

Experiences in the Residence Hall Chapels

Submitted by Allison Liedtke '18

Which residence hall did you live in?

Corrado Hall

What kind of faith activities were held in your hall?

Each year we consistently held a hall retreat during the month of September which was planned and led by the Faith and Formation Ambassador(s). Those retreats were typically community building-focused, but had some faith elements to them such as prayer, Mass, small group sharing, and reflection. For me, when I went during my freshmen year, it was the first time I felt like I belonged at college. Corrado also held a day retreat in the spring semester that had faith-based activities such as affirmation activities, prayer, and small group sharing. Other faith activities that Corrado had included a "shout out" box (where residents could write affirmations to each other), interactive bulletin boards (such as a Random Act of Kindness board), walk-overs to on-campus events organized by Campus Ministry or other departments, the West Quad Mass Crawl, and of course, hall Mass! Some of those Masses were themed, such as "Bring your friend to Mass."

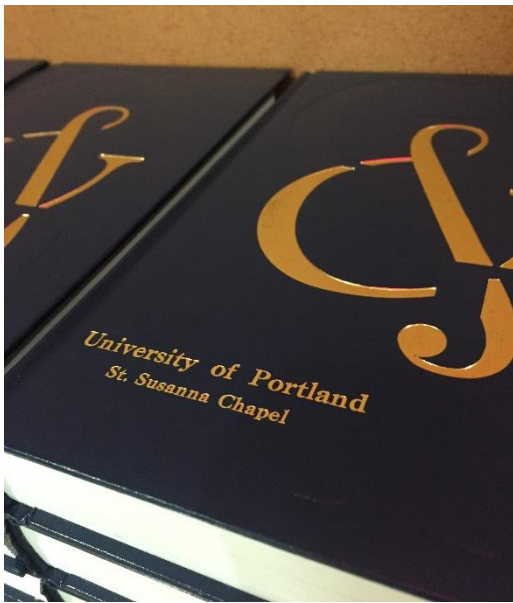
What was Mass like in your hall? What made it special?

Corrado Mass is a time where residents can come as they are, find community, take time to reflect and be still, and have some great conversations and food at the after-Mass social. I went to the very first Corrado Mass my freshmen year and only missed a total of 3 in the following 4 years. Before college, I barely went to Sunday Mass- only going when family or my school required me to go. Corrado Mass was the first time I felt the beauty of community in Mass and had a desire to return every week.



I have a very specific memory of the first time I went. I wandered down to the Corrado basement, unsure of my decision to attend. I didn't know anyone in the dorm yet and I was already anxious about whom I would sit next to. When I entered the Chapel, I ended up sitting down in an isolated spot towards the end of the row. However, only after a short minute, a few other Corrado residents introduced themselves to me and encouraged me to come closer to sit by them. It was in that moment that I knew that I found something special at college.

Ultimately, it wasn't the music, space, or rituals of the Mass that drew me. It was the community- the people that welcomed me with smiles, the hugs during the exchange of peace, and the laughter that often accompanied announcements at the end of Mass. It was the feeling of acceptance and knowledge that it didn't matter where I was in my faith, Corrado Mass was somewhere I could simply be myself. I looked forward to every Monday night and having the chance to encounter a love so great, it could only be of God. As the year progressed, I started recognizing other aspects of Corrado Mass that made it special, such as the beautiful homilies from our pastoral residents (Fr. Mark and then Fr. Jim Gallagher) and seeing fellow Corradans unveil their talents of music and singing.

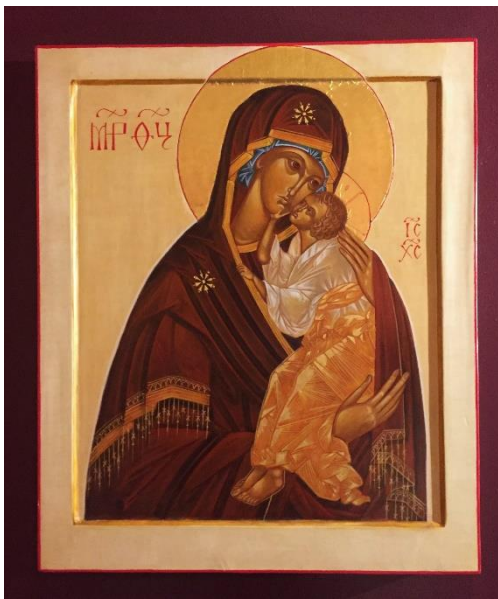


Corrado Mass was never anything grand. We often lacked a piano player and had to sing acapella. We had a small space and sometimes had to empty out all the chairs and sit on the floor. My hall director would often crack an inappropriate joke and cause everyone to laugh. But it was these imperfections that made Corrado Mass so wonderful though. Corrado on its own is a pretty goofy dorm, so it would make sense for its Hall Mass to be a little goofy as well.

Lastly, Corrado Mass was special because it was always a place to gather as a community when we needed each other. I remember times when our UP community was struck by deaths, suicide, illness, and other forms of loss and hardships. In all these times, Corrado Mass was a safe space for tears, pain, and recovery. Our staff or pastoral resident would acknowledge what our community was going through and let us know of the love and support they had for us. It was a space of authenticity, compassion, and prayer.

How did these activities in the residence hall impact your faith?

When I arrived at college, I was ready to leave my faith behind. I struggled with the basic and most important belief of God's existence. However, Corrado was where I encountered God in a very tangible way. Its community and the people within it engulfed me in a love so great that there was no way that it was not of God. I would look into the eyes of my hall director and RA (two people that have left a huge impact on my heart) and see Christ. They were the original ones to push me to go to the first Corrado Mass. Through attending every week, I started encountering God in more and more people. I became more interested in cultivating my faith, so I started partaking in more dorm activities and events through Campus Ministry. I went on the freshmen Connect Retreat, the Encounter with Christ Retreat, the Corrado retreat, and started forming a strong relationship with my Faith and Formation Ambassador (FFA).



During my sophomore year, I was the FFA for Corrado and I started leading the events that I found such deep meaning in freshmen year. Through spiritual mentorship and theological reflection/formation, I started asking more and more questions about my faith and started to grow stronger and more confident in it. Seeing Christ in people and serving others became the main ways I lived out my faith. During my junior year, I participated in the Faith Based Leader Program and changed my major to Theology. And finally, my senior year I was a Resident Assistant in Corrado and had the opportunity to accompany residents like my RA had accompanied me my freshmen year.

I am currently working in Campus Ministry at the University of Michigan and next year I am going to Boston College to pursue my Masters in Divinity. It is clear from this chain reaction that Corrado Hall has had a huge impact in my life. And it all started by going to Corrado Mass. I entered college as a computer science major and left as a faith-filled individual, passionate about embodying Christ in the world and helping others encounter Christ. God revealed Himself to

me in Corrado Mass, all the retreats and faith activities, and most importantly, in each and every individual of Corrado Hall. I am forever grateful for this community and the impact it has had on my life.

Published in connection with Light from The Bluff Faith Newsletter

University of Portland, Office of Alumni & Parent Relations

June 10, 2019