

Faith and science go hand-in-hand for Mount St. Mary's student



Faces of Faith

EMMITSBURG - The more deeply Veronica Balick probes cellular and molecular biology, the more firmly she believes in the existence of God.

"It's just incredible to learn how all these tiny, little molecules can do all these incredible things and keep us alive," said Balick, a sophomore at Mount St. Mary's University who is studying biochemistry and biology as a double major.

"In a biochemistry course I took last semester, we learned about how proteins work," she said. "It's definitely got to be God working there because there's no way that didn't happen without some sort of intention behind it. It all works so perfectly together."

For Balick, a parishioner of St. Louis in Clarksville who is minoring in mathematics, faith and science easily go hand-in-hand.

GET TO KNOW

Veronica Balick

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What is your home parish?

St. Louis, Clarksville

Who had the most influence on the development of your faith?

My mom (Nancy Balick) is such an example of faith. She encouraged us to say the rosary every day. She sends me all this different stuff – pray this prayer for this or make sure you are reading the Bible. I cannot thank her enough.

Who is your favorite saint and why?

St. Veronica. That whole image of St. Veronica wiping the face of Christ is so beautiful. It's something I try to keep in mind about reaching out to people who are in need. She went against the crowd and against the soldiers to be able to reach out to Christ and that's really beautiful, that we try to see Christ in the people who are really in need and go out of our way to be there for them and help them.

What makes you proud to be Catholic?

It so amazing how the Catholic Church has stayed so constant throughout time and provided so much help to people around the world. It has been so influential in bringing good to people who are suffering around the world.

Guided by a mentor at Mount St. Mary's, Balick currently spends hours in the laboratory attempting to place a fluorescent gene inside a plant so it shows a specific pattern of florescence. In the summer, she will be researching leukemia during an internship at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, Tenn. After graduation, she hopes to pursue a doctorate so she can begin a career in cancer research.

"I really want to help bring healing to those people who are suffering," Balick said. "It's something that needs so much focus. We're making really great strides in it, but there's so much that we really don't know."

The eldest of four sisters, Balick was homeschooled from grade 3 through 8. She was one of the top-performing students at Mount de Sales Academy in Catonsville, where she graduated as salutatorian in 2016 and was one of the Archdiocese of Baltimore's Distinctive Scholars.

At Mount St. Mary's, Balick was awarded the Monsignor Hugh J. Phillips Prize for being one of the freshmen with the highest grade point averages.

Balick serves as a lector at Mount St. Mary's, where she is active in campus ministry and helps lead the incoming freshman retreat. She has also led high school and middle school retreats, including one for juniors at Mount de Sales. Involved in a women's fellowship and a Bible study, Balick attended a Catholic leadership conference in January sponsored by the Fellowship of Catholic University Students.

"We prayed the rosary every day as a family since I was 6 or 7," Balick said. "My parents really made sure that the whole time we were growing up, we had a lot access to resources about our faith."

Father Brian Nolan, chaplain and director of Catholic ministry at Mount St. Mary's, said Balick "radiates goodness because she has such a love for God."

"She lives the faith day-to-day," Father Nolan said. "She goes to Mass daily, prays and surrounds herself with good people. She's always available to others and has a really joy-filled presence."

Balick said she finds peace in knowing that God is ultimately in charge.

“I don’t have to be in control,” she said. “I can trust him and know that he has a plan. It’s so wonderful to have that hope and to know that even if things are not going well, God is still there and is still guiding it. God can bring good out of those hard situations.”

*Read more Faces of Faith profiles **here**.*

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