

## The annual Convocation and Student Code signing at the New York UTS campus

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The annual Convocation for the New York UTS campus was held on Wednesday, October 19th in the Oak Room. As the opening ceremony for the academic year, the Convocation provides all new students to sign the Student Code and to be officially welcomed into the UTS “family” as they begin their academic journey.

The Convocation and Student Code signing at UTS is a special time for everyone at the Seminary.

Dr. Winings, VP for Academic Affairs at UTS, explains:

“Why does UTS ask students to sign a student code? It is because as students learn to lead themselves, their families, their communities or their congregations they need to feel what a blessing and privilege it is to do so. A seminary education is not just any type of graduate program. It is a degree program rooted in the ideal of living for the sake of others. God needs men and women who can serve as compass points. God is looking for those who can be good role models. We are faced today with tremendous needs as a nation and as a world. Many people are not sure where to go and what to do with their lives. So they look for role models, but are they the kind of role models that we need? Not always. They might be role models for success in business or the arts, but where are the role models in serving others, the role models in loving unselfishly? Those choosing to engage a theological and ministerial degree program have the aptitude and the desire to serve God’s calling in their life, to learn how to live unselfishly.

“The next step is to set up the environment in which this calling is honed, guided and deepened. That is why students are asked to sign a student code – it is part of this deepening process. The UTS student code reminds each student that as compass points, as role models, they are called to a higher standard. At UTS we are asked to value the life we have been given, the family we may have and the people with whom we work. The student code reminds us of these things and is there to challenge us to be better and to nurture that image of God that is within each of us. Hopefully all of the students recognize it as a new beginning.”

This was the first official event that Dr. Drissa Kone has organized since he became the Director of Student Life in mid-August. In the last couple of months he has been making effort “to know and be known.” Dr. Kone says, “Convocation provides a moment of connectedness. It is a natural way of welcoming new students. Not only the students, but also faculty and staff, agree to stand for the sake of the institution and each other.”



Current new student, George Glass, spoke after the pledge, and reflected upon how his life is coming full circle. From the age of 13 through 21 he was in Catholic seminary. He reminded those gathered of Acts 2:17

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams” KJV

George is finally completing his theological study after retirement from a career in education.

Dr. Elvira Green, the second new student called on to speak during the ceremony said that she could feel that UTS is a family.

“I feel that we are brothers and sisters and care for each other. Since coming to UTS I can feel my spirituality being uplifted.”

UTS recruiter, Joy Theriot, was emcee and did a great job of making everyone feel welcome, included and embraced. Joy shared, "I felt the convocation is a sealed commitment by our students and on the part of UTS the institution. Welcoming them is like celebrating a new addition in our family. UTS is their second home, and this plays an important role in retention. When our students feel comfortable and loved, they don't want to leave.”