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*MEDIA ADVISORY*

SAINT CHARLES BORROMEO SEMINARY
ANNOUNCES CREATION OF THE JOHN CARDINAL FOLEY CHAIR OF HOMILETICS AND SOCIAL COMMUNICATIONS

New seminary position to advance theological education in social media

PHILADELPHIA – Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary in Philadelphia announces the creation of The John Cardinal Foley Chair of Homiletics and Social Communications. This faculty position represents the only one of its kind in seminary or university education. Its mission is to promote the work of priestly formation, ecclesial participation and professional dialogue in the realm of mass media and social communications.

In presenting this new venture, Most Reverend Timothy C. Senior, rector of the seminary, explains how “this endowed chair not only honors one of our own but also signals to the next generation of priests their need to be more fully and more faithfully engaged in social communications.”

“Whether in church or online,” the bishop adds, “we all need to learn how to thrive in this new world so as to fulfill our mission of bringing Christ to those around us.”

For more than twenty-three years, Philadelphia native John Cardinal Foley served as President of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications in the Vatican. Popularly known as “the voice of Christmas” for translating the broadcast of the papal midnight Mass, Cardinal Foley guided the Church’s reflection and developed its policies concerning the ethical and cultural influences of all communications technologies.

Archbishop Claudio Maria Celli, current president of the Council, praised Cardinal Foley’s significant contribution saying, “He promoted a vital internal dialogue within the Church on these issues, and also in broader international contexts, by calling on all communicators to seek for the highest and most noble standards of their profession.”
The inaugural appointment to the Chair is the Reverend Thomas Dailey. A religious-priest in the Oblates of Saint Francis de Sales (the patron saint of journalists and Catholic writers), Fr. Dailey founded the Salesian Center for Faith and Culture at DeSales University in Center Valley, PA. He sees this new position as a unique opportunity to carry on the mutual integration of theology and communications.

“Cardinal Foley had a great devotion to Saint Francis de Sales,” says Fr. Dailey, “and both of them saw the need for engaging new media in the work of the Church.”

To continue the legacy of his work, the John Cardinal Foley Chair will explore the theological dimensions of the world of social communications through lectures, courses and conferences. The new technologies offer effective means by which evangelization can take place, such as web sites, mobile applications and social networking platforms; however, the Chair’s primary focus is the culture of communications. Today’s media engages in a new way of thought and generates new forms of social relationships; consequently, the Church can and must enter into this new world as the guardian and promoter of what it means to be who we are as human persons and faithful believers.

“Saint Francis de Sales was renowned for his apologetics,” Fr. Dailey reminds us, “which he communicated through pamphlets and letters and books that were widely distributed with the aid of the then newly-invented printing press. Cardinal Foley made use of today’s means to teach professionals and the general public about the important ethical aspects of communications media.”

Fr. Dailey understands that, although social media is new, the message of salvation remains the same. “Our task today is to see this digital world in the light of faith and to harness its potential as a means for producing a spiritual transformation.”

Fr. Dailey will deliver the inaugural John Cardinal Foley Chair lecture at Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary on January 27, 2014. “Beauty, Truth and Goodness in Person” will examine the topic of evangelization and social communications as modeled by Pope Francis. Attendance is free and open to the public.

For more information about the John Cardinal Foley Chair or to contribute to the Chair’s endowment, visit Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary at www.scs.edu or contact Fr. Dailey at (610) 785-6271.

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