

# The Prophet...the voice of the students

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## WORLD YOUTH DAY • PANAMA

*By Elissa Sainthil*

World Youth Day was hosted by Panama this year. It is an event that happens every four years. This event included many special guests, including Pope Francis. A handful of SJB students and teachers went down there along with the Diocese of Rockville Center. Of the attendees, I interviewed Ms. Luhman and Allison Martens. When asked, they happily told me of their experiences.

### 1. Was it your first time in Panama? What was different between the U.S. and there?

**Mrs. Luhman:** “It was my first time going to Panama and really I thought it was a great city. I thought that Panama and the United States actually have a lot in common. The area that we stayed in was a very modern part of the city with skyscrapers and very good public transportation, but Panama has some impoverished areas, as well as impoverished communities. That’s much like the United States. We have our areas that have a lot of prosperity and are very comfortable. They’re usually away from areas that are suffering from poverty. So just like the United States, Panama kind of fits that model. One thing that really stood out to me about Panama is its hospitality. The Panamanians welcomed us. They were smiling. They didn’t show that they minded we caused traffic jams from our massive numbers or that they closed streets for us. They didn’t harbor any animosity [towards] us whatsoever. They were only welcoming. That really made the trip.”

### 2. What did you do each day? Did you have a routine?

**Allison:** “We did have a routine. We participated in World Youth Day from Wednesday to Sunday. We landed early in the morning, so that day we really had to ourselves. Wednesday through Friday we would be up to breakfast by 7 AM, and leave for catechesis with the bishops and archbishops from all around the world who spoke English; the first day we had one from Australia, the second day one from the US, and on the third day one from Nigeria. That would finish around 12, and we would be back to the hotel around one. To get to and from these sessions, we would take the subway, buses, walk, or a combination of those options. Our pilgrim packs, backpacks that had some things provided to us by the organizers, included unlimited metro passes which made getting around easier. Still, even with those passes we walked four to ten miles a day! On those days after returning to the hotel we would have an hour or two before setting out on another trek, normally to a youth event. One day it was stations of the cross: another day it was a youth concert and adoration. On Saturday, we had to be out of the hotel by 6 to walk to 6:30 morning mass. We walked back to the hotel for breakfast, and then, around 9AM, we started our trek for the campout. On our way there we got what felt like a twenty pound bag of nonperishable food and had to walk probably another three miles in the heat with it. We finally got to the airfield and set up our camp of tarps and sleeping bags. Dinner was from that bag



of nonperishable food, and I chose the canned tuna over the canned meat. We had another mass with the pope that night before there was a recitation of the rosary, in Spanish, of course. While this was happening, though, a GIANT spider crawled across my backpack, and we all SCREAMED. I had to ask the kid sleeping next to me to kill it. Despite that experience, I slept pretty well until I was awoken before 6 in the morning. That morning we had mass with the Pope, and that was when he announced the next World Youth day would be in Portugal! We had already left the campsite at that point, right after receiving the Eucharist, in hopes of beating some of the rush, but we were still stuck shoulder to shoulder walking in the ninety degree heat, sweaty and smelly. Once we finally got back to the hotel I fell asleep fast in my bed. The next two days we did touristy activities, such as touring the Old City in Panama, taking a boat tour of the rainforest, and of course, seeing the Panama Canal!”

3. What was it like being so close to the Pope? Allison: “It was so cool being that close to the Pope. Our group was extremely lucky to have gotten to the site early where the Pope was passing. I only had one person in front of me who was pressed up against the barricade at the time. Once we got to our spots, we stood there for about an hour and a half to two hours before he past us. You could feel the anticipation in the air especially in the minutes before the Pope came; there were helicopters circling, live coverage on the TV screens near each section, there were even a few false alarms beforehand when everyone would push towards the barriers thinking that the Pope was coming. As he drove by everyone started screaming and cheering, everyone would



always chant, “Uds. son los jóvenes de tu Papa” which would roughly translate to “We are the youth of the Pope.” The Pope had amazing security; there had to be at least ten cars that preceded his arrival. After he drove by, everyone was riding high; some went running to follow him as he rounded the corner just to see him for a few more seconds. I couldn’t help but smile for the minutes after he passed, but I couldn’t really put a finger on why. I didn’t”

### Stories Food

**Allison:** “The food there was amazing! I mean, of course, you had your normal fast food places, McDonalds, Domino’s, etc., but the local food was so good. On the first day we got authentic food for lunch. We got this huge plate of rice and beans with beef and a side salad, and it

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## WORLD YOUTH DAY CONTINUED

as only \$4. I was so hungry yet I wasn't even able to finish that plate. That night we went to an authentic Panamanian restaurant, and I got this really good fish, and normally I'm not a fish person, but it was so good. It was so fresh, and in the sauce you could taste the lime and the cilantro. I also got lemonade to drink but was confused when it came out looking like iced tea. It turns out that the lemonade is made with cane sugar, which gives it the darker color. Also, even at normal American restaurants there were differences. For example, at Domino's when you ordered the cinnastix, they didn't come with icing, they came with a dulce de leche a caramelish sauce that was actually quite good and not too sweet. Also, flan was a very prevalent dessert there, and at the first restaurant, it was served with cherry ice cream."

### Monkey

**Allison:** While we were on the rainforest boat tour, one of the main appeals of the tour was seeing the monkeys. Our guides would hold up snack for the monkeys in order to entice them towards us. We got really lucky when one jumped on the top of our boat and was running across the canvas on the top to get to the food. He stuck his head down first and looked at us before he jumped down to take the fruit out of our guide's hands. After this, the monkey jumped to the boat next to ours, and I have to say I was a little sad because he was a really cute capuchin monkey. Little did I know that, within a few moments, the monkey would be back within a few feet of me, hanging on one of the poles that held up the canvas roof. He was so cute and only a few arm lengths away from me. The people in the row behind me had an apple, and they began biting off pieces to feed to him. Our guide had warned us, though, to not show our teeth or smile at the monkey as they might take it as an aggressive move, and I don't think anyone wanted to get into a fight with that monkey. It was so cool, and I couldn't stop smiling about it the entire boat ride home.

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## MR. GRASSO, INSIGHTS ON A HISTORY TEACHER

*by Emilie Chiofalo*

Mr. Grasso is a beloved teacher who has been at St. John the Baptist for twenty-five years! He has always loved politics and enjoys every aspect of studying history. Mr. Grasso has taught many courses at St. John's in the past, including Global I, Global II, Global II Honors, US History Regents, US History Honors, Civil Law, Economics and Sociology. Currently, Mr. Grasso teaches AP United States History, Urban Studies, Public Policy, and AP Economics. Mr. Grasso has said that "fate" is what led him to his job as a teacher at



St. John's. In addition to being a teacher at St. John's Mr. Grasso is also the head of the National Honor Society (NHS). NHS is an organization that provides service to the school and community. The National Honor Society organizes an annual celebration for Teacher Appreciation Day; this year the theme of the day was High Afternoon Tea. NHS members provided a meal that corresponded to the theme for the teachers and taught their classes for the day. This is a day to acknowledge all that teachers do and give them a time to relax and enjoy. The St. John the Baptist community is very grateful for all that Mr. Grasso has done for the school.



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## SUPER BOWL PREDICTIONS

*by Dylan Rizzuto*



The divisional round of Super Bowl LIII will be starting off in the AFC conference with the Kansas City Chiefs and the Indianapolis Colts and I have a feeling that the Kansas City Chiefs will advance to the AFC championship. The next game involving the AFC conference is the Los Angeles Chargers and the New England Patriots. With New England being one of the best offenses in the league I have a strong feeling that Tom Brady will take his team to the AFC championship and take on Patrick Mahomes and his team. Now let's go to the other side on the NFC conference, which will start us off with the Dallas Cowboys and the Los Angeles Rams and sorry to say for those Ram fans out there, but I feel like there is a possibility that the Rams will choke and Dallas will advance to the NFC championship. Last but not least, we have the New Orleans Saints and the Philadelphia Eagles. With New Orleans having one of the best offenses and Philadelphia just barely beating Chicago, I have a strong feeling that the New Orleans Saints will advance to the NFC championship. Now we have the AFC and NFC championship. Let's start off with New England Patriots and the Kansas City Chiefs. Both of them have an outstanding offense, but Tom Brady is one of the greatest. I'm going to have to go with New England. Next we have the NFC championship with the Dallas Cowboys and the New Orleans Saints. With Dallas not really having a good defense they wouldn't make it to the Super Bowl, and Drew Brees is one of the best quarterbacks in the league. Dallas wouldn't last against New Orleans. So, New Orleans would advance towards the Super Bowl with New England. I have a strong feeling that we'll be seeing the New Orleans Saints compete with the New England Patriots in Super Bowl LIII. Tom Brady will go against Drew Brees. Both of these quarterbacks are great. This will be a great competition, but the person holding this year's Lombardi trophy will be Drew Brees. Yes, your winner of Super Bowl LIII will be the New Orleans Saints. Unfortunately, the Saints lost the game to a really obvious pass interference call. So we saw the Los Angeles Rams in the Super Bowl with New England Patriots. The Super Bowl was really exciting during the first half because the Rams were really good on defense and from the looks of it New England Patriots were struggling. But as always New England started gaining yards and got 10 points in the 2nd half and took the lead to win the Super Bowl Game.

### CONGRATS

to the NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS on their sixth ring.



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## LIFE IN THE STUDIO

by Rae Hill

When I first came to SJB, I didn't know many people. One way I expanded my connections and interests was through the SJB Media News Net-



work. I found the opportunity to bond with other students and I learned about the technology in our school. After being a part of Media Club for a few weeks, I was invited to join TV Studio. I walked into the studio, and in the blink of an eye, it came to life. Father Rob greeted us and stood in front of the camera, then Christian picked up the microphone and Eddie followed. From the cameras to the screens, and the microphones to our ears, it was a delicate but calm process. As quickly as it had started, the process was over, and I had learned that so much more went into going live every morning than simply, "Good morning, St. John's!"

Within the SJB Media News Network, a process goes into learning about each component. When new members have yet to learn about an aspect of the studio, they are trained by experienced club members, who are typically the upperclassmen. A few months are spent training in each area, allowing Studio members to expand their knowledge further than just one part of the Media News Network. My experience in the SJB Media News Network has taught me about the diverse concepts that go into newspaper, photography, the TV Studio, and more. Media Club is a fun learning experience that I recommend to anyone who wants to take part.

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## THE BACKGROUND OF STAGE CREW

by Elina McAteer

My name is Elina, and I am the senior production assistant for the Spring Musical. Stage crew is a branch of the musical held every year here at SJB. I have been involved in stage crew for the past two years now. We do much more than just move the sets on and off stage. As a stage crew member, we are responsible for building of the sets, knowing the cues for each scene, and the break down, and clean up when the process is all said and done. Stage crew has a combination of responsibilities in the Musical. One thing is that we do is build and create the sets the way the director sees fit for the show. This year, we showed our production of Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*. Each scene of the show has a different setting. First thing a stage crew member would do is sort the script into sections based on each setting. For example, when we were inside the Beast's castle, we needed to create his castle. In my few years of working with stage crew, this was one of the most ambitious sets I've ever built. This process took a long time to complete. We began construction on the castle, or as we called it, the bridge, during February break. We had to create a blueprint on which we based the bridge. For each scene, we broke it up into smaller parts to be created by individual groups. Everyone should join stage crew and we hope to see you involved in the Spring Musical next year! We hope you enjoyed Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*!

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## MARCH FOR LIFE

by Fernando Gomez

In 1973, The extremely controversial case of *Roe V. Wade* went through The United States Supreme Court. The outcome of this was the legalization of abortions in the United States. Every year since 1974, the first anniversary of the decision, people have protested the outcome of this case in defense for the rights of the unborn. What started as a group of no more than twenty people progressed steadily into what we now know as the March for Life. This year a group of our faculty and students went down to Washington, DC, for the annual march. Some went the day before for an overnight experience and others went the day of the march for a day trip. One student described the March as "an experience like no other. It's not a protest, like the ones shown on TV. It's a peaceful protest full of love and kind people. Going with some close friends really enhanced the experience of it as well." At the march, the students and faculty got to visit the National Mall to join in with the other protesters from around the country. They also had the opportunity to hear speeches and performances that represented the purpose of the "March for Life."



## **The Holidays of Spring**

By  
Natalie Martusciello

Compared to the seasonal excitement that lasts throughout the beginning of the school year - with the celebration of Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day - the second half of the year seems only to drag on with a limited amount of fun. However, there are several holidays at the end of the winter and the beginning of the spring that are often disregarded but actually contain rich culture and history. The first is St. Valentine's Day.

Although St. Valentine's Day has become heavily commercialized in our modern world, the holiday has ancient roots that date back to the Roman festival of Lupercalia, held in mid- February. The festival celebrated the coming of spring and included fertility rites and the pairing of women with men by lottery. Some historians believe that this tradition has influenced the current version of St. Valentine's Day that we are familiar with. It was originally a feast day in the Catholic religion that memorialized the martyrdom of two Roman priests named Valentine. The fact that not much is known about the martyrs had not hindered the wild imagination of the public, and several legends have surfaced regarding the history of a single Saint Valentine over the years. Some believe that he performed weddings for soldiers who were forbidden to marry because of the Roman emperor edict that decreed married soldiers poor warriors. He wore a ring with Cupid on it that allowed soldiers to recognize him and handed out paper hearts to remind Christians of their love of God. St. Valentine has become the patron saint of love as a result.

Another holiday rooted in Catholicism is St. Patrick's Day. Although Saint Patrick was born in Scotland or Wales around 370 C.E., he is the patron saint of Ireland. His birth name was Maewyn, and he was the son of a Roman Briton named Calpurnius. He was kidnapped and brought to Ireland as a slave when was only sixteen years old. There, he began to have religious dreams and visions, one of which showed him how to escape captivity. He later returned to Ireland after having escaped and spread Christianity upon his arrival. Similar to that of Saint Valentine, many people have attempted to piece together the story of Saint Patrick with fabricated and elaborate myths. For example, he is said to have driven the snakes out of Ireland. However, this legend is historically inaccurate and most likely represents the early Pagan faiths of Ireland that he metaphorically banished from the nation through his missionary work. He is also known to have used the shamrock to explain the Holy Trinity. St. Patrick's Day is celebrated in the spirit of Irish patriotism on March 17, the day on which he is believed to have died.

As members of the a Catholic school community, most of us are familiar with the origins of Easter, arguably the most important holiday of the Christian faith, on which we remember the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. When we were little, we probably opened baskets from the Easter Bunny and decorated eggs with our family. Though, are we aware of how such festivities came to be? Some sources indicate that Easter Bunny can trace its origins back to German immigrants who brought with them to America their tradition of an egg-laying hare called "Osterhase" or "Oschter Haws." Their children made nests in which the creature would lay its colored eggs, a practice that led to the modern-day Easter basket. Easter is the second best-selling holiday for candy in America today, after Halloween. The chocolate eggs that are associated with the holiday date back to early nineteenth century Europe, and they symbolize new life and Jesus's resurrection. Jellybeans are another egg-shaped candy that became associated with Easter in the 1930's. These are just some of the Catholic traditions associated with Easter.

**HAPPY EASTER!**