It’s summer! I truly hope everyone is enjoying our beautiful Wisconsin weather. As the staff and I use the summer months to plan for the next school year, I can’t help looking back and reflecting on how blessed St. Augustine University Parish was last year. We continue to see growth with regards to student participation. 133 students attended a bible study, 90 participated in our retreat opportunities and 31 joined or continued in our discipleship program. Monday was added to our Adoration schedule, as we now have Adoration every weekday from 7:00 am to 5:00 pm filled entirely with students. Our RCIA also experienced growth with seven new students entering full communion with the Catholic Church.

On other fronts, we introduced a new brand, PIONEER Catholic, to give St. Augustine and the Newman Center a fresh look more appealing to our university students. We also kicked-off our banquet series to spread our unique message, culminating in An Evening with Mike Ditka. A heartfelt thank you goes out to Coach Mike Ditka and all the volunteers that helped make An Evening with Mike Ditka our most successful banquet with regards to attendance and money raised. I am proud of what our staff was able to accomplish last year, but now everyone’s focus is making the 2019-2020 school year even better.

Please join me in welcoming our new Varsity Catholic Missionary Justine Broyles, FOCUS Team Director John Shakal and Campus Ministers Matt Busch & Lucas Comeau. Likewise, we all wish the best to Luke Klosiewski, Nathaniel Nygaard and David Jaramillo as they leave St. Augustine University Parish to pursue new careers. I especially ask for you to pray for David Jaramillo who is heading off to seminary in Milwaukee and for our newlywed Campus Ministers Lucas and Meg Comeau!

Finally, I am pleased to announce our student living center, Newman Heights, is completely full for the start of the 2019-2020 school year. It is a blessing to have so many students live close to the Blessed Sacrament. I pray this will help our students grow in their love of Christ!

Please pray with me for all our students and parishioners as we continue to grow here at St. Augustine University Parish.
On June 1, 2019, after 30 years, Pioneer Catholic and St. Augustine University Parish welcomed back Coach Mike Ditka to Platteville. Just like he did during his playing and coaching days, Da Coach made a huge impact during his short time on campus. The afternoon began with Coach Ditka meeting, signing autographs, and taking pictures with many of our sponsors, friends, and community members. Greeted by many of our students here at the Pioneer Catholic Newman Center, our guests were treated to a beautiful venue, great company, a wonderful dinner, and impactful talks by those close to us. Sarah, a current Crop and Soil Major at UW-Platteville, spoke about her appreciation for the Newman Center and how, having transferred from another school, she has been affected by the Lord through the events and authentic friendships that she hadn’t found in her previous circumstance. Fr. John Del Priore, Director of Pioneer Catholic, took time to share about our mission to the students of UW-Platteville and how important a life centered on Christ is, especially in today’s culture. A tradition established over 30 years ago was revived as we honored and recognized Jim Rosemeyer with the St. Monica Service Award for all of the support and servant leadership he has provided to Pioneer Catholic and St. Augustine University Parish! Finally, Coach Ditka addressed the crowd on a variety of topics including his time as a player and as a coach, how he felt about Platteville and the people here (He Loves Us), and he took questions from the crowd. People were thrilled with the unexpected surprise chance to ask an NFL Hall of Famer questions! The Pioneer Catholic Banquet: An Evening with Mike Ditka has become our most successful banquet of all time. We were able to welcome over 325 people to join us for dinner and a program. The most we’ve ever welcomed to an event! We were also able, through the generosity of our sponsors and patrons, to raise over $80,000 through the banquet. The most we’ve ever raised through a banquet! It has been a tremendous blessing to connect our history with our future and, with success like this, the future is bright here at UW-Platteville! Thank you to everyone who attended, everyone who donated, and all who supported us by helping to coordinate this event! If you were unable to attend the event and would still like to donate, please visit, pioneercatholic.org
Pioneer Catholic Newman Community has an absolute blast throughout the school year. We have students coming and going from the Newman Center at all hours for prayer, study, socializing, eating, and fun. There is never a dull moment...during the school year. The summer is another story. Though the summer brings us beautiful weather, longer days, and more time “off” of school we certainly experience a lull in the number of students and community members around the Newman Center. So, where do all the Pioneer Catholics go and what do they do when they leave Newman?

Some students depart for a short time, only to return 3 months later to take up the next step in their academic journey. Others, depart from the community and University all together, beginning their “adult” lives and entering “the world”. In both cases, our Pioneer Catholics bring their love for Christ, the Church, and evangelization to all whom they meet in their journeys.

Youth Ministry

Mark Shinninger is a senior Mechanical Engineering major at UW-Platteville. This summer, he is working as a part of the Love Begins Here Core Team. Love Begins Here (LBH) is a local, life-changing mission trip program of the Madison Diocese that sees middle school and high school students from the diocese come together on a weekly basis to do service work within a particular community. Over the summer Mark will travel to seven different parishes within the Diocese of Madison to serve those in need throughout the community. His main role is to lead a group of missionaries in different service projects. Mark operates as a manager, coach, entertainer, mentor, and friend to these youth missionaries. When asked about what kind of impact he hopes to have on these missionaries, Mark says “I want to share as much about my knowledge of the faith with as many young people as possible. Teens are still figuring out who they are and what they believe in, and I want to show them the faith in a positive light.” Mark cites his involvement in the Pioneer Catholic Newman Community and St. Augustine University Parish as quality preparation for his current role. He shares, “By being in Bible studies, attending daily Mass, weekly adoration, and attending Newman events I’ve learned so much about my faith while at UW-Platteville.” Love Begins Here certainly has a major focus on service to the community, but even more important is the program’s intentionality in celebrating daily Mass, praying a daily rosary, time for Reconciliation and Adoration, and having the Core Team lead the youth groups in guided presentations and reflections. “I give a talk to the teens every week right before adoration and confession. One week, after my talk, I had one of the teenage boys come up to me with tears in his eyes. He hugged me and said, ‘Thank you, you have no idea how much I needed that. You have truly changed my perspective on Reconciliation and the Sacrament of Confession.’ Hearing those words come out of his mouth was one of the most fulfilling things I’ve ever experienced. Knowing that sharing and living out my faith is helping people develop in theirs is a truly humbling experience.” “By sharing my knowledge and past mistakes with the teens it shows them how far I’ve come in my faith since high school. It helps them realize that if they are in a similar position or have similar struggles, that there is still hope for them.”

Vocations

Marlee is a recent UW-Platteville graduate with a degree in agriculture education. Her summer got off to a particularly exciting start when her boyfriend and fellow Pioneer Catholic, Dominic Kuhn, asked her to marry him! Dominic is a senior at UW-Platteville seeking a degree in technology education. So much of what college is perceived to be is a time of intense preparation for what will become your professional career. While this is certainly true, with the addition of time spent in the Pioneer Catholic ministry, it can also be vital preparation for your Vocation. We asked the couple about what brought them together and how the Catholic Community played a role and they shared, “Newman has played a huge roll in our relationship! We have been able to continue to grow more and more into the man and woman that God created us to be through all of the events and the community at St. Augustine’s. We have been able to witness beautiful relationships and marriages before us within the Newman community and have had a great guide in how to welcome God into our relationship. Our closest friendships, that encourage us to live holy authentic lives, have formed through the Newman community.” One of those beautiful relationships they’ve witnessed was the marriage of two of our past Pioneer Catholics/Campus Ministers. It was at that wedding that the two remember connecting for the first time. Marlee shares, “I don’t remember ever meeting Dominic...(continued on page 4)
until we were at a Campus Ministers’ wedding at the end of the school year. We were in the chapel before the wedding began and I couldn’t stop staring at him because we was almost as dressed up as the groom! He was wearing a paisley tie! Paisley?! Then during the reception we were talking and he said he knew how to swing dance! Who was this guy?! I had to get to know him better. So, since that wedding we have been talking non-stop.” When talking about what has prepared him for this Vocation Dominic said, “I think that the one thing that prepared me to enter the Vocation of marriage, is the example that my own father has shown. Growing up in a strong Catholic family, we prayed every day together, worked hard together, and had fun together. He showed me what true love looks like by the sacrifice he makes every day for us kids and my mom. It is through our relationship with Christ that we both have been able to grow in virtue and to nurture that virtue into a Christ centered relationship.”

Evangelization

UW-Platteville ’19 Tanner Hoerter is becoming a Missionary for FOCUS (Fellowship of Catholic University Students) at the United States Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut. FOCUS is a nationally known program that brings trained young adults to college campuses to evangelize the faith. Pioneer Catholic employs four FOCUS Missionaries on the campus of UW-Platteville. When asked about what had prepared him to make this decision Tanner shared, “I was first invited into a FOCUS Bible Study as a freshman at St. Augustine, and not long after was invited to take a step further to become a student leader in the Newman Center in Platteville. If not for all the invitations to these, as well as applying to FOCUS, I surely would not be where I am at today. The witness provided by the missionaries made me realize God calls us all to missionary life, just not all in the same way.” “It was not just the influence through my friends and missionaries on campus, but through my own witness to the work that FOCUS was doing at Platteville, and how well they were doing at bringing Christ into the lives of students on campus, that lead me to want to do the same.” Tanner shares that the need for FOCUS Missionaries and Newman Centers is made evident through the statistic that 80% of fallen-away Catholics today lose their faith by the age of 23, mostly due to the campus culture and lack of accountability from others. Pioneer Catholic utilizes the three main tenets of FOCUS; encouraging chastity, sobriety, and excellence. Three principles that directly combat the college culture of today. When asked about how he wishes to share Christ with others Tanner says, “I hope not only to be a witness to others, but to also enter into the lives of those who otherwise may never have that ask or that coming to know the person of Jesus Christ and to have a relationship with Him.” Tanner is currently raising funds as a part of his missionary work. If you are interested in helping Tanner in his mission please feel free to email him at tanner.hoerter@focus.org.

A Love Begins Here Core Team Member, a FOCUS Missionary, and a married couple! This is just a glimpse into the lives of our Pioneer Catholics as they leave the Newman Center and bring Christ with them into the world. We are blessed to have such virtuous and service-minded students as a party of our community. This is why Pioneer Catholic is here. We are here so that we can be there for others.