



Dear Faithful -

Today, I will start my day over at Saint Patrick's parish, worshipping with those students at Regina High School, who will be retreat leaders this academic year. Following the Mass, they are on a retreat of their own, trying to imagine and trust that God has a plan for them. Being on a retreat team is a great responsibility. It presumes that you have a living relationship with God and his Church. It presumes that you feel called by God, to share your experience, (imperfect as it may be) in

such a way that it inspires and makes clear the path for others. The sobering reality is that when I was in high school, I volunteered as an opportunity to get out of class.

Going on retreat is a great opportunity. It presumes that you desire a deeper relationship with God and his Church. It presumes that you had freedom to choose to go on retreat. The sobering reality is many times it's mandatory in a high school setting. Our retreats here at the Newman Center are poised to break the 100-student mark this fall. This is a huge achievement because these students are responding to invitations, not coercion. Please pray for the students of both Regina and the University of Iowa who will be going on retreat this academic year. Pray that God opens their hearts to receive the invitation. Pray that a deeper relationship with God and his Church will not only be the goal, but the reality.

Now what about you? Have you been on retreat lately? Have you seen growth in your spiritual life lately? Do you desire a deeper relationship with God in his Church? Or are you in a rut? I started my first class of a certificate program from Villanova University this week. One line that stuck out to me in the first lecture was: "*one of the few differences between a rut and a grave is the dimensions of the hole.*"

Perhaps a small change would be fitting right now. One of the great blessings of the Catholic community of Iowa City is the variety of daily Masses that are offered each day. I would like to challenge you to find one of those Mass times that fit your schedule and see it as a mini retreat. Add just one more day of Mass to your weekly schedule. And while you are there give God permission to deepen your relationship with him and his Church.

A quick shout out, in thanksgiving to all those who made the Labor Day canoe trip a success. Regina for the vans, the Lehman/Sueppel families for a great lunch, the Jennison family in Burlington for the 26 foot long "Shoquoqon" canoe, the FOCUS Missionaries, Fr. Thom Hennen and Fr. Joseph Sia, and Donna DeJoode and Christopher, who came all the way from New York to help. And of course, Christine Wissink, who tries every year to make me a bit more organized. And of course, all of those who offered prayers for our trip!

Blessings -

Fr. Jeff Belger
Priest Director

P.S. Head over to the website and check out how the Newman Center's mission to prepare students for the Church and the world is having an impact through the works of our alumni! Click here to find out more! [Newman Catholic Student Center](#) (Click the ABOUT tab at the top of the Home page and you will see ALUMNI in the drop down menu

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