



Hamilton's Suppression of the Rosary Club

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GUEST CONTRIBUTOR

On March 4th, the Burke Library hosted an event by student activists who launched a smear campaign against the Alexander Hamilton Institute and its student publication, Enquiry. Also attacked in the pages of The Monitor, a Hamilton College-sponsored publication, was a recently formed student organization called the Rosary Club. According to The Monitor, some students believe the Rosary Club operates with a "self-victimizing nature." The truth is that it has been a constant uphill battle for the Rosary Club to operate at all. Its head, Devin Mendelson, sheds light on the reality of the situation.

"Blessed are ye when they shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you, untruly, for my sake." Matthew 5:11

After praying what is known to Catholics as a "54-day novena" from last August to October, I felt inspired to begin a new club at Hamilton, one dedicated to Catholic prayer. I was given the green light to begin the Rosary Club in November. Father Peter El Hachem, the Catholic chaplain at the college, and Jeff McArn, the head of the chaplaincy, explained to me that the Rosary Club would be categorized as an offshoot of the Newman Council, the established Catholic organization on campus. While the Newman Council focuses on social events, the Rosary Club would be focused on prayer.

The Rosary Club received its own email address to send out campus-wide emails. I figured that although it wasn't ideal that we would be unable to reserve rooms like every other club, we could at least send out emails and at least follow the teachings of the Church. In no way was it implied that being under, or an offshoot of, the Newman Council meant being controlled by its leadership. This supposed condition of the Rosary Club's official recognition is retroactively being used as an excuse to crack down on our right to our own meaningful identity.

After just our [second campus-wide email](#) in December, which stated that the Rosary Club is 100 percent unapologetically pro-life, I received an [email from Jeff McArn](#) that said: "you should share all communications and events with the Newman exec board so there is agreement on how the Catholic community is being portrayed."

Compromising Catholic values out of fear of what the world may think is not how Catholics are instructed to act. Jeff's email essentially translates to the Rosary Club being restricted from professing the teachings of the Faith at the behest of the Newman Council leaders, who apparently don't believe in certain Church teachings or are afraid to profess them since they are unpopular positions at Hamilton. (Keep in mind, the Church has taught the "sanctity of life" since the 1st century.)

For our final Sunday prayer session before spring break, the Rosary Club decided that the main purpose for that day's Rosary would be "the restoration of authentic love between men and women." We said so, in exactly those words, in a [campus-wide email](#) that included this quotation from Pope

*"Blessed are ye when they shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you, untruly, for my sake."
Matthew 5:11*

Francis: "We now live in a culture of the temporary, in which more and more people are simply giving up on marriage as a public commitment." With the quote from the Holy Father, we made clear that our intent was to pray for men and women to return to chastity and monogamy. Many students took issue with it for not including relationships that go against the Church's teachings.

Shortly after that email, a [hit piece](#) appeared in *The Monitor*. The next day, I received a [message](#) from the director of student activities, Noelle Juliano. In it, she said "when [the Rosary Club] was approved by the organization review board it was approved so long as it was

a branch of Newman Council. It's come to my attention that Rosary may be acting as a separate group rather than a branch of a parent organization so Jeff McArn and I would like to meet with you to share what the expectations are since they may not have been clear originally."

Before I had a chance to reply to her email, the following morning, [she disabled the Rosary Club email account](#), justifying her action in a [follow-up email](#): "Rosary is not a separate club" from the Newman Council, and "[f]uture events and communication will have to go through cooperation with Newman ... Rosary was approved with the understanding that the group would work through Newman as its parent organization however Rosary has differentiated itself as a separate entity which was not approved by the club review board back in the fall. To that end, we had to freeze the email account and ask for a meeting to discuss how best to move forward."

In other words, according to these messages, our club was approved with the expectation that its emails would have to be agreed to by the heads of the Newman Council. This is not accurate, and my response to Ms. Juliano's first email, conceding that "[the expectations] may not have been clear originally," is: Of course they hadn't been made clear. Father Peter had me under the impression that it was standard operating procedure for any Catholic club at a college to be categorically placed under that school's Newman Council. I was led to believe the decision to place us under the Newman Council was due to one of the Catholic Church's organizing principles. It was only because I thought this subordinate relationship was a policy of the Church that I agreed to the club's being placed under the Newman Council. In essence, should the director of student activities and the Newman Council leaders have their way, Rosary Club emails that mention

continued on back

prayer intentions for certain authentic but often-unpopular Catholic beliefs, such as praying for the unborn victims or potential victims of abortion, would never see the light of day. This is a form of discrimination against our faith.

A week into spring break, I sent President Wippman a detailed message seeking help against such discrimination after the disabling of our email account. He replied by saying he would pass it along to the Dean of Students office. A week later, I received [another email](#) from Ms. Juliano:

“Though we don’t typically give non-clubs email accounts, after a pause and reassessment we’ve decided to reinstate the rosary@hamilton.edu email address for the remainder of the semester barring no listserv violations. Since Rosary has differentiated itself from Newman Council

my fiancée upon marriage is false. I began my conversion process months before meeting her. The hint that I “only [attend] mass (virtually)” is based on the fact that I no longer attend Mass on campus. Instead, I go to a Traditional Latin Mass off-campus. The other claims made here aren’t worth addressing.

I can handle the petty emails and Instagram posts, tagging the [Rosary Club account](#), boasting about how we inspired someone to donate to Planned Parenthood. I can likewise tolerate anonymous students signing up the Rosary Club’s email account to the mailing lists of [Adam & Eve \(a sex shop\)](#), [loversstores.com](#), [Planned Parenthood](#), [NARAL Pro-Choice America](#), and the [Communist Party USA](#) (just to name a few). I will gladly

offensive to their religious beliefs that pious students are subjected to by officially authorized campus emails. Not to mention the [posters for such events across campus](#). If students of faith ever dared to speak out against any of it, we all know they would be faced with a “hate crime” investigation and probably be punished for it.

Why do we tolerate such a double standard?

It’s as if Hamilton, like so much else in America, has been taken over by anarcho-tyranny.

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While “anarcho-tyranny” has generally been used to describe governmental policies, it can also be applied to the policies of a college. In Hamilton’s case, I think the term fits the administration’s unjust suppression of the Rosary Club while it simultaneously allows attacks against me and grotesque mockery of the Catholic faith.

we will need your group to reapply through the new organization process next fall if you wish to continue and receive the privileges of being a recognized organization.”

But if we were truly understood to be a “non-club,” we would not have been given an [entire table](#) at the [most recent Clubs Fair](#). And according to the message, we must reapply as a new club next semester, after I have graduated, in order to be considered for formal recognition. Calling the Rosary Club a “non-club” sets up a potential pretext for giving my successor difficulty in getting it properly recognized next fall.

I suspect that someone will again try to shut down the club next semester by rejecting it outright during the new organization application process, likely by saying the needs of Catholic students are sufficiently fulfilled by the Newman Council. If this happens, my successor will have to fight that battle on campus, although I will be happy to help as an alum.

No other club has to go through such hoops and hurdles simply to exist, and I think this is intolerable. I find it even more intolerable than the fact that the college and the Media Board apparently turned a blind eye and allowed a story in *The Duel Observer* to spread a lie about me on every table in Commons and McEwen: the hint that I am [“desperate ... to get a crumb of that Holiest of Grails ... \[and am\] convert\[ing\] from Judaism solely to get engaged in \[my\] senior year of college so \[I\] can taste that ever-forbidden fruit.”](#) The suggestion that I’m converting in order to experience the pleasures of the flesh with

deal with all of that, as my cross to bear.

Hamilton’s devout Catholics, however, shouldn’t have to put up with attacks against the Faith, such as the *The Daily Bull’s* sacrilege of [photoshopping George W. Bush’s face onto a picture of Our Blessed Mother](#) (and [see the other side of that item here](#)), or a blasphemous student publication headline: [“Friday Five: Things That Are More Powerful than the Most Holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary.”](#) Such things go against Hamilton’s anti-discrimination policies, but nonetheless seem to be permitted – like the personal attacks against me and the perverse objectification of my fiancée.

At the same time that these things are allowed or not addressed, the Rosary Club must fight a tedious bureaucratic battle simply to exist. Our last event before spring break, dedicated to praying for the restoration of authentic love between men and women, received backlash from the mob merely for not including relationships that the Church teaches are sinful and a certain view of the “gender spectrum.” This is part of what prompted the director of student activities to disable the Rosary Club email account a couple of days later (it was only recently reinstated). In essence, the Rosary Club account was shut down at least partly to appease the mob.

Meanwhile, students of traditional faith are subjected to not [one](#) or [two](#), ([three](#), [four](#)) but [five](#) emails pertaining to a “Bob the Drag Queen” event – just one of many examples of events

Club while it simultaneously allows attacks against me and grotesque mockery of the Catholic faith.

Anarcho-tyranny is why some professors and students are comfortable blaspheming God in their everyday language, but students of faith would never dare to profess the teaching of our churches that homosexual acts are sinful. Anarcho-tyranny is why chastity is the only sexual identity student newspapers can make fun of without a hate crime investigation (see [here](#) and [here](#)).

Anarcho-tyranny is why professors and students can make racist and hateful statements about white people but the slightest, most well-meaning critique of something in the black community could land you in serious trouble. Anarcho-tyranny is why a hockey team can advertise a game in Commons by [defiling Sacred Scripture](#) unscathed while the Rosary Club account gets disabled for nearly three weeks after the authentic love email. Anarcho-tyranny is why the Rosary Club, the only active club that goes against the worldly, sex-crazed cultural tide, can’t be on the same plane of existence as every other club on campus.

It is because of the anarcho-tyranny at Hamilton College, the tendency to selectively repress based on left-wing standards, that the Rosary Club, which had its own booth at the Clubs Fair, has been classified as a “non-club” by the director of student activities.

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CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION

1. *Hamilton’s Suppression*
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