



THE PITTSBURGH ORATORY ANNUAL FUND

Advent Appeal

MATCHING GIFT APPEAL: EVERY GIFT COUNTS TWICE!



GIVE TO THE ORATORY ADVENT APPEAL

*Supporting the heart of the Oratory:
Campus Ministry and Liturgy*

Thanks to generous Newman Center alumni benefactors, **your gift counts double.**

When you give now,
a \$100 donation becomes \$200,
a \$250 donation becomes \$500,
a \$500 donation becomes \$1,000.

Your gift to the Advent Appeal goes towards:

- Liturgy supplies, flowers, candles, altar bread, altar wine, incense: **\$16,800**
- Priestly ministry and retreats: **\$15,400**
- One semester of campus ministry programming: **\$25,000**

Goal: \$57,200

Double your impact today by giving to the Advent Appeal!

pghco.org/adventappeal

Dear Friends in Christ,

The beating heart of the Oratory is **Jesus in the Holy Eucharist**. Every day, He draws students, alumni, families, and neighbors to Himself. This community is blessed by His nearness and by the steady stream of people who come to adore Him. It is here – before Him – that *lifelong discipleship quietly takes root*.

For eight and a half years as a priest of the Oratory, I have watched this grace unfold again and again. From my own years as a student, to my time as Br. Peter, to my priesthood, I have seen the same pattern: Christ forms hearts here, slowly and deeply, through the liturgy, the sacraments, and a community centered on Him.

Your gift to the Advent Appeal sustains that work. It supports the sacred liturgies, the priestly ministry, and campus outreach to university students – ordinary and essential works through which Christ meets His people.

And this year, your generosity **goes twice as far**. A group of Newman Center alumni – whose own lives were shaped here – have come together to match every contribution. They remember what the Oratory gave them. They want today's students to receive the same gift.

On the next page, you'll find **Steven and Megan Pepin's story**. Their years at the Oratory were marked by prayer, friendship,

formation, and the quiet work of grace – experiences that strengthened their faith, shaped their vocations, and now *ripple outward into their family life and into the world*. Their story is one of many made possible by your generosity.

Your support of the Advent Appeal helps more students encounter:

- **Beautiful liturgy** that lifts their hearts to God
- **Priestly ministry** that guides and strengthens them
- **Campus outreach** that invites them to meet Christ and choose Him

Advent is a season of hope and preparation, a time to ready our hearts for the coming of Christ. It is also a fitting moment to strengthen the place where He is encountered daily in the heart of our city's universities.

A generous, doubled gift to the Advent Appeal helps students discover the Eucharistic Lord, grow in prayer, form holy friendships, and carry the faith into their vocations and families for years to come.

Thank you for supporting the mission of the Oratory.

Come, let us adore Him.

In Christ and St. Philip Neri,

Fr. Peter J. Lember, C. O.

Alumni Spotlight: Steven and Megan Pepin

Steven and Megan Pepin met at the Pittsburgh Oratory during their time at Carnegie Mellon and the University of Pittsburgh. Today, Steven works as a product manager at Microsoft, and Megan is a stay-at-home mom and part-time graduate student at the Augustine Institute.

Megan became involved with the Newman Center during her first week at Pitt. At that first Catholic Action (now it's called Newman Night) of the year, she met the woman who would be her Bible study leader, and the rest is history. Before serving as Newman Club president, she had been involved in FOCUS Bible studies and discipleship, so being elected was both a surprise and a gift. God used that experience to prepare the soil of her heart to say yes to becoming a FOCUS missionary after graduation.

Steven first met the FOCUS missionaries and the Newman Club president, Steve Oetjen, during his first week on campus while they were handing out ice cream. As a Catholic ice cream lover, it was a perfect fit! Quickly realizing how much his faith mattered to him, he dove in and got very involved in his faith, fueled by the deep reverence for the Mass he saw at the Oratory. At that time, the Catholic campus ministry was small, and Steven was more or less the de facto choice for president, though he greatly appreciated and treasured the opportunity.

Prayer played a big part in both of their formation. One turning point for Megan was signing up for a 4:00 a.m. hour of Eucharistic Adoration with her roommate during their senior year. Sleepy though it was, that hour became her training ground for prayer and learning to trust God. Despite already having a firm foundation in faith, it was a pivotal moment of deeper conversion and commitment to serve Jesus wherever He called her. For Steven, being asked to lector his senior year inspired a deep appreciation for proclaiming God's Word and a love for the liturgy that he's carried ever since.

For Megan, some of the most powerful experiences of her time at the Oratory came through friendship. She met her best friend at a Newman spaghetti dinner her freshman year, met her husband there, and made countless other deep and meaningful friendships – including with the priests. Rednal also played an important role in her conversion through college, both in attending and helping to lead retreats. Likewise, the Oratory was always an inspiring and welcoming place for Steven. His



Steven and Megan at their Senior Retreat at Rednal, Spring of 2013.

freshman year there were three students named Steven and a Father Stephen, which was always a good time. Those friendships, and others formed through the Oratory, inspired him to grow in his faith and become the man he is today.

Steven and Megan first met their freshman year but didn't become close until senior year, when they began seeing each other regularly at daily Mass. A group of friends started meeting afterward for "breakfast club," and that's when their friendship really took off. When Megan joined FOCUS after graduation, Steven respected her one-year dating fast, and when it ended, he asked her on a date.

After college, they carried the spirit of the Oratory into their married life. Steven dove headfirst into parish life in Seattle, starting Bible studies, mentoring others, and sharing the gospel at work. Megan, missing the many daily Mass times and perpetual adoration of the Oratory, sought that same level of devotion and reverence in her missionary work, parishes, and small groups of women.

The Pepins have since returned to living in Pittsburgh and still return to the Oratory when they're able. The Children's Holy Half Hour has been a special gift; getting little ones in front of the Blessed Sacrament in a no-pressure setting has been both beautiful and meaningful for them as parents. Many of their closest friendships still trace back to those years at the Oratory – Steven's men's group and Megan's book club are filled with fellow alumni.

When asked why people should support the Oratory, Megan and Steven responded, "The Oratory provides a haven for faith and an opportunity for students to be nurtured and challenged, taught and inspired, led and encouraged to lead as they grow in their own relationships with Christ and His Church. The Oratorians form people to be holy; holy fathers, holy mothers, holy siblings and mentors."



Students at the November First Friday Feast



Bishop Eckman speaking at Newman Night



Grad Students at the Young Adult Barn Dance



Mass on St. John Henry Newman's Feast Day

*"Let us reflect that
the Word left heaven,
and stooped to become
man for us."*

– St. Philip Neri

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- OR Donate online at pghco.org/adventappeal
- OR On your phone, scan the QR Code here -->



Thank you for making this ministry happen!

