

Loyola stunned by death of student

The murder of a Loyola College in Maryland sophomore, along with her three family members, has sent the school's campus reeling.

Baltimore County police were investigating the death of 19-year-old student Stephanie Parente, and her father, William, 59, mother, Betty, 58, and sister, Catherine, 11, as a murder/suicide. The family was discovered at the Towson Sheraton Hotel April 20.

In an April 22 statement, Baltimore County Police said they believe Mr. Parente killed his family through blunt-force trauma and asphyxiation and then cut himself.

Mr. Parente, the police statement said, "may have been involved in questionable financial dealings."

Jesuit Father Brian Linnane, the school's president, said in a statement to the Loyola community, it "was a moment of unimaginable sorrow for the entire Loyola family. The loss of young lives - particularly under such circumstances - defies understanding."

Father Linnane celebrated a Mass in memory of the Parente family on campus April 21. Funeral arrangements were not immediately available.

According to a statement released by the school, Ms. Parente was a Garden City, N.Y., resident pursuing a speech pathology degree and minoring in natural sciences. She participated in the school's Habitat for Humanity projects, volunteered through the Center for Community Service and Justice and was involved with a partnership with St. Mary of the Assumption (Govans) School.

She was also on the women's rowing team and was the coxswain on the men's team as well.

"I knew Steph as a friendly, happy and optimistic young athlete," rowing coach Albert Ramirez said in a statement. "She was a coxswain on our novice team last year and she stayed through the toughest times as the frosh team broke down into

just four men.”

The statement from the school said Ms. Parente was going to study abroad this fall at Newcastle University in Newcastle Upon Tyne, England.

“I know that if given the opportunity to go to Newcastle, England, I can make Loyola proud,” she wrote in her application for studying abroad. “I will be able to fulfill the Loyola mission by gaining diversity and bettering the whole person. The knowledge, cultural experience and character this opportunity will provide will allow me to be successful in anything I choose to pursue later on in life.”

Ms. Parente’s life was a promising one according to those who knew her on campus. They described her as someone who had just the right words to say at the right time.

“Stephanie was a sweet and kind person and a hard-working student who always had a generous word for her peers,” said Mark Osteen, her core advisor and Alpha program teacher, in a statement. “It’s an unfathomable tragedy to have such a young and promising life cut short. All of her Alpha classmates already miss her terribly.”

The Parentes were parishioners of St. Joseph Church in Garden City, N.Y. A statement on the church’s Web site said, “The parish family of St. Joseph is deeply saddened by the tragic death of the Parente Family, Betty, Bill, Stephanie and Catherine. May the Lord of Easter morning bring comfort to all who mourn their loss as he welcomes the Parente family home to peace and new life.”

Grief counselors were scheduled to work with parents of the parish to teach them how to talk to their children about the deaths April 22.

On-campus grief counseling at Loyola was made available to students at Humanities Center and Cohn Hall. Residential life staff members were also prepared to work with students as well. Counseling information was also available at www.loyola.edu/counselingcenter.

Father Linnane said faith can be comforting in times of tragedy,

“For those of us who are Christian,” he said, “we are mindful of Christ’s resurrection

just celebrated on Easter Sunday, and so we rely on God's bountiful goodness to help move us forward with hope and peace."