

A**L****U****M****N****I****November 2022****Cade Naughton, Class of 2021 (December)**

Cade Naughton is currently serving as the Youth Minister at St. John the Baptist Parish in Mount Vernon, IA. Cade shares that as a new Youth Minister, a lot of what he does is based on his time as a Fellow at Newman. At Newman, he had the opportunity to look deeply into how Christ fills the hearts of His kids. He says that he came to realize that the desires that we have in our hearts are relatively constant throughout each of our lives. For that reason, he tries to cater to the desires of belonging, purpose, and authenticity in his ministry. That being noted, he says he tries his best to make sure each child knows they have a place in their program and in their Church. He also does his best to make sure they know Christ is at the center of what we are doing, and that He is attainable at their current stage of life.

Sharing about the impact of the Newman Center on his college years, Cade says, "When I came into college and for the first semester, I struggled a good bit with the purpose of why I was there. I was not sure how my major or what I was learning played into the grand scheme of my life. When I decided that I needed to prioritize my faith, the Newman Center provided that fertile soil so I could grow into the beautiful, delicate flower that I am. While I was there, I met some amazing people, including Brynne (my wife), and I also met Father Jeff Belger! So, all in all, the Newman Center gave me the purpose, belonging, and authenticity that I needed."

He continues with how the center is impacting his life now, "Right now, the Newman Center is impacting my life by showing me how to discern different decisions. Presently, my wife and I are pregnant with our first kid on the way, and we are deciding how we want our child's life to look in the future. The experiences we received at Newman helped us to know better what God wants us to accomplish. Also, being in Cedar Rapids, we are still very close to Iowa City and the Newman Center. So, we remain in contact with many of our friends who help support us and provide encouragement as we take our first steps out of college."

Cade's favorite memory is a meet cute! "There was this one time I met a doppelganger of one of my friends in the Newman Center. From a distance, you could hardly tell them apart, and I did not realize they were two different people. That was until after Thursday Night Mass when I went up and tried to talk to this doppelganger. She then made eye contact with me as I went to greet her, and she continued to walk right past me. That was the first interaction I had with Brynne." Brynne and Cade were married this summer!

He went on to say, "For a favorite activity at Newman, it is hard for me to pick. Thursday Night Mass and Wednesday Night Adoration were the most spiritually fulfilling. The repeated activity of smoking Fr. Jeff in ping pong fulfilled me emotionally."

We love to hear about holy moments that students experienced while at the Newman Center. Cade remembered an event that was not specifically one that was in the Newman Center, but it was at a retreat that was sponsored by Newman. It was in Cincinnati, Ohio. He and his friend Zach and were watching Forrest Gump on the projector in the church. They knew it was getting late and that their computer was running out of battery. "At one point in the movie, I looked over to Zach and said, "Hey Zach, you think we should be getting to bed?" Zach responded, "Cade, I think when God wants us to go to bed, He'll let us know." Then, not two seconds later, the computer died, and the movie turned off. He says they looked at each other, said nothing, then went to bed. Sometimes God is loud and clear."

"There was a huge amount of people that impacted my faith formation in substantial ways. However, I would have to give it up to the staff at Newman, especially Mike, Christine and Father Jeff. Seeing how the staff lived out their faith lives was originally something I just admired, but later it turned into a standard of virtue to strive toward. Additionally, I would also have to mention a woman named Jeannie who exemplifies the love for unborn life. Being able to witness the graces and courage she had was simply inspiring."

Thank you for sharing with us Cade! !