

Eagle's Wings

**Executive Director
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Ministry**

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RCIA Information

Contact Sr. Nora
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**Weddings and
Baptisms at
Alumni Chapel**

Call Fr. John Maher
286-8415

Mass Intentions
are accepted for each
Weekday and Sunday
Mass for \$10 per
Mass.

Call 286-8400 or stop
by the office.

**Campus Ministry
Web Page**

[www.niagara.edu/
ministry](http://www.niagara.edu/ministry)

Newsletter On-line

from the above
website, click on
NEWSLETTER

Mass Schedule
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FROM THE DIRECTOR



My favorite time of day when I was a kid was right after supper because my job was to dry the dishes. As the oldest girl in a family of six children, that was my "privilege". You see, this was probably the only time that I could spend alone with my mother. I admit here for the first time that on occasion, when our topic of conversation was of special interest to me, I would place the dishes that I had already dried in the wash pile so that our time together might be extended a bit longer before she had to attend to the needs of the other five. Talking with my mom was more important to me than any TV show that might be on, and I even sacrificed getting the "good chair" in the living room to be there with her in the kitchen.

This time of year, November, the fall, holidays, darkness, is a time to reflect on the circle of life, and in particular, the reality of death. On November 2nd the church celebrates All Souls Day, and we remember loved ones who have died. Shortly thereafter we celebrate Thanksgiving, and there is always a somber remembrance of those not at the table this year. Christmas follows after the madness of shopping and the ornaments on the tree tell the story of joys and sorrows that are a part of this circle of life. My mom died ten years ago. She was only 70 years old. She taught me about life, about friendship, about love. She brought me to school and I learned to love learning. She brought me to Church and I learned to love God. She taught me to care for the down-trodden, and I followed in the footsteps of St. Vincent de Paul, one of her favorite Saints, and became a Daughter of Charity. She listened to me. She believed in me. She made me feel important. She gave me life and she brought me face to face with death, her own.

I write about this to encourage all who read it to spend time during this time of year thinking about the circle of life; when it seems so dark, when the holidays are approaching and our memories of days past are vivid, when the colors that make the season of fall brilliant turn to the gray-white days of winter. Jesus once taught his disciples that "unless a grain of wheat falls to earth and dies it remains just a grain of wheat". Gratitude for the many grains of wheat that have grown beyond what we could have even imagined can be the result of reflecting on such things.

Merry Thanksgiving, Happy Christmas, and "Let it snow, let it snow, let it snow"!

Sr. Nora Gatto, DC
Exec. Dir. of University Mission and Ministry



Chaplain's Corner, November-December, 2007

Fr. John T. Maher, C.M.
University Chaplain
Dying days, Rising Lights

"Dying you destroyed our death, rising, you restored our life. Lord Jesus, Come in glory!"

- from the Eucharistic prayer

Sometimes words we utter in prayer and hymns we sing at Mass can become rote recitations; at least I know that's true for me. This point hit me recently while celebrating weekday Mass in Alumni Chapel. After the consecration, the priest invites all to join him in praying the "memorial acclamation" which summarizes the majesty and mystery of Christ's life, death, and resurrection. The one above gave me pause, for several reasons.

Recently, I presided at the funeral of my Uncle Jim, the last surviving O'Connor on my mother's side. Uncle Jim, an articulate, educated lawyer, had descended into the depths of dementia, suffering greatly the last few years. Indeed, a heart-rending moment with him was a recent conversation simply when he asked me "Why am I still alive?"

Additionally, this year has seen many members of the University community mourning the loss of loved ones. The steady list of names prayed for at the "Prayer of the Faithful" each Sunday is a reminder that life and death constantly intersect whether we are ready or not. Perhaps it is appropriate to reflect on the above memorial acclamation.

Our faith tells us death is not the end, and that we are destined for eternal life. In November, the Church asks us to reflect on death's reality not from fear but from faith. Beginning with 'All Saints Day', we reflect, pray, and emulate the Saints in heaven – our spiritual forebears - and learn from their lives. On All Souls Day, we pray for deceased family members and friends, reflecting with gratitude for their lives.

In November, as the outside world around us grows darker and colder, we pray in remembrance of the deceased recalling the words of St. John's Gospel: "*The light shines on in the darkness, a darkness that did not overcome it.*" (Jn.1:5) God's light, the warm glow of love and comfort given to all, is the perfect antidote to our fearful, death-denying culture of contemporary life. And Jesus' life, death, and resurrection show us that reality.

That's why November's dying leads to December's rising. Advent, season of grace and goodness, readies us for Christmas, the coming of Christ in our hearts and homes. We pray "*Come, Lord Jesus*" so we can look beyond the losses to the love of God always ready and waiting to encircle us. "*Lord Jesus, Come in glory...*" The Lord Jesus comes to us, not demanding an answer, but begging a surrender of trust and faith.

Maybe this Advent, as short and busy a season as it is, can be a time we carve out a few moments each day for prayer, reflection, and thanksgiving for the God who loves us and, by his death and resurrection, restores us. In the mystery of Jesus' life we see that, if we can accept the reality of death, we will be able to live the endless beauty of life.

"INVISIBLE CHILDREN" Update...

A subgroup of NU Pax Christi is "Invisible Children." The 'Invisible Children' are children in Northern Uganda who are forced into slavery and into the military. The national organization, "Invisible Children" raises awareness concerning this disturbing issue and raises funds to help get these children off the streets and into school and better housing situations.

The gala which was to take place on November third has been moved to April. Stay tune for further information. Thanks so much to all those who have been most supportive of "Invisible Children." To learn more about "Invisible Children" contact Monica Saltarelli in Campus Ministry at ms@niagara.edu or give her a call at 286-8409. Invisible Children's web site is www.invisiblechildren.com.

B.A.S.I.C.

Please keep in your prayers the fourteen students who will be traveling to the Vincentian missions in Panama, January 4-15, 2008 accompanied by Dr. Joe Little and Monica Saltarelli. Twelve students along with Fr. John Maher, C.M. and Kathy Sydor will venture to the St. Vincent de Paul Center in Philadelphia to do Vincentian service. Eighteen students will travel with Jerod Sikorskyj and Stephanie Newman to the St. John the Baptist Parish Center in Brooklyn to become acquainted with the Vincentian service in the Bedford – Stuyvesant area.

A different Sort of Gift...

Do you have someone on your Christmas or Hanukkah list that seems to have everything? Perhaps, this year you want to be a bit more mindful of where the gifts you buy come from or to what consequence was this gift produced. NU Pax Christi challenges us all to think about our shopping experience. Look for the fair-trade label when buying coffee or other merchandise this holiday season so you can be assured that the working conditions and wages were fair. There are several websites that can be of assistance including Catholic Relief Services at www.crs.org.

For the person that has everything – why not give them a gift that keeps on giving. Oxfam, World Vision, Heifer, and Catholic Relief Services are three organizations that offer gift opportunities ranging from \$10 and up that actually help the poor. It can be anything from seeds, chickens to cows and goats that help people meet their basic needs. Check out these websites for further information: www.oxfam.org, www.heifer.org, and www.worldvision.org.

The Giving Tree

Once again Campus Ministry is offering the opportunity to share our Vincentian hearts with children that are less fortunate this holiday season. You are invited to take an ornament from the Christmas tree located outside the Campus Ministry Office in LLGC or off the tree in Alumni Chapel and buy a gift for that needy child. Please return the *unwrapped gift with the tag* back to Campus Ministry no later than Monday, *December 3rd*. The gifts will be distributed to the *Joan Male Center* formerly known as (Parents Anonymous), and to needy children in Niagara Falls. Your assistance as always is greatly appreciated. Feel free to contact Campus Ministry if you have any questions at 286-8400.





Interfaith Council

Interested in meeting people from different religions? Come to the Interfaith Council meeting, where student representatives learn about each other, experience the spiritualities of other religions, and help plan campus events. If you're interested, come to our last two bi-weekly Friday meetings of this semester, (Nov. 16 and Nov. 30, 2pm, LL Gallagher, Lounge). For more information, contact Jerod J. Sikorskyj, Campus Minister @ 716-286-8412, or jjis@niagara.edu

Christmas Tree Blessing

Enjoy decorating the family Christmas tree? We want you to create a special ornament for your student club, staff/faculty department, athletic team, dorm, or RA staff, etc. Join us for our NU university Christmas Tree Blessing, 12:00pm, Wednesday, December 5th. Hosted in LL Gallagher, the event features live Christmas music, cookies, and hot drinks to warm both body and soul. For more details, contact Jerod J. Sikorskyj, Campus Minister @ 716-286-8412, or jjis@niagara.edu

Lenten Journal

While it's not even Advent yet, we are preparing to compose the 2008 Lenten Journal. We invite you to share from your own wisdom and sense of spirituality by writing a short reflection on a Gospel reading for one of the days of lent (about 125 words). ***If you are interested in writing a reflection, email jjis@niagara.edu by Monday, December 10th.*** Once you respond back, we will send you a scripture quote for one of the days in Lent and ask that you ponder it, write a short reflection on what it means to you, and return it ASAP to me, Jerod Sikorskyj at jjis@niagara.edu. ***Your reflection must be turned in no later than Monday, January 21, 2008. Thank you.*** If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me, Jerod Sikorskyj.

Catholic Bible Study

Interested in learning about the Bible? Come to the Catholic Bible Study every Tuesday @ 5:05pm-6:05pm in the back Chapel. For more details, contact Jerod J. Sikorskyj, Campus Minister @ 716-286-8412, or jjis@niagara.edu

Science and Ethics: Stem-cell Research

If you're looking for deep conversations about this and other big topics come to **Theology on Tap**, an event featuring free pizza, soda, and fellowship. \$Beverages available for 21+ Philosopher Dr. James Delaney and Biologist Dr. Robert Green will lead us in a discussion on science and ethics. Come enjoy food and drink for mind, body, and spirit. Come and be inspired.

WHEN: November 13, at 7:30PM
WHERE: University Commons (in Clet)

Bring student ID, all NU Students and Staff are welcome.

For more info, contact: Campus Minister, Jerod Sikorskyj, 286-8412 / jjis@niagara.edu.

Announcements for Alumni Chapel

- Sunday, November 11th - Sunday, December 9th, Mass times will be at 11 a.m., 4:30 & 10 p.m.
- Starting December 16th-December 30th, Mass times will be at 11 a.m. only.
- Tuesday, December 4th ~ Penance Service 7:30 p.m.
- All Weekday Masses are held thru December 14th
- Christmas Eve Masses, Monday, December 24th are held at 5 p.m. and 10 p.m.