

St. Louis College Ministry

Keeping you Connected to the Fam



HALT & Put it Down!

Yes, yes, the “Balance Check List” is making its third appearance in row! You know why? Because I like it. It’s helpful to me and hopefully it’s helpful to you as well!

Let me share another practice that has also been very helpful to me.

I was working on my Balance Check List a couple of months ago and realized that I was not getting as much sleep as I needed. Getting enough sleep is essential in taking care of your body which God asks of us: *“Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body” (1 Cor 6:19-20)*. Part of the problem was that I would “go to bed”, but would either stay up watching shows on Netflix or scroll through my Facebook feed. Technology itself is not an evil, but once I realized that it was negatively impacting my sleep habits, I made a rule for myself that I would not use technology in my bed, meaning no cell phone and no laptop.

Sticking to this rule had many positive affects on my life– I definitely got more sleep and I found myself reading and praying more in order to wind down. I also found that I was mentally and emotionally healthier after removing some of

Balance Check List

- _____ Enough Sleep
- _____ Eating healthily
- _____ Exercising 3-4 times a week
- _____ Leisure & Rest
- _____ Studying Enough for Classes
- _____ Time to Pray & Attend Mass
- _____ Time for Fun & Friends
- _____ Service to Community

Hello from the CYM Office!

As we get closer and closer to Thanksgiving, I wanted to share how thankful I am for all of YOU! I have enjoyed keeping in touch with many of you and hearing about the exciting things taking place in your lives. I appreciate the honesty with which you ask for prayers and share some of the struggles you face at school. It is very inspiring. I am proud of you!

This newsletter is intended to help you prep for some future events– enjoy!

-God Bless! St. Louis College Ministry

the negative influences that I would receive from the shows and social media.

I highly, highly recommend giving this a try. Especially for college students living in a dorm, your bed can become your study space, your hang out space, your dumping ground for laundry. Your bed and sleep can lose some of its “sacredness” or “set apartness”. Abstaining from technology in your bed should help you get better sleep, keep you from viewing anything harmful before sleeping, and help to keep your texting conversations more appropriate and drama free! Which brings me to HALT....

HALT is a self-care acronym for “Hungry”, “Angry”, “Lonely”, and “Tired”. I like to add an “S” for “Stressed.” The concept is such: whenever you find yourself about to explode and react poorly to a situation, HALT and ask, “Am I hungry, angry, lonely, tired, or stressed?” If the answer is “yes”, then you need to take a step back from the situation and reassess (maybe even postpone) your response.

I bring this up in reference to texting in bed because often, when you’re laying in bed, you can answer “yes” to the HALTS question. This means you are in a particularly vulnerable state when it comes to texting. I have noticed from my own experience that people are more likely to get into regrettable conversations– getting upset with a classmate from a group project who has been slacking, fighting with a significant other because they’re out at a party and you feel insecure, reaching out to a person of the opposite sex because you’re lonely and you know that person will give you attention. In *Proverbs 21:23*, we read *“He who guards his mouth and his tongue keeps himself from trouble.”* Consider HALT-ing and putting away the technology, at least for bed time!

Introducing our next Habitat for Humanity Retreat Leaders!

Brittany Fontana

Hi everyone! My name is Brittany Fontana and I am a sophomore at James Madison University. I'm so



excited to be one of the co-student leaders for college ministry's Habitat for Humanity trip!! This is a perfect start to summer break: have the most fun with other college students, help as many people as you can, and grow in your personal relationship with our Lord. I have previously been on 4 work camp retreats with St. Louis and there is a reason I keep returning. As if participating every summer isn't enough, my experience with Habitat has led me to be involved with JMU's Habitat for Humanity Club. I never would have imagined that building walls, nailing floors, painting ceilings, tiling, cutting wood, or demolition would be such an enjoyable and fulfilling experience for me. The reason behind this work and Habitat for Humanity's purpose is why I have a passion for saying yes to God and this particular organization every summer. Their mission statement is "seeking to put God's love into action, Habitat for Humanity brings people together to build homes, communities, and hope." Every human life deserves a decent place to live. Putting our faith into action is so necessary because Scripture tells us, "What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him?" (James 2:14). God calls us to be the light and hope for our brothers and sisters, relieve

them of their cross and we can do that by giving them a place to call home. If you've never been on a work camp with Habitat for Humanity or have never swung a hammer, believe me it is okay! AmeriCorps and Habitat volunteers are trained to teach us how to do our daily jobs on the site. Just come with a heart ready to serve! I invite you to seriously consider this opportunity and pray if this is how the Lord is calling you to spend one week of your summer. Don't forget to free up your calendar May 23-28!

Stephanie Wellen



was doing when Katie Erskine messaged me on Facebook multiple times, doing all she could to convince me to go. With a 'meh, why not' attitude I drove up to Delaware where everyone was, and sat in my car deliberating about going inside. I think you all know the feeling that I'm talking about. I took a gulp and walked inside; I recognized a couple of faces, also seeing a lot of strangers. I thought to myself, I guess this'll be ok. UNDERSTATEMENT OF THE YEAR. In five days those 'familiar faces' and 'strangers' became family. Honestly. We went from laughing hysterically to talking deeply to building houses to worshipping together. It was incredible—I didn't know such a bond could exist between such different people

in so little time. The things you learn about yourself, others, and God—honestly, it was probably one of the best weeks of my life. I know a lot of articles like this have been written about similar sorts of retreats, but trust me this is one that you don't want to miss. The immediate friendships, the relationship growth with Jesus, the overall joy and laughter—it's crazy, and it's contagious. I read the Bible now. I go to church a heck of a lot more; it was like it kickstarted my faith. And I honestly think that I've carried some of that joy into every place I've been since—Clemson, home, church, etc. That sounds cheesy, and I guess you won't know for sure if it's worth it to go unless you go, but I absolutely wholeheartedly recommend you taking that leap of faith. Just trust me on this one. What's there to lose? If you have ANY questions at all, shoot me a Facebook message.



Join Brittany & Stephanie at
College Habitat for Humanity
May 23-28!
Registrations in March

“Merciful like the Father”- The Jubilee of Mercy begins on December 8!

“Jesus of Nazareth, by his words, his actions, and his entire person reveals the mercy of God.” (Dei Verbum 4)

Exciting news- Pope Francis has declared the upcoming year, the “Jubilee Year of Mercy”. You may remember this being mentioned in the September newsletter or maybe you’ve heard it at Mass. The Church is going to dedicate an *entire year* to contemplating and sharing the mercy of God.

I believe our Church is in dire need of this Year of Mercy. Speaking personally, it can be so difficult for me to trust in God’s mercy towards me when I feel like I’m messing up a lot. I know that I could be more merciful and forgiving towards others who have wronged me and I know that I could reach out in service, or *works of mercy*, for those that are in material or spiritual need.

Speaking for what I witness in the world, I think there are many other people who struggle with trusting in God’s mercy. There are even entire groups of people who feel like God, or maybe just the Catholic Church, withholds mercy from them. I see a need among some of us in the congregation to recall the importance of serving our neighbors.

Yes, the Year of Mercy could be very good for us, if we embrace it! But “contemplating and sharing the mercy of God” seems a little abstract, right? Well, to help you out, let’s make mercy a **SPORT**.

S– Saints

“Our prayer also extends to the saints and blessed ones who made divine mercy their mission in life.” (MV* 24) Just hearing some of the stories about the lives of the saints can inspire me and re-spark my faith. This year, focus on learning about some “saints of mercy”. The World Youth Day pilgrimage is being held in Poland, so why not focus on three mega-saints of Poland who lived lives of mercy: St. Faustina Kowalska, St. Maximilian Kolbe, and Saint Pope John Paul II.

P– Pilgrimage

“The practice of pilgrimage has a special place in the Holy Year, because it represents the journey each of us makes in this life” (MV 14). A pilgrimage is a spiritual journey and there are two main ways to participate in a pilgrimage this year: 1) Pay attention to what is taking place during World Youth Day, Poland (end of July 2016). There will also be local celebrations in the United States you can attend. 2) Go on a pilgrimage in the Archdiocese of Baltimore. There are going to be 7 “doors of mercy” designated throughout the diocese to represent THE Door of Mercy, the Church. Every person, Catholic or not, is encouraged to pilgrimage to these door sites and recall the fact that the Door of Mercy to God is open for everyone. I hope to lead a pilgrimage for the young adults this summer.

O– Opening Doors

“Now the Bride of Christ wishes to use the medicine of mercy rather than taking up the arms of severity... The Catholic Church... wants to show herself a loving mother to all; patient, kind, moved the compassion and goodness towards her separated children.” (Saint Pope John XXIII) Let’s be real. Many doors have been shut when it comes to the Church’s relationship with the rest of the world. There are entire groups of people who feel ostracized and kept away from the Church and from God. It’s time to open those doors, extend the hand of mercy, tell our separated brothers and sisters “This is your Church, because God is your God.” Think of someone you know who is in need or healing in his or her relationship with the Church and God. Open the door of mercy to him or her.

R– Reconciliation

“Pardoning offences becomes the clearest expression of merciful love...” (MV 9) and during the Year of Mercy, I encourage you to frequent the Sacrament of Confession, ask forgiveness more frequently, and to strive to forgive those who have wronged you.

T– Tangible Works

“...the mercy of God is not an abstract idea, but a concrete reality with which he reveals his love as of that of a father or a mother...” (MV 6). This year, I invite you to join me in striving to incorporate more “works of mercy”- tangible, visible, and experienced- into my life. A full Christian life cannot go without works! See the side bar for ideas.

Consider this list of the works of mercy. Where do you see them practiced in your life? In the Church? Do you have a particular passion for any of the works of mercy? Perhaps that is a good place to start if you are looking to incorporate them into your life more.

Corporal Works of Mercy

- To feed the hungry;
- To give drink to the thirsty;
- To clothe the naked;
- To home the homeless;
- To visit the sick;
- To ransom the captive;
- To bury the dead.

Spiritual Works of Mercy

- To instruct the ignorant;
- To counsel the doubtful;
- To admonish sinners;
- To bear wrongs patiently;
- To forgive offences willingly;
- To comfort the afflicted;
- To pray for the living and the dead.

*MV stands for *Misericordiae Vultus*, roughly translated (by Katie) to “the face of mercy” or “mercy looks”. It is the name of the document Pope Francis wrote announcing the Year of Mercy.

YOUR PARISH IS PRAYING FOR YOU!

Our CYM Office:

Pat Sprankle
Maggie Fischer
Katie Erskine
Marie Denissen

Office Contact Information:

Phone: 410-531-6668
Website: stlouisparrish.org/cym
Katie Erskine's Email (College Minister):

SAVE THE DATES!

- **1st Sunday of the Month, 7-8:30pm**– Praise & Work in Rooms 301 & 302 of the Social Hall
- **December 20**– College BRUCNHES Service to the Homeless & College Christmas Party
- December 21– Registrations Due for College Day Retreat
- **January 6**– College Day Retreat
- **May 23-28**– College Habitat for Humanity

Looking Ahead!!

- ◆ Advent starts on November 29th (so soon!!). Keep an eye out for weekly advent emails from College Ministry.
- ◆ There are several activities for college students taking place over Winter Break. **Follow the instructions on the right to sign up for College Texts.** You'll receive NO MORE than one a week with event reminders over break.
- ◆ The "Be Not Afraid" College Day retreat is January 6! We hope you will join us! Please register by December 21. There is a minimum of 10 retreatants.
- ◆ Also, random, if you need to get a job at home over Christmas break, now is the time to start landing that down (remember, the high school students are your competition)!

BLESSED ARE THE POOR

I've been reflecting a lot upon poverty over the last several weeks. In this past weekend's Gospel, Mark 12:38-44, Jesus praises the woman who gave two coins, her entire livelihood, from her poverty. Four times in the Gospels (probably more), the Lord invites people to follow Him and the invitation always seems to correspond with a call of poverty: Calling the First Disciples- "...they left their boat and their father and followed [Jesus]" (Mt 4:22), Calling Matthew- "and leaving everything behind, he got up and followed him" (Luke 5:28); The Rich Man- "Go, sell what you have...and follow me" (Mark 10:21), Zacchaeus meets Jesus- "Behold, half of my possessions, Lord, I shall give to the poor..." (Luke 19:8). Looking at the Acts of the Apostles, it is evident that the early Christian community embraced poverty in order to take care of one another: "they would sell their property and possessions and divide them among all according to each one's need" (Acts 2:45), "There was no needy person among them, for those who owned property or houses would sell them..." (Acts 4:34). Ananias and Sapphira actually die for withholding part of their fortune (Acts 5:1-11).

Contemplating poverty is almost humorous to me because I am so, SO far removed from any experience worthy of being called poverty. However, I have been trying to embrace this Scriptural call and think of some baby steps I can make in that direction. My first step is with the holidays.

Inspired by Thanksgiving, I'm practicing the good ole attitude of gratitude. Often in my prayer journal, I make a list of 10 things I am grateful for and I am trying to do this more often.

Inspired by Christmas, I am only asking for things for Christmas that I "need" or would at least end up buying for myself if no one else did.

Like I said, baby, baby steps! I am encouraged to do this for Jesus himself said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven," (Mt 5:3) to remind us that every time we make an act of poverty, we are acknowledging our dependence on Him. With love, Katie

College Ministry
Texts

- 1) Find your class
- 2) Text the corresponding code!

Class of 2016

Class of 2017

Class of 2018

Class of 2019

Opt out at any time
by texting
"Unsubscribe [your
code]".

