

(On Alumni Day on April 29, 2017, celebrating the 50th Anniversary of his Rhet class, Joe Barile R'67 delivered the following speech to those assembled at the dinner reception. He wrote this with input from his class president, Pat McQuillan, who could not attend because of health reasons, and with the help and support from Fr. Larry Percell, and the editing and encouragement of his wife, Patricia.)

## **Our Seminary Class (1961-1973): Challenged by Change**

In 1961, 125 of us entered St. Joseph's College, the minor seminary in Mountain View, California. We were naive, conservative 14-year-olds exploring the possibility of becoming Roman Catholic diocesan priests. We were the last Freshman class to enter as pre-Vatican II seminarians. Vatican II (1962-1965) had a profound impact on us all.

As high school Sophomores our class made a concerted effort to end the "hazing" practices that we and other freshmen classes before us had to endure without much intervention by the faculty. Our class president Pat said he was proud to make newcomers feel welcomed and not "toughened" by initiation rites.

As Juniors we came under the much kinder influence of Fr. Albert Giaquinto who replaced the sterner Fr. Charles Dillon who was an extension of the pre-Vatican medieval years of rigid structure, discipline, and obedience.

In 1964, in our senior year, although we moved to the college wing, we were considered part of the high school system. For one, our sports team captains of old were resurrected as "commissioners" to lead sports program again. Fr. Gregoire was very supportive of Pat and our class in making these and other transitions.

We experienced many other changes which challenged us to assume more personal responsibility. Students had cars on campus, Gregorian chant shared the stage with folk singers and rock and roll groups, Fr. Ron Choccol's philosophy class encouraged questioning, and Fr. Eugene Boyle's Social Justice seminar's report made the front page of the *SF Chronicle*, and would launch several students into state politics. Challenged by our new freedom to grow and foster personal responsibility, many of us struggled to adjust to that freedom. Some were enthralled, others were disappointed, but somehow most of us forged on.

In 1967 our class ended its 6 year Minor Seminary experience. We did not learn until 1968 that we were to become the last class to officially graduate as a "Rhet" class as the seminary went to a 4-4-4 system: four years of high school, four years of college, and four years of theology.

In our junior year our class, as expected, entered St. Patrick's in Menlo Park as "first philosophers," but in our senior year the faculty wanted us to return to St. Joe's in

Mountain View to be one with the college there. Many of us objected; and, surprisingly, a compromise was reached, allowing our class the choice of either staying at St. Joe's or St. Pats, and taking classes on both campuses. We ourselves were literally and figuratively divided on this issue--another first and last in the history of St. Joe's and St. Pat's.

In 1969, after eight years from when many of us first entered the seminary, we graduated from college. At that juncture many of us left the seminary to follow what some call "the priesthood of the laity:" serving those we encountered with the compassion, the respect, and the competency we learned at home and in the seminary. Meanwhile other classmates stayed on, 10-12 of whom were ordained in 1973. Of those ordained, Rich Garcia would become a bishop living in the spirit of Pope Francis, and others would lead remarkable lives in parishes, and/or teaching in schools or universities. After the death of his wife Joan in the 30th year of their marriage Larry Percell would re-enter the seminary and be ordained. Phil Flowers would become a deacon after his career at IBM.

Even in the turbulent times of the 1960's, most of us would find something to hold sacred in our time at St. Joseph's College and/or St. Patrick's Seminary: spiritual growth, liberal education, mentorship, and/or friendships. To those who helped us find these gifts, the Sulpician priests or other educators to whom we could relate, we are very grateful. We are also thankful to the Alumni Association for allowing us to come together here at St. Patrick's to renew old friendships and to celebrate the times we shared then and now. Reading and re-reading the 40 individual autobiographical sketches on our class website, I am so proud of our class and what they have done with their lives, and that most are so thankful for the experiences we had in the seminary which helped us grow from boys of dreams to men of character.

Thank you. Father Larry will now introduce our class.