



# Newman News

St. Thomas Aquinas Newman Center - Spring Semester Newsletter - June 2022



John with his sponsor, Ashan, receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation on Easter Vigil this year.

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## A Peace the World Cannot Give...

### A prodigal son's experience in RCIA

John Ratnaraj, a senior at the University of North Dakota, was not necessarily searching for peace. He certainly was not seeking the Sacraments. And he definitely was not planning to enroll in the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA). All John was looking for was a place with a mechanical engineering program with online options. However, by the time he will graduate this year, John will be walking across the stage with more than his diploma - he has received new grace, new community, and a new peace that the world could never give him.

John was born Catholic and attended Catholic schools. However, he had wandered for some years and had never received the Sacrament of Confirmation. He entered the Newman Center one day, simply because it was the only church on campus. He remarked, "It wasn't a peaceful experience or anything, and I wasn't really looking for peace, but after I left I recognized that there was real peace there." He explained that he couldn't deny that after so many years away, this place, this faith, brought him true peace. He then reached out to Fr. Luke Meyer and was enrolled in RCIA.

John shared that RCIA was so well put together and that Fr. Luke truly invested himself into this work. "He took a lot of time out of his day to educate us and provide us with materials. They were all very thought provoking." Many of the classes provided deeper insight on things he had done... (continued on Page 2)





# RCIA Story

(continued from page 1)

his whole life, like go to Mass.

The class and the resources revealed new and amazing connections of the Old Testament to the Mass that John had never considered before. One resource John particularly appreciated was the Examination of Conscience that was provided. He said, "This examination went deeper." Overall, John's appreciation of the insights he was provided in RCIA could be summed up with his statement, "Ignorance isn't actually bliss. It is much better to not be blind."

Beyond the materials, lessons, and insights, Father Luke and RCIA also provided John with a sponsor who could support and relate to him. Father Luke partnered John with another man, Ashan, from his home country of Sri Lanka. John appreciates this relationship and his sponsor's friendship.

Most importantly, John received the grace of the Sacrament of Confirmation and the joy of returning home to be fully initiated into the faith of his family, his childhood, and of true peace. He's so thankful to the Newman Center and all its donors for "glorifying God by their donations and guiding him in the path of righteousness."



John, back and second from the right, pictured with his sponsor on his left, Ashan, along with the other RCIA participants.

*"Ignorance isn't actually bliss. It is much better to not be blind."*

- John Ratnaraj

## A Message from Fr. Luke Meyer



This spring semester has been full of life and fruitfulness. Whether it's our RCIA Class, Bible studies, mission trips, or many students stopping by for adoration, my heart as a spiritual father is full many days as I see many young people's lives being touched by the truth and love of Jesus.

I want to share some news and my gratitude in general for your support over the past years as I am moving this summer after Bishop Folda assigned me to a new parish. Starting on June 29th, I will be the Pastor of Sts. Anne and Joachim in Fargo. Fr. Chris Markman will be the new Pastor here.

I have enjoyed the past seven years at the Newman Center immensely, and will miss the life and community here quite a bit. It's a big change ahead, and I am grateful for your prayers.

Peace of the Lord Jesus,

*Luke D. Meyer*

# Bible Studies on Campus

Bible Studies provide a safe community for each student

It's a new stage of life in a new town, with new friends and new opportunities, responsibilities, and dreams. Everything is so new when you are a freshman in college! What is a freshman to do?

Seneca Vetter, a junior at UND, studying medical lab science, had an idea her freshman year - join a Bible study!

Bible studies are a great way to plug in, make friends, and grow in your faith at the University of North Dakota's Newman Center.

Seneca shared that as a freshman she knew a Bible study was her ticket to a group of women that would share her values and relate to her struggles and joys.

Now, three years later, Seneca still attends a Bible study of her own but also leads a study of girls who all come from different backgrounds and faith experiences. She shared that "It's just such a great way to know these other women on a deeper level."

Seneca takes her role as a leader seriously and prays for her bible study. Whether it be her three holy hours a week, before daily Mass, or just a random prayer time, she devotes the last five minutes of every prayer to praying for her bible study women.

Bible study leaders also use their prayer time to ask for strength to say the right things, and choose the right materials that will reach their group and draw them closer to Jesus. Seneca explained how valuable this time together can be, "Maybe Bible study is the only time they can give more during the week to grow spiritually; it's such a good chance to have good, in depth discussions that are hard to have elsewhere sometimes."

She also explained that her study is a safe place for students, "It's comforting and relaxing, and even motivating to watch others grow in our study as well." Seneca explained that in studies students are safe to struggle, ask questions, get excited about things, and just share life and experiences.

Overall, Seneca feels that Bible studies and the Newman Center have provided her with so many experiences with Christ. She is so glad she chose to seek a study her freshman year and knows she is a different person three years later because of it.

*I don't know what I would do without the Newman Center!*

– Seneca Vetter





**bikeRace**  
April 30th, 2022

<b>26</b> Riders	<b>565</b> Miles	<b>\$43,693</b> Raised	<b>263</b> Donors
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**Newman Students logging miles near the flooded Red River.**

The annual UND Bike Race, this year on April 30, 2022, is held as a fundraiser and opportunity to ignite the fire of faith at the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks. While this year's Bike Race encountered significant rain, strong winds, and cold temperatures, it couldn't keep the generosity from overflowing! It was quickly converted to a "distance ride" with participants logging miles indoors or outdoors in their home areas. Twenty-six riders logged 565 miles in honor of the 263 donors who contributed a total of \$43,693. THANK YOU to everyone who helped ensure the mission of the Newman Center continues to flourish.