

**MEDIA RELEASE**

Office of Public Relations

Niagara University, NY 14109

Phone: 716.286.8747

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**Niagara University Schedules Events
to Celebrate Vincentian Heritage Week**

**NIAGARA UNIVERSITY, N.Y. (September 6, 2019)** – Niagara University, the first Vincentian university established in the United States, has scheduled a full slate of events to celebrate its rich history of education and service in the spirit of St. Vincent de Paul. “A Heightened Sense of Purpose” is the theme of this year’s Vincentian Heritage Week, which will take place Sept. 21-29, 2019.

Vincentian Heritage Week is a way for the university community to pay homage to St. Vincent, a 17th century Catholic priest who inspired and organized his contemporaries to serve the less fortunate, and other saints, while highlighting the university’s Catholic and Vincentian character.

The entire Niagara University community – students, faculty, staff, and administration – participates in the Heritage Week events, highlighted by the prestigious Vincentian Heritage Convocation, which recognizes the extraordinary contributions of university employees, alumni, and community leaders.

Below is the full schedule of Vincentian Heritage Week events:

**Saturday, Sept. 21**

* **Freshman Day of Service: United Way of Greater Niagara: “Girls in Sports”
10 a.m.–3 p.m. on the Niagara University campus**
Girls between the ages of 9-12 residing in Niagara County are invited to participate in the Western New York Girls in Sports Day. The event will give girls of all skill levels the opportunity to try their hand at a variety of sports at stations managed by coaches and female student-athletes from Niagara University and Niagara County Community College.
* **Mindfulness Conversations
8:30–1:30 p.m., Castellani Art Museum**Mindfulness and mindful movement for educators and wellness professionals.

**Monday, Sept. 23**

* **Poverty Simulation
1:30 p.m., Gallagher Center, Multi-Purpose Room**
Students from NU’s social work classes will gain first-hand insight into the day-to-day struggles of millions of Americans. Recognizing the Vincentian principle of compassion for the poor, this event enables participants to experience the realities of life with a shortage of money and an abundance of stress. All members of the university community are welcome to observe the simulation. For more information, please contact Dr. Kevin Blair (blairkd@niagara.edu).
* **The Spirituality of Niagara Falls**
**4 p.m., Castellani Art Museum**
From pre-Columbian times to the present, the Niagara River has been a waterway imbued with sacred significance. Faculty members of Niagara University’s departments of English, biology, and religious studies will join artist Thomas Kegler, who paints Niagara Falls in the Hudson Valley tradition, in a panel discussion exploring the spiritual aspects of the river. The panel will offer various meanings given to Niagara Falls, including the perspectives of Niagara University’s founding priests, 19th century Romantic writers, and modern-day pilgrims.

**Tuesday, Sept. 24**

* **Common GOOD Conversations: Civil Conversation and the Limits of Free Speech**  **2:10–3:30 p.m., Castellani Art Museum**

**Wednesday, Sept. 25**

* **“IMPACT Fair” showcasing local service opportunities
Noon–3:30 p.m., Russell J. Salvatore Dinning Commons**
* **“Walking a Common Path: Bridging religious difference in the labyrinth”
12:15–1:50 p.m., Gallagher Center, Multi-Purpose Room** One of a series of interactive panel presentations on diversity that explores the differences and similarities between Christianity, Judaism, and Islam in three areas: practice, prayer, and pilgrimage. This presentation will focus on prayer.
* **Vincentian Heritage Lecture “The Purpose Firm—Equal to the Deed”
3:35–5 p.m., Castellani Art Museum**
Presented by Sr. Betty Ann McNeil, D.C., M.S.W, Vincentian scholar-in-residence, Division of Mission and Ministry, DePaul University
Saint Elizabeth Ann Bayley Seton was a notable Vincentian woman whose confidence, clarity, and purpose shaped education, nursing, and social services to assist persons at the margins of society.

**Thursday, Sept. 26**

* **Be a Power for Good: A Student Conversation with Alexis Fuentes
12:15–1:35 p.m., Gallagher Center, Multi-Purpose Room**
Alexis Fuentes, director of missions, Our Lady of Mount Carmel School, and speaking consultant, The Big Talk Academy, was born and raised in Florida of immigrant parents and became involved with the Missionary Cenacle Apostolate (a Vincentian Family ministry) for youth and young adults. She is a sought-after speaker on developing a heightened sense of purpose in life.
* **Vincentian Heritage Convocation
4 p.m., Alumni Chapel**
Members of the Niagara University community are recognized for their outstanding work in the spirit of St. Vincent de Paul at this academic convocation. Alexis Fuentes, director of missions, Our Lady of Mount Carmel School, and speaking consultant, The Big Talk Academy, is the keynote speaker. All are invited.

Honorees include Sr. Betty Ann McNeil, D.C., M.S.W.; Rev. Thomas Augustine Judge, C.M.; Dr. Shawn P. Daly; David V. Whalen; Patricia Wrobel; Christopher Rhue; and Alexis Fuentes.

**Friday, Sept. 27**

* **Vincentian Heritage Week Mass**
**12:20 p.m., Upper Level Gallagher Center**
* **Chilly Billy’s Ice Cream Truck**
**1:15 p.m., in front of Gallagher Center**
Your Mass program gets you free ice cream!

**Saturday, Sept. 28**

* **Saint Vincent de Paul Society Friends of the Poor Walk**
**Registration at 8:30 a.m., walk at 10 a.m., Goat Island at the American Falls**
NU’s Society of St. Vincent de Paul will join the Friends of the Poor Walk on Goat Island in Niagara Falls. This is a great opportunity to walk in solidarity with other St. Vincent de Paul societies in the region. Funds raised for this walk directly assist those in our communities in need of food, household goods, and other services. All who would like to join can register online at https://www.fopwalk.org/. Please select “Niagara University” as your beneficiary, and all proceeds will go to NU’s student-run soup kitchen and other works of our campus conference.

**Sunday, Sept. 29**

* **Family Weekend Mass: Commissioning of the Vincentian Scholars
11 a.m., Alumni Chapel**
Family Weekend draws to a close with a celebration of God’s great love. Niagara University’s newest Vincentian Scholars will also be commissioned at this Mass. The Vincentian Scholars are part of a four-year scholarship program that forms leaders in the Vincentian tradition—academically, practically, and spiritually. Each scholar accepted into the program not only maintains a high grade point average, but also develops the responsibility to work side-by-side with local community leaders.

For more information about these events, contact the Office of Mission Integration (formerly Mission and Ministry) at 716.286.8400.

To learn more about Niagara University, please visit www.niagara.edu.

**ABOUT NIAGARA UNIVERSITY:**

Founded by the Vincentian community in 1856, Niagara University is a comprehensive institution, blending the best of a liberal arts and professional education, grounded in our values-based Catholic tradition. Its colleges of Arts and Sciences, Business Administration, Education, and Hospitality and Tourism Management offer programs at the baccalaureate, master’s, and doctoral level.

As the first Vincentian university established in the United States, Niagara prepares students for personal and professional success while emphasizing service to the community in honor of St. Vincent de Paul. Niagara’s institutional commitment to service-learning has led to its inclusion on the President’s Honor Roll for Community Service every year since its inception in 2006, and its recognition with the Carnegie Foundation’s Classification for Community Engagement.

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