

Reaching Millennials in Campus Ministry

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Whether it is on a secular or religious campus, helping young adults find ways to embrace, and live their Catholic faith daily is clearly at the heart of this ministry. The Society has three men serving in campus ministry, with combined years of service spanning 70 years!

“I became a Salvatorian because I wanted to teach. However, during my formation years our Salvatorian schools and universities had to close,” said Fr. Doug Bailey SDS, recently retired but still active in campus ministry at Florida Institute of Technology (FIT). “As a campus minister, I could still be involved in the life of the University and at FIT I was even able to teach!”



Fr. Sal Ragusa SDS serves in campus ministry at Holy Names University. He is pictured here with his HNU student congregation.

“I believe it was grace and the Holy Spirit that bought me to campus ministry as a Salvatorian. It was not on my radar,” said Fr. Sal Ragusa SDS, campus minister at Holy Names University in California. “However, after a year-long campus ministry internship, I had a powerful transformative experience. It was through these young adults that God made clear that this was to be my particular vocation. The students, faculty and staff are rich soil for growth in the faith. Youth are the future of the Church.”



Fr. Doug Bailey SDS with students after a Florida Institute of Technology event.

Well-known for his research on adolescent spirituality, Christian Smith, Professor of Sociology at the University of Notre Dame, recently shared his study on why millennials stay in the Church. It was noted that if young adults had three primary experiences in their

lives they were more likely to be practicing Catholics as adults. Reasons young people stay included: They had a mentor in the faith outside their family who took an interest in their faith development; spending time outside of Sunday liturgy exploring what it means to be a disciple such as small faith group or Bible study; and having had a personal experience of God in their own life. “If we want to create disciples, we need campus ministry to reach our youth,” said Fr. Doug.

“We are planting seeds for the future of the faith, the Church and its leadership,” said Fr. Sal. “As campus ministers, being with the students at Mass, events, or in the dining hall for example, we are the presence of the Savior and we model how each member of our campus community is called to be the presence of God for each other.”



Fr. Mike Neeland SDS ordained in 2017, now serves in campus ministry at the Florida Institute of Technology.

