

Cool Thoughts

The Mission of My Life: The Successes of Newman



In the spirit of St. John Henry Newman's prayer, "The Mission of My Life," the Catholic Newman Community at the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) continues to embrace its mission with unwavering dedication.

This commitment to serving the

spiritual needs of over 2,500 Catholic students is led by a dedicated and gifted staff including Kristen Smith, Sr. Leandra Kosmoski, SSJ, Mike Vernarelli, PhD., and Fr. Bob Kennedy.

Newman's prayer eloquently states, **"God has created me to do Him some definite service. He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I have my mission."**

This mission is the guiding force behind the remarkable accomplishments of Newman is just the first few weeks of the semester:

Increased Mass Attendance: The community has witnessed a remarkable 20% increase in Sunday mass attendance from the previous year, and continues to draw 30 attendees for adoration and daily mass.

Sacrament of Reconciliation: Over 20 students actively seek the Sacrament of Reconciliation monthly on campus and off; with over 45 during Advent and Lenten seasons.

Pastoral Care: The staff providing endless care, support, compassion for a wide range of needs including prayer, dealing with mental health issues, support for personal and family concerns and even transportation to the hospital, airport and train station!

Leadership Development: Over 50 students have received training as Lectors, Eucharistic Ministers, and Student Leaders, fostering leadership and service within the community.

Spiritual Growth: New initiatives, such as 'Bible Study With Fr. Bob' and 'Big Newman/Little Newman;' Kairos Retreats and Eve Aways attract over 75 students seeking to nurture their faith and building strong bonds of friendship.

Community Engagement: The community offers numerous opportunities for service to the vulnerable in our community, social gatherings, and meals led by a dedicated group of 45 student leaders.

This success hasn't gone unnoticed off campus. The RIT Roar Day was a ROARING success, raising an impressive \$12,310 to support Catholic life. This achievement showcases the vital role of alumni and parents in supporting the community. A special acknowledgment to **Mike Vernarelli** and **Mark Saunders '18** for providing a matching gift and inspiring over 60 donors to contribute to this noble cause. (see story inside)

In the spirit of St. John Henry Newman's prayer, Newman remains fully committed to fulfilling our divine mission, providing spiritual guidance, support, and a sense of belonging to all students. The successes of this semester and that to come is testament to our students and the love of their Catholic faith. There is a lot more Newman wants to accomplish and will with God's grace. Thank you for your unwavering support of our faith and our mission.

Peace,

Rev. Brian C. Cool
Director



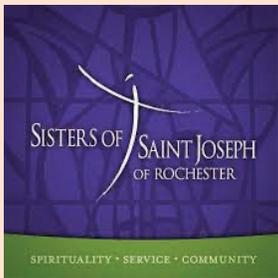
The Basilian Human Development Assistance Grant Received

The Newman Community at Rochester Institute of Technology proudly announces itself as a recipient of of \$2,500 The Basilian Human Development Assistance Grant. The organization expresses gratitude for the generous support, recognizing the grant's potential to make a significant impact on the Tiger Stripes Crossway Program. This servant leadership development program aims to serve and



care for individuals on the margins of the society, while simultaneously promoting generational sustainability. Embracing the words of St. Francis of Assisi, the program seeks to be “instruments of peace” and justice in the community. This program holds positive effects on both the student volunteers and the diverse marginalized community in Rochester.

The Sisters of Saint Joseph (SSJ) Grant Received



Aligning with the mission of the Sisters of Saint Joseph in Rochester, The Newman Community is happy to announce itself

to be a recipient of a \$6,000 SSJ grant that will go to support the Tiger Stripes Crossways Program, here at RIT. In partnership with the YesPa character education program; the Crossways program aims to provide character education, mentorship, and exposure to higher education

opportunities to impoverished young people whilst enhancing character, passion, and social engagement; bringing about growth in both spirituality and service among participants.

The Sisters of Saint Joseph of Rochester, whose mission is spirituality, service and community, engage in variety of ministries to fulfil their mission. They have always been involved in education (at all levels) and have served not only as administrators, teachers, and counselors; but have also made significant contributions in healthcare and social services. Founded in 1867 to meet the

educational needs of immigrant children in Rochester, the Sisters of Saint Joseph, living in prayer, simplicity, and service, now work closely with lay partners and other organizations to address the needs of the times and respond to changing needs of the society. Newman again is thrilled to be a partner with the Sisters!

Want to match either of these grants, or nominate Newman outreach for a company, parish or personal grant opportunity? Please contact Fr. Cool at bcool@admin.rochester.edu.





A ROARING SUCCESS

#1 Among Clubs, Organizations

#6 Among All Schools And Departments

Newman Is The Tiger Cub Who Roared!

The incredible success of ROAR Day, with donations being matched dollar for dollar up to \$12,310, has been nothing short of extraordinary.

Thank you to **Michael Vernarelli, Mark Saunders '18**, and the over 60 donors who made a significant impact on the lives of hundreds of students and our Catholic ministry this past September 28-29th!

With you we are building a transformational ministry shaping the future.

Also, a heartfelt thank you to Newman's own, TV Personality, Tech expert, and Singer-Songwriter **Katie Linendoll '05**, whose video production and inspiring message played a pivotal role in our success.



Katie - RIT - Newman

RIT Newman Catholic Community

STUDENT CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS LEADERBOARD

RANK	STUDENT CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS	RAISED
1	CATHOLIC NEWMAN COMMUNITY	\$12,310.00
2	GAME SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA	\$5,169.69
3	SAILING CLUB	\$3,155.00
4	RIT ESPORTS	\$3,045.01
5	FORMULA CAR SAE PROJECT	\$2,775.00

TOP AREA OF SUPPORT BY DOLLARS RAISED LEADERBOARD

RANK	DEPARTMENT	RAISED
1	ATHLETICS	\$132,233.37
2	RIT FUND	\$31,302.23
3	GOLISANO COLLEGE OF COMPUTING AND INFO SCIENCES	\$13,874.34
4	KATE GLEASON COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING	\$12,158.33
5	SAUNDERS COLLEGE OF BUSINESS	\$12,010.17
6	CATHOLIC NEWMAN COMMUNITY	\$12,310.00
7	COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN	\$7,150.00
8	DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION	\$5,527.00
9	COLLEGE OF SCIENCE	\$4,695.00
10	COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY	\$3,729.00

The Sound of Music at Newman

In the heart of the Rochester Institute of Technology, the Catholic Newman Community stands as a beacon of Catholic faith rooted in sacramental worship. The Eucharist is an integral element of the Catholic life and the power of music essential to unite individuals and community in prayer and worship.

Enter **Kristina Sorochan '25**, our new Newman Choir Director, who brings a wealth of experience and a profound passion for music to Newman. With a background as an organist and a deep connection and experience to our Catholic faith, Kristina is poised to lead the music ministry with grace, dedication, and artistry.

The role of music in the Catholic Mass is undeniably significant. It transcends mere aesthetic appeal, serving as a vehicle to transport congregants to a higher realm of spirituality. The hymns and chants played and sung during the Mass invoke a sense of unity, helping attendees connect with the divine and with one another. The ability of music to evoke emotion, inspire devotion, and strengthen the sense of community within the Newman Community is immeasurable.

Kristina's responsibilities are multifaceted. She serves as the primary accompanist for Campus Masses, selecting music, directing rehearsals and maintaining the overall quality of the music program. Her role extends beyond just the technical aspects of music; she plays a crucial role in nurturing a welcoming atmosphere within our community.

The music ministry isn't confined to regular Masses alone. It extends to special liturgical celebrations, penance services, and events like Brick City Weekend, the Easter Triduum and Holy Day of obligation. Kristina also takes responsibility for organizing the setting up and managing audio equipment and ensures that choir supplies and equipment are well-organized and accessible.



As

Newman's Pastoral Associate for Liturgy and Spirituality, Sr. Leandra Kosmoski SSJ, shared, **"Kristina's passion for music and her ability to make an immediate impact with the choir are truly exceptional. Her dedication and artistry in music ministry resonate with the very essence of our community's mission. We are fortunate to have her lead us in this harmonious journey of faith and unity through the profound language of music."**

Kristina has a solid foundation in music, having completed her Pre-College Program at the renowned Manhattan School of Music in New York City. Her training encompassed classical piano performance, music theory, jazz, ear training, and ensemble work, equipping her with the skills and knowledge needed to excel in the world of music.

Newman is blessed to welcome Kristina and her wave of enthusiasm and musical expertise that is extending far beyond notes and melodies! Through Kristina's leadership, the power of music in the Catholic Mass at the Newman Community will continue to be a source of inspiration and unity for all.

BIG Newman-LITTLE Newman at RIT

An Innovative Way to Grow Faith and Build Faith

In the realm of college life, the transition to higher education can be a daunting experience, especially for those seeking a sense of belonging and spiritual support. As of August, Newman has seen an increase of over 50 students engaged across our programming during the same period last year, marking a remarkable 60% increase. Sunday Mass attendance has also experienced a significant 20% increase compared to last year at this time. In these numbers is a noteworthy observation that 40% of mass attendees in these weeks of school are incoming freshman. So our future is bright and strong. It also highlights Newman's ability to draw in and engage newcomers.

Recognizing the importance of mentorship and guidance, and the incredible interest in Catholic life

at RIT, the Big Newman-Little Newman program was initiated by Dr. Michael Vernarelli, a retired Economics Professor at Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) and one of the current Catholic Campus Minister. This program aims to create a supportive and welcoming environment for Catholic students on campus, offering them the guidance and companionship they need as they embark on their college journey.

Essential to the formation of this innovative and dynamic program has been the student leaders who have designed and guided this program with Dr. Vernarelli including **Theresa Haas '25, Justyn Niemczyk '25, Taode Ogden '25, Kolbe Yang '25.**



Dr. Vernarelli



Theresa Haas '25



Justyn Niemczyk '25



Taode Ogden '25



Kolbe Yang '25

What is a Big Newman?

A Big Newman is a dedicated member of the Newman Community at RIT who serves as a mentor and role model. This program identifies Big Newman's as individuals who:

1. **Embody Catholic Values:** They are recognized as good Catholic role models, adhering to the principles and teachings of the faith.
2. **College Resources:** They serve as a valuable resource for college life, helping students navigate academic challenges and extracurricular activities.
3. **Active Listeners:** They lend a compassionate ear, offering a space for students to share their concerns, thoughts, and questions.
4. **Community Engagement:** They play a crucial role in facilitating students' engagement with the Catholic Newman Community at RIT.

The Purpose of the Big Newman-Little Newman Program

The primary purpose of the Big Newman-Little Newman program is to establish a positive and trusting relationship between the “Big” and “Little” Newmans. This mentorship program is driven by the following objectives:

- 1. Building Trust:** The program aims to form strong, trusting relationships, creating a safe space for open communication.
- 2. Fostering Engagement:** Big Newmans work to help their Little Newmans become more involved within the RIT Newman Community.
- 3. Spiritual Guidance:** Providing guidance in matters of faith, academics, and college life.
- 4. Regular Communication:** Encouraging weekly communication between mentor and mentee through various channels like text, Discord, or in-person meetings.
- 5. Monthly Meetups:** Facilitating in-person meetings at least once a month to enhance the bond between the mentor and mentee.

Building a Trusting Relationship

A core component of the Big Newman-Little Newman program is confidentiality. What is shared between the mentor and mentee remains confidential unless both parties agree to share it with others. This assurance of privacy is essential in creating a safe space for open and honest discussions.

Current Progress and Future Goals

As of the latest update, the program boasts 27 pairs of Big Newmans and Little Newmans, with the aim of increasing participation within the RIT Newman Community. The ultimate goal is to create a vibrant Catholic community where students feel supported from the moment they set foot on campus.

Upcoming activities include a training session for Big Newmans, which will be held virtually, with a recording available for those who cannot attend. Additionally, the first large group meeting for all Big-Little Newman pairs was held the weekend of September 16-17, providing an opportunity for all members to connect. Future engagement programs will be scheduled throughout the year.

The Power of Faith

The Big Newman-Little Newman and our student leader at RIT, initiated by Dr. Michael Vernarelli, is a testament to the power of our Catholic faith, to mentorship and community-building in higher education. By creating a supportive environment, fostering trust, and encouraging engagement within the Catholic community on campus, this program is instrumental in helping students navigate their college journey with faith, confidence, and a sense of belonging. It is a shining example of how mentorship can positively impact the lives of students during their formative years in higher education.



Celebrating Our Team's Win!

Newman received this small certificate from our communications media partner CANVA. It acknowledges the incredible effort of our staff and students to communicate to students, alumni, parents and friends of Newman. It also represents the dynamic ministry we provide in supporting Catholic life on campus! Certainly, part of a marketing engagement by CANVA, it is a win nonetheless! As they say, take a win when you get it! Above all thank you for making this and our ministry happen. You deserve the win too!



Roaring with Faith: RIT Catholic Newman Community T-shirt 2023





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Catholic Newman Community
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Thank you for your consideration of our Newman
mission to share Christ at RIT!