

President Maher's Remarks at the "Powering Transformation" Campaign Launch

Sept. 22, 2022

Thank you for being here this evening to kick off this wonderful event that positions Niagara to embrace and walk fully with confidence, clarity of direction, and a heightened sense of purpose into our future.

The Vincentian community found its home in Paris, France, where St. Vincent de Paul began his ministry to the rural country poor of France and expanded it beyond that country.

Today, if you visit Paris, in a section called Saint-Lazare, and you look at a certain building, you will see an image of St. Vincent de Paul that looks upon the entire city of Paris. It's where the Vincentian mission first began, and it's where, today, people remember the vision and the life of St. Vincent de Paul.

That shadow and that vision looks upon Niagara today. We gather in the shadow of St. Vincent de Paul, a 17th century Vincentian priest who, in his own life, was transformed through his service to others—people who were in poverty and on the margins of life—and built institutions of medicine, of feeding, of housing, of education, that responded to those human needs.

So we gather, inspired by that vision of St. Vincent, with our educational mission at Niagara University, formed in deep faith and driven, like St. Vincent, to demand excellence of ourselves and others.

A vision of action, of impact, and of inspiration, empowering and enabling others to embrace that mission.

St. Vincent de Paul was so compelling in his life that he was one of those rare leaders who, as you got closer to him and worked with him, you became even more inspired by.

Tonight, we announce the public phase of our capital campaign, "Powering Transformation." I will not present to you tonight a laundry list or a wish list of gifts. But what we will present to you in this campaign are the continually compelling stories about how a Niagara University community and education transformed the lives of its students, enabling them and empowering them to become agents of transformation.

You see the common theme of a diversity of people—Jeffrey Holzschuh, Edward Brennan, Debra Baker, Ari Musialowski. Their common experience, from different ways and walks of life, was how Niagara University has transformed their lives.

Our commitment to their development academically, personally, socially, and spiritually is what our transformation and the gift that Niagara University offers is all about, and they, themselves, have been sent out and are being sent out to the world to be agents of that transformation.

Our campaign will focus on the needs of the present, but also on the challenge and the promise of our future. Our campaign is grounded in the six pillars of our strategic plan, which we have named after the credo of St. Vincent de Paul's life. He asked the continual question: "What must be done?"

The transformation of our students' lives is what must be done. If Niagara University didn't exist, someone would have to invent it. It is, itself, a living miracle, bringing people together from different social and economic classes, different religious, ethnic, and racial backgrounds. We are a university that is regional, national, binational, and international. We are the world.

Our students are impacted by your generosity and their lives are transformed. Your generosity is the gift that that enables the miracle of Niagara University to continue.

As we move forward, we remember and call upon the words of St. Vincent de Paul, the eternal truth that he spoke over and over again in his life. A formidable fundraiser who fundraised out of vision and integrity and a commitment to be an excellent steward of all the resources, St. Vincent would often say to his followers, "Charity is the cement that binds the human family together." Your support, your gift, transforms the lives of our students and enables them to be agents of transformation and be the miracle that is Niagara University.

Thank you, God bless you, and go forward, Niagara, powering transformation to be the miracle for our students and our university community.

Thank you very much.