

Dear Sophomores,

This is an exciting academic year for you. All of you will decide on a major by the spring. Some of you will study abroad this fall or spring.

I'd like to share some information with you about the Rome study abroad offering. Your class will be the last to take part in the Saint Mary's Rome Program that started 45 years ago. Beginning next summer and in time for the 2016-17 academic year, the College, pending contract approval, will partner with John Cabot University for Rome study abroad. The new program offers many options, including the possibility to study in Rome as a junior or senior.

The pending partnership with John Cabot University includes:

- **A rich intercultural experience.** Saint Mary's prepares students to be global citizens. Students will benefit from the diverse student population at John Cabot. More than 1,000 students from up to 70 other countries attend the university.
- **An expanded curriculum.** The university offers a wide array of general education courses and higher-level courses in some majors. Depending on the major, more students could study in Rome, even as juniors and seniors, without falling behind.
- **More options.** Students may consider a summer session, which we do not currently offer.
- **Off-campus opportunities.** John Cabot offers students internships and service opportunities in the Italian community.
- **Affordability.** Students currently pay a surcharge of \$2,500 a semester to participate in the College's Rome program. If the partnership with John Cabot is affirmed, as expected, there will not be a surcharge added on to tuition for at least the next three years. (Summer study abroad opportunities are not included in tuition, so there is a cost to attend in the summer.)

For this academic year (2015-16), the program continues as it has for all these years, with Dr. Prebys leading it. It's not too late to sign up to take part in the existing program in the spring of 2016. If interested, please speak with your academic advisor and/or contact Dr. Umberto Taccheri at taccheri@saintmarys.edu. Dr. Taccheri serves as the on-campus director of the current Rome Program while Dr. Peter Checca is on leave this semester.

If you are interested in possibly taking part in the new program as a junior or senior, please contact your advisor and/or Jill Vihtelic in the Center for Women's Intercultural Leadership at vihtelic@saintmarys.edu.

Dr. Prebys joyfully points out that Pope Francis declared 2016 an extraordinary Holy Year or Jubilee. Jubilee years are rare. The last one was in 2000. The Jubilee Year of Mercy opens on December 8, 2015 on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception and the 50th anniversary of the closing of the Second Vatican Council. It will conclude on November 20, 2016 with the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe. What a grand time for our Rome programs to transition from one to the other.

Sincerely,

Patricia Fleming
Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs
Saint Mary's College