

ELEMENTARY/SECONDARY EDUCATION LEADERS AGENDA

Tuesday, June 16

2:10 pm Holy Mass

Crypt Church, National Basilica of the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception

1:00 pm Lunch

1:30 pm 'E Pluribus Unum': Welcome and Introductions

Patrick Reilly, President, The Cardinal Newman Society)

Kevin Murphy, Vice President of Marketing and Communications, The Cardinal Newman Society

1:45 pm 'A City Upon a Hill': Building a Newman Guide Network

The Cardinal Newman Society Leadership

The Newman Guide, the gold standard of truth and fidelity in Catholic education, is rapidly expanding to recommend hundreds of elementary and secondary schools, homeschooling programs, colleges, and graduate programs. We'll discuss the growing opportunities for collaboration across various models and levels of faithful Catholic education, explain the Newman Guide strategy for Catholic education reform, and highlight the benefits of Newman Guide recognition.

2:30 pm 'Under God, Indivisible': Forging Ties with Newman Guide Recommended Colleges

Dr. Denise Donohue, Vice President of Educator Resources and Evaluation, The Cardinal Newman Society
Rich Olon, Director of Religious Education and Youth Minister, St. John Francis Regis Catholic Parish
(Hollywood, Md.)

A major goal of the Newman Guide Network is to build strong ties between Newman Guide Recommended institutions at the elementary/secondary level and in higher education. This session will encourage recruitment of school leaders and teachers from educator formation programs and career services at Newman Guide Recommended colleges and The Cardinal Newman Society's jobs board, NewmanGuideJobs.com. We will also explore ways of encouraging families to understand the value of choosing Newman Guide Recommended programs along their path of growth and sainthood.

3:15 pm Break/Visit Vendor Displays

3:30 pm Breakout Sessions

(Option 1) NAPIS, Newman Guide, and School Choice: Ensuring Quality, Faithful Catholic Education

Dr. Denise Donohue, Vice President of Educator Resources and Evaluation, The Cardinal Newman Society; Chairman, NAPCIS

Corey DeAngelis, Research Fellow, The Heritage Foundation; President, Educational Freedom Institute

After 30 years of service to faithful lay-run schools, the National Association of Private Catholic and Independent Schools (NAPCIS) has begun a new, exciting chapter as a subsidiary of The Cardinal Newman Society. Dr. Donohue will explain the changes and future plans, including the importance of accreditation for school choice funding. Corey DeAngelis, a leading expert on school choice, will explain the growing opportunities for school choice across the U.S. and the benefits to Catholic families.

(Option 2) Forming Magnifica Humanitas: Overcoming AI and Technology to Cultivate Virtue

Malia Busekrus, Principal, Saint Rita School (Alexandria, Va.)

Christina Mehaffey, Principal, Faustina Academy (Irving, Tex.)

Dr. Christopher Reilly, bioethics specialist, author of *AI and Sin: How Today's Technology Motivates Evil*

In *Magnifica Humanitas*, Pope Leo XIV calls for "authentically integral education" to confront an increasingly technocratic society. Educators today must compete with students' attraction and even addiction to artificial intelligence, smart phones, social media, video games, and more harmful content. Dr. Reilly will address the social and psychological concerns associated with artificial intelligence, as well as the impact on learning and recommendations for Catholic educators. Principals Busekrus and Mehaffey will describe model school programs to cultivate virtue and the responsible use of technology in students: the Real Presence Collective at Saint Rita School and the Fight for Purity at Faustina Academy.

4:30 pm 'We Hold These Truths': Protecting Your Religious Freedom (Sponsored by Alliance Defending Freedom)

Gregory Baylor, J.D., Senior Counsel and Director of the Center for Religious Schools, Alliance Defending Freedom

ADF has been a key ally to The Cardinal Newman Society in helping Catholic educators understand their legal rights and protections. This session will provide a tutorial in the primary threats and legal defenses for Catholic education and the great importance of clear and consistent internal policies. Topics include nondiscrimination laws (Title VII, Title IX, state law analogs), discriminatory exclusion from government benefits, and health insurance coverage mandates. Legal protections include statutory religious exemptions, religious freedom restoration acts, and constitutional defenses like the ministerial exception.

5:30 pm Dinner

Special Guest: Eli Langson, Outreach and Policy Advisor, Secretariat of Catholic Education, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

6:30 pm Red, White, and Blue Reception (Sponsored by NAPCIS)

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Wednesday, June 17

8:30 am Breakfast

9:15 am Breakout Sessions

(Option 1) Resources for Integrating Faith and Reason

Courtney Brown, Executive Director, Ruah Woods Institute
Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist, Open Light Media
Megan Lengyel, Chief Academic Officer, Kolbe Academy
Rosario Reilly, President and Founder, Aquinas Learning
Michael Van Hecke, Founder and President, Catholic Textbook Project

The Newman Guide Network promotes collaboration among recommended institutions and programs. In this session, representatives from faithful Catholic curriculum and resource providers will share opportunities and innovations in the integration of faith and reason.

(Option 2) Forming Athletes in Faith and Virtue

Mike Salomon, Head Tennis Coach, Belmont Abbey College
Christopher Vander Woude, Tom Vander Woude Guild

In a Catholic school or college, athletics should never be primarily about winning at all cost. Sports should form students in virtue and communion with others, giving glory to God. Mike Salomon, a championship tennis coach, will lead a conversation on best practices and why schools should guide athletes toward Newman Guide Recommended colleges. Chris Vander Woude will tell the inspiring story of his father, a former coach at Newman Guide Recommended Seton School (Manassas, Va.) and Christendom College, and his cause for canonization.

10:30 am Small-Group Discussion: Opportunities for Newman Guide Networking

The Newman Guide Network facilitates collaboration among leaders of Newman Guide Recommended institutions, to share best practices and work together toward their mutual success. With 40-and-counting elementary and secondary schools added to The Newman Guide, plus school and homeschool curriculum providers, we are eager to launch working groups for leaders in grades K-12. Participants will break into small groups to brainstorm opportunities for collaboration through the Newman Guide Network.

11:30 am Lunch

12:30 pm Meet-and-Greet with College Representatives

Elementary and secondary education leaders are invited to meet with admissions representatives and teacher formation directors from Newman Guide Recommended colleges.

1:30 pm Holy Mass

Votive Mass of St. John Henry Newman, Patron of Catholic Education and Doctor of the Church Blessed Sacrament Chapel, Basilica of the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception.

Lead Celebrant: Fr. Bernard Knapke, OP, Associate University Chaplain, The Catholic University of America

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2:30 pm 'In Order to Form a More Perfect Union': Welcome Address

Patrick Reilly, President, The Cardinal Newman Society

Kevin Murphy, Vice President of Marketing and Communications, The Cardinal Newman Society

2:45 pm Speed Networking for Newman Guide Leaders

For the first time, Newman Guide Recommended leaders in elementary and secondary schools, homeschool programs, and curriculum providers are united with college leaders in undergraduate and graduate education for this afternoon and evening. Participants are invited to a speed networking exercise, pairing K-12 leaders with higher education leaders to exchange program highlights and identify opportunities for collaboration.

3:45 pm Break/Visit Vendor Displays

4:00 pm Keynote Addresses

A Catholic Education Worthy of Children of God

Dr. Peter Kilpatrick, President, The Catholic University of America

Catholic education has a long and storied history, deep in the roots of our Western culture and engaging Athens, Rome, and Jerusalem. In this keynote address, the essential features that animate Catholic education and make education fruitful will be described and examples will be given.

The Catholic Moment in America

Kelsey Reinhart, President, CatholicVote

Now is the "Catholic moment," when America needs the witness of faithful Catholics and the formation of young people to renew the Church and culture. This keynote address will consider the history of Catholics in America and today's opportunities to renew our nation's foundation of Christianity, virtue, and religious freedom.

Saint John Henry Newman, Patron of Catholic Education

Patrick Reilly, President, The Cardinal Newman Society

St. John Henry Newman prescribed an inspired vision for the renewal of the Church in 19th-century England's secularist and often anti-Catholic culture. His cure: formation of the laity by authentic Catholic education. He sought to restore human integrity by cultivating wisdom and virtue through the unity of faith and reason. Today Newman's vision has taken root across the United States with faithful Newman Guide Recommended education, which is vital for the renewal of the Church and American society.

5:30 pm A Star-Spangled Celebration

Join with educators, speakers, and special guests for a pre-dinner cocktail reception.

Heritage Hall, Upper Level of Fr. O'Connell Hall (620 Michigan Ave, NE)

7:00 pm The Newman Guide Awards Banquet

Master of Ceremonies: Kevin Murphy, Vice President of Marketing and Communications, The Cardinal Newman Society

Pope Benedict XVI Distinguished Lecture on Catholic Education

A Time for Catholic Patriots

Major General Patrick Brady, U.S. Army (Ret.)

President George Washington said, "To the distinguished character of Patriot, it should be our highest glory to add the more distinguished character of Christian." General Brady, one of America's most-decorated soldiers, will explain how his Catholic faith and education inspired his exploits during the Vietnam War and service to his country. He will extol the value of faithful Newman Guide Recommended education in forming Catholic patriots who are prepared to serve God and country and renew American values.

St. John Henry Newman Award

- Anne Carroll, Founder and Executive Director, Seton School, Manassas, Va. (1995 – present)
- Eileen Cubanski, Co-Founder and Former Executive Director, National Association of Private Catholic Independent Schools (NAPCIS) (1995-2025)
- Dr. William Edmund Fahey, Former President, Thomas More College of Liberal Arts (2009-2026)
- Joseph M. Guiffre, Retired CEO, Guiffre Distributing Company
- Jeffrey S. Kelly, Retired CEO, Hamill Manufacturing
- Robert E. Laird, Senior Counselor to the President, The Cardinal Newman Society
- Dr. Marianne Evans Mount, Former President, Catholic Distance University (now Catholic International University) (2008-2023)
- Joseph M. Norton, Headmaster Emeritus, Holy Angels Academy, Louisville, Ky. (1986-2022)
- Dr. Timothy T. O'Donnell, Former President, Christendom College (1992-2024)
- Dr. William K. Thierfelder, Former President, Belmont Abbey College (2024-2025)

HIGHER EDUCATION LEADERS AGENDA

Wednesday, June 17

1:30 pm Holy Mass

Votive Mass of St. John Henry Newman, Patron of Catholic Education and Doctor of the Church Blessed Sacrament Chapel, Basilica of the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception

Lead Celebrant: Fr. Bernard Knapke, OP, Associate University Chaplain, The Catholic University of America

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5:30 pm A Star-Spangled Celebration (Sponsored by The Catholic University of America, The Heritage Foundation, and Marsh McLennan)

Join with educators, speakers, and special guests for a pre-dinner cocktail reception.

Heritage Hall, Upper Level of Fr. O’Connell Hall (620 Michigan Ave, NE)

7:00 pm The Newman Guide Awards Banquet

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A Time for Catholic Patriots

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- Dr. William K. Thierfelder, Former President, Belmont Abbey College (2024-2025)

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Thursday, June 18

8:30 am Breakfast

9:00 am 'A City Upon a Hill': Building a Newman Guide Network

The Cardinal Newman Society Leadership

The Newman Guide, the hallmark of truth and fidelity in Catholic education, is rapidly expanding to recommend hundreds of elementary and secondary schools, homeschooling programs, colleges, and graduate programs. We'll discuss the growing opportunities for collaboration across various models and levels of faithful Catholic education, explain the Newman Guide strategy for Catholic education reform, and highlight the progress of the Network's higher education working groups.

9:45 am 'E Pluribus Unum': Collaboration Across Faithful Catholic Higher Education

Nicholas Reilly, Newman Guide Network Coordinator, The Cardinal Newman Society

With difficult times ahead for higher education, the future success of faithful Newman Guide recommended colleges and graduate programs will depend on mutual support and promotion more than competition. This session will highlight examples of collaboration already underway and suggest opportunities for new initiatives. Topics include undergraduate and graduate admissions and aid, transfer credits, dual enrollment, employee discounts, faculty sharing, study abroad, hiring standards and training, and more.

10:15 am Break/Visit Vendor Displays

10:30 am Working Group Session: Opportunities for Newman Guide Networking

The Newman Guide Network facilitates collaboration among leaders of Newman Guide Recommended institutions, to share best practices and work together toward their mutual success. In addition to coordination among colleges and graduate programs, The Newman Guide now recognizes 40-and-counting elementary and secondary schools, homeschool programs, and curriculum providers. Participants will break into focused working groups to brainstorm opportunities for collaboration through the Network.

Noon Holy Mass

St. Vincent de Paul Chapel, The Catholic University of America

Lead Celebrant: Fr. Peter Kucer, MSA, President, Holy Apostles College & Seminary

1:00 pm Lunch

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2:00 pm Breakout Sessions

(Option 1) Faithful Catholic Engagement with American Society

Dr. Thomas Harmon, Scanlan Foundation Professor of Theology and Division Dean of Core and Centers for Excellence, University of St. Thomas

Dr. Benedict Nguyen, Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students, University of St. Thomas

Dr. Harmon will present on the University of St. Thomas (Houston) program to strengthen Catholic civic engagement, funded by a \$1 million grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Dr. Nguyen will present on the dangerous influences of critical theory in the United States and implications for student affairs in Catholic higher education, drawing from his recent doctoral dissertation.

(Option 2) Legal Rights and Responsibilities in Hiring for Catholic Mission

Heather Lachenauer, Esq., Partner, Brown and Streza LLP
Eugene Munin, Esq., Law Offices of Eugene L. Munin P.A.

Perhaps the most misunderstood laws impacting Catholic higher education concern personnel decisions. Attorney Lachenauer will address legal considerations when recruiting and hiring for leadership, faculty, and staff positions, with reference to Title VII, the ministerial exception, and employee benefits. Attorney Munin will respond.

(Option 3) Teaching Catholic Social Doctrine to Business Students (Sponsored by CUA Busch School of Business)

Dr. Andrew Abela, Dean of the Busch School of Business, The Catholic University of America
Dr. Marc Fusaro, Dean of the DeVille School of Business, Walsh University

Students graduating from faithful Catholic colleges and graduate programs should have a right understanding of Catholic social doctrine and how it affects their lives and careers. In this session, two business school deans will present their programs and make recommendations for other colleges.

(Option 4) Forming Athletes in Faith and Virtue

Mike Salomon, Head Tennis Coach, Belmont Abbey College
Casey Scott, Assistant Director of Undergraduate Admissions, University of Mary

In a Catholic college, athletics should never be primarily about winning at all cost. Sports should form students in virtue and communion with others, giving glory to God. This session will focus on best practices in Catholic college athletics.

3:15 pm Breakout Sessions

(Option 1) Teaching Gender and Sexuality in a Catholic College

Leah Jacobson, Director, M.A. in Catholic Women's and Gender Studies, University of St. Thomas (Houston)
Dr. Deborah Savage, Professor of Theology and Director of Institute for the Study of Man and Woman, Franciscan University of Steubenville

"It is becoming increasingly clear that we are now facing with what might accurately be called an educational crisis, especially in the field of affectivity and sexuality" (Male and Female He Created Them, Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education). Graduates of Catholic education should fully understand the nature of humans as male and female and the complementarity of the sexes. This session will explore efforts to teach both students and educators the dangers and falsehoods of gender ideology.

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(Option 2) Balancing Student Liberty and Moral Behavior

Dr. Linda Henry, Vice President for Student Life, Benedictine College

Kimberly King, Vice President of Student Life, Franciscan University of Steubenville

A Catholic college must balance student liberty and moral expectations. Young adults should have appropriate liberties to learn to direct their own behaviors and conform their consciences to Catholic teaching. But they are still learning, and guardrails are necessary to both protect students from spiritual and physical harm while teaching them through the witness of the college, which fully embraces Catholic morality. This session will discuss topics including campus speaker policies, student clubs, residence policies, pornography blocking on wifi networks, and staff hiring in student life, counseling, and campus ministry.

(Option 3) Forming Students for Career, Vocation, and Life

Andrew Antonio, Senior Director of Corporate Engagement, Ave Maria University

Brendan Coyne, Senior Advisor, U.S. Office of Personnel Management

Louis Galarowicz, Special Assistant, Bureau of Personnel and Training (PERT) and National Foreign Affairs Training Center (NFATC), U.S. Department of State

John Spadaccini, Director of Corporate Engagement, Ave Maria University

Christopher Sullivan, Senior Student Programs Manager, Phillip N. Truluck Center for Leadership Development, The Heritage Foundation

Catholic higher education cultivates intellect, virtue, and conscience while also preparing students for meaningful work, public service, and lifelong vocation. This session explores how Ave Maria University is transforming the traditional career services model through The Institute, an integrated approach that unites liberal arts formation, professional preparation, corporate engagement, and faith-forward mentoring. Officials from the U.S. federal government will also explain the growing opportunities for graduates of Newman Guide Recommended education to work in civil service and foreign service.

(Option 4) Creating the Conditions for Transformational Giving

Michael Barvick, Senior Partner, Partners in Mission

Philip Brach, Senior Partner, Partners in Mission

Transformational gifts don't happen by chance; they are the result of intentional strategy and deep relationship-building. This presentation explores two critical drivers of extraordinary philanthropy: an integrated advancement office that harmonizes direct response, major gifts, and planned giving into a unified strategy, and a deliberate process for cultivating donor relationships rooted in shared vision and mission. Attendees will gain practical insights into building a culture and structure that inspires lasting, mission-aligned generosity.

4:30 pm 'We Hold These Truths': Religious Freedom Threats and Protection (Sponsored by Alliance Defending Freedom)

Gregory Baylor, Esq., Senior Counsel and Director of the Center for Religious Schools, Alliance Defending Freedom

ADF has been a key ally to The Cardinal Newman Society in helping Catholic educators understand their legal rights and protections. This session will provide an update on legal and policy threats to religious freedom and legal defenses for Catholic education. Topics include nondiscrimination laws (Title VII, Title IX, state law analogs), discriminatory exclusion from government benefits, health insurance coverage mandates, and the "Do No Harm" provision in the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, which will bar many students pursuing ministry degrees from Higher Education Act Title IV funding. Legal protections include statutory religious exemptions, religious freedom restoration acts, and constitutional defenses like the ministerial exception.

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5:30 pm Dinner

6:30 pm God Bless America Reception (Sponsored by CBIZ)

Friday, June 19

8:30 am Breakfast Breakouts

Participants will meet over breakfast and afterward in Newman Guide Network working groups according to administrative function, such as presidents, admissions, student life, finance and operations, legal, etc. Participants will network and plan future meetings and collaborative projects.

10:00 am Working Group Reports

Each working group will briefly share with the full group its plans going forward and key opportunities for collaboration.

11:00 am Next Steps: Newman Guide Education's Witness to Faithful Formation

Patrick Reilly, President, The Cardinal Newman Society

In the context of our new Patron of Catholic Education, St. John Henry Newman, this session will consider the unique value and calling of faithful Newman Guide education within the Church's mission of evangelization and will propose next steps toward a unified witness to faithful Catholic formation.

Noon Holy Mass

St. Vincent de Paul Chapel, The Catholic University of America

Lead Celebrant: Fr. Charles Sikorsky, LC, President, Divine Mercy University

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