

FOCUS Chaplain and Campus Ministry

FOCUS missionaries work alongside campus chaplains and campus ministers at the college or university where they serve. In addition to these many chaplains around the country, FOCUS also has seven national chaplains who offer pastoral care and support both on campuses and from the national office.

Collaboration on Campus

FOCUS' outreach is designed to coordinate with the campus chaplain's and campus minister's current programs. Our missionaries' goal is to meet students where they are on campus — in the dorms, on the sports fields, in the student union — and to bring them into the life of the Catholic campus community.

Campus ministers often work to meet the needs of the students who come through the doors of the Newman or Catholic Center. In this way, we accomplish together the same goal of helping students encounter Jesus and the fullness of the Catholic faith. FOCUS also trains students to go out on campus to their peers, allowing the reach of the campus ministry to stretch even further across campus.

"The FOCUS missionaries have helped us expand our campus ministry presence by reaching out to students, sharing their personal stories about Jesus and inviting others into that story." ~ Fr. Tom Lankenau, S.J., chaplain at Boise State University

FOCUS National Chaplains

Fr. John Lager, OFM Cap., Fr. Dennis Garrou and Fr. Doug Grandon work out of the FOCUS Denver Support Center in Genesee, Colorado. Fr. Lager and Fr. Reynaldo Frias-Santana, OFM Cap. are full-time chaplains. Fr. Garrou, Fr. Grandon, Fr. John Ezratty, MC, Fr. Gabriel Bakka, CFR, and Fr. Martin Latiff, MC, are part-time chaplains with FOCUS due to their regular ministry of preaching, spiritual direction and teaching for their religious community.

Each priest has specific duties in the organization while offering pastoral care to staff, missionaries, campus chaplains, students on campus and benefactors. They will also participate in Spiritual Boot Camps, Team Director Summits, retreats, days of recollection, Interview Weekends, daily Mass and other sacraments.

Biographies of National Chaplains



Fr. Gabriel Bakkar, CFR, grew up in Florida. He is a priest of the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal. He attended the Pontifical University of St. Thomas for studies in Spirituality and the Cenacle School of Spiritual Direction in Florida. Ordained in 2007, Fr. Gabriel has served his community as director of vocations and postulancy. Over the past ten years he has preached numerous retreats and offers spiritual direction for missionaries. He currently resides at St. Michael Friary in Paterson, NJ.



Fr. John Ezratty, MC, was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina. He joined the Religious Order of Miles Christi at the time of its foundation in 1994 and has been a priest for 15 years. He studied Philosophy at the Pontifical Catholic University of Argentina and Theology at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross in Rome. He served as the Executive Secretary of the Order and as a Pastor of St. Helena Parish in Luján, Argentina. After many years as Dean of Studies, Professor of Philosophy and Spiritual Director at the Miles Christi Seminary in Argentina, in 2010 he came to the USA. He currently lives in the Archdiocese of Detroit, Michigan, from where he travels throughout the USA preaching Retreats and Days of Recollection, giving conferences and providing spiritual direction so as to help the laity to fervently pursue sanctification, particularly college students. In January 2017 he joined the team of the FOCUS National Chaplains. This is Fr. John's third year at NST.



Fr. Reynaldo Frias-Santana, OFM Cap. Is originally from the Dominican Republic. He has a master's degree in Technology Information Science and while working at the Washington Theological Union, Fr. Reynaldo met the Capuchin Franciscans. He studied Theology and Religious Studies at the Catholic University of America (CUA). He also was the chaplain for Harrisburg Hospital in Pennsylvania. After Hurricane Hylma and Maria hit Puerto Rico in 2017, Fr. Reynaldo was sent there as a missionary to help with the recovery process. In August 2018 he joined the team of FOCUS National Chaplains.



Fr. John Lager, O.F.M. Cap., has served FOCUS as the organization's national chaplain since 2013. Ordained in 1979, Fr. John has served the Capuchins as an associate pastor, a high school campus minister and as the order's director of development and missionary activity. He has also served as the executive director of the Samaritan House of Denver, vocation director for the Capuchin Province of Mid-America and cofounder of Marked Men for Christ ministry.



Fr. Dennis Garrou was born and raised in Chicago, IL as an independent evangelical; BA in Bible and Philosophy Wheaton College; M. Div. Trinity Evangelical Divinity School; Diploma in Anglican Studies; 16 years in airline passenger service; 14 years as an Anglican priest in Oklahoma and Colorado; 11 years as Detention Chaplain at the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office Detention Center; became a Catholic in 2008; assisted as a parochial vicar in a parish for 5 years and served as a parish Administrator for 1 year; retired from the Archdiocese of Denver in May of 2017 and joined FOCUS as a National Chaplain immediately thereafter. Special areas of interest and ministry are Bible study, apologetics and evangelization.



Fr. Doug Grandon became Catholic in 2003, after serving as a Protestant missionary and pastor for 25 years. In 2008, Pope Benedict granted Fr. Doug permission to be ordained a married Catholic priest. He presently serves as St. Vincent de Paul Church in Denver and teaches Homiletics at St. John Vianney Seminary. Fr. Doug serves as one of seven National Chaplains with FOCUS – the Fellowship of Catholic University Students, where he is pioneering a new project called “Parish-based Evangelization.” Fr. Doug holds three certificates from the Institute for Foreign Languages in Belgrade, Serbia and degrees from Bradley University, Liberty University, and Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. He earned a PhD in Historical Theology from St. Louis University and completed a year of post-doctoral study at Oxford University. Fr. Doug serves on the board of the Mary Mother of God (Russian) Mission - where nearly 30,000 Catholics suffered martyrdom in the 1920’s and 30’s. Fr. Doug’s wife, Lynn, serves as the director of the Archdiocese of Denver’s Respect Life office. The Grandons have six children. Their son, Christian, is a FOCUS missionary, serving as a member of the Digital Campus Team.



Fr. Martin Latiff, MC, is a Priest of the Miles Christi Religious Order. Born in Buenos Aires, he studied philosophy at the Miles Christi School of Philosophy in Argentina and theology at Sacred Heart Major Seminary, in Detroit, Michigan. Since his Ordination to the Priesthood in 2005, he has preached numerous retreats and days of recollection across the United States as well as served many high school and college students through spiritual direction and faith formation. In January 2017 he joined the team of FOCUS National Chaplains. He currently lives with his Miles Christi religious community in San Diego. He is also one of the spiritual directors at Cathedral Catholic High School, in Carmel Valley, California, as well as one of the chaplains at the University of San Diego.



Fr. Brendan Rolling, O.S.B., grew up in Minnesota. After attending World Youth Day in Denver, Colorado, he joined St. Benedict’s Abbey in Atchison, Kansas, and was ordained a priest in 2000. Fr. Brendan has served his community in higher education for fifteen years as the Director of Residence Life, Assistant Dean of Students, Director for Mission and Ministry and Chaplain at his alma mater, Benedictine College. He has been a supporter of FOCUS since 1998 when FOCUS missionaries were first sent to Benedictine College. In 2015 he joined the team of the FOCUS National Chaplains where he preaches retreats, gives conferences and offers spiritual direction to missionaries. Fr. Brendan looks forward to being with you soon and sharing the message of the New Evangelization!



Fr. Gabriel Bakkar, CFR, grew up in Florida. He is a priest of the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal. He attended the Pontifical University of St. Thomas for studies in Spirituality and the Cenacle School of Spiritual Direction in Florida. Ordained in 2007, Fr. Gabriel has served his community as director of vocations and postulancy. Over the past ten years he has preached numerous retreats and offers spiritual direction for missionaries. He currently resides at St. Michael Friary in Paterson, NJ.