Dear Friends,

As many of you are aware, I was formally installed as President of St. John’s University this past September, and I am honored to serve. As a member and as Chair of the University’s Board of Trustees for many years, I know the traditions and rich history of this institution, and I am committed to continuing both.

When I arrived back in August, one of my top priorities was to meet the St. John’s community — to go out and speak with the students, alumni, faculty, administrators and staff who comprise this magnificent institution. And thanks to events such as New Student Convocation, Faculty Convocation, SJU Oktoberfest and the 16th Annual President’s Dinner, I have been able to greet so many of you, and I am overwhelmed by everyone’s passion for St. John’s.

Most of all, though, I have come to realize what truly sets our community apart: we always serve others.

Nothing exemplifies this more perfectly than the Midnight Run program, a wonderful initiative that our students have been participating in since 2003. Each semester, hundreds of students take part in these weekly “runs,” bringing sandwiches, clothing, toiletries and more to the homeless of Manhattan. In the true spirit of Vincentian service, they reflect on their experiences and, as a result, gain a greater understanding of what it means to live compassionately.

The cover story of this issue of St. John’s University Alumni Magazine describes the Midnight Run program in much greater detail. As you will see, our young men and women are profoundly impacted by service and, once they graduate, carry the Vincentian spirit with them to communities near and far. Simply put, we can take pride in knowing that St. John’s students and alumni are quite literally changing the world.

In the past few months, I have been absolutely amazed at the warmth and kindness St. John’s has afforded me. With the Vincentian mission so strong here on campus, though, it is no surprise that our community is as generous and inviting as it is.

Let me close by thanking you for all that you do for St. John’s and expressing my hope that I will have the opportunity to meet more of you in the months ahead. In the meantime, if you would like to contact me, my email address is levesquj@stjohns.edu.

Joseph L. Levesque, C.M.
President