

GATEWAYS TO COMMUNITY AND FAITH: Rivier's Gateway Projects Reflect the University's Catholic Heritage

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Photos by Jodie Andruskevich

The Gateway Projects, a series of campus enhancements begun in 2013, have transformed the University's landscape and sacred spaces in visible and vibrant ways. Dedication ceremonies for Heritage Plaza and the Sharon McOsker Tamposi Alumni Legacy Garden mark the culmination of these initiatives.

In early August 2015, Rivier University celebrated the completion of Heritage Plaza, a place of sacred beauty, with a formal dedication ceremony. The Plaza is located on South Main Street in the heart of campus. During the ceremony, Bishop Francis J. Christian blessed a bronze sculpture of Blessed Anne Marie Rivier—visionary leader, committed educator, and the University's namesake.

"The dedication of Heritage Plaza marks a pivotal point in the University's history and provides a visual statement of purpose," says Sister Paula Marie Buley, IHM, President. "The Plaza's design and construction reflect both our Catholic heritage and commitment to continuous improvement and renewal. Blessed Anne Marie Rivier's sculpture, now standing at the center of campus, will serve as an enduring symbol of faith, hope, and Rivier's service to all seeking higher education."

Heritage Plaza is comprised of a main gathering space featuring the sculpture; a short walkway to a circular terrace of personalized brick pavers donated by alumni, friends, faculty, and staff; and steps leading down to the Campus Quad. The nearly 8-foot bronze statue was created by sculptress Silvia Nicolas of Mont Vernon, New Hampshire. In its entirety, the plaza structure provides a clear path across

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campus from Madeleine Hall (the Admissions Welcome Center) through to the Campus Quad and Dion Center.



The Rivier University Community gathered for the Heritage Plaza dedication and blessing of the Blessed Anne Marie Rivier sculpture in August 2015.

The ceremony was timed in conjunction with the Sisters of the Presentation of Mary International Congress of Education, which took place on the Rivier campus during the first week of August. Sisters from 14 countries and their collaborators participated in the ceremony with members of the Rivier community. Sister Helene Cote, pm, Provincial Superior, gave an inspiring dedication speech on the spirit of Blessed Anne Marie Rivier as depicted by her sculpture.

The Spirit of Blessed Anne Marie Rivier

Remarks by Sister Helen Cote, pm, Provincial Superior, Sisters of the Presentation of Mary, USA, at the August 4, 2015 Heritage Plaza Dedication Ceremony



“For those of you who have heard the story of Marie Rivier, you know that she was a very short woman, under 5 feet, but what the statue depicts really is her spirit. She was in one sense, larger than life. She was a woman of great strength and of tremendous faith.

Her statue is looking out into the future for she was a woman of vision, one who could found a community in the midst of the French Revolution and dare to believe and say, “One day, my daughters will cross the ocean.”

She is carrying a book, for Marie Rivier was “a woman of the Word,” a woman who studied scripture and sought to know Jesus Christ through its teachings. She was also a great believer in education and did all she could to educate the young people of her time. She would even have Sunday afternoon gatherings for women of all ages to teach them about Jesus Christ and the fundamentals of their faith. In many ways, Marie Rivier was, indeed, a woman of the Word.

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Marie Rivier is also walking, depicting a woman always “on the move,” who despite her fear of heights, traveled many miles crisscrossing the mountains of Ardeche, France. She was a woman ready to go wherever she was called. This element of her spirit is very evident, not only in the statue, but in the presence of our visiting Sisters who come from 14 different countries. She was not static or set in her ways, but open to whatever it would take to make Jesus Christ known and loved.

If you look carefully, you will notice that the wind has opened the cape Marie Rivier is wearing. This for us symbolizes how she lived always open and attentive to the presence of the Spirit in her life.

Marie Rivier was indeed an incredible woman and her place in the center of the campus, is a wonderful reminder of where we come from as Sisters of the Presentation of Mary and of our mission to make Jesus Christ known and loved. It also serves to keep ever before us the mission of Rivier University: ‘transforming hearts and minds to serve the world’.” ■



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