Catholic Campus Ministry (CCM) at Shippensburg University

(1967-2016)
Catholic Campus Ministry (CCM) at Shippensburg University (1967-2016)

May 2016
Beginning in 1967 Shippensburg University provided office space on campus for the Catholic Campus Ministry (CCM) organization to offer faith based programs and events. Originally located in Naugle Hall, the Catholic Campus Ministry office was later moved to the Seavers Apartments Room 111 and is now located in the Cora I. Grove Spiritual Center, Room 215 on the campus of Shippensburg University.

The records of the Diocese of Harrisburg reflect the assignment of Father Robert Pawelski to the Newman Apostolate (the work of the Church on the campuses of secular universities and colleges) at Shippensburg University on June 2, 1967.

The close proximity of the campus to Our Lady of the Visitation (OLV) Catholic church has provided a unique opportunity to involve both parish and campus communities in many activities. CCM enjoys a long history of dynamic partnerships between members of the parish and students at the university. The Knights of Columbus, Ladies Auxiliary and many wonderful parishioners support the students in various ways. Many of the activities started long ago continue today.

Some of the most notable activities of CCM include:

- Student-oriented liturgies where students participate as lectors, ushers, cantors, musicians, and Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist;
- Retreats, offered as a time of growth in Christian Spirituality, reflection and renewal at sites both on and off campus;
- Discussions and Bible Study held both at the parish and on the university campus on a wide range of faith topics which often include films and speakers;
- Social activities, held regularly and for special occasions.

1 Naugle Hall was demolished in 2015.
2 Seavers Apartments were demolished in 2013.
3 Cora I. Grove Spiritual Center opened in 2002.

May 2016
Students also assisted with the religious education program, babysitting during masses, and served as representatives on the parish council. Other activities and events evolved through the years that helped tie the campus and parish communities more closely together.

**1975 - 1996**

After Fr. Robert Pawleski departed as Campus Minister in 1975 Fr. Tom Hemler, pastor of OLV parish, took on the responsibilities of Campus Minister until 1983. He secured a cooperative agreement with Mount St. Mary’s Seminary in Emmitsburg (MD) for seminarians to assist the team of volunteer lay ministers involved in CCM. This team included Parish Board Representative Sally McGrath, Bob and Trudy Bagley, Jack and Pat Benhart, Jerry and Linda Lewis, Bonnie Rosenbaum, and Jim and Linda Gemmell. Over the years, many other parishioners became involved in Catholic Campus Ministry, either with specific events or as regular participants in its mission.


**Student-Oriented Liturgies.** The 11am Mass was traditionally the student-oriented liturgy. A guitar group, coordinated by Bob and Trudy Bagley, was a rock on which the students focused their participation. In the late 1970’s, the singers and players moved from the center of the front row of the balcony down to the left-hand side of the altar, where they continued to add to the celebration of the Mass. The Bagleys invited many students to join them in singing, playing and just celebrating through the years.
Retreats. In 1975, Fr. Tom Hemler suggested that the seminarians present a weekend retreat for the college students at an off-campus location each semester. For years this retreat was a staple of CCM. It was attended by hundreds of students through the years, sometimes by as many as 50 at a time. The seminarians, usually four, planned the theme and the weekend with the lay Catholic Campus Ministry personnel, who attended as counselors, support personnel, cooks, and to fulfill various other duties. These retreats both enhanced the students’ Christian spirituality and allowed many other parishioners to join in the parish’s outreach. The first retreat was held at the Quincy Retreat Center in Quincy, and later moved to various other locations including Blue Ridge Summit, Doubling Gap, and Camp New Dawn (the Diocesan Retreat Center near Gettysburg).

Discussions and Bible Study. During the 1970s and 1980s discussions and Bible study took place at the church or in the Carriage House\(^4\), an older building on the church property. Often the Mount St. Mary’s seminarians led or participated in the discussions with the pastor. The topics were varied and normally requested by the students. Many parishioners became involved through the invitation of the pastor. These discussion groups and Bible study sessions brought parishioners and campus students together and served to deepen the faith of all and strengthen the bonds between the campus and the parish.

Social Activities. The parish, and later CCM, offered numerous social activities for the campus community. The first Sunday when the students returned for the fall semester was always highlighted by a parish celebration following the 11am mass. The parishioners cooked a meal for the students to welcome them to the parish, and helped them to get to know the members of OLV. The parish also offered events for parents who came to visit their children, particularly on Parents Weekends in the fall. Camping, volleyball, pizza parties, and various other activities continued throughout the year to remind the students that the parish as a community welcomed them and valued them as our fellow parishioners in our unique setting next to the university campus.

\(^4\) The carriage house was originally used to store a previous owner's horse carriage. It was later used for meetings and meals for the church and Catholic Campus Ministry, and later used as a storage area. The carriage house became unusable and was torn down in the late 1990's.
Adopt-a-Student Program. In the early 1970’s, one of the proudest accomplishments in Catholic Campus Ministry was the creation of the Adopt-a-Student Program. Each year students who wanted to have an occasional visit with a parish family signed up with CCM. Families who were willing to participate for the year were also identified. Catholic Campus Ministry matched students and families, and sponsored a beginning-of-the-year covered dish to help everyone get acquainted. Families brought the food and students brought their appetites. Each family found a table in the Carriage House to eat with their student and to enjoy some conversation. From there, the families were encouraged to invite the student to some family activity once a month (a dinner, a parish activity, a cultural event, a shopping trip or anything they mutually agreed upon that would give the student a chance to take a “vacation” from campus). This program truly blended many of the parish families with the Catholic Campus Ministry program for years. From its modest beginning with a dozen families in 1976, the program at one time had over 50 families and 70 students. Friendships developed and continued through the years and still endure between many of these adopted families and students. Linda Lewis, who coordinated the program for many years, heard numerous stories from parish families who maintained contact with adoptees from the late 1970’s and 1980’s.

Relationship Encounter Program. Because of Jerry and Linda Lewis’ involvement with the diocesan marriage preparation program Fr. Tom Hemler was able to bring an Engaged Encounter Weekend to Shippensburg University in April 1982. Eight couples used the parish and campus facilities to prepare themselves for marriage in the church. Father Hemler and the Lewis’ also recommended and developed a Relationship Encounter Program with university couples. This program was aimed at developing Christian attitudes on relationships among college students in the Engaged Encounter format. They found students were receptive to devoting a day to a prayerful approach for love and respect for each other in their relationships.
Alice Redding. During these years, Ms. Alice Redding, the first lay Campus Minister employed by the Diocese, worked with the priests to serve the students of Shippensburg University from 1989-1996. Before coming to Shippensburg, she served as the head of religious education at St. Aloysius church in Littlestown, PA. Alice worked alongside Father Burger at both Shippensburg University and Gettysburg College. She had a way with people and had a far reaching ministry - an outpouring of support and respect from Protestants, Catholics and Jews. While pursuing a bachelor's degree in Theology at Mt. Saint Mary's college she died unexpectedly in 1996 as a result of a vehicle accident.

1997 - Present


Mrs. Roxanne M. Dennis is the current Catholic Campus Minister and has managed the program since 1997 alongside several parish priests and assisted by a Catholic Campus Ministry Advisory Board, made up of parishioners and university faculty and staff. The Advisory Board acts as a sounding board for discussions with CCM (the presence and ministry or service of the Roman Catholic Church on the campus of a school, college, or university) and the Newman Association (the student run Catholic club). Various student leaders have also served on the Advisory Board. The representatives of the board are active participants in the ministry assisting with student events. They attend monthly meetings and aid the Campus Minister in providing Shippensburg University students with opportunities for support and growth in Catholicism. The meetings are held on a regular basis by the priest and Mrs. Roxanne Dennis to discuss and plan specific activities.

May 2016
During these years, advisory board members included:

- The late George Snow, SU History Professor and OLV parishioner
- Melodye Wehrung, Former SU Director of Social Equity
- Tom Bradley, SU Emeritus Special Education Professor and an OLV Parishioner
- Signe Kelker - SU Emeritus Librarian and an OLV Parishioner
- Kirk Moll, SU Research Coordinator & Public Services Librarian and a Parishioner at St. Patrick’s Church, Carlisle
- Joseph Zume, SU Geography Professor and an OLV Parishioner
- Dan and Allison Predecki, both Associate Professors in the SU Chemistry Department and also OLV parishioners
- Roxanne Dennis, Catholic Campus Minister
- Father Dave Hillier, Pastor of Our Lady of the Visitation
- Father Dwight Schlaline, Pastor of Our Lady of the Visitation

Tony Cecere, a former member of OLV Parish and retired Associate Dean of Students and Director of Housing served as Newman Association Campus Advisor from 1996-2004. He was also instrumental in acquiring office space for both Catholic Campus Ministry and United Campus Ministry on the campus.

A secretary and office manager has assisted Roxanne Dennis by attending to the CCM budget, performing office work, ordering supplies and communicating with individuals at the university and parish. Over the course of many years (1996-present) several individuals have helped to fill this role. The first were also the OLV secretaries (Mary Stasiac, Vicki Bonitz and Beverly Robillard). Then a part-time office manager position was created for someone to work in the CCM office with Roxanne at the Spiritual Center. This position was held by Carol Zehosky (2007-2014) and now Jessica Reinsfelder (2014-present).

May 2016
Fr. Dave Hillier. On Ash Wednesday March 5, 2014, Fr. Dave Hillier passed on to his eternal reward. On September 6, 2014 a Memorial 5K Walk was held in his honor at Shippensburg Township Park, Cumberland Valley Rail Trail.

Cora I. Grove Spiritual Center

In May 1998 a campaign was launched to help fund the construction of an interfaith center and chapel. John L. and Cora I. Grove were major contributors to the University Endowment Fund. In May 2000, ground was broken for the Cora I. Grove Spiritual Center and the formal dedication was held on October 12, 2002. Situated on private land owned by the SU Foundation, adjacent to the Shippensburg University Campus, the center houses a sanctuary with chairs for 130 people, a small mediation chapel, permanent office space for campus ministers and their staff, office space and meeting rooms for campus religious clubs and organizations. The Cora I. Grove Spiritual Center and chapel provides a haven where students may meditate, pray, meet with friends, or read about religious topics. The center is also home to the Shippensburg Head Start program on the lower level.

Activities and Programs

Current programs are held at the parish, on campus, at various off campus locations, and at the Cora I. Grove Spiritual Center. During Freshman Orientation Days, Mrs. Roxanne Dennis provides information to prospective and future students and faculty about Catholic Campus Ministry and the Newman Association.
Student Liturgies

Student-oriented liturgies, where students participate as lectors, ushers, singers, musicians, and Eucharistic Ministers, were traditionally held at the 11am Mass on Sundays. When Bob and Trudy Bagley retired as leaders of the student musician group in 2000, other students came forth to carry on the tradition for several years. In 2006 Fr. Dave Hillier began offering a student Mass on Sunday evenings at 8pm at the Cora I. Grove Spiritual Center. Musicians Dan Dougherty, Nancy Hartman, Austin Diehl and Christian Sweger, assisted with this Sunday evening Mass. In the spring of 2015, the student-oriented Mass returned to the 11am Mass celebrated at Our Lady of the Visitation church (and 8pm Mass ceased) in an attempt to provide more student and local parishioner interaction. In 2015, Father Dwight Schlaline hired musician Peter Freitas for the 11am Mass.

Retreats

Retreats continue to be a focus for the growth of college students’ in their understanding of the Catholic Faith. They are held several times throughout the school year and have Diocesan and Non-Diocesan priests, religious, and laity as their presenters.

- **Jesus and you in the Pew** is an overnight retreat held at the OLV Church each year. In addition to praise and worship music, a video with discussion is held before the overnight Eucharistic Adoration. Students use sleeping bags in the pews for the overnight retreat.

- **Busy Person’s Retreats** were held and were a “tag team” for devotion. These retreats provided one-on-one spiritual counseling and were a support to students during their free periods in the university academic schedule.

- **Eucharistic devotions** are also held throughout the year.
• SU students have participated in retreats sponsored by the Youth and Young Adult Ministry office at the Diocese of Harrisburg. This began with the Search retreat and, in 2015, evolved into Encounter Retreat for all university students and young adults in the Diocese.

Respect Life Activities
Celebrate Life Weeks are held in October and January and bring awareness to the beauty of humankind. Students also participate in other respect life activities: Cupcakes for Life, We Care about Pregnant Women, Remembering the Unborn Prayer Service, Pro-Life Speakers, and the March for Life in Washington, DC.

Bible Study / Rosary
Bible study discussions continue today at the parish with both parishioners and students in attendance. Monthly “Dinner and Dialogue” sessions on various topics were led by Fr. Dave Hillier. These were held in the parish social hall that was built in 1999 and enjoyed good attendance and positive feedback from both students and parishioners. In the fall of 2015, Bible Study started back up and is currently led by Lisa Christiansen.

Several students and parishioners now come together once a week during the school year at the Cora I. Grove Spiritual Center to pray the rosary for the needs of all our prayer requests received throughout the year. The rosary is prayed on Thursdays at 12:30pm followed by a light lunch in the Cora I. Grove Spiritual Center. Students join the Campus Minister, the priest, faculty and staff of the university and even OLV parishioners weekly through the school year to focus on the events of Christ's life and to honor Mary.

May 2016
Social Events

- **Weekly Dinners.** Catholic Campus Ministry and Newman Association’s popular social event is Newman Night. Students along with Roxanne Dennis prepare a weekly dinner currently held at 5pm every Wednesday night for fellow students. Once a month a guest speaker provides Catholic insights on topics such as the Saints, Vocations, World Youth Day, Pro-Life and Social Justice Ministries. Each month student birthdays are also celebrated.

- **Theology-On-Tap** is a program of lectures sponsored by a number of local Catholic dioceses. Usually held at a pub or restaurant, the lectures are often given by noted spiritual leaders and religious academics and address current topics in religion and theology. This regional program was developed through Shippensburg Catholic Campus Ministry with the help of Rob Williams, Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries, Diocese of Harrisburg, the Mentzer family (Val, Zach, and Ty), Emma Lower, Ann Schwartz, Fr. Dave Hillier and Roxanne Dennis.

- **Caledonia Day** is held in the fall and spring. Students enjoy a picnic, play games and hike in Caledonia State Park, a 1,125 acre park in Adams and Franklin counties, midway between Chambersburg and Gettysburg along the Lincoln Highway, US Route 30. In the spring of 2016 students also enjoyed the day by including their families in the fun.

Service

Each semester there are opportunities for students to come together and practice corporal works of mercy.

- **The Silence of Mary Home**
  Students are invited to assist with the needs of the homeless at The Silence of Mary Home. This is a home for the homeless children, youth and adults on Market Street in May 2016
Harrisburg. Shippensburg University, the Parish and Catholic Campus Ministry provides donations. The university students interact with “the family” as the residents call themselves, and assist with many indoor and outdoor needs at the home including but not limited to assistance with handing out clothing, cleaning, painting and stocking shelves.

- **South Mountain Restoration Center.** The South Mountain Restoration Center is a nearby 159 bed long-term care facility managed by Pennsylvania Department of Welfare that houses and cares for developmentally disabled adults. Students may become involved in two ways:

  1. **Partners in Ministry** An 8-week paid ministry held each semester where students visit one-on-one with the residents to build meaningful relationships.

  2. **Home Dining** Students gather once a month to prepare a home-cooked meal for six residents of the South Mountain Restoration Center. The Home Dining Program has been held at different locations, including Holy Rosary Parish (a small parish for a few years at the South Mountain Restoration Center), Doctor’s Row (a row of housing units at the S.M. Restoration Center for doctors to stay while caring for residents) and most recently Mrs. Dennis’ home. Father Joseph Carolin, the chaplain at South Mountain Restoration Center, along with an activities aid from the center transport residents to the Dennis’ home. Everyone enjoys dinner.
and conversation and several games of bingo are provided for the residents before they return to the center.

- **Children's Halloween Party.** Each fall, students sponsor and conduct a children’s Halloween party for children of the parish and the Head Start children at the University.

- **Knights of Columbus.** As well as being members themselves of the Parish Knights of Columbus, students volunteer their time at the Knights of Columbus dinners and help with the parish booth at the town’s annual Corn Festival.

- **PMI Pregnancy Resource Center (Pregnancy Ministries Inc.).** The students also provide support and assistance at the local PMI Pregnancy Resource Center in Shippensburg. This center provides women and men with information regarding pregnancy, adoption, parenting and sexual health. The center's services are free and it is located at 20 East Burd Street, Suite 4, Shippensburg. Together with PMI Director, Robin Kell, the Campus Minister and Newman students reach out to the campus community in celebration of life! Each semester they educate and encourage students about the beauty of life through their two “Celebrate Life” weeks (held in October and January).

**Fundraisers**
To secure funding to assist with social justice ministries (in addition to receiving some parish donations via parish pew envelopes and individual contributions) the CCM Program also holds fund raisers. There is a Poster Sale in the fall. Other various sales (book and yard sales) have been held.

2016 Leadership Team
(Back L to R) Brittany Monaghan, Kaitlyn Shultz, Jessica Wisniewski,
(Front L to R) Paige Deon, Celine Schell

May 2016