

NIAGARA
UNIVERSITY

Celebrating

170 YEARS

VINCENTIAN MISSION DAY

*Honoring Our Heritage of Vincentian
Values and Education*

September 23, 2026



NIAGARA
UNIVERSITY

Celebrating
170 YEARS

Welcome, students, faculty, staff, and honored guests, to Niagara University's celebration of Vincentian Mission Day and Vincentian Heritage Week!

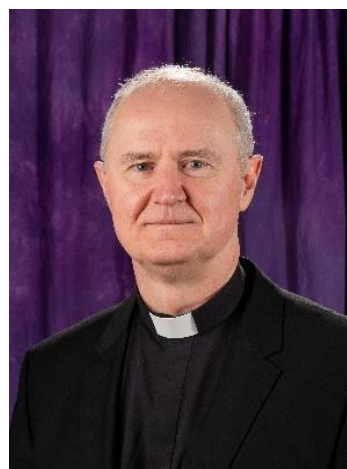
This year, our theme is **"Honoring Our Heritage of Vincentian Values and Education."** On this day and throughout this week, we gather not only to reflect on our rich history and the enduring legacy of St. Vincent de Paul, but also to celebrate how those core values shape our educational mission today. From compassionate service to academic excellence, our Vincentian commitment inspires us to make a meaningful difference both on campus and in the world around us.

Thank you all for advancing this proud tradition. I hope you engage deeply with the events, discussions, and opportunities on Vincentian Mission Day and throughout the week!

With regards,

Fr. Gregory J. Semeniuk, C.M.

Rev. Gregory J. Semeniuk, C.M.
Director of Mission and Ministry



VINCENTIAN HERITAGE WEEK | Sept. 20-27



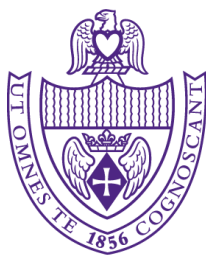
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170 YEARS

**Honoring Our
Vincentian Heritage of
Education and Values**

Scan for
Full Schedule





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A note about registering for events:

A registration link is provided for each event in the Session Descriptions section. Walk-ins are welcome at most events, although registration ahead of time is encouraged. This will help event organizers know how many people to expect, and is also important for students who may be receiving credit from their professor for attendance. QR codes will also be available at each event so students can record their attendance. Any events where registration ahead of time is required due to limited space are marked with a “*” in the schedule.

Vincentian Mission Day Schedule

8:00-8:45	<i>Kick-off Event</i>	MPR
9:00-10:20	<u>Martyrs, Mystics, and Missionaries: Vincentian History in the Stained Glass of Gacioch Chapel*</u> <u>Amelia Gallagher</u>	Gacioch Chapel
	<u>Open Up to Open In: Using Guided Journaling for Self-Discovery*</u> <u>Keri Thomas-Whiteside</u>	Library Classroom
	<u>Using Your Passion to Make an Impact</u> <u>Amy Nwora & Alexander Nwora</u>	ACAD 130
	<u>Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Cultivating Transformative Teaching and Learning Experiences through Reflective Practice</u> <u>Haoua Hamza, Dennis Garland, Yonghong Tong, & Mitchell Alegre</u>	DUNL 211
10:00-11:30	<u>Ethics in Action: Vincentian Values and the Business World</u> <u>Dr. Krieg Tidemann (Moderator), Dr. Michael W. Cropp,</u> <u>Ms. Alison Romanowski, Dr. Kristine Principe, & Mr. Chris Hugar</u>	Bieler Institute, Bisgrove Atrium
10:30-11:50	<u>Vincentian Weaving: Strengthening the Threads of Abundant Community to Address Homelessness</u> <u>Sr. Ellen Marie Hagar, D.C., Rev. Gregory J. Semeniuk, C.M., Rhonda Bivins-Talley, & Eric Boerdner</u>	Marian House
	<u>Serving Through Sport</u> <u>Brandi Guerinot & Alicia Sammarco</u>	Glynn 407
	<u>Capital Punishment Research and Vincentian Values</u> <u>Talia Harmon, Craig Rivera, & Sophie Simmons</u>	ACAD 130
	<u>Special Olympics Coaching and Games Management: Collaborations in Vincentian Education</u> <u>Dennis Garland, Amy Nwora, Brandi Guerinot, Cheryl Rode, Mike Jeswald, Tom Burns, & Debra Colley</u>	Kiernan
	<u>Cyber Smart Forum: AI, Cyber Defense, & Your Digital Future*</u> <u>Glenn Papp & Petter Lovaas</u>	Glynn 115
11:00-1:00	<u>Student Takeover</u> <u>Niagara University Justice House Students</u>	LL Gallagher

* indicates registration is required for this event

11:30-1:30 Lunch – Food Trucks and Activities <i>St. Vincent de Paul Look Alike Contest at 12:00</i>	LL Gallagher
12:00 Women’s Soccer vs. Sienna <i>A food drive will be held at the game</i>	Niagara Field
12:15-12:45 Daily Mass	Alumni Chapel
12:00-1:20 <u>The Hidden Layer of Disability: Accessibility and Community in College and Professional Life</u> <u>Erica Rodman</u>	DUNL 205
<u>Following in St. Vincent’s Footsteps on the Labyrinth*</u> <u>Mitchell Alegre</u> Note: This event will run from 1:00 – 2:00.	MPR
<u>Healthcare and Vincentian Values</u> <u>Esther Sanborn, Tony Stieritz, & James Delaney</u>	Glynn 211
1:00-3:30 <u>Vincent in Heaven</u> <u>Terri Filips Vaughan & Steven Braddock</u>	Leary Theater
1:30-2:50 <u>Why Think AI is an Existential Risk</u> <u>Steve Petersen</u> Note: This event will run from 1:30 – 3:30	DUNL 212
<u>Reading Invasion</u> <u>Melissa Langridge</u>	Library Front Lawn
<u>Using Sport to Make Change in the World</u> <u>Cheryl Rode & Brandi Guerinot</u>	Glynn 211
2:00-3:30 <u>Reentry Simulation</u> <u>Peaceprints of WNY</u>	MPR
3:00-4:00 <u>VMI and Collegium Panel</u> Past participants in the Vincentian Mission Institute and Collegium	Bieler Institute

* indicates registration is required for this event

Vincentian Mission Day Session Descriptions

Martyrs, Mystics, and Missionaries: Vincentian History in the Stained Glass of Gacioch Chapel

Amelia Gallagher

Together with Art History students, Dr. Gallagher will guide participants through the stained glass works of Gacioch Chapel. There are three series of stained glass, depicting the following episodes of Vincentian history: 1. The life of St. Vincent de Paul (1581-1660); 2. The martyrdom of St. Francois Regis Clet (1820); 3. The mystical visions of Daughters of Charity, Catherine Labouree and Apolline Andriveau, which occurred in 1830 and 1846 respectively.

Registration (required): <https://forms.gle/xoPW1jtBakoyFBmK8>

Open Up to Open In: Using Guided Journaling for Self-Discovery

Keri Thomas-Whiteside

To look deeper inside, we need to allow ourselves to be vulnerable. Journaling allows us to do that in a non-judgmental environment. Many people, however, struggle to come up with ideas or topics to ask such questions. This workshop will lead participants through a guided journaling practice using Suleika Jaouad's "The Book of Alchemy." Participants will gather, listen to an essay and prompt from the book, and then have time to explore what this passage means for them in their journals. Limited amounts of journals will be available or feel free to bring your own.

Registration (required): <https://forms.gle/qg7bqB8eY7mXS81AA>

Using Your Passion to Make an Impact

Amy Nwora & Alexander Nwora

People often think that they don't have the power to make a difference. This session will show how a simple idea can be transformed into community impact. The presenters will discuss how they developed a grass roots non-profit organization based on using sports to create opportunities, and the positive effect it has had across a dozen countries and thousands of children.

Registration: <https://forms.gle/TrVNMce26sEgzGN88>

Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Cultivating Transformative Teaching and Learning Experiences through Reflective Practice

Haoua Hamza, Dennis Garland, Yonghong Tong, & Mitchell Alegre

Institutions of higher education experience profound shifts due to developments of advanced technologies and increased human diversity in education. This session is the result of four faculty members' collaboration as an outcome of participation in professional development workshops on inclusive pedagogies. Transforming teaching and learning in a college classroom requires instructors to expand old pedagogies by incorporating new, innovative, and research-based approaches to teaching and learning. Furthermore, it is essential for instructors to engage in self-reflection as an exercise in the process of self-transformation on their

pedagogical journey of preparing graduates. Cultivating transformative learning suggests recalibrating one's teaching. The professors teach in three different colleges, which adds a wealth of insights and approaches to facilitating inclusive pedagogy within their respective areas of expertise.

Registration: <https://forms.gle/BB8PN5hbiFfxzrb6>

Ethics in Action: Vincentian Values and the Business World

Michael Cropp, Alison Romanowski, Mark Frascatore, Krieg Tidemann, Chris Hugar, & Kristine Principe

This panel event brings together practitioners and scholars to explore what ethical leadership looks like in practice. Featuring a representative from the Buffalo-Niagara Business Ethics Association (BNBEA), the president and chief executive officer of Independent Health, and two HCBA faculty members – one with published expertise in Vincentian business ethics, the other a credentialed finance practitioner, the conversation will examine how the Vincentian principles of service, solidarity, and preferential care for those in need show up in modern corporate life, and what students can expect when they face real ethical decisions early in their careers.

Registration: <https://forms.gle/hRe2Q6ya6QSZYSYu7>

Vincentian Weaving: Strengthening the Threads of Abundant Community to Address Homelessness

Sr. Ellen Marie Hagar, D.C., Rev. Gregory J. Semeniuk, C.M., Rhonda Bivins-Talley, Eric Boerdner

This panel discussion will bring awareness of the impact strong communities can have on meeting the challenge of the unhoused.

Registration: <https://forms.gle/YxuSPMSUziuEKtxb8>

Serving Through Sport

Brandi Guerinot & Alicia Sammarco

The College of Hospitality, Sport, and Tourism Management will host a discussion around community relations for the Buffalo Sabres, to talk to students about their work in the community and how sports can serve and connect the community.

Registration: <https://forms.gle/q4AgVUuwAfoxTb8X6>

Capital Punishment Research and Vincentian Values

Talia Harmon, Craig Rivera, & Sophie Simmons

Dr. Harmon and colleagues will discuss recent and ongoing research projects they are conducting regarding capital punishment. Topics covered will include exonerations from death row, patterns of capital punishment usage over time, and the role of religion in individuals' support or opposition to capital punishment. The research will be tied into the larger context of Vincentian and Catholic social teaching regarding justice, as well as society's treatment of individuals, including the disadvantaged and voiceless.

Registration: <https://forms.gle/vo24VxMvnfMJwinx9>

Special Olympics Coaching and Games Management: Collaborations in Vincentian Education

Dennis Garland, Amy Nwora, Brandi Guerinot, Cheryl Rode, Mike Jeswald, Tom Burns, & Debra Colley

Since 2006, every Thursday of the spring semester, students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) from the Niagara Falls City School District participate as athletes in the Special Olympics Coaching and Games Management course during weekly basketball practices. Niagara University students who take the course train the athletes for competition in the western region basketball tournament, which the students plan and host as their final exam. This session will include facilitation of course activities at the Kiernan Recreation Center. Facilitators will discuss critical university-wide and community collaborations that have developed over time and potential for future developments, and partners from the Niagara Falls City School District will be invited to share their perspectives about participation in the program. Niagara University student coaches will also be invited to share their experiences and course outcomes as related to their professional goals.

Registration: <https://forms.gle/FBcJuRhc7MxUnpZp6>

Cyber Smart Forum: AI, Cyber Defense, & Your Digital Future*

Glenn Papp & Petter Lovaas

Niagara University's NSA Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense will host an expert panel discussion featuring Drs. Papp and Lovaas. The session is designed to provide deep, accessible insights into modern cybersecurity threats and career paths for students across all colleges. This event frames high-tech skills as an essential tool for civic responsibility and service. It elevates technology education into a model of moral stewardship—a crucial component of holistic learning.

Registration (required): <https://forms.gle/iQ12hhuG2nQT9ugz6>

Student Takeover

Niagara University Justice House Students

Students from the Justice House will host a discussion of relevant issues.

Registration: <https://forms.gle/zrdN2NyRwqJxbkh89>

The Hidden Layer of Disability: Accessibility and Community in College and Professional Life

Erica Rodman

Many of the barriers disabled people encounter every day are not always obvious to others. In addition to physical barriers, people with disabilities often take on extra emotional, cognitive, social, and logistical work just to navigate school, workplaces, healthcare settings, public spaces, and everyday interactions. This interactive session will explore the concept of hidden labor through discussion and real-life examples related to college life, community participation, and future careers. Participants will examine how inaccessible systems, communication barriers, social expectations, and everyday assumptions can impact belonging both on campus

and in professional environments. Students will also be encouraged to consider accessibility within their own fields of study and future professions, and to think about the role they can play in creating communities that are more accessible, respectful, and inclusive for everyone.

Registration: <https://forms.gle/JQGE3as5fUfSCLNy9>

Following in St. Vincent's Footsteps on the Labyrinth

Mitchell Alegre

St. Vincent calls us to serve. Discern how you may serve through your studies and choice of career by walking the labyrinth.

Registration (required; limited to 20 people): <https://forms.gle/AEfjnpjgGaXQm21S8>

Healthcare and Vincentian Values

Esther Sanborn, Toney Stieritz, and James Delaney

This event will be a panel discussion with experts currently working in the healthcare field. They will discuss how their Catholic and Vincentian values inform their work and decisions.

Registration: <https://forms.gle/ykybc9uKi9RVpNM49>

Vincent in Heaven

Terri Filips Vaughan & Steven Braddock

Vincent in Heaven, a play written by Brother Augustine Towey, C.M. about the life of St. Vincent de Paul, was originally presented by Niagara University Theatre in 1988. This will be a staged reading of the play.

Registration: <https://forms.gle/4BL2smrnfUAqzRfN7>

Why Think AI is an Existential Risk

Steve Petersen

The event will be a screening of the movie *The AI Doc: Or How I Learned to be an Apocaloptimist*. Afterward Dr. Petersen will take questions from any interested students about risk from AI, the Effective Altruism movement, and its relation to Vincentian values.

Registration: <https://forms.gle/kmNt3mj74o6aYnxn8>

Reading Invasion

Melissa Langridge

Niagara University Library invites students, faculty, and staff to participate in our Reading Invasion which transforms the library's front lawn into a temporary, collective reading area. There are no set agendas, required texts, or structured discussion. This is simply an opportunity to slow down and celebrate the joy of reading. Participants are encouraged to bring a book, a buddy, or something to study along with a blanket, lawn chairs, and/or snack to collectively gather to read. By bringing our collective reading habits out into the open, the Niagara University Library aims to visibly demonstrate the strength of our academic community and create a peaceful, shared space for intellectual and personal rejuvenation.

Registration: <https://forms.gle/mmEGPv6YX2LXNPSm9>

Using Sport to Make Change in the World

Cherly Rode & Brandi Guerinot

The College of Hospitality, Sport, and Tourism Management will collaborate with the Center for Sport, Peace, and Society (<https://cehhs.utk.edu/sportandpeace/>), from the University of Tennessee, to provide a speaker on how sport can be used in communities around the world to facilitate change and inclusivity.

Registration: <https://forms.gle/w8FhGXEFXTAnrerv9>

Reentry Simulation

Peaceprints of Western New York

Peaceprints of WNY will run a re-entry simulation, which allows students to participate in the simulation of what it is like in day-to-day life for individuals who are returning to the community after incarceration. It is a very similar model to what is used for the poverty simulation exercise, with the focus being on re-entry into the community.

Registration: <https://forms.gle/i1W2LQiuw4kVHtLy8>

VMI and Collegium Panel

VMI and Collegium Participants

Previous participants in the Vincentian Mission Institute and the Collegium Summer Colloquy will discuss their experiences, including how participation enabled them to further appreciate and integrate Niagara's Catholic and Vincentian mission into their work.

Registration: <https://forms.gle/gvRaaoXqwvibioms8>

Vincentian Mission Day List of Participants

Mitchell Alegre

Adjunct Professor
Holzschuh College of Business Administration
Niagara University

Rhonda Bivins-Talley

Executive Director
Levesque Institute for Civic Engagement
Niagara University

Eric Boerdner

Vice President-Specialized Services
Community Missions of Niagara Frontier, Inc.

Steven Braddock

Artistic Director, NU Theatre
Department of Theatre and Fine Arts
Niagara University

Thomas Burns

Faculty Fellow
College of Hospitality, Sport, and Tourism
Management
Niagara University

Debra Colley, PhD

Professor of Education
Niagara University

Michael W. Cropp, M.D., MBA

President and CEO
Independent Health

James Delaney, PhD

Professor of Philosophy
Ostapenko Endowed Director of Professional Ethics
Niagara University

Mark Frascatore, PhD

Dean, Holzschuh College of Business Administration
Niagara University

Amelia Gallagher, PhD

Professor of Religious Studies
Director, Art History with Museum Studies
Niagara University

Dennis Garland, PhD

Associate Professor of Education
Chair, Special Education Department
Niagara University

Brandi Guerinot, PhD

Dean, College of Hospitality, Sport, and Tourism
Management
Niagara University

Sr. Helen Marie Hagar, D.C.

Executive Director
Vincentian Family Office
Philadelphia, PA

Haoua Hamza, PhD

Associate Professor of Education
Niagara University

Talia Harmon, PhD

Professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice
Associate Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
Niagara University

Chris Hugar, CFA, CFP

Faculty Fellow of Finance
Niagara University

Michael Jeswald

Faculty Fellow
College of Hospitality, Sport, and Tourism
Management
Niagara University

Melissa Langridge

Coordinator of Public Services and Associate
Director, University Library
Niagara University

Petter Lovaas, CISM, PhD

Chief Information Security Officer (CISO)
Professor and Chair, Department of Cyber Security
and Operations (CSO)
National Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber
Defense (NCAE-CD)
Niagara University

Niagara University Justice House Students

Alexander Nwora

Men's Head Basketball Coach
SUNY Erie

Amy Nwora, PhD

Dean, College of Education
Niagara University

Glenn Papp, PhD

Assistant Professor
National Ctr. of Acad. Excellence in Cyber Defense
Department of Cyber Security & Operations
Niagara University

Peaceprints of WNY

Steve Petersen, PhD

Professor of Philosophy
Niagara University

Kristine Principe, PhD

Associate Professor of Economics
Associate Dean for Curriculum and Program
Development
Holzschuh College of Business of Administration

Craig Rivera, PhD

Professor and Chair
Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice
Niagara University

Cheryl Rode, PhD

Associate Professor
College of Hospitality, Sport, and Tourism Mgt.
Niagara University

Erica Rodman

Education Program Developer
Institute for Disability Awareness

Alison Romanowski

Board Member and Treasurer
Buffalo-Niagara Business Ethics Association

Alicia Sammarco

Director of Events and Experiential Operations
College of Hospitality, Sport, and Tourism Mgt
Niagara University

Esther Sanborn

Vice President for Mission Integration
Sisters of Charity Hospital of Buffalo

Sophie Simmons

Graduate Student
M.S. Program in Criminal Justice Administration
Niagara University

Rev. Gregory J. Semeniuk, C.M., S.Th.D

Director of Mission and Ministry
Niagara University

Tony Stieritz

Chief Executive Officer
Catholic Charities
Archdiocese of Cincinnati

Krieg Tidemann, PhD

Associate Professor of Economics
Associate Dean for Undergraduate Enrollment and
Operations
Holzschuh College of Business of Administration

Keri Thomas-Whiteside

Electronic Resources Librarian
University Library
Niagara University

Yonghong Tong, PhD

Associate Professor
Department of Computer and Information Sciences
Niagara University

Terri Filips Vaughan

Professor
Department of Theatre and Fine Arts
Niagara University