer science: cybersecurity major with a minor in mathematics. At Saint Mary's, Colin has participated in the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) and is a member of the men's hockey team, serving as a two-year captain. He has also competed in various intramural sports, including hockey and pickleball. After graduation, he plans to work in construction management and coach youth hockey in Minnesota.

OUTSTANDING SENIOR PROFILES

The following were selected by the Class of 2026 and the faculty and staff of the College as nominees for the Outstanding Female Senior Award.

Peyton Berg

Peyton Berg, daughter of Derrick and Elizabeth Allen and the late Shawn Berg of Chatfield, Minn., is a psychology major. During her time at Saint Mary's, Peyton has been actively involved in Psychology Club, the Psychology Honor Society, and Student Senate. She was also a four-year member of the softball team and played one year of volleyball. She is a three-time MIAC All-Conference selection, a two-time Region All-Tournament Team selection, and was named to the Academic All-American Team. In addition, she completed two internships working with children and adolescents with mental health and neurodivergent needs. After graduation, Peyton plans to pursue a master's degree in mental health counseling with the goal of becoming a licensed mental health therapist.

Taryn Dornseif

Taryn Dornseif, daughter of Tim and Jennifer Dornseif of Somerset, Wis., is a psychology major with minors in business, health humanities, and global diversity and social justice. At Saint Mary's, Taryn has dedicated her time serving as chair of ambassadors in the Admissions Office and as vice president of media and communication on Student Senate. She is a member of the women's hockey team, Psi Chi Psychology Honor Society, Chi Alpha Sigma Honor Society for student-athletes, and Delta Epsilon Sigma Honor Society for academic excellence. Taryn has also served the community by volunteering with the Think Pink Color Run, Winona's Relay for Life, Minnesota Special Hockey, and the Winona Youth Hockey Association, and by working as a Cardinal Development Hockey Camp counselor during the summers. After graduation, she plans to attend graduate school to earn her Education Specialist degree in School Psychology.

Zoe Fink

Zoe Fink, daughter of Dan and Kari Fink of Stevens Point, Wis., is a double major in accounting and business intelligence and analytics with a minor in legal studies. At Saint Mary's, Zoe has served as vice president of Academic

Affairs and as a hall representative for Brother Leopold Hall and Residencia Santiago Miller on Student Senate. She was also an executive orientation leader for New Student Orientation. Zoe is president of the Pre-Law Society and a member of the Delta Mu Honor Society, Delta Epsilon Sigma Scholastic Honor Society, and Chi Alpha Sigma Honor Society. She has played on the softball team for four years, the basketball team for two years, and has competed in various intramural sports. Zoe has also worked as a lifeguard at the Jul Gernes Pool on campus. After graduation, she plans to attend law school and eventually become a corporate lawyer.

Elizabeth Pike

Elizabeth “Lizzie” Pike, daughter of Brian and Colleen Pike of Rochester, Minn., is an elementary education major with a minor in public relations and digital media. At Saint Mary’s, Lizzie has participated in Chi Alpha Sigma, the student-athlete honor society, and Student Senate for three years — most recently serving as vice president of administrative affairs for two years and previously as an at-large representative. She has also worked in the Admissions Office for three years as a front desk receptionist and for two years in the Student Success Center, served as a resident assistant in the Office of Residence Life, and participated in various intramural sports. Following graduation, Lizzie plans to be a third or fourth grade elementary school teacher.

Melanie Winzenburg

Melanie Winzenburg, daughter of Luke and Katie Winzenburg of Blooming Prairie, Minn., is a health sciences major in the pre-physician assistant (PA) program with a minor in chemistry. At Saint Mary’s, she has served as a resident assistant in the Office of Residence Life, a peer tutor, president of Sigma Alpha Iota (the Women’s Music Fraternity), co-president and treasurer of Future Health Professionals, and a two-year class representative on Student Senate. She has also been active in Concert Choir, Pep Band, and Liturgical Choir. Melanie performed as the female lead in last year’s spring musical, Glimpses of the Moon. She is a member of the Delta Epsilon Sigma National Honor Society. After graduation, Melanie plans to continue her training through the Mayo Clinic PA Program and pursue a career as a physician assistant in Pediatric Oncology.

PREVIOUS OUTSTANDING SENIORS

2025	Joel Tranel, Maggie Newhouse	1993	Thomas Cook, Jennifer Hurley
2024	Patrick Derleth, Riley Hall	1992	Steve Beaudry, Molly Guest
2023	William Sepsis, Catherine Pierpont	1991	Joseph Tadie, Amy Smith
2022	Trevor Paradise, Jordan Keely	1990	Christopher Higgins, Julie Carroll
2021	Kristopher Shepard, Kendall Archer	1989	James Chatto, Peggy Powell
2020	Ben Borash, Michele Remer	1988	Michael Majerus, Eileen Gibbons
2019	Max Champa, Bailey O'Hare	1987	Walter Jungbauer, Ann Christensen
2018	Daniel Olajonlu, Regina Bettag	1986	Gordon Hannon, Elizabeth Enderle
2017	Peter Hegland, Ena Moats	1985	Luke Osterhaus, Patricia Rice
2016	Mark Schumacher, Paige Nelles	1984	Phil Kluesner, Kirsten Almo
2015	Joseph Budin, Lauren Salonek	1983	Mark Steinke, Maureen Forsythe
2014	Miles Dunna, Amy Spitzmueller	1982	Stephen Glynn, Anne Broghammer
2013	Peter Borash, Constance Budin	1981	Paul Mulcahy, Patricia Leonard
2012	Michael Mockler, Regina Quandt	1980	Joseph Phillips, Maureen Milligan
2011	Sean Ohl, Hilary Ethen	1979	Louis McCoy, Kathleen Scherek
2010	David Dahlstrom, Mariana Sanchez	1978	Kevin Cushing, Linda Kuczma
2009	Jakub Szymanski, Emily Berg	1977	Robert Rettig, Jacinta Timmons, Andre Carlevato
2008	Kevin Black, Anastacia Sontag	1976	John Halpin, Mary Ann Gay
2007	Davey Warner, Sarah Bellingham	1975	Edward Lawson, Michelle Langenderfer
2006	Dominic Lawrence, Sara Vargason	1974	William Crimmins, Christina Prusank
2005	Liam O'Farrell, Ashley Dingels	1973	Tom Rodell, Mary Lucas
2004	Nathan Semsch, Jennifer Lawrence	1972	Robert Cern
2003	Nicolas Michaels, Elizabeth McDowell	1971	Jeff Ulanski
2002	Douglas Werner, Katie LaPlant	1970	Thomas Murray
2001	Nathan Albee, Ann Durley	1969	Tony Piscitiello
2000	Corey Sievers, Sarah Bayer	1968	Marty O'Sullivan
1999	Andrew Yori, Jennifer Paul		
1998	Jesse Murray, Kathryn Vandenberg		
1997	Trent Vorlicek, Sarah Jorgensen		
1996	Benjamin Murray, Elizabeth Kress		
1995	Brandon Sitzman, Julie Dahlheimer		
1994	Steven Snyder, Amy Kazlauskas		

ACADEMIC DRESS

The academic costume worn today originated in the Middle Ages, when gowns and hoods kept scholars and clerics warm. The distinctive gown served to set the student apart from his fellow citizens, giving birth to the expression “town and gown.” Until after the Civil War, students at most American universities wore caps and gowns daily. They varied in design until they were standardized by the American Intercollegiate Commission in 1894. At that time it was decided that all robes should be black: bachelor’s gowns to be made of worsted material with pointed sleeves; master’s gowns of silk with long, closed sleeves; doctor’s gowns of silk with longer sleeves and faced with black velvet from hem to neck and back. They also carry three velvet bands around each sleeve above the elbow. Hoods are made of the same materials as the gowns, the length varying with the degree. The lining of the hood identifies the university by its colors. The border of the hood indicates the academic discipline in which the degree is earned:

White: arts and letters, journalism

Scarlet: theology

Purple: law

Green: medicine

Dark blue: philosophy

Yellow: science

Brown: architecture, fine art

Pink: music

Salmon pink: public health

Lilac: dentistry

Orange: engineering

Olive: pharmacy

Light brown: business

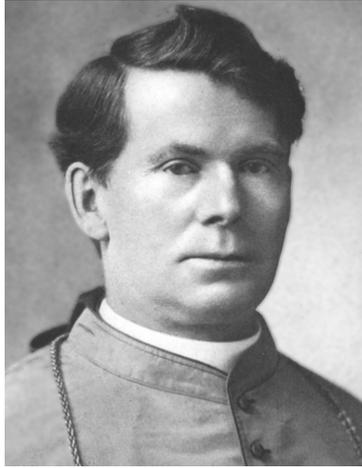
Lemon yellow: library science

Light blue: education

Peacock blue: international affairs

Citron yellow: social work

Celebrating our Founders ...



BISHOP PATRICK R. HEFFRON

Bishop Patrick R. Heffron, the second bishop of Winona, founded Saint Mary's College in 1912 to provide education for young men in the Southeastern Minnesota Diocese of Winona and surrounding areas. In its early years, the college operated as an academy and junior college, and in 1925 it became a four-year liberal arts college. Known for his strong and decisive leadership — as well as his dedication to education — Bishop Heffron also laid the cornerstone for Cotter High School in Winona and started Heffron High School in Rochester, Minn.



SAINT JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE

Saint Mary's University, as a Lasallian Catholic institution, traces its origins to Saint John Baptist de La Salle, a priest and educational innovator of 17th-century France. Born in 1651, De La Salle began a new system of Christian education which nurtured both mind and spirit. He believed that education was a means to a better life in this world and in the next. De La Salle introduced many of the classroom teaching methods considered standard practice today, and he is the founder of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. In 1950, Saint John Baptist de La Salle was named the patron of Christian educators. Today, the global network of more than 1,000 Lasallian educational institutions — 62 of which are Lasallian institutions of higher education — keeps that heritage alive in 79 countries, serving nearly 1 million students. A Lasallian Catholic education prepares graduates to live ethical lives of service and leadership and inspires in them — in the tradition of the De La Salle Christian Brothers — a profound reverence for all human life, a desire to protect the vulnerable, and a commitment to serve the common good.

THE PRESIDENTIAL SEAL

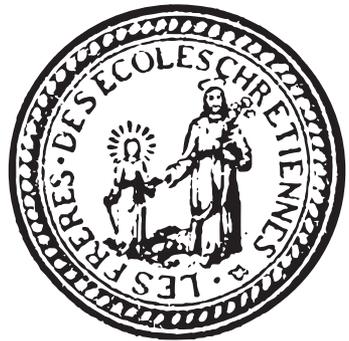
Used by the office of the president and board of trustees to indicate formal actions and declarations, the presidential identity visually upholds our most ceremonious operations such as degrees, recognition and achievement awards, and presidential and trustee documentation and letters.



Translated, the seal text reads: Sanctae (Saint) Mariae (Mary) Universitatis (University) Sigillum (Seal) Virtus (Virtue) et Scientia (and Knowledge). The graphic symbols used in the new branding include the book representing quality education, and the lamp representing the light of truth and illumination. The cross symbolizes faith in the presence of God. The eight-point star represents the light from on high that guides all we do. The five-point star represents our Lasallian Catholic values.

THE ORIGINAL SEAL OF THE INSTITUTE

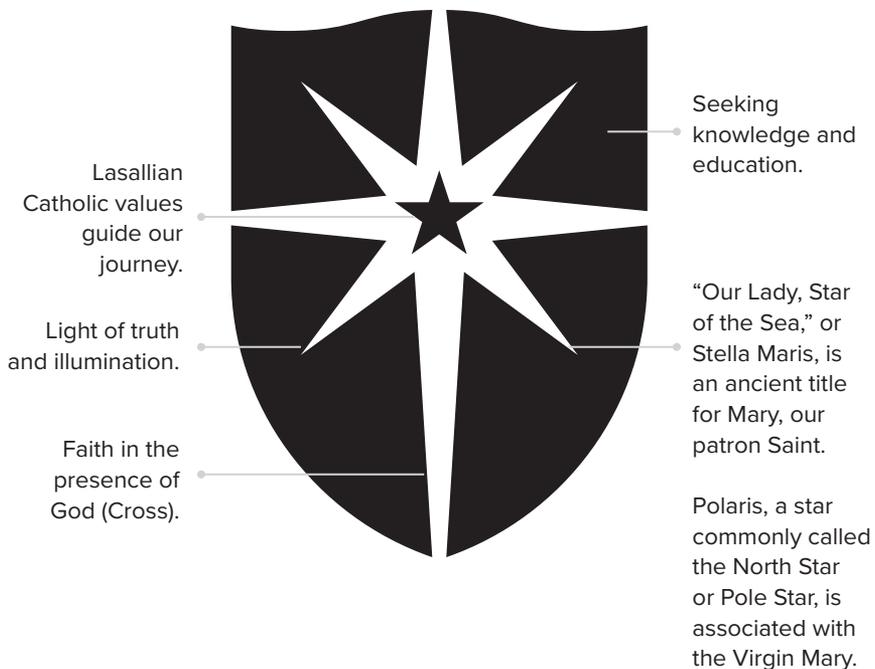
Seals have been used as unique identifiers to represent specific individuals and organizations for centuries. The original seal of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools shows Saint Joseph with a long-stemmed lily in his left hand, leading the child Jesus.



“The initial adoption of the image of Saint Joseph with the child Jesus reflected Saint John Baptist de La Salle’s great admiration for Saint Joseph, whom he saw as a perfect model for the Christian Brothers and their vocation,” says Brother George Van Grieken, FSC, Coordinator, Lasallian Resource Center.

While the official seal of the Institute changed in 1751, a contemporary version of the early seal is still used worldwide to identify the Institute, particularly the Brothers.

OUR LOGO TELLS THE SAINT MARY'S STORY



**Saint Mary's
University**
of MINNESOTA

The essence of Saint Mary's is found in the logo. Elements surround the key feature — the Lasallian Star. This is our northern star, and from it we navigate life with character and greater purpose. It functions as the foundational design of visual components from which all branches of the Saint Mary's architecture originate.

THE SCHOOL SONG

Alma Mater

For the community of Saint Mary's University past, present, and future

Patrick M. O'Shea



Hail Saint Ma - ry's, Al - ma Ma - ter!
Hail, Saint Ma - ry's, fount of wis - dom,
Hail, Saint Ma - ry's, shin - ing bea - con



Hail Saint Ma - ry's, Mo - ther true,
Nur - tur - er of heart and mind,
Of La - Salle's com - mu - ni - ty,



Ev - 'ry faith - ful son and daugh - ter
Strength - en us in thought and spir - it,
Send us out for - ev - er teach - ing



lifts this an - them now to you:
That in seek - ing we may find.
Love and faith and u - ni - ty.

(Refrain - all verses)



A - - ve, a - - ve,



a - ve Ma - ri - a!