

The retreats at Assumption have become an integral part of Campus Ministry at Assumption and a meaningful experience for the students who choose to participate in them. The mission of the retreat program is to provide student-centered opportunities for faith development that take place in a communal environment. The retreats are intended to encourage reflection on one's self and one's relationship with God, while helping to nurture new relationships among retreatants. In my ten years at Assumption, I have seen these retreats fulfill their mission time and time again.

Two of the retreats offered, START 1 and START 2, are student-initiated and student-led retreats, which specifically encourage reflection on issues of identity, community, commitment, faith, prayer, discipleship, and the problem of suffering. While START 1 is the entry level retreat opportunity, START 2 takes place over the course of a full weekend at St. Benedict Abbey in Still River, MA ~ a site students have come to love. On both retreats, through student talks and discussion, I hear stories of joy, pain, healing, reconciliation, as well as the change and growth that flow from such life experiences. Assumption students are challenged on these retreats, but they also form lasting friendships and become part of a new community that can, and does, sustain and uplift them throughout their college years. It is a privilege to be a witness to the power of these retreats and to the lives that are changed by them.



