

May 2011

NEWMAN news

Newman Institute | The Jesuit College of Scandinavia

From the President's Desk

Dear friends of the Newman Institute, it is almost exactly a year since the Newman Institute received its accreditation as the first Catholic college in Scandinavia since the reformation--a good reason to send you an update about what has happened during this year. With this newsletter we have tried to document that it was a year of abundant blessings. The beatification of our patron John Henry Newman was without doubt one of its highlights. Inspired by Newman we look forward to a bright future for the Institute!

Yours in Christ,
Philip Geister S.J.
President



Adolfo Nicolás, SJ, gives the inaugural address.

Inauguration of the Newman Institute

In September the Institute celebrated its inauguration as a college, drawing many guests from Sweden, Europe and the United States. Most notable was the guest-of-honor Fr. General Adolfo Nicolás, SJ, general superior of the Jesuits, whose words at the inaugural address were an inspiration to many.

Over two hundred people enjoyed the festivities which began with Mass in the parish church of St. Lars, followed by an inauguration ceremony on the street in front of the Newman House, with speeches and a quartet of trumpeters who played from a balcony. Then followed a champagne reception with lunch in the Newman House and courtyard, and a full program of academic lectures throughout the afternoon. The day concluded with a dinner for special guests and benefactors.



Inauguration Mass at St. Lars Church.

News briefs— the year in review



Beatification Mass for Cardinal Newman in Birmingham, England.

Cardinal John Henry Newman beatified:

On September 19, just two weeks after the Institute's inauguration, Cardinal John Henry Newman--the Institute's patron--was beatified by Pope Benedict XVI. Several representatives of the Institute attended the events in Birmingham, England, which drew crowds of over 50,000. It was another occasion of celebration for the Institute.

Looking to the Future—

Development of a Strategic Plan:

After a year of faculty and staff discussions moderated by a consultant in higher education development, the Institute has created a strategic plan for growth for the next ten years. A few of the specific goals that were formulated in the plan are the following:

1. To increase the academic depth of the Institute by developing a doctoral program in theology.
2. To broaden the scope of course offerings by adding a program in international relations or diplomacy.
3. To secure the financial future of the Institute by building an endowment fund.
4. To substantially increase the readership of the journal *Signum*.

With the strategic plan in place we look with confidence to a successful future.

Increase in enrollment: With its new accreditation as a college, the Institute's academic programs enjoyed significant growth and development throughout the year. Course attendance was high in both fall and spring, with approximately 100 students participating in a total of nearly 40 courses in theology, philosophy and cultural studies.

New distance learning program: Many more courses went online for the first time, which drew students from all over Scandinavia.

Membership in Erasmus: The Institute became a chartered member of the EU's Erasmus program for student and faculty exchange.

New Master's program: The Newman Institute has established a collaborative Master's degree program with the Norwegian School of Theology in Oslo. Students will be accepted into the program beginning in the Fall of 2012.

Newman House chapel: The chapel of the Newman House was beautifully renovated over the course of the past year, including the addition of a new altar, Marian icon, tabernacle and baptismal font. During the renovation process the chapel remained open for two daily Masses each week. The new chapel will be dedicated this June.



Newly renovated chapel in the Newman House.

The First Bachelor Degree Awarded by the Newman Institute

The Institute will confer its first Bachelor's degree this spring to graduate Gabriel Bar-Sawme.

Gabriel, who has a degree in social work from Örebro University, began his theology studies at the Newman Institute in 2008, after being involved in social work in India.

Gabriel plans to get married during the summer and then to pursue graduate studies in theology at Princeton Theological Seminary in New Jersey, where he has been accepted into the Masters of Divinity program.

When asked about his experience at the Newman Institute, Gabriel said, 'My experience was very positive because it was very personal, and there are so many great teachers. I was especially challenged by my courses in philosophy, which helped me to think in a different way, and to gain access to theology in a different way. The courses at the Institute deal with questions like 'Who am I? What is the meaning of life? And who is Christ?' By exploring these existential questions in a serious way, I have changed and grown as a person, and my faith has deepened.'

Gabriel would like to see an increase in the number of students enrolled at the Institute, and also an expansion of the theology program to include Orthodox theology, which is his own tradition. He believes that the Catholic and Orthodox traditions have much to learn from each other.

We offer Gabriel congratulations and wish him continued success in the future.

'By exploring these existential questions in a serious way, I have changed and grown as a person, and my faith has deepened.' – Gabriel Bar-Sawme



Guest Speakers at the Institute



Question and answer session during academic colloquium on Inauguration Day.

The Institute sponsored a series of high-quality academic lectures and events throughout the year. The series began with the inauguration colloquium on September 4. Speakers included **Jean-Luc Marion**, member of the French Academy and professor at Paris Sorbonne and the University of Chicago, who spoke on *The Impossibility of Atheism*; **Hans Joas** from the University of Chicago/University of Erfurt, who gave a talk on *The Intellectual Challenges to Christianity Today*; and **John Haught** of Georgetown University who spoke on *Darwin, Theology and Evolutionary Naturalism*.

In November, Professor **Christian Troll, SJ** of Frankfurt lectured on *Human Dignity and Religious Freedom in Modern Islamic Thought*.

In March the Institute welcomed **Anthony Corcoran, SJ**, who serves as the Regional Superior of the Jesuits in Moscow and who presented on the *State of the Catholic Church in Russia*.

Later in April the Institute sponsored a debate held at St. Eugenia's parish in Stockholm entitled *One and the Same God?*, which dealt with the differences between Islam and Christianity. Speakers included **Sten Hidal** from Lund University; **Ulla Gudmundson**, Sweden's ambassador to the Vatican; **David Thurfjell**, teacher in Islamic Studies at Södertörns Högskola; and moderator **Thomas Idergard**.

On May 12 the Newman Institute co-sponsored a one-day symposium on Iconography together with Uppsala University.

The final event of the year will be on June 18, when the **Council of American Ambassadors** visits the Newman Institute as part of their Scandinavia tour.

Their visit will include a forum entitled *Marshalling the Resources of Business, Government, Nonprofits and Local Communities to Address the Issue of Global Poverty: Reconciling Moral and Practical Considerations*.

Ethics Course Taught by Xavier University Professor



One highlight of the Fall 2010 term was the visit of Professor Kenneth Overberg, SJ of Xavier University in Cincinnati, who taught a popular course in ethics entitled *Catholic Morality and Medical Issues*.

One student reflected on his course as follows: 'I know I can speak for the entire class in saying that the experience of taking Fr. Overberg's class was a very memorable one. The small size of the group enabled us all to participate and get the maximum benefit of the course. Fr. Overberg is a brilliant professor with immense knowledge of his subject. The fact that each class lasted 10-15 minutes longer than it was supposed to because no one wanted to leave speaks for itself.'

The Institute looks forward to Fr. Overberg returning to Uppsala in the future to teach additional courses in ethics.

The Newman Institute on the Web

The Institute launched an all new website this spring. Check it out at www.newman.se! You can also stay in touch and up-to-date with Institute happenings by visiting our facebook page (you can link to facebook from our website).



Bronze Sculpture Installed in Newman Courtyard



Britta Truedsson presents the new sculpture in the Institute courtyard.

In May, the Institute received a donation of art to enhance the newly completed courtyard. The artwork is a bronze sculpture created in 1979 by Swedish artist Folke Truedsson. It was presented to the Institute by the artist's daughter Britta Baumann-Truedsson. The work is entitled 'Kretslopp' (Life Cycle), and is the most recent addition to the Institute's art collection by Folke Truedsson.

When presenting the artwork, Britta offered the following comments: 'For me it feels like an honor to place the Kretslopp that my father created in this beautiful, newly completed courtyard... and I hope that it will be a source of joy for many who have a little time to relax here and perhaps be inspired with new ideas.'

The new courtyard is an ideal space for private study or small group meetings, and on sunny days its benches are in high demand.

The Newman Institute
wishes all our friends a
wonderful summer!

Keep in touch and see
what's going on our
website and on our
Facebook page!

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