

MONTLY DEVOTION



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Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Romans 12:2

Campus Ministry: Refining the Gold

St. Paul describes the life of the Christian as being "gold refined in the fire." I find this to be a very good description of not only the life of the Christian broadly, but especially of the work of campus ministry.

As many know, the college years are simultaneously exciting and fraught with peril. There's all sorts of opportunities for learning, growth, new friends, new experiences, and of course, the movement from being under the care of your parents to living as an adult. Along the way, many will also meet the person who will later become their spouse. These are all wonderful. However, there's another side, where campus life, classes, professors, friends, roommates, etc. will press hard on the faith of our sons and daughters, encourage

them to question what they know and believe, and ultimately to depart from the faith once delivered.

This is where campus ministry steps in. The local congregation and pastor provide not only the consistency of the gospel and sacraments, but a place where the faith can be nourished, strengthened, and refined. The questions and opposition that come from the world can be tackled through the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions and, instead of resulting in leaving these things, the student finds themselves on even more solid ground.

Through the conversations, studies, mutual fellowship and upbuilding provided in campus ministry, our sons and daughters become precisely what St. Paul describes: gold which has been refined through the fires of college and have come out even stronger, more faithful, and ready to step into the world with a

good and bold confession of Jesus crucified, raised, and ascended for sinners.

When you add into this the numerous students who are struggling with the faith broadly, are curious about the Lutheran confession, or have simply never heard the Gospel, we see an environment in which not only are our own sons and daughters strengthened, but those outside are brought into that same reality. And in the end, the church as a whole is both larger and stronger.

And then, these students scatter out to all sorts of other congregations around the country and act as an encouragement to faithfulness there too. What began in campus ministry continues in the larger church — a family growing stronger and stronger, being refined by the Gospel, and awaiting the blessed resurrection together.

Rev. Kilgo also serves as pastor of Redeemer Lutheran Church, Lawrence.