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The Scholars Newsletter

St. Thomas Aquinas Scholars Honors Program



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Honors Trivia Night

Social Chairs

Aquinas Scholar's Trivia Night was a blast! We had a great turn-out and three winning teams that got to bring some snack prizes home. The trivia included entertainment/movies, words that begin with a "w", song titles, celebrity's yearbook photos, and St. Thomas history. There were lots of challenging questions, but in the end, the winners got a score of 24.5/31! Thank you to all the Scholars that participated!

Coloring Contest

Social Chairs

The coloring contest was a huge success with over 90 scholars participating in the contest. It was so fun to see all the different designs that everybody came up with and all the kind messages I got in my mailbox with the completed turkey coloring pages. The winner of the event was Faith Stickney whose use of color really intrigued me. Congratulations Faith!



UST Swim and Dive Hour of Power

Service Chairs

Scholars joined swimmers for the annual UST Swim and Dive Hour of Power to raise money for Sarcoma Cancer Research. We had a ton of fun making a splash while making a difference :)

A Lonely Bicycle

by Katherine Bruns

A lonely bicycle slumps
Against the wall. Handlebars
Twisted, tires flat. Tandem seats
Hint at adventures, now in the past.

Against the wall, handlebars
worn with use but used no more.
Hints of adventures, now in the past;
Two by two we learned to love.

Worn with use but used no more
Because we won't come back together.
Two by two we learned to love,
But never learned to stay.

Knowing Who You Are and What You Are Called to Do

by Kori-Ann Hermitt



Everyone has a story. A narrative that shaped who we are today, who we will continue to be, and who we will finally become. Many people are embarrassed by their past circumstances and the things that happened there. Because of this, I wanted to provide a platform where others could see and understand that it's okay to have had a complicated and occasionally regrettable history. What we do with it is what differentiates. "Knowing Who I Am and What I'm Called to" was the title of a short film I created and had made. This film demonstrates a couple challenges I'm not particularly proud of, but those challenges helped me grow into the person I am today. I hope this may inspire someone to embrace their history while also using it to help them grow into the person God intended them to be.

YouTube link:

<https://youtu.be/yw9gDf9i1SY>

I Desperately Want to Live Somewhere Warm and Sunny —Help!

by Kaitlyn Maher

Squirrel scurries over my squeaking shoe,
And yanks my mind from winter's fog.

Sky above's lapis lazuli blue—
Though the stars stay obscured by smog.

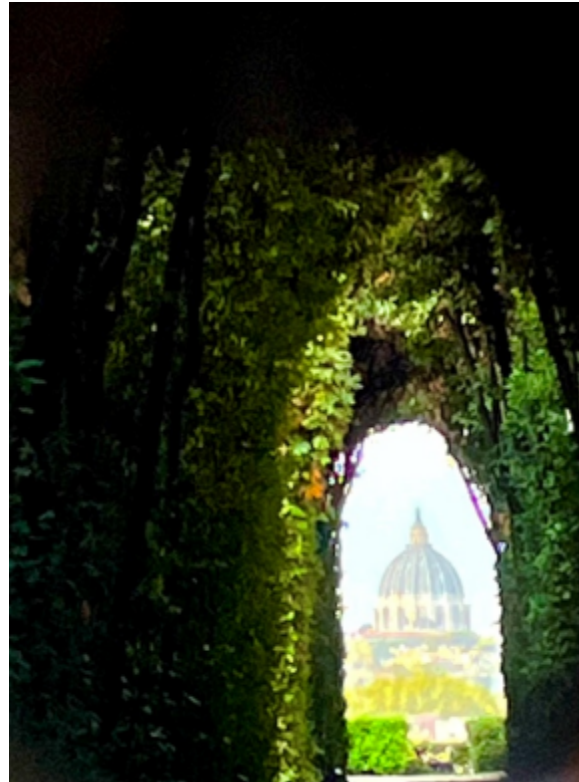
It's at times like this, I wish my ancestors settled
In a coastal town in Portugal

But I know I would surely miss
The way spring blossoms petal
Just before summer's lull.

Study Abroad in Rome, Italy

by Ethan Erickson

This is the view as you look through the Aventine keyhole and see St. Peter's Basilica from the Aventine Hill in Rome, Italy. Rome has been home to me and other UST students during the fall semester. However, our time abroad is nearing its end. As I gazed through the keyhole, I was reminded of the tunnel vision we once possessed at the beginning of the semester. Arriving in Italy, each of us had our own set of expectations and goals. We could admire photographs and research must-see destinations, but nothing could prepare us for the reality of living in Rome.



Behind the veil were the everyday struggles. The balancing act of studying for classes and living in a foreign country with many opportunities and distractions. We could not foresee the extent of the culture shock. We were tested in terms of food, language, beliefs, attitudes, and learning that we would have to adjust to. However, there was no means of preparing as we could only hear about life in Rome through the alumni and the meetings last year. Each person has a distinct and unique experience when abroad. Therefore, no photo or explanation could ever prepare me for walking through the Colosseum or biking through the coastal regions of Italy. While each of us has morphed into residents of Italy in recent months, there is still a lifetime of places and experiences we do not possess. People that live in Rome their entire lives may never truly see the whole city, and perhaps that's part of the eternity of Rome. Being abroad for three months enabled us to be a part of a community and a city like Rome that offers more than just its tourism. The keyhole presents a sense of the unknown wherever we travel or live throughout our lives. Even if we believe to have gained an understanding, we must acknowledge that there will always be lifetimes of learning ahead.

Postcards of My Experience

by Hannah Samuelson

I have seen the streets of Rome filled with many embracing lovers, study abroad students, khaki tourists, hundreds of seminary boys, skirt-wearing businesswomen riding Vespas, crowd-surfing babies, more malnourished cats than seminary boys, more well-fed pigeons than cats, the "Popemobile," abandoned Peroni bottles, Anthony Anderson, the excretion of dogs and the scariest of them all, Italian grandmas. I now understand the difference between Carbonara and Cacio e Pepe.

I have seen the picturesque seaside that inspired the movies *The Talented Mr. Ripley* and Disney's *Luca*, and adhered to the opening verses of Billy Joel's "Scenes from an Italian Restaurant" with a bottle of red and a bottle of white. I now like poetry, specifically masterpieces born through tragedy and baptized in the names of Giacomo Leopardi and Percy Bysshe Shelley. I have guiltily hustled a beer from a British railroad worker with my charming, irresistible pick-up line, "What do you feel about the Queen's death?" I have distinguished the difference between being in "common isolation" and the feeling of being completely alone. I have had the best and worst gelato in Italy. I have seen the men of Bernardi ornamented in an assortment platter of the borrowed-leftovers-of-the-Parliament suit jackets. I have now expressed my frustration towards an unhurried train ticket kiosk through a non-verbal conversation of rolled eyes and grunts with a posh French woman and a rugged, Italian hiker. I have passionately cried over the bluffs of solar panels and the composting efforts embarked by the European environmentalists. I now can recite 87 ancient archeological sites of Rome. I have paid my respect at the gravesites of prominent poets and philosophers, and now developed a complete aversion to distasteful tombstone proverbs¹. I have watched the mainsail of a sailboat attempt (vehemently) to scrimmage an approaching thunderstorm on the Mediterranean Sea.



"THERE WAS NOWHERE TO GO BUT EVERYWHERE, SO JUST KEEP ON ROLLING UNDER THE STARS."

JACK KEROUAC, ON THE ROAD

A Letter to Barcelona

by Keeli Gustafson

Querido Barcelona,

I've never fancied myself to be the kind of person who believes in love at first sight. It sounds too easy, too impractical to be possible. But Barcelona, you wowed me from the very first moment I saw you. Even jetlagged and running on what little sleep I managed to snag during the flight, I couldn't help but be awed by your beauty. Looking outside my taxi window, I was inspired by your dignified streets. Now that I have been here longer, I love the muted colors on each building, the soft pinks, creams, tans, and greys standing out in stately contrast to the vibrancy of the people walking through the streets. Once I saw the city nestled between the Mediterranean Sea on one side and the mountains on the other, I was a goner.



Tibidabo with a View to the Entire City of Barcelona

The mix of Roman, Gothic, and Modern architecture blends together to make the city timeless. One moment I'm wandering down a street that has remained unchanged in the last thousand years, and the next I'm in the middle of a busy plaza with cars, buses, and trains racing past. Walking through the narrow, winding streets of the Gothic Quarter that first week as Catalan and Castilian voices mixed in the hazy afternoon heat, I didn't mind the sweat sticking to my back or notice the jetlag that threatened to pull me under for an afternoon nap. Instead, I simply looked in wonder at the archways, balconies, and tiled streets. I allowed myself to be lost for the first time in over a decade and losing myself in you was the push I needed to find myself.

Getting to know you has been like making a new friend. Most of the time, I'm just trying to keep pace with customs, inside jokes, and stories I don't quite understand. You are certainly never boring. But every day I learn more about this city, its people, and its stories, and every day it captures another piece of my heart. I have spent a decent amount of time getting lost on the metro and walking in the opposite direction than I intended. But with every misstep in navigation, I have discovered a new, beautiful part of the city that I didn't even know I was looking for. After three months, this city has come to feel like home. Even when I am lost here, I feel like I've never been so found. I can't wait to see where our story goes next.

Con cariño,
Keeli

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