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Cardinal Newman: 2015-2019

Cardinal Newman High School, over the past 60 years, has developed into an incredible school that staff, students, and alumni are proud to be a part of. From the school's founding in 1964 to the opening of the Student Life Center in 2023, community has been a central aspect of Cardinal Newman culture. Throughout the years, especially from 2015 to 2019, the Cardinal Newman community has grown, despite the challenges it has faced. The 2017 Tubbs fire was perhaps the most significant of these challenges. The Tubbs fire, though destructive, created a strong sense of unity and solidarity that became the center of the community. Regardless of the challenges Cardinal Newman faced from the Tubbs fire, the 2015 to 2019 period reflected incredible resilience and unity that would shape the community for years to come.

Before the Tubbs fire, Cardinal Newman was much like it is today. The atmosphere was very academic. Teachers encouraged students to ask for help when needed and collaborated with both each other and students to teach in ways that were suitable for all. This is reflected today through advisory periods and office hours, where students can talk to teachers about homework and grades, or ask for help studying for an upcoming test. There were also clubs that students joined. Many students joined Key and Interact Club, a service-based club that looked great on college applications. Today, students join clubs like Model UN, where students simulate the United Nations to learn more about world issues. In both periods, students prioritize academics.

Sports were also a large part of Cardinal Newman culture. Events like football and basketball games were extremely popular, with students filling the student section at every game. Even away games, like the intense rivalries at Windsor High School, the student sections were packed and loud, yelling cheers at the opposing student section. The atmosphere of these games was exciting, as everyone went all out for each theme. Everyone looked forward to sports games, much like today. ASB was significantly involved in on and off-campus activities. Off-campus, they rallied student sections at popular sports games, encouraging fellow students to show up to support the sports teams and participate in the themes. On campus, they organized dances and rallies, ensuring that all students would have a great time. This is similar to today, where ASB

organizes fun events for students and encourages everyone to support the sports teams. Sports and leadership have continued to shape the Cardinal Newman community.

Community was still a central part of what it meant to be a Cardinal. Before the fire, the campus played a key role in shaping the community. The campus was much different than it is today. Today, there are several new buildings, such as the 200 classroom buildings and the Student Life Center. Although the new buildings are central to the culture of Cardinal Newman today, the culture created by the campus before the fire was much different. Before the fire, the campus included a central locker area. This allowed everyone to meet up and talk before their next class. It also provided more opportunities for people to bond with each other at school. Currently, there are lockers, but they are located at the campus entrance, making it difficult for all students to meet up there during school hours. There was also a grass area, with volleyball and basketball courts. This outdoor area boosted the community immensely. Even though the students still had phones, many more people chose to participate in outside activities with their peers. Though there is still a basketball court, students rarely use it. Community, though still an incredibly large aspect of Cardinal Newman, was different before the fire.

The Tubbs Fire, beginning on October 8th, 2017, was among the most destructive fires in California history. It destroyed over 5,000 homes, many of which belonged to Cardinal Newman students, and burned over 36,000 acres. Cardinal Newman's campus was incredibly damaged. Several classrooms were burned, causing classes to be moved off-campus, along with the baseball field. The fire had a large emotional impact on students, alumni, and staff who had a deep connection to the school. It also destroyed much of the physical continuity of the school's history. Memorabilia was lost, along with other historical parts of the campus. The fire caused the community to grieve the loss of their school, but it also encouraged the community to grow closer.

The beginning of the school year in 2017 was much like it is today, with everyone excited for the start of a new school year. However, following the fire, it was difficult to stay positive. Everyone was wishing for a sense of normalcy, as the fire changed the lives of staff, alumni, and students. As a result, the students and teachers bonded closer together. The teachers understood that the coming years would be abnormal for their students. This was shown in how the teachers interacted with students. They showed that they cared about their students as people, not just students. This is still shown today, as teachers express that they are truly there for students when

they need it. Additionally, the fire created an environment of compassion and empathy for people who were dealing with struggles in a different way. This environment still thrives today. Treating others with kindness and care has become a central aspect of Cardinal Newman's culture and is continuously shown through the actions of both the students and teachers. Although the emotional toll was incredibly heavy and difficult to overcome, the fire encouraged the Cardinal Newman community to support one another.

To overcome the challenges caused by the fire, the community banded together. The community showed their support through donations to help rebuild the school. Many alumni and supporters donated both time and money to ensure that Cardinal Newman could continue to serve its students and help the community heal. The community also began to lean on its faith. Prayer services were organized to give an outlet to those who were struggling. Many people looked to their faith to pray for those affected by the fire and for the hope that everything would eventually return to normal.

Sports were a common way for students to take their minds off of what had happened. Many students saw sports games as the highlight of the year following the fire because they brought the community together in times of hardship. Resilience was necessary during this time, which was reflected by the Varsity football team. Despite the school being burned and destroyed just two years before, the football team went on to win the state championship in 2019, highlighting the determination of the Cardinal Newman community to push through difficult times. Solidarity and resilience are still important values at Cardinal Newman, as students and staff support each other in everything they do, especially through hardship. The fire, though devastating, encouraged solidarity and perseverance, which still shape Cardinal Newman today.

In all, Cardinal Newman has continued to carry a strong sense of community and resilience since 2015. Whether it be on-campus or off-campus, Cardinal Newman prioritizes supporting one another. The Tubbs fire was a defining moment in the school's history that strengthened the bonds between its students, staff, and alumni. The unity that came from the Tubbs fire continues to influence the Cardinal Newman community today. The close-knit bonds between one another, the emphasis on academic excellence, and the participation in sports remain at the heart of Cardinal Newman culture. Cardinal Newman, both literally and figuratively, rose from the ashes and stands as a testament of perseverance and solidarity.

