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Our School and Its Uses

Cardinal Newman High School has a history of adapting to change and rising to meet any challenges it may face. Whether integrating Ursuline High School, rebuilding after fires swept Sonoma County, or combatting the COVID pandemic, Cardinal Newman has always persevered and reemerged on the other side even better than before. We currently have three new structures on campus, the newest of which, the chapel, is set to be completed this coming May. The most recently completed building is the Student Life Center (SLC), a space focused on student and community enrichment. Immediately beside the SLC stands the new classrooms, built to replace those lost in the 2017 fires. These three buildings come together to form the face of the new Cardinal Newman, with elements from the school's past shining through and opening the door for countless new uses for the campus.

The "oldest" new addition to Newman's campus is the wing of classrooms, currently hosting the languages, religion, English and writing, and a standalone building for art. These are all outstanding classrooms but the most underutilized feature of this new building is its negative space, the places there *aren't* classrooms, most notably the courtyard and stage. This school year has seen the expansion of Newman's Future Farmers of America (FFA) club, largely off campus, and this club could be expanded further to host events directly on campus, specifically in the new classroom's courtyard. Envision a student-run and school-organized farmer's market, headed by Newman's FFA members but supplanted by anyone in the student body who has a garden, knows

someone who has a garden, or even just has a product they wish to sell. Taking place on Saturdays either during the spring semester of the school year or throughout the summer, this would allow students to make a small profit and build up the Newman community while using the school's space. Students would have the opportunity to sell produce or other handmade goods to other students, parents, faculty, and alumni while learning about being a vendor, money handling, food safety, and how to interact with their peers. A farmer's market of this kind would bring a new life to the classrooms, expanding on the possibilities of what is possible to do with the space and creating greater student involvement *on* the Newman campus.

The recently completed Student Life Center already has several roles it currently fulfills, acting as a cafeteria, study lounge, workplace, college counseling, library, and just a place to hang out with friends. However, a core aspect of Newman's culture, service, could be expanded on and improved through new views of utilizing the SLC. At the most basic level, a greater number of service fairs could be hosted here, bringing in organizations from throughout Sonoma County to advertise their works and recruit Newman students to help their causes. The Senior Service Project also used to be one of the most defining aspects of Cardinal Newman culture, especially for Seniors, and it is something that has lost a lot of its luster. To start rebuilding the program, Seniors would host some of these service fairs, acting as representatives for the organization they have spent their last year at Newman working with and inspiring the rising Seniors and underclassmen. In addition to advertisement, Seniors could also use the SLC to perform aspects of their Senior Service Projects. The large cafeteria space can be easily transformed into assembly lines, where students can work to pack food boxes for a food bank, assemble gift packages for low-income families during the holidays, or put together bags of new and used clothes for families and individuals in need. Service is one of the most important parts

of what makes Cardinal Newman what it is. By using our new spaces to foster service in the community, it is reinforced in the minds and hearts of everyone in the community, bringing us ever closer together.

In addition to the open space primarily used as the cafeteria, the SLC also features a fully furnished industrial kitchen. While it isn't something Newman has ever offered before, this new resource could be used to provide cooking and kitchen skills classes to students. Restricting it to only upperclassmen may be a good idea but it seems a shame to have such an impressive new addition to the school and not use it to help students learn and grow, especially in a skill as essential as cooking. Cooking classes could take place in the period following lunch as the kitchen would no longer be needed to feed students that day, and classes could be taught either by the existing Epicurean staff or a new teacher hired for this purpose.

Finally, the chapel. Yet to be completed, the chapel will be the newest building on Cardinal Newman's campus. While we do already have a small chapel, this standalone building will make the Catholic faith more visually apparent while at school, and provide easier access for students to attend mass, confession, or simply take some time to sit in church and contemplate or pray. The addition of a larger chapel also brings back the possibility of an annual alumni mass. While this was a Newman tradition in the past at some point, it has since stopped and was an integral part of keeping alumni connected with the Newman community and each other. The return of an annual mass for alumni would help to continue rebuilding Newman's community and spirit in the wake of the fires and COVID. Most importantly it would allow the previous students to reconnect with their school and see how it has transformed since they were there. The SLC could also be used to host an after-mass brunch to provide more time for community building, networking, and simple fun. In addition, raffles could be held to help fund the religion

department at Cardinal Newman and the various retreats that each class can attend throughout the year. The alumni are an integral part of Cardinal Newman's identity and without them so much is lost.

Should weekly mass be held at the chapel, or even if not, a Sunday school program could be instated using the new chapel. This would provide an opportunity for younger and older kids to learn more about the faith outside of school and connect with the clergy at Cardinal Newman. A Sunday school program would also expand Campus Ministry's activities and allow club members to grow in their faith while teaching others. As one of the most active clubs at Newman and one that helps students learn about their faith, expanding the program would allow more people to join and possibly even provide service hours. Sunday school would also once again help to grow the Newman community. Children from St. Rose or other local schools would attend and allow them to see the Newman campus before they possibly attend and get a feel for what attending school there could be like.

With a storied past and ever-evolving present, Cardinal Newman High School has always adapted to any challenge thrown its way and the addition of three new buildings on campus proves that. The new classrooms, Student Life Center, and chapel all show Newman's dedication to improving the quality of life and education for its students. Each new building provides countless opportunities to expand what makes Cardinal Newman what it is.