

Meet Our Staff



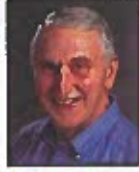
Fr. Brian Cool
Director of UR
& RIT Newman



Nora Bradbury-Haehl
Associate
Director



Kristin Leachhorn
Campus Minister



Mike Vernarelli
Campus Minister



Jimmy Miller
Business Manager

Meet Our Student Leadership



Eryk White
President



Andrew Carbonari
VP Internal



Jess Edwards
VP External



Danielle Smith
Treasurer



Jack Ryan
Secretary



Meghan Barker
Retreats Chair



Ian LaForest
Liturgy Chair



Rachel Ramsdell
Agape Latte Chair



Taode Ogden
Small Groups Chair



Cassidy Kress
Service Chair



Anthony Roohan
Tabling Chair

Our EBoard is Working Hard

This semester our student leaders planned and lead two different retreat opportunities: Eve Away and Kairos. They put together volunteer trips to Bethany House and Nativity Preparatory Academy, organized Newman Hangouts to foster fellowship within our community, and put on the latest installment of our Agape Latte speaker series. All this plus recruiting, training, rehearsing, and scheduling all of our volunteers—musicians, lectors, sacristans, and ministers of hospitality—for Sunday Masses!



Students attended a day-long Kairos retreat at the Mercy Spirituality Center with Fr. Bob Kennedy.



The choir practices for a Sunday mass in the Allen Chapel.



Alex Geiser and Katy Nguyen (pictured at lectern) along with other RIT students (photo above), participated in Taizé Prayer at U of R.



Students get to know each other during an ice-breaker game at the Newman Hangout after 5pm mass.



After helping clean up at the Mercy Spirituality Center, students enjoyed some down time (and snacks of course!)



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Notes from Nora

Nora Bradbury-Haehl

Director of RIT Newman

This first semester for me at RIT has been a season of miracles. Witnessing the joy of students as they returned to campus and of those arriving for the first time, watching as they got involved in leadership, small groups, mass, and service has been an incredible experience! Encountering these students and the strength of their connection to RIT Newman, to one another, and to their faith, I am so grateful to be here and so inspired by what I get to see every day. I wish that everyone could see the miracle of the young church as it is on this campus: hands on, all in, let's do it.

It may not be walking on water or parting the sea but there are little miracles happening here all the time. Because of you and your support, God is at work in and through this community. On our recent retreat at Mercy Spirituality Center "Gifted & Grateful" we talked about loving God with our heads, hearts, and hands and all the different ways we can live out our faith. It was a perfectly crisp fall day for our prayer walk with Fr. Bob Kennedy through beautiful Highland Park. We walked and talked and committed ourselves

to learning more, growing in love for God and neighbor, and putting our gifts at the service of both the community here and the wider human family.

Last month we brought a group to the University of Rochester's Taizé Prayer and experienced the beauty of song, scripture, and silence in their candlelit chapel. This month when we went again one of our student lectors read at the service and one of our cantors sang. Now our students are talking about starting our own Taizé prayer here at RIT!

Tiger Stripes Ministry has begun. Our student workers Cassidy Kress and Taode Ogden are organizing projects and signing students up to

I wish that everyone could see the miracle of the young church on this campus.

tutor middle schoolers at Nativity School and help at the Sisters of St. Joseph Neighborhood health center for the poor and uninsured.

Students are coming into the church through RCIA—the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults—which is going and growing here at RIT Newman. We have four participants and five student leaders joining Campus Minister Mike Vernarelli every week to learn and share about our Catholic faith. You can read more inside about all that! In some ways I suppose it is all kind of "normal." Young adults gathering, connecting, caring for each other, seeking to make a difference.

But seen through the eyes of faith, the wonder of it all really strikes you. Sure it's not walking on water, but the everyday miracles of the RIT Newman Catholic Community going on all around us are a wonderful confirmation of the work we are all doing together. Being part of the group of people that helps create, strengthen, and sustain this community of faith—along with you and all those who support us—is an inspiration. Watching students go from being strangers to friends and watching them move from being tentative followers in our faith community to becoming strong leaders—has been a gift. And yes, a miracle.

Nora



Students volunteered a Saturday morning to help the Sisters of Mercy clean up for winter at the Mercy Spirituality Center.



Senior, Meg Barker, gave a witness talk during the first retreat of the semester; a successful night she also headed the planning of.

Transformational Community

Not every campus parish is lucky enough to have community members who aren't students but RIT Newman has a wonderful history of longtime community members, alumni, staff, and faculty who belong to and support our community in transformational ways.



Mike Vernarelli

Community Member & Campus Minister

I am a campus minister (volunteer) in my sixth year. Since I retired from teaching here at RIT two and a half years ago I have gotten more and more involved. I direct our RCIA program, help with Sunday masses and other programming, and am an advisor to our Eboard. It's a blessing to be working with Nora and Kristen. I love the feeling of warmth and community. The students, our ministry team led by Nora, and our visiting priests really care for and support each other.

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I love the feeling of warmth and community.
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Time and time again I have heard from students how Newman is a home away from home for them. I continue to support the RIT Newman Catholic Community because this is what God is calling me to do. It's my vocation, where I share my gifts of time, talent and treasure. My faith life is strengthened and nourished by the examples of faith expressed by the young people. God's work is being done here. But as Teresa of Avila said, "God has no hands or feet." So, we have to do it.



Lou & Nannette Burrows

Community Members

We have been going to RIT Newman for 45 years and consider it our "home" community. We have lived through many changes in this community from attending Sunday mass in Ingle Auditorium (setting the altar up on the stage), to attending mass in the RIT Interfaith Chapels, then even observing mass in the RIT chapel remotely during this covid-19 pandemic. We both have B.S. degrees in Chemistry, M.S. degrees in Statistics, and retired from Xerox (with 75+ years of service between us) and have found this engineering academic environment to be comfortable. Supporting RIT Newman through the years has given us many opportunities to use our talents from providing food for the students (lasagnas, stews, soup, cookies, ...) to procuring things (we like to shop) for the students to give to those in need as they provide charities (e.g. sanitary items for the homeless, contents for the "Christmas Shoe Boxes", etc.) and community services in the Rochester area and beyond.

Participating as an RIT Newman member has given us many opportunities to watch and be with students through their college years and sharing in their successes and challenges until their graduation and sometimes even after, when they return to RIT as alumni. Watching students as they progress through their academic programs has given us many rewarding experiences. Hearing the students describe their projects and challenges allows us to be current with the latest technical developments.

Student Spotlight
Cass Kress



Year: Second

Major: New Media Design

Hometown: Webster, New York

How did you get connected with Newman in the first place?

I overheard that there were Catholic Masses offered at RIT only to find out it was so much more than that!

What is your role now and why are you still involved?

Currently I am the Community Service outreach Chair for our EBoard and a Tiger Stripes Volunteer worker.

What would you tell someone who was thinking about getting involved with Newman?

I would say 100% go for it! At Newman you'll find your home away from home while bonding with our tight knit Newman family while also growing stronger in your faith.

Student Spotlight
Ian LaForest



Year: Second

Major: 3D Animation

Hometown: Cleveland, Ohio

How did you get connected with Newman in the first place?

Email from some higher up.

What is your role now and why are you still involved?

Liturgy Chair, because I want to live out my faith at college.

What would you tell someone who was thinking about getting involved with Newman?

DO IT.

RCIA @ Newman

RCIA Update

RCIA is underway again this fall. Catechumens Chase Lear and Carson Thomas will be welcomed as members of the Church at the Easter Vigil mass and candidates Moni Chavez and Xavier Wellington will receive the sacrament of Confirmation. Five student members of the RIT Newman Catholic Community and campus minister Mike Vernarelli comprise the RCIA team. In addition to weekly meetings, the RIT RCIA community participates in Intercollegiate RCIA Zoom presentations with U of R and St. John Fisher.

The weekly meetings are in a seminar format where discussions center around a particular topic such as "Revelation and Creation" and "Who is Jesus?" Team member Tom Pawlak states, "I love the open and honest

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The conversations we have in the group spark new questions for me and always leave me wanting to learn more.
”

conversations we have. It is always a great learning experience, since everyone has a different perspective." In a short time, the group has come together as a Small Christian Community. Julia LaFond puts it this way: "Going to RCIA has helped me go deeper into my faith

and find a community to walk with here at RIT. The conversations we have in the group spark new questions for me and always leave me wanting to learn more."

Rachel Ramsdell went through RCIA last year and was confirmed in April. Now she's back as a team member. "RCIA was my gateway into the Church. I came in with no religious background, and ended up confirmed with a basic knowledge of the faith. I learned a lot of great things and I am honored to be back as a leader, learning even more." Future discussion topics include Catholic morality, the Beatitudes, life issues, and much more. "I've been a catechist for 25 years," Vernarelli adds. "And being part of this RCIA community is one of the greatest faith experiences for me."

Student Spotlight
Taode Ogden



Year: Second

Major: Game Design & Development

Hometown: Staunton, Virginia

How did you get connected with Newman in the first place?

When I started freshman year, I really wanted to pursue my faith, especially with my new freedom on campus. I quickly found RIT Newman on my own and here I am!

What is your role now and why are you still involved?

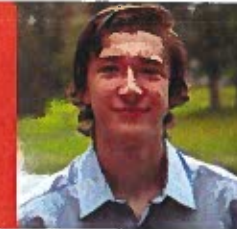
Currently, I am a student worker who helps organize campus events and service opportunities for Newman. I am also the Small Groups Chair, responsible for coordinating student gatherings for spiritual enrichment and

fellowship. Newman has been a great support for me throughout my time at RIT and I want to continue giving back.

What would you tell someone who was thinking about getting involved with Newman?

I always felt like the odd one out in both my life and faith, yet at Newman I always feel like I have a place. And so will you!

Student Spotlight
Thomas Pawlak



Year: Second

Major: Computing and Information Technology

Hometown: Clarence, New York

How did you get connected with Newman in the first place?

I started coming to Mass at Newman my freshman year, it was the most convenient

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Newman has been a great support for me...
”

option, and I decided to start coming to events and getting involved.

What is your role now and why are you still involved?

I am on the Liturgy Committee, as well as an RCIA leader, and I'm still involved because I've really fit into the community, and I get to feel like I'm actually making a difference in people's faith journeys.

What would you tell someone who was thinking about getting involved with Newman?

Absolutely get involved, there are plenty of ways to use your own talents and skills to help out Newman, and both the community and leadership are very, very open and welcoming. If that seems too daunting, just start attending Hangouts and other events and get to know us!