The monthly newsletter of the Office of Campus Ministry

Eagle’s Wings

FROM THE DIRECTOR ...

FACEBOOK FAITH AND MY SACRED SPACE. That’s the title of a presentation I am preparing for a Faculty In-Service Day in March. The question really is can we share who we are in relationship to God through these vehicles of online relating? I think yes and I think no. Here’s why:

Yes, I can share with you how I pray and what I believe using Facebook. No, I can’t see your FACE when I tell you why I believe what I do, or where my doubts live.

Yes, I can promise to pray for your family and friends through this article. No, you can’t see my expression of concern and compassion when I inquire more deeply about the nature of the illness that has you so worried.

Yes, I can invite you to attend a BASIC Information Meeting or sign up for one of our trips to the inner city. No, we can’t serve persons who are poor online!

Yes, we can start a prayer chain, and share prayers that we write with each other. No, we can’t join our voices as we say the prayer Jesus taught us: Our Father…

Campus Ministry is a real face-to-face way to share faith and sacred space. As you will read in this very newsletter, there are many opportunities for you to come out of your room, step away from your computer, and enter into the permanent white water of life, faith and relationships.

• Come to the chapel, either for a Mass or Prayer service, Bible study or Holy Hour, or just to spend a few moments of peaceful serenity in a beautifully sacred space.
• Come to the Gallagher Center and sit and chat with friends, new and old, and be courageous enough to talk about the kinds of things that really matter; faith and love, life and friendship, fears and hopes.
• Come to a campus minister, Jerod or Monica, Fr. John or me, Sister Nora, and ask your BIG QUESTION about your faith, whichever tradition you come from, the question that you may have had in your heart for many years.
• “Come away by yourself to an out of the way place, and pray a while.” These words Jesus himself spoke, not on Facebook or MySpace, but face to face with his followers, and that includes us. I recommend we reply YES.

Sister Nora Gatto, DC
Executive Director of University Mission and Ministry
What does it take to be a person of faith? I suppose there are as many answers as people to opine on this question. Scripture tells us that “Faith is the assurance of things hoped for; the conviction of things not seen.” (Heb.11:1) Assurance. Hope. Conviction. All great ideals, but how do they play out in the experience of daily life? And how do we live them in today’s complicated, chaotic world?

God often shows the ‘how’ in ways so simple we can miss them if we’re not watching carefully. We notice these ordinary opportunities when we see life with ‘eye wide open’ which is exactly what Jesus did. His teachings and parables were all drawn from the ordinary, hum-drum rhythm of life. Jesus was a great teacher because he could find faith at the world around him and share it with people in dire straits.

Two examples of what it takes to be a person of faith leapt out at me in my daily duties as University Chaplain. As I visit a parishioner hospitalized for months with a serious illness, I am continually humbled by his faith, trust, and good humor. His medical treatments have been arduous and unending, but with his wife Dolores at his side and his children flying in to cheer him on, Terry Bower shows a quiet, fulsome faith. His ‘hope, assurance, and conviction’ is rock solid; built on more than medical charts and e-mail entreaties from well wishers. Like the early disciples, “He saw and believed”. (Jn. 20:8)

Another poignant example of faith sprang up on a recent Sunday morning when eight of our students stood up before a packed Church to publicly declare their desire to become baptized and practicing Catholics. They have been studying with Sr. Nora for months in the “RCIA” (Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults). They showed a desire to find in the Catholic community a faith to give them ‘assurance, hope, and conviction’ well beyond their Niagara years. Many who attended that Mass were moved by their simple, but firm ‘yes’ to the questions posed to them as part of this ‘Rite of Election.’

So when searching for what it means and takes to be a person of faith, perhaps we can begin on Mont Eagle Ridge, and echo Jesus’ disciples: WE saw and WE believed.”
Adventurous Service Opportunities

It is not too late to become involved in service. The NU St. Vincent de Paul Society has a very full semester planned. Come and serve the homeless on Saturday, March 1st through Hannah’s House. We will be meeting in Gallagher Center at 10:15 a.m. The St. Vincent de Paul Society is also collecting food and candy for Easter baskets which will be distributed on March 15th from Our Lady of Lebanon Church in Niagara Falls. Special recognition and gratitude is extended to Mike Daloia, Tiffany Rockwood, and Stephanie Gowan who serve and Our Lady of Lebanon Food Pantry every Tuesday. If you would like more information about how to get involved with the St. Vincent de Paul Society, please contact Monica Saltarelli, Campus Minister at 716-286-8409 or email her at ms@niagara.edu.

Work for Justice...
Are you looking to make a difference in the world? Are issues such as war, poverty, domestic violence, and human trafficking concern you? You are most welcome to attend Pax Christi meetings. The first meeting of the semester is Monday, February 25th at 7:30 p.m. in the Gallagher Study Lounge.

ATTENTION PROSPECTIVE GRADUATES...
Attention Juniors and Seniors: there is life after Midterms, Senior Thursdays, finals, and Senior Week! Consider doing a year of service. A year of service offers great benefits such as work experience, health insurance, loan deferment, and possible money for grad school. You may want to consider the Vincentian Service Scholars. The VSS offers a year of volunteer service in Philadelphia with the poor and marginalized to Vincentian University graduates. The Vincentian Service Scholar is granted a $5,000 stipend from the Vincentian Eastern Province for graduate study to a Vincentian University (Niagara, St. John’s, DePaul). Applicants must be practicing Catholics and involved in service. If you are interested in the Vincentian Service Scholars or any long term service opportunity, please contact Monica Saltarelli in Campus Ministry at ms@niagara.edu or at 716-286-8409.

“Invisible Children…”
Imagine being part of a generation that has never known peace. Imagine that the education we take so much for granted was no longer an option. The nightmare began twenty-two years ago when LRA leader, Joseph Kony began abducting and brainwashing children to fight as soldiers in his militia. According to www.invisiblechildren.com, more than 20,000 children have been forced to be child soldiers. The website further indicates that roughly 250,000 children in Northern Uganda do not benefit from an education. Approximately, sixty percent of the schools are non-functioning because of the war. As a result the schools that are open are very much overcrowded, with a ratio of 300 students to every one teacher.

The “Invisible Children Campaign” has been successful with providing children at risk with quality education and valuable life skills and as a result has empowered the children to have hope for the future. Cross-cultural education has been promoted. “Invisible Children” has tirelessly worked for peace and defending the oppressed. They use the power of the media to educate people around the globe about the horrors being done to children.

Please consider attending the “Invisible Children” Gala on Saturday, March 8th at 6 p.m. on 4th floor St. Vincent’s Hall. Tickets are $30 per person or $50 a couple and are available in the Campus Ministry Office. All proceeds will go to the “Invisible Children” foundation. Stay tune for more information on the “Displace Me” event on April 25th. If you would like more information on these events please contact Monica Saltarelli, Campus Minister at 286-8409 or email her at ms@niagara.edu.
SHOPPING SOULS

Have you recently shopped for the most efficient, highest quality, bang-for-your-buck HD TV or newest I-Pod? You might have a stack of Consumer Reports to give you the best information, independent tests done by white lab coats, and even recommendations from friends. If you’ve really done your homework, you’ve even screen-tested a few units, surround sound systems, and DVD up-converters. What does this have to do with spirituality? Are we just talking about TVs? How many decisions in your life have you made with a similar approach: gather information, sort through options, make the best technologically feasible decision.

During this Lent, I want you to consider something new and yet old. The early Christian communities used a different process of discernment, realizing God’s calling instead of merely our own drive. Their process was a simple, seven steps that Sr. Meg Funk, OSB reminds us:

1. Pray for enlightenment, not just for the decision, but as a way of life.
3. Virtually live the decision (make it secretly for a few days/weeks, and observe your inner state, i.e. consoled/peace-filled or desolation/distracted).
4. Look for confirming signs (Does the events of life constantly work against your inner decision or do you find that opportunities open/relationships develop which enable you to be your true self united in God. If confirmed, proceed. Otherwise go back to the beginning.
5. Make the decision public
6. Ritualize the decision (celebrate with family/friends or a small transitional ceremony)
7. Watch your thoughts and guard your heart (monk language for do not attach nor repress the inevitable thoughts of second-guessing. Let them float in and out of the mind harbor, letting them be dashed against the Rock of Christ.

LEARN WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A MAN...

Men’s Spirituality Retreat
Friday and Saturday, April 4-5
Leave NU at 3 p.m. on Friday,
Retreat ends Saturday evening
Hosted at Abbey of the Genesee
Hiking trails, wise men, and monks bread.

REGISTER NOW!!!
LIMITED SPACES AVAILABLE.

Stop by Campus Ministry in LLGC to sign-up. Only $10. For more info, contact Jerod Sikorskyj at 286-8412 or jjs@niagara.edu.