

## Meet Our Student Executive Board



**Maggie Blaisdell**  
President



**Dylan Green**  
Student Sacristan



**Jack Ryan**  
Music Director



**Eryk White**  
Vice President  
& Small Group Leader



**Ellie McCullagh**  
Vice President



**Dominic DeByle**  
Secretary



**David Anthony**  
Treasurer



**Meg Barker**  
Retreats &  
Recruitment Chair



**Matthew Stoffolano**  
Small Group Leader

## Students Taking Action

Through this tough pandemic, the student leadership team has stepped up and taken action. With increased meetings and dedicated brainstorming sessions, student leaders have developed innovative ways to maintain our vibrant Catholic community on campus.

## By The Numbers

### 2 Sunday Masses Each Week

Students are able to attend in-person and online

### 385 Registered Catholics

We are one of the largest religious organizations at RIT

### 520 Attendees at Mass

Since September of 2020

### 22 Students at Lenten Retreat

We filled the room to its max capacity

### 45 Confessions Heard

Students have access to confession after every mass

## Meet Our Staff



**Fr. Brian Cool**  
Director of UR  
& RIT Newman



**Kristin Leachhorn**  
Campus Minister



**Mike Vernarelli**  
Campus Minister



**Jimmy Miller**  
Business Manager

## Lenten Retreat

Friday, March 19  
6 PM - 9 PM

## Lenten Retreat

The Newman leadership team organized a Lenten retreat for students on March 19. Students had the opportunity to meet fellow Catholics, share a delicious meal, learn about discernment from Deacon Dennis, and discuss faith in small groups. It was a great night!



Students had the opportunity to meet other Catholics on campus.



Deacon Dennis talked to students about discernment.



Small groups met to discuss Deacon Dennis's presentation.



## Rev. Brian C. Cool

Director of RIT &  
UR Newman Communities

## Cool Thoughts

Exactly one year ago as I write, the President of the Rochester Institute of Technology wrote to all students, staff, and faculty that the university would be shutting down and sending students home. Soon after, the pandemic swept across the globe and infections, illness, and death came upon us in seemingly never-ending waves. It still does, although the waves do not seem as high or strong as they once were. However, the world has inevitably changed. We have changed. And the Church has changed too.

When the academic year opened this past September, our students were so thrilled to be back on campus. They came back to their 'home away from home.' As we navigated a campus with many restrictions, the University Administration and Newman Staff worked hard to put in place protocols that would be essential. With great pride, these largely have worked, and campus is doing the best it can in a very challenging environment.

One anniversary since the pandemic started, and eight months since students have been on campus, the painful reality of a year of fear, stress, and losses are taking their toll—especially on the young minds, hearts, and spirits of those we serve here at Newman. They seek, as human persons crave, the companionship of friends and a deep desire to share their energy, passion, and talents with others. To give you but one example,



2021 | Spring

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

students are not allowed to conduct service opportunities. Service is not just about helping others. Providing service to others develops oneself, hones one's gifts, and lifts up the human heart as one sees the work they do making a true difference on campus, in the community, in the world.

Last fall, I told our students that we will get through this and that we are building resiliency—indeed we are. But today, as light at the end of a long tunnel begins to warm the earth, our human hearts and our campus, the Church and Newman in particular needs and will be thinking about the rebuilding necessary to be Christ for others. The world changed and so must the Church if we are to meet the challenges that will be in front of and within those of this current generation.

**We have been working with our future leaders who bring the faith to campus and beyond.**

Newman has always done this. We have and we remain on the front lines, working with the next generation of leaders of our Church and world. And, we have already started. We have been working with our future leaders who will bring the faith to campus and beyond. And they are eager as ever and ready to take on this new challenge with love and mercy. Thank you for your prayers, blessings, financial support, and kind encourage-

ment. These make a difference and will make a difference as we build a new ministry in the coming months—one that is more dynamic, engaging, and impactful than the one we have today. For as St. Paul said, "There is nothing love cannot face; there is no limit to its faith, its hope, and endurance" (1 Cor 13:7).

Be safe and well!

Peace,

*Fr. Brian C. Cool*



Eboard President, Maggie Blaisdell, checks in students at mass.



Music Director, Jack Ryan, and Eric Kanis provide music at mass.



Student Sacristan, Dylan Green, prepares for mass.

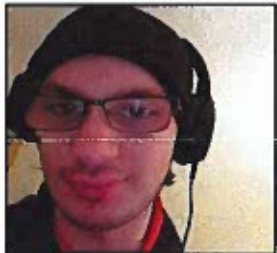


## RIT Knights of Columbus



### Dylan Green

Dylan is a fourth year knight and a software engineering major from Horseheads, NY. His interests include playing Minecraft and games with friends, collecting coins, camping, as well as hiking. When asked about why he joined us, Dylan replied that he "became a Knight out of a need to be more active in my faith and faith community." Some of the knightly activities that Dylan enjoys include the Halloween canned food drive and sponsoring trips to the March for Life in Washington. Of note, Dylan has personally lead a Minecraft stream this fall to donate money to charities feeding the hungry. Dylan would personally pitch the knights as a good way to build camaraderie between friends as they strive to fulfill Christ's commandments. The knights are truly blessed to have Dylan among our members.



### Louie D'Angelo

Louie is a knight and second-year student from Pittsburgh, PA studying game design and development. His interests include building games and playing games. Louie joined the knights in autumn of 2020 at the behest of his friends in the RIT KoC Minecraft server, however he also chose this path to emulate his great-grandfather, a knight and pillar of his community. Due to Covid, Louie has not been able to assist in any formal knights

events yet, but he has assisted with cleaning up after mass. Some of his favorite knight activities include supporting church activities, especially in the Covid era, and building fraternal bonds with his fellow brother knights. Louie would personally pitch the knights as a way for men to build lasting friendships. We're excited to have him on board as a brother knight!



### Tomasz Mazur

Tomasz is a knight and first-year student from Stamford, CT studying chemical engineering. Tomasz joined the knights last semester because he states "the virtues of the Knights of Columbus: faith, brotherhood, charity, and patriotism really resonated with me and I was looking to meeting more people who also held those values." One of the things he enjoys is chatting with his fellow brothers after mass and is looking forward to future brotherhood events to grow in fraternity. When asked about a way to pitch our organization, Tomasz pitched the knights as "a great way to get involved in your own community in a positive way. I think a lot of people have reservations about the members of the Knights of Columbus and if they would fit in but they really are a lot like you than you think." We are excited to see what new perspectives Tomasz brings to the council in the coming years.



### Thomas Pawlak

Thomas is a first-year knight from Clarence, NY in computing exploration, and will declare CIT come the end of the semester. Some of his interests include video games, working out, and playing chess. He joined the knights last semester because he wanted to become more active in his faith and to use it as an opportunity to do good just as Christ taught us. Due to Covid, Thomas has not been able to assist in any formal knights events yet, but he has assisted with cleaning up after mass. Thomas would formally pitch the knights as "a great way to not only help keep Newman running, but to provide your time and effort in the name of charitable causes, and to join a tight-knit community of fellow Catholic males interested in their faith." We are excited to have Thomas in our ranks as a Knight of Columbus!



AJ Roehen helps clean up after mass.



Andrew Carbonari and AJ Roehen work in the sacristy.

## Our RCIA Candidates: Rachel & Jessica

### Why I Chose RCIA

By Rachel Ramsdell

No event in particular prompted me to take the next step in my faith journey and join RCIA. Rather, my faith journey has been a slow, gradual, intuitive process that led me to pursue confirmation. While I was baptized as a baby, I was not raised Catholic. My family did not attend mass or pray together. While we believed in and revered God, we did not actively practice our religion. I always felt as if something was missing, and I believed that to be a better knowledge of and a stronger connection to God. I could feel His presence in my everyday life and see His work in the world, but I could not understand it or know how to show gratitude. I saw everything that God has done for me, and I wanted to develop a better relationship with Him and thank Him for my blessings. God was a mystery to me, and I wanted to find out more. I wanted my questions answered. I wanted to find a deeper meaning in everything and learn how to live my life in the way God wanted me to. Once I came to RIT, I finally had the independence to make my own choices regarding my religion. I decided to become more involved. When I saw the advertisement for RCIA, I knew that this was right for me. Even though I do not have the same strong religious background as many other people in RCIA do, I want to commit myself to the Church and God, with hopes that RCIA will be the start of

that process, rather than an end.

I have learned a lot about the Catholic faith during the RCIA process. As I mentioned, I did not have a strong religious foundation, so I learned a lot from the RCIA classes. Perhaps the most important thing I learned in RCIA is how to pray properly. I prayed in the past, but I felt as if I was doing it wrong, and I did not know what I was doing. The opening and closing prayers and discussions about prayer taught me how to pray, which made my prayer life more meaningful. I also got a better idea of how I should live my life and listen to God. Learning about the Beatitudes really helped me get a better idea of how I should live my life. When I am angry, I remember that Jesus wants us to control our anger, which helps me let things be. Everything I learned in RCIA strengthened my faith and brought me closer to God.



Multi-Campus RCIA Program

### Returning to the Faith

By Jessica Gomez

I grew up in a Catholic family and attended CCD until about 5th grade. Once I started getting older, I got busier with school and athletics, and eventually stopped going to CCD and Mass. Then a couple years ago my grandma got diagnosed with Alzheimers. She was the person I grew up going to church with; she would often take me to things like confession and CCD. After she got sick I thought it would be a good idea to take her to mass every week, just like she used to take me. After doing this, I realized what I had lost and decided I wanted to find my way back to my faith. When I got to RIT and learned about the Newman community, I thought that would be a great place to continue my journey. I then learned about the RCIA program and decided to join and get confirmed.

I've learned a lot during the RCIA program. I didn't just learn about Catholicism, but I also learned about myself as well. I wasn't ever really part of a Catholic community. I went to CCD and made friends through that, but those connections only really existed in class. It was nice to finally find a community here at RIT and be a part of it.

I also deepened my faith and learned more about Catholicism. I had forgotten a lot of things or never learned some topics, so RCIA gave me the opportunity to expand my knowledge. We went over the Holy Trinity, Beatitudes, and more topics I had never gone in depth with. Overall, it was a great learning experience.

## What's Happening

### Recharge Hangout

Tuesday, Feb 2 from 7-9 PM

1829 Room (SAU), across from Fredrick Dougless Statue)  
RSVP: email [mcb1095@rit.edu](mailto:mcb1095@rit.edu)

### Lenten Retreat

Friday, March 19  
8 PM - 9 PM

Faith, Friends, & Food!  
Plus a talk from Deacon Dennis!

### Talk About Faith

Join a Small Group!

Small groups discuss faith and are a great way to make friends!

### Confession

Monday, March 20  
4 PM - 5 PM &  
6 PM - 8 PM

Interfaith Center  
Rooms 1510 & 2402

Confession is an important part of Lent in preparation for the Easter season.