The AMU & APU Newman Center
Quarterly Newsletter
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The Nativity (c. late 1550), by Jacopo Tintoretto (Jacopo Robusti) about 1518-1594. Oil on canvas. On display at the William I. Koch Gallery, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. For more about the painting, see the description at the MFA site.

See page 2 for scripture readings and meditations from Pope Benedict XVI and Saint John Paul II to accompany the third decade of the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary.

The AMU & APU Newman Center is an American Public University System (APUS) student organization founded as a Catholic ministry for the students, alumni, faculty and staff of APUS.

About Newman Centers

Newman Centers are Catholic ministry centers at non-Catholic universities throughout the world. They provide pastoral services and ministries to their Catholic communities, in particular to the Roman Catholic student population within the university. The centers are named in honor of Cardinal John Henry Newman and were inspired by Newman's writings. The first Newman Center was established in 1893 at the University of Pennsylvania.
In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the whole world should be enrolled. This was the first enrollment, when Quirinius was governor of Syria. So all went to be enrolled, each to his own town. And Joseph too went up from Galilee from the town of Nazareth to Judea, to the city of David that is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. While they were there, the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

From Pope Benedict XVI: God’s sign is his humility. God’s sign is that he makes himself small; he becomes a child; he lets us touch him and he asks for our love. How we would prefer a different sign, an imposing, irresistible sign of God’s power and greatness! But his sign summons us to faith and love, and thus it gives us hope: this is what God is like. He has power, he is Goodness itself. He invites us to become like him. Yes indeed, we become like God if we allow ourselves to be shaped by this sign; if we ourselves learn humility and hence true greatness; if we renounce violence and use only the weapons of truth and love. —Homily at Mass for the Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord, December 24, 2009. For more from Pope Benedict XVI, see “Excerpts from Pope Benedict XVI’s Spiritual Thoughts Series: Christmas.”

From Pope Saint John Paul II: At a General Audience in 1996, while speaking of the Nativity, the Pope said: "Mary experiences childbirth in a condition of extreme poverty: she cannot give the Son of God even what mothers usually offer a newborn baby; instead, she has to lay him ‘in a manger’, an improvised cradle which contrasts with the dignity of the ‘Son of the Most High’". Here is a translation of his catechesis, which was the thirty-sixth in the series on the Blessed Virgin and given in Italian.

Jerome, now St. Jerome, once famously said, “Ignorance of Scriptures is ignorance of Christ” (CCC 133). Clearly that is one of those epiphany moments but for Jerome it was not always so. Born into privilege and Roman citizenship in what is modern day Slovenia, Jerome would be sent off to Rome at an early age by his parents to become a scholar—a vocation that he would follow his entire life. Jerome would struggle with drink, sex and life in Rome generally—much like his contemporary Augustine did in Hippo and Athens. Jerome, however, found an asceticism that Augustine did not. He abandoned pleasure and luxury and went to the desert to live as a monk. He learned Greek, Latin, and Hebrew so well that he once said the style of the old prophets was “rude and repellent.” During a fever, Jerome received a vision of Christ rebuking him for his love of Cicero over the Bible. When he awoke he pledged his life to study and translation of the Bible (Bennett, pg. 191).

Jerome became very good friends with Pope Damasus I around 382, which became advantageous for both Jerome and all Christianity. Pope Damasus I was the first to refer to Rome as the “Apostolic See,” he made Latin the official liturgical language of the Western Church, and was instrumental in putting down Arianism. Jerome, because of this emphasis on Latin, was chosen as Damasus’s personal secretary and asked to complete a comprehensive Latin translation of the Bible. What we now call the Latin Vulgate (vulgate meaning common, popular) was one of the most monumental tasks in Church history. The Old Testament at that time already existed in Greek, translated from the ancient Hebrew and then piecemeal, into Latin. Because of Jerome’s knowledge of Hebrew, he re-translated the Old Testament directly from Hebrew to Latin, thus avoiding translation and idiomatic errors. Then he translated the New Testament, which he completed around 390 (pg. 193-196).

Jerome was a contemporary of Church greats Origen, Augustine, and Ambrose. He was not afraid to call the prophets “rude,” or to say that Origen “erred concerning the condition of souls, he has erred by supposing it possible that the devil may repent,” and he sparred with Augustine over how much Jewish influence was proper in the Bible. Augustine wanted less, or at least thought Greek was just as proper, while Jerome may have erred on the conservative/deferential side to Jewish too much. Jerome was neither the theologian of Augustine nor the polished speaker of Ambrose but he was a devoted, educated, and tirelessly faithful man of God who spent fifty years translating the Bible, writing countless commentaries, and defending the Faith against the Pelagian heresy. Jerome’s Latin Vulgate was the Bible used from Jerome’s death in 420 until the Protestant Reformation in 1517. His Vulgate was translated from Latin to all other languages in common vernacular. Saint Jerome, fourth century Doctor of the Church, another repentant sinner who, upon hearing God’s voice, not only changed his life, but enabled the Word of God to be read to the entire world.

St. Bede

Mark Bowles, PhD

The Catholic faith can speak to us all on a personal level, and an important way it does this is through the lives of the Saints. One lesser known example is the Venerable Bede. The work he did well over one thousand years ago touches all our lives today.

Bede was born in Jarrow, England in 672 AD. At age seven his family gave him to the local monastery (we are not sure why) and he remained there for the rest of his life. He became a Deacon at nineteen, a Priest at thirty, and spent his life studying scripture and writing about it until his death at age sixty three. People began calling him the Venerable Bede within a generation or two after his death.

At Jarrow, he was in a very unusual and unique position. He never travelled (he was essentially cloistered) but he did not have to go far to become a scholar. Bede’s monastery had perhaps the greatest library in the world at that time. The library also attracted Biblical scholars from Rome, North Africa, and Turkey and so he had an opportunity to learn from them as well. He was a citizen of the world without ever having left his monastery.

He is most remembered for a book he wrote in 731 (originally in Latin) called an Ecclesiastical History of the English People. This is the first history of England ever written, and today it remains the essential source for this period. He was the first person to use the term “English” and was the first scholar to write in the English language. Bede also became the first person to use the life of Christ as a dating system or the dividing line of history: Before Christ (BC) and Anno Domini (AD), the Year of Our Lord.

Along with his history and theology, Bede was also something of a scientist. Ultimately, he believed that science would aid in an understanding of the Bible and Christianity. He combined the two by focusing on problems of the calendar and the importance (and extreme difficulty) of determining the date of Easter (a calculation we still use today).

Bede’s tomb is on display today at Durham Cathedral. The story goes that he was originally buried at Jarrow but a Priest from Durham was so enamored of him that he literally stole his bones for his church.
St. Bede, continued

After his death, his influence grew because of his scholarship and writings. In 1899, Pope Leo XIII bestowed upon him the title Doctor of the Church, and he is the only Englishman so honored. At the same time, the Church officially recognized him as a saint, and today he is considered the patron saint of historians and scholars.

Bede actually died on Ascension Day in 735. Prior to that, he wrote a poem/hymn about Jesus’ Ascension that became well known. That he died on this day has made these words more poignant.

A hymn of glory let us sing;
New songs throughout the world shall ring:
Christ, by a road before untrod,
Now rises to the throne of God.

The holy apostolic band
Upon the Mount of Olives stand;
And with his followers they see
Their Lord’s ascending majesty.

To them the angels drawing nigh,
"Why stand and gaze upon the sky?"
This is the Savior," thus they say;
"This is his glorious triumph day.

"Again shall ye behold him so
As ye today have seen him go,
In glorious pomp ascending high,
Up to the portals of the sky."

O risen Christ, ascended Lord,
All praise to thee let earth accord,
Who art, while endless ages run,
With Father and with Spirit one.

If you are interested in Bede, you can visit where he lived today at Jarrow Hall, the Anglo Saxon-Farm Village and Bede Museum (https://www.jarrowhall.org.uk/).

Bede’s *Ecclesiastical History of England* is available through Project Gutenberg [here](https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/91).

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**Student Life Corner**

The Office of Student Life is excited to announce that the Newman Center has medaled GOLD per the Chapter Standards Program for 2017!

This achievement speaks volumes, as this is a newly established chapter that has taken off running upon establishment! Due to your outstanding leadership and dedication to the success of this chapter, we have seen one of our newest student organizations take off in great strides!

Here’s to another successful year Newman Center!
Service Project Updates

Corporal Works of Mercy

The Newman Center “Corporal Works of Mercy” service project runs through the end of Winter 2018.

Members have shared these ways to care for others:

- Pack water bottles or snacks in your car and hand out to homeless men and women. If possible, stop and chat for a moment.
- “Brown Bag” project: as Thanksgiving approaches, one member’s St. Vincent De Paul Society distributes empty bags and requests that full ones be returned to create Thanksgiving dinners for needy families.
- Blessing bags: Create bags with food, toiletries, hats and gloves, and either a bit of money or gift cards to local fast-food restaurants. The homeless person who receives such a bag will feel through you the grace of God’s mercy and kindness.
- Burial Assistance donations help needy families with the final expenses necessary to bury a loved one with dignity.
- In many locales, jails have prison libraries. Investigate ways to donate to the library near you.
- As Christmas approaches, remember the elderly in a senior citizens home near you. Many are far from family and friends. A Christmas basket with toiletries and treats will brighten the day of a lonely senior.

If you have additional suggestions to help serve others, please share them with our group on Facebook, ClearPath, or anonymously by a note to apus.newmancenter@gmail.com

Wreaths Across America

Join the AMU and APU community in Wreaths Across America on December 16, 2017

Ways to participate:

1. AMU and APU students, alumni, faculty, and staff will be volunteering at the locations listed on this site: http://www.apus.edu/wreaths. Please register to volunteer via the form below by Monday, December 11, 2017.

2. If there are no AMU/APU locations near you, check the Wreaths Across America site for volunteer opportunities near you: http://www.wreathsacrossamerica.org/

3. If you are unable to participate in person, but would like to contribute, you can donate wreaths by visiting the Wreaths Across America site http://www.wreathsacrossamerica.org/. Select Donate from the main page.

Please post photos from your event on our Facebook site, on ClearPath, or send to apus.newmancenter@gmail.com. We will feature them in our Spring 2018 newsletter. Thank you!
Let’s congratulate our members on their recent accomplishments!

- Tamara Drummer began a new career.
- Stephanie King made the Dean’s List.
- Susanne Watts presented a paper titled “Prohibition: Fighting the Menace of Immigration” at the Northern Great Plains History Conference October 4-7, 2017 in Grand Forks, North Dakota.
- Lynn McAfee became a member of the Golden Key and Alpha Phi Sigma Honor Societies.

**Featured Member—Christopher Watt**

Christopher Watt started with the American Military University in October 2008, pursuing a degree in military history with a concentration in early European studies. He works as an Army contractor supporting unmanned aerial vehicle platoons with the 101st Airborne (Air Assault) Ft. Campbell, KY. When first beginning his degree at AMU, Christopher was working out of Contingency Operating Base (COB) Speicher near Tikrit, Iraq, and he found his down time was better put to use earning a degree. After heading back to the United States as well as subsequent deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, Christopher was able to continue taking classes whenever time permitted. However, it was not until November 2014 that he attained his Bachelor of Arts in Military History.

Christopher used the Montgomery GI Bill, earned while serving in the United States Army, to fund his education. While on active duty, he worked as an armament electrical systems repairer on AH-64A Apache attack helicopters. Serving from 1995 until the summer of 2003, including a brief deployment during the initial invasion of Iraq, Christopher left the Army and started his current role as an Army civilian contractor. His GI Bill expiring became the motivating factor, which led him to start taking courses with AMU. His older brother George, who works as a student advisor with the University of Alabama Huntsville, gave Christopher the initial recommendation to attend AMU as a good option for distance learning from a quality institution.

Christopher recently returned from another deployment to Iraq supporting Shadow UAS platoons during Operation Inherent Resolve. He spends most of his free time visiting family, walking trails at the various state and national parks in Tennessee and taking photos while on his hikes. Although not particularly musically inclined, he is also attempting to learn the banjo during his free time. Originally from mid-Michigan, Christopher is a big supporter of all the major Detroit sports teams, particularly the Red Wings hockey team. Incidentally, Christopher is also a fan of international soccer and follows Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI favorite team, FC Bayern Munich. At this time he is considering options for continuing his education with a Masters degree in history.

Currently Christopher lives in Clarksville, TN where he is a member of Immaculate Conception Catholic Church. Being a member of the Newman Center contributes to Christopher’s growth in the Catholic faith by providing a forum for discussion as well as spreading information, which helps in better understanding the Roman Catholic Church and its role in today’s society. He looks forward to supporting our Newman Centers Corporal Works of Mercy program as well as providing assistance to other Catholic charities throughout the year.
Events

Members recently voted on a variety of service projects for the remainder of 2017. The two winning projects are Wreaths Across America and Corporal Works of Mercy. This year, the national Wreaths Across America event will occur on December 16, 2017.

Our fall 2017-Winter 2018, service event Corporal Works of Mercy, kicked off on October 1. There are many ways members can answer the call to serve our brothers and sisters. For a list of the seven Corporal Works of Mercy and suggestions regarding each, please visit The Corporal Works of Mercy on the USCCB site.

Resources

Bible
Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2nd edition
Rich Gift of Love (Pope John Paul II’s Theology of the Body)
Daily Mass Readings
Catholic Social Teaching
St. Thomas Aquinas The Summa Theologica
The Confessions of St. Augustine
Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, West Virginia
The Fathers of the Church and their Writings
US Conference of Catholic Bishops
Vatican Radio
Vatican News Service
EWTN
Word on Fire

Documents from Vatican II:
Dei Verbum
Lumen Gentium
Sacrosanctum Concilium
Gaudium et Spes

Advisor’s Corner

From Dr. Robert Smith:

Here we are at December and many of you will soon be taking time off to celebrate Christmas with your families.

I wish you and yours all the best for the holiday season.

For us here in the Newman Center, let us focus on the blessings we have shared this year. Continue to learn, grow, pray, and share the gifts that God has given you with others.

I ask each of you to find some way to further help our group grow by bringing in a new member, enabling us to spread not only the Good Word, but also the overall cheer that is evident in this group.

God bless each and every one of you and embrace this season of rebirth and hope as we celebrate the birth of our Lord.