Note from the Archivist

Hello Mount Community,

As our fall semester draws to a close, the Archives has remained very busy! In the issue, you will read about new exciting acquisitions to our collection, reflections from our interns, and updates on numerous archival happenings.

I personally have also been busy. On December 16th, I will formally graduate from Clarion University with my MS in Information and Library Science! However, my studies are not over. In January, I will begin the PhD in Higher Education Leadership program at Concordia University Chicago. Designed for individuals already working in higher ed, the program is offered fully online, which will allow me to continue my work at the Mount while furthering my knowledge in the classroom. I am excited to take this next step and use my education to better serve the greater Mount community.

I wish you all a blessed Advent season! May all of our hearts know the peace and joy that is the gift and miracle of Christ’s birth. I look forward to working with you in the new year.

Jessica Whitmore
New Acquisitions!

On November 15th, the Mount Archives welcomed Fr. Richard Gallagher, S’72. Fr. Gallagher generously donated a matching chalice and paten, as well as a first-edition copy of Monks Pond by Thomas Merton.

This chalice originally belonged to Fr. James Leslie Ronan, who graduated from the Seminary in 1959. The paten matches the chalice, and both are painted with lapis lazuli. These items were bequeathed to Fr. Gallagher by Fr. Ronan’s sister, Gertrude.

The stem of the chalice is carved from a single piece of ivory to represent the four saints: Luke the Evangelist, Mary Magdalene holding the jar of alabaster oil, Gertrude’s devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and St. John Vianney, Patron of Parish Priests. The base is inscribed: “James Leslie Ronan / Ordained Priest / May 23, 1959 / From Mother and Father and Gertrude.”

Fr. Gallagher also generously donated a copy of Monks Pond. In the words of Fr. Gallagher:

“‘Monks Pond’ is a little magazine that was compiled and edited by Thomas Merton in the last year of his life. How I got a “First Issue” is about sitting in the front row as a seminarian in Professor Daniel Walsh’s philosophy lecture. He was a life-long educator and one of the most influential teachers and friends of Merton. In fact, he left his teaching position at Columbia University to follow Merton to Gethsemane Abbey, Kentucky. He also gave lectures to us seminarians at [Mount] St. Mary’s College nearby. At times, he would spend the last ten minutes of class reminiscing about his esteemed friend who was still alive but died a few month later, on Dec. 10, 1968. One day Professor Dan brought in 7 to 10 copies of the first issue of ‘Monks Pond.’ Only about one hundred fifty had been printed. I quickly raised my hand and got the above. It became a sigh post of my journey to the priesthood.”

All three pieces are currently on display in the Archives Study Room.
Reflections from the Archives Interns

By Ronnie Georgieff, C’18

This semester, I was fortunate to work in Mount St. Mary’s Rhoads Memorial Archives as an intern. As a senior who wishes to pursue a career as an archivist, this internship was very beneficial to me. It helped me learn more about the functions of an archive and the daily tasks that an archivist preforms. I have gained a better understanding of the Mount’s history, specifically the history of the ‘National Shrine Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes.’ This experience has also been very useful and helpful because I have worked on two major History research projects this semester. Each centered on a different aspect of the Grotto and my familiarity with the collection certainly helped my research.

As a processing intern, I worked with the ‘Grotto Files.’ My responsibilities included sorting and arranging Monsignor Hugh J. Phillips’ correspondence within a series of boxes and folders by month and year. Processing a collection categorizes information for future researchers in an efficient and well-organized manner. I started my internship where another student had left off, and it is truly fascinating to see all of the work that has been put into processing this collection. The collection is not yet completed but I have helped categorize the information all the way up to December 1980.

Over the course of this internship, I have been able to see the Grotto through Monsignor Phillips’ eyes. With him, I have watched his work unfold, seen the lives he touched, and seen the individuals who helped build and shape the Grotto. This hands-on experience has helped me to grow, while learning more about my mountain home. This internship has inspired me to continue to learn and pursue a career as an archivist.
By Thomas Baker, C’18

Working in the Archives for the past semester has been an exciting experience. It has been exciting to work with Fr. John DuBois’ letters. Reading and translating his letters gave me an insight into the life of Fr. DuBois that most Mount students and community members don’t get to see. Even his handwriting expresses something of his style and the way he wrote. It was like stepping into the early 1800s, reliving the foundation of the Mount. Outside of translating Fr. DuBois letters, it has been fun working with Jess on other projects. I helped to display the centennial priestly vestments. It was a great honor to handle the vestments commemorating our University’s centennial anniversary. Watching the different films in the Archives has been one of the most exciting projects I’ve been able to work on. I watched several videos showing the Mount all the way from the late 1970s to the early 2000s. The most exciting video I got to watch was a video of Mother Theresa’s visit to the Mount and her speech to the Mount community in Memorial Gym! That was very exciting to watch and listen to an exclusive video of St. Mother Theresa walking and talking on the same campus I’m blessed to call my home! I have learned more about the Mount’s history through working with the different artifacts in the Archives, reliving the Mount’s history and meeting the many people who have built the Mount community over the years. History definitely came alive as I encountered the story of the Mount through the artifacts and letters left behind by the men and women who crafted this mountain home. I am thankful to have worked with Jess and Ronnie in the Archives this past semester!
Archival Updates

On October 22, Archivist Jessica Whitmore presented at the 2017 Archives Fair at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History. Her presentation was titled: “Preserving the Story of the Artist: The John La Farge Collection at Mount St. Mary’s University.” The event was very successful, and she received accolades from the staff of both the Smithsonian and the National Archives.

In coordination with the Inauguration of President Tranior, Archivist Jessica Whitmore curated the exhibit: A Presidential Affair: Artifacts of the Presidents of the University and the Nation. The exhibit was available during the evening of Sunday, October 23 through the Inauguration ceremony on Monday, October 24. Whitmore is seen here with archives interns Ronnie Georgieff and Thomas Baker.
On November 3rd, Charles L. Kuhn officially retired as Dean of the Library after six years of service to the Mount. Under Chuck’s tenure, the lower level of Phillips Library was renovated to add compact shelving and the current archives study room. This massive project also included moving the archives from its then storage location on the fourth floor of Bradley Hall to its new permanent home. We are thankful for Chuck’s advocacy and work for the archives, and we wish him a very happy retirement!