

Catholic university is 'our heritage'

Archbishop Miller speaks to Redeemer Pacific College on 'the greatness of the Catholic intellectual tradition'

By C.S. Morrissey
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The archdiocese needs higher education that is "intellectually rigorous and capable of engaging the culture in which we live," Archbishop J. Michael Miller, CSB, told a gathering at Redeemer Pacific College, because "within very few years there will be nearly a half million Catholics in the Lower Mainland, and it's more urgent than ever that we have a Catholic laity that is educated in the faith."

The archbishop spoke briefly at the end of the college's annual



Hugh Buckley
Chairman of RPC
Board of Governors

fund-raising dinner on Saturday night, May 31, at Trinity Western University.

"Men and women must be prepared with solid intellectual credentials, enlightened by the Catholic faith, to take up these [cultural] challenges, and of course they must do so in fidelity to the Christian message as it has been handed down to us through the teaching authority of the Church."

The archbishop referred to RPC's recently implemented university courses for a Catholic Studies minor and for Trinity Western University's teacher certification program as a "wonderful opportunity that has just been developed to be able to prepare teachers for our Catholic school system." They will learn "in an environment which is Christian and within a context of a Catholic understanding of the philosophy of education," he said. "That is an enormous contribution to the good of the archdiocese."

The archbishop's remarks followed a keynote address by Abbot John Braganza, OSB, of Westminster Abbey in Mission on Education for True Freedom, and also echoed heartfelt RPC fund-raising appeals from Senator Gerry St. Germain and from Natalie Hudson, Pro-Life B.C.'s Director of Education and Outreach.

RPC Theology Professor Robert Stackpole hosted the evening and kept the crowd entertained with his jokes, as they waited to be called to a delicious dinner buffet that included salmon, roast beef, and gigantic dual chocolate fountains. RPC president and founder Tom Hamel also offered his per-

sonal thoughts, reflections, and thanksgiving on the occasion of RPC's ninth anniversary.

"Although Redeemer Pacific is only 9 years old, it actually stands, and stands firmly, in a tradition that goes back 900 years," Archbishop Miller observed. "Sometimes we forget that higher education, at least in the west, is a heritage of the Catholic Church. From the cathedral schools of the early Middle Ages to the great universities founded in the 12th and 13th century: Oxford, Paris, Cologne, Prague, Naples, Krakow, and so on, all universities were founded by believers and as institutions with close and indeed even juridical ties to the Catholic Church."

"Monasteries, cathedral schools, and eventually universities nourished a Catholic vision of the world and shaped a tradition which is not just religious, but also intellectual, moral, and artistic," said the archbishop. "The emergence of this great tradition in



Natalie Hudson

the Middle Ages, and now rooted just beside us [at RPC], is best understood as an outgrowth of the Christian faith itself."

"You know the classical phrase, 'faith seeks understanding'; and the whole living tradition of the Church teaches us this: faith seeks understanding, understanding seeks faith. Both the need to understand and the need to believe are deeply rooted in the human nature of which Father Abbot spoke this evening. It is for this reason that the Church was necessarily at the foundation of universities."

Archbishop Miller summed up the origin and purpose of education: "The origin of higher learning lies in our craving for knowledge and a craving for knowledge which is instilled in the very heart and soul of the human person: the human person who searches unrelentingly, sometimes obscurely to be sure, but who searches for truth. Therefore the university had to be born - had to be born - within the Christian world and the Christian faith."



RPC president Tom Hamel, Abbot John Braganza, OSB, Archbishop Michael Miller, CSB, and Senator Gerry St. Germain are enthusiastic supporters of Redeemer Pacific College.



Abbot John Braganza, OSB, gives the keynote address on Education for True Freedom at Redeemer Pacific College's third annual fund-raising dinner.

"Catholics have nothing to fear from higher learning, nothing to fear at all," said Archbishop Miller. "It is our space, it is our tradition, it is our heritage, and the first universities were a response to an urge to find answers to questions raised by reason when reason is enlightened by the Christian faith. Today this is what colleges such as RPC are called to do; it's their sacred trust and vocation."

The archbishop closed the evening with a call to prayer: "It's really a great blessing for us to have RPC in our midst as a Catholic college which is doing the Lord's work. I pray that it will continue in

the years ahead to mature, to grow in stature, to grow in wisdom, to grow like Our Lord in grace. May God bless its every endeavour."



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MOST REV. J. MICHAEL MILLER, CSB
Co-adjutor Archbishop of Vancouver
to address Catholic homeschooling families
Saturday, June 28th
Holy Mass at 1PM
followed by a talk on *Catholic Education and Homeschooling*, in the school gym.
ALL WELCOME