

Betsy Lizotte

Professor Bess Fox

English 303I, Draft “March”

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Women's March January 21, 2017. Photo by Betsy Lizotte.

“Greater love has no one than this, to lay down one’s life for his friends” John 15:13

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.” MLK

Marymount Professors March in the Spirit of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Father Gailhac

President Shank recently reinforced Marymount University's values of diversity and dignity for all students. In a January 28 message, Shank affirmed that, "Our 'common ground' theme is the foundation of Marymount's vision, mission and core values. Stated simply, we come together with unique perspectives from many backgrounds, but learn and leave Marymount sharing and embracing our values of faith, diversity and respect for the dignity of all individuals." This sentiment is front and center in the "Common Ground" page of Marymount's website:

What we value: A comprehensive Catholic University, Marymount is distinguished by a culture of engagement that fosters intellectual curiosity, Service to others, and a global perspective. A Marymount education inspires and empowers students to become active, lifelong learners; leaders with a desire to serve; and informed, involved citizens of the world. (<http://commonground.marymount.edu/index.html>)

These are not idle words for the University: Marymount professors act on them. Several professors recently marched for the dignity and equality of all people at the January 21, 2017 Women's March on Washington.



Marchers gather at the Mall. Photo By Betsy Lizotte

On its website, The Women’s March [Mission](#) was to, “send a bold message to our new government on their first day in office, and to the world that women's rights are human rights. We stand together, recognizing that defending the most marginalized among us is defending all of us.” This mission statement resonated with several Marymount professors including Doctors Tonya-Marie Howe, Sara Ficke, and Marguerite Rippy who relate the March mission to Marymount’s core values.



Anonymous Marcher. Photo

According to Howe, Associate Professor of Literature and Languages, “the values of integrity, compassion, equality, and care for others is--and ought to be--deeply embedded in our University culture.” Howe lent her feet to the Women’s March to support all human rights by fighting for women’s rights. She feels that “As Americans, it is our civil right--even duty--to speak loudly when

our values are being compromised, and I believe firmly that all individuals have a right to bodily integrity, and that women's rights are human rights.”

Doctor Ficke, Associate Professor of Literature and Languages, had similar reasons for attending the March. For Ficke, defending potentially marginalized students is important. “When I was marching I was thinking of all of my students, who could be negatively impacted by our government's actions. The diversity of our campus is our strength, and I want to preserve that diversity because it is a key component of a good education,” said Ficke.

Ficke’s sentiments were visible on the placard she carried to the march. On one side of the placard, Ficke listed the desire for equality that she was marching for:

= Education

= Healthcare

= Pay

= Rights

On the other side of the placard she wrote, "Will we be extremists for hate or for love?" This is a quote from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Letter from a Birmingham Jail."



Dr. Ficke’s Equality Placard. Photo by Cheryl Thayer.

Ficke said that she picked that quote from the letter “because it's from part of the letter that I find very moving:

So the question is not whether we will be extremists, but what kind of extremists we will be. Will we be extremists for hate or for love? Will we be extremists for the preservation of injustice or for the extension of justice? In that dramatic scene on Calvary's hill three men were crucified. We must never forget that all three were crucified for the same crime--the crime of extremism. Two were extremists for immorality, and thus fell below their environment. The other, Jesus Christ, was an extremist for love, truth and goodness, and thereby rose above his environment. Perhaps the South, the nation and the world are in dire need of creative extremists.

Dr. Reverend Martin Luther King was a champion of social justice, a creative extremist who fought for the marginalized. In its own way, Marymount University was established to fight for the marginalized.

According to Sister Jackie Murphy, RSHM, Marymount college, later university, was established under the Catholic Order of the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary (RSHM), “in line with the whole Women’s Movement” of the 1960s especially to support women. Sister Murphy stated that the Patron of the RSHM, Father Gailhac, conducted his ministry in France by educating women sex workers so they could learn other skills and live in a manner to better care for their children. Gailhac, a Catholic Priest, supported the marginalized in the 1800s.

Supporting the marginalized is in line with Catholic Social Teaching. On its website USCatholic.org declares that under Catholic Social Teaching, “People have a fundamental right to life, food, shelter, health care, education, and employment. All people have a right to participate in the decisions that affect their lives.” As a Catholic University, Marymount supports these principles.



Young Marchers near Archives Metro, DC. Photo by Betsy Lizotte.

Another marcher, Dr. Marguerite Rippy, is proud of Marymount’s Catholic values. “I think as a Catholic university, we have a strong connection to social justice issues, which has always made me very proud,” she said. Rippy joined the March “to bear witness and be counted

in opposition to the current president's stated policies against women's health, refugees, immigrants, and basic human rights worldwide.”

Following in the steps of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Father Gailhac, Doctors Howe, Ficke, and Rippy marched to protect the marginalized. These professors exemplify the University’s core values. They are “leaders with a desire to serve” who are “informed, involved citizens of the world.”