



FAITH IN OUR FUTURE

DEEPENING COLLEGE STUDENTS' FAITH AND CATHOLIC IDENTITY: CAMPUS MINISTRY

Each year thousands of Catholic students arrive on southeastern Wisconsin college campuses, entering a phase in their lives frequently marked by personal and spiritual crossroads. Campus ministry programs help students not only keep their faith, but also make it their own, growing into a mature understanding of adult roles in the Catholic Church.

The five Catholic colleges and universities in our archdiocese already have campus ministry programs to guide students during this critical time in their lives. The archdiocese has programs at two other institutions—the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, but have no program at all at MSOE, Carroll College, UW-Parkside. A program at Carthage College, where approximately 40 percent of students are Catholic, is greatly needed.

Campus ministry programs are a designated recipient of the \$3.5 million *Living the Faith Fund* established to provide mustard seed money for archdiocesan initiatives that have high potential to bear fruit for generations to come.

REACHING OUT TO STUDENTS

Campus ministry's single biggest challenge at public schools is making itself known to students. The **UWM Newman Center**, for example, started the most-recent school year by:

- Sending out 3,200 fliers to reach every dorm resident;
- Hosting "Welcome Fest" in the heart of campus, with live music, information booths, a barbeque dinner and greetings from Archbishop Timothy Dolan;
- Holding "Mass on the Lawn" to promote regular Sunday Masses at the Center.

Throughout the year, campus ministry reaches students via newsletters, websites, special speakers on current topics, and regular activities such as student testimony nights that help young people find their religious home on campus. Additional funding could dramatically increase outreach effectiveness, with initiatives like:

- Developing a team of residence hall ministers;

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More on reverse side.

Jesus Christ: the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

- Supporting the popular student suppers events;
- Updating technology to enhance expected online presence;
- Adding trained campus ministers who engage young people and have the deep, committed relationships needed for our ministry to grow.

ENHANCING FAITH FORMATION

The ideal of a Newman Center, based on the writings of John Henry Cardinal Newman, is to provide faith formation to students at a public university. The UWM Center offers Sunday and weekday Masses; opportunities for Reconciliation; Bible study, Catholicism 101 and numerous additional formation programs. The **UW-Whitewater Center** offers similar formation programs and works with St. Patrick Parish in Whitewater to involve students in parish life. This year, for example, UW Whitewater students will staff the parish's annual confirmation retreat.

Additional funding could enhance these efforts. At the small end of the scale, budgets could expand to include videos on various formation topics. A more ambitious goal is a certificate division enabling students to take classes in biblical, liturgical and doctrinal studies while attending college. With theologically-formed staff, campus ministry could provide workshops and classes to help students understand their faith in depth and connect it to their areas of study.

DEVELOPING LEADERS

Students and young adults are the lifeblood of campus ministry. Current programs offer limited opportunities to develop a sense of leadership and social justice. For example, the UW-Whitewater Newman Center has a longstanding Habitat for Humanity chapter, and will send more than 50 students on an alternative spring break, constructing homes in Biloxi, Mississippi.

Additional funding would enable colleges to increase student leadership training and conference opportunities. A dedicated staff person could develop

student leaders, draw recent graduates and local young adult Catholics into leadership roles, and coordinate and accompany students on social justice activities. Catholic Hispanic students at UWM present another opportunity. A bilingual professional could enhance outreach efforts.

IMPROVING FACILITIES

The Newman Centers are housed in older homes that need, at a minimum, extensive refurbishing to maintain a welcoming, comfortable atmosphere.

UW Whitewater, in particular, needs a new building. The current facility, while in an excellent location, is worn and cramped. It stands in stark contrast to the rest of the campus; UW-Whitewater emphasizes physical accessibility and attracts a significant number of students who use walkers or wheelchairs. The Newman Center is not accessible. Students using wheelchairs need to make a near-Herculean effort simply to attend campus ministry events.

STAFFING ADEQUATELY

Any one of the initiatives mentioned above—from increasing outreach efforts to enhancing faith formation to upgrading facilities—requires people to lead the way. The Newman Centers are typically staffed by one full-time director, supported by part-time personnel and volunteers. While campus ministry leaders are enthusiastic and volunteers are generous, an investment in people is essential to a flourishing ministry.

Students need the Catholic perspective and formation that might not otherwise be available on a college campus. The Church needs committed, young, faith-filled members to form a dynamic, robust community. Support for campus ministry efforts is support for our young people—and for the future of the Church in southeastern Wisconsin.

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