

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY  
IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Office of Religious Life

April 15, 2024

I write to reaffirm our commitment to the values of our university, rededicating our communities of faith to the central tenets of morality, care, and discourse that are pillars of our individual and shared traditions. Some of the greatest and most important challenges for our university relate to one of our greatest strengths, namely the profound diversity of the individuals and communities that make up Columbia. Religious communities are familiar with the histories of both schism and reconciliation in the face of disagreement. At our best, we bring our common beliefs in empathy, compassion, forgiveness, and love to bear on the great challenges of our time. Such values and commitments are needed now more than ever.

Amidst the interpersonal discord and trauma of this current academic year, we must bring the common wisdom of our diverse traditions to bear on the needs of the moment. We must acknowledge the ways that we have failed to live up to our ideals. We have allowed our differences to divide us, alienating ourselves from one another and from our shared vision. We must redouble our efforts to affirm that all should feel welcome in university spaces, regardless of doctrine, belief, or intellectual commitments. We must rededicate ourselves to the task of fighting a cynicism which assumes the worst motives in the actions of others. We must employ instead a model of charity, seeking out the good and the true in the views of others with whom we disagree. We must further our efforts to rebuild a foundation of trust, upon which we can work toward reconciliation and renewal.

These are essential tasks related to the values of our academic institution, and they constitute a sacred call from communities of faith and morality throughout the ages. As a faith leader and chaplain, I join my academic and administrative peers from around the university in wholehearted recommitment to restoring the values that will allow us to thrive in the midst of our diversity.

Sincerely,



Rev. Dr. Ian Rottenberg  
Dean of Religious Life  
Columbia University