

COWBOY Catholic

St. Paul's Newman Center
University Catholic Community

Spring 2020



*"Whoever serves me must follow me;
and where I am, my servant also will be."
— John 12:26*

Labor Day Student Hike in the Snowy Mountains

Rejoice in the Lord always.

PARISH STAFF

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Pastor

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The fall semester came and went, and it seems like the “spring” semester is quickly vanishing. Life at St. Paul’s continues at a rapid pace while the Holy Spirit continues to call us deeper into loving service to each other and the broader community of Laramie.

One of the most exciting ways to witness the work of the Holy Spirit is by the growing number of students involved in ministry outside of the walls of St. Paul’s Newman Center. Every Monday a team of students visits women and men in the Laramie Care Center. They are developing personal relationships with those who often feel alone and sometimes even abandoned. On Fridays, another team goes to the Laramie Soup Kitchen. Sometimes they help prepare food and clean up, but their real purpose is to share a meal with those who come to dine. They have learned there is almost always a greater hunger for human companionship and compassion than for food alone. Friday afternoons, another team visits another of Laramie’s care facilities along with the ARK—a residential care center for adults with developmental disabilities. Ask any of the students and they will tell you the time spent in these relationships is the highlight of their week. They have come to understand the privilege of encountering Christ in the face of the poor, the sick, and the homebound.

On a recent Friday night, one of the women from the Care Center was taken to the Hospital. After deciding that treatment would not be effective and the palliative comfort care would be the best option, the greatest need became clear—someone to be with Maryann as she made her final journey to the Lord. Cindy, Maryann’s only family member in Laramie, was exhausted from the previous night in the ER and desperately needed some respite of her own. I began texting our students and within minutes had a group ready to keep vigil with Maryann. I left the hospital with a heart filled with admiration for our students. It wasn’t until the next day that I realized, Emily and Camryn had given up their evening on Valentine’s Day to be with Maryann. That is a true act of love.

The community at St. Paul’s is being formed to encounter Christ in the Eucharist and to take that very presence to God’s people in the world. In response to growing student involvement, we will be hiring an Associate Director of Campus Ministry for the coming year. With your prayers and financial support this would not be possible. Thank you! If you are ever in need of a boost of faith, come join us for Mass at 5 p.m. on Sundays. The energy and love the students bring is a great sign of hope for the future!



Fr. Rob Spaulding
Pastor

Hip, Hip Hooray, for Fr. Hiep Nguyen

Diocesan Associate Vocation's Director in Residence



Seldom will you run into Fr. Hiep Nguyen when he does not greet you with “How’s it going?” accompanied by his generous smile or a thumbs up.

From his high energy and quick walking pace, Fr. Hiep seems to always be on a mission, one of which is to build relationships with the students at St. Paul’s Newman Center and to help them discern their vocation.

Fr. Hiep is from Vietnam and was invited by the Diocese of Cheyenne in 2008 to begin his formation at Conception Seminary College in Missouri to learn English and Philosophy. He continued his education at St. Meinrad School of Theology and was ordained to the priesthood in 2015.

Fr. Hiep has served in Wyoming at St. Mary’s Cathedral in Cheyenne, St. Margaret’s Parish in Riverton and at St. Patrick’s Parish in Casper.

In 2019, Fr. Hiep accepted the assignment of Associate Vocation Director for the Diocese, living in residence at St. Paul’s Newman Center. “I am blessed to be at the Newman Center,” explains Fr. Hiep. “The staff has welcomed me with open arms and supports me in my ministry. They truly show the love of Christ to one another and to the people they serve.”

He goes on to say, “There is an advantage for me living in Laramie to promote vocations. I can interact with UW students on a regular basis. With the large number of Catholic students participating in Campus Ministry it poses many opportunities to help them discern their futures, whether it be priesthood, religious life, married life, or single life. By living here, I am able to talk to and walk with them. Currently, I am in conversation with a graduate student, Emmanuel Iddio, “Fr. Hiep is my spiritual director,” explains Emmanuel. “I am excited about actively discerning my vocation. Meeting with Fr. Hiep has given me a clearer perspective of the discernment process that has been very helpful. Some things we talk about are the importance of a consistent prayer life and how working

through struggles can make room for growth.” Fr. Hiep agrees, “I look forward for our time together. There is always something that we can learn from each other.”

Taking advantage of Sunday Suppers, Fr. Hiep uses this time to converse and share a meal with students on a weekly basis. In addition, Discernment Dinners are offered twice a semester. Twenty or more students gather and are given the opportunity to listen to faith journeys of others in the community. Recently, Fr. Hiep shared the series of events leading up to his vocation as an ordained priest and how he ended up in Wyoming. “It was a joy to share my story of listening to God’s call to make the decisions I did.” Staying



Fr. Hiep with chopping apprentices Matt Jones and Lillie Rodgers



Making Connections at SEARCH Retreat

connected with his roots, Fr. Hiep provided a traditional Vietnamese meal for the dinner to highlight his culinary talents and instruct his kitchen help on the finer skills of chopping vegetables.

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STEWARDSHIP: A CIRCLE OF GIVING AND RECEIVING

Recent alumni made a trip back to St. Paul's to share their beliefs on the importance of financial stewardship.

Rolf and Megan Schuster both attended University of Wyoming and were involved with St. Paul's Newman Center graduating in 2016. They were married at the Newman Center in December of 2016 then moved to Cheyenne where both had new jobs. In 2018 they were blessed with the arrival of their son, Finn.

"People might actually think we have our lives together, and that could not be further from the truth," says Megan. "Most of the time, I feel like Rolf and I are turtles stuck on our backs, flailing around, while a much smaller turtle climbs all over us. That being said, I kept thinking about something that happened to us at the Newman Center. When we first brought Finn to the Newman Center, we were anxious new parents, and he was pretty fussy. As mass came to a close, a woman turned to us and told us what a cute baby we had. 'Here, let me take him for a minute,' she'd suggested. Now, I had no idea who she was and I was desperate, so I handed her our wailing, irritable bundle. Immediately, Finn looked around in confusion and stopped crying. He stared at the lady like a deer in the headlights, but he was quiet. After a few minutes, the woman handed Finn back, and he was back to being his happy, baby self. It was like she had hit his reset button."

Rolf continues, "Family is important. Like all parents, we hope to teach Finn the importance of prioritizing family. However, if he grows up thinking that family is only composed of

the three of us, we have failed him. If family were just about the three of us, we would be irrevocably lost at this point. What about the people who brought us meals after Finn was born, or the friends who offered to watch him when we needed some time, or the kind stranger at mass who held our crying newborn? If we are going to prioritize family, that includes the church. That IS the church."

"So what does this have to do with stewardship?" questions Megan. "Here's the thing. Offering to hold someone's child in church is one manifestation of love and family. Giving financially is another one. When Rolf and I were college students, we gave what we could to the church, and even when we moved to Cheyenne, we continued to give to the Newman Center along with other charities. The funny thing is, we have less money now (what with the mortgage, day care, and infinite boxes of diapers) than we had as college students, but we give a lot more financially than we did then. Why? Because with the birth of our son and the struggle of finding a sense of community in a new city, we realized that there are things that matter and frankly, things that don't. Family, community, taking care of each other... that is what is most important. Sometimes that means eating leftovers instead

of eating out, or buying used appliances off of Facebook instead of buying new (Okay - THAT one just recently backfired on us - we don't recommend that).

Megan goes on to say, "Sometimes it means making coffee at home instead of ordering my favorite drink from Starbucks, but it also means that we are able to contribute to what truly matters."

"Sometimes we are the struggling couple who needs help with their baby, says Rolf. "In a few years, maybe we will be the empathetic arms that offers to hold someone else's child. In all walks of life, we will either need love or give love. Giving and receiving. It's a circle. To us, that is the very definition of family and why we give to the church. Truthfully, it doesn't feel like giving at all. It feels like is being enveloped in a family that is so much bigger than us."



The Schuster Family

Prepared for the Future

by Hannah Bertelson
Reinforced by Faith

Reliving her years involved in Campus Ministry, Hannah Bertelson reflects on her time and lessons learned at St. Paul's Newman Center.

Moving to Wyoming from Texas was a challenge for me. I was 12 hours away from my friends and family and I didn't know a soul at UW. But once I went to mass at the Newman Center I could see how on fire everyone was and how they were truly trying to live out Christ's mission. They took me in as their family and I never felt more at home.

Campus Ministry has been there for me through the ups and downs of my college career. I ran track at UW and I always had the best cheering section from the Newman Center. When I was stressed out from my engineering classes, I would feel a weight lift from my shoulders after attending mass and going to Sunday Supper. It allowed me to de-stress, vent, meet new people, and share in communion with wonderful people.

The most important thing the Newman Center taught me was how to lead and how to take charge of my faith life. I have learned how important it is to lead a life of service and to always find time to read the Bible. I feel so prepared to move away and continue to grow in my faith life and to share what I learned from the Newman Center. I've learned that prayer is powerful, but God needs us to be His hands and feet to reach His children.

I was able to attend several trips to Denver for Christ in the City. It changed my perspective on homelessness and it helped me realize how blessed I am to have my support system; especially because the people I met on the streets had no family to help them. I attended World Youth Day in Panama where I was shown true humility and service from the people of the village of La Candelaria. It made me realize how beautiful it is to offer up everything you have, no matter how little, to God. It touched my heart. I was also able to serve and lead as Director of the SEARCH retreat. Words will never be able to describe the power that weekend holds every semester. It is awesome to witness God changing the hearts of each and everyone of the college students at the end of the three days. I also helped visit the women at the nursing home in Laramie. It showed me how many people are in need of a friendly face and someone to talk to.

Fr. Rob stresses community at the Newman Center because that is where you will see Christ the most. I have made so many friends through Campus Ministry who have challenged me in everything I do. The difference in who I am as a woman and leader have drastically changed since attending St. Paul's. Fr. Rob always warns us that Christianity



is scary because if we are willing, God is going to completely change our lives. And that has been so true for me. I think the reason it was so easy to become involved in service activities and Bible studies was because the people leading them were people I looked up to and admired. They had such strong faith lives and they lead by example. This community draws you in because Christ is obviously at the center. These relationships have meant the world to me because without them, I would never be where I am today.



January 2019 Mission trip to La Candelaria. Hannah with a child from the village. Hannah graduated in December and is working in Indiana.



Home-Away-From-Home

Providing Students A Place to Call Home



At St. Paul's Newman Center, we are reminded that we all are Campus Ministers and have the responsibility to build relationships among the student community. To go one notch further, Home-Away-From-Home Ministry was initiated to encourage long-lasting, one-on-one relationships.

Home-Away-From-Home pairs a resident family or individual with a student parishioner for the school year. It helps to foster a sense of community between parishioners of all ages and provides our students with a "home away from home."

Lorraine Saulino-Klein has been hosting young women for several years. "I would want my own children to have somebody to depend on if they were away from home," says Lorraine. "I feel that faith is a common thread on which to begin a relationship." Lorraine feels that this ministry is especially important in Wyoming where we are a bit more isolated."

Lorraine currently is host to Sophie Dexheimer, an animal science and philosophy major, from Paris, France. In describing her Home-Away-From-Home relationship, Sophie says, "I really appreciate having a family away from home. It makes me feel like I DO have a home here even though I am very far from Paris. Lorraine and I do different things together and she's always very nice to me. We have a lot of fun together." During Thanksgiving at Lorraine's home, Sophie made a huge 'Hi, Mom' sign that she sent to her Mom in Paris with a group photo of Lorraine's family and friends. "I think it's a comfort for parents to know, especially in Sophie's case, that there is another mother watching out for their child's well-being," says Saulino-Klein. When visiting this summer, Sophie's parents met and had dinner with Lorraine beginning a new relationship bridging countries and cultures. In Lorraine's words, "It just doesn't go away."

A recent graduate, Megan Fitzpatrick Ellis, was another student hosted by Lorraine. Both are road bike enthusiasts

and shared many miles of highway cycling. Lorraine hosted her graduation party and made room for her parents to stay during Megan's commencement weekend. The closeness she felt with Lorraine, led to an invitation to tea so she could share with Lorraine that she was engaged. Lorraine was overwhelmed that Megan chose her to be one of the first to know of her announcement. "It was such a sweet thing to do," says Lorraine. "When you are present to another human being, even if it's not a constant presence, they know they have someone they can come to."

Lorraine's generosity to students exceeds expectations on many levels. Opening her home for meals, temporary housing, a place to study, or a retreat from the commotion of the dorms comes easy to her. "It's a way I can give back from my blessings," she adds. Routine text messages asking, "are you studying? how's it going? what can I do for you? what do you need?" are also incorporated into her regular communications with these women. "It's rewarding for me to get to know these young people," she explains. "I've learned a lot. If they're involved in activities or performances, I try to attend. I feel my presence gives them support, but it's been very rewarding for me, too. I get to know all these kids, their philosophies and their areas of study." In return, the students help with Lorraine's computer and cell phone issues. They shovel snow and help in other various ways. "It's a win, win," she adds.

When asked what she would tell someone who is considering Home-Away-From-Home Ministry, this is her advice. "I think you can make it as much or as little as you want to as long as you are present, and you make that student know that you are not going to interfere with their life but that you are going to be someone to call if need be. Just be yourself, don't worry about doing too much. It's not in any way a financial burden, only a little bit of emotional support you that you give to someone. I've made a point to incorporate those young women into my life. They are my friends."

This past fall Fr. Hiep attended the SEARCH retreat, where students are led by their peers in exploring their faith. "It was my first experience of SEARCH. What an inspiration to witness the friendships, joys, and tears and to realize the struggles these students face during this time of their lives," says Fr. Hiep.

Reflecting on his first semester in Laramie, Fr. Hiep says, "It's a good fit. I have encountered many new experiences plus challenges in Campus Ministry. I feel blessed that the students accept me willingly. This gives me a lot of hope as I begin this ministry at St. Paul's Newman Center."

Ministry in Motion



Caroling at the Care Center



Oklahoma City Habitat for Humanity Mission Trip



Sustainable Harvest Mission Trip to Panama



Chicago Inner City Encounter Participants



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