JUST IN CASE YOU EVER FORGET YOU ARE...

BELOVED

Letters of Care and Support for SNC Students who are part of the LGBTQIA+ Community
Dear Beloved,

In the first creation story in Genesis 1, we read how God, after creating humankind, stood back, looked upon all that was created, and declared us “very good” (Genesis 1:31). Because we are created by God, sharing in the *Imago Dei*, God’s image and likeness, we also have inherent worth and dignity. This worth and dignity is true for all people, unconditionally, regardless of their gender identity, gender expression, biological sex, and sexual orientation. This worth and dignity is inherent and true for you.

Catholic Social Teaching gives us language to think about this embrace as the work of God. We stand deeply rooted in these values: the life and dignity of the human person, solidarity, and God’s preferential option for those who have historically been marginalized and oppressed. In Scripture, the psalmist writes, “I praise you, because I am wonderfully made; wonderful are your works! My very self you know” (Psalm 139:14). In Matthew 3:17, we hear the words come down from heaven: “this is my beloved, with whom I am well pleased.” There are countless examples of affirmation like this throughout Scripture.

The following pages are a compilation of short letters of care, affirmation, encouragement, and support from faculty and staff here at St. Norbert College; these notes were collected during National Coming Out Week, October 11-15, 2021. The artwork dispersed throughout are illuminations from *The Saint John’s Bible*. In those moments when you forget that you are both loved and beloved while on the journey to become your most true self, we hope you can turn to this booklet as a source of joy, hope and affirmation: a tangible reminder of how much you are valued and embraced in your wholeness within this community. We invite you to read these notes and gaze upon these images in a place where you feel safe.

Be well,

*Your friends at the Emmaus Center for Spiritual Life & Vocation*
HOLY
HOLY
HOLY,
THE LORD GOD
ALMIGHTY,
WHO WAS AND IS
AND IS TO COME.
Dear beautiful Green Knight:
You are perfect. You are loved. We see you.

**Brian & Carol Bruess, President and loving Presidential Partner**

You are valued, loved and appreciated.
Your opinion and contributions matter.
St. Norbert College is better with you here.

**Anonymous**

Be who you are! We must all work together and love one another with respect and understanding!

**Jamie McGuire, Presidential Office Executive Assistant**

You belong on this campus and we are so happy you are here! Know that there are people on campus who care about you and are here to support you. Make sure to take time to realize how amazing you are and that you deserve the world. Sending love your way!

**HAPPY COMING OUT WEEK!!!**

**Faith Bradbury, Area Coordinator**

You matter. I cannot stress enough the importance and brilliance your light has in this world. It may not seem like it at times, but your strength and resilience serves as a beacon of hope for generations to come.

**Anonymous**

Love is what I give to you, no conditions. I hope you know how amazing you are, how beautiful, how strong, smart, brave and how you are changing the world for the better! I want you to know, I am a mom, you deserve all the love a mom has to give, but if you don't, (or even if you do but are just homesick) come see me! I can listen to you, give you mom hugs, laugh at funny Tik Toks with you, go get coffee with you, or invite you to share a meal with my family.

We are called to love, and know this, you are loved!

**Susan Korntved, Office Assistant Alumni and Parent Relations**

At Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) we strive to meet each student where they are as we listen to each unique story and set of goals. Our desire is that you would experience an atmosphere of acceptance and respect. We want you to know that we consider it a privilege to join you on your journey.

**Bruce Robertson, Director of Counseling and Career Development**
You have support and respect from me at SNC. I recognize there may be times when you experience life differently than I do. I recognize that your experiences can be challenging and evoke strong emotions. I am here to support you at SNC in whatever manner that support means to you.

Be well and be PROUD!

Jennifer Sovey, Counselor CAPS

You are a beloved child of God and of the universe. Even if religious doctrines and texts have been used in harmful ways against you, please know that there are religious communities who would welcome and celebrate you (and those doctrines and texts can be interpreted in lots of different ways anyway). There are people on this campus who care about your well-being. I hope you will seek out and find that support so that others can remind you of your worth if you are ever tempted to forget it.

Kathleen Gallagher Elkins, Associate Professor of Theology & Religious Studies

The world (and SNC!) needs the song that only you can sing and the story that only you can share. Know that I and so many in our community are here for you as you journey to explore and embrace your truth and your goodness as a child of God.

You are beloved as you are.

Becky Lahti, Interim Co-Director of the Emmaus Center for Spiritual Life & Vocation

Hi! I welcome you. You may have been here first, though, and maybe you should be welcoming me. Perhaps it's best that we welcome one another. College presents so many challenges! You may be feeling that you are encountering more and different challenges than your peers.

Know that you have my support. I'm glad you're here.

Jonathan Dunbar, Associate Professor of Mathematics

I support you! Be you! As Lin-Manuel Miranda said at the Tony Awards, "love is love is love is love is love."

Kristy Andrews, Admissions - Welcome Center Coordinator
Thank you for being a member of the SNC community!

Anonymous

As a queer woman, I am here for you and stand with you always.

Jenny Patton, Archives Processing Assistant

Each one of us has been chosen to be here (this time in history) at this time and in this place. We can struggle with "fitting in" sometimes but I’ve learned it’s not about fitting in that gives us a feeling of belonging. It is each of us being the best version of ourselves (the person we’ve been uniquely created to be) that gives us the feeling and sense of being in the right place at the right time (belonging). Just getting a smile from someone or giving a smile to someone can be the acknowledgement that says you are important; you matter :)

Wendy Karabush, Office Specialist of Teacher Education

SNC is lucky to have you. I am so glad you are here and know you will always have a willing ear at the library.

You and your story and your experiences matter so much.

Sarah Titus, Librarian for Archives and Special Collections

There are times in our life where we are challenged to grow, to change, or to morph. If this is your time to be you, and all the glorious 'you' that you are, then hold your head high and bask in God's love, and be the unique you that you were born to be. You are loved!

Anonymous

You are loved and valued in the eyes of God and your SNC community. You belong here, and we pray that you are given the support you need to be who you truly are and continue to grow into who you were meant to be.

Maribeth Franken, Associate Director of Admission

No matter your name, personality, or identity, you matter, and are a wonderful person.

Neil Gloudemans, Endpoint Administrator ITS

You are loved for who you are.

Anonymous
I wanted to let you know that we care and you are important to all of us!

Hugs,

Anonymous

Humanity is diverse. The world is more interesting and exciting when everyone is being themselves. Thank you for showing me some of the possibilities in life! I love the world more because of you :)

Zhuoyi Zhao, Assistant Professor in Business Administration

The motto of my alma mater is "sic luceat lux vestra," which translates into "so let your light shine." I hope this is a place in which you feel safe enough to share your amazing light with others. By doing this, our whole campus community will stand as witnesses to the healthy, holy, and wholesome ways in which God's revelation is manifest in ALL people. Know that my office is a safe space for whenever you feel isolated, alone, or invisible. I see you, Beloved, with your beautiful light shining (even when others try and blow it out). My whole self loves your whole self and I am here for you as you are.

Meghan Stretar, Assistant Director of the Emmaus Center for Spiritual Life & Vocation

I am so glad you want to express your authentic self. Life is much less complicated that way. Thank you for trusting me to love the real you, and not the you who you think I would love.

C-C O'Malley, Night and Weekend Dining Services

You are perfect just the way you are and I am so glad that you are here.

Ivy Summers, Library Operations Coordinator

You matter. And always remember that you are a valued member of this community.

Anonymous

Please know that God loves you! I am an Ally and am here for anyone that needs to talk. You are special, you are worthy and you matter! I am proud of you for being who you are.

Amy Keehan, Admin Asst of the Parish
Your life is yours to make of it what you dream. Take it from a staff member who has found the strength to live authentically as a proud member of the LGBTQ+ community: nobody knows you better than yourself, so be brave and establish love for who you are. Though the world is slow to adjust to your magnificent presence, you are supported and celebrated by many staff and faculty in this community who want nothing more than for you to live out loud as your authentic selves. Your queer* identity is a strength and asset; a tool for empathy; a uniqueness that challenges social constructs; and an avenue for creativity and innovation. Be True, Be YOU...the world will become better because of it.

Tanner Anderson, Area Coordinator and LGBTQ+ Services

Your experience is valid and important, and I hope we, the campus community, can help you celebrate your experience whenever possible.

Alaina Morales, Librarian at Mulva Library

I am a person who treats others as I would like to be treated - with dignity & respect. I am open minded to ALL people no matter their sexual preference, race, gender - It's just this simple - BE KIND.

Anonymous

You are amazing just exactly as you are, and I am so grateful that you are here! Our community is made better because you are part of it, and I hope we get to meet in person ... so I can put you to work! I've got dozens of student leadership roles I need filled and I have a hunch you may be just the person I am looking for. I know there's a need on campus only you can fill, and I'm so eager to help you find that place.

Corday Goddard, Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs

You are loved and are deserving of love. Your experience and identity matters. Your presence on this campus and in this world are invaluable.

Anonymous
Always be true to yourself and live authentically. You are seen, valued, and worthy, and you are deserving of love and acceptance. You belong here.

Anonymous

I stand with you and wish you peace and safety. You are not alone. Love is love.

Rochelle Van Erem, Metadata Specialist, Mulva Library

Fellow queer folks, I invite you to live fiercely, courageously, and enthusiastically in your identity. You are loved - by God and by all the people who truly matter. Folks who are transitioning, your transition is holy and is grace to both you and others; don't let anyone tell you otherwise. LGBTQIA+ folks, don't hesitate to reach out if I can be of any help.

Francis Beaumier, Integration Developer

God loves you just as you are and for who you are. You are a valuable part of this community and there are people here who care about you.

I am happy to be one of them.

Tom Bolin, Professor of Theology and Religious Studies

I am really happy that you have chosen to be a part of the SNC community. Your being here makes the community more vibrant, because of your background and your perspective.

I respect you and the things that you contribute.

Anonymous

Thank you for being a part of our St. Norbert College community! We value you and all that you bring to our campus.

Danielle Geerling, Assistant Professor of Psychology

You are valued and loved! Thank you for bringing your authentic self to our campus community. I'm here for you!

John Miller, Dean of Curriculum and Senior Diversity Officer

You, our LGBTQIA+ students, are our family. We stand with you and oppose any form of violence, bullying or harassment directed at you. We embrace the diversity that makes us all different and all the same. Love is love and is the only way forward.

Nicholas Mauro, Assistant Professor of Physics
Wherever you are on your journey of coming out, you are an invaluable member of this community. You are loved, worthy of love, and called to love. Those of us writing here are here to walk with you as you discover and live out these three truths each day. A happy and holy COW to you!

Thank you for being you.

Alex Gruber, Adjunct instructor, Theology/Religious Studies & Quarantine/Isolation Student Liaison

Hello LGBTQ+. I want you to know you have my unconditional acceptance and love, as Jesus does for all of you. Enjoy your lives as you are meant to. You are loved!

Mary “Steck” Steckart, Volunteer minister at SNC Parish

I am grateful that you are part of our community because we are stronger and better with you! As we work together to create a community where you feel safe, valued and cared for, know that you embody goodness and love and are supported.

Susan Angoli, Community Engagement Coordinator with the Sturzl Center for Community Service and Learning

When I think about my students, I think about how much I love and value them as fabulous human beings, all of them worthy of my respect and attention. Students, I want you to know that I am present for you. That you matter to me. That you are as you are meant to be - and I am filled with joy because of it! When you have a moment or a day in which you feel down, know that you are enough - bastante! - JUST. AS. YOU. ARE. Know also that I am here to provide the virtual and real hugs, the shoulder, the advice, the support, the advocacy, the whatever you need to help you through the day or week. You are not only wanted at SNC, you are necessary to the beautiful mix of people who comprise our caring community.

Lucy Arendt, Professor

There is goodness woven into the fabric of your being, and it takes tremendous courage to trust the strength that resides within. I will hold you in my heart while you journey to the places that others told you not to go and pray that you find the garden that has been prepared for you there.

Derek Elkins, Protestant Chaplain & Interim Co-Director of the Emmaus Center for Spiritual Life & Vocation
Fostering a sense of belonging and connection is crucial to placing all students on a path to success. It’s been a rough couple of years for all of us. We don’t fully heal by struggling forward alone. Putting up fences to isolate groups or individuals only weakens the overall community.

As Helen Keller said, “Alone we can do so little, together, we can do so much.”

Daniel Heiser, Dean of Business & Economics

You are perfect as you are. Never apologize for being you. Stay strong. We have your back. Have confidence in who you are. It inspires others to do the same. The world is a better place with you in it!

Terry Jo Leiterman, Associate Professor of Mathematics

Diversity was the first blessing that God gave to creation. You—whover you are and whomever you love—are God’s work of art. No matter what people say. No matter what people do. No matter what pronouncements are made. You are beloved.

Craig A. Ford, Jr., Assistant Professor of Theology and Religious Studies

Your ideas are valued, appreciated and welcome. Don’t be afraid to take up space and make your voice heard, but also give yourself space when you need it. Seek experiences that bring you joy, express yourself through words and art, and know you are never alone.

Kristen Schiedermayer, Career Counselor

You may not ever meet me, but if our paths cross, I want you to know I am someone who will support you, respect you, and listen. My hope is that while at SNC you build connections and authentic friendships where you can be your be-you-tiful self!

Christine Gill, Administrative Specialist- Title IX and Compliance

You belong. You’re part of our community & family. You make us better.

Hannah Saiz, Swim & Dive Coach

You are beautifully and wonderfully made. God made YOU, because he wanted YOU to be on this earth. You are loved.

Anonymous
Know that you matter and you are loved. I am proud that you’re here and appreciate your presence on campus. Your willingness to share your story with others is powerful. If your preference is to only share that story with a few, trusted people, it is still powerful. I am here if you need support!

Shelly Mumma, Director of Leadership, Student Engagement & First Year Experience

I want students who are members of the LGBTQIA+ community at SNC to know that they belong here - in the world, and on our campus. That their dignity and value are without question. And that many of us allies are committed to supporting them, even when that includes hearing about times they have felt isolated or hurt on our campus. I hope the events of Coming Out Week provide spaces in which you feel seen and cared about, spaces that remind you that you belong.

Julie Massey, Chief of Staff

The history of art is rich in images and objects, architecture and sculpture, fashion and design created by LGBTQIA+ hearts and hands, minds and spirits...and the world is all the more beautiful and full of wonder, joy and awe.

James Neilson, Art Professor

The Division of Student Affairs respects the dignity and sacredness of each person. We strive to create a welcoming and open environment for all and seek to provide opportunities for increased awareness and visibility of LGBTQ related issues and needs.

Joseph Webb, Vice President of Student Affairs

Your most authentic self is truly a gift to our SNC community... a gift I'm so thankful you chose to share at St. Norbert College. My wish is you fully appreciate that your beautiful soul is treasured, valued, and embraced by me and so many others. And may you also fully appreciate and feel the love surrounding you, as our SNC community strives to live in the space of our guiding affirmation, "Let us love one another."

Brenda Busch, Associate Director of Graduate Recruitment
The spirit lifted me up and brought me to the inner court. And the glory of the Lord filled the temple.
Don’t ever be afraid to be who you are. Speaking from my own experience, I can say that love and support will find you, if it hasn’t already. If you are ever in need of support or someone to talk to who will understand, please come find me in the lower level of Main Hall Suite 2. In the meantime, keep on being your wonderful self!

Lori Evans, Director of Student Judicial Affairs

I'm grateful to all our LGBTQIA+ students for their presence on our campus. For helping us move forward and expand our world.

Anonymous

Having a brother and very good friend who are gay, I know how special these people are! Love is never wrong.

Karen Mazzoleni, Loan & Sr. Student Account Specialist

Please always remember how wonderful you are. You get to decide what and how your life will be. It is ok to be yourself and to tell your story when and how you are ready. There are way more of us that will love and accept you than there are those who won’t. Be yourself...always! By teaching all of us love and acceptance you make the world a better place.

Jennifer Timmer, Assistant Director of Annual Giving

You are beautiful, you are brave, you are loved. I pray that you may feel the love of God and the love of others in your life, as well as continue to feel safe in this community.

Anonymous

"It takes courage to grow up and become who you really are."

– E.E. Cummings

Nina Rouse, Director of Communications and Marketing

Dear SNC LGBTQIA+ community members. I hope you will find your experience on the SNC campus to be a positive one. I am proud of you for living your truth. In my classroom, I believe it is important to encourage students to be their authentic selves as part of fostering a safe learning environment. If you ever need help or you are curious about resources available to you, please contact me at nicole.phillips@snc.edu

Nicole Phillips, Visiting Assistant Professor of Psychology
I'm glad you made SNC your home. You are valued and are an important part of our community. You matter here!

Joe Totman, Director of Residential Education & Housing

You are in charge of your own happiness and you deserve to be happy.

Nick Hemschemeyer, Area Coordinator

SNC Campus Safety is here 24/7 to support our LGBTQIA+ community. We are only a phone call away or stop by the PAC if you are looking for a safe space.

Eric Dunning, Director of Campus Safety

Please know that I care about you and want to support you and your wellbeing.

Chrystal Woller, Health Services Director

There are many people who celebrate the beautiful diversity in the world. Be yourself. Love yourself. Our community is a better place because you are here.

Anonymous

You belong here, and I am grateful for your presence and your bravery for sharing your true self with the world and making our campus and world a better place simply by existing.

Katie Garber, Assistant Professor of Chemistry

You were created by The Universal Goodness. We will always treat you with grace, tenderness and honor. Be proud, be well and always be true to your one precious self. You are loved.

Monica Golomski, Retired Advancement Staff

You are a vital part of the SNC community. We are not whole without you. I hope that SNC is a place where you feel belonging and support. I hope it is a place where you become ever more authentically you.

Bridget Burke Ravizza, Professor of Theology and Religious Studies
Students, I am grateful to you. It was about two years ago that my son came out as being gay. We told him we loved him and accepted him, but as his mother and parent I needed some help myself, on how I could best support him. The Spectrum Alliance welcomed me to one of their meetings, allowing me to ask questions, reassuring me that what I was already doing was on point. They extended the invitation for my son to join their meetings and helped guide me in my own journey of continued learning and exploration. I’m eternally grateful. Without your support, I’m not sure I would have been introduced to PFLAG which has been incredibly helpful. Thank you. Know that you are loved, included, welcomed, appreciated, respected and admired. You are amazing and I hope to support you in the same way you supported me.

With gratitude,

Krissy Lukens, '92, Director of Academic Technology, ITS

You have a human right to be your authentic self. Know that you are loved by your SNC community. I am a proud Pride mom with a listening ear if you ever need to talk.

Melissa DaPra, Director of Dining

Know that on your best days and your worst, you are a special and essential member of our community. And on the difficult days, believe that things will get better. Many of history’s most significant change-makers developed their insights and their passions when relegated to the margins of a community or society. The world needs your experiences, your ideas, and your essence.

Erinn Brooks, Assistant Professor of Sociology

A few inspiring quotes: "Never EVER apologize for who you love," "Love is too beautiful to be hidden in the closet" AND "Love is a human experience, not a political statement."

Cathy Lau, Business Analyst, REH

Remember that you are strong, you are brave, and you are loved.

Samuel Robinson, Assessment and Accreditation Coordinator for Teacher Ed
My prayer for you is the prayer I have for every person. May you experience in this world the many different types and aspects of love that honor all that God is and created you to be so that you can know God’s love and share it back with the world.

Martha Kiedrowski, Program Coordinator for the Emmaus Center for Spiritual Life & Vocation

When my daughter Lindsay came out, I hugged her and told her how much I loved her. Unconditionally. She has taught me so much over the years.

Out Loud@SNCParish renders visible the parish’s overarching commitment to EVERYONE, welcoming all persons of all gender, sexual, and racial identities. It encourages us to live OUT LOUD as disciples by discovering, following, worshipping and sharing Jesus Christ.

Kevin DeCleene, Parish, Deacon

There is one constant in all human life. That constant is love. We all have the ability to love ourselves & love one another. Love is shown in many ways. I am often told I show my love through food. I hope you are able to find a way to share what brings you joy with others. All of us are worth love & compassion. Be the light!

Josh Swanson, Campus Executive Chef

When asked, Jesus told us that the greatest commandment was to love, and that we should love our neighbors as ourselves (Matthew 22:37-39). I affirm that every person has worth and is a bearer of God’s image. No matter who you love, how you look, or what you do, I welcome and affirm you and will provide a safe space for you at SNC.

Anonymous

Do what makes YOU happy, LOVE who makes YOU happy, and never be afraid to be YOU!

Shannon Konitzer, Office Assistant for Humanities & Assistant to First Year Seminar
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And then a voice came down from the heavens, saying, 'this is my beloved...with whom I am well pleased.'

-Matthew 3:17