

YOUR LIFE AFTER UB

- 11 SUGGESTIONS -

FOR LIVING YOUR FAITH AFTER COLLEGE



St. Joseph
University Parish

Congratulations! Thank you for being a member of the Newman Center at UB and St. Joseph University Parish. We pray that you will find nourishment for your faith and a place to use your gifts for the glory of God wherever you may go. It has been a blessing to serve you while you were at the University at Buffalo.

We offer you the following suggestions to help you continue to deepen your faith.

The Campus Ministry Staff

Be an Informed “Spiritual” Consumer

- Test drive several Catholic faith communities before you decide on a parish to join. Not all parishes are alike. Ask Catholics in your area where they worship. Stop by parishes and meet the staff.
- Don't be intimidated by large parishes; many are subdivided into smaller faith communities and have committees that work in specific areas.
- Look for a parish community where you can give some of your time and energy. Parishes that seem the least vibrant are parishes that may need more of your gifts. Join a parish not so much for what you can receive but for what you can give.
- Being a Catholic is a community endeavor. Become an active member of a local parish.
- Don't wait around to be asked to get involved.
- All types of gifts can be utilized within the church, but it's your responsibility to let the parish know you're willing. Volunteer your time and talents.

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Deepen Your Spirituality

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- Pray every day. There are many different ways to pray; find those that bring you closer to God.
- Deepen and develop your prayer life through reading, reflection, or joining a prayer group. Some businesses already have prayer groups that meet before or after work or during lunchtime.
- Make a retreat - many are geared to specific interests.
- Seek out places, such as a monastery or retreat house, where you can spend time away in prayer.

Unlock the Riches of the Bible

- Educate yourself on Catholic approaches to reading and interpreting the Bible.
- Buy yourself a good Bible. There are many available translations of the Bible. *The Catholic Study Bible* and *The Catholic Bible: Personal Study Edition* have very helpful notes and introductions.
- Start reading the Bible. Don't be intimidated. Read a few passages each day and reflect on them.
- It is probably best not to read the Bible from cover to cover like a novel. Reading the scripture texts used at daily Mass during the year is a good place to start.
- Find a Bible study group at your local parish. If there's none there, ask the staff to help you start one.

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Learn More About Your Faith

- No more tests!! Now make time to deepen your knowledge about Church history, theology, spirituality, social teaching, etc. Contact staff members of your parish or your diocese for resources.
- Participate in programs, retreats, and educational opportunities offered by your parish, diocese, Catholic educational center, or local Catholic college or Newman Center.
- Subscribe to at least one Catholic publication.
Check out the local diocesan newspaper. (Your parish will have info on how to subscribe.)
U.S. Catholic (205 W. Monroe St., Chicago, IL 60606) is a good upbeat Catholic monthly. www.uscatholic.org
Maryknoll (P.O. Box 302, Maryknoll, NY 10545-0302 - annual donation) is a monthly magazine with a mission orientation.
- Check the internet for Catholic websites; www.americancatholic.org, www.bustedhalo.com
- Read the Catholic press. Look for other publications in your local parish or public library. They often have *Commonweal*, *America*, *The National Catholic Reporter*, and other Catholic magazines and newspapers.
- Be a sponsor for someone becoming a Catholic through your parish's Christian Initiation of Adults process. You can learn much by walking with another adult who is seeking to enter the Catholic Church.

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Prepare for Your Life Vocation - Answer Your Call to Holiness

- A vocation is more than a job. It's responding to your life's deepest passion; it's a way of loving that shapes your whole life.
- Whether you get married, remain single, or choose to enter the priesthood or religious life, it's important to discern where God is calling you. Seek out friends, relatives, and people in your parish who can serve as role models and help you in this process.
- If you are in a serious relationship, spend time as a couple understanding your similarities and difference and finding where God is in your relationship.
- There are many marriage preparation resources for engaged couples in most parishes and dioceses. Participate in as many programs as you can.

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Expand Your Knowledge of Catholic Culture

- Much of our faith is reflected in art, music, literature, and theater. Seek out opportunities that will expand your ideas and images of Catholicism.
- When you travel, pay attention to the variety of images and ways in which others worship.
- Invite your friends to watch movies with a message and discuss their significance. Films with religious content include *A Man for All Seasons*, *Becket*, *Romero*, *The Mission*, *Black Robe*, *Entertaining Angels*, *Dead Man Walking*, *Babette's Feast*, *Jesus of Montreal*, *The Soloist*, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, *Doubt*, and *Slumdog Millionaire*. Other films that might provoke discussion include *Schindler's List*, *Shawshank Redemption*, *Life is Beautiful*, *Shadowlands*, *Chocolat*, *Erin Brockovich*, *The Legend of Bagger Vance*, *Castaway*, *O Brother Where Art Thou?*, *Billy Elliot*, *Philadelphia*, *Pay It Forward*, *Sideways*, *In A Dream*, *Lost In Translation*, and *Million Dollar Baby*.
- Educate yourself about other religious traditions that impact Catholic culture.

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Join a Faith Sharing Group or Small Christian Community

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- Get involved in a small group with other Catholics who have similar interests, are in similar life situations, or who live in your city or neighborhood. Many larger parishes have groups especially designed for young adults or newly married couples. The focus of a group will depend on the needs and interests of those involved. Start small and let the group evolve. Be sure to integrate the group into the larger parish community.

Become a Witness in the World

- Integrate your faith life into all you do. Faith is not something that should be practiced only during Sunday Mass and then left at the church steps when you leave.
- Bring the Catholic vision and message into your career and vocation. The National Center for the Laity (P.O. Box 291102, Chicago, IL 60629) publishes *Initiatives: In Support of the Christian in the World* and has a number of booklets on specific professions. (www.catholiclabor.org)

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Become a Volunteer

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- Graduation doesn't require you to go to grad school or begin climbing the corporate ladder. Explore volunteer opportunities. There are hundreds of programs.
- Look into volunteering with a Catholic organization. For information about a wide range of volunteer opportunities, contact Catholic Network of Volunteer Service (1-800-543-5046 or www.cnvs.org) and ask for a copy of *Response*, their listing of available programs. Or try the Jesuit Volunteer Corps (www.jesuitvolunteers.org) which some of our Newman students have participated in.
- There is even a service program within the Diocese of Buffalo. The Catholic Charities Service Corps offers young adults the opportunity to develop and share their gifts, education and faith in a unique manner. Please call 716.853.4424, ext. 3028 or visit www.ccservicecorps.org for more information.

Make the World a Better Place

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- You don't need to do everything, but make a commitment to do at least one thing to help the poor and the oppressed.
- Assess what you are good at and where you can be the most effective. You might not be able to spend a year in Appalachia or abroad. But you can do something. Often a member of the parish staff or a parish committee can help you get connected with local groups.
- Join a local organization, volunteer at a Catholic Worker House or homeless shelter, offer your services to the local Birthright office, help with fund-raising or book-keeping for a local charitable organization, visit the sick, help rake leaves or do house repair for an elderly neighbor, or build homes for the poor with a local Habitat For Humanity chapter.
- Keep informed about the world. Watch the news, listen to the radio, read newspapers.
- Influence your world and help change the structures that keep people down. Some national groups provide information on how to do this.
 - **Bread for the World** (50 F Street, NW, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20001) works to end hunger by influencing Congress. (www.bread.org)
 - **Amnesty International** (322 Eighth Avenue, New York, NY 10001) works to release prisoners of conscience by letter-writing campaigns. There are local groups in many cities throughout the world. (www.amnesty.org)
 - **Pax Christi USA** (532 West 8th Street, Erie, PA 16502) is an International Catholic peace organization. They have resources for action and prayer. (www.paxchristiusa.org)
 - **Network** (25 E Street, NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20001) is a National Catholic Social Justice lobby which provides resources for influencing US policy. (www.networklobby.org)
- Make justice a part of your life - be just where you work. Find out about the Catholic tradition of social justice teaching in documents from the Pope and the U.S. bishops.

Structure Generosity into Your Life

Much will be required of the person entrusted with much, and still more will be demanded of the person entrusted with more.

Luke 12:48

- Only 1% of people in the world have a college education. You have received one of the best! Remember how generous God has been to you.
- Tithe 10% - or work toward it. Give 5% to your parish and 5% to the poor and other charities.
- Support your local parish. Ask for envelopes and use them.
- Give to groups that help the poor. One of the best international efforts is Catholic Relief Services, (www.crs.org; 209 West Fayette St., Baltimore, MD 21201). Over 90% of its funding goes directly to help the poor throughout the world.

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Check the UB Newman Centers websites often - www.newman.buffalo.edu.

Once you get settled, drop us a note at **Newman Centers at UB, 520 Lee Entrance, The Commons - Suite 209, Amherst, New York, 14228** and let us know what you are up to. If you have questions and just need a listening voice, call us at **716-636-7495**.