



THE CANTICLE

NEWSLETTER OF THE SAINT BENEDICT INSTITUTE FOR
CATHOLIC THOUGHT, CULTURE, AND EVANGELIZATION

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BACK TO THE Beginning

This year, the Saint Benedict Institute launched a new program for women called Genesis. Often, we need to go back to the beginning to understand who we are as daughters, created and loved by the all-good, all-powerful, all-loving Father. That is the aim of these women's groups. Participants read scripture, listen to podcasts, and look at a few other sources to cul-

tivate a deeper life of prayer individually and communally. The program focuses on daughterhood, sisterhood, and ascetic disciplines (forms of fasting, no social media, etc.). Women have the option to sign up for a semester-long commitment or a yearlong commitment. Here's what this year's participants had to say about Genesis:

“Genesis and the disciplines have been a daily reminder of who I am really living my life for. Whenever I think about the disciplines that I should be doing, it brings my mind back to God. I am held accountable in my daily prayer and in fasting.”

“I think these relationships were so meaningful because we were all united by a desire to love God better, and our commitment to the disciplines and showing up for each other was a testament to that.”

“It has helped me grow closer to Christ by really reflecting on certain topics that I have struggled with, and it has encouraged me to think and pray about things I haven't before. It also taught me the importance of giving and allowed me to meet some new people.”



WELCOME TO THE CATHOLIC CHURCH!

This Easter, the Catholic Church welcomed several Hope college students and alumni into full communion. Here are their stories in their own words and in the words of their sponsors:

Dallas Fisher

I decided that I wanted to enter the Catholic Church because of my experiences here at Hope. The seed of Catholic education was planted in high school, but I grew away from my faith as I began college. It wasn't until the second semester of my freshman year that I began returning to Mass, becoming more involved with Hope Catholics, and falling in love with my faith and the Church once again. It was a surreal experience at the Easter Vigil to finally receive the sacraments of Confirmation and Holy Communion. At long last, I was finally welcomed into the Church, where I belong. It was a reminder of my involvement with my faith and my community leading up to this and where it will guide me in the future.



Above: Molly Leonard and Dallas Fisher

Left: Molly Leonard



Molly Leonard

Serving as Dallas Fisher's sponsor and catechist was a joy, as I had been praying he would enter the Church since I met him. I am incredibly grateful to have been a part of this journey with him to not only watch him grow in faith, but also deepen my own. The Easter Vigil was beautiful! Dallas is one of my closest friends and welcoming him into the Catholic Church was a wonderful way to celebrate the Easter mysteries.



Natasha Landolt

When Anna Beth asked me to be her sponsor, I was very excited and honored that she thought I would be a good sponsor. It was very inspiring for me to witness and support Anna Beth in her journey of becoming Catholic. I tend to take for granted my Catholic upbringing and my faith. Seeing how excited Anna Beth was to join the Catholic church and receive the sacraments reminded me what a blessing it is to live life as a Catholic.

Left: Anna Beth Guthery and Natasha Landolt

Right: Anna Beth being confirmed by Fr. Noah Thelen



Jael Stilwell

As I reflect on Holy Week and my reception into the Catholic Church this Easter, I was and continue to be filled with joy and wonder at the graces of the sacraments that I received. I am grateful to my parents for the gift of my Baptism, for family members and mentors who walked alongside me during my catechesis, and all who prayed for me on my journey to receive the Holy Spirit in Confirmation and Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. I look forward to seeing how the Lord continues to seek after me and I pursue him in this season of my life and the ones to follow.



Above: Jael Stilwell, **Below Left:** Patrick McGeehan, **Below Right:** Patrick and Kelli Trudeau.



Patrick McGeehan

I decided to enter the Catholic Church after many years away from the church. I found myself lost and alone in the world. I had strayed far from the plan that God had for me. When I first started attending Mass, I figured that it would be just like any other church service I had been to (I was raised Protestant) but instead found a sense of longing and wanting to know more about the Catholic faith. On top of that, I had visited Scotland and while there dove headfirst into the faith. I attended Mass in multiple different parishes and completely fell in love with the faith as a whole. While over in Scotland, I decided that I wanted to enter the Church and embrace the plan that God had for me! My experience of the Easter Vigil was honestly one of child-like joy. I remember being so excited to be confirmed and then finally receive the Eucharist. It felt like finally being home. The feeling of Jesus placing his hand on my heart and telling me I am his through the Eucharist has left me smiling to this day. (Patrick's sponsor was his fiancée, Kelli Trudeau. They will be married this June.)



Men & Women of Hope

This spring, the Saint Benedict Institute hosted two student-only events, one for men and one for women. In different ways, these events were designed to help students learn how to honor God in their relationships with the opposite sex. We asked three students to reflect on these events and this is what they said:



Michael Bonanni

Men of Hope was an event that I thoroughly enjoyed. It was well-designed, giving us a space where we both listened to advice given by four Hope coaches—all older than us but at four different stages of life—and engaged in

group discussion with questions on life, faith, and love. What I gained from the event was some level of wisdom unique to each individual, but also a few common themes within it all. These included respect (of self and others), discipline, hard work, and a steadfast faith in God and his plan for our lives. I would certainly attend an event like this again and would recommend my friends do the same!



Alexander Lams

The Men of Hope event was very helpful, as it provided practical advice for my relationship and where to go with it. I am grateful to the many coaches and faculty who shared their experiences and wisdom with us, as we sorely needed it.



Ellie Bonanni

I found all three of the Understanding Fertility events to be both personally informative and spiritually enriching. During the first seminar, Carly McShane and Professor

Melissa Mulder introduced us to Pope St. John Paul II's teachings on the Theology of the Body, which emphasize the sanctity of human life and the givenness of all persons. In the second and third sessions, Dr. Kim Barrows, MD, explained several different biomarkers that can be used to practice fertility awareness-based methods. Laura Cole provided specific education on the Creighton Model FertilityCare System. Both gave excellent instruction and answered many students' questions on menstrual cycles, fertility, and sexual morality, among other topics. For many of us students, this was our first opportunity to learn the details of natural family planning. It was very encouraging to see that there are real, scientifically-based options for managing fertility and infertility that are compatible with our Christian faith.

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