

**Religion Editor**

Julie Ascosi

**Forum Editor**

Ryan Breslin

**Photography Editor**

Marie Graney

**Web Editor**

Katey Brengel

**Design Editor**

Christina McLean

**Echo on Campus Editor**

Madelyn Carey

**Advertisement Managers**

Martin Muller

Alissa Troutman

**Office Manager**

Caitlin Allen

**Academic and  
Production Advisor**

Sheldon Shealer

**Writers and Photographers**

Kayleigh Gelles

Dillon Mullock

Irina Kuchevski

Christina Fowler

Luke Nolan

Hannah Dell

Allison Weston

Sara Tierney

Matthew Greissing

Tricia Lester

Nikole Gavrilidis

Liz Mitros

Katie Sechrist

**Contact Information:**

(301) 447-5246

echo@msmary.edu

donating have contributed to that. We will proudly wear out Mount shirts as we join the thousands of others walking to make a difference and to help all those affected by breast cancer.

At my sisters funeral, her husband said "look around at the hundreds of

Catholic, and apostolic church when we have such great members lifting each other up. Even if we don't get our medical miracles there are always gifts of peace, trust, hope, etc."

I'd like to add to that and say that we are proud to be members of this Mount

Team T-Mar:

**Barbara Levy, Faculty Secretary  
Math/Computer Science/Psychology**

**Joel Levy, Class 2008**

**Sara Garbarini, Class 2009**

To the Mount community:

My great fondness for you, my colleagues and students, makes writing this letter very difficult. Yet it is because of this very fondness that I feel compelled to share with you some of my reasons for leaving the Mount.

Although there are a host of personal and professional contributing factors, ultimately, my decision to leave is motivated by concern about gradual but marked changes in the character and direction of our institution, changes which, if left unchecked, will continue to grow in momentum and force in the coming years.

At the heart of our institution is a creative and dynamic tension between our commitment to liberal learning and our identity as a Catholic institution. For decades, the Mount has been a place where this rich dialogue between faith and reason was celebrated. When it is embraced openly and humbly, this complex and difficult exchange challenges us to become better scholars, teachers, students, and community members. In such an atmosphere, reason can deepen and enhance faith, while faith can illuminate and enrich reason.

Sadly, the institutional embrace of this dynamic and often messy dialogue between faith and reason can no longer be taken for granted. Our long-standing tradition of being an open, diverse,

and dynamic community of inquirers is rapidly being replaced with an atmosphere that is more narrow, uniform, and dogmatic. Rich and nuanced conversations about what it means to be a vibrant Catholic university in America are being replaced with superficial gestures and simplistic "nose counting." As Pope Benedict XVI reminded us during his visit with Catholic college and university presidents, "Catholic identity is not dependent upon statistics."

Though many seem to imply otherwise, the Catholic intellectual tradition is not a single, undifferentiated stream of thought. There are many branching tributaries and estuaries, each of which is an essential part of the whole. Debate, disagreement, and controversy are not only an essential part of the academy, they are necessary to a truly reasoned faith.

At the Mount, an increasingly insular and reactionary atmosphere is now suffocating these once dynamic conversations. If it is to blossom, the fragile dialectic between faith and reason must be situated firmly in the ground of a humble recognition of our own fallibility. Arrogance and hubris quickly degenerate into a deadening dogmatism that weakens faith and blocks the road to genuine inquiry. So marked are these changes that even some senior colleagues who have ded-

icated so much of their lives to the Mount no longer feel welcome or at home here.

As the Mount stands on the threshold of its third century, it is my sincere hope that it will once again embrace its identity as a broad, pluralistic, and diverse community of inquirers, that it will embrace fully the difficult, complex, and nuanced dialogue between faith and reason, and that it will recognize again that genuine diversity of perspective, background, and interest are not regrettable areas for improvement, they are essential characteristics of a vital community.

While in one sense this letter serves as a goodbye, I hope that my thoughts will provoke the sort of conversation that has been painfully absent in the face of these fundamental changes to an institution that we love. May the Mount welcome its third-century with the courage to embrace fully the creative tension inherent in its identity as a "Catholic liberal arts institution of higher education dedicated to liberal learning in the pursuit of truth."

**Respectfully yours,  
Brian G. Henning, Ph.D.**

**Signed editorials reflect the personal view of their author(s) and not necessarily that of The Mountain Echo.**