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 **Newman**
Catholic Community at RIT

FALL 2025 NEWSLETTER

Year-End Giving

 **Newman**
Catholic Community at RIT

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 **Newman**
Catholic Community at RIT

Schmitt Interfaith Center
40 Lomb Memorial Drive | Rochester, NY 14623

RIT | Rochester Institute of Technology

CATHOLIC NEWMAN COMMUNITY CALENDAR

NOVEMBER

- Nov. 2 All Souls Day**
9:15am and 5pm Mass
- Nov. 5 TigerStripes Service**
4-8pm
Bethany House
- Nov. 8th - TigerStripes and Big/Little Newman**
Fall Clean-up
Mercy Spirituality Center
- Nov 8th - 9th Fall Retreat**
Mercy Spirituality Center
- Nov 16th**
Coffee Hour after Mass
Hangout social event after 5pm Mass

DECEMBER

- Dec. 7th**
Newman Christmas Party
- Dec. 9th**
Reading Day
Distribution of Study Baskets
- Dec. 10th**
Bowling Night
- Dec. 10th - Dec 17th**
Final Exams

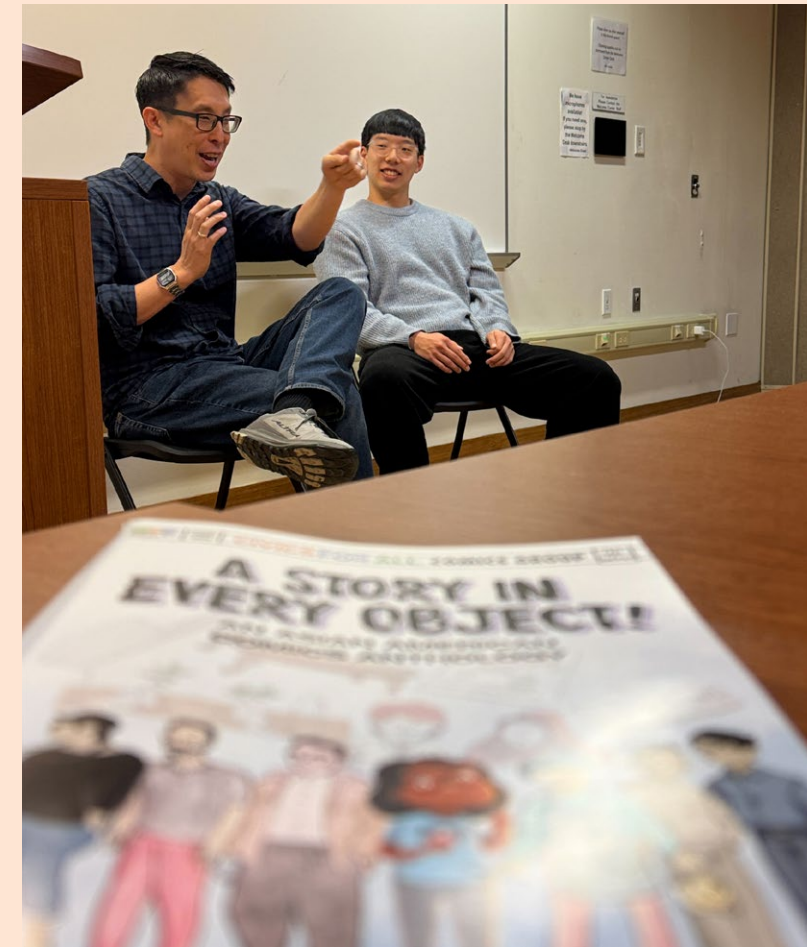
RECURRING

- Sunday Mass**
9:15am and 5pm
- Exploring the Sunday Scriptures with Fr. Bob**
Tuesdays
5:30pm-7pm
- Adoration**
Wednesdays
4:30pm
- Wednesday Mass**
5:30pm
- OCIA**
Wednesdays
7pm
- Confession**
before Mass
or by appointment

A Dad, A Son, And A Comic

On October 10, the Catholic Newman Community was honored to welcome Gene Luen Yang to campus for a memorable and inspiring visit. Gene is a nationally acclaimed graphic novelist, educator, and former U.S. National Ambassador for Young People's Literature, whose works—including the award-winning American Born Chinese, Boxers & Saints, and Superman Smashes the Klan—have earned him both critical and popular acclaim. A MacArthur "Genius" Fellow and long-time advocate for the intersection of faith and creativity, Gene has brought powerful stories of identity, culture, and belief to readers around the world. He is also the proud father of Kolbe Yang '26, one of our active student leaders. Together, they joined our community for several special events that beautifully blended faith, storytelling, and fellowship.

Gene's visit began with Mass on Wednesday, October 8, where he joined more than 25 students and staff for our weekly Evening Mass and Newman Dinner. This midweek gathering is a cornerstone of Newman life, offering students a chance to pause, pray, and reconnect amid their busy schedules. Gene's presence brought a spirit of joy and authenticity to the evening. After Mass, he shared a meal with students, engaging in thoughtful, down-to-earth conversations about life, comics, creativity, and faith.



Gene and Kolbe Yang reflect on their work, "Name Plate."

In a particularly moving moment, Gene invited Kolbe to join him in conversation. Together, father and son shared insights from their creative collaboration, including their work on a story titled "Name Plate" in a recent anthology. Their dialogue revealed not only the bond of family but also the way faith and creativity can become intertwined pathways toward understanding God's presence in our lives.

Having Gene and Kolbe with us was a tremendous gift. Their visit reminded all of us that faith is a living story, one we tell through the relationships we nurture, the creativity we share, and the grace we find in one another. We are deeply grateful to both of them for spending time with the Newman family and for inspiring our community in such a personal way. A sign of God's presence.

To learn more about Gene and his work, visit:
GeneLuenYang.com



His Newman visit culminated on Friday, October 10, with a special edition of Agape Latte, one of our community's most beloved programs. More than 30 people gathered in a coffeehouse-style setting to listen to Gene and Kolbe's joint presentation, titled "Finding and Naming Your Object." With warmth and humor, Gene reflected on his journey as a Catholic, an educator, and a creative artist—sharing stories about faith, identity, and the spiritual power of storytelling.

ROAR DAY SUCCESS!



WITH YOUR SUPPORT WE RAISED **\$25,870**

FOR CATHOLIC LIFE AT RIT!

(RANKED **#4** ACROSS THE WHOLE UNIVERSITY)

THANK YOU FOR SHOWING YOUR STRIPES ON **ROAR DAY!**

A **HUGE** THANKS TO OUR MATCHING DONORS,
KATIE LINENDOLL '05 AND MARK SAUNDERS '18!



One Faith, Two Continents: A Global Mission



This fall, the Catholic Newman Community at Rochester Institute of Technology joyfully welcomed two international students from RIT Croatia, Marin Grabovac '27 and Patrik Perkovic '25, who are spending the semester at the Rochester campus. Both are studying Hospitality and Tourism Management, bringing with them not only their academic curiosity but also the warmth, tradition, and Catholic faith of their homeland.

For Marin and Patrik, their journey to Rochester was more than 15 hours of travel. It was a leap into a new academic and cultural adventure. “We are students from RIT Croatia, a small global campus of Rochester Institute of Technology,” Marin explained. “For us, studying in the United States meant finally reaching Rochester after a long trip filled with excitement and anticipation.”

Nestled along the Adriatic Sea, Croatia may be a small nation of just over four million people, but it is rich in culture, hospitality, and deep Catholic heritage. “We are known for Mediterranean food and warm hospitality,” Marin shared. “Our Catholic faith is also a big part of who we are. We are actually one of the most Catholic countries in the world.” That deep-rooted faith made the Catholic Newman Community a natural home away from home.

Landing in Rochester, Marin and Patrik were struck by the size and energy of RIT’s main campus. “Our Dubrovnik campus has fewer than 200 students, and here there are almost 20,000,” Marin said. “It can feel overwhelming at first. What really helped us settle in was the Catholic Newman Community. The Schmitt Interfaith Center is huge, probably big enough to fit our entire Dubrovnik campus and it quickly became a place where we felt at home. To be completely honest, we did not expect the community to be this vibrant.”

Since arriving, Marin and Patrik have immersed themselves fully in community life. Both serve in liturgical ministries at Sunday Mass, enriching the celebration through their prayerful presence.



They’ve also joined the Big/Little Newman Program and regularly attend Fr. Kennedy’s Tuesday Bible Study, which Marin calls “a highlight of my week.” He added, “It gives you a chance to really dig into the Sunday readings and reflect on them. Kristen and Mike are always so welcoming and never hesitate to invite you to any Newman happenings!”

One of the things they’ve appreciated most is how easy it is to live out their faith on campus. “Mass, Confession, and Adoration are all within walking distance of both housing and classes, right at the heart of campus,” Marin noted.

Though the shift from a quiet campus on the Adriatic coast to the vibrant energy of RIT in Rochester has been a big one, both students see it as deeply rewarding. “Moving from a tiny campus in Dubrovnik to a big university in Rochester has been a big change, but it has also been rewarding. It is exciting to meet new people, experience campus life, and still feel connected to our roots,” Marin reflected.

Their presence is a joyful reminder of RIT’s global mission—to expand its academic and cultural life worldwide—and of the universal nature of the Catholic Church, which unites people across continents through shared faith, worship, and community.

As Marin beautifully concluded: “Bog vas blagoslovio! (God bless you all!)”

Let us continue to pray for Marin and Patrik as they journey through this exciting semester abroad—and if you see them at Mass or any Newman event, be sure to say hello!



Cool Thoughts A Remarkable Renewal

Dear Catholic Tigers,

Catholic life at the Rochester Institute of Technology is experiencing an extraordinary renewal. After the challenges and isolation of the pandemic years, students are hungrier than ever for truth, community, and faith in Jesus Christ—and they are finding it all at the Catholic Newman Community. In a campus culture marked by constant motion and digital noise, Newman has become a spiritual home where students encounter God and rediscover what is lasting, real, and good.

The numbers tell a remarkable story. Over the past three years, Sunday Mass attendance has grown by 35%, with the chapel now filled as students gather in prayer and song to celebrate the Eucharist. Each year since 2022, the number of students preparing to enter the Catholic Church has increased, culminating this year with nine students in the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA formerly RCIA)—the largest group in more than fifteen years. Their desire to become Catholic is a powerful witness to the living presence of Christ on campus and the enduring relevance of the Catholic faith in a restless and questioning generation.

This surge of faith has created a joyful “problem” of its own

This surge of faith has created a joyful “problem” of its own: space. Newman has outgrown its usual rooms for OCIA, Bible Study, and community Hangouts. Each week, leaders search for larger spaces to accommodate the growing number of students who want to learn, pray, and connect. It’s a welcome challenge—one that speaks to the vitality of Catholic life at RIT and the Spirit’s movement among our students.

Beyond the numbers, the renewal is visible in every corner of student life. The first Sunday Mass of the semester welcomed more than 200 students, followed by over 100 at the opening “Newman Hangout”—double last year’s participation. Through programs like Big Newman—Little Newman, students are mentoring one

Newman has become a spiritual home where students encounter God and rediscover what is lasting, real, and good.

another in faith, building friendships rooted in prayer, service, and shared purpose. Participation in Bible studies, Kairos retreats, and the Tiger Stripes service initiative continues to climb, as students discover that faith is not just personal—it’s lived in community.

In the midst of this flourishing, two recent RIT graduates have begun discerning the call to priesthood formation, a testament to the deep formation and spiritual support cultivated through Newman life. Many others are exploring religious vocations, Catholic marriage, or simply a deeper commitment to living their faith in daily life and future careers.

This moment of grace arrives as the Church herself experiences renewed hope with the election of the first Pope from the Americas—a shepherd who speaks with warmth, humility, and conviction to a world in search of meaning. Inspired by his example, students at RIT are seeking truth amid a turbulent and divided age, finding in the Gospel a steady compass for life.

As one student shared, “In a world that moves so fast, Newman helps me slow down and remember what truly matters.” That spirit of renewal is alive and growing at RIT and with your prayer, and support, it shows no sign of slowing down.

Peace

Fr. Brian C. Cool

Rev. Brian C. Cool, '06W (MS), '21W (EdD)
J. Nelson Hoffman '55 and Joan Dutcher Hoffman '55
Director of Catholic Newman Community Pastoral Care

Faith, Innovation, and Advocacy: The Inspiring Journey of Katie Linendoll '05

Raised in Erie, Pennsylvania, and now based in Boston and New York City, Emmy Award-winning TV personality and global technology consultant Katie Linendoll '05 has traveled the world—yet her Catholic faith remains her true compass. Whether filming a technology segment in a remote location, producing a music video, or praying the Rosary daily, Katie brings her devotion into every dimension of her life and work.



Katie Linendoll '05 performs her new song "Hey, Mr. Charlie."

A proud graduate of the B. Thomas Golisano College of Computing and Information Sciences at RIT, Katie earned her degree in New Media Interactive Development and quickly rose to prominence as a sought-after voice in the world of technology and media. She began her career behind the scenes at ESPN's SportsCenter—where she won an Emmy—and went on to appear as a leading technology expert on the TODAY Show and The Weather Channel, while contributing stories to The Wall Street Journal, Popular Science, A&E, Sports Illustrated, and other major outlets.

During her RIT years, Katie was the Student Government Women's Senator and was active in SportsZone, the student-run television organization that gave her early hands-on experience in media production. In recognition of her professional achievements and leadership, she received the 2011 Distinguished Alumni Award from the Golisano College of Computing and Information Sciences.

Today, through her production company, Katie Linendoll Productions, she continues to merge storytelling and innovation, capturing technology and human triumphs from Silicon Valley to the most remote parts of the world. She is a keynote speaker, emcee, and host for top tech conferences and events for companies including Mercedes-Benz, Lenovo, SAS, Qlik, the Global Semiconductor Alliance, Teradata, Dell, King's Candy Crush All Stars Live, BMW, and many others. Additionally, her side passion for country and Christian music has landed her songs on iTunes and country radio charts.

Yet beyond her professional success, Katie's Catholic faith is the force that sustains her. She attends daily Mass whenever possible, prays the Chaplet of St. Michael the Archangel and Rosary daily, participates in weekly Adoration and finds strength and grounding in the Eucharist. Her deep spirituality informs her creative work, guiding her to bring light, integrity, and beauty into the fast-paced media world.

At RIT, Katie has remained a steadfast advocate for the Catholic Newman Community, helping ensure that Catholic life on campus is not only present, but thrives. As both benefactor and spokesperson for RIT's ROAR Day, she has helped increase Newman support by an astounding 350% in just three years!

"Katie's desire to see Catholic life not only grow but thrive at RIT is remarkable," said Fr. Brian Cool, Director of the Catholic Newman Community. "She leads with faith, generosity, and joy, and continues to inspire our students to bring their Catholic values into every part of their lives."

"Her boundless energy and witness is making a real difference in the Catholic and moral development of our students," Fr. Cool added. "Katie models what it means to live an integrated faith life, professional excellence rooted in love of Christ. We are grateful to have her on our team."

To follow Katie's faith-filled adventures and media work, connect with her on social media: Instagram: @katielinendoll • X/Twitter: @katielinendoll • YouTube: Katie Linendoll
Katie's music can be found on Spotify, Apple Music and SoundCloud channels.

At RIT, Katie has remained a steadfast advocate for the Catholic Newman Community...



Katie and her assistant Max Martilik visit Fr. Cool and Campus Minister Kristen Smith on campus in August

Recent Newman Alumni Discern Priesthood Answering the Call

The Catholic Newman Community at RIT joyfully celebrates two of our recent alumni—Thomas Pawlak '25 and Kevin Healy—who have entered their first year of seminary formation for the diocesan priesthood. Their journeys stand as living testimonies to how the Holy Spirit moves within a vibrant faith community and how God's quiet invitation can be heard amid the pace of campus life.

During their time at RIT, both Tom and Kevin were cornerstones of the Catholic Newman community—serving as peer ministers, student leaders, and faithful participants in retreats, liturgies, sacristans, altar servers, and leading small groups. They helped create an atmosphere of joy, prayer, and authenticity where young adults could grow together in faith and discern God's plan for their lives. Through the chapel, fellowship dinners, and long conversations about faith and purpose, they discovered a place where Christ's presence was real and transforming.

Tom Pawlak '25, a graduate in Information Technology, is now discerning the priesthood for the Diocese of Rochester. Known for his servant leadership, steady prayer life, and generosity, Tom often led by quiet example. His consistent presence at mass, adoration, service projects, and other student events reflected his deep trust in God's providence which now provides him the opportunity to explore it with a new and open heart.



Home Parish: Our Lady of Peace, Clarence, NY
Entered Seminary: 2025
Before Seminary: Planning a graduate degree in Data Analysis
Major Influence: "Being surrounded by faithful Catholics on a secular campus and the example of college ministry priests."
Interests: The outdoors, computers, and recreational shooting



Kevin Healy '26, studied Computing and Information Technologies, has entered formation for his home diocese, the Archdiocese of Hartford, CT. With his enthusiasm, compassion, and humor, Kevin drew others toward Christ through his leadership and friendship. His favorite Scripture captures his sense of humble gratitude: "But by the grace of God, I am what I am" (1 Corinthians 15:10).

Favorite Food: Pastelillos
Favorite Saints: Our Blessed Mother, St. Timothy, St. Paul, St. Francis, Bl. Michael McGivney
Favorite Thing About Being Catholic: "God's mercy through Reconciliation as it reveals who God is and His love for each of us."
Favorite Thing About Jesus: "His desire to bring us into an ever-deeper understanding of His love."

Together, Tom and Kevin embody the fruits of the Catholic Newman Community and what a dynamic campus ministry can provide, a community that takes faith seriously, where students not only practice their beliefs but learn to listen for God's voice in friendship, prayer, and service. Their "yes" to God's call is a powerful reminder that the seeds of vocation are often planted and nurtured right here, in our home away from home.

We give thanks for Tom and Kevin's witness, and for the generosity of alumni, parents, and friends whose support makes such faith journeys possible. Please join us in praying for these two men and for all those discerning God's call whether to priesthood, religious life, marriage, or dedicated lay service so that more young hearts may respond with courage and love to the Lord's invitation: "Come, follow me."