



GODDARD TALK

THE GODDARD CHAPEL NEWSLETTER
Tufts University

Volume 1, Issue 1

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From The Desk of The Chaplain

Volume 1, Issue 1 is very exciting. This is the first ever issue of "Goddard Talk," the newsletter of Goddard Chapel, for the Friends of Goddard Chapel Society. This issue is dedicated to the wonderful and humor-filled talk given by Reverend Professor Peter Gomes, Minister of the Memorial Church at Harvard, on the occasion of the rededication of Goddard Chapel on March 13, 2003. Read and enjoy one of the great orators in the U. S. reflect on sacred space. Also, check out the Chaplaincy website to see more pictures of the event and the chapel: <http://www.tufts.edu/chaplaincy/>

Now that Goddard Chapel is renovated, it is time for everyone to enjoy it. Do stop in any time you are on The Hill. I

would love to give you an escorted tour. One new program that I am very pleased to announce is the "Renewal of Wedding Vows." Every first Saturday of the month starting in July, from 9 A. M. till noon, will be set aside for this new offering. Any couple who would like to renew their marriage vows can now do so in beautiful Goddard Chapel. Please call the Office of University Chaplain at (617) 627-3427 to get more information.

Finally, Goddard Chapel is beautiful but there are still many projects to complete. The Friends of Goddard Chapel Society is being launched to help support the programming of the Office of University Chaplain and continue to improve Goddard Chapel. More information on the

Friends of Goddard Chapel Society can be found at the end of this newsletter.

Pax et Lux,

Rev. David M. O'Leary

S.T.L., Ph.D. ♡



Reverend Professor Peter Gomes at
Goddard Chapel Rededication

Reverend Peter J. Gomes, Harvard, Russell Lectureship Recipient at Rededication Ceremony

"I am flattered, of course, by the bestowal of the Russell Lectureship, and I will try to do justice to the distinction it confers on me however unworthily. And knowing how these 19th century lectures went, especially with an audience under compulsion, doubtless here, I propose to lecture for an hour. I don't want you to think that we

have lost our will or stamina in the trade, and I'll certainly not be outdone by my deceased predecessors.

But a word or two before I launch into what I would like to say under the auspices of this distinguished lectureship. I've been doing my job as university preacher at Harvard

now for a long time. I came there in 1970 and assumed my present responsibilities in 1974. Those of you who do the math will figure out that I am entering upon my thirtieth year of service. Somebody said, 'Oh, being in that job so long, you must know where all the bodies are buried.'

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Rededication Ceremony

Well, of course, I do. I buried most of them. And there are just a few more to go.

When David O'Leary came to see me and to tell me that he had been appointed to the Office of Chaplain of Tufts University with all that that entailed, I offered him a collegial, warm arm of sympathy. Because no one, I yield to no one, no one knows more than I, both the joys and burdens of this particular office and the expectations that attach to it. Our job description in some sense could be described as "vividly vague." Everybody has a sense of what it is we're supposed to do, because what it is we're supposed to do, we're supposed to do for them. And thus, it becomes an exercise in the juggling of priorities and concerns and interests. So the office of college chaplain is a great and splendid one, and I was pleased, early on, to welcome your chaplain into this strange and very peculiar fraternity. But one of the benefits of this office is that we get to occupy, usually, the most splendid geography on the campus. For any who have been at Harvard know that I spend most of my time in the Memorial Church—that marvelously subtle building so hard to notice in the middle of Harvard Yard—with its tall spire someone once said "pure Emily Dickinson," and with its large, sturdy, dark columns "pure Mae West."

Here on this hill, the Chaplain and Chaplaincy occupy one of the most conspicuous buildings on the campus. You couldn't hide this place if you tried. And I suspect there might be some among you who are not here tonight who would like to try to hide the chapel. But here it is—its cloister walk, its great windows, its great bulk, and its great tower. All of this suggests that when this building was given to Tufts by Mary Goddard and entered into the present glory that we see it in in 1882, that a chapel was meant to be the element that bound together all of the virtues and all of the values that a liberal arts college worthy of a name aspired to. Every college needed two things; they needed a library and they needed a chapel. The two were not meant to cancel one another out. They were meant to represent the two values to which the institu-

tion was dedicated—the life of the mind and the life of the spirit. So this building was a sign of Tufts' both institutional maturity and ambition. No longer would it be sufficient to gather in an academic room to hold daily prayers and carry out the religious services of the college; now there would be a dedicated building sorted from all of the other buildings and set aside for a sacred purpose.

Now I know all about parietals and I know a good deal about mandatory chapel because, as your President indicated, I graduated from college before 1969. It is a frightening thing when I discover that I am older than the presidents of most of the colleges with which I deal nowadays, including my own. It reminds me, however, that these buildings, these sacred spaces, were not always regarded as benign in the eyes of those of us who were meant to occupy them.

When I was an undergraduate at Bates College we, too, had mandatory chapel—Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at nine o'clock. Classes at Bates College began at eight o'clock, and at 8:55 the bell rang and all the classes were dismissed and you went to your assigned seat in chapel. When you were a freshman, you were assigned alphabetically at the back and as you progressed you moved en masse all the way up to when you were a senior you sat in the front. It was Gomes, Guggens, Gudlak for four years. We became fast friends. And our friendship has continued over all these years because it was cemented, as it were, in the adversities of daily chapel. It is a miracle to me that I believe anything and can say anything and would willingly say anything in a church considering what I sat through as an undergraduate in the Bates College Chapel. The worst preaching of my experience I heard there. Bad Sunday sermons cut down to accommodate college students. Platitudes and condescensions and apologies and the worst rhetorical style, so it seemed to the smart, eighteen-year-old boy that I was. And I resolved that I could do better than that. And so I've spent the last 32 years trying to do better than that. I'm not sure that I have succeeded, but they haven't found anyone else to

do it. And so, for better or worse, there we are.

The days of mandatory chapel, like parietals, like single-sex dorms, are antique institutions. But I would suggest that the one thing that does remain is that sense of need for the community to be gathered together, for there to be a place apart from the usual haunts of faculty, staff, and students in a liberal arts university. Many things, indeed, do happen in the libraries and in the laboratories and in the lecture halls and on the fields of athletic endeavor and in all of the spaces which surround

For any who have been at Harvard know that I spend most of my time in the Memorial Church—that marvelously subtle building so hard to notice in the middle of Harvard Yard—with its tall spire someone once said "pure Emily Dickinson," and with its large, sturdy, dark columns "pure Mae West."

you and this chapel on every hand. But what happens in this space, in ever-changing accents and ever-increasing styles, what happens here is unique, for here people are reminded of something more, which even the greatest of our universities cannot provide elsewhere. If it sounds to you that I am making a special case for college chapel, you are even smarter than you appear for that is, in fact, the case that I am making.

Our predecessors, our ancestors, understood full well that a person could not be considered properly educated until that person was forced to contemplate the great, imponderable questions having to do with meaning

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and being. And if you think about it, most of our colleagues in liberal arts spend all their days tracing down problems in order to tack them down with finite answers. They do it in the English Department. They certainly do it in the Chemistry Department. They do it in the Sciences. They even do it in the Fine Arts. Everything for our colleagues is a problem to be solved. And we give them prizes if they solve them with particular style and imagination. And we give them tenure so that they can go on solving those problems indefinitely. And we write books about the problems that they solve. And we enroll students in courses which usually have such and such and such and such colon—the problem of. Look in your catalog and see how many of your course descriptions have in them the word problem, with the implication that there is, of course, a solution—if you take this course, if you concentrate in my discipline, if you take your Ph.D. in this particular field.

Now that sort of thing is important to keep a lot of people, like ourselves, busy and occupied. If there were no problems, most of the Tufts faculty, like the Harvard faculty, would have nothing to do, and since they are unfit to do anything else would be a great burden upon the Commonwealth. But, fortunately, once a problem is solved there's another set of problems to be solved, and we go on like this forever. This is why this is not Oz, but the university is much more akin to Alice In Wonderland—where things never are as they appear to be; they never cease to be as they appear to be; and we are replicated because we always reproduce ourselves. The only place where this is not the case is the chapel. Why? Because we do not regard problems as matters necessarily to be solved and filed away. We do not solve problems. We enter into mysteries. And the entrance into the mystery is really where the pilgrimage and the meaning and the value of life begins. We, in this place, are dedicated to those deep, eternal, and internal mysteries which defy definition. They defy tidy summation. They defy logic. Literally we worship what we do not know. Because once we have it all wrapped up and know it as perfectly as it is capable of being learned and known, it is no longer an object worthy of our attention and we move on.

I remember a wonderful distinction that was made describing the genre of detective novels in which I have a mild recreational interest I'm sure as do many of you. This was made by my colleague at Princeton who rejoices in

the name Diogenes Allan. Now a Professor of Philosophy whose first name is Diogenes is somebody to be taken quite seriously. Known to his friends as Dick, which is much less impressive than Diogenes, he developed what I regard as one of the healthiest paradigms for the kind of work that we are about. And he uses the detective genre of Conan Doyle and Dorothy Sayers as an illustration of the point. You've all watched enough mystery on television to know what I am talking about and will appreciate, I trust, the analogy that he is trying to make.

He says: In those mystery novels that we read about and know about, particularly in Sherlock Holmes and Dorothy Sayers, the police, the professionals, are always problem-solvers. They see the crime as a problem. They look at the clues as means to solve the problem. And they trip over themselves in their haste to solve the particular problem. Why? Because there are so many others that need to be solved and one just keeps going at it, over and over and over again. And in the mystery genre, the police are usually described as cumbersome, as not altogether sharp and observant, hasty, a little untidy, anxious to move on, credulous at the wrong time, incredulous at the wrong time. The police in these novels usually get in the way, and they're set up as objects for us to pity and to hold in some mild degree of contempt as they simply cannot get it so problem-oriented are they.

I had nursed this marvelous analysis on my way out here tonight when I was informed by my splendid driver that David O'Leary had recently been made an honorary member of the Tufts Police Department, and I thought maybe I should reconsider this in some way. But as he is an honorary member, maybe what I am about to say doesn't attach fully to him.

So Dick sees the police as problem solvers and always in these novels—whether it's Miss Marple or it's Hercule Poirot, or it's the great Sherlock Holmes himself—there is the amateur sleuth who actually is able to get to the root of the matter. And the characteristic of the amateur sleuth in these cases is one who is not either overwhelmed by the problem or all that eager to solve it. In fact, the distinction that Dick makes is that while the police want to solve the problem, the sleuth wants to enter into the mystery and is fascinated by all

the details that seem so unimportant in the great rush to the solution. The sleuth is the one who notices the tiny little thing that most ordinary people would not observe and, in the long run, is the one who comes up with means, motive, and opportunity. So without accusing my humanist or my sociological or my scientific friends of being intellectual policemen, I would like to say that I believe my clerical colleagues and chaplains are, first and foremost, sleuths—people entering into the fundamental mysteries of our being. And the place where that work has legitimacy, validity, power, and passion is this very sacred space.

Now this place is not made sacred simply because somebody said it was so. It was not made sacred because it was constructed in a certain style. It's not even made sacred because a lot of people married here and a lot of people buried from here. It certainly hasn't been made sacred by the sheer quantities of the sermons that were preached in here. What makes this space sacred is the fact that it is dedicated to eternal things—things that do not pass away and are all the more eternal because we do not see them; we do not quantify them; we cannot measure them. In other words, this space is sacred because it is dedicated to all of the things that in our other pursuits in the university and in the world we would not take seriously. Some might very well hope that if this is what happens in a college chapel, that it will stay inside the college chapel. These buildings are built like fortresses—look at the stone of which this place is composed. It looks either like a reservoir or a military outpost. *Ein' feste Burg ins unser Gott*, "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God."

Some think it might be guilt this way to keep the hosts of Satan out. Well another way of looking at it is, it may very well be built to keep the hosts of the Divine locked up so that they do not somehow seep out and permeate the other places of the university. Whichever theory you want to hold, what happens in this space is a dedication to what the novelist John Updike calls, "an act of defiance." He calls religion "an act of defiance." Because contrary to all other definitions, it defines me not simply as I am, but as I aspire to be. And so, unlike anthropology which tries to describe the things that were and unlike many of the other disciplines which

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look at an inert subject and try to define it and describe it in some way, what happens in here is a dynamic exercise in aspiration. And we're even more impressed with the dynamism of that aspiration now than we might have been twenty-five or thirty years ago because this aspiration is so articulate in so many languages, so many different tongues, and so many different styles. When all of the different styles, the theologies, the cultural differences are put aside, it is the same motivating spirit that is at work in this place, a desire, as William James once said, "for something more—a yearning for something more than what we have." Not more of the things that meet our material needs, but more of the things that feed our spiritual needs.

It is a brave thing that the governing boards of this university, the administration, and all of the donors have done. It is a brave thing to renew this space for both its ancient and its transformed purpose. You could have decided to invest in just another auditorium, or another lecture hall, another laboratory. You could have turned this into yet another concert hall, another place in which to worship the aesthetic, and I'm sure it is a good place in which to do music and to celebrate the arts. But you took on the nobler task, which is to reclaim the spiritual inheritance of this place and affirm it for new generations of Tufts faculty, staff, and students. You have decided that you wanted to be as faithful to the future in the spiritual realm as your predecessors were faithful to it in the past. You are *contra mundo*, against the world, against the grain. This is not the direction in which so much of popular or academic culture is moving these days. You have decided to reclaim something beautiful from the past that it might be both beautiful and useful for the future. And I rather think that Mary Goddard and all of those who followed her benefaction smile, in some degree of quiet satisfaction, that this gift, this mission, this motivation, continues to now flourish today in the 21st century. Had she looked down from wherever she is, twenty-five or thirty years ago, here or anywhere else, she might have cause to wonder. People worried, I know, when compulsory chapel was ended at my college and many other places. How will we impart virtue and values to the young if we don't compel them to come

hear it from ourselves? And others rejoiced that this last dead hand of an imperial, oppressive, state religion was now finally put to rest. And between those two debates buildings like these molded away. They gathered dust. Their fabric was neglected. They appeared to be a living rebuke to the ideals of an earlier age. And administrators wondered, "What good use can we make of all that stone, all that glass, and all that wood?" Certainly not any other use than the use for which it was intended.

I go across the country to a lot of colleges who are embarrassed by their college chapels. So big. So boastful. So

upon a time do here?" And instead of getting an antique answer or an historical answer or an answer that is defined only in terms of the past tense, they will hear music; they will hear preachers; they will see rabbis; they will see priests and imams. They will hear the squeal of little children being initiated; they will see happy couples being united; they will see solemn friends bidding farewell to one who has passed this life. They will understand that they are in a temple, a holy, and a sacred place.

Now to use the language of sanctity and sacred places and temples and holy



Those who made the rededication possible from left to right: Steven Makris, Ammann & Whitney; Robert Reppucci, and Rudi Pizzi, Tufts University Facilities; Rev. David O'Leary, University Chaplain; Wendall Kalsow, McGinley Hart & Associates; Nancy Velletri, and Kelly Patterson, Shawmut Construction.

proud. And so empty. What do we do with these relics from an age of earlier and simple piety? They should look to you to see what to do. You have refurbished and renewed the space. You have recreated and reinvigorated a chaplaincy. You have provided and you will continue to provide money—real cash—for them to do the work that they have to do. And from time to time over the years to come young men and women will find their way in here, not marched in serried rank assemble. But they will stumble in. They will wander in. And first blinking their eyes as if stepping out of the light into a rather dimly lit place, some of these secular children or grandchildren of yours will first wonder, "Where are we? What is this place? What did they once

ground might seem a little extravagant, a little odd on this rational hill upon which Tufts has been planted for so long. The Universalist Unitarian spirits that hover about here might question something of the geography, not to mention the anthropology, of such designations. But we must remember that it was that Universalist spirit that believed in the ultimate redemption, or at least the possibility of the redemption, of everybody that laid the foundations first of this college and then of this chapel. And so the link between the earthly and the divine on this hill is unbroken.

Now were I a predestinarian Calvinist like my good friend Patricia Budd

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Kepler is, I would have said this renewal, of course, is inevitable. It was predicted in the mind of God before time itself began, and all we are simply doing is carrying out the predestined motions which were ours. Such doctrines give great comfort to Presbyterians, and I wouldn't deprive them of it for a moment. But there is a little doctrine called free will and the Universalists, not to mention the Unitarians, not to mention a lot of other people, rather invest in that. And I would like to think that you had a choice here. You had a choice to leave this place in a derelict condition, hoping that by some act of nature, these huge stones would be transformed into some natatorium, or perhaps a garden villa, or something or other—that that great phallic tower of yours would sort of just disappear. You had a choice to just hope for nothing or actually to do something. And you chose to do something. All of you collectively—the President and the Trustees (I'm sure nothing good happens without the President or the Trustees here), the alumni, the donors, the friends, the ministry represented, the artisans whom we have acknowledged tonight—all of you chose to do something. You chose to refurbish a jewel. And we stand in it tonight. It shines. It glows. It beckons for generations to come. It is not simply a reminder of a particular chapter in Tufts' past so long ago. It is an answer of the future.

And as the world becomes increasingly a less agreeable place, where we become less confident in our answers, when at times we don't even know what our problems are, the kind of mystery and meaning, virtue and value, which is celebrated by a sacred place such as this will come into its own. And the young, the clever young, will be among the first to recognize this. It is conceivable that some of you are past help or hope in these circumstances. You know too much. You've done too much. You've seen too much. You've been around too long. Nobody can tell you anything. There are no surprises left for you in the great mystery of life. I hope that is not true, but I just want to cover my bases because I must say in every academic community there's a small cove of such a people and they even make their way into here.

But the wave is not with such people. The wave, the motion, is with those who are prepared to invest in the yearning for something more, who are prepared to partici-

pate in the act of defiance which faith is, who are prepared to recognize that in this sacred, holy space, great things can happen, great discoveries can be made, minds can be uplifted, souls can be saved, spirits can be irritated, and no other place here or elsewhere is engaged in that kind of work of transformation. So it's a good, glorious (dare I even say holy) thing that you have done to bring this space into its present moment of glory and opportunity and service. My prayer, as one long in the trenches and not far removed from you, is that you will be encouraged and inspirited in the work that must take place here. My hope is that you will support your chaplains, that you will give David and his colleagues here all of the material and spiritual support that they will require to do justice to this new opportunity and this new age.

You should regard the rededication of this chapel as your second chance. You might say the institution is born again, and this time, by God's grace, you'll get it right. The second chance is always an opportunity to get it right. And what that means, we will learn from these wise chaplains. We will learn from the clever students that will assemble here. We will learn from the message and ministry that will proceed out from this place. We will learn from the patient, benevolent, and blessed God who looks, I am confident, with pleasure on this renewal of activity in this place made sacred to his name. I wish nothing but joy for you, nothing but good things. And even when bad things happen, as inevitably they will, this will be the place for consolation, for confrontation, for conviction, and for encouragement. You may not realize what you have achieved by calling new life into this ancient space, but it is, as the English poet so wisely put it, a sacred place. It is a holy place on holy ground. And because it is, all of us are made that much better for it.

Mary Goddard, God bless you for your imaginative gift in 1882. And for all of you who have followed in her train, particularly tonight, God bless you for your investment in the future. I have every confidence that it will be a great and a glorious one.

Thank you.

FRIENDS OF GODDARD CHAPEL SOCIETY

The Friends of Goddard Chapel Society has a very special mission—to support the work of the Office of University Chaplain, its programming, and to continue the beautification of Goddard Chapel proper.

For \$250.00 one becomes a member of the Friends of Goddard Chapel Society. Each member will receive "Goddard Talk" newsletter twice a year, individual invitation to special Fall and Spring Lectures at Goddard Chapel, and a yearly concert in Goddard Chapel. There are also many "naming" opportunities available. The Fall Lecture is looking for a benefactor and would be the "Name" Lectureship.

The entire Chapel space is in need of new pew/benches. Each new pew/bench with cushion would have a plaque placed in the center of the pew/bench. There are thirty pews/benches on the main level and four in the choir loft.

The entire Chapel area is in need of air conditioning for Spring and Summer weddings and events. A special "name plaque" would be placed in the foyer of Goddard Chapel by the Quad door indicating the donor of the new air conditioning system.

Finally, there would be the opportunity to endow the Office of University Chaplain with a "Name" Professor of Religion & Society Chair.

For more information on any of these opportunities please call the University Chaplain, Reverend David M. O'Leary, at (617) 627-3427.



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We're on the Web!
www.tufts.edu/chaplaincy

**FRIENDS OF GODDARD CHAPEL
SOCIETY KICKS OFF - See Page 5**



Rev. David M. O'Leary, University Chaplain, receives check from Steven Makris of Amman & Whitney.

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