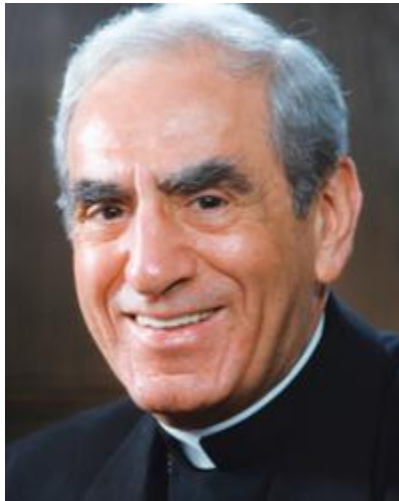


Legatus' gain is also its loss

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Legatus' first ecclesiastical advisor, Cardinal Bevilacqua, steps down . . .



Cardinal Anthony Bevilacqua

Cardinal Anthony Bevilacqua
Legatus Ecclesiastical Advisor

by Matthew A. Rarey

Although still publicly active on the cusp of his tenth decade, His Eminence Anthony Cardinal Bevilacqua, 87, has been retiring from official capacities in recent years — most notably in 2003 as Archbishop of Philadelphia, which he led as one of the most prominent voices of orthodoxy in the Church in America. And just last month he announced that he will step down as Legatus' ecclesiastical advisor, a position he has held since 1987.

Intimately involved with Legatus almost since its founding, Cardinal Bevilacqua will leave big shoes to fill, which is somehow fitting for the son of Italian immigrants who owned a shoeshine shop in Queens and taught their son the value of pulling oneself up by one's bootstraps.

“In an age when relativism and materialism pervade our society, I have been edified by the example shown by Legatus members in their efforts to serve as ‘ambassadors in the marketplace,’” he said. “They live the mission statement of Legatus in every aspect of their lives — to ‘study, live and spread the faith.’ They are the stone thrown into the water which sends ripples far and wide. It has been my honor and privilege to serve as ecclesiastical advisor.”

Cardinal Bevilacqua assures members that he will continue to do for them what he has been doing for a long time: “I pray that our Heavenly Father will continue to bless all of the members of Legatus and their families.”

One of 11 children born to an immigrant family in New York City, Cardinal Bevilacqua’s priestly life has been the clerical version of living the American dream. Ordained to the priesthood in 1949, he spent most of his ministry in New York City in a myriad of capacities: pastoring at parishes, serving as chancellor and auxiliary bishop of his native Brooklyn diocese, and teaching at both the seminary and university levels. An accomplished scholar, he holds a doctorate in canon law from the Pontifical Gregorian University, a master’s degree in political science from Columbia University and a doctorate in civil law from St. John’s University. If he so desired, he is entitled to practice law in New York and Pennsylvania.

His Legatus involvement began in 1987 when, as bishop of Pittsburgh, he welcomed a chapter to his diocese. Within a few months, he was appointed archbishop of Philadelphia and would spend the next 23 years promoting Legatus among his fellow bishops and at the Vatican. His enthusiasm is born of esteem for Legatus’ mission to encourage lay evangelism in the Church.

“I am really awed by the members’ holiness, by their dedication to the Church and to spreading the Gospel in their own lives,” he told *Legatus Magazine* in a 2007 interview. “I have been inspired by the holiness of so many of them [just by] living the life of a Catholic layman or laywoman [without] having to get up on a soapbox and start preaching.” Legatus’ living witness “inspired me to grow in holiness, and it taught me more and more of the importance of the laity from the way they acted. I want to thank Tom [Monaghan] and all of Legatus for inspiring me to be a better priest, a better bishop and a better cardinal.”

Shortly after founding Legatus, Monaghan asked Cardinal Bevilacqua to become ecclesiastical advisor on the recommendation of the apostolic nuncio to Washington. It was not a hard sell: Monaghan already was impressed by His Eminence’s support for the greater role of the laity envisioned by the Second Vatican Council. In turn, Cardinal Bevilacqua already was impressed by Monaghan’s own enthusiasm for lay evangelization. It was a perfect match.

“It is difficult to summarize the importance of one who has filled an invaluable role,” Monaghan said in tribute to his dear friend. “Yet, when presented with how to describe the many years of His Eminence’s service to Legatus, that is the word that comes to my mind — *invaluable*.”

“Cardinal Bevilacqua has served as Legatus’ ecclesiastical advisor essentially from our inception. The credibility, especially with the hierarchy, that we as an organization garnered from his association with us was monumental.

“His extraordinarily generous service over these many years to Legatus as an organization, and by extension to each member, has been a source of great inspiration and encouragement to all, in particular the board of governors and those who had the opportunity to interact with him on a personal level. Of particular note, in the early years of the organization, the Cardinal’s wisdom, grace and diplomacy were critical in helping to overcome some trials facing Legatus. With his assistance and counsel, we were able to maneuver through some rocky waters and emerge healthy and whole.

“Simply put, Cardinal Bevilacqua has been an invaluable asset to Legatus as we have attempted to live out our mission in service to the Church. It is with great personal gratitude that I take this opportunity to thank and honor him on behalf of the entire organization.”

Matthew A. Rarey is Legatus Magazine’s editorial assistant.



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