



CATHOLIC NEWMAN CENTER

Newman News

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By Fr. Bill Kempf

A few days after the tragedy at Virginia Tech, I received a call from one of the Resident Assistants in the dorms. They were putting together a candlelight vigil and wanted me to be one of the speakers at the event. It is one of those invitations that you can't say no to. Let me share a part of what I spoke about that evening.

"There are some images I wish I did not have in my head. Some of them are personal, like my mom kissing my dad goodbye in that hospital room. Others belong to us all because of the news media. Planes crashing into the Twin Towers on 9/11. Photos of broken and twisted bodies almost on a daily basis from Iraq. And now, there are the images from Virginia Tech. These are images that sear themselves into your consciousness and won't let go – or at least won't let go until they have taught you what they need you to know. In one way or another, they try to tell us NEVER AGAIN. Never again should this needless suffering happen. Never again should people die of war and hatred and violence. Never again should children be taken from parents or friends or lovers or fiancés.

"However, there are no guarantees for NEVER AGAIN. There is a reality to evil that cannot be explained away, dreamed away, wished away or even planned away. To be human is to have the choice to do amazing good or horrific evil. Until the day comes when there is no freedom – we will never be able to stop occurrences like what happened at Virginia Tech. What I can tell you, though, is that we are always free to choose how we will respond to evil.

"... Finally, may we learn how to stand with each other in the suffering. In this tragedy, these are the images that I am glad are in my head – the tears and hugs and memorials and quiet conversations taped from a discreet distance. Images of people who are willing to stand with each other in the sorrow, who remind us that we never stand alone. In our Catholic heritage, the icon of the cross gives us the divine response to human suffering. In that image, God stands united with us in our human suffering and death through his Son's suffering and death. That is why the cross is so powerful. It tells us God has not abandoned us in our sufferings..."

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On behalf of the students at the UMSL Newman Center, let me thank all of you who are reading this for your support, which allows us to stand with our students. In a very real way, your love, prayers and support allow us to be there for this generation of Catholics and young adults. From this graced place, we continue to teach them the deepest truths about our faith, about goodness and evil, about love and about the God who stands with us all...

Social Justice Month:

Social Consciousness on Campus

WEEK ONE: Hunger Awareness Week

by Jenny Ebel

If you've ever thought you couldn't do anything about the number of hungry people in the world, you aren't alone. I'll admit I've wondered what can I do to keep people from going hungry? I've gone to work in a soup kitchen and donated some green beans to a food drive, but what does that really do? Does that really make a difference? Heck yes, it does. But at the same time, I want to do more.

During the first week of March, we held Hunger Awareness Week. During this week, there were soup lines, a hunger banquet, and a Hold 'Em for Hunger Tournament. Finally, a chance for me to do more. Not until I attended these events did I understand the impact they each have on fighting the endless hunger so many people less fortunate than I face everyday.

For the first two days of Hunger Awareness Week, you could buy soup and bread for a minimum donation of two dollars. The food was donated to us by UMSL's food-



service provider, Chartwells, and that means one hundred percent of the profits went to a local organization that provide food to those who cannot afford it.

Next, there was the Hunger Banquet. This was the first I had ever attended, and I would recommend it to everyone. Those that attend the banquet are given a piece of paper which contains a make-believe identity and social rank that becomes your identity for the banquet. The room is divided according to how people eat throughout the world. To some, it may be surprising that the largest group is the poorest, and the smallest group is the one that is well-fed.

I ended up in the group that was well-fed and at the table with linens and utensils, and if that was lucky or not is difficult to say. I ended up feasting on chicken marsala with salad and dessert while the poorest group sat on the floor amid trash and ate rice and dirty-looking water. The most moving portion of the banquet was when Laura Riley, one of the Masters of Ceremo-

nies, showed a slideshow of pictures from her trip to Malawi. She reminded us all that every three seconds a child dies of hunger and preven able causes as a drum beat every three seconds during the slideshow.

On Thursday of Hunger Awareness Week, the Hold 'Em for Hunger Tournament was held in the Pilot House of the Millennium Student Center. We had close to forty participants. None were professional gamblers, but they were willing to donate ten dollars to help the hungry for a friendly game of Texas Hold 'Em and a chance to win some nice gift certificates and prizes.

Almost \$500 was raised during Hunger Awareness Week. The donations were split among the Metro Homeless Center, Operation Food Search, and Oxfam America.

It was a long and busy week of activities, but I learned little donations can make a big difference. If I can make a big difference, I can only imagine the effect we could all have on the world, if we all made little donations in order to make the world a better place.



WEEK THREE: Fair Trade Awareness Week

by Julie Schneider



"Fair Trade certification empowers farmers and farm workers to lift themselves out of poverty by investing in their farms and communities, protecting the environment and developing the business skills necessary to compete in the global marketplace." ~TransfairUSA.org

Fair Trade is an important world issue that cannot be ignored. To raise consciousness on campus, the CNC decided to make Fair Trade Awareness Week part of Social Justice Month. The most basic definition of Fair Trade means that the farmers receive a fair price for the crop they grow. Fair Trade creates sustainable

communities. Through increased income, farmers are able to provide an education for their children, keep their children in school and not in the fields, and provide healthcare.

On Monday, March 19, we distributed gallons of Fair Trade certified coffee to students, faculty, and staff on the Millennium Student Center bridge. Each cup had a sticker of quick facts slapped on the side which informed the consumer about Fair Trade Products.

Did you know that small farmers who work without the benefits of the Fair Trade label most often sell to middlemen, capturing a

mere 2%-4% of the retail price of coffee? Coffee is not the only Fair Trade product available in the United States: fruit, rice, honey, tea, chocolate, and many more products can be found at several websites and stores (e.g. www.maketrade4fair.org).

Speaking of chocolate, we just couldn't pass up the opportunity to allow our fellow students to try Fair Trade cocoa. We passed out small Fair Trade chocolate bars to each passerby on the bridge on Tuesday, March 20 along with a quick fact sheet and a list of places Fair Trade products can be purchased in the area.

WEEK TWO: Homelessness Awareness Week

A Night in the Life of "Homeless Mike"

by Mike Ruzycki

On Thursday, March 15, the Newman Center sponsored its annual Shantytown. A Shantytown is an experience of living in solidarity with the homeless. I was challenged to record my thoughts, feelings, and what I learned as a homeless person for the evening. Although, my experience cannot compare to the reality of being homeless, I feel I learned very much from this experience.

As I approached the Shantytown, I saw several students hanging out on the patio just outside of the Nosh, chatting amicably. I entered the scene the same time as Laura Riley, a graduate student at UMSL. She and I began to construct what would become our sleeping quarters for the night. The following is an excerpt from the journal that I kept for the duration of the evening.

6:00 pm— Laura had the great idea that sleeping with multiple people in one box would create more heat inside of the box, and would help to keep us warm throughout what was sure to be a very cold night. We began to build a multi-person shanty using cardboard boxes and duct tape that the Newman Center provided. Having duct tape to help construct the shanty made it much easier than having to simply crawl inside of a box with no firm structure.

7:00 pm— Soup is delicious! It warms me from the inside out! I couldn't imagine not being able to get a hot meal. Luckily, there were two different types of soup to choose from, as well as dinner rolls.

7:15 pm— Several speakers have come to UMSL from various organizations around the city that aid St. Louis' homeless population. First up... Tom Mulvihill.

7:45 pm— Tom Mulvihill is the Director of Projects and Special Initiatives at the St. Patrick's Center, located on Tucker a little ways North of Highway 40. He spoke to the gathered crowd about the beginnings of the St. Patrick's Center, as well as about some of the specific people that have been helped by the organization. It sounds like a great place that helps people get back on their feet.

8:20 pm— The second speaker was Tom Burnham. He works at the Sts. Peter and Paul Men's Shelter in Soulard. He spoke to us about the experiences he has had running a shelter for homeless men, and how he has been able to help them in their struggles to make a living.

8:45 pm— The third and last speaker was Sr. Stephanie from the Room at the Inn. She told us about her organization and how they help women with children by giving them a place to stay, helping the kids attend school, and making it much easier for single mothers to take care of their children as they struggle to make a living for themselves and get their families off

the streets.

9:00 pm— It's cold! Luckily, there is a fire pit nearby, and we have just started a fire to keep warm. Tracy, the Campus Minister, is setting up a video that we are going to watch soon, so I guess I will have to abandon the fire for a while.

10:30 pm— The video that we watched was called "It Was a Wonderful Life." It was a depiction of homeless women in America. Rather than simply showing the obviously homeless, begging men and women who spend their days on the street asking passer-by for spare change, this video interviewed women and showed them going about their day as a homeless woman making a living. The main message of this video was that not all homeless people are readily identifiable as being homeless. Rather, many of these people go through great pains to appear normal, hold steady jobs, but simply do not have a home in which to sleep. The women in the movie all had different strategies for sleeping. One woman slept with her family in a hotel room. Several of the women slept in their cars, while another woman rented a U-Haul for a brief period of time and slept in the back of it. Showers were difficult to come by. Some women were able to take advantage of public shower houses, while other women were forced to wash up in public restrooms. Despite their hardships, these women were all determined to live, and still held on to the hope that some day they would once again be able to live as a regular member of society.

1:00 am— People are starting to crawl into their boxes just now. I think I will too.

3:30 am— Sleeping is very difficult in this cold weather. I am going to get up and try to get the fire going to warm up a bit before trying to sleep some more.

3:45 am— As I was fanning the embers of the fire trying to get a flame, one student climbed out of her box. She was shivering with cold. She told me that it was too cold for her and that she was going to go inside to sleep. She went to her car and drove off. Soon after that, another student emerged from her box and went into the MSC to warm up for a minute. She came out soon thereafter and went to her car to drive elsewhere to sleep. Then, Laura came out of our box and also left to go sleep inside. Tracy and another student then came out of their boxes and joined me at the fire.

6:00 am— Birds are chirping. The sun is not yet up, but we take the birds to be a sign of the morning, and declare ourselves victorious over the bitterly cold night. We clean up and depart from our home for the evening. I am glad the cold night is over and thankful that I don't have to do this everyday.

Relay Around the World for Life

by Joe Sanchez



Cancer causes of 1 out of every 4 deaths in the United States. It's estimated to kill over 1500 people a day in the U.S. alone. Chances are, either you or somebody you know currently has, or in the past has had, some form of cancer. Billions of dollars are spent on medical costs alone associated with cancer.

On April 13th and 14th, the Catholic Newman Center participated in the American Cancer Society's first-ever Relay for Life on UM-St. Louis' campus. The event began at 6:00 p.m. that Friday and concluded at 6:00 a.m. Saturday morning.



Various organizations on campus had teams that walked around the designated track in the Millennium Student Center throughout the entire night raising funds and awareness for cancer.

The theme of this year's relay was "Relay Around the World." Each team selected a country to decorate their camp site with the theme. The CNC chose Djibouti (pronounced ji-boo-tee), a small county in eastern Africa. Our theme was "Fight Cancer: Get your Djibouti in Gear!" The CNC boosted our fundraising total to \$1200 by selling over \$400 worth of keychains, chili, and

baked goods throughout the night.

To keep everyone energized and awake, the night was filled with various games and events. Every enthusiastic participant received Spirit Bucks in order to win the coveted "Most Spirited" Award. The Catholic Newman Center team took 3rd Place in the most spirited contest with over 1800 Spirit Bucks.

UM-St. Louis' first-ever Relay for Life was an amazing success! The campus raised over \$56,000, double the original goal, for the American Cancer Society. Over sixty teams participated. Relay for Life also won the "Best Campus Community Building Program" at the Student Life Leadership Awards Banquet.

Together with the rest of the college and surrounding community the Newman Center is doing their part to help raise awareness and find a cure for cancer.

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Is that Chase on a Billboard??!!

by Tracy Van de Riet

It was much to my surprise when I received a voicemail message from a student several weeks ago. She exclaimed, "I think I just saw Chase on a billboard!" She was quite right! Our very own Newman Center Athletic Director, Chase Sims, is on two billboards, a few bus stops, and various other materials the Annual Catholic Appeal distributes. Chase was selected as a "success story" when we submitted our annual budget to the ACA in September.



Chase entered college three years ago

with the desire to find a new faith and church to belong to. He began to attend Mass on a weekly basis and soon joined RCIA classes. Chase became Catholic two years ago. At the Newman Center, Chase has found an amazing community and wonderful friendships.

Chase has been recognized by people on campus and a facebook group entitled "Is that Chase on a Billboard?!" has been started in his honor. I think people have even asked for his autograph because, really, how many people do you know that have been on a billboard?

Awakenings 2007: "Glad to be Alive!"

by Chase Sims

As one pulls up through the small wooden arch that begins Camp Wyman, it's hard to fully understand what is about to happen. It's Friday, and already students have met at the Newman Center on the UMSL campus to begin Awakenings. Awakenings is a college retreat focused on giving students an opportunity to slow down, find themselves, find their faith, and enjoy the message that this weekend of social interaction and heightened awareness of life's hidden happiness has to offer. But before they leave Newman, students really have no idea what lies ahead, and there's no way to prepare for it.

Once students pass through that wooden arch, they enter a world cut off from the ordinary. Although not seeming like much on the outside, Camp Wyman has been transformed. Throughout the weekend, the students will listen, participate in activities, interact, and go through various events that hopefully will spark a dead flame, or make an already lit flame larger. Many things that go on at Awakenings are considered "secrets" but are only secrets so students can have that unprepared "wow, I can't believe how this weekend turned out!" feeling when they leave Camp Wyman on Sunday.

So when we arrived on Friday, February 9, I was as excited as I had been since last year's Awakenings. As we unpacked and settled into our cabins, the smells and feelings of the retreat came over me, and I couldn't help but smile. Walking down the leaf-covered path to the community hall where the main activities were held, I could see the look of uncomfortable concern on others who were having their first Awakening experience. *It's okay, I said to myself, they'll only be like that for another ten minutes.* And it's true. Once the weekend of Awakenings gets started, there's no turning back.

This year's Awakenings had particular meaning for me. I was able to be a member of the Team, a Team I care for immensely. And, I was able share in the excitement of those experiencing it for the first time. We were even blessed to have a group from St. Xavier University in Chicago drive hours and reschedule important classes just to be with us on this retreat. Their passion for what they wanted to gain from the weekend, and what they wanted to bring back for a retreat of their own, helped give me that little extra happiness throughout the weekend. It was something I will cherish, and look forward to coming back to in Oc-

tober. The funny part about Awakenings is that honestly, when I first went I wasn't expecting to get much out of it. By Sunday, I couldn't stop, and wanted more.



Saturday evening Adoration at the Awakening Retreat.

The Awakenings retreat is the Newman Center's big event to reach out to UMSL students as well as students on others campuses. Not only do I believe it touches them, but for most, it knocks them right off their feet. This

year especially, Awakenings reminded me what the Newman Center and the people involved bring to my life. I would come to Awakenings again and again, just to be wrapped up in it all.



The Awakeners, Growers, and Team of February's Awakening Retreat.

Thanks to all our soup makers this year

Gin Barton
Jeannine Bennett
Bernie Berns
Angie Burton
Bridget and Brian Dailey
Jenny Ebel
Gary Gagnepaigne
Jennie Gildehaus
Shari Gindra
Jeremy Loscheider
Teresa Roberson-Mullins
Ashley Norton
Sue Reid
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Wish List

- **Stamps**
- **New Dining Room Chairs**
- **New Living Room Couch**
- **Gift Cards to Shop n Save, Office Depot, Home Depot**
- **Endowment Contributions**

If you would no longer like to receive this newsletter or other mailings from the Newman Center, please contact us at cncumsl@aol.com or 314-385-3455.

Mission Statement

The Catholic Newman Center serves the campus community at UM-St. Louis through liturgy, fellowship, prayer, and education. As a welcoming faith community, we offer service and leadership experiences, spiritual guidance and faith development, and recreational and social opportunities, forming people for their active roles in the church and the world.