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Following the devastating fires of 2016, our school and community was tasked with the difficult feat of rebuilding Cardinal Newman's school, the buildings and culture within. Years have passed, and we have seen regrowth of the buildings and the student population. Hand in hand these aspects, the buildings themselves and the students, have contributed to countless life changing memories and moments. In times like these, as we rebuild and grow, our school turns to God and faith as a pillar of strength. In spring of 2023 our school broke ground on the school chapel, a sign to the community that faith remains through and through. The question now is, as the chapel is close to completion, and students have filled the new classrooms and SLC for close to a year or two years now, how do we use these spaces to their greatest potential. There are a multitude of paths to take when mapping out the plan for Newman's future, but one must look at the core of the school. What defines Cardinal Newman? To me three things come to mind, Faith, Academics, and Extracurriculars. These ventures fuel the students at Newman to better themselves and those around them.

Part of what makes a building culture within a community is a shared experience and mutual bonding. Recently the Senior class went on a class retreat, an opportunity for the class to come together and bond one last time before graduation. During that retreat, like the ones that came before, we had a multitude of teachers come before us and talk about their experiences and our Newman legacy. One major thing that I took away from this experience is how the faith of our teachers and those who lead us connects to those within the class, each in a different way but

overall uniting us. With the new chapel being built, I think there is an opportunity to expand and connect the faith of Newman. We could utilize this space by hosting guest speakers who can provide a testimony of faith or insight into the world around us. These guest speakers could be leaders within the Catholic community or even students, inspiring others to better themselves, connecting us all with a mutual goal. This plays a big role in our CBSL as well. The mission of these projects is to “engage in meaningful acts of service, but also internalize the importance of compassion, empathy, and kindness towards others.” These speakers can work to inspire the lowerclassmen to begin looking for their CBSL and find a purpose beyond the Newman community. This is important as these projects can provide a foundation for many within highschool, and beyond. Overall, the chapel can be a connecting force within our school community, as we can invite speakers to engage and challenge students.

As well as the faith aspect of Newman, the culture of student life creates a unique environment within our community. Aspiring Cardinals look to Newman for sports, a culture of excellence exploding at the seams, or for the dance program, the spring and winter shows one of the most coveted events of the year. There are a multitude of opportunities and outlets that our school has to offer that positively impacts the student body as well as our community as a whole. It is important for the school to share these opportunities with the Newman student body in order to further aid in the restoration of Newman culture following the tumultuous years of fires and the pandemic. We can showcase the success of our students, the academic accomplishments, the artistic achievements, and the athletic accolades all throughout the SLC. There are newly installed poster billboards, and televisions that can be used to update the school on these achievements whether it be by student curated videos, or infographics. Seeing the

accomplishments of your classmates, a familiar face proudly represented on these walls, serves as a sense of pride in our community and helps build up the Newman spirit.

The Student Life Center and the new classrooms enable us to host events or to call on our vast alumni community to serve as such inspiration. The great thing about having a school like Newman, is there are years of alumni who are involved in various aspects of life. The courtyards and outdoor spaces within these buildings can be utilized to host alumni events. Bringing and involving former students in the current Newman community creates bonds and further helps redefine the student culture. Certain events could include athletic recruiting events where we invite former Newman athletes who went on to a higher level to discuss their process with recruitment or how they got to that level. The school could host career days that showcase former Newman students who can share advice regarding their particular career paths. Hosting events like this can broaden the horizons of current students by providing insight into the world around them. Hearing the stories of those who came before them can inspire the betterment of current students.

The Cardinal Newman campus and community has changed and evolved throughout the past few years, but one thing that remains constant through all is the faith and culture of our school. Utilizing these new facilities and embracing these immense opportunities can help aid in the upward trajectory of our school culture. By hosting events and inviting guests onto campus, whether it be within the SLC or Chapel, we can connect our students with the world and former Cardinals. Hearing and witnessing the stories of others provides an opportunity to connect and build up the Newman spirit.