

NEWS RELEASE

Aug. 20, 2009

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University of Saint Mary Welcomes, Blesses New Students at Annual Matriculation Ceremony

(Leavenworth, Kan.)—The University of Saint Mary officially welcomed its newest students to campus at the university’s traditional matriculation ceremony Wednesday, Aug. 19, in Annunciation Chapel on the Leavenworth Campus, 4100 South 4th Street. Classes on main campus began Thursday morning, Aug. 20.

This year’s ceremony was particularly well-attended, as the university is welcoming in a record freshman class of about 130 students. It’s the biggest USM freshman class since the late 1990s.

The University of Saint Mary is one of only a handful of American universities with a formal matriculation ceremony. USM’s matriculation event dates back to the 1980s and serves as an official welcome to—and blessing of—the university’s new freshmen and transfer students.

The ceremony Wednesday began with a procession of students into Annunciation Chapel. Once there, the students bring individual candles up to the chapel altar and light them, representing the light they carry into the Saint Mary community. The students then form a “circle of light” around the chapel, and are blessed by the administration, faculty, staff, and fellow students on hand.

“This day you become Saint Marians,” USM President Sister Diane Steele told the students. “The Saint Mary family is a proud family, proud of the excellent liberal arts education we share, and proud of the strong bonds of community and faith that unite us...

“As you become part of the Saint Mary community, you bring your light to join the circle of lights at Saint Mary. In doing so, you commit yourself to the challenges and the rewards of a liberal arts education.”

Sister Susan Rieke, chair of USM’s English department and a key figure in establishing the matriculation ceremony, said the event’s purpose “is to really celebrate the new students... it makes them feel like a part of Saint Mary in an official way.”

The University of Saint Mary is a Catholic co-educational applied liberal arts university founded and sponsored by the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth. The University of Saint Mary is located at 4100 South 4th Street, Leavenworth, Kan., with additional locations in Overland Park, Shawnee, and Kansas City, Kan. Visit www.stmary.edu on the web for more information.

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