**The Hope Found in Campus Ministry Communities**

**-**Fiona Williams and Myles Griffin (Howard University Bison Catholic Campus Ministry)

A lot of parents worry when they send their children off to college, they will not go to church. Well…they are not exactly wrong. I came to Howard University in August 2021 and did not seek out a church home. After an enlightening freshman year filled with the highs and lows of being a college freshman navigating a new city, friendships, and coursework, I started my sophomore year asking God to open my heart to finding a church in Washington DC. That is how I got involved in the HU Bison Catholic Ministry (HUBC). I attended one mass and was amazed at the spirit and vibrant community of Black Catholics on Howard’s campus. This community transformed my Howard experience, giving me some of my closest friends and deepening my faith. One of my favorite memories is last spring, Myles and I started coming to mass earlier, standing at the back and we have evolved into honorary ushers of the ministry. I always remembered how welcomed I felt when I first came to mass and I want everyone else to have that same experience. As I transition to finding a new home parish, what I have learned at HUBC that I will take with me is find your gift in the Church and use it! Beyond attending mass, do you like to altar serve, lector, sing, or teach religious education? Whether you end up back home or in a new city, use your gifts because it is needed and will only enrich the church community. There’s a notion that young adults are uninterested in being involved in the church. We are! I challenge each young adult looking for a place at a new church to find a church that welcomes you with open arms that allows you to lead and grow with yourself and faith. Prove your parents wrong and find that church home!- Fiona Williams

When I first came to Howard in August of 2021, my life was almost entirely online due to COVID. However, I found my way to the basilica, which was visible from my freshman-year dorm. And the Basilica became my first church home here in DC. In my sophomore year, eager to finally get to join some clubs and organizations, I met Giannina (then one of the leaders of the ministry) at the annual club rush who encouraged me to join the ministry. At that time, about 10 of us met in the lobby of Carnegie Hall weekly. But those 10 people that I had met, made me feel like family the very first day I joined. Giannina’s warmness and Father Boxie’s friendly and outgoing personality encouraged me to keep participating in the ministry. And of course, how could I ever forget Fiona. Neither of us can 100% remember how exactly we became such good friends, but we did. The friendships I’ve made here at HU Bison Catholic are just one of the many fruits of my life that has been bought by this amazing ministry. There’s a general perception that the Church is “Dying in the West”. However, when I look at our ministry, I think that statement is disproven. To see 40+ college students devoting their Sunday evening to attending mass and worshipping with the community, is a true testament to the amazing work that God is doing for us and our campus. I will be staying in DC after my graduation but I will continue attending mass on campus when I can. I’d also encourage any fellow young college students reading this to consider giving your local church, college ministry or etc a chance. You could even give HU Bison Catholic a chance (cough cough). Much like my campus ministry has changed my life, your life could also be transformed. Peace and blessings!- Myles S. Griffin