

BROTHER BERNARD F. STRATMAN, SM, HONORED AT FAREWELL EVENTS IN JUNE, WILL BE PRESENTED THE CUSHING MEDAL IN OCTOBER

Marianist Brother Bernard F. Stratman was honored recently at two events as he prepared to step down as executive director of the Seminary Department of the National Catholic Educational Association. He served for seven years in the Washington, DC, office. Prior to the NCEA appointment, Brother Bernie directed the national office of the National Federation of Priests' Councils. His service to the national church on priestly life and ministry issues began in 1989. During the 1970's and 80's his ministries focused on Catholic evangelization and church use of instructional technologies.

Brother Bernie will be honored for his life's commitment to the church in October. The Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) has named Brother Bernie as the 2009 recipient of its Richard Cardinal Cushing Medal for the Advancement of Church Research. The presentation will be made October 27 at Georgetown University.

The National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) held a farewell reception for him on June 15. It was attended by the thirty staff members of the association plus a dozen guests from other organizations. Karen Ristau, NCEA president, spoke of Brother Bernie's leadership in securing grants for the work of the Seminary Department and for the many research projects, seminary convocations and books he completed.

Archbishop Timothy Broglio of the Military Archdiocese attended, as did Reverend Mark Latcovich, vice rector of St. Mary Seminary, Cleveland, and chairman of the Seminary Department Executive Committee. Other members of the executive committee also attended, including Reverend Tom Dragga, rector of Borromeo Seminary College, Cleveland; Sister Elaine Brothers, academic dean of the Oblate School of Theology, San Antonio, Reverend Rich Siepka, immediate past rector of Christ the King Seminary, Buffalo, and Monsignor. Jerry McCarthy, director of Accreditation and Institutional Evaluation, Association of Theological Schools, located in Pittsburg.

At the afternoon reception, on behalf of the association staff, colleague Barbara Keebler, Director of the NCEA Communications Office, presented Bro. Bernie with a personalized leather binder full of mementos and letters. Inside were items cataloging his accomplishments at NCEA, and letters of tribute from co-workers, friends and colleagues from around the country. Letters were received from Archbishop Donald Wuerl, Washington, DC; Bishop Gerald Kicanas, Tucson and Bishop Gregory Aymond, Austin. Some of the organizations that sent letters included the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate of Georgetown University; the USCCB Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations; the Paulist National Catholic Evangelization Association and the National Vocations Awareness Division of the J.S. Paluch Company.

His replacement has not yet been named.

On June 17, the rector of Catholic University of America's Theological College, the Very Reverend Mel Blanchette, SS, hosted a reception and dinner in Brother Bernie's honor. About thirty friends and colleagues attended, including Brother Bill Campbell, SM.

At the conclusion of dinner, Father Blanchette invited each person to say a few words about the honoree. Many themes emerged, as people praised Brother Bernie's ability to secure grants to fund projects, publish the highly-regarded *Seminary Journal* and convene meetings of people of diverse backgrounds "just to see what would happen" (many good projects were sparked into life at such gatherings). They remarked on his gentleness, friendship, faithfulness, encouragement, vision of inclusivity and collaboration in ministry, resourcefulness, service to the priesthood, and dedication to the church.

Brother Bernie was deeply touched by these tributes and thanked everyone for their kind words and affirmation. The qualities of life and ministry named, he said, underscore what it means for him to be a "Marianist" and "Brother" in the service of the church.

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