

Sun & Balance

THE RENSSELAER NEWMAN FOUNDATION VOL 57, NO. 1 — SPRING 2022

EASTER GREETINGS



WAIT... what's that up ahead? That tiny spark on the horizon.... could that be light at the end of the tunnel?

As I'm writing this, we're just past the Feast of the Presentation, which means we're past the half-way point between the winter solstice and the spring equinox. Winter is more than half gone! Days are noticeably longer, and despite the groundhog's dire predictions, six more weeks of winter takes us only four days past the start of spring. So much for meteorologically-inclined Marmota monax.

Mercifully, we're also starting to see some light at the end of the pandemic tunnel. Infection numbers, hospitalizations and casualties are trending sharply down. Barring the emergence of another unpredictable variant, we have reason to hope that we're past the worst of this.

It's not too soon to ask what we've learned through 28 months of the pandemic. I suspect we'll find that it has revealed both the best and worst of us. We've seen how the life of our institutions — including Churches and universities — can adapt, and the ways they struggle. The pandemic has certainly pulled back the veil and revealed the irreversible cultural shifts that were challenging us even before the emergence of COVID-19.

In the midst of this wave of change, Pope Francis has challenged us to engage in a process of listening and dialogue: a synod on synodality. This process asks us to look deeply and honestly at how the Church lives in and serves the world and its people today and in the future. It asks us to examine our willingness to accompany those outside our churches. Rather than focusing on the Church's internal struggles and crises, the synod process calls us back to our mission in the world.

We are just beginning the synod process in the Diocese of Albany, but there is reason to have hope. Where ever you are, and how ever you understand your relationship to the Church and its mission, I urge you to participate in the synod process. If we do this well, with honesty, vulnerability, and authenticity, the synod may even provide us with the tools and experience we need to start bridging our cultural and political divisions.

Our presence on the RPI campus has historically placed us at the intersection of Faith and Culture, a juncture where the Paulist Fathers have always engaged in our ministries. As we work together to serve the RPI community, perhaps we can see in the synod process a light in the darkness. May this Easter season bring us all renewed hope!

Fr. Larry Rice, CSP
Chaplain

Student Parishioner Highlights

WE are Church is a weekly post in the Christ Sun of Justice bulletin. These are some recent highlights from Rensselaer students.

MOLLY MONGE

You might not know that:
 "I grew up in the country and we have chickens! A few days before Easter we added 6 new chicks to our family."

Favorite CSJ memory:
 "My favorite memory at the C+CC is performing with the choir at Christmas Eve Mass on my flute! My family enjoyed attending Mass and listening to the Christmas carols. Being a part of a beautiful Christmas Eve Mass made it one of my most memorable Christmases. I am very grateful for the C+CC community. I hope one day I can return and play on Christmas Eve again!"



Molly Monge '21 **WE are Church**

NATALIE YOUNG

You might not know that:
 "My eyes change color! Most of the time they're a grayish color, but they alternate between that, blue, and sometimes a dark green."

My Favorite CSJ activity:
 "I absolutely love cantoring at Mass! I really love singing hymns, so getting to lead the congregation in worship every week is such a gift for me."



Natalie Young '24 **WE are Church**

ETHSON DESTRA

You might not know that:
 - I speak 4 languages: English, French, Creole, and Spanish (fluent).
 - I am an Aeronautical / Mechanical Engineering major.
 - I play the drums.
 - I am also in The Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corp."

My CSJ connection:
 "I am happy to join the facilities staff at the C+CC and I look forward to meeting the parishioners of CSJ."



Ethson Destra '25 **WE are Church**

QI HAN ZHENG

You might not know that:
 - I served as both an altar server and a lector at my church back home in Connecticut, Saint Thomas the Apostle Church, for 8 years.
 - I speak 4 languages fluently: English, Mandarin, Chinese, Spanish, and French along with a decent amount of Japanese.
 - Currently, I am a student representative, representing the entire Architecture Freshman Class of 2026, in which I work alongside the Dean to better support and serve my classmates."

My Favorite CSJ memory:
 "My first time reading at the C+CC as a lector was an amazing experience. I enjoyed the liturgy so much because I was able to spread the words of Jesus to the Church, letting more people acknowledge his love."



Qi Han Zheng '26 **WE are Church**

DENNIS COLUCCI

You might not know that:
 - I'm an Eagle Scout! I've been a Scout since first grade in 2006, and finally earned my Eagle on January 2nd, 2020.
 - I'm an avid Model Railroad! In addition to having a large personal collection of trains at 1/87 scale, I am also the president of the RPI Model Railroad Club, who models at 1/87 scale!
 - I'm a Type 1 Diabetic! I was diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes in 2017, and I now have an insulin pump with a continuous glucose monitor that beeps when my blood sugar is out of normal range, so if you hear me beeping during Mass, sorry in advance!"

Favorite CSJ memories:
 "My freshman year, we had a Halloween party at the C+CC where we hung out and carved pumpkins, followed by a Midnight Mass for All Saints Day. Since there were only about 10 of us there, we held the Mass around the altar instead of in the usual seats, and I got to read the second reading for the ceremony. It was one of the coolest Masses that I have ever attended!"



Dennis Colucci '24 **WE are Church**

ANDY BOUFFARD

You might not know that:

- I was born and raised in Los Angeles and I'm a die-hard Lakers fan!
- I have learned how to play 5 different instruments throughout my life (including the recorder in 4th grade). Now I play bass, guitar, and occasionally piano.
- I wanted to attend college on the East Coast ever since visiting on a trip with my 8th grade class.

Favorite C+CC memory:
 Attending Mass with friends every week and hanging out with Newman and the Knights of Columbus in the Hospitality House!



Andy Bouffard '22 (and his dog, Brandt) **WE are Church**

KAITLIN JENNINGS

You might not know that:
 "In my free time I love doing anything creative, including painting, sewing, and drawing. One of my favorite projects I have done is making a quilt for college."

My Favorite CSJ activity:
 "I have enjoyed getting to meet people within the church community! I love seeing friends and meeting new people on Sundays, as well as getting brunch afterwards every week."



Kaitlin Jennings '24 **WE are Church**

ELISE KULKA

You might not know that:
 "I really love singing! Outside of church choir, I'm in an a cappella group on campus - the Rensselaerics. In addition to our weekly rehearsals, we hold our semestral performances in the C+CC." ([click here for info on upcoming performances](#))

Favorite CSJ memory:
 "Attending the dinner on Holy Thursday held by Father Ed - it was such a nice way to come together with other members of the parish community."



Elise Kulka '22 **WE are Church**

Acknowledgement Notice

When the new semester began, we started some reconfiguring of our staff resources to help us respond more effectively in these challenging times. One change you may notice is that we will no longer be able to mail individual acknowledgement for gifts of \$100 or less. Not that we don't appreciate every contribution - we do! But rising costs and short staff time mean we just can't acknowledge every individual gift. Rest assured that we will send a summary of your contributions to help with your tax preparations.

If you're getting this newsletter, you've been connected to the Rensselaer Newman Foundation and our mission at RPI, and you understand how important our work is, bringing together faith, humanities, science and engineering. Please consider making a gift to the Foundation to continue our work; know also that we're praying for you at every Mass at the Chapel + Cultural Center.

SURVEY

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