

Journey to Confirmation

Reflections along the way—Mothers, Guiding Angels and Inspiring Saints Among Us

Excerpts from an interview with Confirmation Candidate, Julia Hilbert—Edited by Meg Picciolo

DEVOTING YOUR LIFE TO GOD

I have a special place in my heart for people who go into vocational life. I have an uncle who is a Jesuit priest. I also have a cousin who will be entering a convent. She and I would talk about weddings when we were little and she would say, “I’m not going to have a wedding”. She just knew. At National Youth Conference (NCYC) my favorite place to be was the vocational area. There were so many priests and nuns there! I’ll always remember how happy they are with their lives and how they are such amazing people—they have devoted their whole life to God! Each of these people has made God a priority over everything else, which is sometimes not the truth for me. It’s something I need to work on.

DIVINE INTERVENTION

When I was in the third grade, I got a letter from my grandpa’s best friend. My grandpa died when my mom was 11. This friend helped my grandma after my grandpa died. We began writing letters to each other. I was always slow at responding yet he would always write back right away. One day in a letter, I wrote that I wanted him to know how much he meant to me. This time I didn’t get a response. He had passed away. I wanted to know if he had read my letter. At the funeral we told his son about the letter and later he wrote to us saying he had found the letter on his dad’s nightstand and that it had been opened. I’ll always take that as divine intervention. I’ll never know why I sent it that day, but I know that **it was one of the last things he ever saw**. That will always be very important to me.

“If you need a reason to believe in God, to believe that Jesus exists or ever existed, or if you have ever doubted your faith, I think NCYC will give you a reason to believe—because it was so powerful. It was one of the most influential faith experiences I have ever witnessed. I definitely felt that God was there.”

FOLLOWING GOD’S CALL

My mom had been diagnosed with cancer about a year earlier and though she is not a sleeper person, she chose to go with us to Summer Outreach Camp and stay in a dorm room because we needed more adult chaperones. It was also over her birthday and she had to leave my little baby sister who was only 1 year-old. she didn’t know it at the time but she was really teaching us that to serve others you have to be willing to follow God’s call even if its out of your comfort zone.

HUMAN TOUCH

I volunteer at Children’s Hospital every week for two hours. That’s how I try to live out Matthew 25: 35-36 (see *Breaking Out of the Bubble*). The nurses say the mom’s never come to see these little babies and the nurses don’t have enough time to be there for them. I go there to hold them because human touch helps them heal.

I love service; it’s so much more for you than for anyone else. It makes you feel so much better about yourself when you’re done.

The Kiss

There was this little boy, he was about 8 years old, and we were doing a puzzle—all of a sudden he just kissed my arm—because he was so happy that I was there for him. He was all alone and he just wanted someone to play with him. I get so much out of helping these kids. Loving others and bringing joy to others actually brings love and joy right back to you.

These kids have it so hard. It makes me thankful and puts in perspective how easy I have it.

ANGELS AMONG US

When we arrived at our Group Workcamp resident’s house, she had a sign in her yard that said, “Protected by Psalm 91”. She came outside and we asked her what it meant. Someone had their Bible, so we read it with her....”And angels will guard you with their hands lest you strike your foot against a stone”. She started to cry and said, “you are my angels, God sent you to me to help me.” We were her Psalm 91—coming in real life to her. I can’t explain the feeling, knowing that **you’re an instrument of God**—right there—living that out for someone and they are receiving God through you—so amazing!

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MAKING CONNECTIONS

St. Dominic is a *faith community*. You come to know one another and when someone does get cancer, like we experienced for example, so many people come forward to help and send letters. It's really important in anybody's spiritual life to know that you are not alone and that other people will always be there to help you. God didn't make us introverted creatures. We're meant to *make connections with other people*.

To Seek Christ, Know Christ, and Become Christ, Each One for the Sake of All



A BEST FRIEND

A girl in my Workcamp crew and I were talking about how we prayed. I sometimes find it really hard to have time in my life to actually pray and talk to God. She said, "I talk to God everyday on my ride to school. I talk out loud to Him. He's my best friend and I tell him everything." That really hit me. *God is there to listen.*

WHAT MATTERS IN THE END

Another crew member who was very open about his faith and has accepted faith into his life, told me, "You can't worry about whether people like you. Jesus was the greatest person to ever live and people put

him to death because they hated him." So if you are a good person, it's OK if people don't like you. I can get tied up in people liking me or not having confidence, but that isn't what really matters in the end.

HUMILITY

My crew leader had never been to Workcamp before, and she was losing her job, yet she was with us, building this big ramp project for someone else. She was really strong in her faith and she was so determined to learn and get our project done. *Her humility*—admitting she had no idea what we were doing, her acceptance of us, willingness to talk with us, pray for us, and her happiness in being there was inspiring. She did not have kids at Workcamp, yet she was there serving. That is really inspiring—being with teenagers for a week has to be hard!

MARY, MOTHER OF ALL

Mary is one of my favorite parts of our Catholic faith. A lot of my faith came from when my mom and my little sister were sick. It was a really bad year. I had broken my leg and couldn't playsoccer or help my mom. My grandma died and it was the year my grandpa's best friend died. At that point I was so angry. I was mad at God because I wanted him to fix everything. I needed someone to turn to—so I turned to Mary. That is what helped get me through. Mary was so perfect, so willing to let God into her life. Now when I am scared or before tests or rugby games, I say a Hail Mary to help me feel safe and to feel that someone is watching over me—not only God. Being able to talk to her and pray to her for help—it feels special to be able to do that—*Mary is Mother of all.*

BREAKING OUT OF THE BUBBLE

Beth, my confirmation sponsor, was in the Jesuit Volunteer Corp (JVC) last year. She helped at a teen crisis center in the Pacific Northwest. When I visited, I went to juvenile court with her. It was horrible. I live in such a bubble. I haven't witnessed that before. It was really an eye-opening experience. I have been so privileged that I feel I have to give back. Anyone who gives up a year of their life to help others, that's amazing—that's living out one of my favorite bible passages:

"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me." Matthew 25: 35-36.

Beth is very strong in her faith and very willing to share it. She has taught me that it's ok to ask questions and to not always know the answers.

