

Saint Francis

University Magazine

College Life in the COVID Era

INSIDE:

Catholic Roots
Sprout New Growth

Mindfulness
and Wellness

Alumni Making
a Difference



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

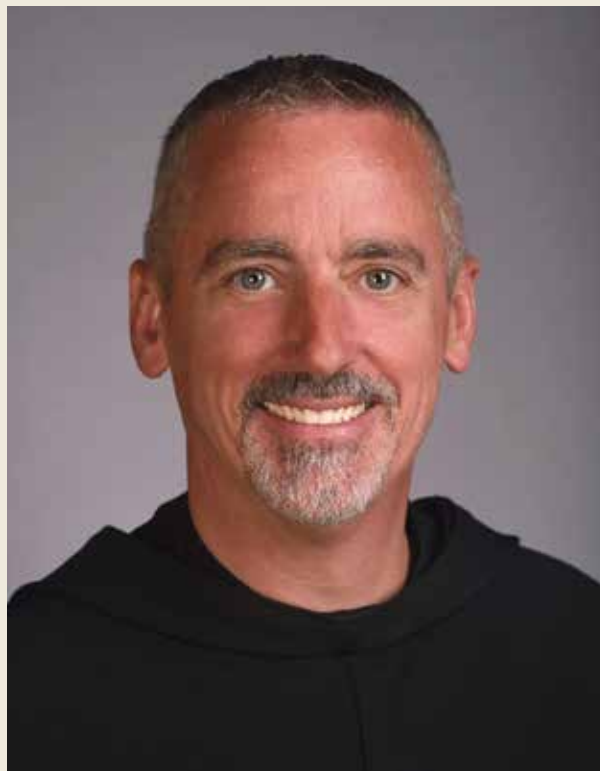
So much has happened since our last issue of the University magazine. Our involuntary last day of “face-to-face” class in the spring was Friday the thirteenth of March when Pennsylvania stay-at-home orders took effect. It was unnerving and eerie to see our campus empty out in the middle of a semester. However, the friars and I “kept the home fires burning” as we live-streamed Mass from Sacred Heart Friary chapel.

Our University community resolved to stay prayerfully and intellectually united during a very uncertain time. Our faculty were amazing (no surprise, of course!) They pivoted on a moment’s notice to a virtual learning format without compromising on academic quality. The academic and athletic staff were motivators and supporters for our students as they rose to the challenge of on-line learning in the midst of a pandemic. Our students successfully completed the spring semester. During the second half of the semester, as we lived virtual lives, we found ourselves with renewed appreciation for the traditional, on-campus, face-to-face experience of learning on our Loretto campus.

During the dark early days of the pandemic, which were filled with uncertainty, I broadcast messages of hope and encouragement to our students, employees, and the alumni family. (Some friars termed them “Fireside Chats,” as the backdrop was the fireplace in the living room of Sacred Heart Friary.) I exhorted people to stay faith-filled and prayerful, to use the time to evaluate one’s priorities. When our American way of life was jolted out of normalcy, the Lord certainly got our attention.

For our physical campus, June 1 was the turning point. Thanks to an order from Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf, the University welcomed home a cohort of Physician Assistant Sciences students. Seeing students walk up the East Gate hill onto the campus was a welcome sight! It gave great hope. Life could return to campus once again. We were blessed to safely educate hundreds of students on campus in the summer of 2020, at a time when many competitor schools were not. Kudos to our students, faculty, and staff for their pioneering work of safely teaching and learning in a face-to-face setting during a pandemic. They paved the way for a safe return of the on-campus community this past August.

Resilience is defined as the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, tragedy, or significant sources of stress. The University is no stranger to adversity in its 173-year



history: fires, World War II, changing demographics, etc. The resilience of the Saint Francis University community was and still is evident: countless displays of flexibility, magnanimity, kindness, and being one’s best self through a very uncertain time. This resilience was undergirded by the prayers of our faith-filled community. Saint Paul is perhaps the epitome of resilience. His encouragement to Christians at Corinth captured it for me in March and April:

We are afflicted in every way, but not constrained; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our body.

(1 Cor 4:8-10)

I continue to be impressed each day by the resolve of our faculty and staff. They bring hope to those despairing, light to those in darkness, and peace to those who are unsettled. They lead by example, putting the One True God first in their lives, so our students may do the same.

Thank you for your support and resiliency in these trying times. United by bonds of faith and love, we truly are all in it together. May the Lord bless you and give you His peace.

Sincerely,

Very Rev. Malachi Van Tassell, T.O.R., Ph.D.
President

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On the cover: Emily Weaver, an Occupational Therapy major slated to graduate in 2022, participated as the server in the Mass of the Holy Spirit. This Mass opens every academic school year. She is from Latrobe, Pa. and participates in Campus Ministry, Cheerleading, and Greek Life (Theta Phi Alpha).

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ADDRESS CHANGES & FLASHBACK SUBMISSION

Office of Alumni Engagement
Saint Francis University
PO Box 600
Loretto, PA 15940
E-mail: sfu-alumni-office@francis.edu
Phone: 814-472-3015

EDITORIAL/PRODUCTION TEAM

ROBERT CRUSCIEL '86
Vice President for Advancement

ERIC HORELL '13, '17 /
Director of Alumni Engagement

ERIN MCCLOSKEY '05 /
Vice President for Communications
and Marketing

MARIE YOUNG / Lead Editor

JOAN KOESTER / Designer

KNEPPER PRESS / Printing

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College Life in the COVID Era

STORY BY / Marie Young, Lead Editor

Yes, 2020 has been a year like no other. We started on campus; then it all went virtual and now things are a creative mix as this rollercoaster of a year continues.

As we began the spring semester of 2020 in January, no one could have imagined that by March there would be a physical exodus from the campus per the Governor's order. Nor did anyone foresee that students would be completing their

courses entirely online, and that the Class of 2020 wouldn't walk across the stage during Commencement in May. Yet Saint Francis University is resilient.

Fast-forward to the fall semester and campus life is still far from normal. In-person classes are taking place again with masks as a required fashion statement. College life has become "socially distanced" with lots of "Zooming" instead of gathering and the start of fall sports has

been postponed conference-wide. Yet Saint Francis University is resilient.

Despite everything that has happened in 2020, a spirit of resiliency has defined the University community. From moving the entire University completely online within a week, to spending months developing and refining safe return protocols: Saint Francis University is committed to fulfilling its mission to provide a transformative educational experience for the students.

Through the Lens of COVID-19 (2020 in photos)

Words can only go so far in telling the story of resiliency that our community demonstrated and continues to demonstrate throughout this pandemic. From dorm rooms to virtual classrooms, the unique thread that defines the compassion and commitment of Saint Francis University wove us together. These photos showcase the best of 2020 at Saint Francis University. You may also find inspiration in the “Stories of Resilience” featured on our website (francis.edu/stories-of-resilience/).



Page 2 and above: Mountain fresh air has been a God-send, supporting both hammock relaxation time and spiritual Communion.

Top right: Fr. Stephen Waruszewski T.O.R., campus minister, learns the elbow bump greeting from Frankie Friar.

Bottom right: Some things are just better in-person such as the canine behavioral training course offered through the psychology program.





Zoom, Zoom, and more Zoom: In early 2020, creativity abounded as college life moved online. When Joe Gatto, star of Impractical Jokers, crashed a nursing Zoom class (photos 1-3) in April, he told the graduates to make a mask with a big smile when they graduate....and they did just



that. Although the summer Spanish in Costa Rica course was a no-go in terms of physical travel, the program host Centro Panamericano de Idiomas set up online classes which included virtual tours and cooking lessons (photo 4) for our students. Making it to "Nationals" is a big deal for the Enactus Team, the SFU chapter of the international small business club (photo 5). Usually it means traveling to a host city to compete in

a dynamic presentation in front of a huge crowd. This year's participants took their virtual Zoom/Powerpoint competition in stride to earn a semi-final finish and a Leadership Award for excellence in social media. Hunter Longenecker, a sophomore Marketing/MIS major and SFU Enactus VP of Marketing, was a national finalist for "Marketing Leader of the Year."



Supporting Healthcare Needs:

In the early days of the pandemic, face masks and shields were in short supply for healthcare workers. Since April 28, a volunteer team (photo 6) that represented faculty, staff, and students from every academic school worked together to design, assemble, and distribute several hundred 3-D printed face shields to local medical staff. The didactic year Physician Assistant students (photo 7) were the first cohort of health science-related majors permitted to resume in-person classes. They returned to campus in June to complete the semester using in-person instruction and labs when the Pennsylvania Department of Education granted



permission for any program leading to licensure of healthcare providers under the medical or osteopathic licensure boards or similar entities in other jurisdictions to resume in-person coursework. Upperclassmen from the other health science disciplines returned shortly after. The entire student body returned in August.



The pandemic has brought mental and financial stresses on top of the health risks. Student and employee groups are using everything from small acts of kindness to more encompassing mental health and safety campaigns. Alumni have been extremely generous in helping to meet financial gaps for students.





Campus life now includes masks and quarantine pauses for exposed students, yet resuming (as much as safely possible) the in-person transformational student experience has been a top priority following the easing of Pennsylvania's "stay-at-home" orders in June.



Called to New York COVID-19 Hotspot

SFU Alumnus spends early days of outbreak
volunteering in a hard-hit Bronx neighborhood



COVID-19 Testing: For 21 days Bill Martyak volunteered at a testing center in a hard-hit Bronx community.

STORY BY / Eric Horell '13, '17,
Director of Alumni Engagement

When his wife Joanna asked him what concerned him the most about going to New York City to work on the frontlines of the novel coronavirus outbreak, alumnus Bill Martyak worried about catching the virus himself, or his family contracting it while he was away, but there was a more immediate concern on his mind.

“Parking,” he says. “While packing the car I was thinking about where in the world I was going to park in the city.”

That problem never materialized. Bill drove straight into Manhattan without issue and parked his car on 7th Avenue, right outside the hotel he would call home for four weeks. The normally bustling New York City was now a ghost town.

“The first few days I had to do all this training with New York City Health and Hospitals,” recalls Bill, “and then I had a free night, so I walked to Times Square. Everything was lit up like it always is, but it was just me and maybe a dozen police officers. I’d go to Central Park on Sundays, my off day, and I’d go for a jog and not see a single person. That was pretty surreal. Those moments put what was happening in perspective.”

A 2000 physician assistant graduate, Bill was in New York City via a temporary staffing agency tasked with gathering as many medical professionals as possible to serve as reinforcements for the city’s overwhelmed hospitals and their depleted staff at the onset of the pandemic. At first it was something Bill never considered.

“I didn’t know it was available,” he says. At the start of the outbreak Bill went from seeing over twenty patients per day to only two to four at the New Paris Rural Health Clinic where he worked as the state rolled out stay-at-home restrictions. Even with a smaller patient load, he was aware that he could become exposed. Because testing was limited, and there was a four to five day turnaround for results; he was living in the basement of his home to avoid potentially exposing his family to the virus. Then he

"I'm blessed to have my family. If I didn't have my family's support, or my community's support, I couldn't do any of this."

— Bill Martyak '00

saw posts on social media from fellow health care workers about the need for medical assistance in New York City, at that time the largest hotspot in the nation.

"I was living in the basement and not seeing my family anyway, and I was only seeing a handful of patients each day, so why not go and do some good somewhere else if the opportunity is available?"

Bill pitched the idea to his boss, Dr. Henry Shoenthal, who supported him. "By forgoing my salary while I was away, that would free up some money to help keep people paid through the lockdown," explains Bill. "My thought was to give the office a break, help people who really need it, and get smart on the process of pandemic response with firsthand experience in case it ever reaches home."

As for his family, they supported Bill from the start.

"I'm blessed to have my family. I have four kids, three of whom are teenagers and can help my wife out around the house and care for our five-year-old son. There were mixed emotions. They were sad to see me go, but proud of me at the same time. My wife said, 'I know you have a desire to do this, and you're no stranger to this sort of thing.'"

This is an understatement considering Bill's past medical missions.

Bill served in the Pennsylvania Army National Guard as a medical officer, which took him on a tour of Iraq serving as a physician assistant, and then down to New Orleans in the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

"Those helped prepare me for my New York stint, but they were also different as well," explains Bill. "With Hurricane Katrina, you knew what the circumstances were. Even with the chaos, you knew what the people needed. Combat situation, same thing: chaotic, but there are processes and techniques and whatnot that you're ready for. You adapt and overcome."

"New York was similar but, personally, much more frightening. This novel virus, you couldn't answer questions about it. Patients would ask us questions all day long—'What's going to happen? Do I need this? Will I be immune?'—and you can't answer them, which makes it scary for both the patient and provider."

When the temporary staffing agency called to tell him he had been chosen, they said he had two days to report to New York City,

so Bill packed his car and drove into a deserted Manhattan. After a couple days of training he was sent to his assignment.

He was to work at the Gotham Health Morrisania Medical Clinic, located in an underserved section of the Bronx. At the time it was one of the hardest hit places in the entire city; over half of the clinic's staff had been sent home due to testing positive or exposure to the virus, and demand for healthcare was at an all-time high.

A tent had been set up outside of the clinic in a parking lot where medical professionals, Bill among them, would evaluate patients for COVID-19 and assess their need for emergent care.

"We would get up early in the morning, and by the time we had everything clean and setup, we would start seeing people at 8:00 a.m.," Bill recalls. "Every morning when we arrived a line several blocks long would be there waiting for us. We tried to rush as fast as possible to see all these folks, but you can only go so fast."

The weather changed radically while Bill was there from mid-April to mid-May. "It snowed the first few days while I was there, and they had to bring in heaters for the tent. By the end it was so hot that they had to bring in air conditioners. And PPE [personal protective equipment] is not made by Under Armour; it doesn't have moisture-wicking technology. And people waited for hours in this, no matter whether it was snow, rain, or sun."

"I saw about 200 people per day, doing nasal swabs from sun up to sun down, for four weeks. When I was coming in I was told that 50% of people who were tested would turn out

to be positive. As my data came in, I was seeing about 80% positive tests."

The medical director told Bill that the area he was going into was 50% Spanish speaking, "but after one hour on my first day I think the percentage was way higher than that," Bill recounts with a laugh. "And I had no Spanish-speaking ability whatsoever, but by the end I could take an entire medical history and complete an entire physical in Spanish. I personally think that is one of the more incredible things that happened. It's a steep learning curve, but you learn quickly. In the evenings, I'd sit in my hotel room and practice my Spanish on Babble (a language learning app)."

Practicing Spanish helped keep Bill's mind off the mandated iso-



Family Support: Martyak is shown here with his wife, Joanna, and their children Laura, Nina, Jude, and Pete.



lation in the evenings. “If you weren’t at work or traveling to work, you were isolated in your room. We couldn’t hang out in the lobby with each other. Facetime with family and friends became super important, but of course it wasn’t the same.”

Despite the resulting loneliness, Bill found his spirits lifted daily by the thankful city.

“The people were so appreciative. The 7:00 p.m. appreciation of essential workers where New Yorkers would cheer and clap and blow horns, that was a real thing that was really quite nice. The folks we tested were extremely appreciative. The clinic staff couldn’t be happier to have us on board, which also helped.

“But the people I worked with at the clinic, the other folks like myself who came from around the country...we meshed so well together. Just being together, working together, was in itself a way to stay positive. We became such a great team so quickly, and by the end, as folks went home, you were sad to see them go because we did work so closely together, but there were always more good people coming in to replace them. You would hope that if something terrible happened here, back home, that people would come to help, so it was great to step back and think, ‘Wow, a lot of

“The 7:00 p.m. appreciation of essential workers where New Yorkers would cheer and clap and blow horns, that was a real thing that was really quite nice.”

— Bill Martyak '00



Eerie silence: The high-energy bustle of Manhattan and other parts of New York City vanished in March as the virus spread through the population, forcing schools and businesses into a mandatory lock-down period.

people stepped up when they were needed.’ It was incredible to be a part of that.”

Eventually it came time for Bill to head home himself. He never tested positive for the virus while in New York, and was tested just before leaving, but “there was always the chance I picked it up in my last twelve hours in the city, and the last thing you want to do is bring it back home to your friends, family, and the community.” So Bill quarantined again for another two weeks. “It was extremely difficult being home but not home. You wanna say, ‘I feel fine, I’m good to go home,’ but you have to be smart, so I stayed offsite in a hotel-type of accommodation. I used Facetime, texts, social media, and whatever else I could to stay in touch with everyone. Whatever the family ate back at the house, they dropped me off a plate.”

In total Bill was away from his family for over six weeks. But if the need arose, would he do it again?

“In a minute,” he answers. “If numbers were high here, then I’d stay. I’d have to see if my boss would grant me another leave of absence. But if the opportunity was right, I’d do it again. I think



a lot of folks from around the country would do it again. It was a very positive experience.

“But I couldn’t do any of this without my wife and kids and their support,” Bill concludes. “I’m blessed to have my family. If I didn’t have my family’s support, or my community’s support, I couldn’t do any of this. Local support drives it.

“Everyone is isolated right now, but we are also very together at the same time.”

► francis.edu/stories-of-resilience

Sticking It Out Together

SFU alumna and family provide shelter for international students stranded due to coronavirus

STORY BY / Rachel (Vasilko) Heckman '13

Romina Cutipa-Chacon was mid-way through the spring semester of her sophomore year when, in mid-March, she was told that Saint Francis University was sending students home to finish their classes remotely.

She bought a plane ticket home to Peru, and was eager to get back to her family. But, as the coronavirus continued to take hold across the globe, Peru closed its borders one day before her scheduled flight.

Similarly, senior Laura Gutierrez-Gomez, an SFU international student from Colombia, was also unable to catch a flight back home. She, and her sister, Camila, who had come to see Laura graduate this spring, had no way to get back to their family.

Stranded in the United States in the middle of a global pandemic, the three girls were taken in by the family of their former Saint Francis University women's tennis teammate and friend, Stephanie Miller.

Stephanie graduated from SFU in 2019 with a degree in International Human Rights and Spanish. Well before her



Laura graduation: Although SFU senior Laura Gutierrez-Gomez missed her graduation ceremony in May due to the coronavirus pandemic, her sister Camila, along with Stephanie Miller '19 and Romina Cutipa-Chacon '22 still managed to make her graduation day special.

graduation, she had accepted her assignment with the United States Peace Corps. In June 2019 she relocated to Costa Rica where she stayed with a host family in

Miramar. In March, as the coronavirus continued to spread, she was evacuated against her wishes and returned to her family's home in Houston, Texas.

Despite the distance between them following Stephanie's graduation, Stephanie had always maintained a close friendship with her former teammates. During their time at Saint Francis together, the girls would spend breaks with each other and their families — Stephanie visiting Laura's family in Colombia and Laura staying with the Millers in the United States. In March, when Laura and Romina reached out looking for somewhere to stay, the Millers undoubtedly offered up their home.

"There was never any question that we would take them in. How could we not?" said Michael Miller, Stephanie's father. "Everything I learned in a Catholic K-12 educational environment suggests that we need to help those in need. This was a pretty easy way to step in and provide comfort to three girls in need and their parents. We were happy to do it. I like to think we were putting into practice everything that Saint Francis espoused during his lifetime."

For nearly two months, from mid-March through mid-May, the girls had all been taking refuge in the Miller's home. They

"We were happy to do it. I like to think we were putting into practice everything that Saint Francis espoused during his lifetime."

— Michael Miller



Last Day Together: On May 14th the group celebrated its last night together before Laura Gutierrez-Gomez '20, and her sister Camila, finally returned home to Colombia.

kept themselves busy around the house — exercising each morning, doing homework together, and helping with some small improvement projects were some of the ways they had been passing the time.

“The first weekend we were here, we painted my bedroom,” said Stephanie. “Then we all repainted the fence in the backyard.”

Romina, Laura, and Stephanie also cooked some of their favorite Peruvian, Colombian, and Costa Rican recipes to share with the Millers at mealtimes.

“Romina made shrimp ceviche,” Laura said. “It was so good!”

Even after Texas reopened, the girls, still unable to get home, continued to hunker

down as they tried to make plans for the remainder of the summer.

Romina, a double major in marketing and accounting, started her junior year at Saint Francis in the fall. Toward the end of May, she is hoping to return to the northeast to do a repeat of last summer’s internship at a tennis club in Connecticut.

Laura, who graduated this May with a degree in marketing and management, has plans to attend Quincy University in Illinois this fall. She has been accepted as a graduate assistant coach for the men’s and women’s tennis teams there.

Although she and her sister bought a plane ticket home for a flight in June, the flight was quickly cancelled. However,

soon after, they were granted humanitarian permission to return to Colombia and were put on a May 15 flight to Bogota.

During such a difficult time, the Millers have enjoyed the company of their guests immensely, and the girls have been so thankful to have a safe place to live out the quarantine.

“It’s kind of bittersweet. We’ve grown kind of used to each other,” Michael said. “But we’re super happy that they’re able to get home, and even happier for their parents.”

“[Throughout this quarantine] they all have been true examples of the kind of students that Saint Francis produces,” he added.

The Saint Francis University Mindfulness and Wellness Initiative

Even before Coronavirus came onto the scene, members of SFU's Student Government Association were thinking about the mental wellness of their fellow students. SGA President Randee McGee and Vice-President Alex Kiepert were seeking ways to help students cope with stress so they could perform at their best.

At the same time the Director of Residence Life, Don Miles, and Res Life Coordinator, Alex Rivers, had become increasingly aware of the high levels of stress and hardship students at SFU were facing, particularly after the loss of three students to tragedy in mid-2019. They wanted to provide students with resources which would improve their health and well-being and give them greater emotional resiliency.

These two paths came together in the Fall of 2019 to become the Saint Francis University Mindfulness and Wellness Initiative.

Soon after, others joined the Initiative including the SFU Athletics department, the Counseling Center, the DiSepio Institute for Rural Health and Wellness, Campus Ministry and the Fine Arts department. This task force/initiative was the perfect foundation for what would be needed to guide students through the emotional impacts of COVID-19.

Their planning began in early 2020 with the idea of sponsoring face-to-face mental wellness events including yoga on the mall, a running group, diverse fitness classes and meditation. As campus life was forced online in March, the team turned to virtual activities and outlets for students to implement healthy lifestyle behaviors for the mind, body, and spirit. Some examples included online holistic wellness workshops and meditation sessions, virtual painting and music lessons, and streaming prayer and praise events throughout the week.

Starting Centered: SFU resident assistants and orientation counselors took a brief break from preparing for the arrival of new students on campus in August to learn about mindfulness and contemplative prayer in the Mount Assisi Gardens.





Practicing Mindfulness:

Mindfulness can be linked to the Biblical concept of “to be.” Psalm 64:10 states, “*Be still* and know that I am God.” Mindfulness helps us to be still, to become aware of our thoughts and our bodies and how the two are linked. And, in these moments of stillness, mindfulness can help us hear God speaking to us.

What is Mindfulness?

STORY BY / Nicol Epple, SFU Instructor and task force advisory member

Since the pandemic began, all we seem to do is stare at screens all day long. It's easy to feel disconnected from everyone, even from our selves. “Mindfulness” is a way of reconnecting with our bodies and the physical world around us.

In 2014, *Time* magazine’s cover story proclaimed that the Mindfulness Revolution had begun in the United States. Today, Google, Microsoft, Nike, and many other mega-companies offer mindfulness practices to employees throughout the work day. Mindfulness

is said to boost productivity and help workers cope with stress. However, its benefits are more wide and far-reaching; mindfulness can benefit anyone.

Although mindfulness continues to grow in popularity in today’s culture, the practice of mindfulness is actually thousands of years old. Mindfulness can be linked to the Biblical concept of “to be.” Psalm 64:10 states, “*Be still* and know that I am God.” Mindfulness helps us to be still, to become aware of our thoughts and our bodies and how the two are linked. And, in these moments of stillness, mindfulness can help us hear God speaking to us.

The Benefit of Mindfulness

There are many benefits which come from learning mindfulness practices. Four of the most important benefits include:

Mindfulness Lowers Stress: When we are stressed, this stress locates itself in our body. We may experience increased heart rate, shallow breathing, and aches and pains. By using mindfulness practices, we can make ourselves aware of how stress is affecting our body and then release the stress.

Mindfulness Sharpens Focus: We can use mindfulness to eliminate distractions and give us clarity. Mindfulness practices can help us to find answers to problems by giving us time to think clearly and carefully.

Mindfulness Expands Empathy: As we practice mindfulness, we learn to cultivate a spirit of openness, receptivity, and compassion. Mindfulness makes us aware of others.

Mindfulness Improves Well-Being: When we engage in mindfulness, we are able to reconnect with what matters most in life. This can bring us more joy and satisfaction.

Practicing Mindfulness

How is mindfulness practiced? Mindfulness is simply a mental approach of “being aware.” This can be done anywhere. While interested people will want to seek out a mindfulness workshop or holistic health coach, a great way to start learning about mindfulness is to try it in the comfort of your own home.

Step 1: Find a comfortable, quiet place to sit. Turn off your phone. You may want to close your eyes or keep them open with a soft gaze.

Step 2: Take several deep breaths and focus on your body. Feel yourself in the present moment.

Step 3: Take notice of what is going on both internally and externally around you. Start by noticing any sensations within your body. Feel the areas where you feel strong and grounded, but also be aware of areas where you may be sore or stressed. You want to simply acknowledge how your body feels and gain a greater awareness of what is present. This step is about becoming more fully aware of yourself in the moment, being non-judgmental, and showing yourself loving kindness.

Step 4: While thoughts about your work day or your past or im-

mediate concerns may come to mind as you sit, let those thoughts pass and re-focus on yourself in the present moment.

Step 5: Having come more fully into an awareness of how your body is feeling internally, shift your attention to your external surroundings. What sounds do you hear? What can you smell? Feel yourself within your space. Open your eyes and notice what is within your sight. What do you see that you have not seen before? Focus on yourself as being within this space.

Step 6: Then, come back to your breathing. Breath in and out, slowly. Feel the parameters of your body, your skin, and the space you are in. Mindfulness is about being, not doing. Acknowledge yourself in that moment in time and space. And just be.

What mindfulness does is help us to live in the present moment. Although mindfulness is a secular practice, it can be a spiritual one. Consider the following scripture: Jesus tells us, “Truly I say to you, unless you change and *become* like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew NIV). Children live in the present. They are not weighted down with the regrets of yesterday and the worries of tomorrow. They live and play in the present, and that is why they have peace. And that is what mindfulness can help bring us: Peace and an awareness of ourselves and our place within God’s world. When we practice mindfulness, we are helped to be whom God wants us to be.

These are just some of the basics of mindfulness practice. Anyone can benefit from using these techniques. More importantly, teaching mindfulness is just one part of a much larger effort by Saint Francis University to improve the health, well-being, and lives of its students, faculty, and staff in these challenging times. Miles states, “One of the main goals of the initiative is to teach students about holistic health and offer opportunities to practice. This builds resiliency. If we can increase students’ knowledge and experience of self-care, we can better prepare them to face not only the challenges of their present circumstances, but also to have more happy, productive lives and careers.”

► **For more information visit: Mindful.org or the Center for Contemplation and Action, [Richard Rohr, cac.org/](http://RichardRohr.cac.org/)**

***About the Author:** Nicol Epple, a Certified Natural Health Professional, Doctor of Naturopathy, and Leadership Coach conducted virtual holistic wellness workshops this Spring on the SFU Wellness Initiative Facebook Group. Epple is passionate about bringing mindfulness to everyone: “Mindfulness connects us with ourselves, with God, with others. As we become aware of our own presence, we become aware of how we are meant to serve others.” In her series of workshops, Epple taught participants different mindfulness practices and movements. These techniques included breathing, stretching, journaling, meditating, and praying.*




Third Order Regular of Saint Francis of Assisi
Province of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus

Ordination to the Priesthood

July 11, 2020



Pictured above from left to right: Fr. Stephen M. Waruszewski, T.O.R., Fr. Matthew Simons, T.O.R., Fr. Zachary Burns '12, T.O.R., Most Rev. Bishop Mark Bartchak, Fr. Rufino Corona, T.O.R. and Fr. Daniel M. Klimek, T.O.R.



On July 11, 2020 the DeGol Arena in the Maurice Stokes Athletic Center transformed into what Most Rev. Bishop Mark Bartchak affectionately nicknamed “The Red Flash Basilica.” On that day Bishop Bartchak of the Altoona-Diocese presided as five friars of the The Third Order Regular Franciscans, Province of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus were ordained to the priesthood. As with all gatherings of scale, Coronavirus restrictions called for a change of location to accommodate the crowd, and the Stokes Center stood ready to host the magnitude of this sacred ceremony.

► You may view photos and video of the day here:
<http://www.franciscanstor.org/ordination2020/>

Catholic Roots Support New Growth

Creating Alta Via (an intentionally Catholic college community at SFU)

STORY BY / Marie Young, Lead Editor

Every generation of Saint Francis graduates have carried the Catholic Franciscan values of their alma mater beyond the borders of Loretto. The incoming Class of 2024 is going to be no exception, although six members of this class will hold the special distinction of being the “inaugural cohort” of a new immersive faith experience.

ALTA VIA (THE HIGHWAY)

Alta Via is an intentionally Catholic college community at Saint Francis University designed for students who want to deepen their faith. Founded this year, Alta Via is a highly selective program open to prospective students seeking to pursue their own faith journey with like-minded peers.

This first cohort of students began to build fellowship from the moment they arrived on campus. Living as a community, the inaugural group are participating in routine prayer and devotion, along with engaging in liturgical services and community engagement

activities carefully crafted to support personal faith development.

Although they are pursuing different majors, on the academic front, they will progress through four specially designed sequential “FRAN” courses together, contemplating the transcendental values of Beauty, Goodness, Truth, and Unity. This sequential nature of the program is why the recruitment process is restricted to incoming students.

The idea behind the program is two-fold. First, it is to support an intentionally personal faith journey that allows each participant to deepen their individual relationship with God. Second, the Alta Via program also establishes a cohort of youth to serve as stewards of our Catholic Franciscan mission.

“Helping students to live the gospel humanizes the mission and culture of Catholic institutions. Our goal is to profoundly affect the student’s spiritual journey and as leaders, we must provide students vibrant opportunities to spread the good word of the Lord,” shares program director Fr. James Puglis, T.O.R. in talking about why Alta Via is important.

► francis.edu/AltaVia

The Franciscan Presence on Campus

One of the fundamental joys of life on campus is daily encounters with T.O.R. Franciscans teaching a class, ministering to students, or simply strolling across campus. This Franciscan presence is the underpinning of both the spiritual and academic journey of a Saint Francis student.

For the 2020-2021 academic year, University President Fr. Malachi Van Tassell, T.O.R., Ph.D., has welcomed several new friars to campus roles, and is thrilled to share that many familiar friars are still serving the community. Friars are embedded in important campus work including in the classroom, in faith development, community outreach and athletics.



Bro. Gabriel Amato, T.O.R. —
Director Dorothy Day Outreach Center
Fr. Christopher Dobson, T.O.R. —
Coordinator of Liturgy
Fr. Joseph Chanler, T.O.R. —
Adjunct Professor Mathematics
Bro. Marius Strom, T.O.R. —
Engineering Lab Assistant
Fr. James Puglis, T.O.R. —
Alta Via & Campus Minister
Rev. Stephen Waruszewski, T.O.R. —
Campus Minister
Rev. Matthew Simons, T.O.R. —
Director of Campus Ministry
Bro. Dennis Synder, T.O.R. —
Adjunct Education Faculty
Fr. Terence Henry, T.O.R. —
Adjunct History Faculty
Bro. Shamus McGrenra, T.O.R. —
Int'l Students Advisor
Fr. Peter Lyons, T.O.R. —
Theologian in Residence
Fr. Jason Wooleyhan, T.O.R. —
Student Engagement
Fr. Daniel Sinisi, T.O.R. —
Athletics Chaplain



2020-2021 Inaugural Cohort

Maria Ferraro

of Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, Trinity High School

Tyler Kozy

of McKees Rocks, Pennsylvania, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart

Anna Parrish

of Latrobe, Pennsylvania, homeschooled

Elena Pontzius

of Zelienople, Pennsylvania, Seneca Valley High School

Ellie Wanner

of Volant, Pennsylvania, Kennedy Catholic High School

Gabriel Vangura

of Gibsonia, Pennsylvania, Aquinas Academy



Recommend a Future Alta Via Student

We are seeking recommendations from alumni, principals, active parish participants, and community leaders for students who would be a good fit for the Alta Via the 2021-2022 program. Referrals and requests for more information may be completed at www.francis.edu/AltaVia. Participating students will receive a scholarship in addition to other institutional financial assistance.

The Joyful Legacy of Sister Thea Bowman

“She challenged her church to accept her as ‘fully black and fully Catholic.’”

— www.sistertheabowman.com

The charitable, activist work of Servant of God Dorothy Day is respected throughout the Saint Francis University community with many members prayerfully supporting the cause for her Canonization. Not as familiar to the community is the story of another remarkable Catholic woman on the path to Sainthood whose legacy has also shaped our students. That woman is Sister Thea Bowman.

The granddaughter of slaves, she was the only African American member of the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration when she took her vows in the 1950s, yet she transcended racism to leave a lasting mark on U.S. Catholic life in the late 20th century. As a result of her impact, the U.S. bishops endorsed a sainthood cause for her during their fall assembly in Baltimore in 2018.

“She lovingly taught young people about the joy of being Christian, she challenged her church to accept her as ‘fully black and fully Catholic,’” according to www.sistertheabowman.com, the website that serves as the home base to further her cause.

Born December 29, 1937, in Yazoo City, Mississippi, Thea was reared as a Protestant until at age nine when she asked her bewildered parents if she could become a Catholic. At age 15, she joined the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration by entering St. Rose Convent in LaCrosse, Wis. She pursued education with a passion and eventually received a doctorate of English literature and linguistics from Catholic University of America.

Gifted with a brilliant mind, beautiful voice and a dynamic personality, Sister Thea shared the message of God’s love through her teaching career. After 16 years of teaching, at the elementary, secondary and university level, the Bishop of Jackson, Mississippi, invited her to become the consultant for intercultural awareness.

In her role as consultant Sister Thea, an African American, gave presentations across the country; lively gatherings that combined singing, gospel preaching, prayer and storytelling. Her programs were directed to break down racial and cultural barriers. She encouraged people to communicate with one another so that they could understand other cultures and races.



Photo courtesy of Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, fspa.org

THE SISTER THEA BOWMAN, SAINT FRANCIS UNIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIP PARTNERSHIP

In 2000, Saint Francis entered into a scholarship program partnership with The Sister Thea Bowman Black Catholic Foundation that was designed to “awaken a hope in black Catholic students who have been conditioned by poverty.” Since 2000, ten Saint Francis students have received the multi-year scholarship funded through both partners, according to Lynne Banks, Associate Dean of Students, who sits on the foundation’s Board of Directors. In addition to the financial support, Saint Francis provides mentorship for the Thea Bowman Scholars on campus.

Editor’s note: In an upcoming issue of Saint Francis University Magazine, we will share more about the life of Sister Thea and her legacy’s impact on our alumni who have received her scholarship.

On Race and Equality



A message from Father Malachi Van Tassell, T.O.R. Ph.D.

As promoters of Franciscan values, we strive to model right behavior in our world. Change begins with conversation and with listening. The Saint Francis University community should be the model for treating others the way you want to be treated and for loving one's neighbor as one's self.

One of my faculty colleagues offered the following reflection: In this time of Black Lives Matter and COVID-19, learning what it means to be human and how to be humane—the lessons taught in a liberal arts education—are more important than ever. If we do not address the most recent public events in a direct and honest way—engaging critical thinking and positive discourse learned through reading, writing, and respectful discussion—we, as an institution, will not survive the changes our society is experiencing.

With the seventh year of my Presidency at Saint Francis well underway, I've already seen how the Franciscan and Catholic mission has helped us weather financial difficulty, is sheltering us through a pandemic, and now will help to crush the evil of systemic racism. We have an opportunity to be who we are as people of faith, who love one another as God loves them, and who rise above strife and incivility to showcase Franciscan values to the university community and the world at large.

I look forward to continued thoughtful and deliberate conversation, and the implementation of meaningful change. May we always be mindful of the role of this Catholic and Franciscan university: to be models of civility in public discourse; to deepen our knowledge and be rooted in fact; to engage in healthy discussion and debate; to speak and act always with respect for others.

In the words of Saint Francis of Assisi, let us begin again, for up until now, we have done little or nothing. May the Lord bless us and give us His peace.

COMMITTEE ON RACE AND EQUALITY

The following members of our Saint Francis University community have accepted Fr. Malachi's invitation to serve:

CO-CHAIRS

Lynne Banks, Associate Dean of Students/Title IX Coordinator

Rev. Peter Lyons, T.O.R., Theologian in Residence / Adjunct Professor, Religious Studies

Dr. Arthur Remillard, Professor of Religious Studies

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Cpt. Eric Allen, Chief of Police

Dr. Mark Buckwalter, Assistant Professor, Sociology/Criminal Justice

Dr. Denise Damico, Associate Professor/Department Chair, History and Political Science

Cecelia Garza, Admissions Counselor

Kei-shon Graham, Black Student Union Representative

Dr. Qin He, Assistant Professor, Engineering

Dr. Amy Hudkins, Assistant Professor, Occupational Therapy

Randee McGee, Student Government Association Representative

Bishop Neal, Assistant Coach, Football

Shaun Russell '15, Alumni Representative

Monica Shedlock, Human Resource Employment & Development Specialist

Eric Taylor, Assistant Coach, Men's Basketball

Dr. Norbert Youmbi, Associate Professor, Mathematics

What it Means to Become that Someone

Inspirational examples of service in action

STORY BY / Dr. Pat Farabaugh

April 6, 2020, marked the fiftieth anniversary of the death of Saint Francis basketball legend Maurice Stokes and the University conducted a number of virtual events in his memory.

Stokes' story is well-chronicled within the University community, as is his relationship with friend and professional teammate Jack Twyman, who "became that someone" for Maurice. I published a book about the two men's story in 2014. The National Basketball Association has presented the Twyman-Stokes Teammate-of-the-Year Award annually to a deserving honoree since 2013, and national news outlets have shared the remarkable story, or parts of it, dating back to well before Stokes' death in 1970.

Their story is special and inspirational to those within the University community, as well as to those beyond the Saint Francis family. It is a story that we celebrate proudly here in Loretto and, in this fiftieth anniversary year of Maurice's death, we should continue retelling this story of perseverance and selflessness. There remains a lot to be learned from these two remarkable men.

We should also try to "become that someone" for others, as Jack did for Maurice. Not surprisingly – given the quality of the people who have walked "among the pines" through the years – stories of SFU students and alumni who have selflessly served others are not hard to find. Here are a couple of stories on two members of the Saint Francis family who have "become that someone."



New Orleans Pelicans guard Jrue Holiday was named the 2019-20 Twyman-Stokes Teammate-of-the-Year Award winner in October. The winner is chosen by the league's players. Holiday becomes the eighth player to earn the award.

Becoming that Someone ... in Haiti

Miranda Snyder is a 21-year-old junior accounting and public administration double-major who hopes to work in either the non-profit or government sectors upon graduation. She enrolled at SFU in the spring of 2019 after completing three semesters of online coursework through Liberty University.

A native of Roaring Spring, Pennsylvania, and a graduate of Central High School, Miranda spent roughly four years of her life living in Haiti, where her family worked as long-term missionaries through their church, the Bare Memorial Church of God.

In January of 2010, Haiti suffered a 7.0 magnitude earthquake. The epicenter was 16 miles west of the nation's capital city, Port-au-Prince. The catastrophic quake and

its aftershocks claimed the lives of more than 250,000 people and severely damaged more than 30,000 buildings and a quarter-of-a-million homes. More than 10 years later, Haitians are still working to recover from this quake.

Miranda and her parents, Theresa and Andy, were 41 miles northwest of Port-au-Prince at an orphanage in Pierre Payen in the Artibonite region of Haiti at the moment of the 2010 quake.

I remember the ground starting to shake," says Miranda, who was 9 years old at the time. "At first, I thought that I hadn't drunk enough water and I was going to pass out and then I grabbed a hold of a young tree and it was also moving. I thought 'this is not right.'

"I knew the last place my parents were

was in a building nearby. I shouldn't have run into it, but I did. I remember running up to my mom and asking her what is going on. She said 'it's an earthquake, sweetheart. It's o.k. I've got you.'"

The Snyders were not hurt in the quake and, later that year, Miranda and her parents, as well as her younger siblings, Ariel and Zacchaeus, moved to Haiti.

"My mom and dad had been feeling God calling them down to Haiti to live for quite some time, but my mom was really hesitant," says Miranda. "She was struggling on whether or not to take her family down. So they took me – the oldest – to see how I would do. And on the trial run, an earthquake happens.

"We had dental clinics. We handed out hygiene kits. We tried to teach the Haitians a little about economics – the value of working for what they need."

— Miranda Snyder

"My mom says that God used me to show her that we would be o.k. and that God would take care of us. He did."

In May and June of 2010, the Snyders completed an "internship" through an organization called Projects of Haiti at a compound in Borel, a community 40 miles north of Port-au-Prince, in order to determine if a long-term mission was right for them. In August of that year, the family moved to Borel.

"We would go for around eight months out of the year and then come back to the States so my dad could work," says Miranda. "Me and my siblings came back to the States for good in 2014, and my parents stayed down there through 2015."

The compound in Borel served as a hub of activity within the community. It included a mechanic shop where people took their vehicles to get repaired, as well as a community water pump that operated on solar power. Miranda's father, Andy, built tilapia ponds in the back of the compound.



"In Haiti, I learned that you have to be happy with what you have," says Miranda. "If you expect too much out of life, you are never going to be happy."

In the front of the facility, a school was established.

"He was trying to show the Haitians how aquaponics works and teach them how they could raise fish right in their rice fields," says Miranda. "He also helped some of the Haitians learn how to do work in electricity.

"I tried to start a program I called 'Goats for God.' I was trying to raise border goats. Unfortunately, someone who was taking care of the goats accidentally gave them feed that had been sprayed with pesticides and they all died except one."

The Snyders also conducted various workshops and clinics at the facility.

"We had dental clinics. We handed out

hygiene kits," says Miranda. "We tried to teach the Haitians a little about economics – the value of working for what they need. Some people in Haiti have become too reliant on handouts. We tried to teach them that if you work for something, it is better than if you get it for free."

Andy recalled the day-to-day struggles of many of the Haitians his family met and served.

"The needs of people became overwhelming sometimes," he says. "People always came to our house for money. Most of the time it was to help pay for hospital care for a loved one. We did what we could to help. The things we as Americans take for granted, like Band-Aids, Tylenol



In addition to her family's long-term missionary work in Haiti, Miranda has also volunteered her time and talents at a Navajo Reservation in New Mexico.

and cold medicine – these are items most Haitians don't have."

Miranda last visited Haiti in 2017, but she wants to return again soon, specifically to see her goddaughter, Sasha. She and her family worked with a man named Watson during their time in Haiti and Watson's sister, Venette, gave birth to a daughter two days before the 2010 earthquake.

"Watson really wanted us to come see the baby, so we went to see her," says Miranda. "I said, 'what's her name?' and Venette said we don't have a name for her yet, so I said 'what about Sasha?'"

Venette liked Miranda's suggestion and named her daughter Sasha. Following the earthquake, Venette asked the 9-year-old American if she would serve as Sasha's godmother.

"They actually love spending time with each other, sitting around playing games or just talking, enjoying each other's company."

— Andy Snyder

A decade later, Miranda is very active within the Saint Francis community. She plays the melophone in the SFU Band,

serves as a co-captain of the school's ESports Overwatch Team, and is a member of the Omega Zeta Nu Sorority. She is also trying to get the Beekeeping Club started back up at the University.

She says she is blessed through her experiences in Haiti.

"I learned that the world is not black and white and that there are big gray areas in life. Seeing the poverty and what the Haitians have to deal with every day, it makes me really sad, but the Haitian people are some of the happiest people I have ever seen in my life.

"I learned that you have to be happy with what you have."

Miranda's father said he learned about the meaning of generosity during his family's time as missionaries on Hispaniola.

"So many times, we would see our Haitian friends and they would want to give us a gift," says Andy. "We would see the young boys bring in a couple of potatoes or eggs and my wife would cook it for them, then the boys would share their food with each other.

"I hope my family learned that Haitians have something special. They actually love spending time with each other, sitting around playing games or just talking, enjoying each other's company. Even though there is poverty everywhere, most Haitians are happy."

Becoming that Someone ... in Loretto

Matt Crawford graduated from Saint Francis with a degree in Communications in 2017. A native of Colver, Pennsylvania, and a 2011 graduate of Central Cambria High School, he hosted a charity webstream at the University in December of 2019 and raised \$8,491 for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

Matt is a popular YouTuber with roughly 554,000 subscribers. He hosted last December's charity webstream at the Dr. Albert A. Zanzuccki Communications Media Center on the ground floor of Schwab Hall. The eight-hour event was streamed over his YouTube channel, "Tekking101," which linked donors to a donation page.

Two other YouTubers also contributed videos to Crawford's charity webstream

last winter. His mother, Karen, and family friend Traci Cook also helped with the event.

"I chose St. Jude because I wanted to do something that was international because I have subscribers all over the world," says Matt. "My mom has worked with St. Jude's Hospital through her job, so I decided to go with them.

"I'm ecstatic that we managed to raise so much money for St. Jude. They require a lot of money to operate annually."

It was the third charity webstream hosted by Crawford in as many years, with all of them held on campus. His previous charity streams benefited the Children's Tumor Foundation and the Leukemia Research Foundation.

"I had seen other channels doing charity stuff and I wanted to do one, but I also wanted to make sure I had enough subscribers to have some success," says Matt.

By the middle of 2018, the number of subscribers to his channel had reached 300,000 and he figured it was time to give it a shot. The first step was to identify a charitable organization to support.

"The Children's Tumor Foundation fights neurofibromatosis, a disease that I did not know much about," says Matt. "I asked my fans if anybody had a recommendation for a good charity. There is a fan of my channel named Aidan, and he suffers from neurofibromatosis.

"He told me that this is a good organization, so I followed up with him and he was



Matt had originally planned to conduct two charity webstreams in Schwab Hall's Communications Media Center in 2020, but was forced to postpone one scheduled for earlier this year because of the pandemic.

actually on the stream with me.”

Neurofibromatosis is a genetic disorder that causes tumors to develop on nerve tissue, including the brain and spinal cord. Matt's first charity stream in July of 2018 raised roughly \$6,000 for the Children's Tumor Foundation. Following this event,

and was in remission for a while,” recalls Matt. “I was talking to my uncle Randy (Kara's father) and we decided to do one for leukemia.”

This second charity event raised \$5,500 for the Leukemia Research Foundation. “Everybody really comes together for

“It's been fantastic that he has come back three years in a row and used our facilities to share his gifts to raise money for those in need.”

— Kelly Rhodes, Chair of the Communications and Criminal Justice Department

Aidan – the fan who proposed this charity – was offered a job at the Children's Tumor Foundation's headquarters in New York City.

Matt conducted his second charity stream in December of 2018. This one benefited the Leukemia Research Foundation. Matt's cousin, Kara, died from leukemia in July of 2017 at 38 years old. She had been diagnosed with leukemia in 2014.

“She fought if for a couple of years

the charity streams,” says the SFU Communications Program graduate. “All of them have been at Saint Francis and I think they really capture the spirit of the school.”

Kelly Rhodes, chair of the Communications and Criminal Justice Department, believes that Matt also embodies the spirit of the University.

“It is exciting to see one of our alums take the skill set that he developed here at Saint Francis and use it to give back to

others,” says Kelly. “It's been fantastic that he has come back three years in a row and used our facilities to share his gifts to raise money for those in need.”

“Matt has taken his talents and found ways to help other people. He is becoming that someone for people in need.”

Matt founded his Tekking101 channel in 2009. It focuses on Japanese anime, which is a style of animation that includes colorful art, with themes and styles similar to manga comics.

“The first two years I did it, I didn't have many followers at all,” says Matt. “I was talking about video games for the first two years. It was right after I graduated high school – literally the next day – when I thought, let's try something different. This is when I started talking about anime.”

“In 2016, it really took off. I never thought I'd get to 100,000 subscribers. But it worked out and now I am making a living off it. I hope to do it as long as I can.”

Matt's enthusiasm for anime has played a significant factor in Tekking101's success.

“I love to talk about the subject matter and everyone seems to enjoy my enthusiasm. The combination of being my own boss, working from home, and interacting with my fans are the things that I like most.”

Roughly half of the 554,000 subscribers to Matt's channel are from the United States. The other subscribers hail from around the world, with the United Kingdom, Canada, Germany and the Philippines accounting for most of his international fans.

Matt is conducting another charity webstream on Dec. 19 for St. Jude. This fundraiser will also be conducted in Schwab Hall's Media Center.

“These events take a lot of work to plan and a laundry list of little things you have to account for, but it is an amazing feeling when it all comes together.”

Pat Farabaugh is an Associate Professor of Communications at Saint Francis. He is also the play-by-play announcer for the Red Flash men's basketball and football programs.

Update on SFU Athletics in light of COVID-19

(statement issued by the NEC on July 22)

In response to the unprecedented challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic and with the health, safety and well-being of our campus and athletic communities being paramount, the Northeast Conference (NEC) Council of Presidents voted late July to postpone

all fall sports athletics competition and championships. This postponement applies to NEC sponsored sports and impacts men's and women's cross country, field hockey, football, men's and women's soccer and women's volleyball, as well as all other NEC sports scheduled to engage in competition this fall.

Success Defined

Athletics Department records 43rd consecutive semester with combined GPA over 3.0

Despite the challenges of virtual learning in the spring semester, the Saint Francis Athletic Department recorded its 43rd consecutive semester with an overall GPA at or above 3.0. All student-athletes achieved an overall GPA of 3.457, the highest in history, surpassing the 2018 spring semester (3.409).

"We are incredibly proud of the amazing work our student-athletes did this semester as it was a record-breaking semester to say the least," Associate Director of Athletics for Student-Athlete and Leadership Development John Krimmel said. "Our student-athletes took a challenging situation and made the most of it. The success of our student-athletes would not have been possible without the outstanding faculty, staff and administration at Saint Francis."

He continued; "The Saint Francis faculty are the best in the country and are always there for our students and for that we

are forever grateful. The academic support staff in the Center for Academic Success under the direction of Dr. Renee Bernard (Associate Dean of Instruction) continued to provide great support to our students as they always do. I cannot thank Renee, April Fry, Sarah Dumm, Jeremy Hudkins, and Terri Kirby enough for all that they do for the university and our students."

Four hundred and six student-athletes (82% percent of total) compiled a 3.0 GPA or higher, 269 (54%) recorded a 3.5 GPA or higher and 69 produced a perfect 4.0.

The men's basketball (3.148 GPA), women's basketball (3.504), football (3.05), men's golf (3.559), women's lacrosse (3.64), men's soccer (3.487), women's soccer (3.697), men's tennis (3.838), women's tennis (3.901), men's indoor and outdoor track and field (3.434) and women's volleyball (3.78) teams all achieved their highest team GPA ever during the 2020 spring semester.

"I also want to thank our coaches for the work they did with our student-athletes during these uncertain and challenging

"Our student-athletes took a challenging situation and made the most of it."

— John Krimmel

times," Krimmel said. "Our coaches were nothing short of incredible and a huge support to our office. Our student-athletes continue to embody what it means to be a STUDENT-athlete and always demonstrate what it means to Become That Someone. Many records were broken this semester and we continue to be amazed by the work our student-athletes do in the classroom, in the community, and in competition."

Fourteen teams recorded a semester GPA of 3.5 or higher. All 25 squads finished the spring with a 3.0 or higher GPA for the first time. The women's tennis team achieved the highest team GPA in athletic department history.

James Downer Named 12th Director of Athletics in School History

On a hot summer day in July, the University community gathered outdoors on the campus mall to welcome Red Flash athletics latest addition, James Downer. Surrounded by coaches, student-athletes and Stokes board members, Father Malachi enthusiastically introduced James Downer as its 12th Director of Athletics in school history. Downer joins the Red Flash after spending the past three years at Eastern Kentucky University, where he served as the school's Senior Associate Athletics Director.

"Continuing a path of excellence is a priority for Saint Francis University," said Saint Francis University President Fr. Malachi Van Tassell, T.O.R. "I am thrilled that James is joining our community as his depth of expertise in athletics administration will provide strong value in reaching our goals. James' leadership approach is a natural fit to enhance the athletic and academic success we expect," said Fr. Malachi. "Not only will he bring a strong focus on student-athlete well-being, but he will further the reputation of competitive success for which we are known."

"Our priority at Saint Francis will be to provide the optimal student-athlete experience across all athletic programs..."

— James Downer

Downer will step into a role with high expectations to build on the school's athletic history. He will oversee 23 NCAA Division I athletic teams and work to make sure the mission of athletics works in concert with the mission of the University.

"Our priority at Saint Francis will be to provide the optimal student-athlete experience across all athletic programs while regularly competing for championships, setting academic achievements in the classroom and increasing our community engagement



Director of Athletics, James Downer is named as the 12th director in school history. He is pictured here with his wife, Erin, and their sons, Max and Caden.

initiatives," remarked Downer. "This is a tremendous opportunity to join a University with a legacy of success and a profound commitment to intercollegiate athletics. My family and I are extremely excited to join the Red Flash family and are eager to make a positive impact on Saint Francis University." Downer was joined by his family for the press event.

Downer succeeds Erika Renwick, who served as the Interim Director of Athletics. Fr. Malachi said her leadership demonstrated the true meaning of service.

"During this period of transition, Erika's knowledge and leadership has been valuable to not only the Athletic Department, but the entire institution," said Fr. Malachi. "Her time and talents are a true gift to the Red Flash community."

Downer's Road to Loretto

Over his three-year tenure at Eastern Kentucky beginning in 2017, Downer served as the sport administrator for football and men's basketball and supervised several departments including compliance, media relations, ticket operations, marketing and development. Downer additionally oversaw football and men's basketball scheduling and played pivotal roles in several coaching hires, secured athletic department contracts with Adidas, Learfield/IMG College and launched the

EKUSports Mobile App.

Downer began his collegiate athletic career at the University of Central Oklahoma. He held senior level administrator roles at Nicholls State University and Presbyterian College.

A native of Springfield, Illinois, Downer graduated from Millsaps College in 2002 where he played baseball. He received his master's degree from the University of Oklahoma. James and his wife Erin have two sons, Max and Caden.

Championship Game

in Images



Jorden "J-Money" McClure leads the Red Flash on the floor for pregame warm-ups



2019-20 NEC Player of the Year Isaiah Blackmon shoots a three-pointer in the first half

The Saint Francis starting lineup comes together before tipoff

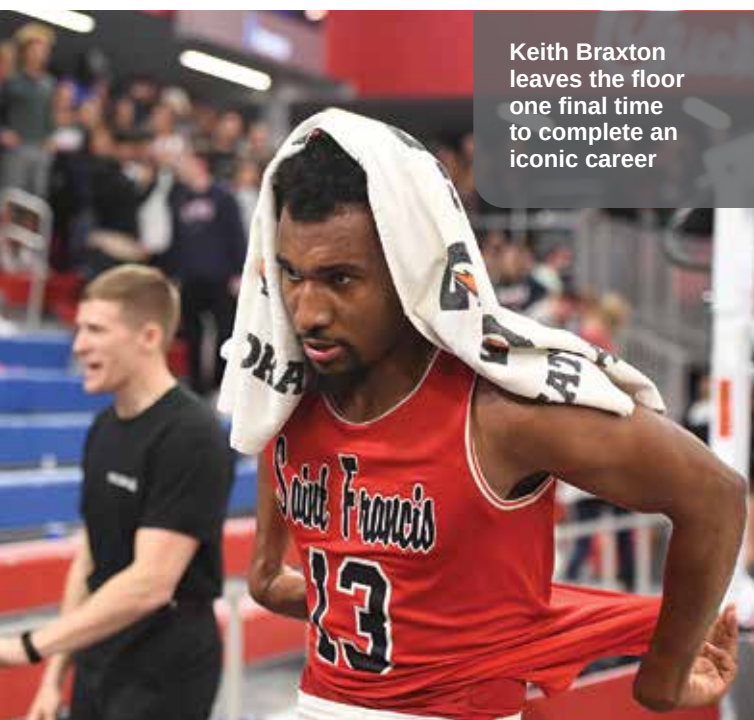
Although the final score wasn't what the Red Flash hoped for (77-67 loss at Robert Morris), the Saint Francis men's basketball team locked horns with Robert Morris in pursuit of a win on ESPN2 in the Northeast Conference Championship game on Mar. 10, 2020. Re-live the excitement with some of the top images.



Red Flash supporters look on in the second half of the contest



The Red Flash cheerleaders show their support



Keith Braxton leaves the floor one final time to complete an iconic career

Three Student-Athletes Garner NEC Player of the Year honors



Saint Francis senior Alyssa McGhee won the Northeast Conference's Offensive Player of the Year for the second time in her career, leading the league in goals with 12.



Junior midfielder Lucas Rosa led Saint Francis to the top overall seed in the NEC Tournament, garnering Player of the Year honors with 11 goals, and a conference-best six game-winning goals.



Fifth-year senior Isaiah Blackmon defied all odds by overcoming two ACL injuries to win the 2019-20 NEC Player of the Year. Blackmon averaged 18.8 ppg to lead SFU to its third NEC Championship appearance in four years.

FLASHBACKS

(Includes items submitted prior to July 6, 2020)

1970s

- ◆ **The Honorable Jerry Garguilo '72** now sits on the Appellate Term of the New York Supreme Court in addition to serving as a Justice of that Court.
- ◆ **Robert Kristofco '73** retired in March 2019 following 11 years as a Medical Education Director and Grants Officer for Pfizer Global Medical Grants. Prior to his service with Pfizer, Bob served 20 years at the University of Alabama School of Medicine as an Associate Professor in Medical Education and Director of the Continuing Medical Educational program. Bob continues to hold a consulting faculty appointment in the School of Medicine.
- ◆ **Mike Alexa '74** was inducted into the President's Hall of Fame at Cathedral Preparatory School in Erie, Pa., on March 30, 2019. He retired in 2018 after teaching mathematics at the school for 37 years.
- ◆ **Jerome Laday '75** retired to the Fort Myers area in Florida after a 40-year career in human resources and 27 years as an adjunct professor at Fairleigh Dickson University in New Jersey.

1980s



- ◆ The Board of Directors of Residential Care Services, Inc. in Pittsburgh unanimously selected **Tom Cloherty '82** to serve as the next CEO of Residential Care Services. Tom has been with RCS for 20 years as CFO and Assistant Executive Director. Residential Care Services, Inc. is a mental health housing agency serving adults 18-65 years old in their Group Homes and Apartment settings.



- ◆ Football alumni returned to celebrate the program's 50th anniversary during the home game against Columbia University on Sept. 21, 2019. Back row from left: **Jack Goodrich '83, Mark Kelly '84, Marty Nesbitt '83, Mike Beck '82, John Monahan '82, Brian Petry '82**. Front row from left: **Brian Radatovich '82, Dan Kanuch '82, Dave Sheredy '82, Fred Pagliaro '80, Mark Pizzillo '83**.

1990s

- ◆ **Indiana Area School District's Wesley Matthews '99**, MIS Manager, has been approved for renewal status as a Pennsylvania Certified School Business Official (PCSBO) by the Board of Directors of the Pennsylvania Association of Business Officials (PASBO). In order to be granted the professional certification status by PASBO, a school business official must meet high personal, ethical and professional standards established for the certification program. PASBO's purposes are to promote the highest standards of ethics and practices in school business administration and to encourage professional development and improvement of individuals engaged in school business management.

2000s



- ◆ **Ashley Fundack '09** graduated in August 2019 with a Ph.D. in Criminal Justice, finishing with a 4.0 GPA. Ashley is employed as an Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice at Cecil College in Maryland.

◆ The school board of St. Martin's Lutheran School announced that **Patrick Kiley M'00** has been named as head of school. Kiley's immediate priorities are driving enrollment, educating students in a safe and effective manner, and revamping and relaunching the St. Martin's website.



In addition to running the day-to-day operations of the school, Kiley will also be responsible for marketing, public relations and fundraising. "I am honored and humbled to have been named the next head of school at St. Martin's Lutheran School," Kiley said. "We are a community of teachers, learners and believers. We have studious and compassionate students, a tireless and dedicated faculty, and committed parents. I am proud and fortunate to be a part of the St. Martin's community."

Marriages

◆ **Nicholas Ford Redden DPT '18** and **Maria Catherine Cup '17 DPT '19** were united in marriage on August 10, 2019 in St. Vitus Catholic Church, Cleveland, Ohio. They are both physical therapists at the Cleveland Clinic in Ohio and reside in Chesterland, Ohio.



Births and Adoptions

◆ **Shawn '10 '12** and **Holli (Urgolites) Lehman '12 '15** welcomed **Ruthie Grace** on September 25, 2019.



◆ **Mollie (Rogers) Rovnak '12** and husband **Carl** welcomed daughter **Margaret "Maggie" Rovnak** on January 5th, 2020. Maggie is also the granddaughter of **Steve and Jean (Payne) Rogers**, both from the Class of '82.

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(List includes names submitted prior to July 6, 2020)

Deaths

Maritza Alfandari '70
Alycia (Gorlaski) Andros '11
Pamela (Jeffcoat) Bailey M'93
Daniel L. Bennett '88
Edward Bernstein '59
Anthony Bradley '66
John W. Brady '63
Raymond J. Bradley,
Professor Emeritus
Terence M. Browne '90
Paul Burns '48
Paul William Carroll '69
Donald E. Charlebois '58
Fortuna (Daloisio) Ciambotti '66
William J. Cimino '70
Margaret (Corcoran) Clark '60
Eleanor (Bardello) Damico '60
Beth Anne (Eckenrode) Darnell '75
Linda (Donelson) Dent '79
Anthony Depolo '64
Denise DiGiacobbe '72
John J. Dougherty '56
James W. Drayer '02
John J. Duffy M'03
Barry W. Eckert '78
Rev. Richard L. Eldredge, T.O.R.
Janet Farrell '72
Patricia Fogle '67
Gerald Gigliotti '74
Laura (Greco) Haack '62

Elena (Addesa) Hartrick '70
Jennifer Hatajik M'00
Christine (Stolinski) Henderson '75
Joseph Hennessey '62
Mark Hertzog '73
Jean (Bresnick) Hessinger '63
Carol (Safchinsky) Hila '59
H. Robert "Bob" Hoare '60
George Hoffman '53
Jennifer Hoover '94
John "Jay" Jedrzejek M'79
John J. Juhasz '52
James Keenan '54
Donald J. Kieffer '58
Robert H. Kilian '61
Ginny Alrutz Koenig '67
Thomas Lang '55
Wendy (Sayona) Larre '61
Richard Lisko '93
Patricia Loughran '88
Fr. Leo A. Lynch '74
Arletta Mangus '92
Marjory Masone '61
John Matolyak '63
Rev. Michael Matusak '72
Michael Messina '62
Cheryl Michelangelo '71
Murphy Patrick Montler '89
James L. Moody '49
Gail (Muir) Morreale '62
Benjamin Nazzaro '70

Roderick Nelson '74
Margaret Nicholson M'03
Brother Bernard Nicolosi, T.O.R.
Arlene (Davis) Pawlikowski '57
David F. Petrak '77
Francis "Frank" Pilarz '66
William P. Piszker '52
A. Michael Powers '51
John Romani '56
Maureen (Thornell) Ross '83
Stephen Rusnak '64
John F. Schneider '68
Donald A. Schratz '54
Linus Seckel '77
Patricia (Foley) Siedel '61
Robin (McKay) Stewart M '05
William K. Sullivan '55
George Surdukan '76
Eugene F. Sweeney '61
Andrea (Mann) Tavella '66
Charles Tobin '58
Patricia (Crowley) Trimble '79
Dennis Volk '68
Michael J. Walker '81
William E. Walker '57
John "Jack" Waters '65
Dennis Weakland '52
Matthew E. Weber '04
Vincent Weiss '59
John C. Weixel '61
Gary D. Wolfe '70

How to Submit a Flashback

We love to hear from our alumni! Please share with us information about career changes, promotions, relocations, volunteer work, engagements, marriages, births, and interesting things.

We welcome photos and will publish them as space permits. Digital files are best as long as they are high quality. A larger file size (300dpi or higher) is better than a smaller file size. Photos submitted by mail will not be returned.

Flashbacks can be sent to:
sfu-alumni-office@francis.edu
OR
Fax: 814-472-3044
OR
Flashbacks
c/o Office of Alumni Relations
Saint Francis University
PO Box 600
Loretto, PA 15940



Saint Francis Winery: Three members of the Class of 1973 are shown left to right: Eileen (Sullivan) Swazuk, Chris Collins and Christine (Boylan) Carr at a visit to the winery in the Sonoma Valley, California in January.

Celebratory News!

40th PA class slated to graduate



1977 In the fall 26 students enrolled in this newly created major to prepare for the emerging career of physician assistant.

1991 Faculty Senate approves expanding the major into a masters-level program.

1981 After completing the two years of academic study and two years of clinical work with local hospitals, the first class graduated from a freshly accredited PA program at Saint Francis College.

1999 A multi-year streak begins with Saint Francis College's PA program being the only one not affiliated with a medical school to rank in the national top 10 list according to the U.S. News and World Report.

2021

We want to honor all four decades of graduates in some way in the upcoming year. In light of COVID-19 restrictions, we are not yet sure how, but we certainly want to celebrate this achievement! If you have ideas or memories to share, please send them to the Office of Alumni Engagement (sfu-alumni-office@francis.edu).



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