



# Newman Foundation, Inc.

*Bringing the Gospel to our communities*

An apostolate of the Catholic Diocese of Lexington

September 2021

## Greetings from the President

When I was asked to consider taking on the job of president of the Newman Foundation, I was surprised, at first. “Who, me?” I’d been an NFI trustee for only a year, and it’s a year I’ve spent learning about the work of the foundation and its role in helping to nurture and create leaders both for the church and for the community at large. The Newman Foundation has expanded to include 11 colleges and universities in the Diocese of Lexington, in addition to the Newman Center/Holy Spirit Parish which was critical to my experience at the University of Kentucky.

I think Father Elmer Moore would approve of the way I internalized the directions he gave me with a list of 47 jobs that needed to be done when I became involved in the day-to-day operation of the Newman Center as a student. “You can’t do

all of this yourself, and you shouldn’t,” he told me. The great lesson I learned was that of delegation of tasks and the celebration of success.

I think Father Moore would smile to see that the need for delegation is still part and parcel of how we get things done!

In addition to a talented executive board, the work of the foundation is accomplished by a half dozen standing and ad hoc committees. I’ve been impressed by the amount of work these committees have accomplished and in the weeks since I’ve taken on the position of president, some of the names on those committees have changed, but the work goes on.

I’m excited about the on-going work NFI is doing with its partner organizations, the 12 colleges and universities of the Diocese of Lexington. We have representation from

a variety of areas in the diocese and as a resident of Louisville I have enjoyed learning more about the eastern part of the state. Our long-range vision includes outreach to the Archdiocese of Louisville and the dioceses of Covington and Owensboro. The Newman Foundation has always had a unique mission that can only be strengthened by increasing our number of partners.

I’ve taken this role in a time of growth and transition and I’m thankful to Jan Swauger and Maria Bane. Jan has taken on the role of mentoring me through my first year and Maria is never more than a text away, even as she begins her new career as a professor at Eastern Kentucky University. I’m grateful to both of them.

Most of all, though, I’m thankful to NFI’s supporters. Don’t be surprised to hear from me as I heed Father Moore’s advice: You can’t do all of this by yourself—you have to build community and take time to celebrate!

~ Patrick Murphy

## The Cottrill-Rolfes Chair of Catholic Studies

One of the most exciting and influential projects of the Newman Foundation is the The Cottrill-Rolfes Chair in Catholic Studies at the University of Kentucky. After being held by Dr. David Hunter from 2007-2019, the University of Kentucky has posted the advertisement, launching an international search for a scholar to fill the chair beginning in 2022.

The current *pro tem* Cottrill-Rolfes Chair of Catholic Studies, the first of its kind in Kentucky, is Dr. Abigail Firey. The chair could be filled by a scholar in any number of academic disciplines, Dr. Firey said. “We’re imagining broad possibilities and looking at ways Catholicism intersects with life and how it has impacted culture in so many ways, while still preserving Catholic traditions.”

In discussing how a secular institution can comfortably agree to allow such a position, Dr. Firey said students who take the classes offered through the program are not learning religion, “but they’re learning *about* religion.” The agreement with NFI specifies that the chair should neither advance nor inhibit the Catholic religion.

Catholicism has played a major role in shaping human history, according to Dr.

Hunter. “But Catholicism is also a global phenomenon, and the Church remains a potent force throughout the world today,” he wrote in an essay thanking NFI for its role in establishing the chair.

The year-long search for the chair invites applicants from a broad range of disciplines including anthropology, sociology, gender studies, music and art, to honor the agreement’s recognition that there are many approaches to Catholic tradition, experience, or impact.

The course offerings, which will be developed by the chair, will intersect with other academic fields and broaden its outreach to students, Dr. Firey said.

In order to keep the Chair of Catholic Studies active during the search, there was a search last semester for a post-doctoral scholar in Catholic Studies who will teach several courses in the coming academic year, and help develop a refreshed curriculum and public programming. The search committee included internationally renowned faculty from the disciplines of Anthropology, English, Gender and Women’s Studies, History, and Musicology; the advertisement attracted scholar-applicants from 11 countries who displayed a high

degree of energy and originality as they addressed questions about how Catholic teaching can support conversations about race, gender, architecture, science and more.

The position has been accepted by Sinu Rose, a graduate of the University of Hyderabad, in India. Her dissertation studied the impact of the Portuguese in the seventeenth century on the Thomas Christians of India, one of the oldest groups of Christians, a branch of Syrian Christianity. Dr. Sinu’s work explores a rich view of global Catholicism, in which there were differences between European understandings of Catholicism and long-standing local traditions. This is the sort of research that helps us stop and think about the formation of traditions and the variety of Catholic experience around the world. The University of Kentucky, in partnership with the Newman Foundation is excited to build an international reputation with the support of a range of disciplines at the university. “In doing so, we are doing our best to honor Carol Cottrill and Tom Rolfes and their commitment to international engagement, love of knowledge, and expansive faith,” Dr. Firey said.

## Newman Foundation, Incorporated

### Board, 2021

Patrick Murphy

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Erik Davidshofer, faculty/staff

*University of Kentucky*

Fr. Terrence deSilva, pastor

*Holy Trinity Church, Harlan*

Niya Gates, freshman

*University of Kentucky*

Ben Harnden, junior

*Centre College*

Loida Martell, faculty

*Lexington Theological Sem.*

Pam Mueller, OSU, campus minister

*Brescia University, Owensboro*

Jan Swauger

*Immediate past president*

Ellie Wnek

*UK Newman Center/Holy Spirit*

Stan "JR" Zerkowski

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### Ex-Officio Members

Michael Bayer

*Diocese of Lexington*

Peggy Gabriel

*NFI Office Manager*

### NFI Advisors

Father Larry Hehman

Father Dan Noll

Father Tom Farrell

Tim Wills

Maria Bane

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

## Thank you from Jan

Dear Friends of the Newman Foundation, Inc.

On June 30th I stepped down as President of the Foundation with great pride after three and a half years. As I reflect on my tenure, I am so proud of our Board of Trustees and grateful for the many hours they invested in helping to get us to where we are today. I am also grateful for the dedication and commitment of our former Executive Director, Maria Bane, who recently resigned to begin her career in academia. Maria was a constant force over the past eight years in helping to keep us on track. She recently earned her Ph.D. and is now working as a professor at Eastern Kentucky University in a tenured track position. So many thanks and best wishes to Maria!

However, a key person that deserves much credit for our recent success is Bishop John Stowe. The Foundation and all of us who serve as volunteers are truly blessed to have his full support of our mission and his confidence in our ability to move forward. When we approached him four years ago with the idea of expanding our mission across the diocese, he embraced our partnership. Since then, he continues to demonstrate his ongoing support in many ways. We have been able to

continue to work with our campus/parish partners at 12 sites and with Bishop John's encouragement, we will be working with a new partner in Middlesboro, Fr. Kiran Varaparla, who serves 40 students a mile from his parish, across the border at Lincoln Memorial University in Harrogate, Tenn.

Also, many thanks to our Advisory Board members, especially, Father Larry Hehman, Father Dan Noll and Father Tom Farrell. They inspired us to become engaged in campus ministry when they served as pastor at the UK Newman Center/Holy Spirit Parish. I agreed to come back on the NFI board because of their leadership and because we never want to forget our dear Father Elmer Moore who started all of this. I am very excited and pleased that our new president, Patrick Murphy, also knew Father Moore and is willing to help continue his legacy. Father Moore would be very proud. Patrick is the perfect person to lead our organization as we explore opportunities to serve the other three dioceses in Kentucky.

Last, but not least, the Foundation could not exist or continue its mission without our friends and generous donors. I hope that we can count on your ongoing support to ensure our future success.

~ Jan Swauger

## A Thought from Bishop Stowe

As we continue to address the stress of pandemic, I am counting the blessings in the midst of our unprecedented upheaval in our lives. One of the great blessings that comes to mind was the opportunity to gather with a socially distanced but deeply engaged campus ministry gathering at Eastern Kentucky University. Readily admitting that there was not much competition for their schedules, students eagerly gathered for a discussion about their faith and fellowship with other ECU folk that was happening in 3-dimensions, rather than through a screen. There was joy at being together and an impressive curiosity about faith and topics related to the life of the Church. Earlier some of these students participated in a Zoom session with some benefactors of the diocese.

Their presence as young people alive with faith was a source of hope and joy to the participants in that session.

This little episode is only one sign of hope springing up on the college campuses in the diocese. In groups small and large, with the support and encouragement of the Newman Foundation, students were creatively forming community at a time when many young people are desperate for human connections.

There is a desire on the part of many involved in campus ministry to learn about

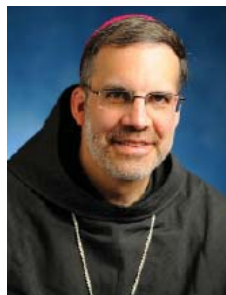
the Church's teachings on racism. An on-line discussion group was led by Deacon John Brannen and some impressive guests from the African American Catholic community who shared a perspective on the history of the Church in the United States that has not always welcomed them or treated them well. Hearts and minds began broadened as stories were shared and a need for cross-cultural encounters was expressed. It is too

easy to overlook those who are excluded— or not even noticed that they have been left out.

As we embark on a new academic year, Pope Francis' observation that we cannot live through a crisis like the pandemic unchanged seems quite fitting. I hope that our greater sensitivity to the richness of our diversity as a community of faith and a greater commitment to inclusion and equality are part of our expression

of faith going forward. We look, as always, to those in their formative years, to see what kind of future we can expect. Seeing the committed students in campus ministry throughout the diocese gives me hope.

*NFI plans to host Bishop Stowe as a Distinguished Speaker, addressing Catholic's role in the political forum. The date will be announced, accordance with safe public health practices. Watch for the date.*



# Distinguished Speakers

NFI launched Distinguished Speakers 2021 on March 10 with a panel discussion on *Laudato Si: On Care for our Common Home*, Pope Francis' 2015 encyclical. About 50 people joined the Zoom event to hear a discussion with Jeannie Kirkhope, co-coordinator of the Catholic Committee of Appalachia (CCA); Benedictine Sister Kathleen Weigand, a founding member of the *Laudato Si* Commission of the Diocese of Lexington; and Augustinian Father Robert Dueweke, who, at the time, was his order's Non-Governmental Organizational representative to the United Nations.

Jeannie opened the discussion, saying that CCA was years ahead of the institutional church concerning the environment with the publication of "This Land is Home to Me" in 1975; "At Home in the Web of Life" in 1995 and "The Telling Takes Us Home" in 2015. These pastoral letters come from people of the Appalachian region, including bishops, and the narrative was gathered through conversations with the people of the mountains. Forty-five years ago, the bishops of the Appalachian region were preaching about the importance of caring for creation.

"We didn't write these letters because it was cool or green or hipster," Jeannie said. "We published them as a response to our faith." She shared over a dozen Scripture references from both the Old and New Testaments to support that response.

Sister Kathleen shared the mission statement of the diocesan *Laudato Si* Commission and its vision, both prayer and action, including building relationships between individuals, families, organizations and parishes; promoting such activities as community gardens, recycling and composting.

In addition to promoting these activities, Sister Kathleen said the commission also encourages people and parishes to address overconsumption of energy, food choices, packaging of materials, transportation and clothing.

Father Bob gave excellent insight into the work of the United Nations and how its presence contributes to international cooperation the prevention of a third world war and pointed out the vast influence of the U.S. on the global stage.

He addressed the importance of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, saying "The countries of the world have agreed that to respond to these issues will help to create a better world." All of these

goals relate to *Laudato Si*, in one way or another, Father Bob said. "Nothing is perfect, but they provide context to help navigate ourselves in the global challenges we have today."

A question and answer period focused

largely on the presence of single-use plastics, how they affect the environment and how their use can be reduced.

*The panel discussion is available at Laudato Si Resources - Google Drive*

# Campus Spotlights

The coming academic year is bringing new faces to the University of Pikeville. Many of our more involved students have gone off to their externships, so we are starting from scratch as we get to know the new students (graduate and undergraduate) that have recently moved to Pikeville.

We are looking forward to welcoming incoming students to Pikeville to see how we can serve them. We love having students involved in our church community at St. Francis of Assisi. Whether they're simply interested in the Catholic faith or in offering their talents in liturgical ministry, we want to be a source of Christ for all students to support their education through feeding their faith.

~ Hannah Busro  
Graduate Student

Patrick Murphy and Jan Swauger met with Father Kiran Kumar Varaparla, pastor of St. Julian Church in Middlesboro, to lend him support in the outreach he provides to Catholic students at **Lincoln Memorial University** in Harrogate, Tenn. Although the LMU campus is located in the Diocese of Knoxville, it is only ten minutes from Middlesboro; St. Julian is the most accessible Catholic community to the LMU student body. As a priest of the Diocese of Lexington, Father Kiran has received permission from Bishop Richard Stika to say Mass on campus one or two times each month.

Father Kiran told Pat and Jan that as many as 40 students attend Mass at St. Julian Church, participating in liturgical ministries and helping with such outreach as the parish soup kitchen. "The Catholic

students are very inspiring," Father Kiran said.

Pat told Father Kiran about the grants that NFI makes available to its campus partner and plans are in the works for a dinner meeting with folks from Union College and the University of the Cumberlands. "We'd like to 'cross-pollinate' partners so that all three can grow and be sustained," Pat said.

Efforts continue to establish a part-time campus minister who will serve **Union College** in Barbourville and the **University of the Cumberlands** in Williamsburg. NFI has committed to paying the salary of the minister for one year and is working in partnership with Father Mani George at St. Gregory in Barbourville and Father Prashanth Lobo at Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Williamsburg.

Both pastors report that Catholic students attend Mass regularly and are looking forward to strategies they can use to increase student involvement in the parishes. They will continue to offer transportation to church, dinners and welcome packages.

Many of the students at the small institutions in southeastern Kentucky are from South America.

Jan Swauger said she hopes Union College and University of the Cumberlands will find a good partner in the Newman Foundation and asked how we can meet students "where they are. If only a few Catholic students stay committed to their faith during their college years, we've been successful."

## #iGiveCatholic, November 30

Celebrated annually on the Tuesday following Thanksgiving, Black Friday, and Cyber Monday, #iGiveCatholic is the U.S. Catholic Church's Giving Day that kicks off the charitable season and brings the Catholic community together to give thanks and give back. As the first-ever giving day created to celebrate our unique Catholic heritage, #iGiveCatholic inspires faithful stewards to "Give Catholic" on #GivingTuesday, a global day of giving. Newman Foundation is using #iGiveCatholic as its annual giving campaign for 2021 and encourages supporters to make a financial commitment on November 30, 2021.

# Incoming Board Members

• **Elisa Cahill** is a senior at Morehead State University and has been active with the Newman Center at Morehead during her college years. She lives at the Newman House on campus. She looks forward to being involved with the Newman Foundation and looks forward to helping to plan activities and programs for students.

• **Erik Davidshofer** is a senior proposal development officer at the University of Kentucky who helps faculty and staff identify relevant funding sources for their research and critiques narrative sections of grant proposals that are submitted to federal agencies and private foundations. He previously served on the leadership team for the Pulse, Christ the King's group for young professionals. Erik lives in Lexington and attends Mass at UK's Newman Center and Christ the King.

• **Fr. Terrence de Silva** currently serves as pastor at Holy Trinity Church in Harlan, St. Stephen Church in Cumberland, and at the Church of the Resurrection in Lynch, and formerly served as associate pastor at Holy Spirit Parish/Newman Center in Lexington. He understands the importance of NFI's mission to not only focus on the intellectual development of students, but

also the spiritual and personal development of college age young adults. Prior to entering the seminary, he served in several administrative jobs within the private sector in Kuwait and Sri Lanka.

• **Niya Gates** is a sophomore at the University of Kentucky and a member of St. Peter Claver where she serves on the parish council. She also has leadership roles for Ronald McDonald house, Black Soil, and Campus Kitchen and brings a unique perspective to NFI as an African American Catholic. Niya is a graduate of Lexington's Lafayette High School and was a member of the school's award-winning marching band.

• **Sister Pam Mueller, O.S.U.** believes the world can be transformed through education. She adds the perspective of a member of the Diocese of Owensboro which, like Lexington, is a mission diocese. She currently serves as director of campus ministry for Brescia University and holds certification in campus ministry through CCMA. Sister Pam is a councilor on the leadership team for the Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph, serves as sacristan for Brescia's on-campus parish chapel and lives in Owensboro.

• **John Pica** is committed to Catholic education, serving as president and headmaster of Sts. Peter and Paul Regional Catholic School in Lexington and has served as chair and member of several parish, finance, local and diocesan school councils. He supports NFI's promotion of campus ministry throughout the diocese and will contribute experience with college-level student support/ development, passion for strengthening Catholic education at all levels as well as fundraising experience. He lives in Winchester and is a member of St. Joseph Church.

• **Tricia Shackelford** practices healthcare law and represents a broad spectrum of clients including both facilities and providers. She is the Secretary of the Health Law Section of the Kentucky Bar Association and vice-president of the Board for the Lexington Medical Society Alliance. She has served on boards of Friends of the Arts, Spindletop Hall, the University of Kentucky Faculty and Alumni Club and Habitat for Humanity. Tricia lives in Lexington; her children, Brennan and Beau, are graduates of Lexington Catholic High School where Tricia still volunteers.

**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.*



## Newman Foundation, Inc.

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED