

Copy (on Harvard letter head)

Feast of Pope Damasus

Dear Roger,

Thank you for your beautiful long newsy letter! Your questions regarding my experiences here at Harvard made me realize how much I have to tell you --and thank you for!!

It has all been and is continuing up to this very hour to be the most incredible experience. Regarding my freshman seminar, "Ritual and Society in the Middle Ages," the good Lord could not have dumped upon me eight more beautiful young people than you would ever want to know. They are so fired with enthusiasm about everything, our scheduled 3-hour meeting often goes well beyond that, as well as the greatest "field-trips" we keep doing together. The first was to the Widener-- I told them to produce for me a sacramentary, breviary, missal, pontifical, etc., and after a real show-down with the reference room, card catalogue, Harvard stacks and Pusey extension, they came out smiling and victorious with their books. Fascinatingly, each have had at least a little bit of Latin, and they are tickled pink when they can use it. Next we went to an exhibition on the catacombs at the Boston Public Library (for the iconography and typology of baptism and the Eucharist). I wish I had recorded for you the full scale discussion on angels that took place in the middle of the jam-packed MTA (homework was to look up a feast for the liturgical calendar, and somebody had Michaelmas).

For the Mass, what took their cake were your slides of the cover of the Drogo Sacramentary. They read the Ordo of St. Amand (OR IV) for homework, and then I told them, using your article, that the panels had been jumbled. Their task was to come up with the right order! They were brilliant, and noted all sorts of fascinating details in the slides that I hadn't. That got them thoroughly intrigued with the manuscript book. I discovered through Jim Hankins that the Houghton has a s. IX ms, and called Rodney Dennis, the Curator of Manuscripts there. His willingness to take my class astonished me. I wish you could have seen 8 freshman crowded over him for over an hour in the very special seminar room of the Houghton, bug-eyed at seeing and actually being allowed to touch a 1200 year old book. Rodney absolutely fascinated them with details about how a ms was put together and the quirks of individual books. They asked more questions and learned more about mss, book-trade, universities, and scriptoria than a month of lectures would have failed to convey. While there we also unrolled a facsimile of an exultet roll, thanks to your having shown me your own.

For ordination, by some incredible coincidence, the largest ordination ceremony of the entire year for the archdiocese of Boston was to take place Nov. 7 right in St. Paul's in Cambridge. 24 Jesuits from Weston Theological Seminary were to be ordained into the diaconate! My students were more excited than I was! They insisted on being there half an hour early to get good seats. We had had our class on ordination at this point, so they knew what to look for. Well, they saw everything-- entrance procession, bishop with mitre and crosier, incense, thurifer, full prostration of 24 albed men down the enter aisle of the church, stoles

over the left shoulder. It lasted 3 and a half hours and it was a Saturday afternoon, and yet when it was over they just sat there asking a million questions. We finished off the afternoon at Baskin & Robbins next door, and you can imagine the euphoric state I was in at our mutual joy in what we had seen and in our growing comradery.

For "Life in a Cloister" I had to apologize that I was not able to get a monk or nun to speak to us, or get to a monastery. Well, some of the students took it upon themselves, and to my astonishment invited me to join them at compline at the Episcopal Seminary down on the Charles River. The stories go on. I am completely bowled over, and right now watching them struggle with Latin passages for their research papers, I have the greatest respect for these young people and for the whole Harvard environment.

Indeed, I have met and come to know both Jim Hankins and Tom Bisson. There could not be two more beautiful people here at Harvard. Both of them were the first to approach me at a faculty meeting, and have been so warm and friendly to me ever since. I sat between them last night at the monthly faculty dinner and meeting at the Faculty Club--(an extraordinary show of the department's committment) and was so delighted to be able to tell Tom Bisson I had your letter. He has very fond memories of you out at the Canon Law School at Berkeley. Jim is one of the sweetest, most caring people I have ever met. But if you know him, you know this.

Thank you for your offprint, "South Italian Liturgica." I treasure each one, and reading them always fires me up in my own writing efforts. That Cyprian passage about the water and wine in the chalice and the water is the people certainly got around. I just bumped into it again in the letter of Beatus of Liebana against Elipandus of Toledo.

Thank you, too, for your wise thoughts on publishers. I must say I sometimes feel an awful long way yet from the publishing stage, but I'm hoping it will all come together pretty soon. I'm doing all the usual applying for any jobs I hear about, but I would like very much to apply for a Research position at PIMS if nothing comes through. Would you be willing to send me the application forms and again to write one of the letters of recommendation? I hate to burden you, but perhaps you can just re-submit last year's. I realize the deadline is fairly soon, especially given the Christmas season and the Canadian postal service, so if you could mail me whatever forms I need as soon as you have a chance, I would be most grateful.

I hope I am going to hear more PIMS news when "Ginny" comes to town this week (Jim has arranged lunch). I am astounded that you are managing FOUR seminars along with everything else. I did love hearing about Michele (what opportunities!), Persis (what independence!), Nathan (what courage!), and Caleb (what fun!) I am delighted that Ruth is right there at St. Joseph's College. There is a young man here (in the Divinity School) who is an angel in demeanor and devoutness, with a beautiful pregnant wife and 3 children, named Michael Waldstein, who has been offered a job at St. Michael's College, which I am assuring him he would love. I hope you and Ruth come to know him. (By the way, Jim Hankins and I were talking and he was telling me he is a Catholic, and I mentioned your lovely story about going from

the most Roman of Anglicans to the most Anglican of Romans. He hadn't known, and I hope it was alright that I mentioned it. He was extraordinarily touched. In fact, was quite silent for several moments, and then repeatedly said how glad he was during the course of dinner.

Merry, merry Christmas to all your family. My prayers are with you always. I wouldn't dare urge you not to exhaust yourself, because to deny you your fight would be to deny you your crown. How shining it will be!

All my love,