

Spirituality on Campus

Reaching Out

New Chaplain Dan Kelly Looks to Impact School Spirit

By Joe Fitzgerald (BA '94)

Even at a young age, **Dan Kelly** had a sense of something greater than himself. Growing up in a small town in Ontario, he remembers confronting a gnawing presence one Christmas when he was 21 years old. *"I was coming home from a party, being thankful for my family and friends, and I took a left into the church parking lot instead of a right,"* says Kelly. *"I got out of the car, walked up to the nativity scene outside the church, knelt down, turned my eyes toward heaven and said, 'Please leave me alone, I'm not strong enough to do what you're calling me to do.'"*

After brief stints in business, Kelly could not ignore the call. *"I thought if I'm going to have any peace in my life, I have to go see what this is about,"* he says. *"It was like the hounds of heaven kept pursuing me."* At 28, Kelly quit his job and began studying for the diocesan priesthood. Being the youngest of ten children, living alone in a rectory was not appealing, so Kelly decided to enter the **Society of Jesus**, or **Jesuits**, the same religious order that used to run Saint Mary's University.

Kelly was recently appointed the new chaplain at Saint Mary's University and rides in on a fresh wave of enthusiasm. Currently a deacon, Kelly will be ordained to the priesthood this September. He was originally sent to Halifax to work at the soon to open *Jesuit Centre for Spirituality* and, with a background in spiritual direction, looks forward to connecting the past with the present to infuse today's students with school spirit. *"I'm not sure if the students of today are connected with the richness and the tradition of Saint Mary's University, however, that richness is still there,"* he says. *"The school spirit is present, and I look for ways that I can enhance that."* Kelly emphasizes that the chaplaincy service is open to all students, whatever their beliefs.



Dan Kelly, university chaplain, is photographed in the campus chapel located on the 1st floor of the Loyola Building.

"Being a Catholic chaplain on such a diverse campus, I don't want it to seem to be here just for Catholic students," says Kelly. *"I am here for all students, and I want individuals to sense that. My focus here is to provide service for all the students on campus who come seeking it, whether it be the food bank, counseling, advice, or just information. We just create a warm, welcome, hospitable environment, and let things develop naturally."*

Kelly faces many new and unique challenges. His first is to increase the profile of the Chaplain's Office. *"A lot of people don't even know we exist,"* he says. Kelly encountered another challenge while handing out flyers advertising the chaplain's services. *"I noticed a dismissiveness from students before they even knew who I was,"* he says, *"and I wondered where that came from."* Citing last year's huge brawl at the **Liquor Dome**, Kelly thinks it's too simple to blame it on dollar drinks. *"Most of us get mad once in a while, but we don't get into a brawl. That's deep seated anger, boy. Alcohol is just the catalyst. I'm hoping to discuss these issues with the students and find out what they are."*



Saint Mary's students Catherine Sanders (left) and Erin Lutz work in the Chaplaincy Office.

Catherine Sanders is a second year student at Saint Mary's and works in the Chaplaincy Office. *"Apathy is currently a major issue,"* she says. *"Students are so stressed about tuition costs, part time jobs, and the elusive dream of a career, that at the end of the day they just don't have the energy to spend on spiritual matters. They just don't care about what is happening around them anymore. The 2000s have become a repeat of the 'me decade'."*

Ron Abarbanel runs the *Navigators Student Ministry* and has been at Saint Mary's for four years. He sees some of the serious personal issues facing students today compounded by the fact that many of these students have no spiritual education or haven't practiced any formal religion. *"I'm sure Dan will have some challenges – with any new job, there is a steep learning curve. I suspect a challenge for Dan will be navigating around people's perceptions of a chaplain and lowering barriers in order to get into spiritual conversations that are relevant to people. People expect a chaplain is going to be formal, perhaps wear a collar, not understand doubt about God and not have experienced "real" life. In reality, Dan is easy to talk to, dresses normally, is insightful, and has a ton of real life experience that people can benefit from. Dan has an intuitive sense of what needs to be done, is extremely creative on his own, but draws people together to enhance creativity. Dan is also good at*

creating a team environment that accomplishes what needs to get done. He is well liked, approachable and easy going. The Chaplain's Office has become a vibrant bustling place."

By reaching out to address both spiritual and concrete needs on campus, Dan Kelly and the Chaplaincy Office hope to help instill those at Saint Mary's with a heartfelt spirit, and a genuine sense of intimacy, belonging, and oneness with something greater than themselves. [mw](#)

Rediscovering Livelihood

Centre For Spirituality and the Workplace Explores the Search for Meaning at Work

By Joe Fitzgerald (BA '94)

Saint Mary's University is world renowned for its business programs, but many eyebrows were raised when the *Sobey School of Business* launched the **Centre for Spirituality and the Workplace**. The centre is the first and only academic-based centre in Canada, and sponsors conferences, research, and monthly speakers, while offering undergraduate courses and housing a centre library. The centre's website (www.spiritualityandtheworkplace.ca) promotes global press coverage and a global e-mail list to encourage discussion of issues of spirituality in the workplace. The centre's e-mail list is global and goes to more than 650 individuals and organizations in 21 countries.

The centre's chairperson, **Martin Rutte**, is also the co-author of the New York Times business bestseller, *"Chicken Soup for the Soul at Work,"* and a consultant exploring the deeper meaning of work and its contribution to society. His clients have included the World Bank, Sony Pictures Entertainment, Virgin Records, Apple Computers,

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Labatt Breweries, and London Life Insurance. *"Work is a place where we want our souls to be nourished and called forth, and we've forgotten that,"* he says. *"Part of the narrative today of the condition of work is that it's a place to go and earn your daily bread, but you have to give up part of your soul in order to do that. One thing we're doing at the centre is saying work can be a place that nourishes your soul and the souls of others, and that creates a much more sustainable individual and organization."*

The late 1990s saw two major trends begin to alter 20th century perceptions of ourselves and the purpose of work. In North America, new technology and overseas outsourcing were embraced as profit-making alternatives to traditional labour. This created a dramatic shift in business strategy as not only struggling enterprises, but successful companies, government and academia began downsizing to cut costs. A longtime unwritten agreement between employer and employee was suddenly void. Doing a good job and being successful no longer guaranteed security.

At the same time, the baby boomer generation was entering their 50s and 60s and, as is typical of middle age, they began to ask questions about the meaning of life. Their career aspirations had been fulfilled or were waning, their children were leaving home, and their friends and family were beginning to die. As they contemplated their legacy, the sheer size of their generation affected the psyche of society as a whole. Book sales on spirituality and religion exploded, and the changing nature of personal spirituality that had been traditionally limited to the home or places of worship began to move into the workplace.

"People wanted to do something but they didn't know how to have this conversation," says Rutte. *"Twenty years ago, the conversation was only about profit, loss, and traditional business issues. The only personal issue you could talk about was career."* Gradually, personal issues such as gender, race, sexuality, substance abuse, and mental health began to be discussed openly. *"Each time one of these issues came up people said, 'oh no, you can't talk about that,'"* says Rutte. *"But we found ways to talk about them that were respectful, dignified, and useful to the individual and the organization. So the question became, 'Is there a way to talk about spirituality in a way that people didn't get scared and didn't end up being proselytizing?'"*

The centre's current executive director, **Dr. Charles Beaupre**, is not surprised that the centre found a home at Saint Mary's. *"What you find at Saint Mary's is a relatively newer business school with a greater*



receptivity to new ideas and acting upon those ideas, including a wider understanding of what business activity could be." Beaupre says that with the development or maturing of North American society, it is now possible to discuss the perceived need for people to express themselves more fully in a work context. *"I think it's reflective of society as a whole to address the implications of how one's body, mind, and spirit are interconnected and how that relates to the work environment."*

Saint Mary's President, **Dr. J. Colin Dodds**, reminds us that business looks at issues that go beyond profits and earnings. *"One of the alarming things is that many people who have had tremendously successful careers suddenly step back and say, 'why have I done all*

special feature



◀ New York Times bestselling author Martin Rutte is the chair of the Centre for Spirituality and the Workplace at Saint Mary's.

this? And it hits them, if you like, in the soul. And then they start to ask these questions, and they find that other people are asking these questions too."

As millions of people continue to clock in and clock out in a *Darwinian struggle for survival*, Saint Mary's finds itself in the vanguard of a worldwide enquiry, searching for constructive and innovative ways of rediscovering work as livelihood, enriching and fulfilling to the individual, the organization, and to those they serve. *mw*

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