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Connor Maly prays with men from the Newman Center. Story on Page 2.

MARIAH VETTER



Every Wednesday during the school year, at around 9:45PM, a large group of UND students will arrive at the Grand Forks Applebees smelling of incense. Mariah Vetter will often be among them, placing an order for boneless wings with a side of ranch dressing. She and the dozen or more other students have just come from the 9PM Mass at the Newman Center. "I hope the 9PM Mass

never changes," mused Mariah as she talked with us in late April 2021. "It could maybe be moved to 8, but it needs to be a night Mass. I like the group that goes to Mass and then goes out to eat afterwards." Mariah will be missing that group next year. She's graduating this spring, and she has been at the Newman Center since her first day of college, literally.

"The very first day I came to UND, I came to the Newman Center for Mass with my parents," Mariah recalls. "I signed up for everything." And she's not exaggerating. Four years later, the Mariah preparing to graduate has been: resident and Events Chair at the Newman House, a Bible study participant, a Bible study leader, Service Chair on the Student Board, President of the Student Board (twice), a member of the sacred music team (playing violin), and she

has recently been going through preparations for marriage to Kyle, her fiance. Oh, and she's also ridden in the Bike Race all four years of her college career.

"It was so fun!" she exclaims. "My bike wasn't the greatest... so it took me two maybe two-and-a-half hours to do it. But I rode and talked with Maddie (Class of 2020) the whole way!" Behind all this involvement and activity is -- ultimately -- a love story. And if you want

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Abby S., Clare L. and Mariah V.

The Boys are Back

Every Wednesday morning, our chapel is full, and the kitchen smells like bacon.

Connor Maly talks with Jack Sullivan.

MEN'S ROSARY

It's just after 7AM on a Wednesday and FOCUS missionary Connor Maly is whisking together 36 eggs in an absolutely huge bowl. To his left, freshman Ben



Ben lays out the bacon.

Engstrom is shingling strips of bacon onto a baking sheet. There are easily 50 strips of bacon to lay out.

"This started with just 3 or 4 guys and has just grown since then," says Connor as he pours the whisked eggs into a frying pan. "We had 15 guys one morning, which was awesome." This morning's group is just over half that size. Directly above the Newman Center kitchen are 6 other guys praying the rosary in the chapel. They gather like

this for prayer and a hearty breakfast every Wednesday morning.

"I really think that male fellowship was something missing, especially in campus ministry," noted Connor. "We've really hit the sweet spot, since most guys aren't doing anything at 7AM, so they are free, but we need to get moving because a lot of them have class at 8."

The whole point of this men's group is prayer and fellowship. They take turns leading the mysteries of the rosary. And one of them volunteers each week to come down to help cook in the kitchen. After prayer is over, they gather round for an absolutely huge breakfast: 4.5 eggs and over 6 strips of bacon per plate. When the meal and laughter are over, we don't see any leftovers.

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to see how the grace of God works through the Newman Center, you couldn't get a better look than through the life of Mariah Vetter.

"I knew I wanted my faith to be important, to be a part of my life in college," Mariah recalls of her freshman self. "[Back in high school] Msgr. Richter, my priest in Bismarck at Cathedral, had gathered all the seniors and told us 'The first day you're on campus, go to your Newman Center.' So that's what I did."

Mariah remembers going to "at least 3 of the 5 Welcome Week activities" freshman year. But what really stood out -- what made her want to come back -- was the kindness and attention of Becky, one of the FOCUS missionaries. Mariah recalls: "She just listened to me. And I was, just thinking, 'What do I have to say?' She wants to hear me." In a world where most people are too distracted and too busy to genuinely listen, missionaries and students at the Newman Center work hard to do the opposite: to see and listen to everyone as a son or daughter of God.

But if the beginning of Mariah's life at college was one of warmth and welcome, her sophomore year was one of new challenges.



Jack prays in the chapel.



Celebration of baptism for Jeanne in Easter

“I gained a lot of humility through these experiences,” Mariah sighs as we talk. She’s just walked us through her stressful start to sophomore year. “Coming from high school, I was pretty well-known and involved...achieving a lot of things, so when I came to college I wanted to be an RA for the University.” She interviewed. She waited. She...didn’t get the job. “I was just like...shocked. This was an eye-opening thing because I didn’t get what I wanted.”

Then, a week later, the director of the Newman House asked Mariah, “Hey Mariah? We’ve seen some potential in you. Would you consider applying as an RA at the Newman House?” Mariah saw her second chance. She interviewed. She waited. She...didn’t get the job.

But since Mariah had already made arrangements to live at the Newman House, the house director created the role of “Events Chair” for her. Soon Mariah was organizing weekly game nights and monthly womens’ nights -- a skill she had from her childhood in the large, Catholic, and rather game-friendly Vetter clan. In the end, Mariah recounted how much she ended up enjoying this experience that would have never took place without perseverance in the midst of the unexpected.

Her junior year started strong, but a new challenge came over spring break

when the COVID restrictions hit. This was a time when the Newman Center and the FOCUS Missionary Team got creative and began to continue dozens of Bible studies on-line over Zoom. The accountability of those weekly times online provided for her during those weeks were a great gift as Mariah and other students were able to check in about habits of prayer and living a balanced life. This allowed the Newman Community to continue to give life to students during a sudden transition to studying at home, while navigating a new daily schedule without the benefit of normal community life and conversations.

We asked Mariah: “What’s the warmest memory?” And after a moment, she replied: “It happened at the FOCUS conference, my freshman year, in Chicago. I just remember being in adoration, during the big adoration night and, just, when the monstrance passed by me. I remember seeing the light hitting it. And it was so radiant and bright. I remember feeling instantly at peace about different things going on in my life. I felt and heard Jesus say to me, “I have all the power. I am all the power. And I have the ability to take away your suffering. But I am not going to because I am still in control.” And that brought me so much peace. I remember that feeling and it’s part of my testimony all the time. There was this really hard and painful situation

Dear Newman Alumni and Friends,

While the campus faced many challenges this year, our doors remained open to students, and we were able to connect with so many students and offer inspiration and meaning in these days.

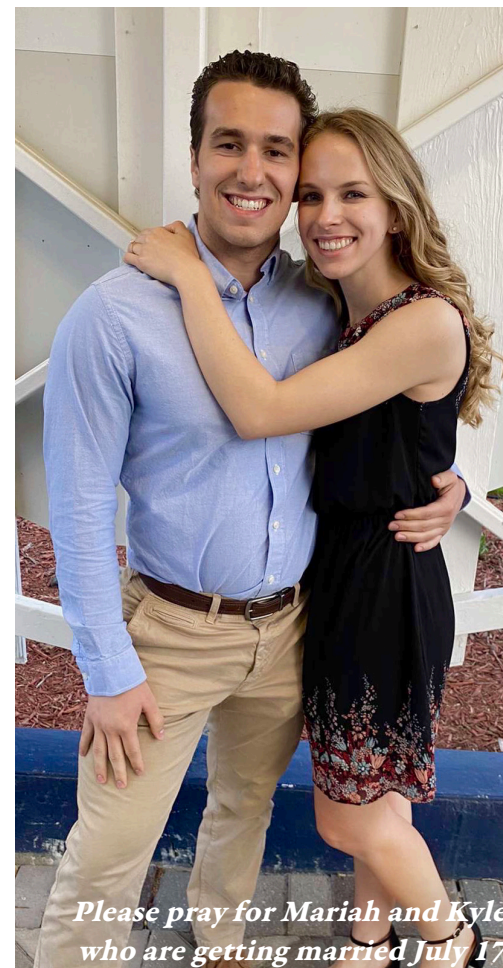
Thank you for all of your support! You really help us ignite the fire of faith on campus, and helped us have a great semester!

Peace of the Lord,

Fr. Luke Meyer, Pastor

in my life, and Jesus was just telling me “I could just stop this. I don’t want it to happen. But I am going to allow it to happen and you will be OK. And that’s been true.”

Mariah’s story is but one of many stories of many students who come to the Newman Center and leave changed forever.



Please pray for Mariah and Kyle who are getting married July 17

NEWMAN HOUSE

What an incredible semester it was!

As the campus continued to open through the Spring Semester, the theme at the Newman House became one of “Togetherness”. With the ability to host larger events again and greater freedom to have community within the house, we were able to have movie nights, host our annual Murder Mystery Party, and share

communal meals once more!

Although we said goodbye to 4 seniors this year, we already have a handful of new women ready to move in this fall, as well as all the returning residents from this past year. Please continue to pray for the women of the Newman House, for their growth in holiness and for Christ-centered relationships that last.



FOCUS



Please welcome our new FOCUS missionary team for the 2021-2022 school year. Connor Maly, who has been on mission here at UND for the past two years, will be the team director in the fall. Joseph, Michaela and Sydney are all 2nd year missionaries from other campuses, and Catherine will be joining us as a 1st year missionary.

Please keep our FOCUS team in your prayers!

- Connor Maly, Team Director
- Sydney Fuller
- Michaela Moriarty
- Joseph Forde
- Catherine Schuth