



Memo

Date: March 24, 2025

To: Pastors, priests, deacons, religious, principals, parish catechetical leaders/DREs, youth ministers, parish business managers, college campus ministers

From: The Most Reverend Gregory J. Hartmayer, OFM Conv.

Re: Newman Connection's high school outreach program

Peace and all good things!

I write to share important news about an archdiocesan-wide initiative to support our young people during a critical time in their faith journey. Our archdiocese is once again partnering with [Newman Connection](#) to strengthen the bonds between our graduating high school students and their Catholic faith as they transition to college, military service or the workforce.

The statistics are sobering, nearly 80 percent of young Catholics drift away from the church during college. As your archbishop, I am committed to changing this narrative in our archdiocese. Through this continued partnership, the hope is to create bridges that connect our young people to Christ-centered communities where their faith can flourish.

This high school outreach initiative encompasses three essential components:

1. Supporting families through this significant transition
2. Gathering information to ensure intentional welcome into Catholic communities
3. Empowering campus ministers and chaplains with resources to meaningfully engage our young people

Through Newman Connection's Called App, we will directly connect our graduating high school students with Catholic campus ministers, ensuring they receive a personal welcome into vibrant Catholic communities at their chosen destinations.

I ask every parish, school and Catholic organization in our archdiocese to actively participate in this crucial mission. In past years, while we have partnered with Newman Connection as an archdiocese, we have had a fairly

low participation rate. The more we participate, the more fruitful the initiative can be. Together, we can ensure that our young people remain rooted in their Catholic faith during this formative period of their lives.

Pastors and school leaders will receive specific information directly from Newman Connection about implementing this program in your communities. I encourage you to support these efforts fully as we work to strengthen the future of our Catholic Church. If you have any questions, parishes may contact Elaine Phillips at ephillips@archatl.com and schools may contact our Office of Catholic Schools.

Let us join together in prayer for the success of this initiative and for all our young people as they prepare for these important transitions. May God bless you abundantly in this holy season of Lent.