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College Launches Catholic Medieval Guilds

Students Invited to Participate in Craft and Charity

MERRIMACK, New Hampshire, JULY 27, 2010 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- The Thomas More College of Liberal Arts is launching several medieval-style Catholic guilds to offer students a chance to learn from master craftsmen and practice charity in the community.

William Fahey, president of the college, explained, "Not only will students learn skills they can use throughout their lives, they will have an opportunity to bake bread for the homeless, produce icons for local churches, create chairs, cribs, and other projects for the poor and needy in our community, and bring music to nursing homes and hospitals."

In these guilds, students will have the chance to learn woodworking, music, baking and sacred art.

A press release from the college explained that these guilds will be modeled on the medieval associations of people who "advanced their trades and responded to the needs of their local communities."

Fahey stated, "Catholic guilds flourished during medieval Europe, but by the 19th century they had all but disappeared."

He continued: "Guilds in its earliest form were developed out of man's natural spirit of association.

"The Catholic Church took medieval guilds under its tutelage and infused into them the vivifying spirit of Christian charity."

Campus life

Thus, in this spirit, the college guilds are expected to contribute to campus life. For example, this fall, the woodworking guild will build a new altar for the college chapel, and the sacred art guild will produce religious works to hang on the walls. Liturgies will be enhanced by the skills of the music guild.

Mark Schwerdt, the college's director of admissions, noted that these guilds "will show students how to live."

"Students will now have confidence that they can fix their own furniture or make music with their family," he affirmed. "They will learn how the common man can create works of art as well as how to balance work, family, and leisure -- all while enhancing their ability to be creative."

He added that this will prepare students "for a life of self-sufficiency."

Students will meet in their guild once a week and learn from a master craftsman. They will also be responsible for completing certain projects or meeting specific goals in their skill performance.

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Fahey expressed the hope that "many of our students will advance in their development of these skills over time so they can teach -- or apprentice -- new incoming students each year."

He continued, "I would expect nothing less from our students, all of whom operate with an intense desire to learn and engage others with a spirit of charity and humility."

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