



Newman Catholic Community

Serving Eastern Illinois University

April 2022

Newman Notes

Because of Newman . . .



Camp Ondessonk 2013

One evening we received a phone call asking us to consider writing a short article about what the Newman Center meant to us. Our response? A resounding yes! After putting our children to bed we spent a moment reminiscing about the joy, laughter, and fellowship we discovered at Newman. A day later, amid talk of sheet music for our dear friend Zach's ordination, we realized a few hundred words would never be enough to explain just *how much* Newman impacted us. Newman's influence in our lives didn't end upon graduation. Nearly a decade later and miles away, Newman continues to provide for us. Because of Newman, we were able to build our life. So you see, a few paragraphs isn't sufficient; we could fill a book. Nonetheless, here are our best efforts.

Because of Newman, our faith prospered. Before attending college we each considered ourselves rather faithful, but it wasn't until our experiences at Newman that faith and prayer evolved into an integral part of our lives. Newman offers an abundance of ways to grow in faith. From small groups to Prayer Around the Cross (a favorite), there is something for everyone. Most notably, we served in the music ministry, which became a key expression in the practice of our faith. It remains an important part of our lives. Newman gave us the best-possible foundation to strengthen our faith, and we proudly share this faith with our children.

Because of Newman, we created meaningful friendships. Newman surrounded us with an engaging, supportive, and positive group of people. This community of the faithful provided us with a safe environment to mature into adulthood having gained knowledge through numerous service and leadership opportunities. Walking in faith with other students encouraged us, and the permanent community welcomed all. With so many inspiring folks

PATRICK ('14, '18) AND RACHEL (SAPP-'14, '16) WARD

around, there is no surprise some of them turned into beloved friends, going on to witness our marriage and act as Godparents to our children. Although we traded late night games of Polish ping pong for skype dates and reading potty training books to our toddlers, Christ stands at the center. Our tight-knit group shares both happiness and sorrow, praying together through it all. We consider them family, our Newman family.

Because of Newman, we found each other. Our roads diverged at Newman. We started dating at the end of Sophomore year after spending a couple years nurturing a quiet affection for the other. In good times and in bad (and there has been bad), in sickness and in health (and there has been sickness), we remember to honor each other by keeping Christ in our hearts. Newman taught us how. We understand that no matter what life brings, with Christ we shall overcome.

We eagerly await the day our two beautiful children, Henry (August 2019) and Lucy (October 2021), learn about the place where mom and dad fostered their love of Christ and met each other. Although we don't often find ourselves in Charleston, we never miss an opportunity to visit Newman, if only just to wave through the window. Forever thankful and abundantly blessed, we owe Newman everything.



Lucy, Rachel, Henry, & Patrick Ward December 2021



Newman Notes

Newman Became Part of My DNA . . . DEACON ZACHARY D. SAMPLES '14, '16



Austin Stout '14, '19, Amanda Hoelscher Stout '14, '16,
Patrick Ward '14, '18, Jennifer Vogt Metz '14,
and Deacon Zach Samples '14, '16

I had zero interest in attending Eastern Illinois University. It was nothing personal—I just didn't want to go to my mother's alma mater. But I also knew something else. I knew part of what I wanted to accomplish in college was to grow in my faith. My parish didn't have a youth program, so I didn't have an outlet to grow in faith. I first heard of the Newman Catholic Center when I attended Boys State at EIU. I remember walking in, meeting Roy, and asking him, "Are you the priest here?" He laughed and warmly welcomed me. I could tell this was a place where people like me came to know and love the Lord and His Church in profound ways, and I wanted to be part of that.

That experience changed my mind about EIU. I had to bite my lip and tell my mom she was right...EIU was the place for me as she had often said. This was true for many reasons, but chief among them was Newman. The rest, as they say, is history.

Over the next six years, Newman became part of my DNA. Through participating in Mass, retreats, bible studies, the KofC, Students for Life, Catholic Scholars, and more, I came to fall in love with Jesus Christ and His Church. I came to understand His place in my life, and what life with Him really meant. Life with him is a life of joy, peace, mercy, and love. Newman taught me that. This reality came to fruition of course through the sacraments and our beautiful liturgies, but also through relationships. In those years at Newman, I developed the strongest relationships I

had ever had. As one friend put it, "We really came to be." And we did so together. We grew together. We fell in love with Christ together. We came "to be" together. In the years since graduating, many of those friends are now married, some to each other, and are raising children. It is beautiful to watch their families grow. The neat part about that is I get to be Godfather to some of those adorable little cherubs...I can't wait to tell them all their parents' stories...

I went to EIU intent on being a teacher. I left knowing the Lord had a different plan. Early in my time at Newman, Fr. John Titus (Chaplain) invited me and several others to begin discerning Diocesan Priesthood. This was not the first time I had considered Priesthood, in reality I had been considering it since 4th grade, but it was the first time I took it seriously. To re-use a phrase, the rest is history. I am now in my sixth year at Saint Meinrad Seminary & School of Theology. Seminary is a



long journey, but it really started during my years at Newman. For that, and for so much more, I am forever grateful.

Deacon Zach will be ordained a priest on May 28th at the Cathedral in Springfield. Please keep him and all of our priests in your prayers.



What happens when you gather 14 students, seven telephones, and many generous donors for six weeks to raise \$17,000? Success! When you surpass that goal...AMAZING!!!!

This year, you answered our calls. We are truly grateful and humbled! With your continued generosity in support of these students and this Newman Center, over \$22,000 has been pledged. Thank you to the 362 of you who said "yes" and to the 38 who said "maybe."

Here are just some of the ways your donations help our students grow in their faith, bring the love of Christ to others, and keep the lights on in the building.

- Enable a student to go on Panther Awakening Retreat
- Purchase Bibles for our Small Groups
- Purchase Catechisms for RCIA students
- Provide coffee/tea when meeting students on campus
- Food for outreach events
- Gas in our van and bus for student retreats/activities
- Incense, charcoal, and candles for weekly adoration

Our Vision Statement: To invite the EIU Community into transforming relationships with Christ and one another, empowering all to create a lasting impact in the world.



My Home Away From Home . . .

GRACE WALKER '22, DIETERICH



Eve Walker '25, Logan Waldhoff (ISU), Mandy Transon '24, and Grace Walker '22

I started my EIU experience a bit different than most people. I transferred my Junior year in the height of COVID restrictions. A week before classes started, I moved into my apartment and most of my professors changed their classes to online. I was so discouraged I moved away from my family and home just to be cooped up in an apartment attending online classes. Luckily my younger sister was a freshman at EIU, and we could share all the new experiences together. Without her on campus, I probably would have gone crazy.

I grew up in a Catholic community and leaving that behind left this feeling of longing for the Lord. I convinced my sister to attend adoration with me at the Newman Center. It was great to have that connection with God again, but I still felt homesick. The first semester, my sister and I would only go to Newman weekly for adoration. In January, a former high school friend transferred to EIU and invited me to Newman for a euchre tournament. I had a good time and it was nice to just talk to people again. I was then invited to join a small group.

Before I knew it, I was going to weekly game nights too. I convinced my sister to come. We slowly became friends with other young people of faith. After one adoration, a girl headed straight towards my sister and me as we were trying

to leave and said "I don't know you two, what are your names?" It took us by surprise. But that's the Newman community for you, super friendly and straightforward. I was becoming more involved and my homesickness started to fade.

That April my sister and I attended the Panther Awakening retreat and, not to be dramatic, but it changed my life! I felt so connected to God and the faithful Newman community - I was hooked. I spent the rest of the semester attending different praying opportunities, signing up for summer mission trips, and making long-lasting friendships. I am now part of the leadership team, I lead a small group, and I just finished staffing my second Panther Awakening retreat. I didn't



May 2022 CAP Mission Trip

realize as it happened slowly over time, but Newman became my home here on campus. Even though I only get to spend two years at EIU, I can confidently say that the Newman Community has had the most impact on my life and will stay with me after I graduate.

The Panther Awakening IV Retreat was held at Immaculate Conception Parish in Mattoon from February 18-20.

Thirty students attended. The theme was "Rest in His Peace" and the Patron Saint was St. Francis of Assisi. We are looking forward to PAX in the fall of 2022.

Thank you to everyone who donated to help make this retreat possible for some of these students.





Newman Notes

Ways to Give Back to Newman . . .

In our last newsletter, we introduced you to our Newman Mission Circle (our monthly donor program). Since then, 22 new NMC partners have joined us! This means we now have 117 of you on mission with us - praying for this community of students, alumni, faculty, and friends. For this, we are extremely grateful!

If you would like to know more about the Newman Mission Circle, please visit our website: www.eiunewman.org and select the "Give" tab at the top or you can contact Maureen (msmith@eiunewman.org) at 217-348-0188.

Besides our NMC, we have other opportunities for you to give to this community. We make it easy for you to choose where your gift makes a difference.

- ◇ **General donation or Greatest Need** - This allows us to host our small groups, student outreach, annual Busy Person's Retreat, pay the electric bill, hospitality for students, provide hosts and wine, and much more.
- ◇ **Lauren Bovis Memorial Scholarship Endowment** - This scholarship is currently awarded annually to two students to attend a mission trip.
- ◇ **Jeff and Karen Boshart Summer of Service Scholarship** - This scholarship is awarded to one student who wants to spend their summer doing mission work.
- ◇ **Dr. Ann Jackson Catholic Scholars Endowment** - This scholarship is awarded to students who want to deepen their knowledge of their faith by attending faith-based classes at Newman.
- ◇ **Dr. Julian Hamerski Leadership Award Endowment** - This annual award is given to outstanding leaders here at Newman and elsewhere. These leaders are recognized at our annual Newman Night.
- ◇ **Planned Giving** - Consider a planned gift to sustain the ministries that mean the most to you. With planned giving you decide what to give and how to give. You may also designate your gift to benefit a certain ministry.

If you would like to make a difference by donating, you can support any of these endowments by writing the name in the memo field.

*It is the smallest of all the seeds, yet when full grown, it is the largest of plants.
It becomes a large bush and the birds of the sky come and dwell in its branches.*

-Matthew 13:32

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www.eiunewman.org

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Newman Catholic Community
500 Roosevelt Avenue
Charleston IL 61920

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