

✠ SLO NEWMAN ✠ CATHOLIC CENTER

SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2026



PROCLAIMING THE GOOD NEWS TOGETHER

Our Mission

The SLO Newman Catholic Center serves the community of Cal Poly and Cuesta College as it proclaims the Kingdom of God and builds community through the ministries of Word, Sacrament, and Service.

Dear friends and loved ones of SLO Newman,
Bishop Ramón has appointed Fr. Andrew Garcia, SJ, as Director as of August 1, 2026. Thank you for your prayers during this transitional period. May God continue to bless the good work of the Newman Center. We appreciate your support - prayerful, financial, and otherwise - and may God bless you all as we continue to participate in the ongoing work of God's upbuilding of the Kingdom, now and forever.

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. Martin J. Cain, Director 2025-2026

Our Staff

Fr. Andrew Garcia, SJ

Jim Burrows, Deacon

Terry Burrows, OICA & Liturgy Coordinator

Marian Perales, Associate Director of Administration

Cate Kerpsack, Associate Director of Advancement

Evelyn Valtierra, Student Assistant

Jovita Joseph, Student Assistant/Editor

KEEP IN TOUCH AND CONNECT WITH NEWMAN ALUM!

FOLLOW THE STUDENT
POSTS AT SLO.NEWMAN
ON INSTAGRAM



Stay connected
through [LinkedIn](#)
and see what the
students are up to on
our [Instagram](#)!

SLO NEWMAN ALUMNI,
STUDENTS & SUPPORTERS
LINKEDIN GROUP



WELCOME Fr. Andrew Garcia, SJ

to the SLO Newman Catholic Center!



Please join us in welcoming **Fr. Andrew Garcia, SJ**, who has been appointed as the new **Director of the Newman Center** in San Luis Obispo for Cal Poly and Cuesta College, effective **August 1, 2026**. Fr. Andrew comes to SLO Newman with a large breadth of pastoral experience. He has worked with middle and high school students in Italy, and also served as University Chaplain at the Università di Padova (Padua) and Università di Torino (Turin).

Fr. Andrew has also ministered at San Quentin to the incarcerated, and in parish ministry at Most Holy Trinity church in San Jose, Our Lady of Mercy in Madrid, Spain, and Our Lady of Sorrows in Santa Barbara. We are grateful for his bilingual gifts, having fluency in Spanish and Italian. Fr. Andrew has his BA in English from UCLA, BA in philosophy from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, and his M.Div. from the Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley. He received his S.T.L. in Spiritual Theology in the Universidad Pontificia Comillas in Madrid.

Let us pray for Fr. Andrew as he begins this new assignment that the Lord will bring great fruits to his labor!

ORDER OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION

EASTER TRIDUUM AND SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION

The liturgical calendar and university spring break aligned this year so that we could celebrate the Easter Triduum with the students on campus. We prayed together during Lent at the Stations of the Cross and with a soup supper every Friday. At Holy Thursday mass we washed each other's feet and processed to Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament on the terrace. The Good Friday liturgy included Adoration and Stations of the Cross. We concluded the Triduum with the Easter Vigil by starting a bonfire and then celebrating the sacraments of initiation for four students that evening. Thank you to Fr. Roy Shelly & Deacon Jim!



This year we initiated four students in full communion and eleven in confirmation. We have two students continuing the process for initiation for next Easter, three for full communion and nine for confirmation. Thank you to our Faith Formation Director, Terry Burrows!



GRADUATE INTERVIEWS

"My roommates and I were looking for a Catholic Church to go to our freshman year, and since Newman was the closest, we went there. But we weren't active until spring quarter, after Gabe and I went to our first retreat. Before spring retreat, we only went to Sunday Mass and didn't really know anyone at Newman. Since then Newman has lit a fire in my heart for the Lord and a calling to learn more about my faith. Starting off, this community itself has taught me so much about my faith and has brought so many graces, such as making so many lifelong friends and opportunities to help others. It has also felt like my second home. This summer I'm planning to go to Seattle, WA to work on an internship at Boeing. And I will be coming back to Cal Poly SLO next year to complete my Master's in Engineering Management!"



EFREN SANCHEZ
INDUSTRIAL ENGINEERING



ELIZABETH SOUZA
LIBERAL STUDIES

"I knew I wanted to find a Catholic community at Cal Poly, so I sought out the Newman Center right away during WOW Week! They were instantly welcoming and let me know all about Women's Group, Bible Study, daily Masses, Adoration, etc. Being surrounded by young Catholics that take their faith incredibly seriously was a great source of comfort and inspiration for me. The future really is bright! Their faith continues to inspire me to take my prayer life and commitment to Christ to the next level. Next year, I will be continuing my education at Cal Poly as I acquire my Multiple Subject Teaching Credential with the School of Education! I will also be directing the theatre program at St. Joseph High School in Santa Maria and serving my third year as Youth Minister at St. Louis de Montfort in Santa Maria."

"I first learned about the Newman Center from students tabling at Open House, and when I came to Cal Poly later that Fall, I started attending Mass at Newman. I met Fr. Gerry, and he and the returning students immediately welcomed me into the community. Since then, Newman has played a significant role in my journey of faith. After attending Fall retreat my first year, I started spending more time at the center, frequenting the sacraments, and attending Eucharistic adoration. During my second year, I lived in community housing, helping lead fall retreat, weekly house dinners, and other events. I have also been involved with our People's Kitchen ministry and music ministry. It has been a joy and a privilege to serve in these ways. Through Newman, I have gained supportive mentors and cultivated faithful friendships that have lasted through the ups and downs of college life. It's difficult to express the gratitude and love that I have for this community and the friends that I have made through it. As I end this chapter, I will be taking some time to rest and discern where the Lord is calling me next!"



ELLI SUMERA
MATHEMATICS

GRADUATE INTERVIEWS

"My friends and I wanted to continue attending Mass while in college, and after doing some research, we found the Newman Center. For most of my freshman year, I would only go for Mass on Sundays, but my involvement at Newman grew significantly after I attended the Spring Retreat. I met people who were so knowledgeable in the faith and who had a deep relationship with God, and I wanted the peace and joy that I saw in them. Throughout my time here, Newman has been so impactful in my life because of the opportunities it has given me to receive God's love through the community and to share that love and serve others, especially through altar serving, People's Kitchen, Knights of Columbus, and Men's Group. Being surrounded by such kind, amazing, virtuous, and holy people inspired me to become a better man and to set a good example for others. Not only has Newman helped me in my faith and friendships, but it has also guided me in discerning my vocation and purpose in life. I plan to stay at Cal Poly for an extra year to complete my Master's in Engineering Management. After that, the plan is to get a job close to family and raise a family of my own (God willing).



GABRIEL GUTIERREZ
INDUSTRIAL ENGINEERING

BACCALAUREATE MASS: JUNE 12, 2026



SEMINARIANS FROM NEWMAN

"I was a regular at Newman Mass and in the choir from the start of my Freshman year, but I didn't really find Newman until a few months later. Other communities and friend groups were fun, and we had things in common, but none enriched the depths of my soul quite like being here. And then I pretty much lived at Newman through my second year! Newman has done so much for me, but nothing greater than allow me to grow madly in love with Christ. I found that love in the Eucharist, in going to daily Mass for the first time, and in sharing life with my friends. I trust the bonds He's given me here will last even until sainthood! I will be attending - God willing - St. Patrick's Seminary in Menlo Park, just south of SF. It should be eight challenging and fruitful years until Jesus, through his Bishop, would ordain me a priest." ~ Sebastian Carrascal Gomez

**MAY THE LORD STRENGTHEN THEM IN FAITH, WISDOM, AND
FIDELITY AS THEY RESPOND TO HIS CALL**



THOMAS ROSA
(AGRICULTURAL BUSINESS)

SEBASTIÁN CARRASCAL GOMEZ
(BIOMEDICAL ENGINEERING)

BUILDING COMMUNITY



ASH WEDNESDAY

For the first time in decades, we welcomed students to Ash Wednesday Mass on campus. Several hundred students attended at Chumash Auditorium after waiting in lines that went out the back doors of the University Union.

PEOPLE'S KITCHEN

SLO Newman students continue to support People's Kitchen in San Luis Obispo by cooking meals and serving the food at Prado Shelter once a month.



WOMEN'S GROUP THRIFT

Our women's group hosted a thrift store pop up fundraiser on the terrace to support various spring activities such as the formal, and also donated several bags of unsold clothes to the Old Mission School Thrift Store.

MR. NEWMAN

The annual Mr. Newman Pageant was a fun and lively night as the men of our community showcased their talents! Congrats to Ignatius Han, who took home the crown as this year's Mr. Newman, and the charity he sponsored, *Feeding America*.



BUILDING COMMUNITY



HOLY MASS WITH BISHOP RAMÓN

Bishop Ramón Bejarano celebrated the Holy Mass and Sacrament of Confirmation on April 19. Cal Poly & Cuesta College students were strengthened by the gift of the Holy Spirit, a sign of God's faithful presence among us.

SPRING FORMAL

This year's Spring Formal theme was Clue! It was complete with on theme outfits, decor, games and snacks! Special thank you to Women's Group for putting it all together.



SPRING RETREAT

The theme of this year's retreat was *The Beatitudes*! We would like to thank **Fr. Joe and Sr. Sara** and our community housing members for taking their time and planning this beautiful experience for the students!



We also want to thank our amazing supporters, **Mark & Michele Penner**, who provided all the meals and service at the retreat.



NEWMAN OLYMPICS

Newman Olympics is always fun and competitive! With sports like ultimate frisbee, cornhole, beach volleyball and so much more! Students from UCSB also came by to participate. Congrats to the blue team who took 1st place!

SPRING AT NEWMAN



SPIRITUAL DIRECTION: A WORD OF THANKS

Over the academic year we've had so many clergy and religious stopping by Newman to support our students. One such person we would like to thank is Sr. Milda Avila, CSJ, who is a spiritual advisor trained in the Ignatian Method. Sr. Milda volunteered on Thursdays at the center to check in on students and offer her time to anyone needing a chat. Often students were invited to make appointments for further guidance. Also, Sr. Milda organized the students for a Contemporary Stations of the Cross during Lent. We are so blessed to have Sr. Milda spend time with us!



SR. MILDA

We are also tremendously grateful to the various priests who covered weekly masses, and offered reconciliation, this past year.

Special thanks to:

Fr. Roy Shelly (ret.), who presided over Ash Wednesday mass on campus, the Easter Triduum (Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Vigil, and Easter Sunday) and Rites of Christian Initiation

Fr. Rafael Reniva, Old Mission SLO

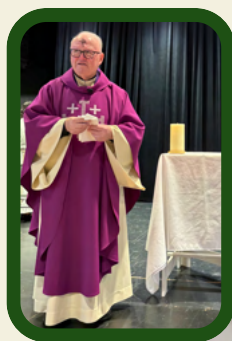
Fr. Jim Nisbet, Nativity of Our Lady SLO, who covered daily masses and also guest lectured at Bible Study about the Gospels in parallel

Fr. Gabriel Okafor, St. Timothy's, Morro Bay

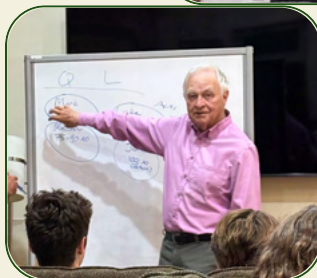
Fr. Beto (Alberto) Vasquez, St. Patrick's, Arroyo Grande, who celebrated Misa en Español

Fr. Russ Brown, Old Mission, SLO

Fr. Joe Kraemer, SJ, who led our Spring Retreat, and shared Jesuit prayer and Ignatian discernment in his talk about The Art of Holy Listening



FR. ROY



FR. JIM



FR. JOE

Financial Support

THANK YOU FOR MAKING AN IMPACT FOR THE STUDENTS IN 2026!

As a friend of SLO Newman, you are a partner with us in campus ministry. We are deeply grateful for your prayers, your friendship, and any level of support you are able to offer.

Supporting Newman is easy!

You can make your gift securely online at

www.SLOnewman.org/donate



OR by returning the enclosed envelope with a check
written to the SLO NEWMAN CATHOLIC CENTER



DID YOU KNOW?

RECURRING donations are a
vital part of our ministry!
We respectfully ask that you
consider a monthly donation.



Tax-Smart Ways to Give

DAF (Donor Advised Fund)

If you already give through a DAF, please consider recommending a grant to benefit SLO Newman as part of your stewardship.

QCD (Qualified Charitable Distribution) from IRA (age 70½+)

If you are subject to Required Minimum Distributions, a Qualified Charitable Distribution can directly reduce taxable income.

Legacy Giving

If your estate planning is current, please consider remembering SLO Newman in your will or trust as a lasting act of stewardship.

Please consult your tax and financial advisor.

Every situation is different so ask if these ways may increase the impact of your charitable gift.



Contributions

In Memory Of:



Fr. Gerry Robinson from Richard & Joanne Spotswood
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Sally Equinoa from James Tejani
Brian Welsch from James Welsch
Katie Davis from Jerry Davis
James and Pat DeQuarto from Karen Clark
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Fr. Gerry Robinson from Elizabeth O'Donnell

Contributions

In Honor Of:

Fr. Jim Nisbet from Rebecca Schrader & Robert Mancell
Leanne Callante from Theresa Moran
Rya Luzzi from Carlo and Antoinette Luzzi
Belle from Gale Damery

Ann T. Grady from David Grady
Jerry Kobliska from Rita Kobliska
Chuck Trudeau from Nancy Trudeau
Fr. Jim Nisbet from Vivian and John Phillips

*Our Benefactors and their intentions are remembered
at all our Newman Masses*



Newman
CATHOLIC CENTER

1472 E Foothill Blvd
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slonewman.org

FALL 2026 SEMESTER

CUESTA COLLEGE
AUGUST 17, 2026

CAL POLY
AUGUST 24, 2026

SLO NEWMAN MASSES BEGIN
AUGUST 23

WELCOME BBQ
AUGUST 28

ADDRESS CHANGES?

If you have moved or would like to be removed from our mailing list, please contact Marian at:
marian@slonewman.org

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