



NEWMAN NEWS

in the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland



Strangers No Longer: Together on a Journey of Hope

College of Wooster and Baldwin-Wallace College

A Mission Trip to Camden, Mississippi

Six students from the College of Wooster spent a week of their spring break immersed in the community of Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Camden, Mississippi, a rural, African-American parish. The time in Camden included working in teams to interview elders in the community for an oral history project, doing some repair work on the home of one of the older community members, and helping with the spring break day camp for middle school children that the parish runs.

The most powerful part of the trip for many of the Wooster students was the opportunity to listen as the elders shared their experiences of growing up in the Deep South during the time of sharecropping, segregation, and through the civil rights movement. "The best thing you can do to help others is to try to understand them," said one College of Wooster student reflecting on the week.

It was an enlivening experience to worship with an African-American Catholic community where the style of music and preaching was quite different than the style of worship that the members of our group were used to. Several of the students remarked how witnessing the faith, vitality, and genuine welcome of the community at Sacred Heart in Camden made them want to be more involved in their faith too. One student observed, "Faith is the strength that keeps a community together; it does not matter the age, the past, or the color of our skin.

Karen Habn.

Dear Newman Sisters and Brothers,

My name is Sophia Viglione, a student at Baldwin-Wallace College. In early March, 2011, I was blessed with the opportunity to travel to Camden, Mississippi for a spring break trip through Missionary Cenacle Volunteers. I was accompanied by seven other Newman students on the mission trip: Rachel Bellis, Kaitlin Chervenak, Nathan Howell, Kirby Luczak, Jared Missler, Tori Scozzaro and Rebecca Trinter. The eight of us spent a week at Sacred Heart Parish—a predominately African-American parish in a rural community.



Sacred Heart Church, Camden, MS

The trip was amazing. We got to help out the parish while learning a lot from the parishioners about love, life, family and community. The main lesson that I think we learned as a group can be summed up through the following quote by Mahatma Gandhi: "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others." As a group, we found ourselves in the sense that we invested so much of our hearts into this parish in just one week, and ended up learning a lot about our own personal identities and faith. We became quickly accustomed to the raw, natural beauty and happiness that can be found within simplicity, and as a result of this, I'd bet that if you see any of us students walking around Baldwin-Wallace campus and ask us how we are, we would smile and say, "I'm blessed," because that is the ultimate truth we experienced—God's blessings.

In Christ, Sophia M. Viglione

Baldwin-Wallace, Wooster & Akron

Newman Students Collaborate: The 2011 March for Life

In January, Baldwin-Wallace, the College of Wooster, and the University of Akron teamed up to take a bus of 50 students to the March for Life in Washington, D.C. to be



witnesses to the sanctity of life along with hundreds of thousands from across the U.S. With the financial generosity of individual donors, each college, and the Church of the Resurrection in Maryland, the students were able to spend Sunday in D.C. visiting the Smithsonians, government buildings, and the National Basilica before the March on Monday. They participated in the Youth Rally at the Verizon Center – a praise & worship session, speakers, and Mass – with thousands of other young adult pro-life students and then walked from the Mall to the Supreme Court carrying signs in a peaceful march to protest Roe v. Wade. One student said the Youth Rally was “seriously awesome. I believe [it] prepared us for the march in a beautiful, passionate way.” Maria Bedell, president of Newman and the Students for Life groups at Akron said, “It’s so cool to see more students getting involved and especially seeing how collaborating with other campuses can really be beneficial. That’s what it’s all about – uniting together to witness to the truth. As long as we’re in this together we will attain social justice for all – born and unborn.”

Case Western Reserve University

Do More Than Simply “Talk the Talk” - Get a Glimpse of God

The Labre program—sponsored by Newman and the Center for Civic Engagement and Learning at Case Western Reserve—goes out every Monday with three to nine students in order to meet individuals or families experiencing homelessness on the streets of Cleveland. It’s named after St. Benedict Joseph Labre, and began last year as a powerful way for CWRU students to break out of their proverbial bubble, and gives them a chance to learn about the dire circumstances faced by many people in the Cleveland area. More importantly, it allows students an opportunity to develop relationships and understanding with the people they may pass on the street corner every day. Over a hot meal and conversation, they can make a difference in each other’s lives; the conversations seem to be the most appreciated aspect. Later, during the van ride home, students take time to reflect together. The student leaders also participate in the monthly coordination meetings for service providers hosted by the Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless, to sharpen their skills for service to mercy and justice.

Labre has affected Kelly Rogers’ spiritual life. Kelly is a pre-dental senior from Columbus. “I am able to see God more clearly in every person in my day to day life. I can often see ways that God is communicating with me through the people experiencing homelessness that we see week to week, and that has carried over into my daily life as well. I have learned that if you truly focus on the humanity of each person you speak to (homeless or not), that’s when you get the best glimpse of God.”

Joey Baum, senior starting quarterback who began Labre with Kelly, reflects that “there was a recent passage in

the Lenten ‘Little Black Book’ that discussed the difference between talking about your faith and acting on your faith. Labre, for me, is one way in which I can do more than simply ‘talk the talk’ in regards to my faith as a Catholic. Labre allows me to put into action the things that I truly believe in, the lessons that Jesus teaches us each Sunday through the Gospel. When I go out to visit homeless individuals each Monday, I cannot wait to get back out there the next week. I want this type of activity, this type of service, to be a part of my every day life. And I know that I will continue to grow in that understanding because of my experience with Labre.”

Devin Shepard, a junior from Chicago and member of Sigma Chi, notes that “instead of having a site where those in need must travel to, we come to them. Each trip is personally rewarding but at the same time brings forth the difficult awareness of how harsh some of these peoples lives are. At first, we barely saw a man who was laying on the ground, trying to sleep in a thin windbreaker that offered little protection from the cold. He had such horrible arthritis that he couldn’t even get up at first and during our conversation we learned that he had such bad frost bite on his feet that some of his toes had to be removed. The hardest part of all this was we didn’t have any clothing, coats or blankets for him because we had just started out and only had food with us due to our low funding. (We gave) our own sweatshirt, fleece and gloves to him, knowing that it would not be enough to keep him warm but hoping it would at least help.”

As written in the prayer that is shared each week, “Poor in the eyes of men and women, rich in the eyes of God, St. Benedict Joseph Labre, pray for us!”

– Tony Vento

Oberlin College

A Light to the Nations: Comprehensive Immigration Reform

“What can the Church contribute to the national debate about immigration reform?” I wondered as I prepared Oberlin’s Fall Parents Weekend Event on the topic. At the same, I became aware of *A Light to the Nations: Comprehensive Immigration Reform and the Church’s Global Commitment to the Poor*, a conference sponsored by Celebration Publications and NCR this past January in San Antonio. I invited students and created a for-credit Winter Term Project. We heard speakers from all sides of the issue and committed to equitable reform. (Visit www.celebrationpublications.org/conference for presentations). Sophomore Lauren’s Muscott provides a brief testimony as to the conference’s immediate and future impact:

“After the passing of Arizona SB 1070 I felt that I had to become more knowledgeable about our current immigration system and the proposed reforms. I have always been empowered by Jesus’ message of love. When my Campus Minister, Debbie Dacone, invited me to attend a conference in San Antonio about the Church’s fight for comprehensive immigration reform I knew it was the perfect opportunity to see how I could put my faith into action to protect the sanctity and dignity of human life. This tenet was the conference’s central focus and attending opened my eyes to the fact that “loving thy neighbor” means that when we look into the eyes of the migrant, we look into the eyes of the crucified Jesus. When he was hungry, thirsty, naked, imprisoned, what did you do? This struck me to the core and

I am committed to fighting for a more just and equitable immigration system this summer and beyond.”

– *Debbie Dacone*



Above: Lauren Muscott, Kyle Kessler, and John Geisler surround Sr. Mary McCauley, BVM who opened St. Bridget’s Church to families amid the chaos of the 2008 ICE raid on a meat packing plant in Postville, Iowa.

Oberlin College

A Culture of Peace, Love and Justice

Oberlin College as an institution hosts a veritable slew of different service trips, events, fundraisers, and the like. The ‘Day of Service’ is the most prominent and widely attended service event on campus. ‘Immerse Yourself in Service’ is one of the premiere service-related groups on campus and offers many trips for students to participate in. Part of our mission in the Oberlin Newman Catholic Community is to give back to our community, participate in service-related events, and represent the face of Christ in the midst of our colleagues and professors. Many Newman students play an active role in these campus activities and some acquire leadership positions within service-related groups. There are also faith-based events and off-campus organizations that students participate in regularly. For example, the Interfaith Hospitality Network is a network of various local churches that host homeless families for certain weeks while they work through their struggles. Volunteers cook meals, clean linens, and provide emotional support and sometimes transportation for these families.

Oberlin is on the forefront of the environmental movement. David Orr, one of the founders of the environmental studies department at Oberlin, is a prominent scholar in the field of environmental research. He laid the foundations that nurtured Oberlin’s progressive attitude

toward environmental justice and helped implement the George Jones farm, a small organic farm down the street from the college. Last semester a group of students from our Newman Community went to help close up the farm for the winter. The experience was fulfilling for them, knowing that they cared for God’s creation and for the people who benefit from their food.

One of the unique and important features of a religious attitude when participating in service is the unity of God’s unending love for each and every one of us. As important as the human aspect is, it cannot be separated from the divine aspect of social work and justice. Newman brings a nuance to these service opportunities that is refreshing and spiritually motivated. It is our duty as Catholics to work hand in hand with those of other backgrounds, faiths, and cultures to provide for those in need and promote a culture of peace, love, and justice. By reaching out to our broader Oberlin community we are evangelizing through service and helping bring those we serve closer to God. Service will continue to be an important aspect of the Newman Catholic Ministry at Oberlin College. Hopefully, through our commitment and dedication to our sisters and brothers in Christ, we can help create a better world to live in.

– *John Geisler, Liturgical and Student Coordinator*



*Alberta R. Hensley, President,
The Newman Foundation of Northern Ohio*

A Pastoral Letter Concerning Migration.

Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope

In the Church no one is a stranger, and the Church is not foreign to anyone, anywhere. As a sacrament of unity and thus a sign and a binding force for the whole human race, the Church is the place where illegal immigrants are also recognized and accepted as brothers and sisters. ... The Church must, therefore, welcome all persons regardless of race, culture, language, and nation with joy, charity, and hope. It must do so with special care for those who find themselves—regardless of motive—in situations of poverty, marginalization, and exclusion.

*The Catholic Bishops of Mexico and the United States
January 22, 2003.*

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