

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

When I graduated from Colonia Senior High School in New Jersey, I thought I was pretty much done with the place. But five years later, I was invited to come to a reunion. It was fun to see some of my classmates once again. We realized that while our high school days were fun, many of us had moved on to new facets of our lives. For some, it was college, which brought with it a new loyalty to a new alma mater. For some, it was military service and the pride of serving one's country. For some, it was the workday world, with all of its requirements and responsibilities.

We went for twenty-five years without another reunion, for a variety of reasons. But at our 30th class reunion, we realized what we had missed by not keeping in better touch with one another. I found out that I had always envied Handsome Bob because he always had girls following him around. Turns out, Handsome Bob envied me because I was always hanging with the "smart" kids and he wished that he had been smarter in high school. We've since had a 31st reunion and a 35th reunion, and, all too soon, will gather for a 40th reunion. For those of us who appreciated what our high school days were about, we look forward to these gatherings. For others, it is just another social event to be overlooked on their calendars.

Some Brothers of Alpha Chi Rho look at their undergraduate days in the Fraternity through a similar lens. It was a fun couple of years being in the Fraternity as an undergraduate, but now they have moved on to something else. Yet, one of the things we say about our membership in Alpha Chi Rho is "Once a Crow, always a Crow!" Perhaps if we, like many of us in the world of religious leadership, stopped thinking about "membership" and focused more on "discipleship", it would make a difference in how Brothers felt about our Fraternity once they leave the college campus.

Any of us can be a member of most any group. Send a donation check or a membership dues payment, and you can be a member. But to be a disciple of a group – to live every day with the standards of the group and to live every day so that others could see in your life that your discipline meant something to you – would make a major difference in how others perceived that group.

Many colleges and universities are clamping down on fraternities, because of the pre-conceived notions and stereotypes perpetuated by the media. "If one fraternity does something wrong, they must all be doing something wrong!" Too often, graduate brothers of a fraternity do nothing to challenge that assumption. The attitude becomes "I had my fun while I was an undergraduate – let these kids fight their own battles." That belies the credo of "Once a Crow, always a Crow!"

We Graduate Brothers have a responsibility – a sacred Bond – to fight for the right for our Fraternity to exist on campuses. AXP is different than some other fraternities. We make a BIG deal out of academic achievement, and celebrate it every year with scholarship awards and recognitions of exceptional Chapters. We make a BIG deal out of community service and look for ways to boast about outstanding Chapters and lift them up as role models for other Chapters. We make a BIG deal out of expanding on campuses that match the ideals of Alpha Chi Rho; we are not a Fraternity that expands simply to expand. We want to be on campuses where we can "Be Men" and help others grow into that ideal. We want to be a Fraternity that meets the needs of the undergraduate Brother, recognizing that that commitment becomes an investment in our future, as well as the future of the Brother.

At the Leadership Conclave in January 2011, I will be talking about how your Fraternity intends to strengthen the connection between the undergraduate Brother and the Graduate Brothers. In the next issue of the Garnet and White, I'll summarize all of this and give some suggestions of ways for all of us to strengthen our ties – our Bond – with Alpha Chi Rho, because "Once a Crow, always a Crow!"

In peace,
Pastor David Jost
AXP National Chaplain
Eta Phi '75

