



NEWMAN NEWS

in the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland



The University of Akron

“Mercy is taking another person’s misery as one’s own.”

- St. Thomas Aquinas

The Jubilee Year of Mercy began at the University of Akron with members of the Newman community choosing to bring their talents and treasures to various community service projects in the City of Cleveland over winter break. Although considered “service” students also shared the “misery” and the “plight” of those they came to serve.

Twenty-three Newman members (photo above) participated in a week of service to: The Westside Catholic Shelter, Malachi House, Migration and Refugee Services, LArch, Greater Cleveland Food Bank, Metro Catholic and the Julie Billart School for special needs. Sr. Kathleen Hine, a Sister of Notre Dame working with Cuvilly House, coordinated the students’ week of service, along with Vice-President Marysarah Menkhaus. The efforts of Newman Catholic Campus Ministry were well supported by Sister

Kathleen and the other sisters serving the young adults of the Diocese of Cleveland at Cuvilly House.

Along with the work, the opportunity for guided meditation, spiritual direction, eucharistic adoration, and Mass allowed the students to grow spiritually as well as in the context of mercy and service. The following comments of the students indicate that they had “taken another person’s misery as their own” and worked toward alleviating that misery in any way they were able.

“Working with people who are less fortunate than we and seeing their happiness truly struck my heart in ways I didn’t think possible.”

“I was so inspired by both the children and the faculty at Julie Billart. They truly care about the wellbeing of each other and they strive to make each other better.”



Case Western Reserve University

Beyond Fair-Weather Fellowship . . .

In January, the student leadership of our Labre Homeless Outreach Ministry received the news that their longtime friend, Jim Vitu, affectionately known as Jimbo or Alabama Jim, had died suddenly of natural causes only weeks after finally moving indoors. With the invitation of Jim's nephew, Pastor Shawn Vitu of Valley View Village Church, three of Jim's long term CWRU friends were able to attend his memorial service on January 15.

We had known that Jim was a recovering alcoholic, and some students of John Carroll University, CWRU Newman, and St. Ignatius High School, had begun visiting him 15 years ago when he was drinking so heavily he lost several toes to frostbite. Jim's (formerly estranged) family shared their

memories of who Jim who, by the grace of God, had been in recovery. With his sobriety, Jim's innate creativity and woodworking skills blossomed. With scraps of wood and other scavenged materials, he built a three room home with an improvised wood stove surrounded by a large collection of whimsical wood sculptures. These sculptures ranged from the practical – ornamental tables and chairs, to the ingenious – a system of troughs and barrels to collect rainwater from the roof, to the fanciful – a cat playground and a yellow submarine.

Jimbo provided warm hospitality in his wonderland of a home – not only to the outreach ministries bringing him food, but also to other homeless individuals needing shelter from the cold. He would take them in and do his best to convince them to face and beat their addictions as he had. The fences and outside walls of his home were adorned with wooden signs attesting to his conversion. Several proclaimed, "God created me; Jesus saved me; Holy Spirit guides me," or "Seven days without prayer makes one weak."

A gentle man in recovery, Jim also had the courage to intervene when the drunken argument of a neighboring homeless couple turned violent. The young woman was in a coma with head injuries for several days, so Jim's quick action probably saved her life. He named his makeshift home "Oh-Well," which was his one-word summary for the familiar Serenity Prayer; "God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference."

Sharon Bramante, Campus Minister



College of Wooster

Students Use the Year of Mercy as a Springboard into Prison Ministry

"A breath of fresh air that has revitalized our organization and the work that we do." That is how Susanne Figge describes the new involvement of the Catholic Campus Ministry students this year in the Wayne and Holmes County Behind Bars and Behind Association (BB&B). BB&B is a community outreach group comprised of faith-based organizations and social agencies that seek to help those currently incarcerated, and those readjusting to life as a returning citizens. The newest members of this group come in the form of 10 students from the College of Wooster's Catholic Campus Ministry.

"We spent a lot of time last year looking at the way we did service and outreach as an organization. We talked about our understanding of justice, and we looked at what areas were being underserved in the community. In the end, it was obvious to us where we were needed," says Zoe Hostetler, the chair of the service ministry for Wooster's campus ministry.

Once the students decided that a new venture into prison and jail ministry is where they wanted to focus their efforts, they needed to decide what that would look like. What they have developed is a deep and multifaceted approach to serve those on the farthest fringes of society.

Each month members of the ministry go into the Wayne

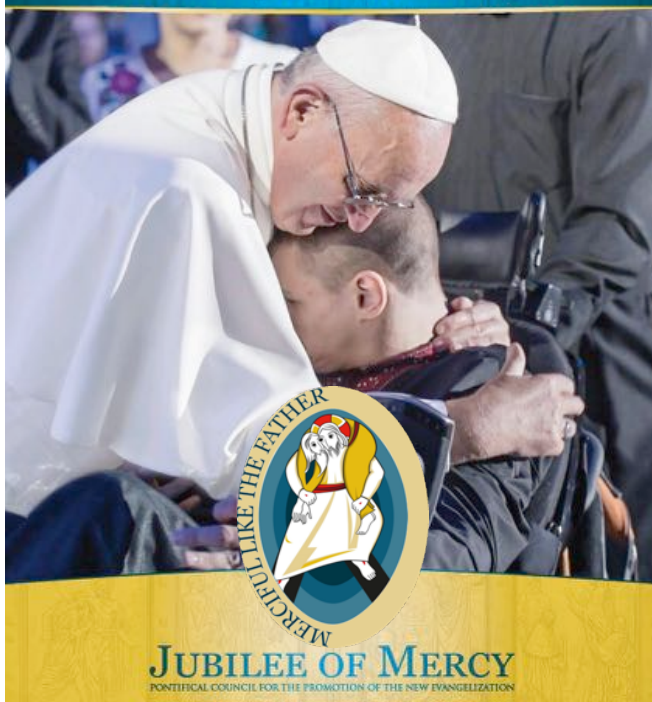
County Jail and run a Bible study. "Many of the participants are serving sentences of one year or less, but we strive to use our time well so that we can build real relationships with the participants," said Hostetler. Additionally, ten other students help facilitate two monthly support groups for returning citizens who have been released into society. The students help lead discussions on what it means to have a second chance and are currently developing programs to help with résumé writing and budgeting skills.

"Our hope is that if we can help the returning citizens stay employed and learn to budget, we can help raise them out of poverty and break the cycle of re-incarceration. We know that about 78% of those released from prison will find their way back there again. We want to help fix that," said Kaitlyn Rayl, the Student Campus Minister for the College of Wooster.

The involvement of the students, particularly that of Rayl and Hostetler, who serve as the primary leaders of the ministry team, has not gone unnoticed. In April the two will be presented with the Catholic Charities of Wayne Ashland and Medina Young Adult Justice Award at the annual John Paul II awards banquet.

Nate Addington, Campus Minister

December 8, 2015 - November 30, 2016



This Jubilee is a privileged moment for the Church to learn to choose only “what pleases God most”. What is it that “pleases God most”? Forgiving his children, having mercy on them, so that they may in turn forgive their brothers and sisters, shining as a flame of God’s mercy in the world. This is what pleases God most.

Pope Francis, Dec. 9, 2015; www.im.va

Baldwin- Wallace University

Music Nourishes the Spirit

A grant from the Newman Foundation makes it possible for Melissa Rusu to serve as the Music Director for the Baldwin Wallace Newman Center. Since we are not formally associated with any parish, we have the privilege of hosting our own Sunday Masses in the university’s Interfaith Chapel, and we have become renowned for the richness of our liturgies. Students and visitors alike remark upon how any parish would envy our music. This of course has much to do with the extraordinary talent from BW Conservatory students who are part of Newman, but it is all coordinated by Ms. Rusu, who is herself an alum of that same conservatory.

Melissa has been playing liturgical music since 1999 at St. Joseph’s in Strongsville, and has been the Music Director for BW Newman since 2004. She has a gift for layering contemporary liturgical music with a strong piano and many-textured vocals. Melissa is an essential part of a welcoming liturgical experience, one which nourishes the spirit for students who are seeking to keep their faith alive on campus. She says, “I love the hominess of it [at BW] and feeling like part of a family.”

Steve Eyeran, Campus Minister

Ashland University

Merci, Mercy!

This spring semester we are taking our cue from Pope Francis, seeking to make the Jubilee Year of Mercy the central focus of all that we are as the “Church on campus.”

In *Misericordiae Vultus* the Pope reminds us: “At times we are called to gaze even more attentively on mercy so that we may become a more effective sign of the Father’s action in our lives.” For the Newman Community at AU, this means that every aspect of ministry provides an opportunity to “gaze even more attentively” and/or “become a more effective sign.” Because of the D.C. blizzard, our planned trip to March for Life was cancelled; instead, we attended the diocesan Mass for Life, entering the Cathedral through the Doors of Mercy. Our Newman Night schedule included a 3-week series on the Jubilee of Mercy. Bookending that series were presentations on the Ethics of Life and Peace. The month of February ended with a festival of praise and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Later in the semester with Jeanne Marie Miles, Bishop Gries, and Fr. Mrosso, we will take a closer look at the grace conferred in the sacraments of the Church.

Of course, the Pope also reminds us: “God does not limit himself merely to affirming his love, but makes it visible and tangible... By its very nature, [Love] indicates something concrete: intentions, attitudes, and behaviors that are shown by daily living” (*Misericordiae Vultus*). Throughout the semester AU Newman members, though our Social Justice Team, have many opportunities to partner with local social ministries like Ashland Christian Health Center and Ashland Pregnancy Center. As well, Faith Formation and Social Ministry Teams help members to grow together in faith and friendships through small groups, Liturgy of the Hours, daily Mass at St. Edward’s, and stations of the cross, as well as through social events like game nights and a lenten fish fry. Finally, as I write, seventeen of us are making final preparations for our spring break mission to Nicaragua. We look forward to offering and encountering the love of God during our time with Mustard Seed Communities.

In all of these ways, and in ways not yet recognized or experienced, the AU Newman Community is becoming increasingly aware that “mercy is the force that reawakens us to new life and instills in us the courage to look to the future with hope” (*Misericordiae Vultus*). For that, we are truly grateful. *Merci, Mercy!*

University of Akron

Spring Break Project

On August 11, 2014, six inches of rain fell in Detroit and surrounding communities, flooding tens of thousands of basements with storm water mixed with sewage. Severe mold problems that resulted from flooded basements are causing respiratory problems for some of the residents. Spring Break 2016 had fifteen University of Akron students traveling to Detroit to help Mennonite Disaster Service Volunteers and the residents of Detroit return their neighborhoods and homes into livable safe spaces.



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Letter from the President

Continuing Series: A Personal Relationship with Christ

Each of us starts with the same daily responsibilities; we get up, get dressed and prepare for the day. Does our human commonality end there? Our unity with one another extends beyond this because we all individually exercise our God-given free will in our daily responsibilities. By means of our free will, we can choose to deepen our relationship with Christ by imitating Him or we can choose to ignore Christ as He accompanies us during the day. We sacrifice some of our Christian joy each time we choose poorly. Sadly, too many Christians today put off deepening their relationship with Christ for their convenience or temporal gain.

When you watch TV or surf the net are you guided by Christ-like values? Do you give an honest day's effort to your employer? If you run a company is your only concern making a profit? In each of your life experiences, do you ask yourself, what would Christ do? Do your actions serve to deepen your relationship with Christ?

In choosing to relate to Christ by our actions we invite PEACE into our souls and spread PEACE throughout our community and the world. In Christ, self-doubt is erased and confidence is instilled in our heart and soul.

In regard to his personal relationship with Christ, Saint Anselm reflects:

“Go before me with your grace; follow me with your mercy. Take from me whatever is not from you, for I hate whatever is from me; and I still hope in you.”

As you begin your day remind yourself to fully embrace the Truths taught by the Church; open the Scriptures, spend time in adoration and pray throughout the day! You'll find a new life spring up inside of you. You'll find inner joy that didn't exist before. You will find the peace of Christ.

*Sincerely In Christ,
 Tony Crookston, President
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