

SPRING 2022

DUKE CATHOLIC

THE DUKE CATHOLIC CENTER NEWSLETTER



BREAKING BREAD

AT SUNDAY BRUNCH



Natalie Kubicki '23 chats with friends over a hot brunch following Sunday Mass.

Many Duke Catholic students want a network of Catholic friends and peers—Duke students who share their beliefs and values—but their schedules are packed or they're hesitant to commit to retreats or

small groups on their own. This is where low-barrier, community-building moments come in, and, in particular, the Duke Catholic Center Sunday Brunch.

Far and away, the celebration of Sunday Mass is the most-attended Catholic “event” on campus. Thus it made perfect sense when, in August, the DCC staff pivoted from a Tuesday evening dinner at the Falcone-Arena House to a catered brunch in the Divinity Cafe immediately following.

“I have a really busy schedule as an engineer so I can't usually commit to things during the week,” said sophomore Joe Laforet. “But Sunday Mass is something I do every week and brunch has been a really



Graduate students like Matthias Sur (center) enjoy connecting with Catholics from other departments and programs during brunch.

natural addition to that time. I'm already in a 'Catholic mentality', brunch is right outside the doors to Goodson, and there's good food. They made it so simple and convenient it was easy to add into my weekly routine.”

Every week, Sunday brunch attracts 60-70 students, with special free brunch days seeing upwards of 110 in attendance. But more than the

convenience or the good food, it's the easy entry point into the community that has many students returning.



Sunday Brunch is always packed with a good mix of undergraduate and graduate students.

“The biggest thing for me is being able to stay connected with some of my Catholic friends

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Student Director Andrew Griffin '23 enjoyed post-Mass brunch with new and old friends.

Keeping it low-key and social in nature, there is no programming to be found at Sunday Brunch. It is simply a meal shared amongst peers. Some chat about difficult mid-terms or parties of the nights before, others share memes or chat with DCC staff. But there are also students who use brunch as a time to translate from the Mass to the real world the challenges they received in the preceding homily.



Fr. Mike sits down with Rafaela Rivero '22 and friends during brunch.

around campus,” said senior Resident Advisor Matthew Majsak. “Last year one of my residents and I would ride the bus to Mass together. After Mass, we’d have great conversations on the walk back to grab breakfast. This year he is no longer my resident but I still get brunch with him almost every single week, and we keep that tradition alive. Plus, I’m not as active with DCC activities outside of weekends due to other commitments, but brunch has been a great way for me to meet people through eating with him and a few of his friends.”



Sunday Brunch is an open and welcoming space for any Catholic student, regardless of how involved they may be in other DCC activities.

“I usually go to Mass and then brunch with three to four friends,” said senior Mason Eaglin. “It’s definitely the most chill location to talk about faith. If we didn’t have brunch, we’d all just go off and do our own things after Mass. But at brunch, my friends and I talk about the homily a little, and that time becomes a nice transition from hearing it to implementing it in your life.”

The communal celebration of the Eucharist leads right into a communal act of breaking bread together. At Sunday Brunch students strengthen their relationships with one another, establish a network of Catholic peers, and find casual ways to bring Christ into conversation and into their week ahead.

For students unsure about coming to brunch by themselves, Matthew Majsak shared some encouragement.

“Just go for it. You might start up a conversation with the person waiting next to you in line over a food you both love or you might run into someone who is still eating but their friend had to leave so they’re on their own too. Many of us are creatures of habit and eat with our same friends but that doesn’t mean we’re not open to others should they want to join in!” 



Graduate students intermix with undergraduate students at brunch, providing opportunities for greater community bonds and peer mentorship.

CREATING SPACE FOR COMMUNION

My grandfather often saw technological advances as problematic. He always referred to the television as “the idiot box”, and anything made of plastic as “cheap”. I could go on with some of his other pearls of wisdom, but I’ll spare you.

Suffice it to say that I smile as I think of his take on things progressive. As a man who worked his entire life (into his 70s) in a steel mill, he had a particular take on life that tended to lean more toward the permanent than the latest and greatest. As he died just when cell phones were coming of age, I can only imagine what he would say if he were to walk on Duke’s campus today and witness those ubiquitous essentials of modern life. They make “the idiot box” seem downright tame in comparison!

As I reflect on the place that technology has taken in the world of our students, I can’t help but feel a bit like my grandfather and wonder if we haven’t missed the mark a bit.

I have no illusions regarding my ability to effect any real change in that regard. However, we do find ourselves here at the DCC having to address some of its unintended consequences. While these have been noted by many in other places already, I am not certain that the impact of virtual connections on our relationship with Jesus in the Church has been thoroughly vetted.

It seems obvious to me that we can’t speak of any relationships without considering what the word “virtual” will do when placed before it. Tim Elmore’s quote below is clearly an invitation to assess how the declining emotional intelligence of our students (and of us all) will impact how we connect with the Son of God who chose to become flesh (rather than a virtual redemption).

The DCC’s Sunday Brunch, as you will read more about in this edition, is one of a number of our strategies to bring students together in person. To put down the technology for a few minutes and enjoy a meal together. That this takes place just after we have celebrated the rather low-tech Eucharistic rite (Mass), is hopefully not lost on students who could actually find themselves not looking at a screen for 2+ hours during a Sunday (a record for some).



“AS VIRTUAL CONNECTIONS CLIMB, EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE DECLINES.”

– Tim Elmore

Creating space for communion, Eucharistic and human, is an essential component of Catholic life and is also the theme for Lent (Communion) that the DCC Staff chose for this (almost) post-pandemic season.

May our efforts at addressing some of the declining soft skills of human interaction empower all of us to appreciate more the non-virtual lengths that our God has gone to in order that we all might share a meal together in this life and the next. 🕯️

What's Been Happening AT THE FAH?



HOME COOKED THANKSGIVING



FAH-LA-LA



A SUPER SUPER BOWL



The beautiful renovations of the Falcone-Arena House have made it a hub for Catholic life this year. Whether folks are coming over to focus in the study or student leaders are hosting social events in the Great Room, the house has been full of energy. Enjoy these quick snapshots of what's been going on in the Falcone-Arena House (FAH)!

HOME COOKED THANKSGIVING

This year, as some students faced the reality of being unable to head home for the short Thanksgiving break, Sabina Marroquin, DCC Director of Small Groups, stepped in to host and cook a Thanksgiving meal at the FAH. 15 students—a mix of undergrad and graduate students—enjoyed fellowship and good food together!

FAH-LA-LA

The DCC Socials team threw a Christmas party at the FAH just before December

finals. Students made Christmas cookies, drank hot cocoa, decorated gingerbread houses, put up Christmas lights and décor, and joined together in elements of Las Posadas (a traditional Mexican Christmas celebration).

A SUPER SUPER BOWL

The annual DCC Super Bowl Party is not new, but this year's event outdid all the others. The student socials team worked with DCC staff to bring in two different food trucks for the night of the party. Not Just a Fry Guy set up shop with a menu of loaded up

French fries—hot, fresh, and made to order. And Maple View Creamery (a perennial Duke favorite) brought all the ice cream you can imagine, including their specialty flavor Devil's Delight.

SERIES OF STUDY BREAKS

Throughout the year, DCC staff and student leaders have hosted study break moments at the FAH for any students who happen to be studying in the house. From making your own pizza to canvas painting to loaded nachos, students have found the study breaks a refreshing (and often delicious) treat. 



LIGHTING A FIRE

STUDENTS SPARK THEIR FAITH ON RETREATS



Senior Haein Kim gives a talk on the Holy Spirit to Ablaze retreatants.

The business of academic life at Duke begs for a counterpart, something to balance out the hyper-focused study.

For Duke Catholic students, retreats play a vital role in providing a much-needed break from academics and the space to reflect, not just on their life at Duke, but on their relationship with God.

At the DCC there are two central retreats each year. Ignite,

the first retreat, comes early in the fall semester, offering students an “on-ramp” into the ministry. On Ignite, first- and second-year students travel to the beaches just south of the Outer Banks in an effort to step away from hectic campus life and spark their faith life at college. This past fall saw 60 students on retreat at Ignite! For many first-year students, this is the first opportunity they have to meet and form friendships with other Catholic students.

Senior Kaela Basmajian is getting ready to graduate, but her current roommate is a fellow senior, Carolina Cassidy, whom she met on that very first retreat. Students meet new friends and form life-long bonds that will take them well past graduation day.

But beyond budding friendships, Ignite also introduces students to and gives them a taste of the abundance of Catholic opportunities on campus, such as small groups, adoration, music ministry, confession, and more.

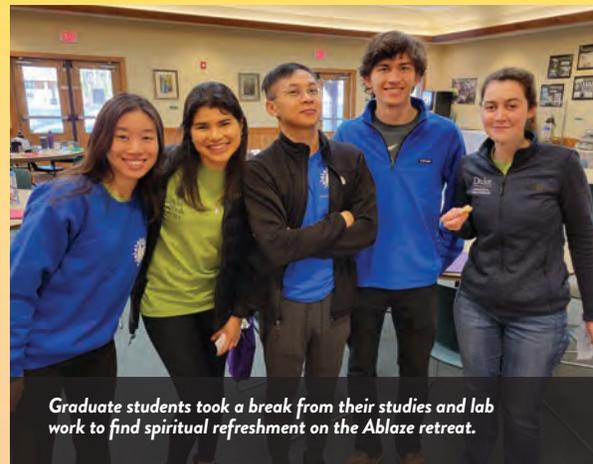
In the spring, all students have an opportunity to attend the Ablaze retreat. If you are sensing a theme, you’re right! Ablaze builds on the foundation students receive on that first retreat, and its purpose is to fan the flames of their discipleship in Christ. This year’s Ablaze retreat saw 30 students dive deeper into their Catholic faith at Duke. The theme for this year’s retreat focused on the power the Holy Spirit can play in students’ lives.

Highlights from the retreat include an evening of adoration under the stars and campfire praise and worship. Students gathered outside (on a basketball court, no less) to praise and adore the Lord. The next night, they gathered around a campfire, not to tell ghost stories, but to lift their voices in praise to their God and Father.

A big takeaway from the retreat came in the form of a talk given by Fr. Mike. He shared with students his thoughts on the Holy Spirit and how it can sometimes be thought of as the “forgotten person of the Trinity.”

Indeed, junior Robert Gilmore shared that Fr. Mike’s talk was a turning point for his relationship with the Third Person of the Trinity.

“I’ve prayed to God and Jesus plenty of times, but I never gave much thought to praying specifically to the Holy Spirit. Fr. Mike helped open a whole new world to me now that I am praying intentionally to the Holy Spirit.”



Graduate students took a break from their studies and lab work to find spiritual refreshment on the Ablaze retreat.

Students also prepared testimonials, shared in fellowship together in small groups, and enjoyed good food throughout the weekend. All this completed a refreshing and inspiring weekend for Duke students to refocus their relationships with one another and with God. 

Answering the Call from Pope Francis

DCC HOSTS SYNOD WITH DUKE STUDENTS

“It is precisely this path of synodality which God expects of the Church of the third millennium.” –Pope Francis

In 2021, Pope Francis began the Synod on Synodality, a two-year process of listening and dialogue for the universal Church. For the Synod, Pope Francis invited the entire Church to reflect on a theme that is essential for its life and mission and give feedback. The DCC answered the call!

In the last few months, the DCC hosted two synod meetings with students to get feedback on a variety of subjects. Students were asked to reflect on the following questions:

- What’s happening on the ground level?
- How can we make our Churches better?
- In what ways are we already journeying together with each other?
- What is it like to live as a Christian in today’s world –the joys, struggles, hopes, and fears?

The Synods were facilitated by Director of Small Groups Sabina Marroquin and Peer Ministry Coordinator Tim Fasano. Students appreciated the process.

“For many people that participated, they didn’t know this is something the Church was called to do,” said Sabina. “The opportunity to be heard by the Pope was very

beautiful. It told students ‘I matter, and the experience I’ve had with the faith matters. People care and are listening.’” During the synod there was some consensus around strengths and weaknesses of the Church at Duke.

Students appreciated the music ministry, faith resources available to them, homilies being relatable, and Mass as an anchor for faith practice on campus.

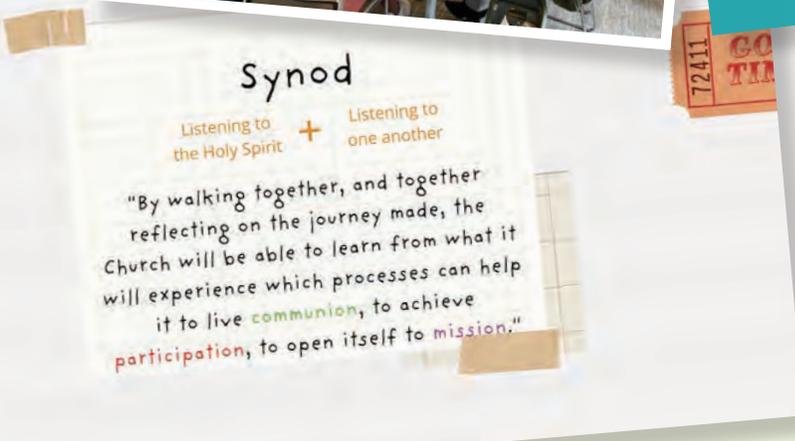
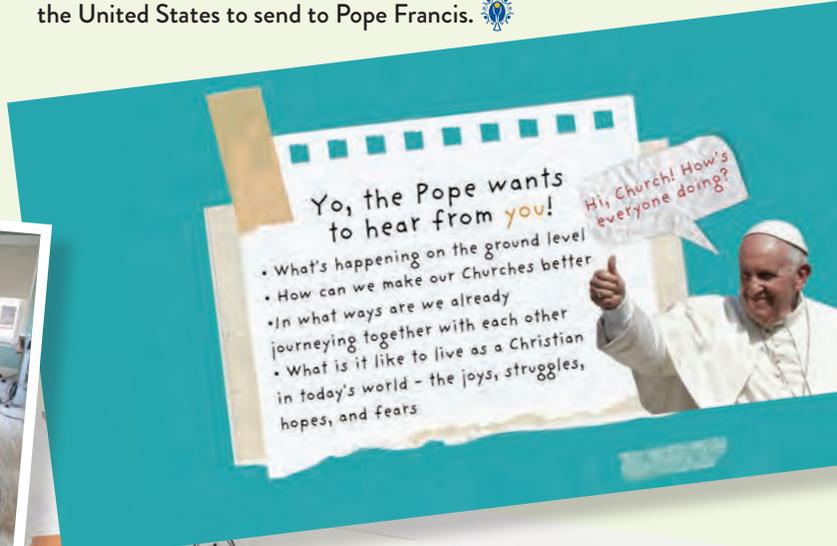
“Coming to college was the first time I took ownership of my faith,” said one student. “I was Catholic but did it as a family. Now I have to do it on my own. Having all the resources helps give students ownership.”

Among the suggested areas for improvement were students feeling insecure about defending the faith with their peers and students’ ability to connect to the larger universal Church outside the Duke bubble.

“Despite moving a lot, Catholic Church is home,” said one student. “Home brings joy. Home is where you can be yourself. At Duke, there is an intense professionalization. We have to be our best selves.

Being here [in the Catholic community] I can just be me; I can be home.”

Sabina is currently compiling the Duke Catholic Center Synod report that will be sent to Bishop Zarama at the Diocese of Raleigh. The bishop will compile all the notes from the diocese to send to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops who will, in turn, compile the report of the United States to send to Pope Francis. 



"TO BE OR NOT TO BE..."

Students Explore Vocations within the Church

Suffice it to say, when Shakespeare created his famous line "to be or not to be," he was not talking about discerning one's vocation. In fact, most people today do not talk much about their vocation and the role prayer and guidance can (and should) play a part in it.

That is why each year the Church celebrates and promotes National Vocation Awareness Week. This academic year, that special week fell in early November, just after students returned from Thanksgiving break.

In order to celebrate and bring awareness to vocations in the Church, the Duke Catholic Center invited Brother Nick, OFM Conv. and Sister Mary Elizabeth, FSE to campus to talk about their respective vocations in religious life.

Sister Mary Elizabeth Endee is a member of the Franciscan Sisters of the Eucharist. She lives at the community's Motherhouse in Meriden, CT. Currently, Sister Mary Elizabeth is the Director of Vocations for her community. She also works with young women in prepubescence,

the initial phase of vocational discernment. Sister Mary Elizabeth is a Marriage and Family Therapist and serves as Director of the Franciscan Life Center, a psychiatric clinic which is one of the apostolic outreaches of the community.

Brother Nicholas Romeo, OFM Conv. was recently named the Vocations Director for the Franciscan Friars Conventual. Previously, Brother Nick spent time as a Theology teacher for his alma mater, Archbishop Curley High School in Baltimore.

Sister Mary Elizabeth and Brother Nick joined the DCC for a few days, kicking the week off by hosting a panel discussion at each Sunday Mass. Throughout the next two days, they met individually with students curious to know more about vocations to the priesthood or religious life. Their visit concluded on Monday evening with a dinner at the Falcone-Arena House, followed by a prayer service with students for an increase in vocations to the Church. 

Celebrating Cultural Identity in the Church

*"Being Catholic means
'Here comes everybody.'"*

—James Joyce

Duke University is an institution that attracts students and faculty from across the world. And with the Catholic Church alive and present on every continent and in countless cultures, it's no surprise that Catholics at Duke are arguably one of the most diverse communities on campus.

The challenge for the Duke Catholic Center, then, is to encourage inclusion and participation of all Duke Catholics in the life and ministry of the Duke Catholic community by building up both their Catholic identity and their unique cultural identity within their faith.

To that end, the Center has embarked upon an initiative to celebrate and support the different cultural identities of Duke Catholic students. Here you can read of two recent moments meant to do just that.

BLACK CATHOLIC SMALL GROUP COLLABORATION

The Black Catholic Small Group has been getting together and sharing faith experiences with one another since August 2020. A small but dedicated group, the members meet every week to read, discuss, and pray about the upcoming Sunday Gospel reading. This February, outside of their weekly small group, members initiated a new relationship with another Black Catholic community in Durham.

Just five miles away from where the small group meets sits Holy Cross Catholic Church. Founded by Jesuits in 1939 as a welcoming place for African-American Catholics in Durham, Holy Cross is a historically Black and culturally diverse parish. Over the years, the DCC and Holy Cross have partnered on various events and initiatives. But this was the first time a group of students opened up a collaboration with the parish.

LUNAR NEW YEAR

Lunar New Year is an annual celebration in China and other Asian countries that begins with the first new moon of the lunar calendar and ends with first full moon 15 days later.

It's a time in which families gather, elders and ancestors are honored, homes are cleaned, gifts are given, and festivities abound. Indeed, parishes with large Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese and other Asian communities celebrate Lunar New Year almost like another feast day. Homilies make the connection between family ancestors and the spiritual ancestors of the saints and apostles. Bishops remind their people that material newness is superficial without the newness of life in Christ.

And at the Duke Catholic Center, Asian Catholic students gathered to celebrate with multilingual prayer and a traditional tea ceremony. 



Students are hungry and excited for moments that allow their cultural identity to be celebrated within the Duke Catholic community!

Snapshots of Catholic Life on Campus

ASH WEDNESDAY 2022



SPRING BREAK TRIP



1. The Music Ministry team led the community into the Lenten season with beautiful music and song. 2. Tommy Livesay '23 shared an invitation to all students at Mass to consider joining a Small Group for the season of Lent. 3. Luke Jackson '23 served as a Eucharistic Minister to his classmates and peers at Mass. 4. The chapels were full on Ash Wednesday as students flocked to Mass to begin their Lenten journey. 5. (Clockwise from bottom left) Hanny Echeverria '25, Ego Maduafokwa '25, Daniel Hwang '22, Chris Cosby '25, Axelle Miel '24, and Jaqueline Gomez '25 were part of a group of 10 students who spent their Spring Break working on a sustainable farm and helping serve the hungry in Maryland. 6. In addition to harvesting carrots and other vegetables, the students planted the farm's first fruit trees! 7. Axelle Miel '24 and Haein Kim '22 peeled carrots as they prepared soup for homeless men and women in Ellicott City, Maryland.

Snapshots of Catholic Life on Campus

Duc in Altum Leadership Retreat



FAH FEST



1. Ella Gunady '23 (left) and Alejandra Mella '24 (right) were partnered up during a teamwork and communication exercise on the DCC's leadership retreat Duc in Altum. 2. Jessica Wey '23 (left) and Clare Sparling '24 (right) also showed off their teamwork abilities! 3. In addition to team-building moments like this, students on the Duc in Altum retreat learned how to lead effective small groups, pray with Scripture, and mentor their peers. 4. DCC ministry staff were able to join in with students and develop deeper relationships with the student leaders. 5, 6, and 7. At the re-opening party for the renovated Falcone-Arena House, students made great use of the photo booth as they celebrated a new year and the new space!

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