

## INTRODUCTION: CHARACTERISTICS OF FRANCISCAN HIGHER EDUCATION

From the beginning, Franciscans have seen education as a vital way of embodying and sharing the good news of God's action in our world. The following characteristics identify ways in which Franciscan education seeks to form persons and build a better world.

The Franciscan Tradition holds a **sacramental** view of the world and of the human person as a reflection of God's overflowing goodness. Thus, a Franciscan education:

- celebrates **diversity** as an expression of God's generous love,
- emphasizes responsibility for **creation** honoring the **dignity** of every creature, and
- provides opportunities to contemplate God's abundant **goodness** and **beauty**.

The Franciscan Tradition emphasizes building **relationships**. Thus, a Franciscan education:

- works from a stance of **humility** and **simplicity**,
- promotes **peacemaking** seeking to heal divisions, and
- fosters **justice** through a culture of **social responsibility**.

The Franciscan Tradition is grounded in **Gospel** values, balancing beliefs and actions. Thus a Franciscan education:

- supports every person on his or her lifelong journey of **conversion**,
- contributes an **intellectual tradition** that integrates faith and an ethical and moral response to God's love, and
- promotes the personal call to **leadership through service**.

### For reflection:

1. What does each characteristic (sacramental, relational, Gospel-oriented) mean to you?
2. What questions do you have about the meaning of any characteristic?
3. How do Neumann's mission, vision, and values (RISES) connect with these characteristics?
4. What concrete examples of the characteristics have you recognized at Neumann?
5. What suggestions would you offer for improvement? How can we better bring these characteristics to life on our campus?

