

Experiences in the Residence Hall Chapels

Submitted by Kayla Garchar '19

Which residence hall did you live in?

I lived in Mehling Hall for four years, and also was a Mehling Hall Resident Assistant.



What kind of faith activities were held in your hall?

The faith activities in the hall are usually guided each year by the Faith and Formation Ambassadors. These activities have included Bible studies, learning how to pray the rosary, community service (especially through L'Arche at UP), room blessings, community dinners, faith-filled conversations with cookies and tea, and walk-overs to hall Mass from Espresso UP.

After hall Mass, we always have a social that lasts anywhere from half an hour to an hour. This year our pastoral resident, Fr. Jim Gallagher, hosted an event called Breaking Bread with Fr. Jim every Monday night. At this event, residents had the opportunity to help bake bread, eat the bread, and stay around for conversation on a topic of faith suggested to Fr. Jim by residents. In addition to this, an annual Mehling Hall Retreat is held every fall that provides a weekend of spiritual reflection for members of the Mehling community.

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

Mehling hall is a very large dorm, housing over 200 residents. Hall Mass provides a unique opportunity to foster a community within a community, where members can gather weekly to pray and grow in faith together. Fr. Jim did a wonderful job this year of creating a . . . *(cont. next page)*



(cont. from first page) . . . welcoming environment for all who attended, especially those who were not Catholic, by using the opportunity to share the unique elements of Catholicism and explain the Mass. This not only helped members of the community who were not Catholic grow comfortable in the environment, but it helped those who were Catholic understand more about their faith and the importance of gathering as a community to celebrate the Eucharist.



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

As an individual who discerned religious life throughout college, these activities and the community that they brought together were incredibly formative in my faith journey. They helped me to grow in humility as I learned to turn my spiritual life outward and focus less on myself as I prayed more for other individuals. This was fostered particularly through a prayer

journal that we kept in the back of the chapel. Everyone was encouraged to write their prayer intentions in the journal and to pray for all of the intentions that were written in it. Even as I used the chapel for individual prayer, this journal helped to unite me to the wider community as I prayed for the joys and the struggles that my fellow residents were living with. As I prepare to enter religious life this year, I will always remember the way that the Mehling community transformed my heart and helped me become more attentive of how to live authentic community.

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