

NEUMANN INSTITUTE NEWS
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University-wide Theme for 2010-2011

Live the Truth in Love: Reverence and Integrity

This year's theme highlights the Neumann University motto found on the university seal (Veritas - Caritas) ***Live the Truth in Love*** and the first two core values, ***Reverence and Integrity***. We will continue the reflection on the theme begun at our August 25 Welcome Back celebration throughout the year in our days of reflection. We encourage every member of the Neumann community to find practical ways to live out the theme daily!

Mass of the Holy Spirit

It is customary for Catholic colleges and universities to begin the academic year with a special Mass asking for the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Our Mass of the Holy Spirit will be held in Our Lady of Angels Chapel on Thursday, September 2 at 11 AM. After Mass we invite you to join in a Picnic. As has become our tradition we invite faculty, staff, and administrators to serve our students during the picnic.

John Henry Cardinal Newman

You are probably familiar with Newman Centers which serve the spiritual needs of Catholic students on many campuses. On September 19, John Henry Cardinal Newman will become Blessed, a step toward sainthood in the Catholic Church. Often confused with our own St. John Neumann, Blessed John Henry Newman was an influential spokesperson for Catholic Higher Education. We will be highlighting the life and vision of this great man throughout the year. If you wish to learn more about John Henry Newman, please contact the Neumann Institute for Franciscan Studies for a helpful article, book, or audio cassette program.

St. John Neumann, a 200th Birthday Celebration

March 28th is the 200th anniversary of the birth of St. John Neumann. In September, Father Daniel Francis, Director of the Redemptorist Office for Mission Advancement and chair the committee working on developing programs and events to highlight the birthday of St. John Neumann, will visit our campus to discuss ways that we might plan for a meaningful celebration. We will announce plans as they are developed.

Neumann University all campus Days of Reflection

Based on feedback on the evaluations from last year's half days of reflection, we will offer a full day of reflection this year. The morning session will focus on *Reverence* using a segment on the Dignity of the Human Person from the *God's Extravagant Love* program. Designed by the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia (founders and sponsors of Neumann University), this program has been offered to over 3,000 women and men, lay and religious throughout the United States and in Ireland, England, Scotland, and Africa.

The afternoon session will focus on *Integrity* understood as “Living the Truth in Love.” We have invited Neumann graduates to join us for the afternoon to share how the values they experienced at Neumann have influenced their lives, personally and professionally. We will then explore together how we can continue to develop and sustain a culture which promotes the values we embrace. The day of reflection will also explore three of our “brand promises”: Uniquely Personal, Catholic and Franciscan, and Inspiring! Plan now to attend one of the following days of reflection: Thursday, September 30; Friday, October 15; Monday, November 8; Wednesday, November 10; Wednesday, January 5, 2011; Tuesday, January 25; Thursday, February 10; Monday, February 14; Tuesday, February 22; Monday, February 28.

To register for a Day of Reflection, please call or e-mail Sr. Mary Ann McCarthy mccarthm@neumann.edu or 610-358-4270.

Feast of St. Francis of Assisi

On every Franciscan campus, October includes special celebrations connected with the Feast of Saint Francis of Assisi. On the afternoon of October 3, we invite you to gather with your pets in St. John Neumann Circle for the Blessing of the Animals. On the evening of October 3, we are invited to join the Sisters of Saint Francis in celebrating the Transitus of St. Francis. This ritual commemorates Francis’s passage into eternal life. We will celebrate the Feast of St. Francis on Monday, October 4, with a Morning Prayer Service in the RAB Lobby and Mass at noon.

On October 6, Dr. Richard Sayers will present the first in a series of lectures offered by Neumann faculty and staff this past June at the 2010 Symposium of the Association of Franciscan Colleges and Universities. The topic of Dr. Sayers’ lecture is *Musical Companions on the Via Pulchritudinis: Composer, Performer, Listener*.

The Bock Book Award will take place on Friday, October 15, in the Neumann University Library. Due to the theme of this year’s award-winning book, the Care for Creation Council is investigating a presentation by the Philadelphia Zoo.

Through the generosity of one of our Board members we hope to offer the one-person play *St. Damien of Molokai* on October 27.

On October 25, we will host Dr. Darleen Pryds, the author of the latest Franciscan Heritage Series book entitled *Women of the Streets: Early Franciscan Women and their Mendicant Vocation*. Dr. Pryds will speak in OLA Convent at 6:30 PM. Watch for an invitation to dinner and this lecture. Dr. Pryds has graciously offered to speak with faculty members and/or students about her book and her research on Franciscan women. If you want to schedule a time to meet with Dr. Pryds or invite her to speak to a class, please contact Sr. Mary Ann McCarthy at mccarthm@neumann.edu or 610-358-4270. During October and November, we will also host a study of Dr. Pryds’ book. See below for details.

During the month of October, the Care of Creation Council is also planning a Harvest Festival to promote the importance of growing and buying local foods.

Look for specific details about each event in the coming weeks.

Additional Events sponsored by the Office of Mission and Ministry and the Neumann Institute for Franciscan Studies

Our Advent Dinner and Evening of Reflection will take place on Tuesday, November 30. Stephanie Taylor and Dr. Ed Hastings will share *The Power of Storytelling: Vulnerability, Relationships, and Meaning-Making*. This is the presentation they offered at the AFCU 2010 Symposium.

A Highlight of Advent is our celebration of Greccio, commemorating the first Live Nativity initiated by St. Francis of Assisi. Our Greccio celebration will be Sunday evening, December 5.

Beginning March 22 and continuing throughout Lent, art historian and teacher Dr. Melinda Parsons will share a special library exhibit tracing a *Lenten Journey through Art*.

Most weeks during Lent we will sponsor a "Soup and Sharing," featuring one of the AFCU Symposium presenters.

During Earth Week, Dr. Elaine Grose and Sr. Marguerite O'Beirne will share their AFCU Symposium presentation, *Environmental Awareness Leads to an Environmental Ethic*.

We are also planning an evening during the Fall semester at the Philadelphia Museum of Art to reflect on *Franciscans in Art*.

During the Spring semester we will sponsor a Pilgrimage to the Shrine of St. John Neumann in Philadelphia.

AFCU 2010 Symposium, June 8-11, 2010

Eighteen members of the Neumann community traveled to the University of Saint Francis in Fort Wayne, IN, in June to participate in the Association of Franciscan Colleges and Universities 2010 Symposium. The theme was *Educating for the Care of Creation: Cotemporary Verses for the Canticle of the Creatures*. Throughout the year we will offer opportunities to experience the richness of the presentations of our own Neumann personnel! To view videos of the keynote presentations, visit <http://www.sf.edu/sf/afcu> and follow the directions to download movies.

Franciscan Scholar for 2010-2011

Sr. Diane Tomkinson, OSF will be the Visiting Franciscan Scholar at Neumann University during the 2010-2011 academic year. Sr. Diane is a Sister of Saint Francis of Philadelphia. She holds a Ph.D. in Historical Theology from Fordham University and recently completed service as an Assistant Professor of Religious Studies at Salve Regina University in Newport, RI. Sr. Diane has published several articles on the medieval Franciscan theologian and spiritual writer Angela of Foligno (d. 1309). She has lectured extensively on Franciscan topics, particularly the Franciscan intellectual tradition. Sr. Diane currently serves as the Director of Formation for the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia. During the Fall semester, Sr. Diane will lead a Book Study on the Franciscan Heritage Series book entitled *Women of the Streets: Early Franciscan Women*

and their Mendicant Vocation by Darlene Pryds. Sr. Diane will be available on a limited basis throughout the year to offer presentations on topics related to the Franciscan tradition. Contact the NIFS office to discuss the possibility of a class visit by Sr. Diane. The Visiting Scholar is supported by an endowment established by the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia.

Franciscan Book Study

In the past we have offered the opportunity to read and discuss Franciscan books of interest. Books studied in the past have included: *A Franciscan View of Creation: Learning to Live in a Sacramental World*, Ilia Delio, OSF, Lent 2004; *Francis of Assisi: Performing the Gospel Life*, Lawrence S. Cunningham, Lent 2006; and *Care for Creation [A Franciscan Spirituality of the Earth]*, Keith Warner, Ilia Delio, and Pam Wood, Lent 2009.

Last year Sr. Mary Beth Ingham was our Visiting Franciscan Scholar. A highlight of her visit was a book study on her Franciscan Heritage Series Book, *Rejoicing in the Works of the Lord: Beauty in the Franciscan Tradition*. On October 25, Dr. Darleen Pryds from the Franciscan School of Theology in Berkeley, CA will join us to reflect on her recently published book, *Women of the Streets: Early Franciscan Women and their Mendicant Vocation*. During October and November Sr. Diane Tomkinson, herself an internationally known Franciscan scholar, will lead a book study of Dr. Pryds' book. If you wish to participate in the book study, please contact Sr. Mary Ann McCarthy at mccarthm@neumann.edu or 610-358-4270 by September 25 so that we may order a book for you.

Franciscan Action Network (FAN)

During the AFCU symposium Christine Elliott of Franciscan Action Network shared the hope of FAN to become more engaged with the Franciscan colleges and universities. As a result of continued dialogue, Neumann University will participate in a pilot program designed to promote respectful dialogue around difficult issues. The program will be offered as part of the Student Leadership Formation Program. To learn more about the Franciscan approach to civil discourse, read the "white paper" on the FAN website at http://www.franciscanaction.org/Upload_Module/upload/2010-05_On%20Civility%20in%20Politics.pdf. Take time to learn more about Franciscan Action Network at <http://www.franciscanaction.org/>

Resources on our Identity as Catholic in the Franciscan Tradition

The Neumann Institute for Franciscan Studies is continually expanding our library of print and media resources related to our mission as a Catholic university in the Franciscan Tradition. Visit the Mission and Ministry and Neumann Institute websites for more information or call or visit the NIFS office to borrow a CD or DVD.

Spirituality and the College Student

In 2003, the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA initiated a large scale multi-year study of spiritual development and college students. According to the researchers the findings of the study “provide a powerful argument for the proposition that higher education should attend more to students’ spiritual development, *because spirituality is essential to students’ lives.*” A summary of the Key Findings of the study may be found in this brochure

[http://spirituality.ucla.edu/docs/Brochures/Key%20Findings%20Brochure%20\(March%202010\).pdf](http://spirituality.ucla.edu/docs/Brochures/Key%20Findings%20Brochure%20(March%202010).pdf)

Evaluations of 2009-2010 Retreats

During the 2009-2010 academic year, the Mission and Ministry Office and Neumann Institute for Franciscan Studies offered twelve half-days of reflection for members of administration, faculty and staff (December 9,10,14,15; January 6,11,21,22,25; and February 2,5,18). A total of 181 employees (84 staff members; 61 full and part-time faculty; 36 members of the University Management Team) attended these reflection days which ran for 3 hours (either 8:30-11:30 or 12:30-3:30). The reflection days took place at the Mirinda Center for Sports, Spirituality and Character Development. The goals for the day were to:

- ❖ Explore our identity as “distinctively” Catholic in the Franciscan tradition
- ❖ Celebrate and rejoice in the values on which Neumann RISES (reverence, integrity, service, excellence, and stewardship)
- ❖ Renew our commitment to live the actions these values inspire
- ❖ Express gratitude for the many ways each person promotes our mission

Each day included an opening and closing prayer service based on the Catholic and Franciscan tradition and the unique mission of Neumann University. A presentation recalling the process (Awareness, Reflection, and Transformation) shared at the Opening Day August 26, 2009 led into reflection time using the visual display of our values in the Mirinda Center. Participants entered into personal reflection, then in small group sharing, and finally sharing with the larger group. The final session challenged the participants to move from this personal experience to explore how “we” can further our values as an educational community.

A total of 79 participants completed evaluation forms. It was evident that participants found the day rewarding. On the quantitative section, participants rated the facilities, food, and presentations very good to excellent. Likewise, participants felt that the day met the stated goals.

In addition to the quantitative section of the evaluation, there were a number of open-ended questions. Responses to these questions also affirmed the value of the day. In fact, those who responded to the evaluation requested more days like the reflection day. Participants expressed gratitude for all the opportunities offered throughout the year to better understand and live our distinctive identity, mission, and values. (e.g. speakers, book studies, workshops, resources). Some suggested that we expand the venues for

interaction and sharing to include shared opportunities for giving service as a community, opportunities for recreational interaction (games, sports – playing together), non-alcoholic “Happy Hours” in the Mirinda Center from 4:30-5:30 pm, opportunities to visit the Motherhouse for informal interaction with the sisters (lunch discussion groups), a workshop type day with break-out sessions on various aspects of Franciscan history and values. One suggested that we do a similar “awareness” reflection outside to appreciate the beauty all around campus. It was again suggested that there be faculty and staff participation in the Assisi pilgrimage.

Participants were asked to respond with concrete steps they could take to “integrate pervasively our Catholic Franciscan identity” and “strengthen the spirit and culture of reverence, integrity, service, excellence, and stewardship” on our campus. Some individuals offered the following recommendations.

- Take classes to the Mirinda Center and discuss the values with the students.
- Include values in the syllabus and integrate them throughout the course.
- Use the story *Ask the Geese* in community building with students.
- Use the material in the Student Leadership Institute Program.
- Have monthly gatherings with the unit to discuss progress on living the values.
- Be mindful of “mission” especially at stressful times in offices.

A few additional comments were noted:

- I have a much better appreciation of the Center; this was a healing experience.
- Athletes can teach us a lot about our values.
- Loved the importance given to “play” in spirituality.
- I see the connection between sports and spirituality!
- The relaxed, informal setting triggers creativity and sharing.
- It would be great to have a photo directory of everyone employed on campus so we could learn names...it could be on the web.
- I missed the traditional “Tea”.
- Visiting the displays in the Center recharges me. I plan to stroll through frequently.

Most respondents concluded their evaluation with an expression of gratitude for the day. Many individuals stated that they found the day personally enriching and enjoyable. Many also mentioned their gratitude for the opportunity to take the time to visit the Center for Sports, Spirituality, and Character Development. In planning the 2010-2011 Days of Reflection care will be taken to incorporate specific suggestions related to times for reflection, guide questions, and a single booklet containing all the prayers and directions for the day (rather than several separate handouts).

Peace and All Good as we begin another academic year!

Patricia Hutchison, OSF, Ed.D.