

Eagle's Wings

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RCIA Information

286-8400

Sacrament of Reconciliation
(Confession)

Mondays 5 - 5:30pm

Alumni Chapel

Weddings & Baptisms

Alumni Chapel

Call Fr. John Maher, C.M.

286-8415

Mass Intentions:

\$10/ Mass

Call 286-8400 or

stop by the office.

CONTACT US:



Campus Ministry Corner

www.niagara.edu/ministry

ministry@niagara.edu

LL Gallagher Center - 286-8400

Living Up to our Good Niagara Name

Shakespeare's question, 'What's in a name?' has many answers. Names bestow identity and origin. In Scripture, a name is a sign of power, as in God's self-revelation to Moses: "Tell them I AM WHO AM sent you." (Ex. 3:13) Names tell of one's family, trade, or village, as in "Jesus, son of Joseph the carpenter, of Nazareth." So names do matter!

Two names associated with Niagara University from our 1856 start are 'Catholic' and 'Vincentian'. Then and now, our Catholic and Vincentian identity is our core. Much is written on challenges that Catholic colleges and universities face to maintain a vibrant Catholic identity. Those new realities are also evident here at NU: fewer vowed religious on campus, a more secular society, and the apathy of un-churched or inactive Catholics.

NU succeeds admirably in promoting awareness of the Vincentian part of our core identity. As individuals and a community, we know the life of St. Vincent de Paul well and apply his vision at NU, especially in community service. The Vincentian part of our mission is something we articulate and act upon. As a Vincentian, I find that gratifying.

But I wonder: how do we - both as individuals and a community - live out NU's Catholic identity, the prime piece of our core? Some wags say "You never really leave the Catholic Church", but recent surveys and polls show otherwise. Were it not for the steady increase in Hispanics, USA Catholic population would be in serious decline.

What are some tangible signs of this decline? They include declining participation at Sunday and weekday Mass, ignorance of Church teachings and traditions and failure to integrate these into their lives. From these come a diminished sense of the common good and value of community, and selective individualism in living out Catholic beliefs.

Yet, St. Vincent de Paul's life shows that of a man filled with love for Christ and the Church. His Catholic faith was the fuel that fed his service to the poor and the myriad organizations he founded. Biographer Henri Daniel Rops offered a keen insight, noting "It was not St. Vincent's charity that made him a holy, but his holiness that enabled him to be truly charitable." Vincent's virtue came not just in his doing for the Lord, but in his being with Christ. One of his most well-known quotations reveals Vincent's true priority: "Give me a person of prayer, and I will be able to do anything."

In a new semester, challenges abound, both known and unknown. Perhaps now we can take stock and ask ourselves these key questions: How do I live out my Catholic faith at NU each day? Do I make time to be with the Lord in prayer and at Mass? Do I thank God daily for the gifts given me? Do I seek Jesus' help in the trying times of my life? Can I step out of my own comfort zone and be Christ to others, especially those in need? For our good name, and Niagara's, the time to examine and act is now.



Fr. John T. Maher, C.M. '76
Director, Campus Ministry
University Chaplain

Finding Community in Camden... and on Campus

Community and friendship are two things I have always taken for granted in my life. I have been so blessed to be raised in a strong faith community and always surrounded by love—God’s love made manifest in the many beautiful people I have come to know and call “friend” over the years. We usually don’t realize the true gift of these people until we are faced with some sort of tragedy or experience that forces us to rely more heavily on their love—at least this has been my experience.

I recently had the opportunity to participate in BASIC – Camden, a group of eight students who travelled with me to Camden, NJ for a week of service in January. During one of our evening reflections, I was able to share pieces of my own faith journey with the students. As I reflected on my own experiences of friendship and faith over the past six months, and the students opened up with stories of their own faith journeys, I came to realize there was great trust and acceptance within our group, and that we were forming our own little community there in Camden. We had students from freshmen to graduate school, spanning all different majors and from a variety of faith and family backgrounds, and yet we were united. We couldn’t all express why we were in Camden, but we were brought together for the common goal of serving God in His Poor. Throughout the week, we each felt stress and exhaustion and faced some really difficult questions as we experienced poverty in Camden, but every day we were able to come back together as a family and talk about the things we saw and felt, and lean on each other.

One of the top priorities of Campus Ministry is to create opportunities for our students to grow together and learn from each other, to build community among peer groups. BASIC is one great example of the many ways we strive to foster faith community. However, the excitement of the week-long service immersion experience often dwindles as groups return to campus and the every-day-routine.

The Living In Faith Together (LIFT) program is designed specifically for the purpose of encouraging community and brings people, usually strangers, together, who often have nothing more in common than a desire to deepen or learn more about their faith. LIFT groups are student-run and meet weekly (on Wednesday and Thursday nights at 7PM) to talk about various faith topics and the challenges and joys of maintaining and nurturing faith at college.

Please join us on Wednesday February 2 at 7:30PM in Bisgrove Room 351 for pizza and games and to learn more about this semester’s LIFT programs. I especially challenge those who have been a part of the BASIC service immersion trips to join a LIFT group and keep the conversation and service going!



Kristina Schliesman,
Campus Minister

Building the Vincentian Community...

Spirituality, in its manifold forms, is about receiving energy of life...

It is lived and sought in community and for others.

(World Council of Churches, Canberra Assembly, 1991)

Welcome Back! It is difficult to believe that Spring semester is well under way and the holidays are pretty much a blur. As I write this article on Vincentian Founder’s Day, I reflect about the fact that a few weeks ago, 28 students, 4 Campus Ministers and 1 other administrator were in the midst of BASIC (Brothers And Sisters In Christ) Service Immersion Trips. It has left an impact on each person’s life. The students left an impact on those they came in contact. NU never looked or felt quite the same. Relationships were made. Community was experienced and Christ was there in the midst. No question it was a week of grace! What next? Where does it lead?

It is not enough to revel in the experience of an African Mass without contemplating how do we as a faith community find heart and soul in our own midst of community? Being impacted by feeding others at the soup kitchen or feeling the sense of accomplishment of fixing up someone’s home is not enough until we bring that experience back home and discern how we can be instruments of hope in our own NU and Niagara Falls community. Treasuring the friendships and memories that we made on BASIC come to full fruition when those relationships are nurtured to grow so that great things can happen for the greater glory of God!

Think about how you can be the instrument of change this semester whether you went on BASIC or not by joining the St. Vincent de Paul Society which will meet on Thursday, February 3rd at 7:15 pm in the Study Lounge LLGC...If you would like to work on the root causes of injustice stop by and see Monica Saltarelli in Campus Ministry about being involved in Pax Christi or Invisible Children! Help build the Kingdom of God –by caring about one person at a time!



Monica Saltarelli,
Campus Minister

“Give Me that Good Ole’ Time Religion?”

There was a time not that long ago when persons were quite unabashed about declaring their own religious affiliation. Persons would freely say to complete strangers, “Give me that good ole time religion!” There was a clear, institutional affiliation, and persons were quite comfortable in saying so. Of course, in the region of the country where I grew up, the South, this was certainly true. But I have also discovered much the same in the Northeast, including Western New York. For example, someone would ask where you are from, and the response was short and sweet: “I am from Saint so and so parish.” This ready identification with a parish or place of worship is changing significantly, today, though. Sadly enough, there is a growing conviction that one can be spiritual without any affiliation whatsoever with a church, synagogue or mosque.



Fr. Bruce Krause, C.M.,
Campus Minister

Numerous studies show a growing disaffection with what has been called “organized religion”, particularly among young persons. Persons are content to think of themselves as spiritual, but discount the importance of any institution which they believe regularizes one’s observance of faith and practices. Perhaps, in the minds of many is this question: What right does this institution or any other have in placing demands upon me or any other’s when its own integrity, particularly among its leadership, is under scrutiny? Certainly the recent sexual abuse scandal among clergy has contributed to this malaise. While I appreciate the lack of confidence many persons place in organized religion, allow me to briefly explore why I believe that both are necessary.

No doubt, you have heard the expression: “Don’t throw out the baby with the bath water!” There is some truth to this statement with regards to the church. While its history, at times, has been sordid and marked by sin and error, there is also a collective wisdom which the church has gained over the years by reflecting upon its experience and that of the world. A good example of this is the emergence of Catholic social teaching in just over a century. The question we should each ask is: How else will we gain such wisdom if not through organized religion? How else will we have a sense of where we have been as believers and how we should proceed without some reference point that Tradition offers us?

Another concern is that we too readily will conclude that we are “better” than others because of our so called “spirituality.” Certainly the Catholic Church in describing herself as a “pilgrim people” realizes that we have not “arrived” or reached some state of perfection. In a preference for the merely spiritual, there can be a tendency to escape from the world’s realities. While this choice can seem somewhat understandable at times, it can significantly diminish one’s moral responsibility to others, including those with whom we might disagree. I believe, then, that spirituality continually looks to be grounded in today’s realities, while calling us forward toward greater personal and social renewal and transcendence. This is a task we must commit ourselves to both communally and as individuals. What does the love commandment of Jesus mean unless it finds some concrete expressions towards one’s neighbor? St. Vincent de Paul would argue again and again that all of our lofty spiritual thoughts in prayer, while good and beneficial, are ultimately meaningless until they find some grounding in practical examples of charity.

A third reason for arguing for the institutional church is a question of sustainability. All too often various movements, including spiritual ones, while notable and even commendable, have come and gone because they lacked sufficient grounding institutionally. How will the spiritual movement continue beyond the life of its charismatic leader(s)? Who will continue the vision and how? It is for this reason that the Catholic Church grants its approbation to the establishment of a religious order only after it has demonstrated over time its sustainability through some constitution and rule of life, and its contribution to the life of the church and its people. This approbation provides a safeguard as well.

We may tend to think that organized religion can place excessive demands upon us. I would argue that these tend to be minimal. Still the church does provide an important prophetic function that calls its members to conversion and renewal based upon Scripture. To think that this will be done on one’s own is unlikely in most instances, and persons too easily settle into a routine with few challenges to their own faith, convictions and practices. To allow ourselves to become his or her own spiritual guide is misguided in my estimation.

In fairness to the spiritual is the spark it can provide. This inspiration can provide the catalyst for significant change both personally and communally. It can offer an all important vision for the future with its foundation rooted in God. I do want to add a caveat, though. Ultimately, this inspiration must come from God and not merely on one’s own. There is an acknowledgment that St. John the Baptist famously said, “I must decrease and Christ must increase.” (See John 3:30). This warrants a humility both in the spiritual life and in our life together as a community of believers. Unless we work toward this humility before God and one another, I am afraid that we will be too readily dismissive of organized religion as antiquated and even hypocritical. In this respect humility is both old and new inasmuch as it provides a reason for claiming both the spiritual and institutional for the growth as followers of our Lord.

Campus Ministry Events

Sunday, January 30th- BASIC Reunion – 7:00pm - Under the Taps

Sunday, January 30th - Birthday & Name Tag Sunday – 10pm Mass – Alumni Chapel

Tues., February 1st, & Wed., Feb., 2nd - Eucharistic Minister & Lector Training – 7pm – Alumni Chapel

Wednesday, February 2nd - LIFT (Living in Faith Together) Pizza Party – 7:30pm – Bisgrove #351

Sunday, February 6th - Super Bowl Soup & Pasta Collection – 11am & 10pm Mass – Alumni Chapel

Sunday, February 13th - Winter Sports Athlete Blessing – 10pm Mass – Alumni Chapel

Friday, February 18th – 20th - Winter Retreat – contact - kschliesman@niagara.edu

Sunday, February 20th - Birthday & Name Tag Sunday – 10pm Mass – Alumni Chapel

Wednesday, February 23rd - Theology under the Taps – 7pm – Under the Taps

SUNDAY MASS 11:00am & 10:00pm

Daily MASS Monday to Friday @ 12:15pm

January 2011 BASIC Participants

Philadelphia: Kaylin Ranagan '08 Office of Admissions, Fr. John Maher, CM '76 Dir. Of Campus Ministry, Marie Albano, Lauren Costello, Catherine Trzaska, Matthew Nadler, Erin Weber, Erinn Hill, Joanne McKeon, Steve Fuest, Jessica Spellane, Alexandra House, Amy Domiano, Andrea Nicolia, Mitchell Willie

Camden: Kristina Schliesman Campus Minister, Amanda Trickey, Ashley Collins, Lisa Paska, Patrick Teixeira, Ashley Serwon, Anna Toepp, Jason Gentzke, Madison Doud

Emmitsburg/Baltimore: Monica Saltarelli '86 Campus Minister, Fr. Bruce Krause, CM Campus Minister, Sean Farber, Carmen Schaff, Frank Arena, Vincent Schiano, David Hoover, Elizabeth Trzaska, Becky O'Connor



Emmitsburg/Baltimore



Camden



Philadelphia