

The Newman Center at UB

The Newman Center at the University at Buffalo has opened its new, modern building on Skinnerville Road at the university's "North Campus" in Amherst, New York; what makes this special? Well, there was a sign on the site since 1967 saying that the new building was coming! Now it's 2010 and Catholics at UB have a brand new worship space that seats almost 400 people.

The 14,000-square-foot building cost about \$2.7 million to build and did not come from university funds, but, rather, charitable donations. Newman Centers are often found on or near college campuses around the country. Named after John Henry Cardinal Newman, a priest who promoted university education, Newman Centers provide a Catholic presence of many campuses, including the University at Buffalo, which has tens of thousands of Catholic students, faculty and staff among its population.

In the "old days," the Newman Center met at a small white chapel on Frontier Rd. or at the Student Union. In the past, the congregation also set up a large tent to hold Masses outdoors in the nicer weather months. The new building, which got its first real use on Christmas Eve 2009, serves hundreds of college students, as well as about 850 families who make the commute from nearby towns like Getzville and Williamsville.

The venue is "like a smaller version of the Chapel at CrossPoint." It has a plain, auditorium feel to the main room, with a kitchen and side rooms for offices, meetings and kids' activities, along with very "now" color schemes on the walls. It's simple, fresh, and new. And unlike many other Catholic communities, it's filled with people. Because the priest, Monsignor Pat Keleher, is "the smartest priest in the entire diocese," you have a church filled with very smart people-- professors, doctors, lawyers, and others who are well-known and respected in the community. Monsignor Pat is one of the liveliest priests you'll come across in the Buffalo area.

If you get a chance, visit some Sunday morning to check out the new church building and you'll find a Catholic congregation that's distinct and lively, though the music is not yet contemporary Christian/modern in nature. Smartly, the priest asks what prayer needs there are, and then people in the audience stand up and talk about who/what needs prayer, followed by prayer for those needs. Masses are held at 5pm on Saturdays and 9 (mostly older people), 10:30 and 6pm (mostly students) on Sundays. For more info, call the Center at 716-636-7495. [Click here to read The Buffalo News article about The Newman Center at UB.](#)