50th Anniversary: A Long And Lasting Relationship

- Myra Belser

This year, Fr. Tom Ogg reached a milestone in celebrating his Golden Jubilee of priestly ordination. Looking back at his years of ministry, his relationship with the Newman Center has come full circle.

In 1958, Tom Ogg came to the University of Wyoming to study agriculture. His involvement in Campus Ministry was the result of joining an inquiry class to obtain answers to faith questions. He became president of the Newman Club the same year they were awarded the outstanding Newman Club in the United States.

The priest at St. Paul's at that time, Fr. Charles Taylor, began a series, *Newman School of Catholic Thought*, empowering students to take a closer look at the way they live their lives. "Fr. Taylor's inspiration, the intellectual writings of John Henry Cardinal Newman, and God's pushing and saying, 'this is what I want you to do' led me to make a deal with God to consider a vocation to the priesthood," explains Fr. Tom.

Following ordination in 1968, he became an assistant to Fr. Taylor in Laramie. He was assigned as the first Director of Vocations for the Diocese of Cheyenne by Bishop Hubert Newell in 1975. He found this appointment challenging for several reasons. He explains, "I was in a different parish every weekend and felt lonely and lacking support, just like Jesus in ways. But I learned a lot of things about myself." His success in surfacing men discerning priesthood came not through mentioning vocations but by asking "Who are the best teens in the parish; who are your leaders?"

With a degree in marriage counseling it was fitting that Fr. Ogg became a mentor priest for Worldwide Marriage Encounter. Forty-three years later he is still incredibly active on the local, state, national, and international levels. After 4 years of traveling from Ten Sleep to Denver International Airport, he accepted Fr. Rob Spaulding's proposition to a temporary residence at St. Paul's. This invitation has greatly eased his time on the road plus he generously helps with the ministry needs of the community during his stays in Laramie.

Fr. Tom celebrated Eucharist with St. Paul's Newman Center to commemorate his 50th anniversary of ordination to the priesthood. In fact, he was able to visit all the Wyoming parishes where he has ministered during the last half century. Fr. Ogg was a bit emotional as he thanked the community for the love and support shown in forming him as a student, as a priest in residence while vocation director, and currently, as temporary priest in residence.

We thank Fr. Ogg for his hard work and sacrifice and countless hours of ministry.

Senior Reflection

Graduating senior, Emma Thielk, offered a reflection at the late-night student liturgy in May. Reminiscing she recalls, "God has been present, even when I didn't know it. In college, I was treating God like a lucky rabbit's foot for when I had a big test or paper coming up. Thankfully this has changed."

Emma, like many freshman, came to church to appease her parents. She attended Liturgy but did her best to get in and get out without any personal engagement. "Little did I know how I would be impacted by this place," she says.

During her Sophomore year, Emma attended Mass with friends, but had no desire to learn about Catholic beliefs. She relates, "I felt that 'good' Catholics never questioned their faith and I was content by occasionally going to Mass."

During her Junior year something clicked. Emma felt unsettled and wanted to have a better understanding of Catholicism. "I have always been a person who asked questions in class," she explains. "Why should this differ with my faith? So, I started to inquire about prayers, devotions, and Catholic practices. This in turn sparked conversations with other students about their faith experience. 1 Peter 3:15 states 'Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you.' God graces us with different gifts. Fortunately, he gave me the gift of asking questions. By utilizing this gift, I became more connected at the Newman Center. This fosters what God gives us; gifts that will spread God's kingdom on earth long after we leave college."

St. Paul's Newman Center
University Catholic Parish
1800 East Grand Avenue
Laramie WY 82070-4316

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

"Peace begins with a smile..."
-Mother Teresa

A glimpse of SEARCH Retreat and Habitat for Humanity Mission Trip to Oklahoma

Upper photographs from left: Lillie Rodgers, Director of Campus Ministry, Zach Parsons (East Wenatchee WA), Hannah Bertelson (Midland TX), Fr. Rob, Pastor, Andrew Miller (Wheat Ridge CO), Kristopher Knesek (Gonzales TX). Lower photographs from left: Julie Cathey (Gillette WY), Sandy Rupp (Laramie WY), Eliza Ann Walsh (Ft. Collins CO), Rosemary Hopson (Gillette WY), Elizabeth Winnop (Sheridan WY), Chaney Peterson (Sheridan WY).

COWBOY Catholic

St. Paul's Newman Center
University Catholic Community

Fall 2018

"Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love."
- Mother Teresa

Katie Caskey (Papillion, NE) and Dillon Farley (Glenrock WY) at Nazareth Farm in Salem, West Virginia

St. Paul's Newman Center Staff

Father Rob Spaulding
Pastor
rob@newmancenter.org

Anthony Allen
Director of Pastoral Ministry
anthony@newmancenter.org

Lillie Rodgers
Director of Campus Ministry
lillie@newmancenter.org

Tom Quinlivan
Director of Pastoral Music & Liturgy
tom@newmancenter.org

Sandy Gaddis
Parish Business Manager
sandy@newmancenter.org

Myra Belser
Communications Coordinator
myra@newmancenter.org

Sandra Loza
Administrative Assistant
sandra@newmancenter.org

Building Relationships & Forming Disciples

The recent snow and road closures have reminded us what it's like to be a Cowboy Catholic in Wyoming. While the temperature outside is falling, the energy inside St. Paul's continues to rise. It was a challenging start to this academic year with serious illnesses effecting staff members and our families. This is primary reason for the delay in this edition of Cowboy Catholic.

There are many examples of the Holy Spirit at work this fall but the most obvious is the excitement of our students to invite their friends to mass and other student events. With the public news of the tragedy of abuse and coverup in our church, you might think students would be hesitant to share their faith, or even acknowledge being Catholic. To my surprise, the opposite is happening. In the past two months, I've received more phone calls, emails, and texts than ever before from students who want to talk about faith. Almost all these students were encouraged or invited by a friend at St. Paul's.

We are continuing to learn the importance of forming relationships of friendship and discipleship among students. Through the leadership of Wyatt Overton, a Campus Ministry Intern, there are now 7 small groups of students meeting weekly. Each group is studying something different from books of the Bible to the writings of C.S. Lewis. As you can imagine, these groups become important sources of support and Christian friendship as students navigate the challenges of college life.

Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." —Mt 4:19

Fr. Rob Spaulding-one of our fishers of many

Thank you for the many ways you support the ministry of St. Paul's Newman Center. Please continue to pray for our students and the staff of St. Paul's as we journey together to encounter Christ.

-Fr. Rob Spaulding

In Memory - Margaret Tobin

November 22, 1920 - May 26, 2018

On May 26, after 97 full years of life, Margaret "Peg" Tobin was welcomed into the loving arms of our God. Peg had been at St. Paul's since 1964 and often referred to herself as the matriarch of the community. Family and friends gathered at St. Paul's on June 11 to remember Peg. Paying tribute were friend and traveling companion Reverend Marilyn Engstom and colleague, Charlotte Davis. UW President, Dr. Laurie Nichols, shared a declaration naming the former Pi Beta Phi house as the Tobin House.

A true Wyomingite coming from the small town of Midwest, Peg served the University of Wyoming and St. Paul's Newman Center with an infectious optimism and belief in the goodness of every person. I am grateful to God for her life and her love.

Peg in her familiar Volkswagen

Listening to God's Voice. -Lillie Rodgers

Last spring, thirty college students from St. Paul's Newman Center welcomed Bishop Steven to a "Discernment Dinner;" a program that encourages vocational discernment over a meal. Bishop Steven shared his own vocation journey, particularly the tension between his love for ranch-work and questions about seminary. He encouraged the students to take time for silence amid our culture of constant noise, pointing out how the daily activities of riding in the tractor in silence and gazing on God's creation had become prayer.

Bishop Steven noted that following the Lord's call is not always the path that one would choose, as it can be challenging, yet it brings a sense of peace and personal fulfillment. In his words, it "feels right." Wyatt Overton loved hearing from Bishop Steven. "I'm in the process of applying for seminary now and often I have doubts about my call. I feel I need to be sure of my vocation right now! Hearing that Bishop Steven spent so long in discerning and is now doing amazing work for the Church was encouraging to me. Knowing that God has great plans for me helped ease my fears about the future."

The conversation turned to Pope Francis and his prophetic witness, which Bishop Steven is striving to imitate. Bishop Steven explained that being a prophet means speaking the Word of God in bold ways, that often leads to discomfort.

Will Heili and Raul Otamendi dicussing vocations

William Heili's response to Bishop Steven's comments was, "It helped me to see that I should bring a renewed intentionality to my discernment, even as I remain mindful of the nudges of the Holy Spirit toward some choices rather than others. In the end, my discernment is more about learning from God how to respond to His love than for me to find a vocational career."

Bishop Steven asked the students what kind of Church they want to be a part of. Their response was a Church that is built on strong community that welcomes all and a Church that teaches truth and provides opportunities for us to pray.

"Having Bishop Steven share his vocation story with us was really enlightening," said Catherine Winnop. "He has so much passion for our church, and great vision for the future. It showed me that he values our opinions when he asked, 'What would you like to see in our church in the future?' This event really helped me reflect on my vocational path."

The students left the dinner inspired by Bishop Steven's example of discernment and dedication to the work of the Holy Spirit. Together, the shepherd and his flock are making the Church in Wyoming truly great.

Simplicity, Service, Prayer, and Community -Katie Casey and Bailey Schramm

During winter break, 8 students and 2 resident parishioners from St. Paul's Newman Center traveled to Nazareth Farm in Salem, West Virginia for a week-long service retreat. Nazareth Farm is an intentional community built on four cornerstones of simplicity, service, prayer, and community. Students from Cornell University from Ithaca, New York joined our Newman Center crew. Katie Caskey and Bailey Schramm, both sophomore students at UW, reveal their life altering experience.

"Upon arrival, we were welcomed by those living at Nazareth Farm and oriented to their way of living. The first cornerstone, simplicity, helped us connect more with one another, and understand the meaning of solidarity," explains Katie. "Going without makeup, hair products, phones, and other technology for the week allowed us to connect more quickly with one another. We bonded on a deeper level because we didn't have those elements to distract us from being present to each another. One five-minute shower allowance during the week helped open my eyes to my water use and waste and that simple changes in my life can save water."

Bailey adds, "I'm not going to lie, I had some struggles. I was pushed to be more energy-conscious. But these are all parts of the simple living that is the lifestyle at Nazareth Farm. Not having your phone, or make-up, or a watch, really allows you to

[cont. on pg. 4]

Student Leadership: Providing Ministry Opportunities

Andrew Miller & Brenna Fankell

The summer months at the Newman Center are often a time to slow down and take a breath. However, this year was unique with over 20 Newman Center students spending the summer in Laramie. Along with impromptu hikes and a lively lake outing, these summer sojourners sought out numerous opportunities to gather together for friendship, food, and much more.

Continuing service to those experiencing poverty and homeless in Denver, Brenna Fankell rallied a group of individuals to provide street ministry with *Christ in the City*. Stationed downtown, students interacted while serving lunch or handing out needed items. "Socks are always high in demand," says Brenna. "I connected with an older gentleman when we discovered we both grew up in North Denver." Being authentically present and entering into simple conversations create a sense of human dignity, bringing meaning and friendship to lives who have so little while living on the streets. Students also experience the benefits of ministry that embody the spirit of Christ.

The newly remodeled student center, Jericho House, has been the perfect summer hangout for students to gather. One of these students, Andrew Miller, has become the summer chef preparing a weekly meal for his Campus Ministry companions. "I wanted a get-together that mirrors Sunday Supper during the school year." Rousing games of charades and comradery following

mealtime is a great opportunity for students to linger and strengthen bonds of friendship.

Students taking leadership to initiate and plan activities during these summer months have a positive impact on the continued success of Campus Ministry during the Fall. Their spirit of hospitality and inclusiveness will be put to work to welcome all who walk through the doors of St. Paul's Newman Center.

Nazareth Farm [cont. from pg. 3]

be immersed in the lives of those around you rather being focused on yourself." Bailey goes on to say, "I think the biggest thing I took away, which was exhibited in all of the cornerstones, was to act with intentionality."

Implementing the cornerstone of service took the students into the local community doing home repairs for people in substandard living conditions. Beyond the actual project, the service members make a point to grow relationships with their homeowners too. "This helped me realize that service can be a lot more than just painting a kitchen or putting up drywall," explains Katie. "You also serve through conversation with the home owner and valuing the repair project for that person instead of thinking it is just a job that needs to get done."

Bailey adds, "There's a quote in the kitchen at the Farm from St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta that says, 'Wash the plate not because it's dirty, not because you're told to wash it, but because you love the person who will use it next.' On the work sites, every screw became important because of knowing the owner of the house on which we were working. Every prayer was said with someone else in mind. Not showering brought us into solidarity with those who aren't as fortunate. Knowing how everyone is affected in a shared space made me mindful of my actions in the living areas. For me, intentionality is a practice I will continue when certain tasks seem to be pointless."

"A lesson learned is that community extends beyond our immediate circle of family and friends," Katie sums up. "I plan to encourage my roommates to join me in taking shorter showers and to go out of the way to have a conversation with someone you don't know. These are small things I can do with great love, and I am grateful for Nazareth Farm for showing them to me in a new way."

Bailey Schramm, Joe Harlow & Brian O'Flannigan enjoying down time at Nazareth Farm