

A LETTER FROM DR. NAGEL

To the Valparaiso University Community on the occasion of the
50th Anniversary of the Dedication of the Chapel

Dear Friends of the Chapel of the Resurrection,

How I wish I could be with you this morning, in this time set apart to celebrate not only the dedication of the University's Chapel, but also all that has been shared in this very special place for over 50 years. And yes, it has actually been the heart and center of the campus for more than 50 years, because when I came to Valparaiso in 1968, the Chapel had not yet received its name. That was to come a year later. And before I came, of course, OP's dream of the Chapel as the vibrant center of much of the University's life had already become a reality. It was beautiful, and it told the world what we were about.

How many unforgettable times here do you remember? The Sunday morning Eucharist with the musical glories of the organ and the choirs? The rich roster of preachers and the teams of acolytes, ushers and altar guild? Holy Week and Easter Vigil with superabundant liturgy and baptisms? Song Fest? The Societies' Fair? Baccalaureate and, when it rained, Graduation? Nurses' Pinning? Hundreds shaking the west gallery during Wednesday night Folk Service? OP's poetically evocative Christmas Sermons? Counseling every night in the Dean's Room? Christmas Gift Night when you brought your own gift to the altar and Hoelty-Nickel always offered his variations on Three Blind Mice? Morning Prayer? Recitals in Gloria Christi and on the great Chapel organ? Offertory processions composed of students from the dormitories, the sororities and the fraternity houses? Band and orchestra concerts? Lectures, programs, exhibits? The chiming of the campanile bells given by the Guild? Funerals? Baptisms? Weddings? The inauguration of our University presidents? Christmas Advent Vespers? Perhaps the one when walking to the Chapel you saw Professor Brauer's play of light on the outside of the west wall? Perhaps the one when the faces of the Brown Field's football crowd were projected on the inside walls? Perhaps the one when laser balls of light spurted up the piers in the chancel, confessing creation's "Let there be light," and the bright mist welled up from the dry ice in Gloria Christi? Or perhaps, when leaving the Chapel afterwards, you remember joining the hundreds who kept singing Fleming's "Song in the Night" or, on another occasion, "Donna Nobis Pacem" as you walked home in the falling snow?

But I hope – and pray – that what everyone of every generation at Valpo, past and future, will *most* remember about the Chapel is what was so beautifully illustrated by artist Richard Caemmerer in a work commissioned as a gift for me when I was leaving Valpo to serve at the seminary here in St. Louis. It was a painting of the great building, and bursting out of the roof, right over where the pulpit is (if one could have seen it), was the Christ – huge and embracing. May that Christ, our Lord, preached in this Chapel of the Resurrection through generations past and future, be every Valpo student's blessed memory and strength.

Norman Nagel

Dean of the Chapel, 1968 - 1983

