

Sun & Balance

THE RENSSELAER NEWMAN FOUNDATION

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Dear Alums, Family and Friends:

Our fall season has come and is fast disappearing. These past couple of days have seen the first flakes of snow giving hints of the winter to come. It has been a great autumn with much happening here. Above and beyond the “routine” of getting to know the Class of 2018, we have had a great Homecoming and Family Weekend. Each of these events brought back many familiar faces and many new friends. There is such delight in seeing couples return to the C+CC that I had the pleasure of witnessing their marriages and even baptizing their children. These children are now old enough to understand and appreciate the memories their parents share upon bringing them into the C+CC. Parents tell of going to Mass and getting married here and walk to the font to show their children where they were baptized. In that moment a face or two lights up because they have seen the pictures of their baptisms and now are where it took place. What a moment for me!

In a separate meeting these past couple of days, parents from Slovakia were visiting their son here at RPI and the USA for the first time. We had a nice conversation as they spoke about their experiences these past couple of weeks in NYC and at Niagara Falls. The mom said she deeply appreciated coming to Mass here and, for reasons she could not explain, she felt right at home. She acknowledged the C+CC as a place of worship for students and community. In addition, the student’s dad said this place was



special and it made their visit all the more memorable. “We will be back and thank you so much for your welcome” were their final words to me earlier today.

All this continues to be possible because of your spiritual and material support. Thank you for your financial contributions over the years and your continued commitment. Our future is bright because of our strong past and presence. Words cannot express my gratitude to you for all that you are and have done for us! Please know that you are in our prayers daily and at all the liturgies we celebrate here.

One last thing, if you have some time, please write us and let us know about the role of the C+CC and the people here in your lives. We would truly enjoy hearing from you.

Wishing all of you a Blessed Thanksgiving, a Happy Christmas and a Healthy 2015!

Sincerely yours,

Father Ed Kacerguis



Bishop Scharfenberger's address to the Committee of 100

We were honored to have EDWARD B. SCHARFENBERGER, D.D., Tenth Bishop of Albany address the annual Committee of 100 Dinner that was held on Friday, 7 November 2014. Here are some of the insights the Bishop shared with those who attended the dinner.

"We are standing on holy ground"

The northeast, including the Diocese of Albany, has been described by those who study such trends as spiritually arid. Another way of understanding this condition, however, is that the region is, and has historically been, spiritually hungry.

The history of the Church's presence on this ground bears this out. The North American martyrs, (Isaac Jogue, Renee Goupil and John Leland) gave their lives to bring the Good News to the Mohawk. Why would they do this? They were refined and educated men, who could have stayed in Europe, writing and teaching about the Word. Instead, they brought the Word into an unknown and hostile world. They did this because of a hunger to minister to those who were hungry for understanding. Among these was St. Kateri Tekakwitha, who, though exposed by her conversion, lived an exact Christian life seeking to comprehend, through faith and piety, the true nature of suffering.

People are looking for something essential. From conversations with people attending the Dinner, the Bishop heard people's concerns; fear of social instability, lack of employment in the region, and the migration of the young and talented to other places. Most frequently, the plea the Bishop has heard has been, "Don't close my church; don't take




my pastor!" We Catholics are anxious about what comes next. We often experience feelings of guilt about this condition; we feel somehow we haven't done enough. We become acutely aware of our sinfulness. This awareness, however, can also be interpreted as a call from God.

"The New Evangelization"


For the Bishop, the New Evangelization is built on four pillars: Freedom, Family, Faith and Friendship. The New Evangelization is not aggressive. It has to take place in a complete atmosphere of freedom, with an approach of friendship. It is peer-to-peer; every individual is responsible to tell her or his story of faith in order to spread the Word in a real way. We need to recognize our imperfections and accept them as our personal call to Grace, to trust in Jesus. Having reached for and received humility, we can then each go evangelize. But there will continue to be loneliness, disconnectedness. Like the North American martyrs, we must reflect on what we do and how we do it, then accept the gift that Jesus gives each one of us, the courage, clarity and serenity to open our hearts to the spiritually hungry.

How do we find leaders in this effort? We need to expand our reflection on our mission to recognize those who have the talents needed to lead. The most common reason that many don't take up a consecrated vocation to take a pastoral lead in the Church can be as simple as this: "I was never asked". To find those who would lead, we may need only ask.


Despite the challenges that we face in life and in faith, the Bishop believes there is an abundance of hope. Relax and rejoice! 

Reaction to Bishop Edward Scharfenberger's remarks

Bob Thayer, Secretary, Pastoral Council Parish of Christ Sun of Justice

"Rejoice and relax" was the message from our new Bishop at the Committee of 100 Dinner. Taking as his theme the New Evangelization, Bishop Scharfenberger rooted his talk in the Gospel, the lives of the saints, and contemporary experience. He reminded us that we do not need to be perfect to serve as an example of God's love to others; God calls us through "our awareness of our sinfulness." He also noted that there is a deep need for stability in the world today, a need the Church is uniquely positioned to fill. The Bishop's pastoral focus is clear as he begins to lead our diocese. 

Megan Fannon, Vice President The Rensselaer Newman Foundation

Bishop Scharfenberger talked about the spiritual hunger in our region that is evidence of need for a New Evangelization. As a member of the RNF Board looking to the future, I reflected on how that idea translates locally: the C+CC, RPI, and Christ Sun of Justice. I considered the genesis of the C+CC, which filled a hunger in the RPI community both spiritual and cultural. While we wonder these days about the stability of the church, what our future pastoral situation will be, and how best to meet the evolving contemporary hunger of the RPI community, I take heart in the Bishop's exhortation that "hope abounds." 

The Rensselaer Newman Foundation would like to express their sincere thanks to Quest Plumbing and Heating Contractors, Inc. and to Modern Press for their sponsorship of our 2014 Committee of 100 Dinner.

At the 2014 Committee of 100 Dinner

Remarks by David Haviland



If I had to choose a single word to characterize the recipient of this year's Sun & Balance Award, I would choose WISDOM.

Simply put, Jim Ljunglin, RPI Class of 1957, has the gift of wisdom – a special talent for discerning what is the truly important in any situation, and then talking about it in a way that both teaches and inspires. He is profound, and yet always humble and respectful.

Jim has been most generous with his special gift here at Rensselaer, at his social fraternity Zeta Psi, at the RPI Alumni Inter-Greek Council, and especially at the Rensselaer Newman Foundation, where he has served as trustee for 29 years and as board president from October 2001 to October 2006.

We, who are the Church at Rensselaer, are beneficiaries of Jim Ljunglin's wise counsel. "We" includes all in this room, countless others across the country and around the world, both graduated and still attending Rensselaer.

More than beneficiaries, we are Jim's intellectual

descendants. Hear the words of the writer of the Book of Wisdom, Sirach:

"Now allow us to praise famous people and our ancestors, generation by generation.


They ruled in their kingdoms, and made a name with their power, some giving counsel by their intelligence; some making pronouncements in prophecies;

some leading the people by their deliberations, and by their understanding of the people's learning, giving wise words in their instruction;

Their descendants stand by the covenants, and their children also, for their sake.


The people will tell of their wisdom, and the congregation will proclaim their praise."

— Sirach 44: 1, 3-4, 12, 15

Tonight, the people tell of this wisdom, and the congregation proclaims its praise, as the Rensselaer Newman Foundation proudly presents the Sun & Balance Award to trustee, advocate, friend, and counselor, James J. Ljunglin. 

My surprise at this honor occurred at the board meeting in June though I am no less grateful for it now. The interval has allowed a contemplation anew of my sixty-plus years of fun at and affection for Rensselaer and Troy.

First, I see clearly the need for gratitude to the clergy, religious, and laity whose care and generosity made sure there was a Christian component to that long experience. Second, after my spending half those years on the Rensselaer Newman Foundation board, is the need to express my admiration for all the board members I have known who have slowly succeeded each other, never failing the high standard that so impressed me at the beginning. Their commitment and talent have given the RPI and Troy community a vibrant and vital institution. It is firmly based to face the challenges of the future.

And strength and courage will be required to carry forward that humane mission in education entirely appropriate for an organization bearing the name of Blessed John Henry Cardinal Newman. As you all well know, higher education in this country is approaching a crossroads, if not a crisis, as the public perceives something that was for centuries a peculiar mix of charity and privilege at the margins of society as now central to its well-being. The struggle over what higher education should now consist of, who gets it, and who pays for it, will be intense. There will be lots of attempts to cut corners. It is comforting to know that the Rensselaer Newman Foundation and its supporters will be positive, wise contributors to that debate in this beloved community. "Who us?" you may say. You are stronger than you realize. You know the value of the tiny seed, the leaven in the loaf, the still, small voice. Because you do, there is hope. 

Jim Ljunglin

The Rensselaer Newman Foundation

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Please visit our website or follow us on Facebook to view our upcoming events for the holiday season.

The Knights of Columbus celebrates 10th Anniversary

The Knights of Columbus are a Catholic, Fraternal Service Organization. After its founding in 2004 by Matt Kosara, the RPI Council # 13635 has been an active part of the parish and college community, as well as Troy's. Last month they celebrated the ten year anniversary of their founding. This is a major milestone for a college council, especially since the average life span of a college council is 3 years. Since then, the council has won the Columbian award for widespread service every year. The award requires multiple service events in the following categories per year: Church, Community, Council, Family, Culture of Life, and Youth. As well as this, this past year they have won the McGivney Award for increased membership, and they have been given the Circle of Honor award by NYS. If you see a young man wearing a Knights of Columbus shirt, they will be more than willing to help you in any way they can. 