

DEDICATION OF THE PADOVANO COMMONS

September 26, 2018

Remarks by Dr. Anthony T. Padovano, Distinguished Professor of Literature and Philosophy

After 45 years teaching at this institution, from its very inception until just two years ago, I am deeply grateful for the experience of being here. I trust that the vast majority listening to me share in the gratitude. I was a founding member of Ramapo College brought on board when cows and horses covered the property now busy with cars and students. I could not have imagined then that this site would have achieved the growth and beauty we call Ramapo College. The hopes all of us had then have been exceeded and indeed, the hopes I had for this Commons have been surpassed.

There are two people I would cite for having made a decisive difference. One of them is Cathy Davey; the other is Peter Mercer.

I worked with them on the Spiritual Center and the Padovano Peace Pavilion and now on this Padovano Commons. I have been startled and amazed time and again at their ability to be hopeful, as we put together these dream buildings. They never let the inevitable setbacks along the way dim their spirits. From their hopes, I was given hope. Now that the buildings are completed, the hope they taught me has become gratitude.

Cathy worked more closely with me and Peter became the captain of this ship he would not let sink. I am grateful that both Cathy and Peter were on board until the conclusion of both projects.

What we need most in life is one another. We are at our best when we reflect, with those we care about, on what gives us meaning and how well we give ourselves to it.

The Padovano Peace Pavilion gives us the opportunity to pursue our meaning in life. The Padovano Commons is where we join with and share friendship and a meal with those who

became friends along the way. We cannot meet regularly at meals with one another without friendship growing between us.

Gratitude is at the heart of our humanity. What truly nourishes us is gratitude for what we have become and gratitude for sharing life with friends. If we learn to be grateful with one another and for one another we shall find our way in life.

It is living without a companion that brings us close to despair. Sitting down with a companion and sharing a meal is deeply gratifying and helps us find our way. The Latin root of the English word "companion" is sharing a meal with one another. "Companion" means "with bread"; cum ... pane.

One of the nicest things we do for one another is treating the other at our expense to a dinner side by side. I found that, when I was doing research over the years, if I invited the person I wished to interview to share dinner with me, that person hardly ever refused.

May we find each other often in the sharing of bread together. May this happen many times in this Commons. May what is most common about this place be the friendships that are nourished here.