

HEART OF THE HALL



FALL 2024

VOLUME VI

ISSUE I

LETTERS FROM THE EDITORS

With the air getting colder and the anticipation of the Christmas season building, I am proud to present the Fall 2024 edition of *The Heart of the Hall*! This edition has been a long time coming, and the hard work of all the contributors is a testament to their desire to share their stories and experiences with our readers – both at our home at the Hall and in our wider online readership. Along with the publication of this edition come a few changes for the publication as it looks forward to the future. First, *The Heart of the Hall* will resume print publication starting with this issue for the first time since Covid. The hard work of our authors will now be showcased not just online, but throughout campus for the whole community to see. Second, as I prepare to graduate this December, I will be passing my seat of Editor-in-Chief to Bridie McGlone. As our publication is brought back to its pre-Covid strength – and hopefully beyond it – it will be in her capable hands.

Now, with my time as Editor-in-Chief at a close, I want to thank you all for your readership and support of our publication throughout these past few years. Coming back to our full strength was not an easy task, but with your help and prayers we have done it – quite the victory! May that victory continue on as we here at *The Heart of the Hall* help bring the voices and reflections of the students of Seton Hall University out to our campus and beyond. Hazard Zet Forward!

Pax Christi,

Erich Sanders

I would first like to thank Erich, my wonderful predecessor, for all his kind words and hard work on *The Heart of the Hall*. I was beyond honored when he asked if I would like to step into his shoes after his graduation, and I hope I can live up to his incredible example as Editor in Chief of this publication. This daunting task feels much more manageable when I look at the superb work of our writers this semester, and know that they will be there to help me maintain the high standard of quality that we strive for here at *The Heart of the Hall*.

Upon reading the articles produced by our students for this edition, a pattern emerges. Each of us, in one way or another, focused on the incredible ways that the faith makes and maintains communities. Jasmine De Leon, in a beautiful and expressive style, recounts her experience on her study abroad trip and how she found a home away from home in the Church. Jimmy Gifford and I focused on representations of the saving community created by faith in popular media in our respective articles. Gifford makes insightful observations about the novel *Crime and Punishment*, using it to demonstrate the saving power of being surrounded by faithful individuals during hard times. My article focuses on the incredible community that is depicted by the film *Cabrini* (2024) and how the faithful representation of Mother Cabrini brings to mind modern religious communities and their affect on those touched by their hard work. Finally, Jackson Shank provides a sobering view on how difficult it can be to participate in these beautiful Catholic communities with his account of his journey of faith and baseball. His wonderfully personal account provides a relatable insight into a struggle to maintain your faith and partake in the Church community.

These articles were an absolute pleasure to write, read, and edit. This tendency toward an appreciation for community is, I think, a fitting theme for an edition of *The Heart of the Hall*. We are, at our core, a publication that reflects the Catholic community here at Seton Hall. Of course our students are drawn to the incredible unity and connection of the universal Church. I hope that, in the coming editions, we can continue to faithfully represent our shared Catholic experience.

Enjoy this issue and God bless,

Bridie McGlone

CONTENTS



A Semester in Rome 5
Jasmine De Leon

The Transformation of Grace 9
Jimmy Gifford

**Cabrini's Mastery of
Subtle Storytelling** 13
Bridie McGlone

Faith and Baseball 17
Jackson Shank

A Semester in *Rome*

FINDING GOD'S GIFT IN SILENCE

JASMINE DE LEON



Sitting not too far from Pope Francis and other Christian religious leaders in Saint Peter's Square, I looked around in wonder and disbelief as we prayed in silence together.

On September 30th, the Pontifical Irish College, which included an assortment of priests from every continent, seminarians from Minnesota, and college students from all over the States, traveled from Rome to Vatican City. I was a member of the Irish College community for a semester abroad in Fall 2023, and I took classes at Gregorian University. The Irish College was granted special seating at the ecumenical prayer vigil, "Gathering of the People of God," before the start of the General Assembly Synod on Synodality in October 2023.

For eight minutes, it felt like the entire world was sitting in silence together.

Only two weeks before I was saying goodbye to my parents at Newark airport. But in that short scope of time I found myself elbow-to-elbow with the Irish and U.K. Ambassadors to the Holy See and other Catholic and Protestant leaders at a conference on the Good Friday Agreement. During my semester, I met people from countries on all continents, the first



Chinese priest to ever live at the Pontifical Irish College, an Irish Archbishop who grew up with one of my Seton Hall professors, and the Sisters of the Servants of the Pierced Hearts of Jesus and Mary who invited us young American students to their convent for support, advice, and dinner. Being so far from home, I was beginning to learn how to make God my home, no matter who I was with, even if the moments felt unreal.

Often, I asked myself whether certain moments I was experiencing were even real, whether it was overlooking a rooftop view at Gregorian University or meeting a wide range of people such as the President of Ireland Michael D Higgins, or Cardinal Louis Tagle. I listened to the stories of many sisters and lay women who have dedicated their entire lives to the Church. I

am honored to have met them and so many people that have opened my perspective of the Church – and of the world. I know that God cared for me through the people I met serendipitously, people who I now call friends.

But in that blissful moment in St. Peter's Square, I prayed in silence with what felt like the entire church. White birds resting atop St. Peter's Basilica leapt into the sky, and music filled the air - Taizé hymns, songs in Italian, and a performance by the Ukrainian children's choir. A copy of the San Damiano Cross and the Byzantine icon of the Madonna and Child "Salus Populi Romani" towered behind the Christian leaders. I could not believe that someone like me - a girl from New Jersey who didn't even know what theology was until a few years ago - could sit among

these people. I knew before going to Rome that people like me do not usually end up in places like this, in moments of history, around some of the most influential religious leaders in the world. Yet, here I was, praying with them; an experience which I found more profound than any other. All these people, these leaders from groups that do not always get along, chose to be together and pray together. From that moment, it felt like anything and everything could happen.

Living abroad, however, brings its own variety of challenges, but those challenges never eclipsed the joy I experienced in

Rome. Community life can feel like both a punch in the face and a warm-hearted hug. Being in the Eternal City did not prevent me from experiencing some unexpectedly hard moments, yet in those moments, God stretched me and demanded more from me than I knew I could give. Prayer grounded and enveloped everything.

What I will never forget are the moments of silence. Prayers along the Via dei Fori Imperiali, in the stillness of empty chapels, before each pranzo (lunch) and cena (dinner) at the Irish College, are where I met God. Each church I prayed in, was where I considered home. On one of my first days in Rome, I wandered into the Church of San Marcello al Corso, found a tiny statue of Mary, and prayed that she and God would show me what they wanted me to do next. I took one of the prayer cards, and I often stopped in the church to pray to her after class. In the middle of the semester, I decided to do the Marian Consecration, which revitalized my spiritual life, helped me get through personal struggles, and connected me more deeply with Mary. My last night in Rome, I returned to San Marcello al Corso. While I prayed to Mary, I looked down at the prayer card again. I never realized until that moment that the statue and prayer card were dedicated to the Marian Consecration prayer. This is just one full circle moment where I look back and see how God and Mary were at work in my life and laid the path for me to draw closer to them. Prayer united me to Christ and to my Roman family.

Silence, listening, prayer - these things are not just essential for Christian life but are the building blocks of unity.

My Roman family - with which I shared my faith - expanded

my perspective of the world. Whether it was at the Irish College, the Laycenter, or the Greg, I became friends and shared my life with people of all vocations from every continent. Before Rome, I knew that the Catholic Church was characterized by its “universality,” but this characterization felt abstract. I saw an incredible display of diversity when I attended the 2023 World Youth Day, but that evening at the vigil in St. Peter’s Square, I understood what “universality” meant in my heart. It is natural to focus on how differences can divide, even amongst Christians, but we can always choose to see past those differences. We can start by sitting in prayerful silence together.

Silence, listening, prayer - these things are not just essential for Christian life but are the building blocks of unity. The Church is not universal just because it has people from everywhere or because the word “Catholic” means universal. The

Church is universal because it can connect with people from everywhere - literally any person in the world - because anyone can pray and listen. We represent ourselves uniquely; we contribute our own particular and extraordinary gifts. At the Irish College, I reflected on what gifts I could contribute as the first Seton Hall student to represent the university in the program and as a young lay woman in the community. I used my gifts as a musician to minister at mass, connect with other students, seminarians, and priests. After connecting with the Filipino community in Rome, I invited members of the Irish College community to the Filipino mass for the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Sharing my faith, culture, and gifts - while learning the same from others that I prayed with - helped me embrace my identities and feel more at home in the Church.

One of my unique attributes is that I am a diplomacy and Catholic studies double major. Pope Francis in his 2023 address to the Members Of The Diplomatic Corps Accredited to the Holy See defines diplomacy:

“It can be said that diplomacy is an exercise of **humility**, since it demands that we sacrifice something of our self-regard in order to build a relationship with others, to understand their thinking and points of view, and thus to oppose the human pride and arrogance that are the cause of every will to wage war.”

I noted at the September 30th vigil that *this* is what true diplomacy looks like: we begin on our knees, asking God for His guidance, listening to His answers, and then going out to do His will, together.

What is true in the Church is true in the world. Wherever there is mistrust, pain, anger, there is a call for humility. Each of us must practice silence and begin with listening in order to practice humility.

What began as a typical study abroad experience of philosophy and theology in Italy became something much more providential by the mysterious workings of God. I thought God sent me to Rome to learn more theology and philosophy, but I see now that He sent me for even deeper purposes: to understand and share in the profound beauty of silence with Him and with others; to see how I am different from others as a gift to be shared; to see others' differences as gifts; and to learn that listening, humility, and forgiveness are the building blocks of peace in every situation. In this world anything and everything is possible if we begin in silence with Christ. Prayer with Him, with Mary, with my Roman family, and in unity with the Church in these few short months.





THE TRANSFORMATION OF GRACE

JIMMY GIFFORD

In life, we must respond to suffering. Ideologies are developed and embraced by people to relieve their ailments and combat their spiritual challenges in life. Fyodor Dostoevsky conveys an example of a man who attempts to invent his own morality to indulge his grievances in his novel *Crime and Punishment*. Raskolnikov is a destitute ex-student who thinks he is a superior man compared to the public. This, in his mind, gives him the license to overstep conventional Christian morality in St. Petersburg. His mindset drives him mad, and he commits a double murder for money. The plan ends in disaster, and Raskolnikov is spir-

itually broken by his yielding to the passions. Sonya, a faithful Christian, intrigues Raskolnikov and inspires his moral redemption. His next challenge, as Dostoevsky illustrates, is to receive his grace, to heal his heart of sickness and march towards God. Raskolnikov's story is an inspiring tale, a message that affirms that we all can return from the pit of suffering, no longer despair, and instead love and hope.

Raskolnikov struggles at first. Sonya offers the sinner a Christian repentance, to accept suffering and confess his sins so he can be redeemed. A striking difference

between the two is revealed in the conversation: Sonya accepts suffering and has faith in morality despite that suffering. The rationalist Raskolnikov still can't comprehend this approach to life and rejects her idea of salvation, still not willing to let go of his ideology.

Raskolnikov understands he cannot run from his crimes anymore and turns himself in. He hesitates for a moment in the bureau, then changes his mind. However, when he steps outside, he meets Sonya's crushed eyes. The symbol of faith and goodness in his life is broken at the sight of his continued internal torment, even on redemption's door. This is enough to inspire Raskolnikov, out of his own free will, to march back into the bureau and face his sins.

He announces clearly, without the ideological masking and uncertainty that commanded the rest of the novel's

prose, that he killed the pawnbroker and Lizaveta and robbed them. His "punishment" begins.

The convict gives Sonya the cold shoulder and remains alienated in prison. He had resolved to acknowledge some guilt, but not a Christian one yet. Remaining ignorant of his moral crime, he thinks his weakness was shown by not confessing earlier, like an "extraordinary man" would. The other inmates dislike Raskolnikov because of his perceived atheism and pester him. On the other hand, they love Sonya's Christian character and leave Raskolnikov alone after some time.

A change occurs in Raskolnikov's attention when he learns Sonya is sick. He is genuinely concerned and sorrowful over another person's wellbeing. It's just a minor cold, but Raskolnikov's consciousness appears to have a major shift. As he begins to love Sonya, he participates in God's energies, and the Holy Spirit therapeutically heals his soul. As a result, his body heals, and he recovers to full physical health. Then, Raskolnikov embraces the labor in the camp, ending his abstinence from work and participating in life, indicating a defeat of sloth, which dominated his grueling life as an ex-student.

One day he takes a seat outside to admire the natural beauty. He lifts his eyes to the world and observes. Raskolnikov,

despite spending so much time alone, rarely experienced peace because of the torrential onslaught of thoughts in his mind. St. Petersburg is a massive, cramped

barrier that held Raskolnikov deep in its cage rarely offering him a glimpse of freedom or serenity. His incarceration, while removing him from his city, gives him a change of scenery, where the whirlwind of pedestrians and eternal activity are absent. Mentally, his thought patterns adopt the same trend. Sitting before the Siberian landscape, he finally feels a sense of stillness. He is peaceful in a state of admiration, in awe of creation, appreciative of the world and of life. Previously, his volatile intellect and material attachments blocked his soul from love. Now, with his heart at peace and joyful, Raskolnikov opens the door to salvation.

**Behold, I stand at the door and knock;
if anyone hears my voice and opens the
door, I will come in
(Revelation 3:20)**



Suddenly, Sonya sits down next to him. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, Raskolnikov experiences the divine light. His soul is engulfed in the knowledge of God, righteousness, and love. The divine grace of the Holy Spirit visits Raskolnikov, and he accepts God's mercy. On his feet and weeping, he tells Sonya he loves her, a remarkable turn towards gratitude and holiness. His heart is overflowing with peace and love. By the natural procession of the trinitarian energies, the working of God, Raskolnikov receives grace and surpasses his old limits of nihilism and resentment, which improvised his heart. His catharsis has begun, the purification of his heart and mind through the rooting out of sins, passions, and evil deeds.

Raskolnikov hopes again, he believes

all will be resolved and he will become a better man. A key aspect of Raskolnikov's redemption is his turn to developing relationships, particularly with Sonya and with Christ. The protagonist rejected connections with others and his ideology gave him excuse to think of them as beneath him. In this state, his transformation would not have happened because he would never internally mend his own soul without the outside influence of love. Importantly, the forgiveness that Sonya and God give to Raskolnikov are not chains. God made the initiative of freely showing Raskolnikov his beauty is what made him realize the chasm that separated him from grace, presupposing the murderer's active acceptance. This is the way of continually receiving God in one's heart – *metanoia* (μετάνοια) – the transformation of one's whole fundamental

outlook, one's whole spiritual disposition, beliefs, and actions towards communion with God.

This challenge is Raskolnikov's greatest because it requires him to acknowledge his own errors in word and deed, admit that they were wrong, then leave them behind and move in a new, virtuous direction. The "Napoleon" must abandon his hubris to be a better man. Christ says "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in" (Revelation 3:20). God always invites Raskolnikov to receive grace but will not force him. God's help is required for a full fellowship with

him, but it is also necessary for Raskolnikov to accept it and play his part. As long as he holds on to his ideology as his answer to life, he turns his head away from God keeps his door closed. However, by rejecting his old ways and acquiring a true *phronema* (φρόνημα) – a true outlook on life, being unshakable love for Sonya, love for the world, and faith in God, he willingly opens the door to union with Christ. It is his therapy and healing, the cleaning of his impurities and emergence of a faithful spirit. He leaves behind nihilism and ideology. Instead, he chooses to love and to hope. Raskolnikov takes out Sonya's New Testament from under his pillow and begins his journey.





Cabrini's Mastery of Subtle Storytelling

BRIDIE MCGLONE

Biopics are difficult, to say the least. A biographical film has the tough task of both recollecting the life of a historical figure with accuracy and honesty while creating an entertaining and satisfying movie. Religious films are also notoriously difficult to do well. They are usually either gruesomely accurate, to the point of causing severe bodily harm to the actors for shock value (for example, *The Passion of the Christ*) or they are brightly colored musicals for children (think *Joseph and the Technicolor Dreamcoat*). Finally, it is extremely

difficult to make a movie that emphasizes and uplifts the accomplishments of women without feeling forced and fake.

In light of this, Angel Studio's *Cabrini* was an ambitious project. Released on International Woman's Day, this biopic follows St. Frances Cabrini, the foundress of the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the first American citizen to be canonized a saint, the Patroness of Immigrants, and namesake of our very own Cabrini Hall. When I saw this movie

in theaters, I was cautiously optimistic at best. I was aware of Angel Studio's fairly good track record with previous projects, most notably *The Chosen* (2017), but I was also aware of the ambitious nature of this project. I am happy to report that I was pleasantly surprised with a genuine, moving, and wonderful movie.

Cabrini follows the journey of Mother Cabrini's efforts to establish herself in America. She led her small order of sisters to New York City in 1889 to provide aid and care for the marginalized and mistreated Italian immigrants that lived there. They encountered a multitude of obstacles, many deriving from the fact that very few people in the New York area were willing to help financially. The movie shows Mother Cabrini and her sisters persevering through these hardships with admirable compassion and determination. Overall, I would say that this film took on three difficult tasks when it comes to moviemaking and executed them all remarkably well: telling a biographical story that stays interesting and engaging to a wide audience, depicting religious topics without jarring tonal issues, and crafting a genuine and sincere narrative focused on the accomplishments of women.

Firstly, *Cabrini* excelled as a biopic. All biographical films must deal with this conundrum: it seems inaccurate or false to leave out certain details, but in order to create a cohesive, satisfying story, a movie should only introduce details that will be resolved by the time credits roll. *Cabrini* deals with this problem neatly. The characters overcome every roadblock in their path, one way or another. For example, originally Mother Cabrini wanted to estab-



lish her orphanages in China. The Pope asked her to instead focus on the Italian immigrants in New York City who were being severely mistreated. At the very end of the movie, they make a point to mention that the Missionary Sisters did eventually make it to China and establish schools and orphanages, just as Mother Cabrini hoped. The screenwriters could have easily left this

detail out entirely, or simply left it hanging. But instead, they paid attention to the little details like this and many others, and in doing so created an immensely satisfying conclusion.

Cabrini also was outstanding as a religious film. As I mentioned earlier, the tone of religious movies can vary wildly. *Cabrini* found the sweet spot that does not shrink away from the reality of the situations the characters find themselves in, while avoiding any overly gruesome scenes. The screenwriters chose to show the horror of the Italian immigrants' situation through the eyes of a few pivotal characters. They followed an orphaned boy and a young woman who were saved by Mother Cabrini and her sisters. The audience becomes attached and invested with these characters and, by association, the many people that they represent. The struggles of these two characters kept the audience invested and sympathetic towards the Italian immigrant population as a whole, without resorting to viscerally unpleasant and gruesome scenes. They also demonstrate the success of Mother Cabrini's efforts in subtle but effective ways. For example, these two characters start out the movie dirty and unkempt, dressed in rags and resorting to desperate measures to survive. Throughout the movie they are cleaned up, dressed in proper clothing, and start working towards better futures. This subtle approach to storytelling shows Mother Cabrini's effects in tangible ways, which is more emotional and effective than

simply having characters talk about how helpful she has been.

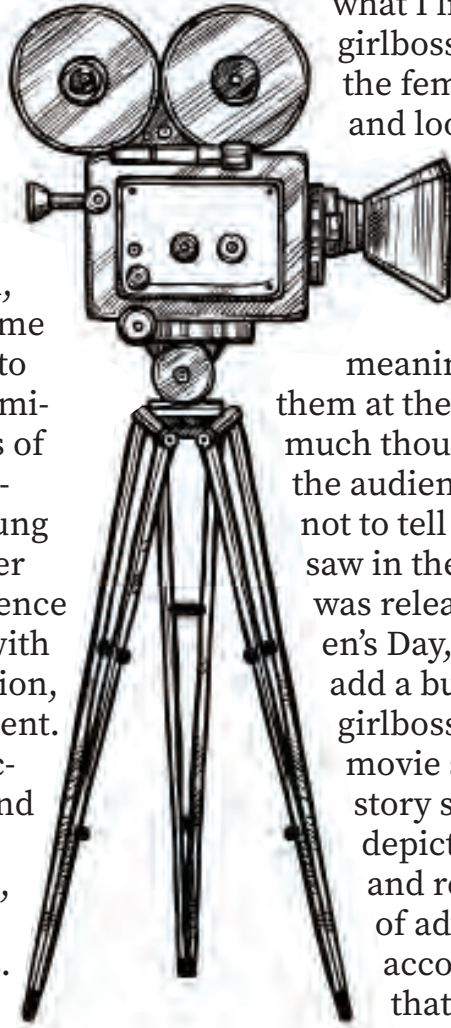
Finally, *Cabrini* excelled as a film drawing attention to the accomplishments of women. Oftentimes, movies will include

what I like to call "manufactured girlboss moments." Moments when the female lead does something cool and looks into the camera and says

something along the lines of "And I did that wearing heels" or "Do you think a boy could have done that?"

These scenes feel fake and meaningless, like the writers added them at the last minute and without much thought. They exist to pander to the audience with snarky one-liners, not to tell meaningful stories. When I saw in the advertisement that *Cabrini* was released on International Women's Day, I was nervous they would add a bunch of these "manufactured girlboss moments". Instead, the movie simply let Mother Cabrini's story speak for itself. It honestly depicted her quiet determination and refusal to give up in the face of adversity. The point was her accomplishments, not that fact that she happened to be a woman while doing it.

Cabrini was such a meaningful movie because of its subtlety. The screenwriters placed details very carefully and thoughtfully to tell Mother Cabrini's story in an honest and engaging manner. Each scene felt genuine and heartfelt, and never dipped into insincerity for shock value. That is why *Cabrini* succeeds both as a film and as a story of an incredible woman. On



a more personal level, I believe that subtlety created a wonderful representation of women in religious life. Since I was little, I have attended Catholic schools that benefited from the presence of religious sisters. Most recently, I graduated from Villa Walsh Academy, a school established and run by the Religious Sisters Filippini, another Italian order focused on education. I have seen the quiet determination, compassion, and strength that characterizes these

orders and learned from it. The way these women operate is very subtle; they care deeply and work without ceasing to guide and help those they are responsible for. Perhaps most admirably, they never expect any recognition or reward. Mother Cabrini represents this quiet strength, and her film is a loving and sincere thank you to her and the women like her that have shaped the lives of so many children.





Faith AND **Baseball**

JACKSON SHANK

Have you ever had the feeling that two things are just meant to be together? Were made for one another, like peanut butter and jelly? Well, that is how I feel about my Faith and the game of baseball. There is something special about the two and how they fit together.

As a Kansas kid who grew up around the suburbs of Kansas City, I had major league dreams: the Royals, Cardinals, and Braves were all I could think about growing up. Falling in love with a game such as baseball is the beauty of childhood and one of the many things I will recommend when I become a father. For me the game was simple: show up at the field, glove and bat in hand, cap on head and a smile. It was my escape from reality, something that felt otherworldly when I stepped onto fresh cut grass and smooth dirt. It was heaven.

Growing up in a Catholic household I was raised around the faith. While I would not say I was a cradle Catholic due to my father going through the RCIA process when I was 5 or 6, I would say I am about as close to that as they come. My faith when I was growing up was a beautiful thing, not really something I adored, but I always knew that one day would end up exploring it because of life's inevitable questions. I always imagined that God was my best friend, the guy who I walked with down the path of life and could stray away from when I felt like it but would be waiting for me when I came back so we could keep moving forward. My lack of commitment to the path of God was due to the lack of time I made for Him in my life.

As a young adult, responsibility can be a difficult thing to handle. You add self-control into the mix and it can become diffi-

cult to balance a life of Christ. This had me worried about my relationship with Christ. When was I going to find time for God? I was going to Catholic school,, which was good, but when would I find time to spend intentionally with God? Playing baseball on the weekends made it even tougher to have this relationship because during what was essentially the year long season, tournament games on Sunday morning started before you could get to Mass. While going to Mass each Sunday was great, I wanted to make sure that I spent time individually with Christ. Individual time with God is so important to me because in growing a relationship, one must proactively strengthen that relationship by dedicating time and effort towards it. This was beyond the hour I spent with Him on Sunday's. However, in my mind, there was no time for God, nothing in my head could make any time for Him. I had school Monday through Friday, and so it was difficult to get to adoration and confession throughout the week and there was a tournament every weekend outside of the two weeks off we had a year. I kept wondering: "What am I going to do?," "Am I a bad person?," "Should I even consider myself a man of God?" Each of these questions bounced around my head as the season sped by.

I was a kid with Major League dreams, so I played as often as a Major Leaguer would. I went to Practice four to five times a week and played multiple games on the weekend. On those weekends I would travel and traveling meant time in the car with my beloved iPad. There are only so many

things that I could experience for the first time and prime *Clash of Clans* was one of them. In addition to playing games on my iPad, I spent plenty of time watching movies. Of course, the only option when it was time for tournament travel ball was baseball movies. I fell in love with baseball movies as a player to dream big much like the players do in the films. Motivation can be one of the greatest tools for performance, that is until I realized I could use my faith. I will never forget the first time I watched *Field of Dreams*. On the road to a game, I found this movie on Netflix about these young boys from Monterrey who scrapped together funds to play in the Little League World Series and, somehow, defied the odds and became champions. All of this would not have happened without a

My Heaven on Earth had now become one of the many places I could speak to God with no interruption.

little help from the Man upstairs. Many times, throughout the film the boys showed how their faith motivated them to continue. But the one scene that had the biggest impact for me was

when they refused to play without their pregame prayer from a priest and nearly forfeited the tournament. In this scene they wanted the priest to read the 108th Psalm, which is the victory prayer said by David before he went out to fight Goliath. What I did not know, and what the movie taught me is that on that ball that I had been dreaming of throwing in the big leagues my whole life, there are 108 stitches that keep it together.

In that very moment, I realized that faith and baseball were meant for one another. Just like those boys from Monterrey, I began to pray before games. Each



time I stepped on the field I spoke to God and started to offer my performance out there to Him. My Heaven on Earth had now become one of the many places I could speak to God with no interruption. This relationship started to flourish, and I began to speak about my faith during games, and even got some of my teammates to join me in prayer. My faith transformed the game for me but little did I realize that my playing days would end just six short years later.

Stepping away from something after 15 years of having it be the one thing constantly on your mind, the sudden transition was rough to say the least. Covid and the NCAA rules on eligibility decreased the scholarship money I had from various schools that sent me offers, and the appeal of playing was no longer what I once hoped it would be. It was time to move on, but how? And where would I find time for God? Would I have more time for Him now or would I find something else to get in the way? Luckily, God had a plan for me, and that plan was Seton Hall and Sports Broadcasting. From dreams of the Majors on the field to hoping that one day I can talk about the players on my favorite team, the thrill

of competition has not left me. I love every minute of it, and my faith has only gotten stronger as I have started broadcasting. Before each game, before I put that headset on, I thank God for the gifts and talents He has given me. On the air, I give all glory to God. He is my one true king, my best friend, and the greatest motivator.

My goal is to one day call baseball for one of those Major League franchises I once dreamed of playing on, but I will settle for any team that gives me that call. Hand in hand with Christ I take each step forward. Day by day I strive to grow deeper in my relationship with God, growing in my relationship with Him through prayer and Scripture. My faith journey has come a long way, but one thing I will always remember is that there were not two things made for each other more than faith and baseball.



MEET THE AUTHORS



Bridie McGlone

Bridie McGlone is a sophomore English major. She is active in many clubs and organizations on campus, including English club and the Setonian. In her spare time, she likes to read fantasy novels, practice guitar, and play volleyball.



Jackson Shank

Jackson Shank is a senior from Kansas City, Kansas, studying visual & sound media with a concentration in sports media. He grew up in a family that went through the RCIA program together when he was young, and since being introduced to Catholicism he hasn't looked back. His faith has made him the man he is today, and he couldn't be prouder to be a believer.



James Gifford

James D. Gifford is a senior history and philosophy major at Seton Hall, with a minor in classical studies. He is a member of the university honors program, the history honors research program, and Phi Alpha Theta, the national history honors society. James is the founder and editor-in-chief of *Chronicles: Journal of History*, the student history journal at the university. He also works as a desk assistant and was a resident assistant and social media intern for the history department.



Jasmine De Leon

Jasmine De Leon graduated from Seton Hall in 2024 with a B.S. in Diplomacy and International Relations and a B.A. in Catholic Studies, and minors in Journalism and Mandarin. She is currently a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant in Kinmen, Taiwan. In her free time, she enjoys learning about Taiwanese history, exploring religious sites, and making YouTube videos about her ETA experience.



Erich Sanders

Erich Sanders is a senior Theology and Philosophy major from New Jersey. On campus, Erich is involved with Campus Ministry, The Lonergan Review, and, of course, The Heart of the Hall. In his free time, he enjoys reading, writing, hiking, and learning how to cook.



Victoria Ferrisi

Victoria Ferrisi is a graphic design major with a minor in business. On campus, she is on the e-board for Italian Club and Independent Music Society, and sings with the university, chamber, and church choir. In her free time, she enjoys playing guitar and going on hikes.

WANT TO SUPPORT US?

The Heart of the Hall is supported by the generosity of the givers to “The Newman Trust.” The Newman Trust is a restricted account in the endowment, which advances this publication through the Office of Mission & Ministry.

If you are interested in supporting us, you may do so through the following ways:

1. Visit www.shu.edu/giving. Under the “designation” field, choose “Other” and type “The Newman Trust.”
2. Mail a check, made out to “Seton Hall University”. In the memo line, write, “Fund: The Newman Trust.” Mail to:

Office of Alumni Relations & Annual Giving
ATTN: Hayley Trinkoff
457 Centre Street
South Orange, NJ, 07079

3. Call us: Our number is 973-378-9826. We can take credit card donations via phone.

Find out more by emailing, following our social media, or visiting our website:
blogs.shu.edu/heartofthehall



heartofthehall@shu.edu



[@shuheartofthehall](https://www.facebook.com/shuheartofthehall)



[@HeartoftheHall](https://www.instagram.com/HeartoftheHall)

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

“The Heart of the Hall publishes articles to lead students, faculty, and alumni to recognize the value in the Catholic Mission at Seton Hall University, by drawing their hearts and minds towards Catholicism’s truth and beauty.”