'Soup and Substance' Invites Discussion of Lasallian Education

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By A. K. Carroll



A simple table set with bread and soup awaits a small group for discussion at Saint Mary's College.

Photo A. K. Carroll

kets of fresh sourdough and set cial assistant to the president. with clean glass goblets, stiff thick cardstock handouts.

the middle of the day, at the center of Saint Mary's campus, there is an integrated meal that nourishes more than just the body. Nepal. "Soup and Substance," a yearround series of mid-day meals, gathers members of the SMC community for a communion of mind, soul and body. Now in its 14th year, "Soup and Substance" is a catalyst for conversation, an opportunity for faculty, staff, Brothers and students to come together and discuss the text of one the Christian Brothers in the of the De La Salle Brothers.

One text is selected each year by the Office of Mission. This stance" was originated by Brother meals provide food for the body, year they have chosen to discuss Stan Sobczyk in 1994 as a rethe thoughts that Brother Armin sponse to SMC President Brother soul. Luistro shared in his 2014 Con- Mel Anderson's conversations vocation Address, which chal- defining the mission of the collenged the members of the SMC lege. Brother Stan gathered faccommunity to rethink the process ulty and staff to discuss the of education, to problem-solve a college's three traditions of way of reaching the 57 million Catholicism, the Liberal Arts, and uneducated children in the Philip- Lasallian teaching in relation to pines. "Bringing education is the college mission, suggesting more than just access," remarked that Saint Mary's revisit the pracone of the recent attendees. "It's tice of dining and Lasallian disalso about creating a condition in cussion. which you can learn."

meal is hosted by a different have been re-instituted and are

long wooden table is blan- In October, that member was tor of Mission Sally Jamison. "I keted in red, laden with bas- Brother Dominic Berardelli, spe-

"They like to call me SAP," white napkins and white ceramic Berardelli joked as October's plates and bowls. Around the group took turns introducing table, 14 wooden chairs wait to be themselves and identifying their filled. A vat of steaming veg- various roles on campus. Among etable barley soup stands off to the dozen or so present were a the side, in the center of the Ale- professor of mathematics and many Brother's Community Din-computer science, representatives ing Room at Saint Mary's from the Office of Institutional College. Beside it is a stack of Research, a staff member from Information Technology, a repre-In the middle of the month, in sentative from Mission and Ministries and an undergraduate biology major preparing for a Lasallian Service Internship in

> "This is the 12 disciples," Berardelli remarked with a smile and a laugh. He opened the group in prayer, then ushered them to the red-clothed table, where they dipped hunks of bread into steaming bowls of soup while delving into the thoughts of Brother Armin and discussing the work of Philippines.

The first "Soup and Sub-

After a several-year break, Each "Soup and Substance" "Soup and Substance" gatherings member of the SMC community. currently organized by Coordina-

do most of the inviting through personal contact, email, the SMC web page and a news flash in the Collegian," said Jamison, who is always happy to see new faces around the table. A full table is anywhere from 12-14 participants, which Jamison noted, "allows for comfortable (or uncomfortable) conversation." There are regulars who participate, but variety is key.

"Both Carole (Swain, vice president for Mission) and I agree that meeting new community members is a highlight," said Jamison. "The discussions are also a highlight. Even though they revolve around the same reading, they vary, focusing on different themes in the text."

The key purpose of "Soup and Substance" isn't to brainstorm or problem-solve as much as it is to foster thought, build community and provide participants with an introduction to the Christian Brothers and an understanding of Lasallian traditions and the mission of Saint Mary's College. The food for spirit and food for the

The next "Soup and Substance" will be held on the SMC Rheem campus in January. "Soup and Substance" was started as a means of generating discussion about Lasallian education, and though this is typically contained within the SMC community, anyone with an interest in such discussions is welcome to join the conversation. To reserve a spot or inquire about future meals, contact Sally Jamison in the Office of Mission at (925) 631-4406 or sjamison@stmarys-ca.edu.

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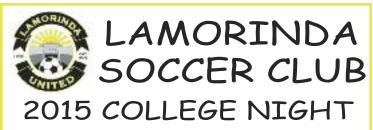
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