John P. Felice

Founding Father of Loyola’s Rome Center
(1923–2008)

John P. Felice, founder and director emeritus of the John Felice Rome Center and a retired professor of theology, passed away at his home in Glenview, Illinois, on the morning of January 31, 2008. He was 84. Felice was an educator famed for his remarkable leadership skills and diplomacy and for his warm, charitable, and untiring spirit. He was beloved by the Loyola and Rome Center communities, and by the many other people whose lives he touched. “To me, John was a wonderful example of Ignatian availability and dedication, putting his daily life to work for the greater glory of God and for others around him,” says Loyola President Michael J. Garanzini, S.J. “His generosity of spirit was extraordinary. He was truly a person for others.”

Born in 1923 in what was then British Malta, now the Republic of Malta, Felice served as a British intelligence liaison officer during World War II and after the war, was received as a member of the Society of Jesus and ordained to the priesthood in 1957. He remained active in priestly ministry for over 15 years, and counted among his friends many Church leaders, including Pope John XXIII.

Felice was appointed assistant professor of theology at Loyola University Chicago in 1959. During a trip to Rome in 1961, Felice met with the president of the Italian Republic and American diplomat Clare Booth Luce, and the idea of opening a permanent American study-abroad program anchored in Rome was born. After 45 years and three campus moves, the John Felice Rome Center, as it is now known, has more than 14,000 alumni who live throughout the country and the world.

A man famous for his accomplishments and generosity of spirit, Felice received numerous national and international awards. In 2004, Father Garanzini recognized Felice’s commitment to the center which he had nurtured for so many years by rechristening it the John Felice Rome Center. In 2006, Loyola awarded Felice the “Heart of Loyola” to honor his extraordinary generosity and lifelong commitment to Jesuit education. “John Felice was totally committed to the Jesuit ideals of educating the whole person—mind, body, and spirit,” says Father Garanzini. “For over 40 years, John’s passion for the Rome Center program, and especially its students, was truly remarkable.”

Felice is survived by his beloved wife of 33 years, Mary Kate Felice; his brother, Joseph; six nieces and nephews; a flourishing educational center in the hills of Rome; and the thousands of individuals all over the world whose lives he indelibly changed.
Dear Friends:

The news of the passing of John Felice has brought a great sadness to the center that bears his name, but it is a sadness filled with gratitude for all that John did to make the Rome Center a reality, and the countless years of stewardship he provided to the JFRC. At the beginning of 2008, John was proud of his thriving center, filled with students having the experience of their lives, and the continual progress and updates happening at the JFRC.

We started the spring semester with a new orientation program that took our students to Assisi. We sponsored new trips to lesser-known places in Italy that revealed the hidden side of the country. We began new courses, some with an emphasis on women’s studies. We began to fully “Italianize” our curriculum to create a deeper and broader appreciation for the wonderful country that hosts us. We commenced a new program to “beautify” our center with new posters, artwork, plants, cleaning, and restoration, thanks to the kindness and generosity of our splendid alumni. We improved our method of working with alumni by communicating more, meeting more, and listening more. We sparked new and very productive relationships with institutions like the Center of American Studies and the American Academy as well as forged new ties to the U.S. Embassy to Rome and the U.S. Embassy to the Holy See, the United Nations, and multinational firms like Telecom Italia and RAI. We took the first steps in implementing our strategic plan to make real the extraordinary vision of John Felice and Loyola President Michael J. Garanzini, S.J.

This year will be marked as a turning point in the history of the JFRC and we hope you will join us in celebrating our new beginnings. Now, more than ever, your presence at the JFRC All-Class Reunion in April is requested and desired. There is no better way to celebrate John’s life and the JFRC than in a gathering of people sharing stories and laughter from their time spent studying, living, and learning in the Eternal City.

Warm regards,

Emilio Iodice
Director

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Deacon Sam Kachuba (North American College/JFRC Campus Ministry), John Chandler, S.J. (director, JFRC Campus Ministry), and Michael Kennedy, S.J. (California Province and delegate to the 35th General Congregation), celebrating Mass of the Holy Spirit at the JFRC.
All-Class Reunion in Chicago

APRIL 12-13  Spend the weekend in the Windy City for the 2008 John Felice Rome Center All-Class Reunion Weekend

Festivities will kick off on Saturday, April 12, when we take over Scoozi!, one of Chicago’s favorite Italian restaurants for over 20 years. We’ll have the whole place to ourselves for a fun-filled evening of great Italian food (lots of it), great Italian wine, and great Italian company. Buon Appetito!

Since we know how much fun will be had on Saturday night, we'll start things a little late on Sunday, with a brunch at 10:30 a.m. at Loyola's Lake Shore Campus. While enjoying good company and good food, you'll also have the opportunity to privately record your favorite memories of the Rome Center's beloved founder, John Felice. These recordings will be compiled in a special DVD to be presented to John's lovely wife of 33 years, Kate Felice.

Immediately following brunch, a private memorial Mass honoring our founder will be held in Loyola's newly renovated Madonna della Strada Chapel at 12:30 p.m.

To wrap up the day, we'll offer a tour of a Lake Shore Campus that, even if you attended Loyola, many of you won't recognize. A lot's been happening at Loyola lately, and this guided tour will showcase the campus's new buildings and plans for the future.

Register online at LUC.edu/romereunion.

John Felice Rome Center
All-Class Reunion Weekend

Events are priced on an a-la-carte basis.

SATURDAY  DINNER AT SCOOZI! *
6:00 p.m.  All–Class Cocktail Reception
7:00 p.m.  Dinner with Your Classmates
$100 per person in advance
$125 per person for walk-ins
$175 per couple in advance

* Dinner includes passed appetizers and pizzas, four-course, sit-down dinner and full bar. Complimentary valet parking available.

SUNDAY
10:30 a.m.  Brunch at Lake Shore Campus
$25 per person
12:30 p.m.  Memorial Mass at Madonna della Strada
1:45 p.m.  Campus Tour

Questions can be addressed to romereunion@luc.edu.
**Campus Beautification**

The current JFRC at Monte Mario has been described in many ways: fascinating, exciting, life changing, but “beautiful” has rarely been the first word to leap to mind. An effort is under way to change that. Last fall, new statues of famous Romans were added to the JFRC grounds as part of a beautification project, which has been led by Marilyn Vitale and Fausto Fecchio, with the support of members from the Class of 1977/78. Susana and Emilio have taken a personal interest in this project, and, as a result of this combined effort, the JFRC now has a radically improved campus environment.

**News**

**JFRC to Host Conference on Islam, Catholicism, and Democracy**

The John Felice Rome Center and Loyola University Chicago are organizing an international conference, “The Cross, the Crescent and the Ballot Box: Catholic and Islamic Dialogue on the Rule of Law and International Democracy Promotion,” to be held in Rome April 2-3, 2008. Panelists will include renowned international scholars, representatives of the Catholic and Islamic faiths, and members of international organizations.

Conference attendees will explore the relationship between two of the world’s most prominent religions—Catholicism and Islam—and the promotion of democracy and the rule of law. “Current scholarship on international democracy promotion has a noteworthy lack of discussion on the role of religion in the promotion of international democratic practices,” says Peter J. Schraeder, professor of political science at Loyola and the coordinator of the conference. “With this conference, we intend to promote a scholarly, interdisciplinary, and inter-religious dialogue on this neglected topic.”

The conference will be held in the Centro Studi Americani (Center for American Studies), located in the heart of Rome in the Antici Mattei Palace, a stunning conference venue built between 1598 and 1618. Although all of the presentations will be in English, an on-site translation service will provide simultaneous translation (English/Italian) for non English speakers. For further information and a full list of panelists, see the conference Web site at [LUC.edu/jfrc](http://www.LUC.edu/jfrc).

**Life at JFRC: Online**

Over the course of the ’07–’08 school year, two Loyola students have kept a blog of their travels, experiences, and impressions of life abroad. One of the students, Laura Burns, is a journalism student and Ricci Scholar. During her time at the JFRC, in the fall semester of 2007, Laura kept a thorough and engaging record of her thoughts and experiences while studying and traveling abroad. As part of the Ricci Scholars program, Laura has moved on to China, where she will write about her life at the Beijing Center for Chinese Studies throughout the spring semester. To read her blog, please visit [loyolachicago.typepad.com/laura_burns](http://www.loyolachicago.typepad.com/laura_burns).

Jay Mathur, a Loyola student studying biology and business, will be keeping a Web journal of his time at the JFRC during the spring semester. To read his blog, please visit [loyolachicago.typepad.com/jay](http://www.loyolachicago.typepad.com/jay). Both Laura and Jay’s online journals are part of Loyola University Chicago’s student blog initiative. To view all of the student blogs, visit the homepage at [LUC.edu](http://www.LUC.edu) and click on the image of a binder with various pictures of students.
During the inaugural year of the John Felice Rome Center, a tour of the Middle East was offered over the winter term break. The tour quickly became a JFRC tradition with stops in Cairo, Tel Aviv, Amman, and Beirut. Unfortunately, due to political turmoil in the region, JFRC ventures to the Middle East are now few and far between. The JFRC has recently started some innovative programs to remain connected with this fascinating and important part of the world.

In October, three Muslim students, two of whom arrived from Lebanon and one from Tunisia, joined members of the JFRC community for a three-day interfaith retreat hosted in Assisi and facilitated by Todd Waller, associate director for student life, and John Chandler, S.J., director of campus ministry. Nine JFRC students joined the three guests for a weekend retreat in which stories were shared that revealed a remarkable level of common ground between Catholicism and Islam. Muslim lecturers included Omar Sillah from The Gambia and Lamis EL-Muhtaseb from Jordan. The event was coordinated by Student Life Assistant Carla Mollica and was funded by a generous gift from Tom (JFRC ’63-’64) and Kathy Rucker (JFRC ’63-’64).

In addition to the lectures, the attendees shared moments of prayer together. Rabab Waldi Alkhatib of St. Joseph’s College Lebanon, one of the Muslim attendees, describes the feeling of sharing her faith with others: “I felt such an enormous responsibility to represent my religion, Islam, in the moment that I was asked to pray before the Americans. The following morning, I experienced another powerful moment when Father Chandler led us through a prayer, followed by a meditation. It is so obvious that we are all searching in our respective faiths to find deep meaning in this life.”

Sam Feigenbaum, a Loyola student, was also moved by the experience: “The presentations were insightful, but what stuck out was Rabab’s performance of one of her five daily Muslim prayers.” Feigenbaum, an atheist, learned about more than just Islam at the retreat. “The contrast between each faith’s prayers was stark, and I learned a great deal about how Catholics pray.”

Aya Hassan Jaber from St. Joseph’s College Lebanon summarized the feeling of the participants when asked to reflect on the weekend’s gathering: “I realized that we are all here for the same goal, to work toward creating a more peaceful world.”

“We owe a great debt to the Rucker family,” says Father Chandler. “Their generous gift made it possible for young people who have limited access to one another’s worlds to gather for a meaningful and heartfelt exchange.” Hopefully, this meeting between worlds will only be the start of a rich tradition of interfaith dialogue and exchange at the John Felice Rome Center.
John Felice Rome Center alumni have great passion for life, for culture, and for the center that gave them the opportunity of a lifetime. This year, when asked to honor the memory of your study-abroad experience, as well as the Rome Center’s founder and former director, John Felice, you stepped up more than ever. To date, six classes have reached and surpassed the initial goal of $25,000 to establish a scholarship in their name.

As you can see below, several class years are very close to accomplishing the same feat. Once your class’s scholarship reaches endowment level, every year a JFRC student with demonstrated financial need will be awarded a scholarship in your class’s name. If all of the first 30 class years endow a scholarship, a life-altering experience at the JFRC will be put within reach of 30 more students.

Alumni and friends of the John Felice Rome Center who make personal, annual gifts of $250 or more become members of the Società di Donatori. Those who join this club in fiscal year 2008 (July 1, 2007–June 30, 2008) will be listed in the honor roll of donors in the fall issue of Il Bollettino. To become a member, look for the spring solicitation in the mail in the coming months, or make your gift online at LUC.edu/alumni/giving. If you have any questions or comments, please contact Robin Miller, annual giving officer, at rmiller@luc.edu or 312.915.6363.

Thank you all for your critical support, and with your help, we look forward to the continual growth of the JFRC!

**JFRC Class Scholarships**

*Years in bold have endowed scholarships.*

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Devin Reddy, a JFRC student and Loyola junior from Tempe, Arizona, prepares to roll a wheel of cheese uphill as part of a JFRC excursion to the town of Altari, in Tuscany, to participate in its annual cheese festival.
Professor Nicholson has been teaching at the John Felice Rome Center for 40 years, and running the bookstore for almost as long. Most JFRC alumni remember Professor Nicholson as the instructor of the “Art in Rome” course, a fascinating and thorough on-site art history tour through some of the highlights of the Eternal City.

Q: When was the first time you visited Rome?
After the Christmas of 1963, my first year as a graduate student in Belgium.

Q: Are there any churches you haven’t seen in Rome?
Yes, mainly those in the newer parts of Rome. But I often come across an older church or chapel in the historic center that is a new experience.

Q: If you didn’t live in Rome, in which city would you like to live?
London.

Q: Has anything particularly strange ever happened while teaching your class in the city?
Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip once drove by the class during a state visit.

Q: Has Rome changed while you’ve been living there?
Yes, in many ways. Negative: more crowded, more congested and polluted, and much more expensive. Positive: easier access to museums and sites, extensive restoration of monuments, restriction of traffic in some areas, e.g., Piazza Navona. An entire book could be written about this.

Q: If you taught “Art in Chicago,” what would you show your students?
The Art Institute, the Museum of Contemporary Art, Frank Lloyd Wright architecture in the suburbs, and Millennium Park would be high on the list.

Q: Do you ever give JFRC alumni tours of the city?
Except for the all-year reunion almost two years ago, I have not given formal tours to alumni groups. However, sometimes former students contact me, and, if possible, I am happy to spend time showing them around.

Q: Are there any hidden gems in the city that tourists often miss?
Yes. Churches: San Clemente near the Colosseum, Santa Sabina on the Aventine Hill, San Giorgio in Velabro near the Tiber, Santa Maria and Santa Cecilia in Trastevere, Santa Maria del Popolo; Museums: Palazzo Altemps near Piazza Navona, Palazzo Massimo near the Stazione Termini, Palazzo Barberini; views of Rome from the Pincian Hill and the Aventine Hill.

Q: While teaching “Art in Rome,” do you always stick to the same sites, or do you change it from semester to semester?
I usually keep to the same sites for logistical reasons, that is, easy access by public transport from the Rome Center.

Q: How long have you been running the bookstore? Do you still do it?
Yes, I still do it. I started in 1969. Interested applicants for the post are welcome.

Please note: The Forum will return in the fall 2008 issue of Il Bollettino.
Il Bollettino

JFRC Gallery Project

Have your photos from your time in Rome displayed in the JFRC hallways! The Alumni Relations Office is currently collecting photos from alumni for possible display at the JFRC. Your photographs will make current students aware of the long tradition of the JFRC as well as commemorate your own unique experiences. For more information on submission guidelines visit LUC.edu/alumni/jfrc.

Be part of the JFRC Gallery Project

John Felice Rome Center
Annual All-Class Reunion in Chicago will be the weekend of April 12–13, 2008. Join your fellow alumni for a weekend of friendship, food, and fun—Roman style!

For more details, see page 3!