

A few years ago, I had the opportunity to meet a group of La Roche College alumni living and working in the Washington, DC area. I enjoyed hearing these graduates talk about their college memories and experience, especially one young man who shared a particularly moving story. A Palestinian Muslim from the Middle East, he came to La Roche College—a Catholic institution of higher learning in the United States founded by the Sisters of Divine Providence—in the late 1990s through the Pacem In Terris scholarship program, which since 1993 has welcomed and educated more than 450 students from war-torn and developing nations. He recalled how he and his Muslim classmates talked often of how welcomed they were by the college community and of their surprise that no one ever pressured them to learn about Christianity or tried to convert them to Catholicism. Rather, he said they always felt their faith was respected, especially when the college created a dedicated prayer room for them to gather each day.

This story affirms the “radical hospitality”—values of diversity and inclusion that can transform lives—that has roots in the foundation and is embedded in the mission of the college and all ministries of the Sisters. By modeling radical hospitality, we all can be enriched by the thoughts and talents each of us has been so generously given by our Provident God.

Today, many in our world are fearful of the other, distrustful of those with different beliefs, apprehensive about unfamiliar cultures and suspicious of unknown customs. By encouraging the exchange of ideas and life stories, each of us can chip away at the walls sometimes inadvertently built around our lives. When we are willing to learn about our very complex world through knowing and understanding each other—one person and one life story at a time—we can be inspired, not afraid, to make the world a better place. Radical hospitality is a way that we are “best *for* the world.” (*over*)



Providence  
Reflections

**Radical hospitality** is much more than a polite welcome or a friendly introduction—or even an invitation to a place of respite and care—it...

- is about solidarity with the other; an opening of not only the door but, more importantly, the heart.
- allows the other—the one who is different than others—to feel safe. For it is in feeling safe that one can learn, grow and become all he or she is meant to be.
- reassures the frightened, comforts the lonely and guides those who are lost.
- inspires peace in each of us and in our world.

by Sister Candace Introcaso, CDP, Ph.D., president of La Roche College

*“We reaffirm the commitment of our institutions to creating inclusive welcoming campus environments that embrace people of all faiths and cultures.”*

(American Catholic Colleges and Universities Statement, reaffirmed 1/29/17)

