

## The Spirit of Inclusion at Notre Dame

*“Strangers and sojourners no longer...” (Ephesians 2:19)*

The University of Notre Dame strives for a spirit of inclusion among the members of this community for distinct reasons articulated in our Christian tradition. We prize the uniqueness of all persons as God’s creatures. We welcome all people, regardless of color, gender, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, social or economic class, and nationality, for example, precisely because of Christ’s calling to treat others as we desire to be treated. We value gay and lesbian members of this community as we value all members of this community. We condemn harassment of any kind, and University policies proscribe it. We consciously create an environment of mutual respect, hospitality and warmth in which none are strangers and all may flourish.

One of the essential tests of social justice within any Christian community is its abiding spirit of inclusion. Scriptural accounts of Jesus provide a constant witness of this inclusiveness. Jesus sought out and welcomed all people into the Kingdom of God — the gentile as well as the Jew, women as well as men, the poor as well as the wealthy, the slave as well as the free, the infirm as well as the healthy. The social teachings of the Catholic Church promote a society founded on justice and love, in which all persons possess inherent dignity as children of God. The individual and collective experiences of Christians have also provided strong warrants for the inclusion of all persons of good will in their communal living. Christians have found their life together enriched by the different qualities of their many members, and they have sought to increase this richness by welcoming others who bring additional gifts, talents and backgrounds to the community.

The spirit of inclusion at Notre Dame flows from our character as a community of scholarship, teaching, learning and service founded upon Jesus Christ. As the Word through whom all things were made, Christ is the source of the order of all creation and of the moral law which is written in our hearts. As the incarnate Word, Christ taught the law of love of God and sent the Holy Spirit that we might live lives of love and receive the gift of eternal life. For Notre Dame, Christ is the law by which all other laws are to be judged. As a Catholic institution of higher learning, in the governance of our common life we look to the teaching of Christ, which is proclaimed in Sacred Scripture and tradition, authoritatively interpreted by Church teaching, articulated in normative understandings of the human person, and continually deepened by the wisdom born of inquiry and experience. The rich heritage of the Catholic faith informs and transforms our search for truth and our understanding of contemporary challenges in higher education.

*This statement was adopted by the Officers of the University on August 27, 1997, in conjunction with an open letter to the Notre Dame community.*