



The Ann Ida Gannon, BVM,  
Center for Women and Leadership

January, 2011

Dear Friends of Mundelein College and the Gannon Center:

In the midst of a very cold winter, it is quite heart-warming to think of all of you with gratitude. Your support, interest and encouragement help us to discover and nurture leadership through the work of the Gannon Center. In many ways this Christmas and Epiphany Season has resembled Saki's beautifully crafted short story, *The Gift of the Magi*. Like the husband and wife in that story, you, too, have shown your love of God and others through self-less giving. Here, we pause in gratitude and wonder.

We also pause in gratitude and wonder at the many people who have helped us extend and engage in leadership development. Our work with EVOKE has highlighted women in leadership and service. Our book club discussion of Tema Costa's book, *Farmer Jane*, heightened our awareness of the issues surrounding sustainable agriculture. This was followed by the Gannon Scholars' hosting of the tenth sustainable dinner and discussion in Piper Hall.

In November, two of our Gannon Scholars, Annemarie Barrett and Betsy Redelman joined with other Loyola students in a Vigil for Peace at Fort Benning, Georgia. I am sure that as you read Annemarie's reflection, you will be moved by her intense dedication to peace-making.

In December, we were able to celebrate the opening of the Gannon Collection at the Newberry Library with Sister Ann Ida Gannon. And then, Advent Vespers and a Christmas Reception with Mundelein and Gannon Friends gave us an opportunity to usher in the Christmas Season and remember our commitment to those at Sarah's Circle.

Our spring line-up of activities looks very inspiring. Please visit our web-site (<http://www.luc.edu/gannon>) to find out more about our symposium, *Women Shaping the Church*, on February 10, 2011 and our 2011 Ann Baum Women and Leadership Lecture on March 24, 2011.

Blessings and peace to you and those you love.



Janet Sisler

Director, Gannon Center

# Telling HerStory with EVOKE

**Telling HerStory**, co-sponsored with EVOKE, highlights women in leadership positions at Loyola University during a series of monthly luncheons. These events feature casual conversation and the inspiring life stories of the remarkable women in our community. This initiative has been hugely successful, and we are excited to continue with it next semester. This semester's featured speakers have included Janet Sisler, Director of the Gannon Center; Marian Allen Claffey, Ph.D., Assistant Provost; and Susan Ross, Ph.D., Chair, Theology Department.



*Gannon Center for Women and Leadership Director, Janet Sisler, gives a heartwarming story to begin the series during the first Telling HerStory in September.*

*Susan A. Ross, Ph.D. captivates an audience of students, faculty, and staff with HerStory during the November event. November's Telling HerStory took place during Loyola's Hunger Week. Guests enjoyed a simple meal of soup and bread at this event.*



*Marian Claffey, Ph.D. Speaks at The October Telling HerStory in Piper Hall.*

## The Sustainable Dinner ↻



[THE GANNON SCHOLARS AND THE GANNON CENTER HELD A SUSTAINABLE DINNER AND DISCUSSION OPEN TO ALL STUDENTS FACULTY AND STAFF ON NOVEMBER 8<sup>TH</sup>. ]



The event was extremely successful with over 80 in attendance! The Sustainable Dinner increased awareness about taking on a long-term view on how our actions affect nature and future generations and what it means to eat sustainably. The Sustainable Dinner was an initiative created to foster a conversation based on how students can make their own sustainable contributions in eating and other ways throughout the holidays and in the future.

## Farmer Jane Book Club & Discussion

Participants read Terma Costa's *Farmer Jane: Women Changing the Way We Eat* and attended two meetings in October and November to discuss the book and how its meaning can be put into action. The book and discussion was focused on sustainable eating, addressing different types of new energy and information on starting a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture). Books were provided to any students that wishing to take part in the discussion.

[FARMER JANE PROFILES THIRTY WOMEN IN THE SUSTAINABLE FOOD INDUSTRY, DESCRIBING THEIR AGRICULTURE AND BUSINESS MODELS AND ILLUSTRATING THE AMAZING CHANGES THEY ARE MAKING IN HOW WE CONNECT WITH FOOD.]



# Christmas at the Mansion

On December 4, 2010, Mundelein Alumni Association and the Gannon Center held an open house in Piper hall with Vespers at 5:15 and a reception following in Mundelein Auditorium. All alumni and friends were invited to participate in this festive event. Donations for Sarah's Circle, an all women's shelter in Chicago, were collected.

Both locations were decorated beautifully for the Holiday Season and alumni and Gannon Scholars joined together in celebration. The event was a perfect way to get into the Holiday spirit while both greeting old friends, and making new ones.

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A group of Mundelein Alumnae gathers and discusses their time at the College during Holiday Vespers in Piper Hall.



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Family of a Mundelein Alumna visits during the Holiday reception in Mundelein Auditorium



## A Gannon Scholar's Reflection: Annemarie Barrett

*My name is Annemarie Barrett and I am a twenty-one year old junior undergraduate student and Gannon Scholar at Loyola University Chicago. I am pursuing a major in Communication Studies with a concentration in Social Justice Communication, as well as minors in Political Science, Spanish and Peace Studies.*



**“You can't claim you're for peace if you're not willing to disturb it.” –Bill Maher**

I cannot claim I am for peace if I am not willing to disturb it. My humanity is clouded and restricted by the systems of injustice in which I participate. My faith is dispensable in the

privilege that I hold close. My love is confounded by my fear.

This November I traveled to Columbus, Georgia to call for the closure of the School of the Americas now renamed the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation. I joined a community of people, thousands of people, outside the gates of Fort Benning in Columbus. I traveled there as a student, to join other students, as a Catholic, to join other faith-filled people, as a United States resident, to join my fellow citizens, as a human, to come together in community. I gathered with that community to withdraw my consent from the practices of the School of the Americas (SOA). As a student, a Catholic, a citizen, and a human, I cannot deny what I have learned in the classroom, in church, from our government and in my heart.

This was not my first journey to Columbus. In the fall of 2006, I was introduced to the SOA. When my friend first mentioned the school, I had never heard of it, never knew the history of the massacres, and knew nothing of the annual vigil in Columbus. What I did have was a desire to learn. My friend invited me to travel with my high school to the vigil; I was eager to learn more. I began to read about the history of the school. I read about the village of El Mozote. On December 11, 1981 in El Salvador, over 700 people were massacred in the village of El Mozote. Over 700 people. No, my sixteen-year-old mind thought, no that could not be. Over 700 people? Women and children? Marta Lilian Claros was only three years old, her father, Domingo Claros, only twenty-nine, when they were both murdered. It then became clear that, yes, Marta was only three years old, and no, El Mozote was not a special case. No, this destruction was in fact systemic. This systemic

destruction protects the economic and political power in Latin America, and thus U.S. interests in Latin America, by targeting human rights defenders and their communities. And the source of that system? Our U.S. tax dollars.

In the massacre at El Mozote, ten of the twelve soldiers of the Atlacatl Battalion responsible for the murders were cited as graduates of the School of the Americas. That school is on our soil. That U.S. Army training school has trained over 60,000 soldiers from Latin America with funding from our tax dollars. However, I did not understand my complicity until I arrived at the gates outside Fort Benning, where the School of the Americas is located. On the Sunday of my first weekend at the vigil, which has been sponsored by an organization called SOA Watch every year since 1990, I listened to the names of those families, those children, parents and grandparents killed by the graduates of the SOA. Throughout the solemn funeral procession, I listened to those names for over two hours. We marched with crosses and held the names of those victims in our hearts and resurrected their lives with our voices. With each name called, my mind expanded, my heart opened and my complicity sank deeper.

After that first experience at the vigil, each year I have continued to make the journey to the gates of Fort Benning. And each year, my experience has evolved. I traveled first with my high school, then with Veterans for Peace the following year, then with my fellow students at Loyola University Chicago. Each year I have been challenged in a new way. My community has evolved, as well as the faith and love in my heart.

This year, yet again, I was challenged in a new way. In the twentieth year of the vigil, I had to ask myself, how would our voices be heard?

Were our refrains becoming comfortable? Was our presence becoming routine? I was invited to consider my participation in the vigil. Would I march in the solemn funeral procession on Sunday? Or would I risk arrest and participate in the opportunity for direct action on Saturday? These were not easy questions. There were no easy answers.

Not only was this the twentieth year of the vigil, but this November it was also undergoing a significant restructuring. Each time I have traveled to Columbus, the events of the weekend have been co-hosted by SOA Watch and the Ignatian Solidarity Network. The two have worked together to gather the masses from Jesuit institutions as well as communities of faith outside of the Jesuit tradition. Personally, my participation in the vigil has been greatly influenced by the Jesuit tradition. The opportunity to gather for mass at the Ignatian Family Teach-In in Columbus connected my faith with social justice. That connection resonated with me for the first time in Georgia, with the Ignatian family. Yet this year, the Ignatian Family Teach-In had moved to Washington D.C. and chose to focus on legislative action to close the SOA. So I too moved to Washington D.C., I too engaged in legislative action. I dialogued with legislative staff about the School of the Americas and immigration reform. I walked away feeling competent and grateful for a new perspective. I now knew more about what it meant to work within the political system. Yet I also walked away with many questions. The legislative staff told me that, while their legislator firmly believed in these issues and shared our passion for reformation, the current "political climate" simply would not allow for the change we sought. Therefore I left Washington D.C. with a

new challenge, a new question, how do I contribute to that “political climate”?

The logistics were all set out for me. The vigil would take place for the twentieth year, outside the gates of Fort Benning. The number of people gathered may be significantly less than in years past due to restructuring. The solemn funeral procession would take place on Sunday morning. There would be an opportunity for direct action on Saturday, with the opportunity to risk arrest and partake in civil disobedience. Within all of these details I asked myself, what was in my heart? Where was my faith? Where was God calling me? The questions of the proper “political climate” followed me on my journey as well. How can I live in a “political climate” that allows for injustice to continue? How can I depend upon politicians who don’t have the courage to speak out during an unfavorable “political climate”? And again, how do I contribute to that “political climate”?

*I have wrestled for a while with the call to civil disobedience.* I have had to confront great fears related to risking arrest. I have had to redefine many deep seeded understandings of what it means to follow rules and do the right thing. Yet, I have also struggled deeply with my consent to injustice. The suffering caused by the policies, positions and power that I hold as a U.S. citizen overwhelms me. I cannot sit forever in my fears and also live with inaction. Traveling to the vigil this year, I was called to confront those fears. When I felt most vulnerable and alone, I turned to my community of friends and fellow activists for support. I found strength in that community. I realized that I was not acting alone, but acting with the solidarity of those closest to me. And so I decided to raise my voice to affect that “political climate” in a different way.

I chose to nonviolently disrupt the system that keeps us within our permitted protest area every year, and with it keeps our collective voice and message within a permitted area, a safe distance from the media and the general population. I have utilized opportunities for legislative action. Yet the school has not been closed, in fact, the bill calling for its closure has not yet moved beyond the House of Representatives. For twenty years the movement to close the SOA has gathered at the vigil and for much longer, graduates of the school have perpetrated massacres and assassinations against the innocent civilians in their own countries. So this year, I chose to risk arrest and help hold a banner that read, “Stop: This is the End of the Road for the SOA”, while blocking traffic on Victory Dr., a highway in Columbus near Fort Benning and the location of the annual vigil. I chose to confront my fears in community with fellow activists and friends. I chose to trust in God, and act on my faith knowing that the consequences would not be convenient.

And they were not convenient. I was arrested and held in the Muscogee County jail overnight. Soon after my arrest, I was joined by a group of activists and journalists that had been unlawfully arrested by the police. These individuals had not participated in civil disobedience, but were picked up on the way back to their cars or while taking photos of the event. I received four charges, two city charges and two state charges. I was fined for each of the city charges and my state charges are pending; I was released on bond. In court, an undercover cop testified against me and detailed my involvement in the civil disobedience because she had infiltrated our nonviolent direct action. In retelling these stories, it sounds surreal. But in the cold of the

cellblock and the chaos of the court proceedings, which found all but one of those arrested guilty, I felt and now remember how real it is.

In the words of Daniel Berrigan I have found great challenge and great comfort, "*...it is unheard of that good men and women should suffer injustice or families be sundered or good repute be lost-because of this we cry peace and cry peace, and there is no peace.*" I am challenged to reclaim what it means to be a good woman, and accept the sacrifices and fears that accompany standing for justice. My fears of civil disobedience were not soothed in jail. I was even more afraid when at the mercy of the judge than I was in preparation. However, in that moment, standing in his courtroom, I believe the two of us shared our fear. It was clear that the police in Columbus as well as the judge in the Muscogee County courtroom wanted to send a message through us. They sent a warning to the movement to close the School of the Americas that we must not step out of line; we must not take our voices and our message outside of the permitted area.

In that warning I felt their fear. I learned that our voices hold power, the power to challenge the systems that perpetuate injustice and violence. The School of the Americas is just one element of the systemic injustices perpetuated by our U.S. military and government power. I felt the power of those systems, in the holding cell, the cellblock, the courtroom; and I was afraid. Then I remembered that I was not acting alone, we had the support of a strong community and a steadfast movement. The police and the government also know our power, our voice, our spirit; and in the warning they sent, they exposed their fear of any

challenge to the power of their systems. And from that fear we allowed barriers to be built between us. I withdrew, stayed quiet, looked down. The guards and the judge looked past me, stayed distant, didn't listen. Our systems, our power, our fear, we shared. And these barriers are as impermeable as we allow them to be. If we fear each other, we sacrifice the strength in our love. That love, however, is more powerful than that fear, much more powerful than our barriers. At the School of the Americas vigil this year, I found hope, knowing that we did not act with fear, but with God, in community, we acted with love.

-- Annemarie Barrett, *Junior Gannon Scholar*

## Important Upcoming Events

### **Shaping the Church: A Conversation with Women Leaders on the Common Good**

1:00pm LSC, Information Commons, 4th Floor  
Thursday, February 10

Register at:

<http://quest.cvent.com/d/0dqgzd>

### **Spring Telling HerStory Series**

noon- 1PM McCormick Lounge LSC  
Thursday, February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2011  
Monday, February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2011  
Wednesday, April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2011

### **The Ann F. Baum Women and Leadership Speaker Series**

7pm Mundelein Auditorium LSC  
Thursday, March 24<sup>th</sup>

*A comprehensive list of all events and details is listed on our website*

[http://luc.edu/gannon/Spring\\_2011\\_Events.shtml](http://luc.edu/gannon/Spring_2011_Events.shtml)