



Newman News

St. Thomas Aquinas Newman Center - Summer Newsletter - May 2023

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Pictured, 2023 Celebration of Holy Thursday Mass



Pastor's Corner

A Message from Fr. Chris Markman

Dear Friends of the Newman Center,

It's certainly been quite the year of transition around here at undCatholic. I arrived in June to find out that we were without both a Focus Team Director and a House Director for the Newman House. In December our House Director resigned and we put in place a part-time temporary House Director, Mary Kaye Schneibel, and part-time Kitchen Manager, Lena Granger. We hired Deacon Curtis Kaufman as our Development Director in January. March 17 was Jess Kuznia's last day here as our Office Manager. Jess is moving on to focus on her graduate studies. I especially want to thank Jess for the 8 years that she served here in our office. Her sacrifices, efforts, and faithful presence helped bring the Newman Center to where it is today. We can't thank her enough for that! We currently have two part-time ladies covering her position, Jordan Nichols and Diane Jilek. Our new full-time Office Manager, Gabrielle Houle, will start

May 8. Michaela "Mick" Moriarty, one of our FOCUS Missionaries, will become our new Newman House Director starting on June 1.

So, as I said, it has been quite the year of transition. At times it has been a real challenge and frustration for me, being new here myself still. I'm very thankful to everyone who helped to make these transitions as smooth as possible. And, in the Lord's time and in His providence, He is slowly forming a team here at Newman that I think, with His grace and help, will do great things to continue our mission here on campus at UND.

Even in the midst of all these transitions, the Lord continues to work in the hearts of the students, faculty and staff here and beyond, as you can see from the stories in this newsletter. The support that you give us through your prayers and financial donations makes all of that possible. Please continue to pray for us here at undCatholic as Jesus continues to do great things!

God bless,

Fr. Chris Markman
Fr. Chris Markman
Pastor



Welcome, Deacon Curtis Kaufman!



Thank you, Jess Kuznia!



Welcome, Gabrielle Houle!



A Life Changing Year

Courtney Werner, Sophomore, Elementary Education

"There have been so many changes in a year it just blows my mind", says Courtney Werner as she explains how life at college, especially at the Newman Center, has changed her life. A sophomore education major, Courtney reflects on her journey to UND and the Newman Center with awe and amazement. "Freshman year, I didn't even feel comfortable going to Mass by myself," she admits. But when invited to attend Mass with a teammate from the track team, Courtney came and kept coming. Sunday Mass soon became daily Mass, then also FOCUS bible study and other social activities. "Once I got involved with bible study and made friends, I discovered Jesus in the Eucharist and what that really meant." The Newman Center has become a home to her, where people truly care about each other. Seeing joyfulness in others, Courtney shares her desire. "I want to have that happiness from the Lord. Life is really hard sometimes, and it is good to have something constant when nothing else in this life is constant." In her own words, "ready to boldly pursue the Lord", Courtney is now sharing her faith by leading a bible study for her teammates and participating in as many Newman Center activities as she can.

"The Newman Center has genuinely changed my life and the way that I live. What I have learned [at Newman] is more beneficial than a college degree. It impacts my eternity and how I can bring others to the Lord as well. "



Liturgical Music, Creating Beauty at Mass

Nathan Peasland - Graduate Student, Master of Accountancy

This year we were excited to welcome Nathan Peasland to the staff in the now official role of Director of Sacred Music. Nathan is a graduate student working toward his Master of Accountancy degree. He had been helping with music at the Newman Center in a volunteer capacity for the previous two years.

Nathan's love for music began in third grade singing in the Grand City Children's Choir, for which he later became a student assistant while in high school. He also learned the clarinet, the piano and then the organ, which he now claims as his primary instrument.

Nathan has come to see liturgical music as his calling. He has chosen to use the gifts God has given to him in glorifying the Lord. "The goal of music is to create beauty at Mass and to bring people to God", Nathan says, "I want people to learn to pray through music and through that beauty." According to St. Augustine, "those who sing pray twice". Whether students are singing in the congregation or in one of the choirs that serve on various Feasts and Holy Days, the music ministry at Newman is helping them to worship God and grow in their faith.

"The goal of music is to create beauty at Mass and to bring people to God."

Thanks to the generosity of UND supporters, UND students can encounter our Lord in new and beautiful ways at the Newman Center, like through the sacred music ministry of the newly hired, Nathan Peasland.

The Greater Importance of Newman Centers Today

Father James Ermer, Former Student and Pastor

Fr. James Ermer's first time at St. Thomas Aquinas Parish and Newman Center was as a student during a very tumultuous time in history for college campuses across the country. He remembers St. Thomas Aquinas at that time mostly as just the place he went for Sunday Mass. "Catholic Newman Centers were not as active as they are today," he says. After graduating with a degree in Radio and TV Journalism and being commissioned 2nd Lieutenant in the army as a participant in the ROTC program, Fr. Ermer served two years at the end of the Vietnam War in Germany before returning to join the seminary.

The next time Fr. Ermer was to return to the Newman Center was as Assistant Pastor from 1982-1984 and then as Pastor until 1991. During this time at the Newman Center there was great growth in college centers to encourage active participation in community through education and social activities. Peer Ministers worked and lived at St. Thomas Aquinas actively evangelizing and inviting Catholic students and encouraging others to come to inquiry classes, a precursor to RCIA to become Catholic. Fr. Ermer would intentionally take a class on campus each semester to become familiar to the faculty and students. This would also get him invited to speak during lectures and asked to join committees on campus which ensured a "Catholic voice on campus". It was also during Fr. Ermer's time that the great Bike Race began. He points out that in his time Grand Forks remained undefeated, in a much more difficult race than happens today!

Fr. James Ermer treasures his second time at the Newman Center as some of the best years of his priesthood. He also sees the growth in Newman Centers across the country as a step in the right direction for the evangelization of our culture as we again see ourselves in a very politically and socially charged time. "Newman Centers are a critical junction in a kid's life where they become intelligent in their faith. During college it is invaluable for students to be in a community where they see how faith works in real life." Students graduate and start thinking about real issues, maturing issues. Fr. Ermer says, "the Newman Center is going to be in my will, it is a great place to make an investment. It is a great return in these times to have students who become FOCUS Missionaries and great moms and dads, involved in their parish lives."



"During college it is invaluable for students to be in a community where they see how faith works in real life."



Giving Hearts Day - Update!

Thank You

Funds from Giving Hearts Day support the many spiritual and catechetical programs of UNDCatholic, like Bible studies, our FOCUS Missionaries, and the First Timers Retreat. Funds also go toward our Student Board Activities like axe throwing, bowling, and other parties. These activities help to foster a sense of community among the Newman Center. Thanks to YOUR Giving Hearts Day support, together we are igniting the fire of faith in our students here at the University of North Dakota.

\$99,792
Total Raised

\$49,896
Donated

\$49,896
Matched



239
Donors



\$24,000
Largest Donor