



NEWMAN NEWS

in the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland



“Retreat”... in Order to Advance

Welcome to the spring 2009, edition of the Newman News. Newman Catholic Campus Ministry has many facets, like a precious stone that gleams from many different viewing angles. From the Liturgies we celebrate on or near each of our campuses; to the wonderful catechetical opportunities we offer for growth in faith; to the myriad opportunities for service (locally, nationally and internationally); to the personal touch, the one-to-one conversations between campus minister and student, we are constantly looking for ways to help our wonderful young women and men draw closer to Christ and His Church.

Our theme for this issue deals with the spiritual growth of our students through the various retreat and spiritual direction opportunities that we offer for the members of the seven campuses we serve in Northeast Ohio. A part of the story is told by our campus ministers, who write about the various options available; and a part is reserved for our students, who describe how participation in these programs and processes has affected their lives.

Over the past several years, a number of campus ministers, here and around the country, have noted what they believe to be a renewed sense of spiritual hunger among many of the students we seek to serve. Sometimes that hunger is evidenced by the significant crowds we are seeing at weekend and special liturgies, or by the interest of students to reach out in more intentional ways to the homeless, the hungry and the marginalized. However, the increasing number of Newman students involved in these program activities is only a part of the story. An equally significant indicator of spiritual hunger and growth can be seen in the way that students are responding in ever greater numbers to an expanding array of retreat and spiritual direction opportunities. They are realizing that, in addition to actively engaging the world around them in order to grow in faith, they must also take quiet time in order to nurture the “spirit within”.

One way this nurturing can be done is by meeting with a trained spiritual director who can engage the individual in conversation and lead her/him in an exploration of Sacred Scripture as well as introducing the student to various prayer

and meditation techniques. The pages that follow feature some “snapshots” (literally and figuratively) of various opportunities for spiritual growth which we offer through Newman Catholic Campus Ministry. Several of them include just the type of reflective process I have described here:

- The “Catch the Spirit” Retreat,
- The 8-Day Ignatian Silent Retreat,
- Busy Student Retreats, and
- Ongoing Individual Spiritual Direction.

The Newman Foundation of Northern Ohio has been our constant and faithful partner in these efforts, contributing thousands of dollars each year to help underwrite the costs for the many spiritual growth opportunities we offer. Without their support, both spiritually and financially, as well as the support of people like you, these programs would cease to exist.

Stroll through these pages with us to meet the campus ministers who will explain some details of the various programs, and students who share some of their experiences of conversion and growth. Read about how their lives have been changed forever — for the better — as they are preparing for and assuming roles as campus ministry student leaders today and parish leaders of the future, wherever their faith journeys lead them.

In the realm of campus ministry, there is nothing more exciting or more fulfilling than companionship young adults as they reach the point where they begin to realize how much they are loved by God, how much they have been given in the form of talent and opportunity, and how many exciting ways there are for them to use their gifts and talents to build the reign of God on earth.

As campus ministers, these are the moments we live for — these are the moments we die for — giving of ourselves each day in order that others might grow closer to Christ. Come and see how the Spirit of God is at work in the lives of our students and beyond. Here, in their own words, they will tell you that, once you have felt the embrace of the living God, there is no turning back. Who would even want to?

Bill Miller
Diocese of Cleveland Director
of Newman Catholic Campus Ministry





Empowered and Enlivened In the Spirit!

CATCH THE SPIRIT RETREAT

The Hebrew word for spirit originally meant “breath”, “air”, or “wind” and was understood from ancient times to be the source of inspiration, life and movement within God’s people. We understand the presence of the Spirit in the Old Testament to be more hidden in comparison to the dynamic, visible action of the Spirit in the life of Jesus and the Church. Mary conceives by the action of the Spirit. Jesus goes to the desert at the prompting of the Spirit



prior to his ministry. Jesus promised not to leave us orphans but that humanity would forever be guided by the Holy Spirit. These are but a few examples.

Rooting our work in the Bishops’ document on campus ministry, *Empowered by the Spirit*, the Diocese’s annual retreat *Catch the Spirit* provided time and space to step back and allow that same Spirit to animate and inspire us. Minister/student teams presented reflections on our relationship with God, self and others. Students were given time and space to ponder, discuss, journal, pray alone and together, reconcile and worship together in a 24-hour period. The Holy Spirit provided us with experiences of God’s presence and we were sent forth to our respective campuses empowered and enlivened to witness and celebrate our Roman Catholic faith.

Debbie Dacone

EIGHT DAY SILENT RETREAT

The *Eight Day Silent Retreat* in the exercises of St. Ignatius was held January 4 - 11, 2009 at the Jesuit Retreat House in Parma, Ohio. This is a powerful, in-depth introduction to one of the most time-honored approaches to discernment in the Catholic faith tradition. It allows students the opportunity to go deeper in the process of interiorizing their faith - that is, appropriating the faith at a deep, personal level.

Students who were interested were asked to meet three times prior to the event with a spiritual director to discern their participation. Students need to be in the habit of daily prayer to benefit from the retreat. Accordingly, they are given 10-minute daily prayer assignments as part of the discernment. It’s like training for a marathon — students are

invited to learn the rhythm of prayerful preparations, and they need to avoid “peaking” in their training too early. They are asked to pray, and through practice, increase the amount of time they can spend in prayer. The goal is to be able to pray 1/2 hour to 1 hour, 4 times per day. One challenge is for students to keep up prayer and preparation in the weeks leading up to the start of the retreat.

Once the retreat began, three retreatants met daily with their spiritual director for up to an hour. In between these daily meetings, they were asked to engage in the four silent prayer sessions, for up to an hour each. Retreatants also participated in daily Eucharist, where the spiritual director was invited to offer the homily or post-communion reflection. ■

Student Reflections

Catch the Spirit served as a real “ignition” to Lent. I left a different person than I’d come. I’m pretty sure all of the more than 50 Newman students attending were deeply changed. We traveled back to our campuses with a renewed vigor to serve and worship.

Jacob Lamoureux – Oberlin

Like the story of the prodigal son, we have our own story that is unfinished and waiting to be written. How is it that we want to finish our story? Do we want to turn from our ways and become more like Christ? Or do we stay where it is comfortable and allow the glory to come from others rather than from God? This Lenten season we are given our chance to do just that. Change our ways and let God work in us. *Morgan Lewis – Akron*

The *Catch the Spirit Retreat '09* was a great opportunity to make new friends, to further develop the old, to explore our faith and to get away from our busy run-around college lives for a weekend. I found it particularly moving in my own search to walk closer with God.

Maggie Lusina – CSU

Opportunity to Encounter God

An *Eight Day Directed Silent Retreat* is an opportunity to encounter God in a new way for many students. In my first retreat of this type, I remember being very unsettled, I remember being very restless, and I remember wanting to get away from the retreat center. The students have shared with me some of these same experiences. But I also hear from the students that the retreat has “changed their lives.” Their lives are changed because they learn how to allow God to speak to the core of who they are. Once settled in with the quiet and really engaged with the spiritual director openly and honestly, I know that they can truly deepen their relationship with Jesus Christ. The students spend quality time in prayer and reflection, and they learn more about themselves in relationship to God and others. If they are preparing to make a significant decision, they can respond to the movement of the Spirit. Each of these experiences is potentially life changing and truly a gift to the student.

Fr. Vince Harok

BUSY STUDENT RETREAT

In October, eight students participated in the *Busy Student Retreat* at the College of Wooster. At the College of Wooster, the retreat has the tradition of being ecumenical, and it was led by spiritual directors Sr. Mary Ann Spangler, H.M., and Rev. Barbara Battin, a Presbyterian minister serving at Sinclair College. The theme of the retreat this year was “Called to Lead, Called to Serve,” and the participating students were all leaders of campus Christian groups, including the Catholic Student Association and several Protestant groups. The goal was to give student leaders, who pour so much of their time and energy into serving others, an opportunity to build up their own spiritual lives and to reflect on the gifts that they bring to their ministry. This ecumenical retreat helped to build relationships among students from different Christian groups who may not have many opportunities to share their faith. The students appreciated the chance to refocus on the importance of their relationship with God within their busy lives. *Karen Hahn*



“Portable Retreat” For Students “On The Go”

Newman Catholic Campus Ministry in the Diocese of Cleveland has been sponsoring *Busy Student Retreats* for students on our seven campuses for well over a decade.

The concept is both simple and profound. College students often become overwhelmed with the pressures from carrying a full load of classes, working to pay the bills, and participating in extra-curricular activities. While spirituality is important for many of them, they can't seem to find the time they would like to pray or to reflect upon their relationship with God.

In a *Busy Student Retreat*, students meet with a professionally trained and certified retreat director for approximately 45

ONGOING INDIVIDUAL SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

On five of the seven campuses we serve, students are taking advantage of spiritual direction. For example, about 1½ years ago at Baldwin Wallace, two religious sisters began making monthly visits to campus, and now, anywhere between ten and fifteen students meet them. Many of the students meet regularly with one of the sisters, signing up each month just to check in and keep their spiritual life on track in the midst of a busy college schedule. Others meet only when there is a crisis or major event approaching. As with those who meet regularly, they want to consider these events through the lens of their faith. From my perspective as a campus minister, I have seen visible benefits both to the program as a whole and for the individual students. Quiet, uncertain freshmen grow into confident sophomores, juniors, and seniors who join the Newman leadership team and develop into capable leaders. The grounding they receive through spiritual direction and the self-

Busy Student Reflections

The *Busy Student Retreat* helped me re-center my life on my relationship to God. I made an effort to begin each day with a short prayer, something I'd always thought I should do but for which I had never made time until that week of retreat. This small but motivated effort, along with spending time in conversation with my spiritual director, helped me look at each day in a new light. I felt a sense of reflection and quiet conversation with God that lasted the whole week. Because I was on campus and still immersed in my usual schedule, I could actively put into practice tools for a more prayerful life. The habits I developed for that week of retreat are still with me, helping me remain aware of God's presence throughout the day. *Katherine Hoyson – CWRU*

I learned from this retreat the importance of making time for God, no matter how busy life may become. I also realized what I had been missing out on: a deep friendship with God. In college, it is so easy to lose that friendship due to challenges, temptations, and crazy schedules. By the end of the retreat, I was so disappointed in myself that I had let worldly things interfere in my relationship with Christ. The *Busy Student Retreat* was definitely positive in that aspect: it opened my eyes to Christ present and working in my life. *Jacki Komos – Wooster*

minutes of individual spiritual direction every day for four consecutive days, and have the opportunity for individual and communal prayer each day, right on campus. The directors travel, for one week each year, to each of our campuses to make this event available “on location”. The result is a powerful vehicle for bringing students closer to God without requiring them to leave campus.

Over the years, hundreds of students have taken advantage of this wonderful invitation to spiritual growth. The Diocese of Cleveland was among the first in the country to offer this dynamic spiritual practice, which has become a national and international phenomenon. In recent years, record numbers of our students (nearly 100 last year) have accepted the invitation to “Retreat”. ■

reflection abilities they gain have benefits not only for them and for the greater ministry while they are students on campus, but also down the road as they enter their professions, attend to their spiritual lives, and join parishes and volunteer organizations that will allow them to share their gifts with others. *Kirsten Kolaja*



NURTURED IN FAITH

I must confess it has been some time since my last retreat. This issue of the Newman News reminds me that every retreat experience moved me to a better relationship with my God and or my neighbors. The various retreat opportunities on our campuses are doing the same for our students and faculty. The results are evident in the enclosed articles. There are increased commitments to prayer, service and the Catholic community.

Faith opportunities on campus have an enduring impact on the lives of the student participants. I hear from alumni who now in later years are very active in their faith and the Church. They frequently refer to Newman as a source of their adult faith life. Friendships, commitments to service, and dedication to prayer often began in their college days. The Catholic communities on campus are nurtured in faith through Newman Catholic Campus Ministry (NCCM).

Students are busy preparing for their life after college.

Most will go on to careers in business, education, science, medicine, etc. Many will marry and have families. Some will choose a religious vocation. Whatever gifts, talents and opportunities lead them to their vocation, we must remember that the vocation is not the end goal. It is simply where God wants us to be to work out our salvation. NCCM helps to keep God in the equation during this time of preparation.

The Newman Foundation is proud to sponsor many of the retreats and other faith opportunities. We continue to work toward maintaining a strong Catholic presence on the college campuses within the Diocese of Cleveland, through NCCM. We need your help to do this. Please consider a contribution to The Newman Foundation so that we may continue the ongoing funding of these worthwhile activities.

Frank P. Hackett, President.

The Newman Foundation of Northern Ohio

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Student Reflection

Spiritual direction is a wonderful way for me to take some time for myself and to reflect on how I am living my life and where God is amidst the chaos. Whether I am having a good day or a bad day, my spiritual director always helps me find more meaning and connection to my faith. It is a wonderful emotional support, especially because I am so far away from home. If I had to pick one thing from my college experience that helped me to grow and develop the most as a person it would be spiritual direction. I can say with some certainty that I would not have gained as much as I have from my college experience without spiritual direction.

Claire Allen - Baldwin Wallace

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