



# Newman Foundation, Inc.

*Inspiring the future of Catholic leadership*

An apostolate of the Catholic Diocese of Lexington

December 2021

## Faith and Politics: A Catholic approach

After the pandemic forced the Newman Foundation to schedule, postpone, re-schedule and postpone again a live event, Bishop John Stowe addressed a Zoom audience of about 35 on the topic “Faith and Politics: A Catholic Approach to a Complex Relationship” on Dec. 2.

The Distinguished Speaker event was originally scheduled to take place before the 2020 presidential election but using an abundance of caution, the committee decided to ask Bishop Stowe to deliver his insight in a virtual setting.

Noting the country’s polarization prior to Election Day 2020, Bishop Stowe said, “We’re still polarized, but we might be at a calmer time. Now might be the time to look into what Catholic tradition has to say.”

The belief that church and state should always be kept distinctly separate is not supported in Scripture, Bishop Stowe said, citing the gospel of Matthew, when the Pharisees try to entrap Jesus and force him to take a position contrary to that of the Roman authorities.

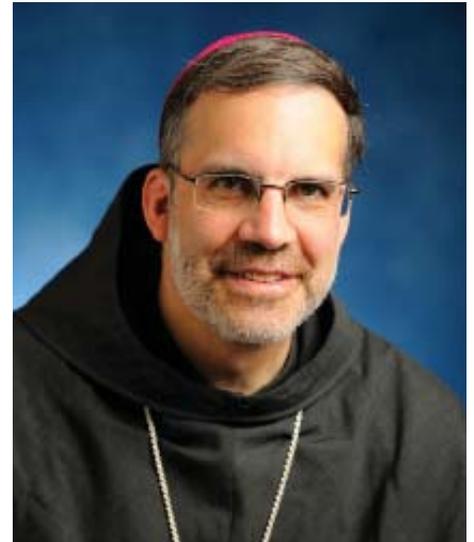
If today’s Christians were to read the passage as a rabbi (“As we should,” Bishop

Stowe said) we would see Caesar’s face on the coin. “But where is God’s face?” he asked. “All that pertains to humanity has to do with God and if we don’t resolve differences politically, how do we resolve them? With war? Does might make right? “Politics is better.”

Bishop Stowe pointed out that the concept of separation of church and state is relatively recent and while people say they have a difficult time balancing church and politics, the divisiveness of politics might more accurately be described as partisanship. “A church that is founded on unity can’t be involved in something that separates us,” he said.

Over the years, Bishop Stowe said, we have learned that we haven’t done a particularly good job when we’ve run the government like church. “We’ve learned that we all must be at the table, especially the laity, whose role is to transform the social order.”

“No political party embodies Catholic theology, but to be effective in promoting the common good, we have to be engaged in politics. Politics can be a noble vocation if one is acting for the common



*Bishop John Stowe*

good.”

Although Catholics shouldn’t been seen as a “voting block,” a great deal of money and resources are spent tracking the Catholic vote, “so it must be worth something,” Bishop Stowe said.

Catholics, he said, bring a concise moral framework that brings moral views and framework rooted in Scripture and tradition. Catholics are large and diverse in political, racial and ethnic backgrounds with substantial experience in the areas of education, health care and social services.

“The role of the Church is to form conscience not to replace conscience. We have to be church that goes out into the world. We can’t just be about preparing for worship; that worship has to be expressed in service.”

Such issues as war and morality, immigration, health care and protection of the environment come into consideration when Catholics go out into the world to promote the teachings of the Church but not impose them.

“How do these things promote the common good?” Bishop Stowe said. “It helps to believe in Jesus because we realize that things are not ‘either/or’ but religion helps us to promote what we know to be true.”

## Tornado relief: What can I do?

*By Peggy Gabriel, NFI Office Manager*

I recently learned that my nephew, a student at Murray State University, that in lieu of Christmas presents he requested tornado relief for western Kentucky. While I’m proud of Dennis and his sense of responsibility, he is one of thousands of people who have mobilized assistance following with the December 10 storm and its destruction.

A letter from the Diocese of Owensboro Bishop William Medley asked parishes in the diocese to take a second collection the weekend of December 18-19 and we are asking that supports of Newman Foundation participate in this collection. The link to donate through the diocesan website is [owensborodiocese.org](http://owensborodiocese.org)

Checks can be mailed to Catholic Charities Tornado Relief, 600 Locust St. Owensboro, KY 42301

DECEMBER 2021

Sister Pam Mueller, NFI vice-president, offered this prayer follow the devastating storms.

In an instant lives and dreams were blown away: Lord, have mercy.

As your people sift through rubble: Lord have mercy.

As bodies continue to be found: Lord, have mercy.

As displaced people begin to long for home: Lord have mercy.

As people settle into the process of rebuilding their lives: Lord have mercy.

Through God’s mercy, may the victims feel God’s love and not lose hope for a better future and may we all find compassion to serve one another. Amen.

**Newman Foundation, Incorporated  
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*NFI Advisors are individuals who have ministered on college campuses in the past and have agreed to provide advice and insight to the foundation.*

## Creating new Catholic leaders

*By Patrick Murphy, NFI President*

I was honored to have the opportunity to describe the ministry and mission of the Newman Foundation, to create new Catholic leaders, to my parish, the Church of the Ascension in Louisville, at the Masses on the last weekend of November as part of our I Give Catholic fundraising campaign. Although NFI currently works in the Diocese of Lexington, the Board of Trustees plans to extend its outreach to the rest of the state of Kentucky: the Archdiocese of Louisville and the dioceses of Covington and Owensboro.

I shared a story about involvement at the Newman Center/Holy Spirit parish in Lexington when I was a first-year student at the University of Kentucky. After Father Elmer Moore, who later became a mentor, learned that I had not been impressed by the retreat I had recently attended out of curiosity, he charged me with planning the next retreat and the rest, as they say, is history.

During those four years of service to the Newman Center, I developed organizational and leadership skills, learning how to organize events and activities and then celebrate their success, and last but certainly not least, met the girl I married 45 years ago.

Fast forward to 2021 and I was

humbled to be invited to serve as president of the Newman Foundation. In this role, I hope to enable today's students to encounter a combination of intellectual, spiritual and recreational activities similar to mine as they become part of a Catholic faith community on a secular campus, and become the next generation of Catholic leaders.

I was surprised to receive warm applause after each of my presentations at the Church of the Ascension and was delighted when so many people sought me out to tell of their own Newman experiences, both at UK and at other colleges and universities. I learned that then, as now, through Newman clubs and centers Catholic students are able to connect to a community that enables them to live their faith during a time when they are making a transition to adulthood.

NFI hopes that as they make that transition they will acquire the skills they need to become effective leaders, both of the church and their communities. We provide resources and support for that transition.

I hope that by introducing the work of the Newman Foundation to my parish in Louisville, we have started NFI on the road to expanding our mission to colleges and universities throughout the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

## Church Tradition and Newman Apostolate

Convened in 1962, the Second Vatican Council's mission was to update the church and restore the unity of all Christians. For three years the council grappled with reconciliation with other Christian traditions and opened up the possibility of dialogue between Christian traditions and world religions. Vatican II reframed the conversation to a focus on Christ within the context of the Trinity and discovered a new sense of the boundless presence of the Holy Spirit. That movement within the Church has a great influence on the outreach to students

Following the lead of Cardinal John Henry Newman, who was canonized in 2010, the council made its peace and presented a positive relationship between the church and the world, recognizing what is good and true in the world. The church opened to cooperation between the church and worldly institutions and addressed itself to all people of good will.

Additionally the council created a positive relationship towards other religions. The Catholic Church rejects nothing of what is good and true and holy

in other religions.

Finally, the council affirmed that the People of God have an inclusive character. Based on baptism, we are all, clergy and laity alike, imbued with the sense of all the faithful, "sensus fidelium." An educated community of faithful members of the Body of Christ in the church can continue to build and contribute to the life and well-being of the church.

The Council affirmed Newman's assertion that in matters of faith, the faithful can and will discern to truth in any age, including the present age and carry the gospel forward.

Thousands of Catholic students attend universities and colleges in Kentucky. NFI continues to quietly work to provide the means of supporting students as they instruct their minds and hearts on the way to choosing their particular vocations. We are honored to carry on the mission established by St. Cardinal John Henry Newman.

*From the Newman Foundation website. See more information about the history and the Newman Foundation's mission and ministry at [www.newmanfdn.org](http://www.newmanfdn.org)*

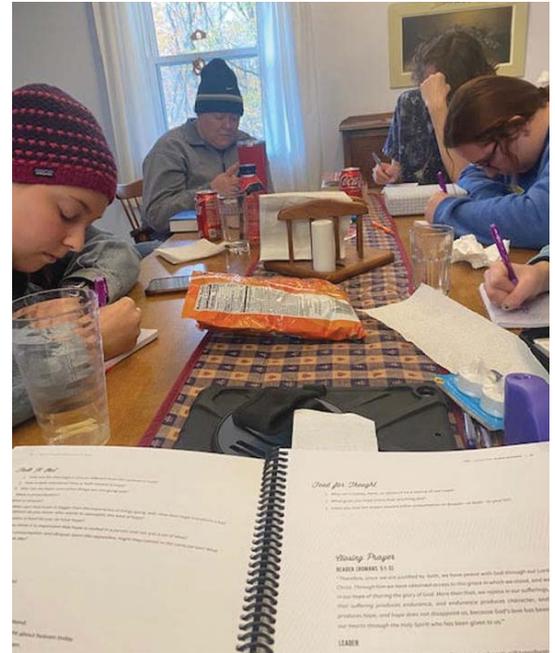
# Campus Spotlights

## Morehead State University Morehead

Students from the Newman Center at Jesus Our Savior and Morehead State recently attended a retreat with the Sisters of Mount Tabor in Floyd County, Kentucky. Activities included Mass at St. Martha Church in Martin, a service project, prayer, Bible study and reflective journaling.

The Dwelling Place Monastery is an ecumenical monastery in the Benedictine

tradition, the only monastery in the Diocese of Lexington. A small core of sisters build a life centered on communal and private prayer, work, leisure and hospitality to retreats. The Sisters have been hosting students from the Morehead State University Newman Center for 15 years.



Above, Morehead State students participate in a reflective journaling exercise as part of their retreat at The Dwelling Place in Martin, Ky. Left, the service project that was also part of their two-day retreat. Photos by Darinda Ramey-Marriner.

## Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond



EKU students are members of St. Mark Church in Richmond. They gather weekly for meals, faith-sharing and recreation. Right, Jake Weston and J.D. Ross create a bracket for a ping pong tournament. A St. Mark parishioner donated the table. Photos by Alanna Sininger.



## University of Kentucky Lexington

Abigail Firey, chair of the Search Committee for the Cottrill-Rolfes Chair of Catholic Studies, reports that the search is on track to fill the position and that the committee is pleased by the number of very strong scholars who applied. "We are excited about the prospects, and look forward to the next phase of the process," she said.

Abigail also announces that lectures are in the planning stages which will host internationally-known scholars to speak on topics relating to Catholicism, supported by the Cottrill-Rolfes fund. Watch the NFI website ([www.newmanfnd.org](http://www.newmanfnd.org)) or an email blast for names, dates and locations.

**NFI extends thanks to the supporters who made contributions in response to #iGiveCatholic Day of Giving on November 30. Through the generosity of our donors, NFI raised almost \$9,000, doubling our total from 2020.**

# Incoming Board Members

During 2021 the Newman Foundation made a transition of leadership, with Jan Swauger preparing to step down from the board and handing the role of president to Patrick Murphy.

In the summer and fall months, Patrick and Jan met with the majority of NFI's campus partners.

While meeting in person has been the preferred method, the constraints of time and an abundance of caution because of the pandemic, resulted in several meetings conducted via Zoom.

Patrick reports that he has learned much about Eastern Kentucky and the Diocese of Lexington as a result of these trips and has broadened his knowledge about the needs of college students and the importance of campus ministry. Jan, he says, with her familiarity of the people and places they're visiting, has eased the introductions to pastors and campus ministers.

One of the first visits that took place in the late

summer was with Father Kiran Varaparla, the pastor of Saint Julian Church in Middlesboro, Ky., which is in a far southeastern county of Kentucky. The church in Middlesboro is the closest Catholic church to Lincoln Memorial University in Harrogate, Tenn. Although the university is in the Diocese of Knoxville, Father Kiran had received permission to minister to the students on the LMU campus. "We were shocked to learn that shortly after we met, Father Kiran died of a heart attack," Patrick said. "He was only 39 years old and we hope that the new pastor, Father Miguel Alvizures, will continue his outreach to LMU students."

Although there are still a few meetings to conduct, Pat and Jan believe they have made a great start on introducing campus partners to new NFI leadership.



Catholic ECU students gather for recreation as well as spiritual reflection.

**Newman's legacy:** Our inspiration, Saint John Newman, supported an educated laity and presentation of Catholic thought to Catholics and non-Catholics on campuses of higher learning.

**Our mission:** We are an independent non-profit corporation that seeks to deepen and integrate spiritual, intellectual, and personal development through the Newman Apostolate in the Catholic Diocese of Lexington, Ky., by providing financial support and initiated programs.

**Our vision:** We will promote, foster, and support a parish-affiliated, community active and campus-recognized Newman group on each of the campuses in the Catholic Diocese of Lexington, Ky.

Please see the envelope inserted into the newsletter.

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