A Reflection from your Humanist Chaplain

Dear Jumbos,

Care is more than just a four letter word. I realized the hard way because soon after being appointed the Humanist Chaplain in 2021, I acquired a plant, interestingly called "String of Hearts."

I was excited to tend to this plant, as my housemates also had plants they were doting on. The plant symbolized the deepest aspirations for my work, and it felt incumbent upon me to nurture it. I bought an intricately adorned ceramic pot for its new home. Aside from reviewing the sparsely written care instructions, I figured the plant would be just fine. After all, I grew up surrounded by plants as a kid. I was also a voyeur of others caring for plants. But, as life often demonstrates, things do not always go as planned. My plant started to wilt, and little by little leaves began to collect on the table.

I agonized over this unfavorable outcome. How could this be? What was I doing wrong? What should I be doing differently? After days of intensive reading and consulting plant connoisseurs, I decided to tend to my plant differently. I "listened" to it and let it "rest." Two years later, the plant has gone from a sole leaf to abundant growth. I had to recognize that I was imposing more than I was accepting. In retrospect, I did not inquire enough about the plant, its "language," and the ways I would meaningfully respond to its needs.
Extrapolating this to other domains in my life, I am often more attuned to my biases, attitudes, and preconceived notions and how these bear on relationships and the understandings of the world around me. This story asks me to consider my own embodiment and how I am situated among others – do I arrive somewhere ready to listen? To learn, and grow in the process?

As you go about your week, consider the quality of your care. How are you listening to your needs? How will you resource yourself? How will you enlist the support of others to fulfill these needs?

In solidarity,
Anthony Cruz Pantojas
Humanist Chaplain

“The University Chaplaincy encouraged me to organize across lines of difference on the topics and issues that mattered to me the most. My experience on the Interfaith Ambassador team allowed me to create spaces on campus for students of diverse perspectives, identities, and lived experiences to engage in community learning and service.”

Jane Romp, A23
On Giving Tuesday this year, join Tufts University alumni, friends, faculty, staff, and students in supporting the impactful programs and communities of the University Chaplaincy! We are grateful for your support of the University Chaplaincy's innovative and inclusive programming through our Buddhist, Catholic, Hindu, Humanist, Jewish, Muslim and Protestant chaplaincies. Help us achieve our best day of giving yet by giving generously to the University Chaplaincy "Friends of Goddard Fund" in support of the Interfaith Ambassador Program this year. You can always find more about giving to the University Chaplaincy here.

Above, Jane Romp shares why she gives back to the University Chaplaincy. Jane graduated from Tufts in 2023 as a triple major in Political Science, Civic Studies, and Sociology. During her time as a student, she was involved in JumboVote, Mock Trial, Model UN, COFFEE, and worked as an Interfaith Ambassador for the University Chaplaincy. Jane is currently working as a research assistant for a documentary project exploring implicit gender bias in judicial sanctions.

Giving to the University Chaplaincy

Upcoming Signature Programs
Call For Art, Pax et Lux: A Multifaith Winter Celebration
Submissions due Monday, November 27

Pax et Lux is the University Chaplaincy’s multifaith winter celebration centered around themes of peace and light. The celebration includes singing, dancing, storytelling, and poetry and aims to highlight individuality and celebrate people’s traditions, cultures, and practices. This year a reception, co-hosted with the Tufts First Gen Collective, will be open to all after the event!

Interested undergraduate and graduate students are invited to submit creative responses for this year’s Pax et Lux celebration. We invite submissions of written or visual art to be displayed in Goddard Chapel event and reception. We ask that submissions respond to one of the following questions: “Peace and light have many different manifestations in many different lives, how do these grounding principles of our community reveal themselves in yours?” “What brings you joy and warmth in the winter?” “What traditions do you associate with wintertime?” Submissions are accepted here.

Submit Art to Pax et Lux
Religious and Philosophical Programs

Our gatherings are open to all members of the Tufts community! Please find more information and more regular weekly programming and events here on our website. If you have any questions, or would like to connect about convening a new gathering, please reach out to the University Chaplaincy.

ExCollege Class: Rwanda Fellowship GIM
Wednesday, November 15, 12:30 p.m., Granoff Family Hillel Center

This Rwandan Fellowship program offers an in-depth analysis of Rwandan history, culture, genocide, and reconstruction as impacted by external colonial powers and internal political and ethnic dynamics. This Fellowship’s class component is followed by a 10-day trip to Agahozo-Shalom Youth Village in Rwanda, where fellows are fully immersed in the culture of Rwanda through the lens of reconciliation and care exemplified by the Rwandan people. If you have questions, please contact Associate Director Lauren Bloom. Applications are open now and due Wednesday, November 29.
Pizza and Bible Study
Wednesday, November 15, 6:00 p.m., Campus Center, Room 218

Join the Protestant Chaplaincy as we study the Gospel of Mark together. All are welcome, regardless of your identity, spiritual/religious background, or knowledge of the Bible. Please contact Protestant Chaplain Dan Bell with any questions.
Vocation: Professional and Spiritual Synergy
Thursday, November 16 at 5PM EST
at Goddard Chapel

Join us for a transformative panel discussion exploring the pursuit of vocation, with a panel discussion moderated by Wanci Nana, and an interactive Q&A session to inspire personal and professional alignment.

Join the University Chaplaincy for a transformative panel discussion exploring the pursuit of vocation, with a panel discussion afterwards moderated by Interfaith Ambassador Wanci Nana, A24. The session is meant to inspire personal and professional alignment. Please reach out to Wanci Nana with any questions.
Catholic On-Campus Day Retreat
Saturday, November 18
10 AM- 7 PM
The Interfaith Center (58 Winthrop St)

Sometimes we just want to step back and take some quiet time to be with God, ourselves and one another. In the middle of the semester, it can be hard to make that happen. This on-campus Day Retreat is an opportunity to carve out space for connection and reflection but in a way that is accessible. We will try on different kinds of spiritual practice, learn with and from one another, make art, move our bodies, share meals, and end the day with a Dinner Church liturgy with the Saints. All are welcome. RSVP here.

You can contact Catholic Chaplain Lynn Cooper with any questions.
Africana Spirituality Dinner Series: The Beauty of Gospel Music

Wednesday, November 27, 5:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m., Africana Center (8 Professors Row)

Gospel music is both current and historical. It is African-American history. It is American history. However, many of us are not allowed to learn history through the lens of Black lives, and the beauty of Gospel music is that we learn about this history while simultaneously linking that experience to our own, regardless of age, ethnicity, or creed. And we do it together, singing, and marching forward. Please join for this dinner and conversation co-hosted by the University Chaplaincy and the Africana Center. You can contact Humanist Chaplain Anthony Cruz Pantojas with any questions. Please RSVP to the dinner event here.
Queerness and Faith Dinner
Thursday, November 30, 6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m., Chase Center (Carmichael Hall, opposite side from dining hall)

Join us for this annual gathering, hosted by True Colors and COFFEE, where we enjoy dinner together and discuss the intersections between queer identities and religion, spirituality (or lack thereof). Please sign up here. Sponsored by the LGBT Center and University Chaplaincy.
Join Special Collections for a lecture on Tarot and other forms of cartomancy!

November 16, 2023 from 2-3pm
Tisch Library Room 103

Lecture by Grace Rotermund, A’24

Grace Rotermund, A24, Religion Major will be speaking in the Tisch Library, Room 103. Come learn about the history and systems of Tarot, along with other forms of cartomancy!
Capoeira Workshop
Thursday, November 16, 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m., Aidekman Arts Center

Join the Tufts University Art Galleries next week for a special Capoeira workshop in conjunction with our current exhibition Véxoa: We Know, led by instructors from Sinhá Capoeira. Capoeira is a mixed martial arts that incorporates dance-like practices, originating from Afro-Brazilians and continues to be practiced as an indigenous movement to this day in Brazil. All ages and levels are welcome to this workshop. No equipment or accessories necessary, just come with comfortable clothing and sneakers.
9th Annual Conference on Gender and International Affairs
Friday and Saturday, November 17th & 18th, 2:30pm - 7:15pm, Fletcher School

The student committee for The Fletcher School at Tufts University's annual conference on Gender and International Affairs is pleased to invite you to our upcoming conference, Power, Policy, Progress: Redefining Authority, Reshaping Influence, scheduled for Friday, November 17 and Saturday, November 18. Individuals can register, donate, and learn more about our lineup of speakers on our website. The conference is free to the public and will be virtually accessible for registered participants unable to attend in person.
REL 192-02 Civil Disobedience
Wednesdays, 9:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

This course assesses the place of religion in the theory, practice, and history of civil disobedience. How has religion shaped notions of citizenship, justice, legitimate authority, and obedience? Is religion an impetus or impediment to protest? What role does it play in establishing and motivating the distinction between violent and nonviolent dissent? What impact have different forms of civil disobedience — religious and irreligious—had upon various moments of history? We will explore these and related questions through scrutiny of classic and contemporary accounts of civil disobedience taken from practitioners and theorists. As a course in religious studies, we will also pay special attention to civil disobedience as a site of interreligious exchange and moral formation.

Find Spring 2024 Course Offerings

Upcoming Religious Celebrations and Observances

These events are drawn from the multifaith calendar maintained by the Office of Religious and Spiritual Life at Harvard Divinity School. To see more upcoming religious holidays and festivals, please follow the link to the Harvard Divinity School calendar.

Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji
Fri., Nov. 24, 2023
Tradition: Sikhism
This day commemorates the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji (1621-1675), the ninth of the Ten Sikh Gurus. He is remembered not only for his defense of the Sikh faith, but also of Hinduism and of religious liberty.

Day of the Covenant
Sat., Nov. 25, 2023
Tradition: Baha'i
Celebrates the anniversary of the appointment of ‘Abdu'l-Baha, the son of Baha’u’llah, as the Center of the Covenant. Work is not suspended on this day. Begins at sundown.
Guru Nanak’s Birthday
Sun., Nov. 26, 2023
Tradition: Sikhism

Ascension of ‘Abdu’l-Baha
Mon., Nov 27, 2023
Tradition: Baha’i

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The University Chaplaincy is a dynamic hub supporting religious, spiritual, ethical, and cultural life for all members of the Tufts community. We provide pastoral care, support religious and philosophical communities, educate about spiritual and ethical issues in society and the world, and promote multifaith engagement.

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