

Dean's Vespers – Sept. 29, 2005 – Msgr. Kevin W. Irwin

I do not know what Dean began the tradition of Dean's Vespers to start the academic year but I do know that it was celebrated in the first month of my employment here at CUA, Sept. 1985

The Dean who hired me was Carl Peter. But by the time I arrived on campus the newly installed dean was William Cenkner. And I can remember Dean's Vespers going that far back. In this building, in this chapel, with some of the same folks who are here today

Dean Cenkner was succeeded by one not from the then SRS faculty, Ray Collins. He came to us from another country and celebrated Dean's Vespers each of the years he was dean.

Then Dean Stephen Happel led us in prayer. Sadly he did that only three times. Many of us in this chapel counted him as friend, mentor and colleague. And some of us still cannot imagine that he is gone from us.

Then came the Dean I'd like to honor with these words tonight, our most recent dean, Frank Moloney.

Any of us who have been here a while will attest, I am sure, that we learn some things from every dean. Allow me to be so bold as to say that I can say that many of us learned many things from Dean Frank Moloney

Frank served us at a very difficult time in our School's history. Always forthright and candid, he was instrumental in leading us through our grief and shock at Stephen's passing and through the still unfolding process of reorganization.

A gifted teacher, he inspired students of all levels in the school to a greater appreciation of the scriptures in the life of the church in the world of our day.

Frank truly brought good news...he announced it by word and example.

He helped us all experience what the reading from Revelation talks about... "the revelation God gave to Jesus..." "bearing witness to the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ."

A truly gifted teacher. For me there has never been any other vocation I have ever wanted to pursue. And the challenge is always to be a good teacher.

Frank is an exemplary teacher. What makes a good teacher? In the words of Gilbert Highet in *The Art of Teaching* two things.

That you love your students

That you love what you teach

One legacy of the Moloney deanship is the Wabash grant about teaching. I would wish that our students learn from this dean what that means.

Frank's deanship was also marked by unspeakable suffering and loss, the untimely death of his brother Ray.

Ray's illness was something Frank thought he would never have to witness or bear or share. And yet he did all of that and more as loyal brother and family member.

He would often email that his visits with Ray in June and June were simply grace filled.

Who are those we honor tonight on this feast but those who brought grace to this earth for those most in need of it.

What is Vespers really, but a prayer of thanks for the gifts of the day and the prayer for a peaceful end.

As we pray this Vespers with and (dare I say?) for you let it be our prayer of thanks to you Frank for all you have been to us and were to us, especially as Dean. And we pray that the bond of friendship and faith celebrated in this vespers will continue as you venture back home at the term's end.

You learn a lot from deans. Thank you for teaching us so many things by your words and example. And by your faith-filled response to taking up the challenge to lead us in a dark hour.

We may not yet see a thousand points of light on the SRTS horizon. But thanks to you we see more than a light at the end of the tunnel. We see a new and radiant dawn from our school.

What is vespers but the church's communal prayer at darkness in the hope of the rising sun.

Your life and ministry among us have left us great hope and encouragement that we can do in this school what you exemplified.

