From the beginning, my memoir, *Monk’s Tale*, was intended to be comprised of three volumes. Volume One, *Monk’s Tale: The Pilgrimage Begins, 1941–1975*, appeared in 2009. It describes my family roots and early Catholic education in Washington, D.C., including my athletic successes at Archbishop John Carroll High School. Then it turns to my time as an undergraduate student at the University of Notre Dame, to my experience of a call to become a priest while on a summer service project in Mexico, to my seminary years and ordination, and to my doctoral studies in Christian ethics at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee. Throughout this depiction I attempted to weave my personal story into the broader narrative of fundamental changes going on in American society, in the Roman Catholic Church, and in the world.

Volume Two, *Monk’s Tale: Way Stations on the Journey*, is intended to prepare the ground for the final volume, which will focus on my presidential years (1987–2005). In *Way Stations*, I provide chronological coverage of my life and responsibilities from 1975 to 1987 as well as detailed discussions of aspects of my priestly ministry that were not directly dependent on my presidential role as such—my years of living in a student dormitory (Sorin Hall), my ministry as a teacher, scholar, liturgical leader, and pastor, and my range of extracurricular involvement in the academy, on government committees and entities, and on a number of not-for-profit boards. Special attention is given to my fifteen years of participation in the process that led up to the formulation of Pope John Paul II’s document on Catholic higher education, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, and its implementation in the American context. Finally I describe the process that led to my selection as
Notre Dame’s sixteenth president in November 1986 as well as how I used the interim before I formally assumed the responsibilities of president on July 1, 1987.

Like the first volume, this second account is full of stories about people, places, and events. I describe in some detail subcultures, such as seminary life or sabbatical times or Vatican processes, that some may find rather far removed from their everyday experience. Nonetheless, I hope that much of what I share about my life as teacher, dorm staff person, international traveler, major administrator, and board member will touch a responsive cord with many.

The image of “Way Stations” is intended to convey that who I am as a person and the way my life has unfolded is not reducible to any one role that I have played or any particular set of experiences that I have enjoyed. While my eighteen years as Notre Dame’s president has surely been my most prominent and publicly visible role, as with all human beings, there is much more to my story. What I did after joining the Notre Dame faculty, how I prepared for the post to which I was elected, and what else I did during these years is the subject of this second volume.
Back to the Seminary

After completing doctoral studies at Vanderbilt University in 1973, I moved back to Notre Dame full of energy and enthusiasm to function as a priest in full-time ministry for the first time since ordination. Even though I was still writing my dissertation, I was aware that an initial period of preparation in my life was at an end. My three years in residence at Vanderbilt had gone quickly. The Divinity School was a friendly, supportive environment for study and for broadening my base as a practicing theologian, and I was confident that I had something to offer as a teacher and a scholar. I also looked forward to serving as a liturgical leader, a counselor, and a pastoral presence in some more permanent setting.

I was a bit surprised when I was assigned to be the director of the College Seminary program at Moreau Seminary. Part of the surprise was related to my concern, sometimes expressed publicly, that the college years, especially the first two, are not the best time for entering the seminary. My own experience in the Holy Cross Order’s seminary system, admittedly at a time of great transition within the Church, indicated that the progress-to-ordination rate was rather low for those entering at the beginning of college. On the other hand, the recent liberalization of seminary life offered more leeway for seminarians who were not yet
under vows to participate in regular college life. I hoped the new model would work more successfully.

My new home was a staff room on the northeast corner of the fourth floor of Moreau Seminary, facing Saint Joseph Lake. It had a work/lounge area, a bedroom, and a bathroom and was spacious enough for my books, other accouterments, and a couple of chairs where I could meet with students. Located at an end of the building, it was generally quiet except for the birds and bats that enjoyed strafing runs after sunset along the length of the long, curving structure. From my room I could see the Golden Dome. Little did I suspect that someday that building would become my base of operations.

In 1973–74 there were approximately fifty seminarians at Moreau, of whom twenty were in the college program. Father Jim Kelly, C.S.C., was the superior to whom I reported; however, the college program contained the largest single group in the house so I had a fair degree of autonomy in putting together its internal workings, including team meetings, counseling and evaluation sessions, liturgies, and apostolic projects. For the rest—community worship, meals, soirees, and the internal work schedule that served the common life—we were part of the larger house.

Moreau Seminary was no longer the place apart it had once been. Guests were now welcome, including family members, friends from campus, and, occasionally, people from some of the seminarians’ apostolates. Thursday was the big community day, with mass, a social, and dinner for the whole house followed by lucenarium (a version of evening prayer with the lighting of candles) and then a long social event. Thursday was also a dress-up day, which meant coat and tie for the seminarians, although the dress code through the week was generally relaxed and informal within the house. Monday was another community day but with no special evening gathering. The team meetings were fitted into the remaining days of the week, allowing for a more personal level of interaction between the staff and the seminarians.
As someone who was ordained only three years earlier, I was relatively young to have a central role in the formation process. I was assisted by Brother Chet Ziemba, C.S.C., a coadjutor brother of the Indiana Province of Holy Cross, whose main duties included tending to the grounds of the seminary and adjoining properties. He had come to religious life in his thirties and was blessed with street smarts and an “in” with the underground gambling syndicate in Chicago. Another assistant was André Leveille, C.S.C., who had been a teaching brother for many years and was now preparing to be ordained a Holy Cross priest. In my second year we were joined on the staff by Dick Rutherford, C.S.C., a theologian who was working on a research project.

The young men in the college program were bright, hardworking, and quite sincere in their process of vocational discernment. Some had enjoyed a loving, supportive family background while others had had to deal with family dysfunction and/or divorce. Some had good ego strength and self-confidence; others were still in search of their best selves. While celibacy is always an issue in seminary life, the collegians were not prohibited from social involvements with women; most such interactions were within group activities anyway. For most, the debates about the vows were more theoretical than urgent. A more pertinent dilemma for some, and part of what the staff had to be alert to, was the related issue of sexual identity in an all-male living environment.

As with most young people, good times were often identified with the consumption of alcohol. All the Moreau residents had access to alcohol, and most of the time it did not pose a problem. However, a few in the college program, as well as some post-Novitiate seminarians, manifested unhealthy behavior in this regard, so the staff had to wrestle with appropriate responses. This was a time when religious communities in general, along with the broader society, were starting to come to grips with the disease model of chronic alcoholism and the need for firm, supportive intervention.
The most important responsibility for the staff was to evaluate on a regular basis the seminarians entrusted to our care. At the college level we were primarily preparing young men to lead good Christian lives, whether or not they persevered in their initial decision to give the seminary a try. Some candidates took only a few months to decide that religious life and priesthood were not for them; they parted at the end of the semester or the end of the year with some appreciation for what they had learned and the friends they had made. The rest of the college group would eventually move on to the Novitiate, where the process of discernment was more concentrated. The hardest cases for all of us were those who enjoyed the security of seminary life but lacked the requisite personal skills and/or maturity to fully invest themselves in the program.

Since directing the college program was my first regular responsibility after graduate school, I invested much time and energy in it, but also focused on finishing my dissertation and reading widely in preparation for what I hoped would be my first teaching assignment. That moment arrived when Professor Stanley Hauerwas, a Protestant ethicist and a dominant figure in the Notre Dame theology department, was asked by Father David Burrell, C.S.C., chair of the department, to husband my candidacy through the various stages of the hiring process. Stanley and I hit it off despite our theological differences, and he invited me to co-teach an undergraduate class with him in the spring semester of 1974. It was my first teaching opportunity at Notre Dame since the seminars that I oversaw during my deacon year of 1969–70. I did not have to do much to prepare for the course except read the assignments and interact with Stan in front of the class. He was, and is, a controversialist by disposition, so he enjoyed the intellectual combat. The students seemed satisfied that they had signed up for a course where professors actually disagreed with each other in public.

My teaching appointment carried the rank of instructor until such time as my dissertation was completed, when I would auto-
matically become an assistant professor. That meant that for the remaining three years of my directorship of the college program, I would also be engaged as a new, enthusiastic, excited faculty member.

In the summer of 1973, the Indiana Province Chapter elected Father Bill Lewers, C.S.C., as the new provincial. This was a moment of decisive change for the Province and for its apostolates. Bill had come to religious life after years as a law faculty member. He was worldly wise, yet full of high ideals. He had spent time in Chile after ordination and this had a profound effect on his hopes for the Church and his commitment to social justice. These values would remain with him the rest of his professional life, as a faculty member in the Notre Dame Law School and as the director of the Justice and Peace office of the U.S. Catholic Bishops Conference.

I was an active delegate at the Chapter at which Bill was elected, and he invited me to become a member of the Provincial Council, a group that met monthly to discuss the works, issues, and problems of the Province. I was honored by the invitation and went on to serve on the council for the next fifteen years, under two different provincials. Our most difficult decisions were not about finances or policies or apostolates but about personnel. Membership on the council and participation in its deliberations taught me early in my priestly life that there are limitations of power and office for those overseeing the well-being of a group of male religious, all of whom had personal histories and memories and could not be simply ordered to proceed in lockstep according to some Provincial decree. As councilors we had to take into account the strengths and weaknesses of each religious, the needs of our various apostolic commitments, and the rather explosive realities of a Church going through dramatic change.

Because of the Holy Cross Community’s heavy involvement in higher education, many of the positions that became open had specific requirements attached, such as a doctorate or its equivalent, and many of the administrative tasks presumed years of
experience as a prerequisite. Some religious desired to work in new settings, and some of these in the absence of a community support system. There were also tasks that were necessary for the well-being of the Province, such as local superiors and heads of the various stages of formation. These jobs usually demanded personal sacrifice of those asked to assume them. In the end, there always turned out to be positions that went unfulfilled and individuals who (because of their own unsettledness) were unassignable. The meetings of the Provincial Council during my years on it were a constant reminder that the Indiana Province was like any large family—we had our high performers, our generous souls who would do anything they were asked to do, and our members whose mental, physical, or spiritual health meant that the rest of us would have to provide for their needs rather than have them involved in the active apostolate.

Learning such lessons while I was responsible for nurturing potential religious vocations was good for me. We had much to be proud of as members of Holy Cross, but there were no guarantees that early enthusiasm and manifest piety would necessarily lead to a healthy and successful life in ministry under vows. The old wisdom of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas remained true: grace builds on nature and character, and self-integration and a loving heart are the work of a lifetime. The collective job of the seminary staff was to use our best skills of observation and counsel to enhance the chances that our seminarians would make good choices about what God was calling them to.

The seminarians’ year always began with a retreat at a Holy Cross camp in Deep Creek Lake in far western Maryland. In my own days as a seminarian, the social order of camp life was much more hierarchical and regimented than it was by the 1970s. The staff now lived in one of two locations—a well-constructed stone house in the center of the facility or an old farm house on the periphery, but except for the special living status for staff, interaction between seminarians and staff was non-stop. There was mass and prayer and meals in common every day. The rest of the time
was spent in team meetings, athletic competition (on land or water), reading, touring, and relaxed moments. For the new members of the Moreau community it was a great opportunity to become acclimated and get to know names. Playing pitch-and-putt golf or going canoeing or playing volleyball after dinner were all excellent ways of getting a feel for the group and its style of interrelating. There were always chores to be done, from outdoor work to meal preparation to keeping the facilities clean and serviceable, and these too provided unpressured physical proximity.

One of the staff’s responsibilities was to introduce the men in a preliminary way to the history of Holy Cross, to the vowed life, to the expectations for the common life at Moreau, and to the practices of prayer, including the Divine Office. The staff wanted all the college men to make a smooth transition, and we were always observing, somewhat clandestinely, the social dynamics, alert for signs of homesickness or social unease. As in any comparable group, likes were attracted to like, and soon recognizable affiliations developed. No one ever left the program from Deer Park, so the experience must have been reasonably pleasant, even to the shy and questioning.

Part of my challenge as director was to achieve rapport with each of the collegians. In addition to participating in their athletic competitions and lingering at meals, I got in the habit of going on long walks with each college seminarian to guarantee a more private context for conversation. It had become fashionable by that time for seminary staff to be addressed by their first names, although some of the younger members never got to that point with the senior citizens among us. Since I was never much for titles, it was second nature for me to go by Monk, the nickname I had carried since grade school. I was Monk not only in the seminary but also with my students after I started teaching and with my dorm-mates later on in Sorin Hall.

Living in close quarters with college-age students meant that they inevitably discovered everyone’s strengths, weaknesses, and idiosyncrasies, and seminary life always develops a few mimics
and humorists who ease the tension and keep everyone amused. Father Jim Kelly, C.S.C., the superior and rector, was a big man in every way—tall, stocky, and very much of a physical presence. His voice and mannerisms were relatively easy to imitate, so he became the most common focus of mimicry. Father Charles Sheedy, C.S.C., one of the oldest members of the staff and arguably the most popular, had so many memorable sayings and quirks that any seminarian of that era, even decades later, could tell stories about him. The coadjutor brothers who resided with us were universally loved and considered great models of committed religious life.

During these years I regularized the tradition of Monk Hoops on Monday and Wednesday nights in the Moreau gym. I was still close enough to my prime that I was a prolific scorer, and the rest of the seminary team was good enough for us to win most of the games. I always figured that such contests disabused the ND students of some stereotypes about seminarians and seminary life.

One side result of spending time with seminarians in basketball contests was the insights the sport helped me gain into their character. I could observe how selfish or team-oriented they were, how they handled success and adversity, and how persistent they were in developing their God-given talent. Such perspectives were only available to me for those seminarians who were reasonably coordinated and knew the basic elements of the game, of course, but as time went on I came to discover that the intuitions I gained about people on the court were usually reinforced by my fuller involvement with them in the rest of the common life.

One of the traditions of Moreau was a spring entertainment that the seminarians put on for the residents of the house, including the coadjutor brothers and the sisters who worked in the kitchen. From year to year this extravaganza could vary widely in content and quality. Since we always had a fair number of seminarians who could play musical instruments or sing, it was safe to have them perform the popular folk tunes of the day as well as
more classical pieces. Non-musicians might read some poetry or a short creative piece they had written. The real challenge came when some group moved toward satire or local humor. For me, the operative standard of bad taste had to be what the eldest residents would both understand and find offensive. More importantly, we had to worry about the ego strength of any candidates who might find themselves imitated or mocked. There was always a temptation for seminarians to get even with peers who had offended them or to pick on the most vulnerable. They were more reluctant to spoof the staff directly, although in my eyes that would have been a healthier alternative.

One year when the college team was supposed to contribute a humorous act, I had to censor several items I saw in the rehearsal. I did so reluctantly, yet I knew that one or two of the seminarian targets (who had real problems) would have a tough time bouncing back from unsubtle attacks on their dignity. Generally, though, the entertainment ended with smiles all around. I was always happy when we survived another evening fraught with the potential for young creativity run amuck.

Because the seminarians had no required time for retiring and because I was by disposition a late-night person, I often ended up engaged in late bull sessions. We would touch upon every type of topic under the sun, from ND football to married priests to presidential politics, from welfare reform to the morality of contraception to our hopes and dreams for the future of the Catholic Church. Most of us saw ourselves as progressive Catholics, truly committed to the reforms of the Second Vatican Council. The more conservative among us would speak their minds as well, but their point of view was often muted both by the pace of change and the absence of a rallying point of generalized concern. Despite the continued controversies in American society and in the Church at large, our group was a hopeful lot, not deterred by disagreements or instances of the persistence of human malevolence. As a staff member, I had the extra advantage of my doctoral work and my level of experience, yet I never sensed that I inhibited
the nature of those late-night conversations or unfairly steered their outcome.

Role reversal is an integral part of the passage to adulthood. Children become parents, students become teachers, athletes become coaches, low-level workers become bosses, and seminarians become priests and seminary directors. In my case, I always had a strong inclination to become a full-time academic and a priest/pastor/counselor, but it had never occurred to me that I might someday serve as director of the College Seminary program. Yet I had plenty of opinions about religious formation and vocational discernment in my years of preparation, and I was in favor of the vast majority of the changes in seminary life and culture that came in the wake of the Second Vatican Council. In some cases I was myself an active agent of progressive restructuring, either as a public critic of the traditional way or as a representative of my peer group in various deliberative bodies.

In the end, I feel that I received an excellent theological education, if at least partially at my own initiative, and that my apostolic experiences (on service projects in Latin America, in inner-city Detroit, teaching seminars at Notre Dame, at a mental hospital, and serving as a resident assistant in a dorm) were eye opening and consciousness raising. I began my priestly ministry with self-confidence, zeal, and a strong sense of being part of a collective ministry based on community living and mutual support. Despite what I considered the limitations of the pre-1960s Holy Cross seminary system, it nonetheless provided me with the tools for effective priestly ministry and an ever-emerging ecclesiology in terms of which I could imagine my future role in service of the Church and the Congregation. Now that I was assigned a full-time responsibility for a subsection of the Moreau Seminary program I had to figure out how to exercise constructive leadership, how to model in a personal way the ideals of Christian living, and how to competently instruct and fairly evaluate the young men entrusted to my care.
My problem with the highly rigid, rather autocratic seminary system of the past was that it was too easy for young men in formation to hide behind formal adherence to the rule and enforced separation from the world. Now that college seminarians had more freedom and a more typical college lifestyle, the challenge for staff was to encourage them toward a greater maturity of decision making and a recognition that they would be evaluated not only on the minutiae of their observance but on the overall pattern of their involvement in the program. For some this was welcome news. Others were frightened by the responsibility and the seeming ambiguity of expectations.

One example: We expected the men to be faithful to common prayer, to perform their internal housekeeping tasks consistently, to be successful in their studies, and to be apostolically engaged. When there was failure in any of these regards, the evaluation process (especially the self-evaluation component) was the fitting place either for an explanation of what went wrong and/or for some commitment to amelioration. All of us on the staff knew that we were dealing with nineteen to twenty-two year olds—a time when resistance to rules, expressions of independence, periodical bouts of moodiness, or seeming lack of fervor were to be expected, at least on occasion. The art of our oversight function came in establishing expectations and in putting in place workable accountability processes.

We knew that some of the college seminarians had special burdens, from family dysfunction and personal health problems to learning disorders and poor religious preparation. Not only were our college men younger and presumably less mature than the other seminarians in the house, but individually they represented a cross section of native ability, overt religious motivation, and comfort in large group settings. We expected more of seniors than of first-year students. We looked for generosity, initiative taking, leadership skills, resiliency in the face of disappointment, and capacity for friendship. While none of these qualities is
unique to religious life, they are good indicators of potential effectiveness and happiness in a celibate male community with diverse ministerial opportunities.

The combination of being director of the College Seminary program while in transition from graduate school to the Notre Dame faculty and still finishing my dissertation did not seem out of the ordinary at the time, nor has it seemed so since. I have always been engaged in multiple, simultaneous tasks.

My apostolic path was not unusual in the Indiana Province. A composite picture of our average priest would be someone who was educated in the best schools or programs after ordination, given high levels of responsibility rather early in his ministerial career, and sometimes asked to serve the Province in internal roles or as a member of Province-wide elective or coordinating bodies. Few of us ever concentrated on doing one thing well (in this regard we were much different from the Jesuits, the religious community that we mostly closely resemble otherwise). The old French boarding school model that our founders brought with them established early on the basis of our prevailing spirituality. In an academic apostolate we generally lived with the students and played multiple roles in teaching, administration, pastoring, and liturgical leadership. In fact, that interesting mix of roles was one of the characteristics that attracted me to Holy Cross. My experience has convinced me that this style best suits my personal talents and predisposition. I have always been an activist by nature and I have enjoyed trying to balance multiple worlds and diverse works with as much enthusiasm as I could muster.

After the Nashville years where our Holy Cross group was tiny, I enjoyed being immersed in the broader context of Moreau Seminary where the prayer life was excellent, the meals were fitting social occasions, the availability of the in-house gym meant that opportunity for exercise was convenient, and the prevailing spirit of hospitality sustained the presence of family members and visitors through the course of the year. The Sunday mass
at 11:00 a.m. attracted friends from around the area who were looking for good liturgical music and well-prepared homilies.

The sheer size of the building, however, was sometimes a deterrent to community life. The distance from the faculty recreation room at the south end to the dining area at the north was substantial, especially for the older members. The seminarians’ rooms were far from soundproof and activity in the hallways could be somewhat disruptive, but if one wanted to hide out or otherwise be inconspicuous, the physical layout was conducive to that. It was almost impossible to know who was in the library or the gym or the lower rec room or on the various residential floors without going there.

The brothers and priests who were not directly involved in the formation program were quite popular with the seminarians. They were seen as sustainer of the common life by their presence at prayer and meals, and their interactions with the seminarians were non-threatening since they had no formal role in the evaluation process. On the other hand, the older religious tended to have a rather idealized picture of the seminarians since they were not as directly exposed to the vocational struggles or the group dynamics or the hijinks. As a result, the staff members had to interpret off-handed comments about individual seminarians by the non-staff religious, to decide whether they grew out of some special insight not available to the rest of us.

The 1970s were a time of profound change in Catholic life in America. Just about every dimension of the structure of church life came under discussion. There were debates about the role of the pope and bishops and about lay participants in the community of faith. In the liturgy, parish life was full of efforts to implement the changes that came in the wake of Vatican II, from the use of English in the mass and the other sacraments to communion in the hand to the appropriate roles of readers, acolytes, and communion ministers. Altars were pulled away from the wall and the priest began to face the people. There was also a great deal
of experimentation with contemporary forms of church music. As in all periods of rapid change, some of the efforts were crude, theologically uninformed, or just plain dumb. Nevertheless, for the most part the average Catholic quickly grew accustomed to the new forms and the spirit behind them.

The variety of influences underlying the evolution of seminary life complicated the roles of everyone involved in the recruitment and formation process. First there was the debate about the nature of priesthood and who should be eligible. The number of advocates for the ordination of married people was growing, and a smaller but vociferous group wanted to extend this openness to women candidates as well. Second, a real hemorrhage had begun of priests leaving active ministry; they left for a variety of reasons, but many to marry. Speculation was rampant that the institutional Church could only sustain the level and quality of an ordained ministry by lifting the prohibition against married priests, and some predicted that it would come sooner rather than later. Theologians who entered the debate reminded everyone that married priests had prevailed in the Church up until the twelfth century, and that it was really a disciplinary rather than a theological matter.

A third influence was the rediscovery of notions of the Church that emphasized its role in the transformation of the world. The parish community (and those who led it) could no longer see itself as a sacred enclave separate from the evil world. Prayer without service to the poor or efforts to reform unjust social structures was said to be a misunderstanding of the holistic Gospel mandate. A fourth issue was related to the newly felt mandate to educate candidates for lay ministry on a par with candidates for ordained ministry. This meant designing new academic courses and support structures as well as providing opportunities for first-class spiritual and pastoral formation.

Finally, there was a growing consensus that seminary formation should not begin in high school and perhaps not even in college, or at least not in the first two years. There was a sense
that undergraduate candidates needed more time to mature and more experience of the world before they undertook formalized training for religious life and the priesthood.

As I began my four-year term as director of the College Seminary program, I was of course aware of all of these trends and discussions. The Indiana Province and the broader Holy Cross Congregation had pondered how to proceed, and in Provincial Chapters and meetings of the provincial with his council, some decisions had been reached. We closed our high school seminary. We moved our Novitiate to Bennington, Vermont, where candidates for both the Indiana and Eastern provinces were prepared together. We kept open Saint Joseph Hall on the campus as an entry point for undergraduate students, but we welcomed post-college candidates to a specially designed new program at Moreau Seminary. We sent undergraduate candidates who had finished one year at Saint Joseph Hall to the college program at Moreau. We did not consider young men as candidates for the Novitiate until they had graduated from college.

We began to develop the possibility of inserting a regency year into the program for post-Novitiate theologians; this would extend their time of formation but also enrich their pastoral experiential options. For some, the regency year was a necessary and welcomed time of discernment before taking final vows. For others, it helped refine the forms of future ministry that they might find especially attractive. We also made the fourth year (mostly composed of deacons) a time for nearly full-time ministry in an academic, parish, or missionary setting, but with supervision from the Moreau staff and structured sessions of peer sharing.

Even given all these adjustments to the traditional formation regimen, there were other lingering issues that were more local in impact. As the total seminarian population began to decline, there was a sense that the physical facility could be seen by some candidates as too overwhelming and impersonal. Some voices began to advocate a smaller facility, or at least more opportunities for small-group living during formation. Another issue
was the absence of alternative sites away from Moreau during the course of a long period of preparation. Back when most seminarians did their theology in Washington (or Rome or Chile) after the college years and the Novitiate, the geographical separation from Notre Dame was seen as enriching. Now a candidate could theoretically spend all his formation years except for the Novitiate year in one place, and some considered this too stifling. As a consequence, more theologians began to take regency years elsewhere, and new theology options were later developed in Berkeley, California, at the Graduate Theological Union.

By the time I joined the staff at Moreau, the separate but related responsibilities of the Notre Dame theology department and Moreau Seminary were rather clearly defined. The theology department and the University were expected to attend to all matters related to academics and the awarding of the degree. Moreau Seminary had prime oversight for everything to do with seminarians’ spiritual and religious-life formation, and the evaluation of candidates for final vows and ordination. The director of the Master of Divinity (M. Div.) program was expected to work out any points of disagreement or disappointment.

Periodically, issues would flare up on one side or the other, such as academic preparation, courses taught without sufficient attention to the pastoral dimension, and inequities between clerical and lay candidates. Since I eventually became M. Div. director after my years on the staff at Moreau, I can say in retrospect that generally things functioned smoothly in the dynamic between the two institutional components.

Memories of my time at Moreau tend to be amusing. For example, one of the college seminarians who was quite witty cultivated the persona of an Italian chef. Periodically, he would set up shop on the seminary roof where, decked out in white chef’s hat, apron, and accompanying garb, he would serve a meal to a small circle of friends. They would look out over the lake toward the Golden Dome and the heart of the campus and act as though they were Roman nobility surveying their property.
Father Charlie Sheedy was in his late seventies or early eighties when he joined the staff, and he was a much-loved presence. He weighed hardly a hundred pounds but he was always carrying around some tome he was reading that resembled War and Peace in bulk. Charlie was famous for his pithy way of summing things up. In a homily one time he complained about self-serving reminiscences, which he defined as the practice of some speakers and preachers to put themselves in the center of the stories they told, usually with heroic overtones. Once, in a staff meeting to evaluate seminarians at the end of the year, the discussion was focusing on an individual with a reputation as an insincere suck-up who seemed to be play-acting his way through the system. After a few staff members who knew the person only peripherally had spoken of him favorably, Charlie intervened and described the individual in a blunt, somewhat profane way that the rest of us thought got to the essence of the matter.

Charlie experienced health problems throughout his life and was open to any method of medical intervention that promised some relief. One day he decided to try acupuncture, and he agreed to undergo his treatment publicly so that anyone interested in the procedure could observe. At the assigned time he showed up in the rec room, stripped down to his underwear—looking like a survivor from Dachau—and let the doctor insert needles into various parts of his body. This event was the talk of the seminary for weeks.

Most of the social dynamics at Moreau were healthy, but occasionally something would take place that reminded us of our collective humanity. One evening at dinner, a priest in residence who was known as very smart but also emotionally sensitive, was badgered and teased by a seminarian who delighted in pushing the limits. After a particularly vociferous exchange, the priest stood up, picked up a pitcher of water, and poured it over the seminarian’s head. Then he stomped out. No one knew what to do at first, and while most of us thought justice had been done, no one was disposed to warrant such behavior. So we just snickered,
helped clean up the mess, and retired to more intimate settings where the incident could be rehashed.

In the 1970s long hair was in, as were mustaches and sometimes beards. This was true not just of the college seminarians but also of the older members of the house. While such freedom of self-expression would have been unheard of a little over a decade earlier, the operative standard was that seminarians needed to be neat and presentable. But loose as that standard was, a few individuals tried to push the system farther. I was fairly tolerant of such propensities since I saw them as simply a function of youth. The closer people got to ordination, the more concerned the staff became about professional appearance.

There was an art studio in the seminary where individuals could pursue their God-given talents and/or fulfill requirements for certain classes. The room was stocked with easels, canvases, oils, and clay. One time in the midst of winter, I decided to promote the arts by advertising a competition for the best work by a seminarian or staff member. In order to encourage wide participation, I announced that I would do a painting myself. To provoke curiosity I kept my developing work under cover and warned my housemates not to peek. Most of them were not sure whether I was serious or not. What I actually did in the moments when I was in the studio by myself was throw or daub paint on the canvas with nothing particular in mind, kind of like a trained monkey. On the evening when the contest entries were to be judged, I held off unveiling mine to the end.

Several of the pieces were reasonably accomplished and worthy of consideration for honors. As my turn approached, I was asked what my painting was called. Privately, I had given it a scatological title, but publicly I called it Monk #1. When Monk #1 was at last unveiled, no one knew how to react. They wanted to laugh, but they were not sure how serious I was or whether I would be hurt by derision. In the end, I received polite applause. Overall, the contest was a great success. It broke up the cold, drab
days of winter and it promoted the arts, at least for most of the participants.

Moreau Seminary developed the tradition of having a low-level football pool each week of the college football season. It cost a quarter to enter, but it was run professionally, with the expert advice of Brother Chet Ziemba who had run numbers in Chicago in his earlier life. We used up to the minute data from oddsmakers, which meant not only that we had to pick who would win or lose, but we had to beat the point spread as well. For me the big problem was that it was the Era of Ara, and there was no way I could bet against Notre Dame even when the Irish were a twenty-plus point favorite. The pool was a frivolous way to have fun and to test out our knowledge of the collegiate football landscape. It was also a good preparation for the future, since just about every Holy Cross priest and brother, anywhere in the world, might be asked about Notre Dame football, and all of us by force of final vows were expected to have something to say, whether we could distinguish a touchdown or field goal from a triple play or a slam dunk.

A retrospective analysis of the Moreau college program during my years would have to take into account many factors. What was the quality of the admissions process which purportedly filtered out immature or improperly motivated candidates or those who carried heavy baggage from their personal and family backgrounds? How long did they stay in the program, and were they highly regarded by their peers and the staff? What were the conditions under which they left the seminary (if they did), and was their time there full of intellectual, personal, and spiritual growth? Did they have any bad experiences with the staff or other seminarians? Did they remain engaged later in life as practicing Catholic Christians? Finally, did the percentage of those who proceeded on to final vows and ordination warrant the financial and human investment of resources?

These questions are difficult to answer because a sophisticated study of the college seminary participants from 1973 to 1977
has never been attempted. At best, we can say that we have positive anecdotal evidence from those who remained in the community or have kept in touch. From the latter group I have never heard any sustained critique. Statistics, however, can at least raise the question of whether the resources expended were worth the results in terms of first vows and ordination.

In my four years as director, about 65 percent of the men who took the first step in the College Seminary program moved on to Moreau. During that period we had a cumulative twenty seniors—fourteen of these were approved for the Novitiate and five eventually were ordained. From the total senior class during those four years, twenty-five were ordained in the end. If I focus on the fifteen underclass candidates who were still in the program in 1976–77, two would go on to eventual ordination, one for a diocese and the other for Holy Cross.

Those numbers may not suggest an impressive cost/benefit ratio, but numbers are not the whole story. Those who participated in the college program in that era and went on to ordination included a future provincial, a religious superior, a high school principal, a Notre Dame faculty member and artist, an African missionary, a parish priest and chaplain, and a scripture scholar. In other words, the dropout rate from the college program was high but among those who stayed the course were some important contributors to the life and apostolic success of the Indiana Province.

Many of the others went on to marry, have children, and to live good Catholic Christian lives in the world. Even those who chose a different path, therefore, became productive citizens.