

McDaniel partners with parish to support faith

Young Catholics who choose McDaniel College still have the opportunity to practice their faith.

The Westminster school has an active Catholic Campus Ministry program, which hosts Bible studies, social nights and other events that seek to promote the common interests of Catholic students at McDaniel. Nearly 40 students participated in various CCM activities last school year.

Teresa Tilyou, CCM's current vice president, called the program a "major factor in my decision to come to McDaniel," which has been affirmed by her experiences.

Associate pastor of nearby St. John, Westminster, Father D. Patrick Peach serves as the CCM chaplain. On Sundays when classes are in session, the group shares dinner and then walks to St. John for its Life Teen Mass.

Mary Ann Friday, a St. John parishioner and the executive assistant to the McDaniel president, has served as CCM's advisor for 14 years. Ms. Friday noted that without the support of St. John and the Archdiocese of Baltimore's division of youth and young adult ministry, CCM could not continue its work with Catholic students.

She sees CCM as a dynamic group, saying, "Every new group of students brings new ideas to us."

One such student is John Michaels, the 2007 valedictorian of The Cardinal Gibbons School, Baltimore, and a recipient of the Eagle of the Cross, an award which recognizes apostolic mission, leadership and moral integrity.

Mr. Michaels chose McDaniel because he "liked the atmosphere; it seemed tight-knit."

However, he acknowledges that being a devout Catholic at a public institution can be challenging.

“It’s a very liberal school,” he said. “In class, all aspects of our faith are called into question.”

Despite those challenges, Mr. Michaels has found ways to live out his faith at St. John, where he plays guitar and interns with the church’s youth ministry. He feels as though the hectic pace of his first year limited his time for CCM activities, but he said he is looking forward to getting more involved.

“I’d say it’s been a good experience so far.”

First-year students can attend a Mass on campus at the Baker Chapel during freshman orientation and CCM’s annual retreat to the Bellarmine Jesuit Retreat House in Waynesboro, Pa.

Outreach is available through McDaniel’s Affinity Housing program, which allows qualified student organizations to share housing in exchange for completing eight hours of public service each month. During recent spring breaks, members have participated in New York, Kentucky, Florida and Washington, D.C.

McDaniel students can expect an international perspective.

The McDaniel Plan, the school’s new curriculum, includes a global citizenship requirement, which mandates that students complete courses with multicultural and cross-cultural focuses.

Indicative of this emphasis is McDaniel’s incoming freshman class, which has increased its percentage of multicultural students to 17 percent, up from 12 percent last year.