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BENGAL CATHOLICS

EST. 1966







Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam

translates: For the Greater Glory of God

Each one of you must have the courage to go and spread the Good News among young people your own age who will then take the Church and society into the next century.

- St. John Paul II -

These words of St. John Paul II were given nearly 30 years ago to over half a million young people in Denver, Colorado at World Youth Day. Now that we have entered the next century, these words maintain their importance, and serve as the inspiration for how our students at St. John's Catholic Student Center - our Bengal Catholics - are formed to be modern-day disciples in a world that is desperately desiring to have the Good News proclaimed to them.

It's been an inspiration to see our students respond to this call. Through sharing the faith, faith has grown. Through teaching the faith, the faith has been understood. And through witnessing to the faith, our witness is being perfected. They are helping students move beyond a mere belief in Christ -a critical step for both believers and unbelievers alike - towards a cooperation with the Holy Spirit to fall in love, grow in love, and walk in love with the God who loves us.

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2022-23 Highlights

- Fr. Emil Parafiniuk joined our community as Chaplain.
- We welcomed 3 new FOCUS Missionaries - Jaz Ocampo, Jessi Moreira, & Anthony Ascolese.
- Rhonan Brownfield was baptized & confirmed Catholic after 2+ years of Inquiry & RCIA formation.
- 16 Bengal Catholics visited St. Louis, MO for the annual SEEK Conference, hosted by FOCUS.

WHY ST. JOHN'S?

By Jenifer Juarez

My name is Jenifer Juarez, and I am a second-year student at ISU. I am majoring in Nursing with a minor in Spanish. The question I have been asking is, "Why St. John's?"

Well, this place has contributed to several aspects of my life. There is a great community where I have made genuine and virtuous friendships.

Before coming here, I don't think I had ever made a friend whom I could talk to about my faith for hours upon hours. I had a misconception of what a Catholic was. Being here has taught me that people pursue faith differently.

Watching people all around me grow in their faith has been beautiful.

I am a cradle Catholic, but the extent of my faith was just going to Mass on Sundays. I slowly started getting more involved at St. John's. Next thing I

knew I couldn't get enough. I started praying the rosary in the chapel every morning with the missionaries. Doing this before work or class helped me prepare for the day ahead of me. If I was able to, I would try to fit at least one daily Mass into my schedule. Joining a bible study seemed like a no-brainer because the girls there were already my friends. That evolved into joining discipleship. Discipleship has not only taught me how others have pursued their faith, but how I too can live out my faith through my actions.

In addition, I joined RCIA to understand the foundation of my faith. One of my favorite things about St. John's is how highly encouraged questions are. My biggest struggle was asking questions because I was afraid that I wouldn't like the answer being given to me. I had always thought that

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questions meant doubt. I now see that questions lead you one step closer to understanding. Not only am I given an answer that I agree with, but I am also given other resources that expand on the topic further. I am more confident in my faith because of St. John's. There have been instances where I have been asked questions about my faith or why I do the things that I do as a Catholic. I now can spread my faith and help others understand.

There is still a lot I need to work on, but I am now sure that this is a journey that I want to take.

Allowing God into my life was one of the best things that I could do. I have never been so blessed. Those words are not enough to describe how present the Lord has been in my life. He has taken the little I can offer him and multiplied it in ways that I could have never imagined. I am thankful that St. John's found me.







Conversion

By Shanae Van Leuven

Something's there.

This is not the first time I have attempted to write my story. This is, however, the first time I have a story that longs to be heard-- a composition of coincidences in divine providence.

Something's there.

Before I walked up to St. John's in the humming heat of August, I was a little girl raised in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. I walked into St. John's without a clue of Catholicism. But I was looking for something. Something to house the hurt that had occupied my life for so

long. Something to fill me with a light I could share.

Something's there.

Two words led me through the front doors of St. John's. Something is there. Love is there. There is healing, peace, comfort, and joy awaiting in abundance. A Father who never leaves, and a Savior that understands sorrow. There is a community full of friendly faces.

I am so grateful I said my first of many little yeses walking into St. John's in the humming heat of August. Little yeses that have led me to come to know many beautiful truths, one in particular - God is good, always.

- After 2+ years of treatments & surgeries, our Campus Minister, David O'Neill, is cancer-free.
- Cooper & Emily Dow welcomed their first child, Milo Maximilian Dow.
- Shanae Van Leuven was baptized & confirmed Catholic at the Easter Vigil.
- Ricky Ramos & Sydney Morris were confirmed Catholic during Easter.
- 18 students said yes to making Jesus the center of their lives and to being formed as disciples.
- 71 students participated in Bible Studies.
- Hundreds of students from all faiths encountered a loving & giving community at our weekly lunches & community dinners.
- Current student, Ethan
 Lang, and alumna, Veronica
 Bolles are preparing to get married in June.
- Fr. Emil was appointed
 Pastor of Holy Spirit
 Catholic Community with
 Fr. Aleksander & Fr. Jorge
 as Parochial Vicars.

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To see Leo with a group of freshman boys gathering after Holy Hour on Wednesdays, to have their Bible Study, and to see those same young men throughout the week stopping by the chapel to spend time in prayer shows us that the faith shared is growing.

To see Ethan & Connor leading a group of students who desire to know more about Christ, His Church, and its teachings at RCIA every Sunday before they all attend Mass shows us that the faith taught is being understood.

To see Jaz meeting early in the morning with Janice or Cristal and then seeing those girls lead other women in Bible Studies or Discipleship groups shows us that the faith witnessed is helping perfect the witness of others.

To see Fr. Emil spending multiple hours a week hearing confessions, offering spiritual direction, or simply laughing & sharing life with our community shows us that the Holy Spirit is helping students fall in love, grow in love, and walk in love with Christ, His Church, and with each other.

We are grateful for all of you who have helped support our mission. We pray we can continue that mission for many more years to come - to proclaim the truth of Christ using all available means - conversation, personal witness, the Church's spiritual & intellectual riches, simple acts of kindness, challenges issued in love, and questions asked with sincerity rooted in authentic friendships.

SUPPORT ST. JOHN'S

As the Catholic presence at Idaho State University, St. John's has the unique privilege and responsibility of equipping the next generation of Catholics for a lifetime of faithful discipleship and service. Nearly every parish in the diocese will be impacted by the ministry of St. John's as students graduate and take positions of leadership and service throughout Idaho.

As a benefactor of St. John's, YOU play a vital role in this ministry. Your prayers and financial contributions will prepare students to:

- be a positive influence on society,
- develop healthier marriages and families,
- build stronger parishes with more vocations,
- establish lifelong friendships,

- cultivate a greater understanding of the Catholic faith,
- and spread the gospel to those who have never heard it.

Please prayerfully consider supporting St. John's as we aim to raise \$50,000 to meet our ministry needs.