

Loras College Catholic Identity Statement

Loras College is a Catholic, diocesan college explicitly oriented to promote service of both church and world through encouraging all members of the community in development of their “diverse professional, social, and religious roles.”¹ The college strives to be a community demonstrating the highest standards of the Catholic intellectual tradition and welcoming all people into a dialogue to promote core values of truth, respect, responsibility, excellence, and service. Recognizing that Christ summons us to “continual reformation” as we go our pilgrim way², we assert the following principles:

We promote an open atmosphere of critical inquiry and academic conversation that includes varied voices, past and present, across Catholic and other traditions. The Catholic intellectual tradition upholds the “*impartial* search for truth”.³ We encourage the ongoing conversation between faith and reason based on the confident hope that there is in human life a truth founded on reality. We endorse academic freedom which makes open discussion and inquiry about truth possible.

We reverence the spirituality of each person. From the Catholic perspective, spirituality is a response to the grace God gives to all to share the divine life and friendship.⁴ Because each person is created in God’s image, we are responsible to one another and called to respect God’s creation in all its forms. Catholic tradition has stressed both the dignity of the individual and communal participation in the formation of personal conscience. “The human spirit must be cultivated in such a way that there results a growth in its ability to wonder, to understand, to contemplate, to make personal judgments, and to develop a religious, moral, and social sense.”⁵

We recognize the importance of personal and communal worship. A vital dimension of a Catholic College is prayer and worship, which increases “our sense of responsibility for the world”.⁶ From the Catholic sacramental tradition, we affirm the idea of a God who acts in history on our behalf, a God who sent Jesus, who lived among us, who taught, who died for us, who rose from the dead and is present in the Eucharist and alive and at work in the world today. We value the integration of the material and spiritual, through creative rituals for prayer and celebration. We seek a vision that calls for awe and reverence, sends us forth to serve, and compels hope that “peace would be possible as the result of a ‘more perfect justice among people.’”⁷

We welcome the responsibility to serve. The Catholic social tradition affirms a solidarity built according to justice, enlivened and integrated by charity, and put into practice in freedom.⁸ Called to build up the reign of God, we must meet our responsibilities to protect human dignity. Aware that the world is an imperfect place, we challenge ourselves to embrace “the joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the men and women of our time, especially those who are poor or afflicted in any way.”⁹

We advocate respect for diversity. As a Catholic college, we are called upon to be particularly attentive to the rich variety among the people of the world. We seek to foster dialogues that will promote understanding, cooperation and respect.¹⁰ We value ecumenism and collaboration among all people. In every dimension of what diversity entails, human dignity must always be maintained. We invite all members of the community to enter serious conversations and ask hard questions that together we might promote the core values of Loras College.

¹ Loras College Mission Statement

² Cf., *Unitatis Redintegratio*, the Second Vatican Council's *Decree on Ecumenism*, #6.

³ *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, Apostolic Constitution of Pope John Paul II on Catholic Universities, #7, emphasis in the original.

⁴ Cf., *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #1996.

⁵ *Gaudium et Spes*, the Second Vatican Council's *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, 59.

⁶ *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, Encyclical Letter of Pope John Paul II, *On the Eucharist in its Relationship to the Church*, #20.

⁷ *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, Encyclical Letter of Pope John Paul II, *On Social Concern*, #10.

⁸ Cf., *Pacem in Terris*, Encyclical Letter of Pope John XXIII, *On Establishing Universal Peace in Truth, Justice, Charity, and Liberty*, #167.

⁹ *Gaudium et Spes*, #1.

¹⁰ Cf., *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, #45.