At the Prince of Peace Catholic Newman Center, staff and volunteers work to provide University of Washington students who are Catholic “with a strong faith community that supports them and journeys with them,” the center’s chaplain/director, Father José Pimentel, said in a recent interview.

“The challenge is that they are in a university — the professors, sometimes they challenge the students about their beliefs. Sometimes they do it diplomatically, sometimes aggressively...The students come to college and they’re exposed to so many different ideas. You try to explain to them the distinction between proof and faith. You can’t prove faith; you live your faith. The only proof is maybe the goodness in your life, and how you treat others.”

As for Newman centers generally, Father Pimentel, a native of Portugal, said, “It is a great experiment to bring faith issues to intellectual life — to deepen your understanding of religious issues.” He said he has received a lot of positive, grateful and joyful feedback from students and their parents about the center’s events, programs and activities.

The center is located on 20th Avenue N.E. across from the University of Washington campus. The first center opened on Oct. 9, 1908 and officials today are preparing for next year’s centennial anniversary celebration. It will be celebrated jointly with Blessed Sacrament Parish located on 9th Avenue N.E., which also was established in 1908.

The parish and center were started by Dominican priests to serve the University District community. As a result, the center essentially has been a ministry of the parish, said Christopher Hanzeli, the center’s development director.

“The Prince of Peace Catholic Newman Center is a very vibrant and active Catholic community.” Hanzeli said. “We offer mission trips, alternative spring breaks to serve the poor in our state, spiritual retreats, study sessions, dances, sports, educational lectures, Bible studies, choirs and all the sacraments.”

Up to 800 students visit the center each week. The center is a parish home for students away from home.

**UW Newman Center**

**Founded:** 1908

**Students Served:** Approximately 800 each week

**Chaplain:** Father José Pimentel

**Address:** 4502 20th Ave. N.E., Seattle, WA 98105

**Phone:** (206) 527-5072

**Chaplains since 1991:**

- Rev. Thomas DeMan, OP, 1991
- Rev. Steven Maekawa, OP, 2002
- Rev. Vincent Benoit, OP, 2004
- Rev. Jose Pimentel, OP, 2006

(A complete list of Newman Center directors and associate directors over the past century is available on the archdiocesan Web site, [www.seattlearch.org/progress](http://www.seattlearch.org/progress).)