



SUMMER WITH THE SISTERS

HOPE STUDENTS ON PRAYING AND SERVING OTHERS IN CHICAGO

Hope students Rachel Tishkoff and Rebecca Cilluffo spent part of the past summer in Chicago's West Humbolt Park, serving the needy alongside the Franciscans of the Eucharist. Both sophomores from Michigan, Rachel is studying Early Childhood Education and Spanish and Rebecca is studying Social Work. Here is what they had to say about their experience.

Why did you decide to spend the summer with the Franciscan sisters in Chicago?

Rachel Tishkoff: I had been looking for opportunities to do service, receive the sacraments more regularly, and meet some cool Catholics. This program had everything I was looking for!

Rebecca Cilluffo: I didn't know anyone else before going to Chicago. God was definitely guiding my heart and mind to learn more about this opportunity and eventually do it. Additionally, as a new social work major, I thought that this opportunity would help me to discern whether or not I wanted to continue pursuing social work.

What were your expectations for the summer?

RC: Honestly, I expected the "Catholic sister stereotype"—to be living with a bunch of older, strict nuns who spent all of their time praying. However,

there were seven sisters and they were all relatively young. They were very open and wanted to get to know us. I don't think that my expectations could have been any further from the reality.

What role has this experience played in your faith journey? How have you grown?

RT: I gained a greater appreciation for regular celebration of the sacraments. Beginning each day with Mass provided me with the spiritual and physical energy that I needed in order to give one hundred percent to God and his work each day. This experience has increased my trust in God and encouraged me to be more obedient to him. It has prepared me to be open, or at least try to be open to whatever he has planned. It reminded me that if I let him, God will take me to where he wants me to be.

Would you tell other Hope students about this program with the Sisters?

RC: I loved this experience and I would recommend it to anyone with an open heart and mind. This experience also isn't just working. On the weekends, I went to the Taste of Chicago, the Museum of Science and Industry, a Chicago White Sox game, and did quite a bit of shopping with the other volunteers. In other words, we were able to go to the city. We also

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MINISTRY UPDATE

WITH FR. NICHOLAS MONCO, O.P.
CHAPLAIN, SAINT BENEDICT INSTITUTE



Who knew that my work at Hope College would be so...caffeinated? Hope students are serious about their coffee and are keeping afloat a substantial number of local bean-based establishments. The secret to meeting students, I quickly discovered, is to offer them a cup of coffee. I am now in the running for customer of the month at no less than two coffeehouses and have gotten to know many wonderful students in the process.

Fostering strong friendships between students is a key aspect of my work. The love that is friendship has been eclipsed in modern times by romantic love. And yet in the history of philosophy and theology friendship did not always play second fiddle. One of my great hopes for my chaplain ministry is that out of their friendships with each other students will help each other grow closer to Christ. To that end I started two prayer groups, one for men and one for women, which meet weekly and where we cultivate habits of prayer and Christian friendship.

At the heart of Catholic life and worship are the sacraments. Daily Mass is currently being offered in the Bultman Student Center chapel each day at noon. On Tuesday evenings a second Mass is offered followed by an hour of adoration and confession. Confession is offered every weekday and it has been heartwarming to see many people make use of the sacrament. Hearing confessions is one of the great privileges of a priest, who is given a chance to touch the deepest recesses of the heart and provide counsel, encouragement and, most importantly, God's mercy.

My world at Hope College also encompasses

a large ecumenical dimension. Real ecumenism is centered around a shared pursuit and love of the truth. It acknowledges the real differences that exist and also the good that we hold in common. My colleagues in Hope's Campus Ministry have gone above and beyond to make me feel welcome on campus. I am in a reading group with two of Hope's chaplains and Rev. Dr. Trygve Johnson, Dean of the Chapel, and I have also become friends through chess and conversation on Friday afternoons. Our shared desire to know Jesus Christ, love Him, and make Him known to others is the foundation of my ecumenical ministry at Hope College.

The future is unknown to us mortals, but I hope that the work we have just begun will continue to bear more fruit day by day. The renewal of Catholic life at Hope College is a beautiful and exciting work.

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played a soccer game and went to get gelato with some of the sisters, which were both so much fun.

RT: Religious sisters have incredible lives so you will have opportunities you won't have anywhere else and you will learn a lot about yourself. You'll get to know God better and have unique opportunities to serve others and share his love. You'll also receive his love in completely unexpected ways. You'll most likely get more out of it than you give.

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