

A New Trial for Our Generation

The Spring 2003 semester began with great concerns on the campus and around the world over the failure of Iraq to verify compliance with U.N. resolutions and divisions among Western allies about how to respond to that situation. Most European countries argued for the continuation of inspections by the U.N. to assure that there were no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. The U.S. with Britain, Spain and a few other allies prepared for armed intervention, arguing that the inspections had not worked. St. Francis students joined in the debate in various classroom discussions, in articles in *The Voice*, and through special lectures presented by various student clubs and organizations. Many important issues arose during these months, including the meaning of a just war, its criteria and how these did or did not apply to the Iraqi situation. At St. Francis and across the globe thoughtful people questioned the long-term implications of a pre-emptive first strike policy. In the end, former allies distanced themselves from the U.S. and Britain. Eventually, on March 19, American and coalition forces invaded Iraq and "Operation Iraqi Freedom" began.

Once again the events were discussed in classrooms and in *The Voice*. One student and eight family members of the college community were brought into active service. Their names were posted by Campus Ministry and they were remembered in prayers, as were the innocent Iraqi families caught in the conflict. The Political Science Club placed boxes around the campus to collect needed supplies and show support for the troops. The Arab-American Society hosted a film and lecture on the Palestinian problem and the effects of the war on the Iraqi people. Students, faculty and staff were all sensitive and respectful of the different perspectives from which various groups and people viewed the conflict, its underlying causes and potential effects. The college community, in the spirit of its namesake, St. Francis, shared in common a hope that peace would prevail.

The hostilities subsided around Easter, shortly after the Hussein government was toppled. The college community continues to study the war, its causes, effects and related problems in the mid-East. In doing so, we commit ourselves to denouncing terrorism and violence in the quest for peace. At St. Francis we experience a community of brotherhood and sisterhood created with love, faith and care among culturally diverse people. We look and work toward the construction of such a community globally, built on truth and justice in the cause of an enduring peace.

Brother Thomas Grady
Campus Ministry

In Memoriam Brother Austin Gill, O.S.F.

Shortly after the 2003 Commencement, the St. Francis College community was shocked by the sad news of the sudden death of Brother Austin Gill on June 25. At that time, Brother Austin was serving as Chairman of the English Department, in which he had taught for thirty-seven years.



An alumnus of St. Francis, Class of '62, Brother Austin was born in New York on July 23, 1935 of parents who had immigrated to the United States from Ireland. He graduated from St. Francis Preparatory School in Brooklyn, and entered the Franciscan Brothers in 1954. For forty-nine years Brother Austin lived as a prayerful, humble, dedicated follower of St. Francis of Assisi. He loved teaching and was personally interested in helping his students succeed. He is known as a quiet man with a gentle Irish wit and a generous heart.

Brother Austin completed his Master of Arts degree at St. John's University and also did graduate study at New York University and Post-Masters work at the University of Ireland in Dublin. His special interest was Irish Literature, particularly the works of James Joyce.

For many years Brother Austin was Moderator of the Troupers, the college's drama club. He enjoyed working with the directors and student-actors on the production of scores of memorable plays during his tenure with the Troupers. The St. Francis students recognized his contributions by presenting him with the SGA Teacher of the Year Award in 1976, the Outstanding Faculty Member Award in 1985 and again in 1998, honorary membership in the Duns Scotus Honor Society in 1985 and the Distinguished Faculty Award in 1987.

Services were held for Brother Austin in the college on June 26 and 27, followed by a Funeral Mass in St. Charles' Church in Brooklyn Heights on June 27. He is survived by two brothers and a sister: Rev. William Gill, Brother Edwin Gill, O.S.F. and Sister Elizabeth Gill, O.P.

St. Francis College is thankful for the many years we had Brother Austin as part of our community. May he rest in peace!

Brother Thomas Grady
Campus Ministry

