



ASSOCIATES of
SAINT JOHN
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Associates of St. John Bosco Announces First-Ever RISE Award Recipients

Three Campus Ministries Win Awards for Creative and Bold Evangelization Projects

Springfield, VA – The [Associates of St. John Bosco \(ASJB\)](#) is proud to announce the inaugural winners of the **RISE** (*Renewal through Innovative Student Evangelization*) **Awards**. The [RISE Awards](#) are part of the Associates of St. John Bosco's five-figure campaign launched earlier this year to inspire new and creative outreach efforts on college campuses. Citing the need for innovative approaches to reach Catholics on campuses through ingenuity and creativity, the Associates of St. John Bosco established the RISE Awards to incentivize a revitalized approach to campus evangelization in Washington, D.C., Maryland, and Virginia. The Associates of St. John Bosco, founded by Fr. Christopher Vaccaro, priest of the Diocese of Arlington, has a proven track record of nearly 15 years of helping college-bound youth keep their faith during their college years.

Three Catholic Campus Ministries from Washington, D.C., Maryland, and Virginia have been selected to receive a total of \$25,000 in funding for their standout evangelization plans, which will engage students with the Truth and beauty of the Catholic faith.

This year's winning projects include:

- **George Mason University:** *'Witness on the Field'* will jumpstart a new approach to student athlete outreach. GMU Catholic Campus Ministry will kick off the program with a "win" event - a casual get together to bring student athletes from different sports together, united in their interest in building a robust student athlete community rooted in Christ. From there, students will become Ambassadors with GMUCCM gear to attract fellow athletes to the athlete small group and the ministry at large.
- **The Catholic University of America:** CUA's innovative approach to outdoor Eucharistic Adoration on campus will include praise and worship music and Confessions, during the first Saturday of students' returning to campus, as well as during Family Weekend. This project will seek to cast a wide net to students (and families) in hopes that more and more students encounter Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and in the Sacrament of Confession.
- **Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University:** *'Pour Into Others'* is the Catholic Campus Ministry at Virginia Tech's innovative approach to catering to fallen-away Catholics and those not involved in their ministry. This project will entail a coffee shop for students, during which time, Eucharistic Adoration will be taking place in the chapel upstairs. Students who visit the coffee shop will be invited to come encounter Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament and/or attend other events that the ministry offers.

Danielle Zuccaro, Executive Director of ASJB: *"We are thrilled that our inaugural year of the RISE Awards was a huge success. We received over a dozen creative projects requesting in excess of \$150,000, from Catholic Campus Ministries who are thinking outside the box to reach more and*



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more souls on their campuses. With the availability of these funds, campus ministries will have the ability to carry out their innovative evangelization and reach many more young souls for Christ. The Associates of St. John Bosco is confident that this initiative will revolutionize campus evangelization by incentivizing ingenuity and forcing the best, most creative projects to rise to the top.”

Julie Cilano, Associate Director of Campus Ministry at The Catholic University of

America: *“Receiving this RISE Award is a profound encouragement to our ministry at The Catholic University of America. It affirms the powerful impact of Eucharistic Adoration and Confession as a starting point for students’ faith journeys and gives us the means to continue offering transformative encounters with Christ at the heart of campus life. More broadly, the RISE Awards are helping campus ministries like ours step more confidently into their mission of meeting students where they are and inviting them into a real relationship with Jesus.”*

The winning projects will be implemented during the 2025–2026 academic year, and will provide videos and full project plans for posting on the ASJB website. At that point, any other ministry in the country will be able to have access to these projects to execute them on their respective campuses. The Associates of St. John Bosco plans to expand the RISE Awards in 2026, encouraging even more campus ministries to answer the call to missionary creativity in a time when young Catholics are leaving the faith in record numbers.

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The Associates of St. John Bosco is a Catholic 501(c)3 non-profit organization located in Northern Virginia whose purpose is to help college students keep and grow in their Catholic faith during their college years. Learn more at [ASJB.org](https://www.asjb.org).