

PRESIDENT'S FOUNDERS' DAY ADDRESS
OneLeMoyne
Cura Personalis

Fred P. Pestello, Ph.D.
November 21, 2008

Good evening!

I am honored to address you tonight as we gather to commemorate the founding of Le Moyne College. This is a particularly meaningful evening for all of us because we are heralding a very special guest: Bishop Thomas Costello. Bishop Costello was ordained as Auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese of Syracuse in 1978, and his personal mentor was one of our founders: Bishop Walter A. Foery. His presence here with us constitutes a tangible connection to our origins.

We, the members of the Le Moyne College community, look forward to this night. This is a time to reconnect and to feel the magic that lies at the heart of the College and affirm that here at Le Moyne the student always come first.

In my short time as President I have already learned a great deal about the many forms of excellence on this campus. One of my first acts was to establish a campus-wide process of dialogue: the OneLeMoyne conversation. We seek to articulate our collective future, asking: "What must Le Moyne College become?" I invite all of you here tonight to participate in these conversations through the community sessions which we are planning for the future, through direct contact with me or my staff, and through our website.

In our sessions thus far, I have heard about the enduring stamp of character and community responsibility that our College imprints upon its graduates. I have learned about the many local achievements of our students, faculty, staff, and alumni. People praise the intimacy of the campus, the long-lasting relationships they develop here, the freedom to rigorously explore a range of academic interests, the opportunity to develop leadership skills and our commitment of service to others.

As we envision our future, we will draw upon the wisdom of Bishop Costello. He helps us to discern what it means to be a thoughtful, prayerful human being in the 21st century. He calls us to enact and create a more just and loving society. He advocates interfaith dialogue. And, perhaps most relevant for Le Moyne, he calls for the preparation of students for life in a complex world, in which they will work, learn, and live with persons of different backgrounds and beliefs. This type of preparation is more urgent now than ever. Here our students develop a passion for the shared search for meaning and truth. In this way, we grow closer to the spirit of love and faith that animates our existence.

Le Moyne College has a long and cherished set of relationships across the Syracuse area. Over half of our graduates remain in the Central New York region, working in a wide array of areas including business, education, and health services. Our students contributed over 32,000 hours of volunteer service last year alone to disadvantaged persons. As we chart our future, we must devote time to carefully reflecting upon our role within this region and how we work even more effectively within the community to promote justice.

At this time of year, we as a nation celebrate some of our most cherished holidays and rituals. This is a time when we express our gratitude and love. A deep sense of gratitude is especially appropriate for us at Le Moyne College this week, because just two days ago, we announced a historic gift. Through the bequest of Bob and Kay McDevitt, Le Moyne will be propelled to a new level of excellence.

This transformative gift will enhance our standing in the national academic community, continue our momentum toward becoming one of the finest institutions of our kind in the country, and ensure that Le Moyne remains an excellent value.

I must acknowledge the many people who have worked over decades to develop this gift. I am particularly appreciative of the work of John and Pidge James '66, our Achieving New Heights campaign chairs. This campaign, now assured to end well above its goal, will ensure that Le Moyne College reaches new heights.

Yes, tonight, we the members of the Le Moyne family are grateful for many things. I wish to thank all of you for your commitment to Le Moyne through your time, energy, ideas, and resources. Know that we affirm our commitment to you, to this region, and to the immensely important and complex project of Jesuit higher education in contemporary times.

Regardless of what opportunities and challenges lie ahead, rest assured that we at Le Moyne stand ready to assist all who seek a rigorous Jesuit education grounded in the liberal arts and sciences that attends to the whole person and prepares men and women for others. Nothing less will do. Nothing else better prepares young men and women for their future. And nothing better honors our venerable founders.

May God bless you.

It is now my pleasure to honor a remarkable man, the former Auxiliary Bishop and current Vicar General for the Diocese of Syracuse, Thomas J. Costello. Bishop Costello's life's work and actions mirror the Jesuit values upon which Le Moyne College was founded: service to others, social justice, equal rights for all, and a passion for excellence. Through words and pictures, we now present the story of Bishop Thomas J. Costello.