

Announcement of the Gift of the Raymond E. Brown Chair in Biblical Studies

In the name of the Sulpician Fathers, I would like to begin by thinking each one of you for coming here to St. Mary's today for this Alumni Day celebration. It means a lot to the community of St. Mary's and to the other alumni who are here.

Also I would like to congratulate my confreres Fathers Michael Barré and John Kselman for being awarded the Olier Medal this afternoon. Not only is this a fitting recognition of two Sulpicians who have a fine reputation for their scholarship and teaching but it is also a fitting tribute to their own teacher and mentor Father Raymond Brown on the Tenth Anniversary of his death. As an old proverb says, "The highest function of the teacher consists not so much in imparting knowledge as in stimulating the pupil in its love and pursuit."

Because we are remembering Father Brown today, I know that my predecessor and our new Sulpician Superior General Father Ronald Witherup would have wanted to be here but he is currently giving a workshop on scripture to a gathering of priests in California. Although he was not a student of Father Brown, Ray encouraged him strongly to pursue biblical studies, and you can see from the card at your place that Ron, with the assistance of Father John Donahue, has just published a new collection of Ray's popular writings on readings in the Lectionary.

For many years, St. Mary's has wanted to establish a permanent faculty chair in sacred scripture named in honor of Father Raymond E. Brown. After a lot of discussion and planning and as a way of crowing today's celebration, I would like to announce that the U.S. Province of the Society of St. Sulpice is pledging a gift of \$1.5 million to St. Mary's to make this dream a reality. Not only will this chair help to keep Father Brown's memory alive for many years to come but it will also help St. Mary's to continue to offer its seminarians and other students the best possible instruction on the Bible.

On October 6th, at the opening of the Synod on the Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church, the Holy Father quoted a passage from St. Jerome's Commentary on Isaiah as follows, "He who knows not the Scriptures knows not the power of God nor his wisdom. Ignorance of Scriptures is ignorance of Christ." It is the hope of the Sulpician Fathers that the new chair that we are establishing will help to promote the knowledge of the Scriptures not only in the dioceses served by St. Mary's but throughout the Church.