

Religious identity on campus

COOL
Times

from
Rev. Brian Cool



Lately, I've been asked more and more about the state of religion on campuses today. I find it to be a lively discussion on a matter pretty close to my heart, and a question that certainly piques my interest.

Based on personal conversation with students, my observation is that those who desire to experience and express their religious identity must do so in a broader environment that sees the person of faith as unique in contrast to the norm. That is, they do so in a growing secular world that lacks the language to understand religious life.

Fortunately, Newman is a strong community that supports students' Catholic identity every day. Having been here for so many years, it's difficult for me

to imagine how students would confront this challenge if Newman wasn't a strong, safe, and faith-filled community on campus.

When I speak to many alumni and parents like you, the first question they want to know is, "How is the Newman Community doing?" Of course, usually they follow up with some wonderful reflection about a chaplain or program they attended at RIT Newman. I respond with the memories we are creating for students today, and I'm confident that they will be able to recall the fondness and joy in their hearts from their experiences with the students and Mary Lou Knapp (Campus Minister) of the RIT Newman Community.

The students in this newsletter are examples of the lives we change. With your support today, we will be able to expand and engage more students with more programs.

Peace,

Fr. Brian Cool

Newman By The Numbers

CURRENT STUDENT, PARENT, ALUMNI,
AND LOCAL RESIDENT DATABASE: **1670**

BUDGET: **\$63,500.00** CHOIRS: **2**

COMMUNITY SERVICE PARTICIPANTS: **20**

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS: **8** STUDENTS AT MASS: **250**

LITURGICAL MINISTERS: **30**



Newman COMMUNITY AT ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

40 Lomb Memorial Drive, Rochester, NY 14623 Phone: 585.475.5172

The Newman Community is a year-round campus ministry within the Roman Catholic Diocese of Rochester, New York, serving the students, faculty, staff and local residents to Rochester Institute of Technology

www.rit.edu/studentaffairs/religion/catholiccampusministry.php



Mass Times

Sunday: 10:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.
At the Allen Chapel

Semester Events

- Adoration of Blessed Sacrament
- Bible Study
- Community Service
- Communion Services
- Confirmation Classes
- Game Nights
- Movie Nights
- RCIA
- Retreats

RITreats

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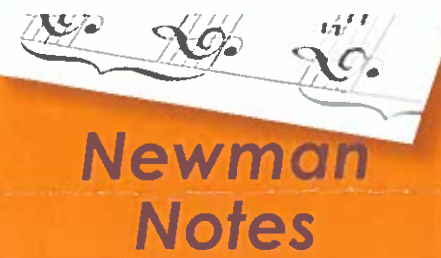
Newman community is like my second family." The sense of community she found in Newman turned out to be her favorite part of her experience on the retreat, and now she considers Newman "a home away from home." She found that "retreats are . . . especially important for newcomers because it is a great way to establish yourself in this wonderful community."

Kassandra urges others to take time out of their busy schedules to attend at least one retreat because it can be life changing. "It makes you appreciate everything a little more, and see things a little differently," she says. "I would definitely recommend this experience to all Newman Students."



R.I.T.
Newman
Community

A PUBLICATION OF THE CATHOLIC NEWMAN COMMUNITY AT ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY



Alexandra (Xandra) Harrison
Major: Computer
Engineering
Class: 2017
Home:
Ellicott City, MD



Xandra is the choir director for the traditional mass at 10:00 am on Sunday mornings. Before her current position, she was a cantor at her church back home in Ellicott City, Maryland, as well as a member of several choirs. "I love music and find it to be one of the best ways for me to connect with God," she says. "My goal is to share that experience with others."

Xandra chooses music for the Newman choir by carefully studying the readings for a given Sunday. "I go back and read them a second time to formulate a general theme or to pick out important key verses," she says. "I use the theme and the verses which stood out to me, and select songs which are complementary to the readings." She also tries to select a variety of songs, keeping a balance between traditional music and slightly newer pieces.

Some of Xandra's favorite religious composers are David Haas and Marty Haugen. "I don't usually try to se-

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Campus Minister Mary Lou leads a retreat to Mendon Ponds.

RITreat Reflection: Afraid No More

Kassandra Rivera
Major: Biomedical Science
Class: 2016
Home: Queens, NY

Kassandra was apprehensive before attending her first retreat (the Mendon Retreat) at Newman. She recalls the campus minister, Mary Lou, encouraging students at the end of a Sunday Mass to sign up for the Mendon Retreat. But growing up as a non-practicing Catholic, Kassandra didn't know what to expect. "All I knew was that the retreat involved food, games, and prayer," she says. Of course, the food and games caught Kassandra's attention, but the prayer was something she wasn't as comfortable with. Fortunately, "It ended up being beautiful," she says. "The songs were fun and lively, and it was just something that reminded me of why I am here."

The bigger fear Kassandra had,

though, was that she wouldn't know anyone on the retreat, and she was afraid that she would find herself alone most of the time. "But when I got there," she says, "I was so happy because I met so many people who I consider friends now, and it made me realize that the

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Second RIT Newman retreat to Letchworth State Park.

Making Our Choices

We all make choices—some with little thought, others with true discernment. Admittedly, I don't remember discerning many times in my life, but I will say that I turned to God and Mary for a couple major decisions. The first was to go back to teaching in Catholic schools while my children were still young. I trusted that Jesus and Mary would look after my children, so long as I offered my services to the Catholic Church. The second was the decision to resign my high school math teaching position to finish my Masters in Theology in 2001. When I turned to Mary and asked her for help, the answer came back loud and clear: Yes! Doing so eventually allowed me to serve as Pastoral Associate at an area church for 2 ½ years before going back to the Aquinas Institute, a school I hold very dear, to teach theology for 3 ½ years.

These are two of the times that I consciously turned to God for direction, and the outcome is still paying off. In retrospect, it is very clear to me that God was preparing me to be Campus Minister for the Newman Community all my



Musings
from **Mary Lou**
By Mary Lou Knapp

adult life.

It's not something I consciously chose, but suffice it to say that I was a logical choice to fill in as "Interim," because of

the way in which God had directed my life.

My goal is to encourage the Catholic students on the RIT campus to be ready and willing to commit to their faith in the many opportunities that are available to them through what the Newman Community offers, and to continue to commit to that faith in the choices they make throughout their college years and beyond. I have never seen stronger faith than what the young people are bringing to this school each year, and amazingly, each year the faith and commitment of these students seem to be stronger than the year before.

Congratulations to the parents who have instilled such strong faith values and traditions in their children, to the church parishes who have helped foster their faith, and to these young people themselves who are witnessing to their faith every day in their lives and in their actions. Many thanks to all who are contributing in any way so that Newman can continue to grow and thrive on this campus. Your support and prayers for us are greatly appreciated.

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lect a song based on its composer," she says, "but more often than not, if I select a relatively modern piece, it is by one of them." She occasionally chooses music sung in other languages—sometimes songs in Latin like "Ubi Caritas" or songs in Spanish such as "Pan de Vida." She chooses these songs in particular because "people are more familiar with the words used in these verses these songs than others."

One of Xandra's favorite liturgical seasons is Advent, when she's able to draw from a wide variety of music expressing the prayers and feelings of the season. "We will definitely do some traditional songs, like 'O Come, O Come Emmanuel,' and we will also do one of my personal favorites, 'People Look East,' " she says. As always,

the songs are chosen to complement the readings and the rest of the Mass. "Although the music is important," she adds, "the Mass itself, the word of God, and the Liturgy of the Eucharist should always be the focal point. The music should never distract from it, only supplement."

Jake Saxton
Major: Computer
Engineering
Class: Second Year
Home:
Concord, NH



Jake Saxton is the Music Director of the 5:00 PM Mass at Newman. His responsibilities for the group include everything from choosing songs, sing-

ing and performing on guitar, and also leading weekly choir practices.

When asked about his music selections Jake says "I usually try to make my selections of music relate in some way to the readings." He especially tries to use the themes from the weekly Gospel reading.

Although music directors Jake and Xandra use the same rationale for their musical selections, they prefer music from different genres. While the 10:00 am Mass is known for their traditional selections, you will find selections from the praise and worship genre, such as Chris Tomlin, the Casting Crowns and Matt Maher, at the 5:00 pm Mass.

Jake performs each Sunday with a drummer, bass player, pianist, and a choir.

International Student Spotlight

Kathleen Cuello Villar
Major : MS (Interdisciplinary)
Professional Studies
Class: Graduate Student
Home: Azua, Dominican Republic

Kathleen Cuello Villar is a graduate student from the Dominican Republic, pursuing a Masters in Professional Studies. She grew up in Azua, a town on the south central coast of the island. "The DR, as we call it, is a small country," she says. "Anywhere on the island is an hour or less away from the Caribbean Sea. Some people who live there think of it as Paradise because it's so beautiful."

She attended Catholic schools back home while her family instilled in her a love for faith. "Not everyone in the DR practices their faith," she says, "and the schools don't always guide their students in the ways of the Church." Because of this, Kathleen believes that few graduate students who come to the States attend Mass. "I was blessed to get my strong faith from my family back home," she says.

Kathleen began attending Mass as soon as she began classes and was eventually invited to become a lector and a Eucharistic minister. "I especially enjoy being able to do a Sunday reading in Spanish," she says, "as there are many other Spanish speaking people who come to Mass at Newman."

Additionally, she performs community service with the Newman Community at a Spanish-speaking Church in Roches-



ter, Holy Apostles.

"Most importantly," though, Kathleen says, "Newman has given me the opportunity to serve God while helping others." The community has helped me kindle my passion for my faith, and has made the transition to life in the States easier. It's given me the opportunity to meet new people and form friendships with other Catholic students whose faith is important to them as well. "Something as simple as 'Game Night' with other Newman people makes me grateful and helps me to feel like I have a new

home," she says.

Her favorite memory with Newman so far is the trip to Letchworth State Park, in which a group of twelve students walked from the Middle Falls to the Lower Falls. "We didn't know it was going to be such a long walk," she says, "but it was an amazing experience to feel so in contact with God's creations, and the group I was with really bonded. We talked, laughed, took many pictures, and gave thanks to God for the beauty. It was wonderful. I had never experienced anything like it before."

Bible Study at NTID

In an effort to better assist our deaf and hard-of-hearing students to grow in their understanding of Scripture, a Bible Study class was started last September and held on the NTID campus. It was a conscious effort to better assist our members with special needs. Through no fault of their own, their understandings of the Mass, Sacraments, prayers, and other rituals of the Church are sparse at best, and it quickly became apparent that what many of these young people are missing is a firmer foundation in their

Catholic faith and traditions.

For this reason, the class now focuses on Catholic theology and traditions, with an emphasis on understanding what happens at Mass, as well as other Sacraments. Scripture will focus on the weekly Sunday readings from the Lectionary, which will be read and discussed. We also serve pizza.

The approach already seems to be working well. Stay tuned!