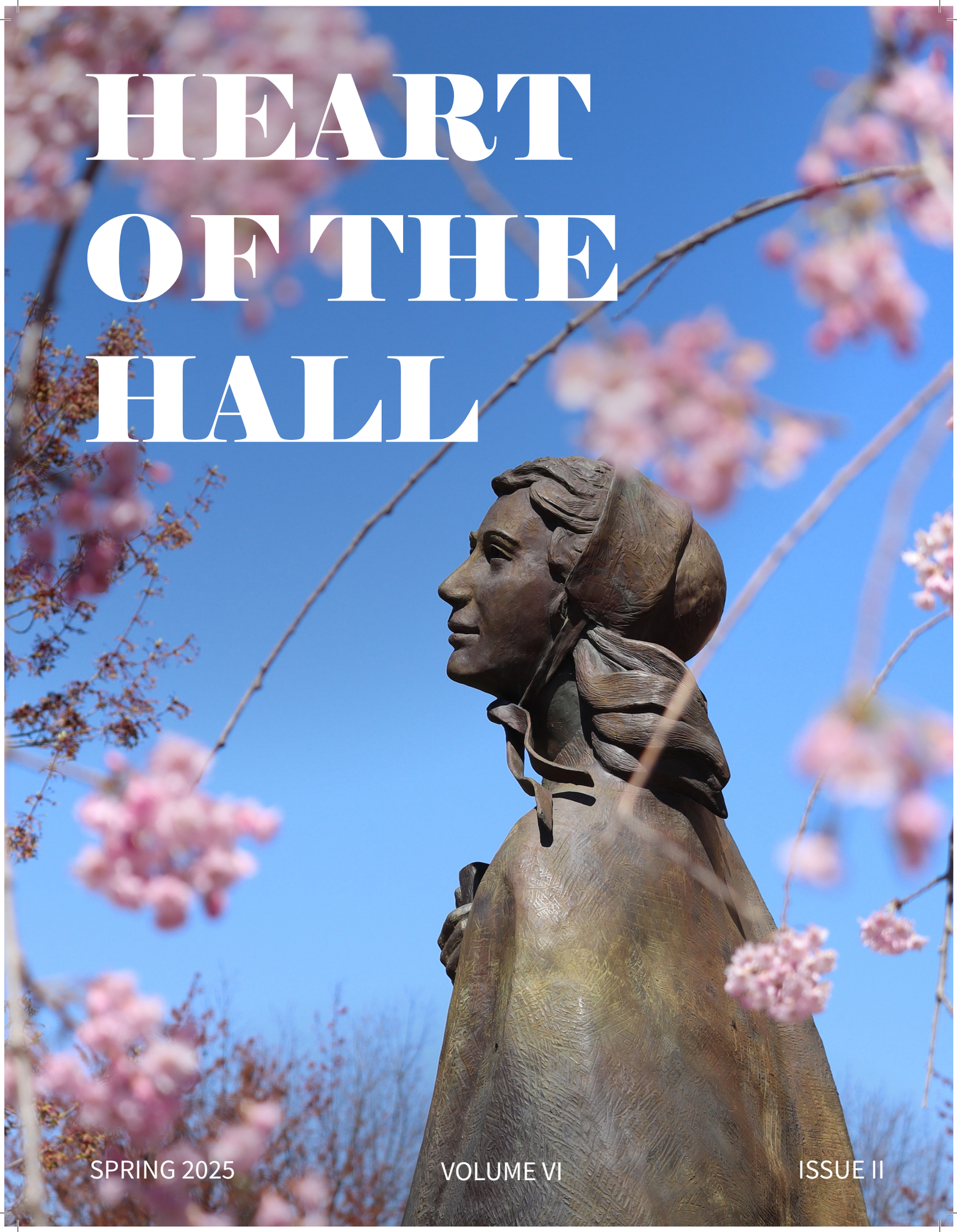
HEART OF THE HALL



SPRING 2025 VOLUME VI ISSUE II

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

As the semester draws to a close, I am overjoyed to present the Spring 2025 Edition of The *Heart of the Hall*! Our writers, designers, and photographers have worked very hard over the last few months to put together a magazine that we are very proud of. All of our writers this semester, in the spirit of Easter, have focused on topics concerning the importance of unity and reconciliation that this season emphasizes.

Our first article, "Returning to Catechesis: The Coptic Orthodox Approach to Holy Lent" by Alexander Marinelli, explores the ways that the Roman Catholic Church can learn from the Church of Alexandria's Lenten practices. He specifically highlights repentance and baptism as recurring themes that serve to unify the season in preparation for Easter.

Next is "Christ the King and *The Lord of the Rings*: Aragorn as an Alter-Christus?" by Jacob Mudd. Examining the famous film trilogy, this article tracks the development of the character of Aragorn into a more Christ-like figure through his increasing insistence on repentance and unity, which makes him fit to ascend to kingship.

The theme of repentance and reconciliation continues in my own article "Winning, Losing, and Catholicism: History and Religion in Irish Poetry," which explores the use of Christian imagery in Irish poetry. Over the course of Irish literature, these themes are used both as a way to continue bloody conflicts, but also as a way to reconcile disparate Christian groups, and move towards forgiveness, unity, and growth.

Finally,Valeria Villagra's article "Future Saints of Seton Hall: Monsignor John M. Oesterreicher" introduces a new series for The *Heart of the Hall*. This piece details the life of a notable Setonian, Msgr. Oesterreicher, and his contributions to our university and our faith's understanding of the relationship between the Church and Judaism. Following our edition's theme, he championed unity, dialogue, and reconciliation between faiths.

As we celebrate Easter surrounded by the beauty of Seton Hall in the spring, it is important to keep the true spirit of the season in mind. We are called to forgiveness and reconciliation amongst ourselves and in Christ. I hope that these articles are able to draw your attention to that beautiful truth.

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to the many people who make this publication possible: Fr. Doug Milewski and Msgr. Dennis Mahon, our tireless faculty advisors, and Fr. Colin Kay, the director of the Office of Mission and Ministry. Without them, all of our work would not be possible. Last, but certainly not least, thank you for reading our magazine! I hope that you enjoy the Spring 2025 edition of The *Heart of the Hall*.

God bless,
Bridie McGlone, Editor-in-Chief

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RETURNING TO CATECHESIS

The Coptic Orthodox Approach to Holy Lent

This year's Holy Lent marks the fourth since my conversion to the Coptic Orthodox Church, but only the third since my baptism on Bright (Holy) Saturday during Holy Week of 2022. More importantly, however, is the fact that this year is also one of the rare times when the Catholic and Orthodox Easter celebrations coincide with one another. Because of this, I would like to reflect briefly on this occasion and use it as a reading lens for this article.

I cannot overstate the importance of Christians learning from one another despite our differences. Personally, my own journey to Christ would have been drastically different had I not met the Catholics that I did along the way; it was through my beloved Catholic friends and teachers that I was introduced to the Eucharist, saints, and the importance of tradition—all of which were the stepping stones in my journey to Orthodoxy. Furthermore, the relationship between Catholics and Orthodox is also of the utmost importance on an ecclesial level. Although our differences cannot be forgotten, this should not hinder the Churches from working with one another in love as siblings in the Body of Christ. Our faith was handed to us from one Lord through His holy apostles, who were united in the mission of spreading the Gospel throughout the whole world. Indeed, it was the Lord Jesus' prayer during the Last Supper that "they may all be one, as You, Father are in Me and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me" (Jn. 17:21). If it is our God's wish to be one, who are we to hold one another in contempt? Taking this into account, I believe there is always room for us to be edified by one another; thus is my wish for this article. Just as I have been edified by Catholic (as well as Eastern Orthodox) brothers and sisters, I pray that the contemplations in this article will prove valuable to those who read it. With this, I would like to first explain the organization of

the Lenten season in the Church of Alexandria and then share with you all the spiritual purpose behind it that I have recently learned: Holy Lent and its liturgical readings are ordered in such a way that we return to the mindset of a catechumen, specifically through constant repentance and then baptism---always reminding ourselves of its nature and purpose.

A short summary on the organization of the Coptic Orthodox Lent: Fifty-five days long, divided into three periods:

- Preparation Week
- The Forty Days
- Holy Week (Pascha)

Historically, the Forty Days of Lent were initially a fasting period precisely for catechumens on the road to baptism. This forty-day journey would begin after Jesus' baptism on the Feast of Theophany and end on Lazarus Saturday, the day before Palm Sunday. Thereafter, the catechumens would join the rest of the Church in fasting for Pascha, concluding with their own baptism during the Resurrection Liturgy. Since Holy Lent began as a period of instruction for catechumens, the Church divided and organized the liturgical readings around the themes of repentance and baptism. The first three weeks correspond to repentance, while the latter three emphasize baptism's cleansing nature through three examples in Christ's ministry. Just as the catechumens begin their journey to Christ with repentance and arrive at their destination with baptism, the Lenten season accordingly starts and ends with these two themes. As the Russian priest Fr. Alexander Schmemann proclaims, "When a man leaves on a journey, he must know where he is going. Thus with Lent. Above all, Lent is a spiritual journey and its destination is Easter, 'Feast of Feasts.'"

Corresponding to the theme of repentance, the liturgical Gospel for the third Sunday of Holy Lent is the parable of the Prodigal Son from St. Luke's Gospel. The Prodigal Son is perhaps the greatest of the parables regarding Jesus' teachings on repentance.

After the younger son realizes the depths of his error and remembers his father's immense love for him and the blessings that such love brought forth, he decides to return to him. Thinking that his father would not accept him, the son says, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no more worthy to be called your son" (Lk. 15:21). Despite his numerous sins, the father rejoices at his son's return and, with unconditional love, forgives him and restores him to his place. This parable highlights the sorrowful repentance at the beginning of our journey and emphasizes God's willingness to forgive and embrace us. No matter the nature of our sins, God's mercy exceeds them all, and He eagerly waits to restore our inheritance. This is proven in Luke's Gospel, which tells that God and every angel in heaven rejoice when a single sinner repents (Lk. 15:7).

The next three Liturgy Gospels are all from St. John: the Samaritan woman at the well (4:4-42), the lame man at the pool of Bethesda (5:1-15), and the man born blind (9:1-41). The baptismal significance of these three wondrous scenes is often overlooked because Jesus does not directly mention the sacrament. However, all three scenes center around water, and the graceful commentaries from the Church Fathers reveal to us the hidden wisdom regarding the sacrament.

When Jesus arrives at Jacob's Well in Samaria, He unexpectedly converses with the Samaritan woman, an infamous adulteress whose people were also held in contempt by the Jews. Knowing her weariness and how long she has waited for the Messiah, the Lord tells her "But whosoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing into everlasting life" (Jn. 4:14). Christ assures the woman that the water He gives is saving and eternal. Commentating on this passage, Sts. Cyril of Alexandria and John Chrysostom explain to us that this water is the Grace of the Holy Spirit—the very same that Jesus had mentioned to Nicodemus. It is through the sacrament of baptism that we receive the Holy Spirit

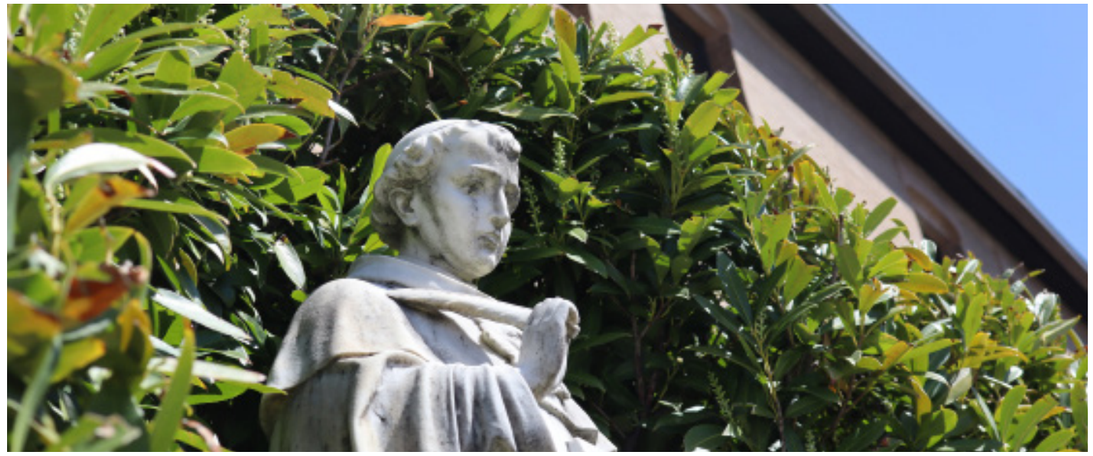
Himself and Divine Grace fills our lives, ensuring that we never thirst again.

On the day definitively referred to as "Baptism Sunday" in the Coptic calendar, we meet the man who was born blind. Here, Jesus meets a blind man whom the Lord says was born this way so that "the works of God should be manifest in him" (Jn. 9:3). After making clay of His own saliva and anointing the blind man's eyes, Jesus commands him to go "and wash in the Pool of Siloam." Once the man washes as was told to him, he was cured of a lifetime of blindness. Once again, we see imagery of baptism, yet this time it is much clearer: just as the man washed in the pool and was no longer physically blind, so in baptism are we cleansed of the infirmity of sin and receive the spiritual sight that God promised to us. Jesus says to Nicodemus in John 3:3 that "No one can see the Kingdom of God unless he is born again" and later defines that to be "born again" means to be born of both water and spirit. Concerning the blind man, St. Cyril beautifully highlights the baptismal imagery:

"It was not otherwise possible for Gentiles to thrust off the blindness which affected them, and to behold the Divine and holy light, that is, to receive the knowledge of the Holy and Consubstantial Trinity, except by being made partakers of His Holy body, and washing away their gloom-producing sin, and renouncing the authority of the devil, namely in Holy Baptism."

During the time of Holy Lent, the Church calls us not only to remember the beginning of our spiritual journey but to immerse ourselves in it, constantly engaging in serious repentance and remembering the nature and purpose of our baptism. I have often heard from brothers and sisters in my parish that they wish that they were able to experience the catechumen's journey; I believe that contemplating the liturgical readings is exactly how they can do this. I, as a former catechumen, am also in great need of this lesson, as with every passing year I find myself getting increasingly lost in life's business and forgetting that precious zeal I once had. As we continue persevering through this season and prepare ourselves for the glorious Resurrection, let us remember to always renew our repentance and keep God ever in our sight. Please keep me in your prayers and glory be to the Holy Trinity our God, Amen.

By Alexander Marinelli



Christ the King and The Lord of the Rings

Aragorn as an Alter-Christus

Lord of the Rings is a trilogy of famous novels by J.R.R. Tolkien whose embedded Christianity has long been recognized. The story centers on the quest of a hobbit named Frodo who has to destroy a ring of power, lest it fall into the hands of a supremely evil powerful entity called Sauron. Assisting Frodo in this quest are three hobbits: Sam, Pippin, and Merry; two men: Aragorn and Boromir; an elf: Legolas; a dwarf: Gimli; and a wizard: Gandalf. The ways in which some of these characters show Christ-like qualities have long been recognized. This article, though, will focus on Aragorn and how his development into the role of the king makes him almost an alter-Christus, or a second Christ. Our focus here will be on how this is portrayed in Peter Jackson's three films based on the books rather than the novels themselves.

For those familiar with *Lord of the Rings*, you may be asking why this article is about Aragorn rather than Frodo or Gandalf, who are both "Christ-figures" in their own rights, and several articles can be written on both of them. Gandalf the wizard is the most obvious example, both in personality and wisdom, but also more explicitly as he fights a Devil-looking creature, dies, then comes back to life. Frodo is similarly a Christ-figure in how he resists the Ring's constant temptations longer than anyone else (other than Sam) could handle, reminiscent of

how Jesus alone was sinless. However, Aragorn is less overt at first glance but very much fits the bill of a Christ figure in the *Lord of the Rings* movies, through his gradual transformation.

To begin, there is a great deal of Marian iconography associated with Aragorn in Rivendell, an Elven city. In one scene he is paying respects to his late mother, the marble statue of which looks very similar to statues of Mary, Jesus's mother. Also in Rivendell is a Pietá-esque statue cradling the sword of Elendil, which is the sword that defeated Sauron and was used by Aragorn's ancestor. Holding that sword is an unidentified woman, yet in the scene Aragorn pays respect to her, like the respect Jesus pays his mother Mary.

Likewise, there is a powerful contrast in how temptation works on Aragorn and the other man, Boromir. Boromir wants to use the ring as a weapon to defend his kingdom Gondor. He, admittedly acting with noble intentions, in fact acts as a symbol for humanity's lack of strength before the temptation to power. Aragorn in contrast, like Jesus in the desert, does not succumb to the temptation to power. The contrast between the two characters is obvious. In the council deciding what to do about the Ring, the Ring's supernatural temptation representing the temptation of Satan succeeds on Boromir, who is power-hungry and arrogant and wants to use the Ring as a weapon. Throughout the movie there are some subtler examples, but the most obvious, and most important, is in the final scene when Boromir is alone with Frodo. Tempted by the Ring, he gives in to that Satanic temptation and tries to take the Ring. Later Aragorn finds himself in the same situation, faced with the same Satanic temptation, but resists the temptation. This also has the broader message of Aragorn being able to resist the temptation his ancestor Isildur succumbed to, a hint that Aragorn is already becoming more Christ-like than his predecessors.

> The movie dramatizes the essence of the Christian idea of rule...that the ruler serves for his people's good and not his own glory.

When Boromir lays dying after trying to protect two of the other hobbits, he acknowledges and regrets his pride and weakness, and Aragorn comes over to comfort him and says "I will not let the White City fall, nor our people fail…Be at peace." This marks an advance, showing where Aragorn has begun to take responsibility for his people, and offers consolation and reconciliation to Boromir. There is a not-too-subtle confirmation of this when Aragorn takes Boromir's leather forearm guards that have the symbol of Gondor pressed into them. As a last little hint in this scene, as Boromir dies, Aragorn makes a gesture that has the feeling of an abbreviated Sign of the Cross.

In *The Two Towers*, the second movie, Aragorn spends a great deal of time with Theoden, the king of Rohan. Theoden seems very much to be the stereotype of an earthly king; proud, quick to anger, resolute, and a strong sense of honor, and at the same time a man with nobility who thinks of his people. These can sometimes stand in stark contrast to Aragorn's meek, merciful, and gracious personality. One important illustration of this contrast between the two men is when Theoden discovers his appropriately-named advisor Wormtongue has betrayed him. Theoden intends to kill Wormtongue, but Aragorn intervenes, saying "Let him go. Enough blood has been spilt on his account." Those words are very similar to many of Jesus' teachings of mercy, of turning the other cheek in the Sermon on the Mount, not exacting revenge on someone, even if that someone betrayed you (cf. Matthew 5:39).

A bit later in the movie, upon learning of an

enemy army marching to destroy Rohan, the different responses of Aragorn and Theoden further highlight Aragorn's Christ-like qualities and Theoden's earthly pride. Aragorn and Gandalf counseled Theoden not to go to Helm's Deep, to fight directly instead and not let the army reach the women and children of Rohan, rightly thinking that the army was after the people, not the land. But Theoden was prideful and ignored their advice, choosing to send his people to Helm's Deep, which was a defensive fort but also one with no way out other than the front entrance. So, construed differently, it could be viewed as a trap. And a trap it was. But even though Aragorn disagreed with him, he accepted the King's authority and still went with them to protect the people, which is again reminiscent of Jesus' willingness to die for humanity's salvation when we did not deserve it.

Arguably the most obvious and important example of the difference between Aragorn and Theoden is near the end of *The Two Towers* when Rohan's people plus Aragorn, Legolas, and Gimli, are defending Helm's Deep against an overwhelmingly large army of monsters called Uruk-hai. Partway through the battle, at precisely the moment when all hope seems lost and the enemy army is overrunning the castle, Theoden is in the grips of despair when Aragorn says "Ride out and meet them." Theoden responds in a way consistent with his warrior ethos, "For death and for glory." Aragorn responds in a much more Christ-like fashion, saying "For Rohan, for your people." He is willing to die for the people, that they might survive. In the last movie, *Return of the King*, one of the first scenes is the victory feast after Helm's Deep. Theoden makes the toast "Hail the victorious dead." Everyone else immediately starts chugging their ale, but Aragorn hesitates and only takes a sip. This could both indicate his literal desire not to get drunk, as well as his hesitation at treating the victory in which they sustained incredibly heavy losses as an entirely happy occasion.

In *Return of the King* a more mystical tone is struck through the way Aragorn deals with the ghost army, that is, the souls of soldiers who had sworn to fight for Aragorn's ancestor, but broke their oaths and never fought. The legend went that only Isildur's heir could command this army. Aragorn finds them and promises to finally free them from their oaths if they fight for him just once. There are a few suggestive connections here to Jesus; the first being that Aragorn, relying on and trusting traitors, is very similar to Jesus eating and speaking with tax collectors and prostitutes, converting them and making them better

CHRIST THE KING AND THE LORD OF THE RINGS // MUDD

people. Aragorn in turn is letting the ghosts fulfill their oaths, become better people, and pass on, presumably to salvation. In this act Aragon is illustrating that he has accepted his role as king. Thus, like Christ, he is functioning as an instrument of salvation for his people. Tellingly, his final words to the souls are, "Be at peace."

Near the end of the movie, when Aragorn and what remains of his army stand outside the Black Gate, the entrance to Sauron's realm called Mordor, the enemy tempts Aragorn once more, presumably offering power and the chance to survive. Once again Aragorn refuses; his battle-cry is a whispered "For Frodo" before charging against the orc army, potentially to his death. The parallel with Christ here is a Garden of Gethsemane moment, where like in the Garden, although it is not explicitly mentioned, Jesus is likely tempted one last time, as he asks that if possible, he doesn't have to die. But Jesus rejects that temptation (cf. Matthew 26:39), as does Aragorn, both sacrificing themselves for others' salvation. Perhaps like Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane, the possibility of avoiding death is presented, and Aragon resists the temptation.

Finally, at Aragorn's coronation at the end of *Return of the King*, Jackson's and Tolkien's subtle symbolism comes to its completion. Aragron's visual appearance recalls depictions of Christ in medieval art —rugged countenance with shoulder-length, slightly wavy hair, and a small beard. Equally, Gandalf in his white robes calling down blessings on the new king evokes the ritual symbolism of popes or bishops crowning Christian monarchs. This same symbolism was seen played out as recently as 2023 with the coronation of King Charles III in Tolkien's native England. Most importantly, though, for our purposes, Aragorn in the movie scene extends the blessing given to him to all his people. Shortly after this, in his moment of exaltation, King Aragorn kneels before Frodo and the other hobbits, a gesture of exquisite humility. Here the movie dramatizes the essence of the Christian idea of rule that has been developed throughout the trilogy: that the ruler serves for his people's good not his own glory, that he exercises his office in humility and compassion, that he reconciles and restores the lost, that he defends true peace whenever necessary, and that he imparts mercy wherever possible. By the trilogy's end, Aragorn now embodies what a King should be like, patterned on Christ.

By Jacob Mudd

WINNING, LOSING, AND CATHOLICISM

History and Religion in Irish Poetry

Catholics lose well." This observation, from my Irish literature professor, struck me when I first heard it. The idea that someone could lose well first rankled with my admittedly competitive nature, but the more I thought about it, the more the statement rang true. Our faith is based on what—at first glance—appears to be a crushing defeat, the Crucifixion, which in reality wins our salvation. It's no wonder that we see sacrifice as a wonderful and holy thing, whether that be with things as simple as Lenten sacrifices or as dramatic as martyrdom. This very spirit of self-sacrifice is continually present in Irish literature as various poets grappled with catastrophic events throughout Irish history.

One such event portrayed in religious terms is The Great Famine. From 1845 until 1853, Ireland suffered from a severe food shortage due to a devastat-ing blight. Great Britain, which occupied Ireland at the time, provided very little aid during the crisis, leaving the nation to starve. Throughout her poem "The Famine Year" (see *Figure 1*), Jane Francesca Wilde leverages the belief in a bodily resurrection at the Final Judgment to cope with the incredible tragedy that was the Great

Figure 1

The Famine Year
Lady Wilde
allpoetry.com

Weary men, what reap ye? — Golden corn for the stranger.
What sow ye? — Human corpses that wait for the avenger.
Fainting forms, hunger-stricken, what see you in the offing?
Stately ships to bear our food away, amid the stranger's scoffing.
There's a proud array of soldiers — what do they round your door?
They guard our masters' granaries from the thin hands of the poor.
Pale mothers, wherefore weeping — Would to God that we were dead;
Our children swoon before us, and we cannot give them bread.

We are wretches, famished, scorned, human tools to build your pride,
But God will yet take vengeance for the souls for whom Christ died.
Now is your hour of pleasure — bask ye in the world's caress;
But our whitening bones against ye will rise as witnesses,
From the cabins and the ditches, in their charred, uncoffin'd masses,
For the Angel of the Trumpet will know them as he passes.
A ghastly, spectral army, before the great God we'll stand,
And arraign ye as our murderers, the spoilers of our land.

Famine. The text of the poem begins with a very accusatory manner towards the imperial English on whom Lady Wilde insists on placing the blame. "Stately ships to bear our food away, amid the stranger's scoffing. / There's a proud array of soldiers—what do they round your door? / They guard our masters' granaries from the thin hands of the poor" (4-6). Wilde refuses to ignore the crimes that the English are committing by standing by as the Irish starve.

The focus of the poem shifts in the second stanza from aggressive accusations against the Protestant English occupation and towards a prediction of the Final Judgement and the resurrection of the late Catholic Irishmen. Despite the many differences between Catholics and Protestants as social groups in Ireland, thei core tenets have many similarities. The most relevant of these in this case is the belief in a bodily resurrection at the Final Judgment. Wild refers to this in the lines "Now is your hour of pleasure—bask ye in the world's caress; / But our whitening bones against ye will rise as witnesses" (11-12). Wilde explicitly leverages the English Protestant and Irish Catholic's shared hope for a bodily resurrection of the dead during the Final Judgment to proclaim that the crimes detailed in the first stanza will not go unpunished. This response vents the righteous anger and frustration that Lady Wilde and much of the Irish population experienced, but rings slightly false to true Catholic beliefs, which allow no room for delighting in vengeance or an enemy's suffering.

While Wilde's religious themes are explicitly stated, Seamus Heaney's "Requiem for the Croppies" (see Figure 2) uses similar imagery more subtly. This poem is a simple but heartbreaking account of the Battle of Vinegar Hill. Towards the end of the Rebellion of 1798, the United Irishmen

Figure 2

Requiem for The Croppies
Seamus Heaney
poetryarchive.org

The pockets of our greatcoats full of barley...
No kitchens on the run, no striking camp...
We moved quick and sudden in our own country.
The priest lay behind ditches with the tramp.
A people hardly marching... on the hike...
We found new tactics happening each day:
We'd cut through reins and rider with the pike
And stampede cattle into infantry,
Then retreat through hedges where cavalry must be thrown.
Until... on Vinegar Hill... the final conclave.
Terraced thousands died, shaking scythes at cannon.
The hillside blushed, soaked in our broken wave.
They buried us without shroud or coffin
And in August... the barley grew up out of our grave.

army, colloquially known as the Croppies for their cropped hair, experienced a crushing defeat at the hands of the British forces at Vinegar Hill. Throughout the poem, semi-religious imagery is used to create a connec-tion between the amateur Irish army and Catholic self-sacrifice. The title of the poem sets the tone, referencing the High Mass celebrated for the repose of the dead. The amateur army is further associated with the Church through the appearance of the priest amongst the soldiers.

While the early lines of the poem depict the unequal conflict as one where the United Irishmen

still have some capacity to fight back in an effective manner, the tone of the poem shifts with the line "Until, on Vinegar Hill, the final conclave" (10). Referring to their last stand as "the final conclave" solidifies the connection between the United Irishmen and the Church (10). 'Conclave' refers to a meeting of cardinals for the express purpose of selecting a new pope. This description turns the rebellion into a sacred attempt for the United Irishmen to select their own rulers that has been destroyed by the opposing British forces. Unfortunately, the attempt fails, leaving only the hope for a future resurrection of their cause.

This poem neatly identifies the goals and struggles of the United Irishmen with the Church and its struggle against sin. Like "The Famine Year", it uses this identification to transform the death of the Croppies from a crushing defeat into a sacrifice that marks the beginnings of a triumphant resurrection. Heaney describes the massacre with bloody imagery, writing that "The hillside blushed, soaked in our broken wave" (12). The amount of blood brought to mind by the grisly line is nauseating, but the word 'blushed' already begins to incorporate signs of life into their deaths. The bodies are "buried…without shroud or coffin" (13). The lack of burial rites or separation between the corpses and the ground surrounding them, combined with the saturation of the hillside with their blood, begins the metaphor of planting their corpses. The metaphor is brought to completion with the final line of the poem: "And in August the barley grew up out of the grave" (14).

The apparent defeat of the Croppies, when keeping in mind the identification with the Church and the idea of martyrdom that the early lines of the poem created, is viewed merely as a temporary setback rather than an ultimate defeat. Like Lady Wilde, Heaney uses this religious imagery to cope with society-wide trauma. This response is understandable, and even sympathetic, at face value. However, there is something improper in both of these poems about the way that the losses and sacrifices are assuaged by the promise of a just comeuppance in the form of the Final Judgment. When taken to the logical conclusion, they seem to argue that revenge and payback are Christian virtues.

Micheal Longley's poem "Ceasefire" (see *Figure 3*) seems to be aware of the tension within this poetic tradition and recasts it for his own purposes in a beautiful way. Longley's sonnet retells the meeting between Achilles and Priam in The Iliad, in which Priam begs for the body of his son. The title, "Ceasefire," places the episode in the context of the Northern Irish Troubles, a contentious period during which urban warfare took the lives of many. The ceasefires were pauses in the violence for negotiation, equally hopeful and tense. This poem, like Heaney's and Lady Wilde's, places the conflict in terms of a canonical text, in this case the *Iliad* rather than the Bible. Longley's poem shifts the focus from vengeance against the perpetrators of the crime to the idea of reconciliation.

> The only way forward... is making these impossible choices.

The two enemies are brought together by the recognition of their shared experience of grief. The "god-like" Achilles is "put in mind of his own father and moved to tears" by Priam's sadness, and the disparate men are united. Together, "their sadness filled the building," leaving no room for the animosity and hate they once felt for each other. Compare this shared experience of grief to the exclusion of all else with the expansive, fertile version of the grief in "Requiem for the Croppies" and "The Famine Year." Those poems frame grief as a motivator for further violence and conflict, as opposed to "Ceasefire," which depicts it as the reason to find another solution.

WINNING, LOSING, AND CATHOLICISM // McGLONE

Figure 3

Ceasefire

Micheal Longley

PoetryArchive.org

Put in mind of his own father and moved to tears
Achilles took him by the hand and pushed the old king
Gently away, but Priam curled up at his feet and
Wept with him until their sadness filled the building.

Taking Hector's corpse into his own hands Achilles
Made sure it was washed and, for the old king's sake,
Laid out in uniform, ready from Priam to carry
Wrapped like a present home to Troy at daybreak.

When they had eaten together, it pleased them both
To stare at each other's beauty as lovers might,
Achilles built like a god, Priam good-looking still
And full of conversation, who earlier had sighed:

'I get down on my knees and do what must be done
And kiss Achilles' hand, the killer of my son.'

While Longley's poem paints an inspirational picture of reconciliation between mortal enemies, he does not sugarcoat the difficulty of such a task. The resentment and pain that is foregrounded in Lady Wilde and Heaney's works is still present in the final couplet of the sonnet: "I get down on my knees and do what must be done / And kiss Achilles' hand, the killer of my son" (11-12). Longley, cognizant of both the poetic tradition he works from and the reality of the emotions surrounding the Troubles, cannot hide how impossible this choice seems. However, he is also aware that the only way forward, the way to reconciliation and away from further violence, is making these impossible choices based on the shared experiences of enemies.

While "The Famine Year" by Lady Wilde and "Requiem for the Croppies" by Seamus Heaney address tragedies in Irish history with satisfying and gratifying premonitions of the Final Judgment, Longley's work in "Ceasefire" engages with that same tradition in a more authentically Christian manner, ironically without Christian protagonists. Instead of using the varying religious beliefs as tools to damn those that have wronged Ireland, Longley calls for a genuine, Christian reconciliation. He calls his readers to make the more difficult choice to love their enemies, and end the cycle of violence, rather than perpetuate it through a desire for revenge. My professor's expression that opens this article—"Catholics lose well"—may have some truth to it, but the true Christian virtue at play in such an idea is not the fortitude and patience to await revenge or an enemy's well-deserved comeuppance. Instead, it is the strength needed to lay down weapons and move forward from a violent history together.

By Brigid McGlone

Future Saints
OF SETON HALL

In Our Time and For All Time, Monsignor John M. Oesterreicher

Did you know that when Seton Hall was originally founded in 1856, Elizabeth Ann Seton had not yet been canonized as a saint? She was beatified in 1963, and finally canonized by Pope Paul VI in 1975, over a century after the founding of Seton Hall. Although it would be a long time until she was officially recognized as such, Seton Hall saw something undeniably holy in her namesake. Indeed, this faith in Mother Seton is beautifully demonstrated in President's Hall. The stained glass window depicting Mother Seton (pictured here), leaves a few panes of glass in the shape of a halo around her head. The shadow of a halo waits there, as if to say "We're pretty sure we have something special here."

Seton Hall is blessed to call itself the home of many exceptional people who follow in the footsteps of our patroness in terms of their commitment to God and to others. This article on Monsignor John Oesterreicher is the first of our new series, Future Saints of Seton Hall, in which we will spotlight these notable Setonians and their contributions to our university and the rest of the world. As the Roman Pontiff is not a part of our editorial staff, we of course cannot actually canonize any of these wonderful people, but—like Setonians before us—we wish to say "We have something truly special here" and share with others the incredible stories of members of our own University community.

Enjoy the article!

Bridie McGlone, Editor-in-Chief

Have you ever wondered about the relevance of historical figures or stories in our Core classes? As college students, it's easy to doze off and think about things that seem more closely related to us, like upcoming assignments, organization meetings, social events, etc. So, when these classes dive into extensive history, it's easy to feel disconnected. What if I told you there's a unique connection between what we learn in class and our Pirate community? In our first university core class we meet *Nostra Aetate* and the Second Vatican Council. What we miss or overlook is that one of our very own Setonians was a key contributor in authoring the document.

Monsignor John M. Oesterreicher, born in 1904, achieved notoriety from his outspoken criticism of Adolf Hitler and Nazism. A resident of Austria, Monsignor Oesterreicher was exposed to the devastation of the war and was personally affected after the death of both his parents in the Holocaust. Channeling his outrage, Monsignor Oesterreicher founded *Die Erfüllung* (*The Fulfillment*), a journal which he would publish for about four years and use as a platform to advocate for Jewish people. Monsignor Oesterreicher's outspoken criticism of Hitler made him a clear target of the Third Reich, forcing him to escape shortly after Austria's annexation, also known as the Anschluss in 1938. After fleeing to Paris, he remained persistent in his advocacy efforts through weekly broadcasts.

Monsignor Oesterreicher's mission stretched beyond condemning the Nazi regime. He made an effort to bridge the gaps and foster community between Jews and Christians. As a Jewish convert to the Catholic faith, he recognized the interconnection between Judaism and Christianity. His profound understanding of both faiths allowed Monsignor Oesterreicher to recognize the urgency of addressing centuries of misunderstandings between the religions. Through lectures, his book, and journal publications,

he was able to promote appreciation for the intertwined histories between Judaism and Christianity. Soon after, his already impactful influence would flow over into the articulation of the Catholic Church's mission in the modern world.

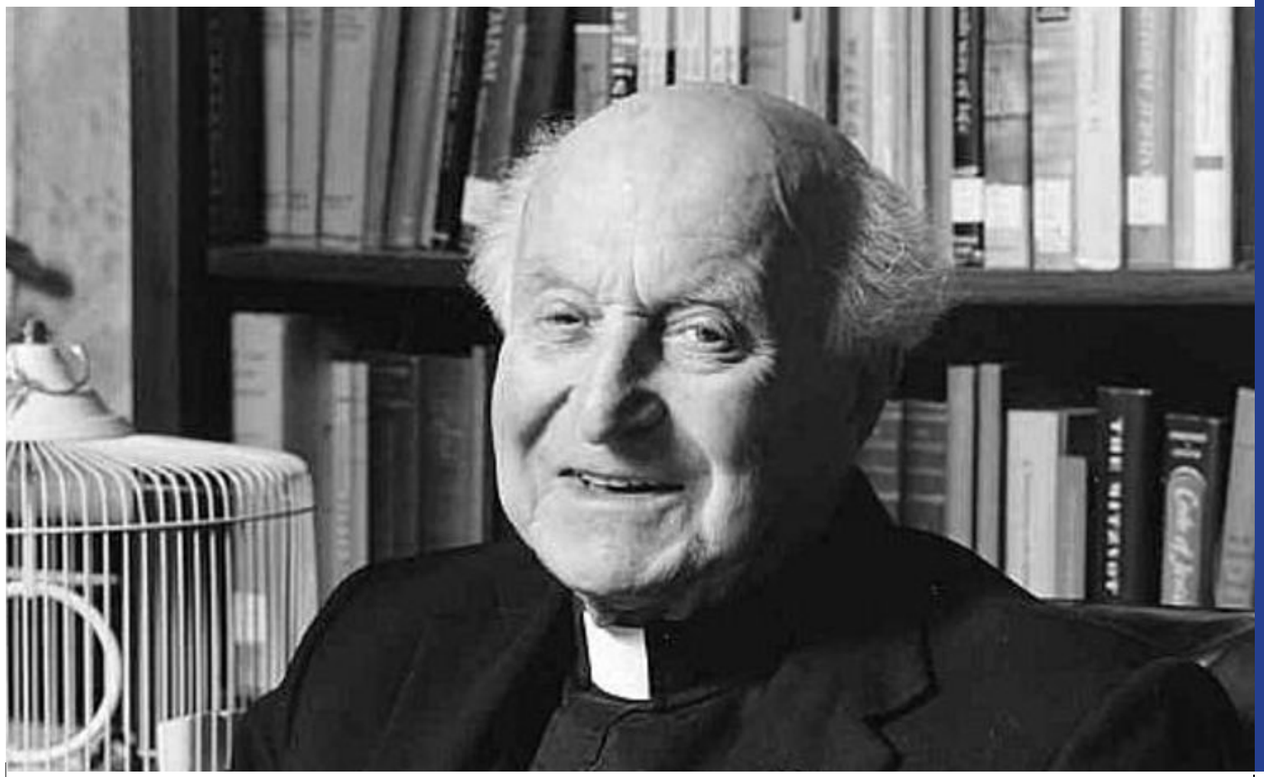
In 1959, Pope John XXIII called for the Second Vatican Council. The Pope's desire for the council was for the Church to reflect upon its mission in the modern world, through the twofold process of returning to its sources and tradition (*ressourcement*), while figuring out how to apply that to the current circumstances of life (*aggiornamento*). *Nostra Aetate*, the Council's declaration of the Church's relationship with other religions, promoted understanding and dialogue between the Catholic Church and other faiths. Monsignor Oesterreicher's passion for acknowledging Christianity's rootedness in Judaism was a central concept within this remarkable declaration. His long-time research is

what molded the foundation of positive Jewish-Christian relations found in paragraph four of *Nostra Aetate* "Statement of the Church's Bond to the Jewish People." His findings made him a leader in the reconciliation between Catholics and Jews. Perhaps chief among his contributions was the Council's rejection of holding the Jewish people as an entirety responsible for Christ's death, a false charge used to justify many atrocities against the Jewish people throughout history. Through his work at the Council, Monsignor Oesterreicher emerges as a figure of perennial influence on Catholic teaching.

This theologian of global influence also left an enduring mark on Seton Hall University. A resident here since March 1953, he founded the pioneering Judeo-Christian Studies program, a ground-breaking enterprise at the time. The graduate program is the only Judeo-Christian program offered at its level in the country, and remains a golden opportunity for students today.

Monsignor Oesterreicher's influence on Catholic-Jewish relations and his contributions to Seton Hall University are undeniable. His trailblazing work in creating the Judeo-Christian studies program, adjacent to his influence on the Second Vatican Council, demonstrates his role as a lasting influential figure globally and locally. His undeniable support for acknowledging the intricate interconnectedness between the Jewish and Catholic faiths was central in establishing how the Catholic Church thinks about and engages its elder brothers and sisters in God's call. This devoted priest of the Lord and His people returned to Him on April 18, 1993, yet Monsignor Oserterreicher's vision endures as an inheritance to us Setonians as we follow his path of promoting unity.

By Valeria Villagra



MEET THE CONTRIBUTERS

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.

Alexander Marinelli

Alexander Marinelli is a Junior Religious Studies major. After Seton Hall, he plans to enter Orthodox seminary to become a professor in Theology. Apart from his studies, Alexander enjoys bodybuilding, reading, and serving his parish, Virgin Mary & St. Pachomius Coptic Orthodox Church.

Jacob Mudd

Jacob Mudd, originally from New Jersey, is a sophomore Creative Writing and Visual and Sound Media major with a minor in English. He is a student tutor at the Writing Center and the Treasurer of the English Club here on campus, which he enjoys doing. Outside of class and work he spends a copious amount of time reading, and also does origami.

Valeria Villagra

Valeria Villagra is a freshman Law and Diplomacy major from Somerville, New Jersey. Val is involved with the Undergraduate Diplomacy Student Association, the Association of Latino Professionals for America, Pre-Law Student Association, and the *Heart of the Hall*! In her free time, Val enjoys hanging out with friends and spending days at the beach.

Connor Neuhaus

Connor Neuhaus is a new contributing photographer and senior marketing student born and raised in New Jersey. Beyond the classroom, Connor is the Vice President of the Independent Music Society (IMS) and can be seen in the chapel, campus ministry lounge, at the gym or hanging out with friends. In his free time, Connor enjoys hiking, photography, and volunteering in his community.

Victoria Ferrisi

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

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"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 Catholisim's truth and beauty"

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