

Campus Ministry: rebuilding broad student involvement in light of the Strategic Plan, and our commitments to DEI transformation and the Laudato Si initiative.

FRAMEWORK FOR A STUDENT COVENANT COMMUNITY

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We are an open and progressive community seeking to participate in God's Reconciling work by following the Way of Christ in Intentional Communities, fueled by a committed, missionary Catholic core community.

Vision Statement:

We aspire to be a community of radical welcome and inclusion. We invite individuals to come as they are, showing up with authenticity, bringing their questions, quirks, and gifts. While we are a Roman Catholic congregation, our community includes folks who have varied relationships with the institutional church. Our community affirms that belonging precedes and can lead to believing. We value community and how we treat each other as the most authentic way to live into our experience of faith, service, and liberating praxis.

Mission Statement

We will provide resources and opportunities for all students of the University community to grow in their spiritual lives and to accept the challenge of being at a Catholic and Vincentian university.

A. Community core values:

I. The Way of Jesus Christ: The Willingness to encounter the divine in the everyday

We value a commitment to the Way of Jesus Christ which is the way of radical trust, openness and responsiveness to the presence of God as it is discovered in the depths of one's inner life, communal life, and cultural life. We welcome people who have made other faith commitments or are still on the journey. HD¹ SP3²

II. The Way of St. Vincent de Paul: The Seeking to be sent

We value being sent into the world to join God in transforming it into a place of peace, justice, wholeness and celebration. We are blessed to be a blessing. Our church is a church without walls. Through collaboration with University Institutes, faculty initiatives, and the local community, we allow God's living Word to be encountered in real spaces of marginalization and suffering. Through longer term off campus experiences, revising the BASIC model, we will make ourselves allies of the oppressed: students and servants of the goals of the marginalized. CE SP3

III. Cultural Engagement: The Embrace of Creation

We value our natural world and all of its cultures as the location of God's incarnating presence and the place where we are sent to join God's mission of Reconciliation. We are convinced and guided by Pope Francis' indications, especially in the document Laudato Si. CE/SUS SP3 SP4

IV. Interfaith Dialogue: The Challenge of Humility

¹ HD=holistic development; CE=community engagement; SUS=sustainability; RL=residence life; DEI=diversity, equity, and inclusion.

² "SP" indicates tie back with strategic plan objective

We value the stories and traditions of all people and seek our own transformation through dialogue with and hospitality to the stranger and the strange. DEI SP4

V. Covenant Communities: The Gift of Simplicity

We value covenants within our families, small groups and community relationships that give shape to our identity, practices, lifestyle, and mission. We promote the building of these communities in all our living spaces, both on campus and off. We facilitate leadership training towards this end. RL/HD SP2

VI. Deep, Relevant Worship: The Expression of Meekness

We value traditional Catholic worship that is creative, engaging and transforming as it speaks the language of faith within the language of contemporary culture. HD SP3

VII. Commitment to Spiritual Formation: the Fruit of Healthy Zeal

We value the "inward" and "outward" journey of spiritual formation where our spiritual practices transform our inner lives, help us discover our gifts, challenge us to discern our calling, and equip us for our ministries of Reconciliation and Liberation. We will amplify our media presence and the availability of online opportunities as supplementary to in-person experiences. HD SP2

VIII. Unity among Diversity:

We value unity amid diversity. Unity is achieved when we intentionally seek community through the inclusion of a diversity of ethnic and racial backgrounds, sexual orientations, lifestyle choices and theological perspectives. This implies a surrender of privilege in various human arenas. DEI SP2 SP3

B. Covenant Worship: the Holy Mass (*missa* = sending)

At our gathering at 7 p.m. on Sunday evenings, worship gives us the vision and sets in motion the practice of living The Way of Jesus Christ in our day-to-day experience. In this gathering we hope to experience God's intention for our living in the world the rest of the week. In worship we partake in God's Reconciling work (peace, justice, wholeness, and celebration) to become better equipped to participate in the creation of God's integral justice in the world. Our worship is not for us alone, but for the healing of creation.

Some characteristics:

- ***The Altar-Table***

Jesus wasn't killed only because of what he said, but also because of the company he kept, the folks with whom he shared his meals. Coming to this Table is still very much a social, political, and theological statement, perhaps the best reminder we have of how to help bring in the reign of God, how to help usher in a reconciled cosmos. We sing, move, and celebrate our call from God and draw wisdom from the Word of God and ALL are welcome to participate. We celebrate the gift of Holy Communion (Eucharist) every week and ALL who make the public covenant³ to live out the values and beliefs of the Catholic tradition are welcome to participate in table sharing.

- ***The Candles***

³ Profession of faith and confirmation.

Each of us comes into this community a bearer of light and grace. During our service you will be invited to light a candle, thus symbolizing your openness to the Source of Light and your willingness to join your light and grace with others' in this place. SP2

- ***Culturally Conscious***

Niagara's Covenant Community draws on multiple cultures for liturgy and music styles on a global scale. This is not just for "flavor" but to be mindful of the entire world that we are a part of as we worship. This also serves to make our worship as open and welcoming as possible to people of all cultures. SP2 SP3

- ***Inclusive Language***

We intentionally attempt to use language that reflects the biblical images of God, our rich theological traditions, and the diversity found in our world. Our community is committed to using language in such a way that all members of the community of faith may recognize themselves to be included, addressed, and equally cherished before God. SP3

- ***Testimony***

In addition to breaking open of the Word by a minister, the community welcomes testimonies of the covenantal life as part of our sending at the end of Holy Mass. Although this extends Mass time, we find it invaluable in its ability to show us how God is showing up in our lives in concrete ways. SP2

Professional leadership for a community like this requires a true spirit of openness with a deep knowledge of the Catholic tradition. Hiring for the Director position will be crucial, and the model must have the full support of the sector leadership.