



MISSION MATTERS

monthly



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QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"The function of education is to teach one to think critically. Intelligence plus character - that is the goal of true education"

- Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

CATHOLIC Q&A

What do Catholics believe about...

Mary, the Mother of Jesus?
click [here](#) for the answer

INTERFAITH CALENDAR

click [here](#) for more information

- 01/01: Mary, Mother of God - Catholic Christian
- 01/01: Feast of Saint Basil - Orthodox Christian
- 01/01: Shogatsu/Gantan-sai (New Year) - Shinto
- 01/05: Guru Gobindh Singh birthday-Sikh
- 01/06: Epiphany - Christian
- 01/07: Feast of the Nativity - Orthodox Christian
- 01/13: Maghi - Sikh
- 01/18: Week of Prayer for Christian Unity begins - Christian
- 01/19: Timkat - Ethiopian Christian
- 01/28: Tu B'Shvat - Jewish

NEW SCHOLARSHIPS FOR A NEW YEAR!

The college is pleased to announce new scholarship opportunities for our students.

The Campus Ministry Mission & Service Scholarships will provide unique, rigorous, and rewarding educational experiences for students with a demonstrated commitment to community service and spiritual development through both curricular and co-curricular offerings, and to enhance the mission and core values of the College.

Up to seven annual one-time scholarships will be awarded to students, each worth \$3,000. Recipients can reapply for up to four years. After four years, eligibility will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

The mission of Villa Maria College is based on its Catholic Franciscan heritage. Programming from the Campus Ministry office honors that heritage in addition to other spiritual traditions. With this in mind, the college seeks to recruit a diverse pool of applicants from any Christian or Non-Christian religious body or applicants open to the college mission and their own spiritual development. All students, who meet the above criteria, are welcome to apply for this scholarship. Click [here](#) for more information and an application form. The deadline to apply is March 1, 2021.

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY

On Monday, January 18th our nation celebrates the life and teachings of Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Click [here](#) to learn more about this amazing man.



NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION TO MAKE YOUR WORKPLACE HAPPIER

From: allabouthappiness.org

Many people going back to work in January will be feeling miserable. The holidays are over, predictions of more economic turmoil abound, and many people will be returning to jobs that they don't enjoy at the best of times.

Today Action for Happiness is proposing a New Year 'resolution' with a difference. Rather than going back to work feeling fed up, people are being asked to commit to make their workplace a happier one in 2021 - and to encourage their employers and colleagues to do the same.

5 actions for leaders and managers:

- Trust people - give them freedom within guidelines.
- Help people see why what they do matters.
- Give regular encouragement, praise and thanks.
- Help people find and play to their strengths.
- Encourage a healthy balance between work and life.

5 general actions for a happier workplace:

- Stop to say hello to colleagues and get to know them better.
- Find ways to make working together more fun and sociable.
- Make a habit of noting good things that happen each day.
- Change something that's making you or colleagues unhappy.
- Go out of your way to support others and help them feel good.

"All labor that uplifts humanity has dignity and importance and should be undertaken with painstaking excellence."

- Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

OUR CORE VALUES

Respect for Human Dignity



Transformation



JUSTICE and PEACE



Compassion



Solidarity with the Poor

2020-2021 Focus

JUSTICE & PEACE REFLECTIONS

Promoting justice, peace and community engagement during a pandemic!

Villa Maria students are routinely involved in community engagement activities during a normal semester through service learning and community service projects through their courses, clubs and internships. There was nothing routine or normal about this past semester due to the restrictions placed on the community by the COVID-19 pandemic. Villa students rose to the occasion and were still able to make an impact as the following examples will illustrate.

Last fall the college began a Day of Service for all students in the freshmen seminar class CORE 101. COVID restrictions prevented that from happening this fall so a temporary alternative approach was taken. It was called Justice and Peace and Community Action. The purpose of the project was to have the student review and apply the Mission of Villa Maria College to the world outside. The project included students choosing an issue they cared about, researching that issue, selecting an advocacy activity they could do remotely and then connecting their learning to the colleges' core value focus for the year of *justice and peace*. They were provided two sources for their research.

DoSomething.org, the largest national not-for-profit working exclusively with young people to promote social change. Using their digital platform, they work with their volunteers on civic action campaigns to make real-world impact on causes young people care about. The second organization students could work with was ppgbuffalo.org, *Partnership for the Public Good*. This is a local community-based think tank that "builds a more just, sustainable and culturally vibrant Buffalo-Niagara region through action-oriented research, policy development and citizen engagement."

After selecting the cause or issue they wished to research they educated themselves using the resources provided on the websites mentioned above and then engaged in an advocacy activity. Both sites provided specific actions that could be taken to address the issue. These included petition signings, letters to the editor or elected officials, social media posts to family and friends or lifestyle changes that could be made to make the world a better place. The students then were asked to connect this project to the Villa core of *justice and peace*. Once completed the students made presentations on their work to their fellow classmates. After the completion of this unit of the course one CORE 101 instructor Alyssa Kowalski commented, "even if we are able to move forward with the Day of Service in future semesters, I would advocate for incorporating this project into the unit somehow. I think it was extremely valuable for students to take the time to research causes with which they are connected and start thinking about how they can make a difference in the community."

Some of the issues chosen by students to explore included gun violence, racial inequality, segregation, LGBTQ+ issues, environmental causes, climate change, the opioid epidemic, homelessness and poverty.

Another group of students who had to make alternative plans for service learning this semester were our PTA and OTA students. They developed the Pen Pal Project where they connected with a Felician Sister at the local Central Convent or with a resident at a nearby nursing home. After the correspondence students wrote reflections based on pen pals who were able to respond and those who were not. They commented on what they learned, what surprised them, made the biggest impression, the dispelling of any preconceptions of the elderly, how a lack of response affected their motivation to engage in service and what the value of continuing to engage with a population despite not receiving any feedback or response. This was followed by a brief research paper on the effects of isolation imposed by COVID to the elderly and individuals with developmental disabilities and some of the measures that can potentially prevent or alleviate these negative consequences. Finally, they related these experiences, research and personally feelings to one of the college's core values.

Nothing beats face-to-face encounters but these were admirable attempts at the next best thing.

ACTION CALENDAR: HAPPIER JANUARY 2021

"Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony" - Gandhi

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
1 Find three good things to look forward to this year	2 Make time today to do something kind for yourself	3 Do a kind act for someone else to help to brighten their day	4 Write a list of things you feel grateful for in life and why	5 Look for the good in others and notice their strengths	6 Take five minutes to sit still and just breathe	7 Learn something new and share it with others
8 Say positive things to the people you meet today	9 Get moving. Do something physically active (ideally outdoors)	10 Thank someone you're grateful to and tell them why	11 Switch off all your tech 2 hours before bedtime	12 Connect with someone near you - share a smile or chat	13 Be gentle with yourself when you make mistakes	14 Take a different route today and see what you notice
15 Eat healthy food which really nourishes you today	16 Get outside and notice five things that are beautiful	17 Contribute positively to a good cause or your community	18 Focus on what's good, even if today feels tough	19 Get back in contact with an old friend you miss	20 Go to bed in good time and give yourself time to recharge	21 Take a small step towards an important goal
22 Try out something new to get out of your comfort zone	23 Plan something fun and invite others to join you	24 Put away digital devices and focus on being in the moment	25 Decide to lift people up rather than put them down	26 Say hello to a neighbour and get to know them better	27 Challenge your negative thoughts and look for the upside	28 Ask other people about things they've enjoyed recently
29 Use one of your personal strengths in a new way	30 Count how many people you can smile at today	31 Write down your hopes or plans for the future	<p>ACTION FOR HAPPINESS</p> <p>www.actionforhappiness.org</p> <p>Learn more about this month's theme at www.actionforhappiness.org/happier-january</p> <p>Happier · Kinder · Together</p>			

CONNECT WITH MISSION MATTERS:



www.villa.edu

The Felician Sisters of Our Lady of Hope Province:

Click [here](#) for more information

The Association of Franciscan Colleges & Universities:

Click [here](#) for more information and resources

Sister Mary Josette Food Pantry:

Serving our staff & students

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Villa Maria College is a Felician Sponsored Ministry

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