

The following reflections were shared during the Opening Prayer Service at the 2009 Welcome Back Celebration.

A reflection on **Reverence** by Marguerite Hohm, visitor to campus in Spring 09 to speak on her sister, Sr. Dorothy Stang.

Reverence is one of our core values as citizens of the world. The definition of reverence is to honor or respect. To honor our creator and all that God created from the smallest to the largest of creation is to be revered. Nothing in the universe is insignificant. Everything has a purpose including you and me and we must be educated to this fact.

Last April on Earth Day I was invited by Sara Marks to Neumann University to present my sister, Sr. Dorothy Stang, SND a missionary for 38 years in the Brazilian Rain Forest. My husband, Elmer and I were honored and treated with much respect from the time we arrived until we left.

A perfect example of reverence I want to share with you. Campus Ministry took care of all the arrangements lovingly. We were introduced to the President of the University, Dr. Rosalie Mirenda, the Vice President of Mission and Ministry, Sr. Marguerite O'Beirne, and many faculty, staff, and students. I must say that I was impressed with the attitude and respect at Neumann.

I witnessed on several occasions how interested and involved Dr. Mirenda and Sr. Marguerite were as well as faculty. The number 1 hockey team was invited to dinner where we ate our meals; Sr. Marguerite went to each player and engaged them in a conversation and congratulated them. The instructors attended the presentation with the students. And what impressed me more was how everyone was interested in Sr. Dorothy's story of martyrdom, respecting or reverencing her people in the forest as well as everything that our Creator created. She taught and fought for respect and human dignity and justice.

I recently traveled to New Orleans for my family reunion and saw how the youth were involved in helping to rebuild the city as did Neumann students this past spring. I happened upon an article in USA Today while flying home titled, "Too Many Colleges Fail to Graduate Students." One paragraph made me think of Neumann. It read, "too many schools seem obsessed with bringing students in, then seem to lose interest in what happens after they are admitted." I do NOT believe that is what happens at Neumann. I know because I witnessed just the opposite.

I will be forever grateful to all at Neumann University for renewing my faith in the youth, our leaders of tomorrow.

With reverent hearts, we pray
Lord, make me an instrument of your peace

A reflection on **Integrity** by Mike D'Angelo

Mahatma Gandhi said, "There are seven things that will destroy us: Wealth without work; Pleasure without conscience; Knowledge without character; Religion without sacrifice; Politics without principle; Science without humanity; Business without ethics."

Nonviolence is the ultimate call of Gandhi's words as well as Neumann University's Franciscan call, so from those lines we pray: May we attempt to let go of our control over other people, places and things and recognize the only person, place or thing we can control is ourselves. Integrity is one of the most difficult character traits we have to mature in because it requires so much introspection of the self. We ask many questions of the "business" of life: Neumann University's holistic education provides us with the opportunity to become wealthy but, we must work to define wealth as purely economic or wealth of the spirit? We develop our conscience but, we must decide what pleasure is; what we want or, what we already have? We receive the knowledge we need but, we must decide if the acquired knowledge is to be used in service to others or only ourselves? Our Franciscan values provide us with religion but, how much are we willing to sacrifice for love of God, self or others? Our conversations provide us with much politics but, are we impeccable with our words? Our ever developing knowledge in science is fantastic but, are we providing ethics from the womb to the tomb or do the choices blur our humanity? Finally may we all be concerned with ethics and not let business get in the way of our most important ethical resources - right relationships. We ask you ever patient Lord to help transform us in all our challenge areas and allow us to shine our true self in all our areas of strength.

With integrity, we pray

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace

A reflection on **Service** by Carol Dougherty

We serve with humility, compassion, and love. We challenge unjust structures and work for social transformation. We embrace service as a life-long commitment. Using one's knowledge in the service of others is part of the tradition and the mission of Neumann University. As Christians, we are called to reach out to others, those around us and, especially those in great need. Formal opportunities to serve are abundant through Campus Ministry and other college activities and, as Service-Learning within the classroom. Students and staff can help to feed the hungry by volunteering to serve the homeless at Saint Francis Inn, or just by stopping for a few minutes in the dining hall to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich for a hungry person living a few short miles away in Chester as part of Sandwiches for Survival. Service opportunities are also available through Habitat for Humanity, in tutoring at risk students or by visiting the sick and elderly. Those participating in service trips to Wyoming or New Mexico learn more about our shared humanity as they serve others in a different culture. Within our families, at work, and within our communities, we seek to serve others with both compassion and respect, to see the face of God in those we serve. This call to service is a life-long commitment as students leave Neumann and join the workplace as business persons, nurses, teachers, police officers and social workers. As part of the Neumann community we set the example as we model the value of service to students and to each other. By listening, by cooperating with others to carry out our responsibilities and going beyond ourselves we demonstrate the commitment to service.

With hands willing to serve, we pray
Lord, make me an instrument of your peace

A reflection on **Excellence** by Sr. Marguerite O'Beirne

We perform to the best of our ability the responsibilities entrusted to us. We encourage our students to achieve their highest potential through an excellent teaching and caring environment.

When I reflect on the characteristic of Excellence as a core value of Neumann University, there are several areas of the University community that come to mind—areas that continue to excel in service to students, in performance of the responsibilities that contribute to the overall excellence of the institution and manner that our students are led to achieve their highest potential through an excellent teaching and learning environment. In the letter from the accreditors granting the ten year accreditation for achievement of quality and excellence in Nursing Education the program was commended for its continued interest in having the program measured against the highest national standards of quality in nursing education. When I have to identify one particular area that reflects excellence of a program, I am immediately reminded of our Nursing program and the achievement of our nursing students not only in the classroom, but in their commitment to service, their engagement in campus activities, and their outstanding performance on the National Council Licensure Examination.

Neumann nursing students achieved a 97.87 percent pass rate on the National Council Licensure Exam. This rate is higher by 16 percentage points than the mean pass rate in Pennsylvania. The recent letter from the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission in Harrisburg is testimony to the degree of excellence and recognition that Neumann's nursing program has achieved on a state-wide level. We salute all who contribute to the EXCELLENCE of Neumann's nursing program, and hold it as a model that is replicated throughout the University community.

Aiming toward excellence, we pray
Lord, make me an instrument of your peace

HOW DO WE DEFINE STEWARDSHIP IN OUR PERSONAL LIVES?

Is it the theological view that can be consciously defined as the use of God-given resources for the accomplishment of God-given objectives?

Is it the central essence that we manage everything God brings into our life in a manner that honors God and impacts eternity?

Is it environmentally-oriented in that every person has a responsibility to look after the planet both for themselves and for future generations?

However we define stewardship for ourselves our example impacts others around us – our family, our friends, our colleagues, our students. Simple things like seeing Mary McCoy picking up a piece of paper off the floor, hearing about Carol Kane stopping on the road to move a turtle to the other side, watching students use the recycling bins, observing Patti Strobl and John Mizzoni encouraging the Students' for Environmental Awareness Club to initiate and implement the University's Adopt-a-Highway Program, Jason Bell and Sodexo's efforts to reduce food waste in the cafeteria, Sr. Betty McVeigh's idea to post signs in all classrooms to turn off lights when you leave, and Corey Calloway's efforts to improve our recycling program – all these actions express taking personal responsibility, stewardship and caring for creation.

St. Francis saw all of God's creation as equal to human beings. He recognized the interdependence of human beings with one another and the rest of creation. Stewardship to him meant that he was responsible to recognize and reverence everything that God brought into his life as gift.

Only when we recognize the Earth as a whole, for what it is, an expression of God's love for us, can we recognize the source of our own lives and become God's faith-filled stewards on campus and elsewhere.

Living as good stewards, we pray
Lord, make me an instrument of your peace

A reflection on **Joy** by Joe Gillespie

Thich Nhat Hahn a Vietnamese Buddhist monk once said, “Sometimes your joy is the source of your smile.” What has caused me to smile here at Neumann University? Beyond everything it is the relationships that I enjoy here. This lies at the heart of my joy! The relationships that I have built with students and colleagues, relationships that shape and are shaped by this community, bring the greatest joy. Yes, I have felt joy when projects have been completed, programs added, accreditations attained or renewed, faculty hired, promoted, published - - all of this has brought a smile to my face. But why a smile is the key. There was a smile, along with a feeling of joy, because in each of these moments I was deeply aware that people worked together - - individually and collectively - - to cause each of these success stories to happen.

What do I enjoy about Neumann? It is the people, people with whom I am privileged to share a mission each day; people who greet me even when they may not know my name; people who go out of their way to make others feel welcome or happy or consoled or respected, and who do so only because they know it is the “good” thing to do.

Thich Nhat Hahn’s full quote is, “Sometimes your joy is the source of your smile, but sometimes your smile can be the source of your joy.” The manner in which people here at Neumann have shared even a smile has often brought me a moment of joy. It is simply this - - the sharing of relationships - - that has brought joy alive to me at Neumann!

With joyful souls, we pray

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace