



Engaging Life, Proclaiming Faith

# Illuminations

Fall Semester 2020



Praying the Rosary together over Zoom in April of 2020, shortly after students left campus due to the pandemic.

## Joy in the Midst of Challenges

Will we be able to have large events? What rules will we have to follow around the Newman Center? Will any freshmen show up? How do we meet new people while wearing face coverings and socially distancing? These were only a few of the questions we had at the beginning of the semester. They were all parts of one big question – Will this year be successful for our ministry and our community? The answer is yes!

Our community is still growing, and students are diving more deeply into the Faith. More new students registered this year than last year, and we now have seventy students involved in small group Bible studies. Many come to the Newman Center daily to study, pray, and spend time together.

So, what does life at Newman look like in the midst of COVID-19? In short, the students follow the same rules in our building as they do on the rest of campus. Wednesday Night Mass is now held at Saint Patrick Church where the students can spread out. We have to be much more careful with items like food at our events. Joe, our Newman Vice President explains:

“COVID has definitely affected a lot of how Newman operates. We’ve had to rethink a lot of events and how we can reach people. Not being able to see faces has been a huge roadblock to forming a lot of personal connections. I know I don’t look all that welcoming with a mask and sunglasses on.

All that being said, the Newmanites have done a wonderful job adhering to the rules that have been put in place. We all understand that the rules are there to keep Newman open. We were able to bring in a good sized freshman class, we’ve been able to stay open and operating, and most importantly, there hasn’t been an outbreak of COVID around Newman. All in all, I’d say this semester has been a strange but successful one.”



Students at Saint Patrick for Wednesday night Mass



Cookies after Wednesday night Mass



Serving at the Walk for Life for the Rolla PRC

# What Is It Like to Be a Freshman in 2020?

Read their stories below:



**Hannah** – “Faith is incredibly important to me. I was raised as a cradle Catholic, so I wanted to find more opportunities to deepen my faith at S&T. I had already planned to go to S&T, so imagine my joy when I realized God provided for this need by placing a bright and vibrant Newman Center right on campus!

I first stepped in the doors of the Newman Center after I met Joe Massman at Minerama. He mentioned a game night, so that night I brought one of the freshmen from my O-week group with me to Newman. I remember being shocked at how many Catholics were in one place that wasn’t a church! Even better, they were all incredibly friendly and made a point to remember me in the weeks to come. I had been struggling with figuring out where I fit in at S&T, but I’ve come to find a home at Newman. The atmosphere is incredibly comfortable to me, and I feel like I spend most of my time there.

I love the emphasis on prayer life at Newman. I’m part of a small Bible study for the first time in my life, and Adam ends every night with Night Prayer in the chapel. I think I’ve said more Rosaries in the past 3 months at Newman than I have in the past year! I am excited to continue my life at Newman in these next few years at S&T and continue developing my relationships with both friends and God. God Bless!”

**Alexander** – “When I first came to Missouri S&T, I was not thinking about my faith life a whole lot. During Opening Week (O-Week), I decided that I wanted my Faith to be a more central in my life. I saw that the O-Week Murder Mystery event was hosted by the Campus Ministries Association, so I went to it. It was actually an event where we traveled around in small groups to all of the different ministries on campus. When my group reached the Newman Center and I heard it was the Catholic campus ministry, I knew that I wanted to go to the different events hosted there.

My first event was right after the Wednesday Mass during O-Week, where I was given a tour of Newman and met a whole bunch of the people. It seemed like such a welcoming place filled with smiles, laughter, and games. I knew that I wanted to come around more often and become a part of such a fun and supportive community.

I feel that the Newman Center is a place where I can be myself around a supportive and wholesome group, who encourages me to be the best person and Catholic I can be. It is a place where I can get help with homework or talk to someone if I am feeling down or unsure of myself. It is a place where I feel close to God and His Church, where I can grow in faith and community.



**Wade** – “When I first came to campus, I thought that I was going to have to fend for myself and take on all of my new challenges alone. I was worried about the future; so on the very first night I decided to take a drive around the campus to see what college was going to be like. As I was driving around I saw a building with a sign that said there was an open house. I took a closer look and noticed that it was the Catholic Newman Center. I had no idea that there was a Catholic center, but I was certainly glad to find out about it. I parked my car and walked in, and at that moment I could feel that my life was about to change in a positive way.

I entered the Catholic Center, and the first person I met was Claire (the Newman Council President). She treated me better than anyone had ever treated me before, and, if I’m going to be honest, that was a big reason why I decided to come back later. We talked for a long time and found out we had both gone to the same high school. It was wonderful talking about something I was familiar with. After we talked for a little while, Claire showed me around the rest of the Newman Center. I got to meet a lot of the other regulars. Out of all my experiences at college so far, that night is my second best experience - second only to the Awakening Retreat.

College would not be as enjoyable for me without the Newman Center. I have made a lot of friends there - friends that I hope will be with me for the rest of my life. The Newman Center is like a helping hand to me, one that is guiding me through my spiritual life and my college life as well. I will be forever grateful to the Newman Center, and I hope it lasts for many more decades.”



# A Year of Constant Changes

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic affected our day-to-day lives in Rolla, things around the Missouri S&T campus and the Newman Center were changing. Recent alumni will likely remember the Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity house across the sidewalk from the Newman Center on North Rolla Street. After years of vacancy, the house was finally demolished. Our students took the event as an opportunity for outreach. Led by our 2019-2020 Newman president, Jack Reiher, they quickly organized a watch party and brought out refreshments. Many students stopped by on their walk from Thomas Jefferson Hall to campus to chat and watch the action.

Multiple buildings on and around campus were also recently demolished, including the old power plant. The brick and concrete chimneys for the power plant were landmarks on campus since its construction in 1945. The entire structure was removed to make room for a newly designed welcome center and entrance to campus.

The coming years will see much more development. In October, Missouri S&T received a massive \$300 million donation from alumnus Fred Kummer and his wife June. Even prior to the donation, the campus was expanding. From the windows of the Newman Center we can see the brand new Clayco Advanced Construction and Materials Laboratory, which is now nearing completion. Many more projects are on the way, including a research and development complex and expansions to the sports and recreation complex.

The Newman Center has had some expansion of its own. Our new deck was constructed in the summer of 2019. The timing was perfect since it gave our students a great outdoor space to use when the pandemic hit. We installed lights earlier this fall semester, and students now use it on a daily and nightly basis.



Students witnessing the demolition of the Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity house



Workers disassembling the remnants of the campus power plant



Workers preparing the frame for the new deck



The completed deck



Our students at the FOCUS SLS2020 Conference in January

## Bringing FOCUS to Campus

Over the past few years, the Newman Center has been speaking with the Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS) about the possibility of bringing a team of missionaries to Rolla. FOCUS is an organization that serves campus ministries all over the country. Their missionaries are trained to go on campus to reach students that might never walk in the doors of a Newman Center. They also meet with students one-on-one to help them grow in their faith and train them to reach out to their peers. Their addition to our ministry staff promises to greatly increase our outreach to the students on campus and bring many more students to the Newman Center and Saint Patrick Church.

The pandemic put our plans to bring missionaries to campus on hold for the 2020-2021 school year, but we hope to bring them to Rolla for the fall semester of 2021. In our own diocese, missionaries are already present at the University of Missouri - Columbia. We are learning much from their experience involving best practices, which is especially needed in the midst of the COVID pandemic.

If our plans move forward, FOCUS will send us a team of four missionaries made up of two men and two women. Their addition will represent a major expansion of our personnel, but it will also require a significant financial investment. Three major steps remain in the process of bringing missionaries to Rolla. First, we must raise additional funds so that we can support their presence on our campus for years into the future. Second, we need to inform the students and the people of the parish what to expect when the missionaries arrive. Finally, we must devise a plan for the beginning of the school year to ensure that the missionaries have the best possible start on our campus.





Rolla Catholic Newman Center  
P.O. Box 833  
Rolla, MO 65401

**Greetings from the Rolla Catholic Newman Center!** The Newman Center is the home for Catholic campus ministry at the Missouri University of Science and Technology and other nearby colleges.

**To those who have supported us financially over the years:** Thank you so much for your support! The Newman Center could not function without you. Your support truly brings the Gospel to campus.

**To all of our alumni:** Please send us updates about your life after college. We would love to hear about where you are and what you are doing. Please send us an email or give us a call using the contact information listed below.

**Want to support the Rolla Catholic Newman Center online?**

Go to [www.rollacatholic.org/support-us](http://www.rollacatholic.org/support-us)

Your donations to the Newman Center are tax deductible. We are included under the Diocese of Jefferson City as a 501(c)(3) organization, Federal Tax Exempt ID 43-0653548.

