Another point of view….

Habemus Papam. On March 13, 2013 from the balcony over the front doors of St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome, the world heard those heralding words and we were then introduced to our new Pope with his new name and new attire. As he greeted the faithful that evening to offer his message to the city and the world called the Urbi et Orbi address, many people would later comment that our new pope looked overwhelmed by this moment, yet, he went on to humbly ask the faithful to bless him in his new role. Our new pope comes to us to as cardinal-archbishop of Buenos Aires, Argentina where he lived a simple lifestyle and was known for his love of the poor. He finds great joy in meeting and serving people of all types on the streets and in the ordinariness of life. Now, as pope, Francis must have a “balcony view” of the whole Church and world. He has, however, already shown us signs that he will continue to have a “street view” as well. Keeping both points of view operative will certainly be a challenge for him as the leader of a global Church in changing times with well over 1 billion members, and this is precisely why he immediately asked for our prayers.

We, too, are called to keep both the “balcony” and “street” views operative as followers of Jesus Christ. Our view from the balcony must envision a proper or healthy sense of the triune God, of the Church or religion, and of the human person. Our view from the street must envision a desire to hear the cry of the poor and respond to their needs. As members of the campus community, we are blessed to be part of a community that seeks to develop the whole person: body, mind and soul. The Vincentian mission invites us to ponder and examine issues and matters of faith and reason for the purpose of growing in God’s love which moves us to serve our neighbor, especially the poor. This is the Vincentian point of view.

Therefore, as we end another academic year at N.U. and go our separate ways for summer break, or for those graduating into the next phase of their lives, let us offer to those we encounter a point of view that makes a difference in building the common good: Vincentian service!

Congratulations and God’s blessings upon the Class of 2013!
The Year in Review

September

In September, we welcomed our third Niagara Plunge Class-19 Freshmen who came to NU early to participate in community service and faith sharing.

Also in September, we commemorated the Feast of Saint Vincent de Paul and the opening of a new school year with our annual Opening Mass held in the Gallagher Center.

October

In October, we celebrated the Month of the Rosary by offering rosary making workshops and prayers.

November

In November, a group of 20 students and Campus Ministers traveled to the Abbey of the Genesee for our Fall Retreat “We Walk By Faith.”

December

In December, we heralded in the Christmas Seasons with carols and cookies at our annual Christmas Tree Lighting in the Gallagher Center.
January

In January, over 30 students and employees traveled to Philadelphia, PA and Camden, NJ for BASIC (Brothers And Sisters In Christ), a week of service.

February

In February, over 25 students and Campus Ministers Fr. Kevin Creagh, CM, Fr. John Dang, CM and Kristina Schliesman participated in our Winter Retreat “Come to the Cross.”

March

In March, 14 students traveled with Campus Ministers Fr. John Dang, CM and Monica Saltarelli for a BASIC week of service in Greensboro, North Carolina.

Also in March, we celebrated our fourth of six Taize prayer services for the school year. This is a new service of ecumenical prayer that we offer 2-3 times each semester. If you haven’t yet, please check it out sometime!

April

On April 10, two of our RCIA participants, Chloe Farnham and Tracey Bayer received the Sacrament of Confirmation from Bishop Malone in Alumni Chapel. On April 17, RCIA student Mike Lowitzer was confirmed with other college students from Buffalo at Canisius College. Congratulations to Chloe, Tracey, and Mike!

And in May we will bid a fond farewell to our dear friends of the graduating class of 2013! Thank you for being a part of our faith community during your time at NU. Please know we are praying for you throughout this time of transition. We know you will make Niagara proud! God bless you always!!
“Be Still…”

As I was growing up, I remember, my parents and teachers frequently would say, “the older I get, the faster time goes.” I have come to realize how very true that statement is. Once again, we are finishing another academic year, which is difficult to believe. For many of us, it has been a year filled with “ups and downs.” I am trying to grasp the latest senseless tragedy that occurred during the Boston Marathon. It was just the end of the Fall Semester that the nation grieved with Sandy Hook Elementary School. I have heard from so many people who have been affected by cancer and other serious illnesses. Illness and death of loved ones take a toll on a family. It is easy to lose hope and be imprisoned by fear. We hope with every April shower that there will be indeed be May flowers. We must be the candle that lights up the darkest of days. With many candles comes much light. Each candle makes a difference.

There is no question that many of you have been the light during the dreariest of days for an infinite number of people, including me. I marvel at the number of people fed each week at the NU Soup Kitchen located at St. George’s. I am renewed by the reflections of students who took the time to go on BASIC service immersion trips. I especially want to thank Gina DelGreco and Liz Young for their dedication and hard work with Invisible Children. They have brought an awareness of the issue of child soldiers and slaves. The St. Vincent de Paul Society will especially miss Jessica Spellane and Christa Mastro and their devotion and care for the NU Soup Kitchen. A special shout out to Logan Jensen who has been such a terrific help as my Spanish translator. Your kind words and thoughtful gestures often turned my day around.

This summer, take time to be present to the moment. When uncertainty and fear set in our lives, we should recall Psalm 46: 10, “Be still and know that I am God.” God never fails us. I pray that God’s love for you will be a source of refreshment and renewal this summer. Be safe and trust in God’s plan for your lives. Godspeed to all of you seniors and graduate students. May you find meaningful employment. As you leave Niagara University, may the spirit and values of Niagara University never leave YOU!

Do not be afraid! Be a NU Star and Witness!

“Don’t be afraid, for I am with you. Don’t be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you with my right hand of justice” (Isaiah 41:10).

I encourage you, NU students, to meditate on these holy words when you are in the midst of our chaotic society.

College is a place that can either make you perfect, or break you apart, so it’s up to you. College is about learning, experiencing, making friends, being mature, and of course growing academically. Additionally, college is “a community and varied family” where one can learn about oneself and experience personal growth and become independent.

As for me, college turned me, an inexperienced person into a confident, mature, and educated person. College is also a place where a person learns how to work with different people, to develop one’s ability, to depend on one’s self, to do research, and to determine one’s future. However, some people cannot make these things happen because they don’t know how to use this wonderful opportunity to grown. The memories made at college include pleasures and sadness, they are unforgettable and remarkable indeed.. College is a place that helps you take another step in your life more easily and confidently.

Graduates, take what you have learned at NU to your career, as well as those with whom you work with. Be a witness for your peers, whose lives are in darkness. Show others that you are well-educated and excellently prepared for your job. Don’t be afraid of obstacles! Be confident and be courageous, for God always strengthens you and helps you.

Be a NU star wherever you go and to whomever you meet.

-Monica Saltarelli
Campus Minster

-Fr. John Dang, CM,
Sacramental Care