



# Newman Foundation, Inc.

*Inspiring the future of Catholic leadership*

*An apostolate of the Catholic Diocese of Lexington*

Fall 2025

## Campus Partners meet in Lexington

For several years, it has been the aspiration of the Newman Foundation, Inc. (NFI) to create links between those who minister to college students in the state of Kentucky. Although there are Newman Centers and clubs at some universities, others are served by the priests, deacons and parish life directors of the parishes in the towns where universities are located.

NFI thanks board member Sister Pam Mueller, OSU, for the progress she is making to expand NFI's contact with Kentucky's campus ministers in the Archdiocese of Louisville, and the dioceses of Covington, Lexington and Owensboro.

NFI has identified 20-plus "campus partners" in the state of Kentucky, thirteen of which are located in the Diocese of Lexington. On June 26, representatives from all four of the dioceses gathered at St. Peter Claver Church in Lexington, to discuss strategies and best practices for their ministries. Included in the group were priests whose parish boundaries include secular and religious colleges and universities (both Catholic and non-Catholic), a deacon, a Dominican priest, lay men and women, and an Ursuline sister.

As part of the meeting the partners identified the different models and the history of their ministries, learning that they had more in common than they might have

thought. Each participant gave the group insight into how they reach out to students on their campus. Sister Pam listed the many ministry models they use.

For example, in the 1960s, the Diocese of Covington established a Newman Center that was the first parish in the U.S. designated to serve Catholic students at a secular university. That model is now used by ten other universities in the U.S., but the University of Kentucky Newman Center/Holy Spirit Parish is the only campus parish in Kentucky. Other campuses in the diocese (now the Diocese of Lexington), as well as the rest of the state, have a wide variety of ministry methods. Although the colleges and university enrollments range from many thousands (the universities of Kentucky and Louisville) to just over 1,000 (Thomas More University and Centre College) and even fewer than 1,000 (Brescia University), the successes and challenges at each school are amazingly similar, Sister Pam said.

Each minister spoke of the need for flexibility ("spiritual agility"), training for staff and resources such as space and funding.

Although such roundtables often provide a forum for creating just a long laundry list of needs, the ministers also listed the qualities they believe their ministries accomplish well, including availability to students, mentorship, and encouraging students to grow into faith-filled adult Catholics.

They were uniformly happy to hear about the resources available to them from the Newman Foundation including "start-up" grants (small amounts that are available at the beginning of the academic year to underwrite the cost of promotional activities), prayer support and membership in the Catholic Campus Ministry Association.

Sister Pam facilitated the meeting with an insider's knowledge of campus ministry since she has served as the Director of Campus Ministry at Brescia University in Owensboro since 2006. She is serving her second three-year term on the NFI Board of Trustees and during those years she has observed many models of campus ministry and the need to connect and share. "I look forward to building upon this state-wide partnership to assist and serve the many students with knowledgeable, dedicated and joyful campus ministers."



L-R front: Laura Huber, Fr. John Baptist Huang (U of L), Sr. Pam Mueller (Brescia). Back: Fr. Prasad Antony (Sacred Heart, Corbin), Andrew Cole and Josh Ostertag (Thomas More), Deacon Brian Cox (NKU), Brian Duggan (UK), Philomena Hempel (Murray), Alanna Siningier (EKU), Father Yohanes Akoit (St. Julian, Middlesboro).

# Series hosts a summer Distinguished Speaker

Augustinian Father Robert Dueweke was the NFI Summer 2025 Distinguished Speaker on July 16 at St. Peter Claver Church in Lexington. Father Bob's topic was "A Synodal Church in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," and said that shortly after his election to the papacy, Pope Leo XIV made it clear that synodality would be an integral part of his pontificate.



A fellow Augustinian, Father Bob said he knew Pope Leo when he was in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. "He was so brilliant, he screwed up the bell curve," Father Bob recalled. "I have a hard time calling him 'Pope Leo;' I prefer to call him 'Pope Bob.'"

Father Bob referenced the work and teaching of St. Augustine and St. John Henry Newman, saying both approached theology as "faith

seeking understanding," and posed the idea that in pursuing a synodal church, people are being introduced to understanding seeking faith. "Don't just tell me what I should believe; tell me why I should believe," he said. "People are asking 'how is synodality seeking faith?'"

Referring to the Gospel reading from the 15<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary time (the story of the Good Samaritan), Father Bob said Christianity is a religion of love, love of God as well as love of neighbor and that Christians are called to make a contribution to making a better world.

This call continues from the days of Vatican II, Father Bob said, and asked for a show of hands of people in the congregation that lived through Vatican II. Many hands went up and Father Bob said that the council made some people happy and some people mad. ("My parents were mad," he said.) His point, however, was that it's hard to grasp a concept for modern-day synodality without an understanding of Vatican II which brought together 2400 bishops from around the world to discuss topics of importance to people.

Neither Vatican II or 21<sup>st</sup> Century synodality are projects with a beginning or an end, but both institutions require ongoing listening and openness to each other as well as the Holy Spirit, who Father Bob identified as "the protagonist of the synodal process."

Pope John XXIII, who called the Council together in 1962 and Pope Paul VI, who continued it, "had

their fingers on the pulse of what was going on at that time," Father Bob said. In the early '60s, the bishops were carrying the memories of two world wars, the war in Korea and the burgeoning war in Vietnam and the Cuban missile crisis and again asked for a show of hands of people who remembered retreating under their desks for protection during their elementary school days. The same hands went up.

Modern synodality examines the challenges we face as a nation and a world, he said, and reminded the congregation we must keep in mind that in the same way, current challenges must be applied.

Asked where he has seen hope in the process, Father Bob mentioned the United Nation and young people. "They may not be in our churches," he said, "but they're out there getting their hands dirty."

The livestream of Father Bob's talk is posted at [cdlex.org/synodality](http://cdlex.org/synodality).

## Newman Foundation, Inc.

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## ***From Bishop John Stowe***

Only a day after appearing on the balcony of Saint Peter's where his papacy began, Pope Francis was called home by the Lord on Easter Monday. The church and the world had been praying for weeks as he battled lung infections, made a return to the Vatican, and slowly resumed public appearances. Clearly the illness had taken its toll on the 88 year-old Pontiff and his death was not too shocking, even if we had hoped he was on the mend.

The world tuned in to the Catholic Church once again. As the events of a papal funeral gathered many of the world's leaders in Saint Peter's Square and as the popemobile on which the late Holy Father had taken his last ride on Easter Sunday was carrying his casket to the Basilica of Saint Mary Major for burial, some 200,000 people lined the streets. From all reports there has been a steady stream of people praying at his simple grave in the basilica since that day.

Secular attention to the ancient process of selecting a new pope was only heightened by the recent movie "Conclave" which for many became a source of information about papal elections. And much of the process depicted in the film was actually quite accurate. The movie had one kind of surprise ending, the actual conclave had another... the election of a pope from the United States! Such was seen to be an impossibility, even by myself, given the outsized influence the United States already has on the global stage. Yet, apparently,

it was not even an issue as the cardinals elected the person they thought most qualified to lead the Church forward.

Pope Leo XIV's Chicago roots have been celebrated, especially in the Windy City and at White Sox games, but his heart was also quite dedicated to Peru where he spent decades as a missionary and as the Bishop of Chiclayo. While in Rome for the beginning of Pope Leo's ministry, I had the chance to mingle with a great number of people from that diocese who were justifiably proud of their former bishop and new pope. They all had stories to tell of a bishop, very much like Pope Francis, who was near to his people and entered into the struggles and joys of their everyday lives.

It seems Pope Francis had a special eye on the future pope when he brought him to Rome to lead the Dicastery (or Office) responsible for proposing future bishops to the pope. In that role, he won the trust and admiration of many of the cardinals who also appreciated his missionary spirit. While his vision of the church is a lot like Pope Francis', his personality and style will be quite different. I am tempted to say that there won't be so many surprises, but his election was already a big one. We never know what God has in store for us, but we do know that God is ever faithful.



## **Fall Greetings to all NFI Donors and Friends!**

It is hard to believe the fall semester is already underway. However, it's a favorite time of year for Newman Foundation, Inc. (NFI) as Campus Ministry Partners in the Diocese of Lexington and across the Commonwealth are welcoming new and returning students to their respective campuses. NFI provides important start-up grants at the beginning of the fall semester to help with student recruitment and welcoming events. For new students, connecting with a Catholic campus ministry student organization, and in many cases a Newman Center or club, provides an immediate opportunity to make new friends to support each other through a shared faith as they begin a new phase of their lives. We hope, too, this gives comfort to parents who are sending their students off for the first time.

We are especially excited that the newly launched Catholic Campus Partnership Network which includes the Dioceses of Covington, Lexington and Owensboro, and the Archdiocese of Louisville will now strengthen NFI's mission to inspire, support and help shape the future leadership for our Catholic faith across Kentucky through these various campus ministry programs. Many Kentucky students that graduate from state colleges and universities go back to their

hometowns to live and work. By working together, the network will allow campus ministers, chaplains, and clergy to share and create new opportunities which NFI hopes to continue to support financially with your help. (See p.1).

It is a bittersweet time for me as I step down as President. However, I am confident in our new leadership that they will continue to keep our mission on track as there is more need than ever to support families and their children during these challenging times. Our faith is a big part of what gives us strength to face whatever comes our way. Also, we welcome new board members who bring great skills, fresh ideas, and a sense of commitment to our mission.

The Newman Foundation, Inc. has always been an important part of my life, and I will continue to support NFI with my prayers and financial resources. The NFI board and I hope you also will continue to support the lives of these students on their faith journeys. Thank you!

Peace and Blessings,  
Jan Swauger

# New NFI Board Members

**Katie Beauchamp** is a member of St. Joseph Parish in Winchester and has worked in youth ministry since the mid-2000s with the Cathedral of Christ the King, Sts. Peter and Paul, Danville and St. Patrick, Mount Sterling. She served as a site coordinator for World Youth Day in Sydney, Australia as as the director of the Catholic Leadership Institute.

**Jon Barnes** is Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean at Lexington Theological Seminary. He has extensive experience at seminaries and divinity schools in the U.S. and Africa. He has worked with Bishop John Stowe and Dr. Margaret Ralph in the LTS Catholic Studies program. Through his experience in the non-profit world, Jon has gained knowledge of non-profit management and grant distribution as well as processes for distributing grants to recipient organizations.

**Father Alfredo Basualdo** is the pastor of St. Clare Church in Berea, which serves as the faith community for Catholic students at Berea College. Father Alfredo's pastorate also includes the mission parishes of Our Lady of Mount Vernon (Mount Vernon) and St. Paul (McKee). His country of origin is Argentina and in addition to his pastoral experience in the U.S. and Argentina, Father Alfredo has teaching experience at Santiago, El Mayor Institute, La Sagrada Familia Institute and Catholic University of Santiago del Estero. Father Alfredo will complete Father Prashanth Lobo's unexpired term. Father Lobo's order re-assigned him to a parish in New Jersey.

**Margaret Ralph** is a past member of the NFI Board of Trustees and a current member of the Distinguished Speakers committee. She served the Diocese of Lexington for 16 years as Secretary of Educational Ministries and Lexington Theological Seminary for 29 years as Director of the Master's Degree programs for Roman Catholics. She has a rich knowledge of the Newman Foundation as well as the Diocese of Lexington. She is a member of the Cathedral of Christ the King.

**Alanna Sininger**, also, is a past member of the board who has agreed to serve another term. Alanna is a long-time campus minister for Eastern Kentucky University and works with the administration of St. Mark Church in Richmond. She is well-versed in the operation of the Newman Foundation and has participated in the formation of NFI Campus Partners.

## O Lord,

Support us all the day long,  
Until the shadows lengthen,  
And the evening comes,  
And the busy world is hushed,  
And the fever of life is over,  
And our work is done.  
Then in your mercy,  
Grant us a safe lodging, and a holy rest,  
And peace at last.

*St. John Henry Newman  
Declared a Doctor of the Church on July 31, 2025*

Newman's legacy: Our inspiration, Saint John Henry 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 initiating programs. Our vision: We will promote, foster, and support activities and campus-recognized Newman groups on each of the campuses in the Catholic diocese of Kentucky. Please see the envelope inserted into the newsletter.

## RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Newman Foundation, Inc.  
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Lexington, KY 40508





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Dear Friends of the Newman Foundation,

I am honored to serve as the newly elected President of the Newman Foundation Incorporated for the 2025–2026 year. I want to thank Jan Swauger for her leadership as president last year and for her continued counsel as immediate past president for 2025-2026.

NFI's mission, inspired by the vision and legacy of St. John Henry Newman, continues to focus on strengthening Catholic faith and life in the college environment. As I step into this role, I look forward to building on the important work of those who came before me while ensuring that our efforts respond meaningfully to the needs of today's students across Kentucky and beyond.

This year, one of our most important priorities is to support the growth of our statewide campus ministry partnership initiative. By deepening collaboration among Catholic ministries at both public and private institutions, we hope to foster unity, expand resources, and encourage vibrant opportunities for faith formation and service among college students. These partnerships not only provide students with pastoral and sacramental support but also help them discover how their faith can guide their personal, academic, and professional lives.

In addition to this work, the Newman Foundation will be distributing several campus ministry grants to Catholic ministries serving students in diverse college and university settings. These grants directly support activities and events that help young adults encounter Christ, grow in discipleship, and form lasting communities of faith. From retreats and service projects to leadership training and liturgical celebrations, these efforts ensure that Catholic campus ministry remains a source of vitality, formation, and mission for students during these critical years of faith development.

None of this would be possible without the generous support of our patrons and friends. Your faith, encouragement, and gifts continue to sustain and expand our mission in the spirit of St. John Henry Newman, who believed deeply in the role of faith and reason in the life of the university. On behalf of the entire Foundation, I thank you for walking with us in this ministry. Together, let us continue to form faithful witnesses who will carry their love of Christ and the Church into the world.

With gratitude and hope,

**John Pica**

President, Newman Foundation Inc.