

# THE CATHOLIC PHOENIX

ELON CATHOLIC CAMPUS MINISTRY NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2024



## BE THE LIGHT

CCM sponsored students to attend the SEEK24 Catholic conference in St. Louis with 20,000 other young adults.

*Story on page 2*

ELON UNIVERSITY



## 4 A JOURNEY OF DISCIPLESHIP

*Gavin Michaud '26 shares how he has grown in his Catholic faith through discipleship with a friend.*

## 5 HOW FAR WE'VE COME

*CCM caught up with Chris Peden '93 and Andi Urvina '95 to talk about how much CCM has grown over the decades.*

## 6 THE BEAUTY OF FAITH

*Zoe Eusemann '25 spent the fall semester in Europe and encountered God in an unique way.*

**CATHOLIC CAMPUS MINISTRY****2024 CCM SERVANT LEADERS:**

Jillian Thomas, President  
 Alexa Ferraiuolo, Vice President  
 Abby Bradbury  
 Kiara Cronin  
 Nicole Kerr  
 Abby Krause  
 Gavin Michaud  
 Eliot Morris  
 Erin Pitman  
 Jake Racey  
 Maria Romero Achon  
 Amelia Totaro  
 Emma Webb

**2023-24 CCM INTERNS:**

Katie Geraghty  
 Grace Minton  
 Gabby Roy  
 Grace Stetler  
 Jacqui Vontersch  
 Luke Wood

**ADVISORY BOARD:**

Chair - Robert DeSantis, P'23  
 Paul Armstrong, P'22  
 Maggie Bergin, P'21  
 Martin and Elizabeth Collins, P'24  
 Amanda Corso, '19  
 Cherilyn Ferraiuolo, P'25  
 Ben Keating, P'24  
 Tom and Angela Mataconis, '22,'25  
 Janie McCarthy, '22  
 Sean McMahon, FS  
 Scott and Jennifer Otis, '23,'24  
 Charlie Peck, '19  
 Ryan Petnuch, '19  
 Dominic Picca, P'24  
 John Rhodes '18  
 Jacqueline Serany, '12  
 Russ and Kathy Smith, P'15  
 Eric and Debby Stanley, P'24  
 Cindy Touloupas, P'13  
 Kristen Wood, P'26

**DIOCESAN STAFF:**

Campus Minister and Associate  
 Chaplain for Catholic Life  
 Fr. Peter C. Tremblay, OFM Conv.  
 ptremblay@elon.edu; 336-278-7355

Director of Catholic Life  
 Trung Huynh-Duc

Assistant Director of  
 Communications & Engagement  
 Kasey Miller

Student Engagement Coordinator  
 Lizzie Gildner

Director of Development  
 George Brunner



**Emily Collins '23**  
*from Clarksville, MD*

I attended my first SEEK as a recent December graduate from Elon University. I didn't know what to expect, but CCM offered a group to go, so I thought I'd go and see what it was about. SEEK is a huge Catholic conference mostly for college students. There were various things to do there, including talks by some of your favorite Catholic speakers, music, prayer groups, confession, adoration, games, and a bunch of fun events to participate in! It was a great way for me to meet other college students who also practice their faith.

SEEK was an unforgettable experience that helped me grow in my faith alongside my Elon friends and other college students and expand our ways of practicing our faith. With so many talks available, I liked that I could pick the sessions I wanted to attend. There were a lot of choices! There was also a massive room of vendors of different missionary groups, clothing brands, jewelry, Catholic brands such as Blessed is She, and service trip opportunities. I also formed many friendships with fellow students I met and even stay in touch with some now!

My favorite part of SEEK was definitely the prayer groups and the talks. I was able to pray with a priest and another girl for my intentions, and it was truly amazing to pray with people I had just met. I also absolutely loved the talks I attended including "Pray the Mass Like Never Before" by Fr. Mike Schmitz, "Friendships That Help You Live in Your Deepest Identity" by Cameron Fradd, and "The Gift God Wants to Give Us" by Fr. Josh Johnson. These were all fantastic talks, and each person gave great advice that really helped me grow deeper in my faith.

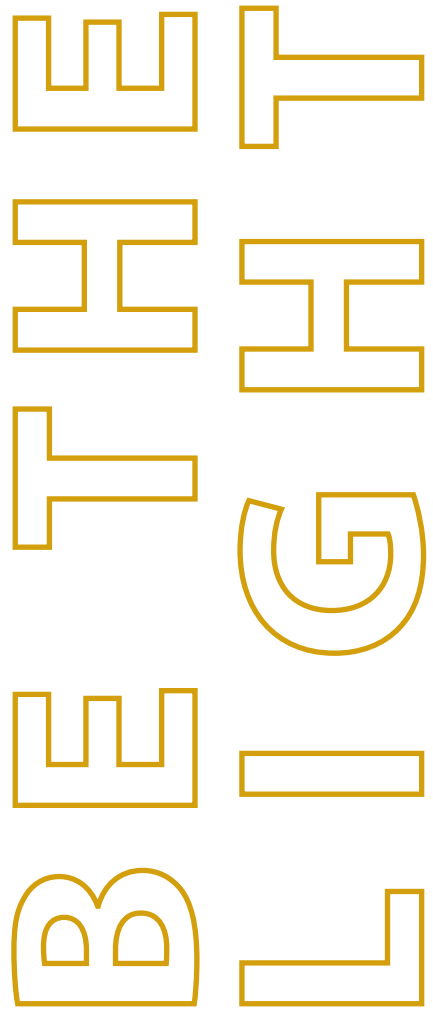


**Nina Devaney '24**  
*from Glen Burnie, MD*

**M**y journey at SEEK 24 was nothing short of extraordinary, providing me with an immersive experience that transcended the ordinary bounds of a religious event. The sheer diversity of attendees, all bound by their shared Catholic faith, was awe-inspiring. It was heartening to witness the unity within the community, emphasizing the strength that comes from shared beliefs and values. The event created a vibrant atmosphere where individuals from different walks of life came together, fostering a sense of belonging that I hadn't expected.

Beyond the social aspect, SEEK 24 offered a deep and meaningful connection with spirituality. The opportunity to worship collectively with fellow Catholics created a powerful sense of communion and shared devotion. The event's organizers curated a program that catered to attendees' spiritual needs and provided a platform for intellectual growth. The talks from prominent figures within the Catholic community touched on a wide range of topics, from theology to social justice, offering valuable insights that have left a lasting impact on my faith journey.

SEEK 24 was not just an event; it was a catalyst for my personal and spiritual growth, an enriching experience that left an indelible mark on my faith journey. The connections made, the worship shared, and the wisdom gained have collectively shaped an unforgettable chapter in my life.





# A JOURNEY OF DISCIPLESHIP

*Gavin Michaud '26 is a Psychology & Sociology major from Southington, CT, and is entering his second year as a CCM Servant Leader.*

Ever since my first day here at Elon, Catholic Campus Ministry welcomed me into the ministry and challenged me to grow in my faith as well as in every aspect of my life. With the help of CCM, I found that sense of community at Elon I was looking for while providing an opportunity to grow closer to Christ. One of the most impactful relationships I have formed in this community is with Trung Huynh-Duc, the Director of Catholic Life here at Elon. T was there to welcome me into CCM; he was a big reason why I continued to be a part of this community and eventually become a student leader. We started to get to know each other over shared meals where T would invite me to talk about anything I wanted to. I was introduced to my first discipleship meeting with T and discovered a new way to engage in my faith.

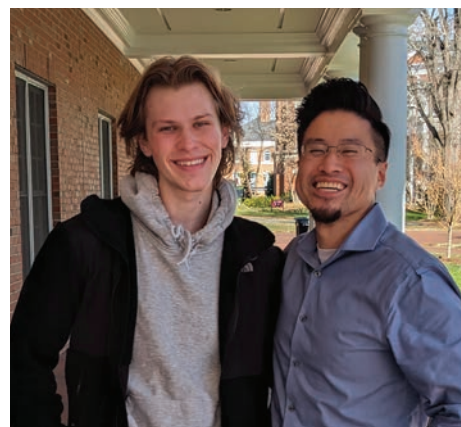
As the year rolled along, we continued to meet, and I found myself excited for future meetings. T encouraged me to apply to be a Servant Leader and also to join EC Reach More. Reach More is a ten-week program led by CCM in partnership with Evangelical Catholic (a national organization that serves parishes and university ministries across the nation to launch evangelizing movements in their communities). The goal of Reach More is to dive deeper into how to be a disciple while learning how to walk with others as they encounter Jesus and begin their own

journeys of discipleship. Going through that program and being a student leader allowed me to develop emotionally and spiritually in ways I could not have imagined. I started to get more comfortable in prayer. I would read and study scripture during personal prayer times and with T. I also found myself applying the teachings of the bible in my daily life. T was there as a mentor every step of the way; I am so thankful for his wisdom and support of my growth as a leader. Looking back, I am grateful for his encouragement because I may have passed up on those incredible opportunities otherwise.

Most importantly, T was there for me as a brother in Christ. He taught me that it means to love others as oneself, to do good work in the community around us, and to work together to welcome others, just as he welcomed me into his life. During times of personal struggle, T is there for me as a friend. We are able to share life, with all its highs and lows, with one another, which helps us draw closer to our faith and each other. His support has helped me grow as a student here at Elon, instilling in me the values of kindness and integrity. Looking forward, I am reassured knowing I have someone like T helping me push toward my future goals of work-life balance and discipleship with others.



*Gavin, T, and other participants went on a ropes course adventure to conclude the Reach More program.*



*Gavin and T outside of the Numen Lumen Pavillion on campus, one of their common meeting locations.*

# How Far We've Come

*A conversation with Chris Peden '93 and Andi Urvina '95*

*By T Huynh-Duc, CCM staff*

It is always incredible to be able to catch up with our alumni. CCM had the immense pleasure of a recent Zoom call with Chris Peden from the class of 1993, and Andrea (Andi) Lauri Urvina from the class of 1995. Chris was president of CCM in 1990 and then served as the CCM treasurer in 1991 and 1992. Andi was also heavily involved in CCM, often serving as a lector at Mass.

CCM was much smaller back then. "We were called the Newman Society and we used to go door-to-door trying to get people to join," recalled Chris. Even though Catholicism was the largest single denomination on campus (as it is today), it was hard to get students to participate. Mass was held in an upper room of the Long building, with anywhere between 15-30 people in attendance, and then the weekly CCM meeting was held afterwards.

Chris, Andi, and other classmates were motivated to grow the organization. "I remember writing our constitution along with Joe Stanko, Mike, Alicia..." shared Chris. They created cups to give away as promotional items and printed flyers to advertise on campus. "We used WordPerfect to create flyers and then had to take it to get approved before printing. And there was no color toner!"

One of the events they had was a retreat to the beach. "The beach retreat was not necessarily just for Catholics," Andi explained. "We wanted a time for as many of us to get together." It turns out that it was the start of a great tradition that CCM continues to hold to this day.

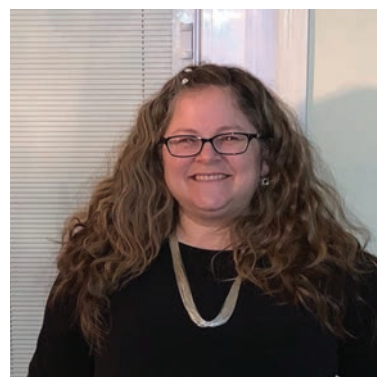
Other things that Chris and Andi remembered was how the Holland House served as the University Chaplain's residence after it had served as the home for past Elon Presidents. They were excited to hear that it is now the home to the Catholic Newman Center on campus. They were even more incredulous to hear how CCM currently has student Engagement Interns that reach out actively to every single first-year student who identified as Catholic.

Andi currently works as a registered nurse in Connecticut, is happily married to her husband Miguel, and is mother to a son and a daughter. Chris Peden is the owner of Peden Accounting Services in northern Virginia, a husband, and a father to two boys. Chris actually met his wife through the Newman Society at Elon. Andi and Chris are both proud of the organization they helped to grow.

"Sometimes it felt like we were just holding the kite strings," Chris said. They wanted to keep the Catholic faith alive on campus until others were able to come and continue the ministry. "It's amazing where you are now." CCM is now thriving with an incredible student Servant Leadership team, Engagement interns, Music interns, and numerous activities and events for students. And it's thanks to alumni like Andi, Chris, and countless others who prioritized their faith at Elon!



*Chris Peden '93*



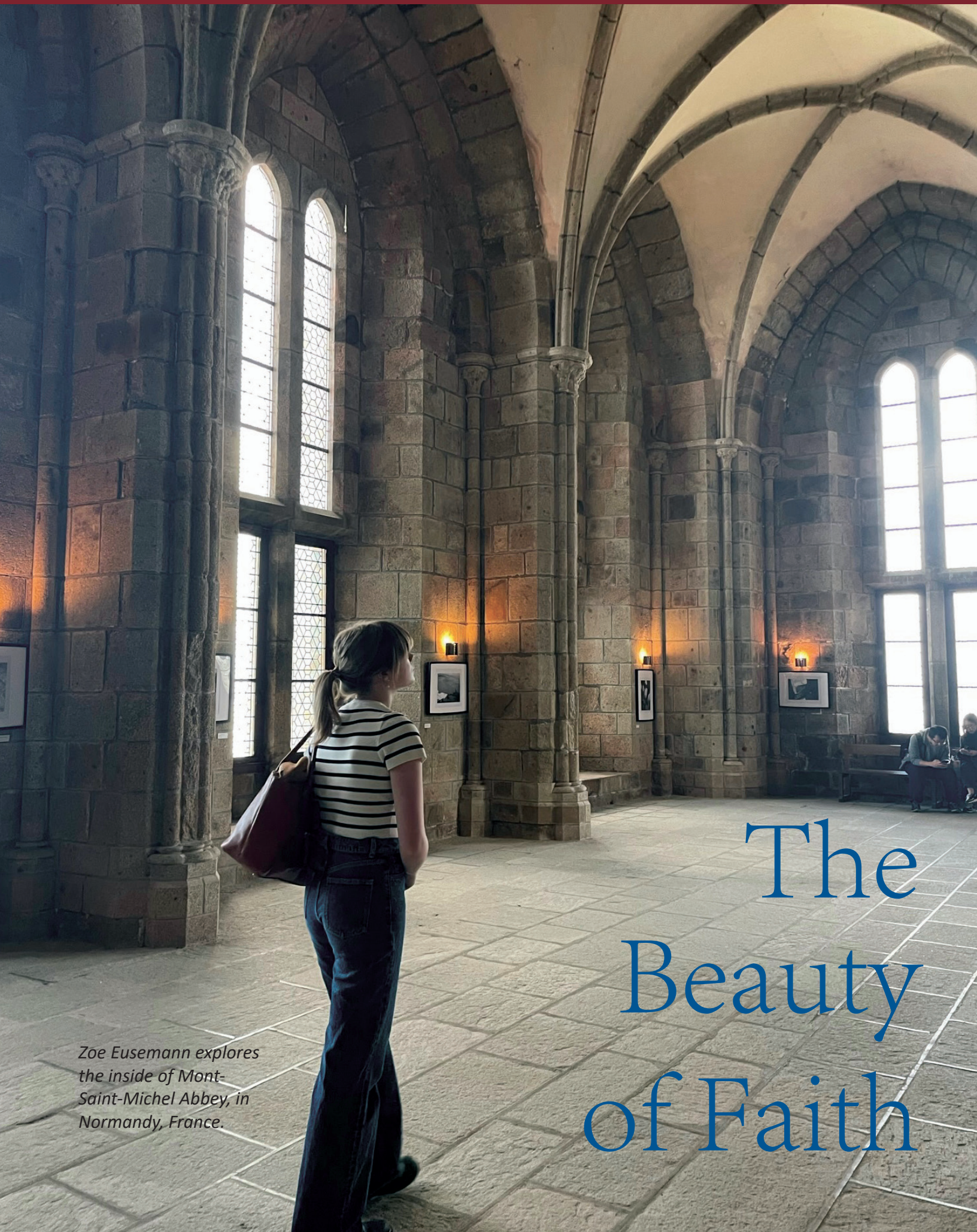
*Andi Lauri Urvina '95*

*Newman  
Society*



Front row: Rachael Esposito, Alicia Holtzapfel (Vice President), Bridget Gibson; Second row: Debbie Donovan, Andrea Lauri, Becky Middleton, Joe Stanko (President); Back row: Dan Chambers, Cathy Rusin (Catholic Campus Minister), Chris Peden.

*An oldie but goodie - a snapshot from the Elon Phi Psi Cli Yearbook, 1992 edition, with the members of the "Newman Society."*



*Zoe Eusemann explores  
the inside of Mont-  
Saint-Michel Abbey, in  
Normandy, France.*

# The Beauty of Faith



*Basilique du Sacré-Cœur, or the Basilica of the Sacred Heart, is located in the Montmartre district of Paris, France.*

*By Zoe Eusemann, class of 2025*

This past fall semester, I had the opportunity to experience a semester abroad in Paris, France. It was one of the most formative and meaningful experiences I have ever had. I was able to become what I believe to be the best version of myself so far. I was able to really immerse myself in a culture different from my own, yet create the feeling of home around me. I felt more like an individual and an adult than I ever had before, and it was both challenging and incredible. I became more resilient and more brave in many aspects. This experience is honestly so difficult to put into words. I cannot recommend or advocate enough for taking the jump to study abroad. Not only was I able to learn and travel and make new friends, but it is also an experience in which you can truly learn more about yourself and make so many wonderful self-discoveries.

I will be entirely forthcoming in saying that pursuing faith was not necessarily an easy experience for me, as those four months abroad were very busy and eventful. However, I found my connection to faith going beyond just attending weekly Masses and having CCM. These four months were more or less the first of which pursuing my faith was my own responsibility. While at home with my family, it is easier for me to feel devoted to faith as I have a faithful family. We attended Mass together weekly, which was an integral part of my childhood and growing up. At Elon, I have had the beautiful community of CCM, which offers wonderful experiences that led me to find friends that have my same beliefs and help me deepen my connection with my faith. While abroad, however, I was on my own pursuing my faith. I was lucky to have my amazing friend Kiara, who is also a part of the CCM community and with whom I could



*The Virgin of Sorrows sculpture located in Église Saint-Paul-Saint-Louis in the Marais quarter of Paris.*



*A tile display of the vision of Saint Francis of Assisi, located in the Capela das Almas (Chapel of Souls) in Porto, Portugal.*

attend Mass, but, more importantly, as someone to have candid conversations about our faith and how we were doing in our spiritual lives. I cannot say that I attended Mass weekly while abroad, but I was making a conscious effort to be more cognizant of the beauty I was witnessing and experiencing while abroad, which I know is due to God. I caught myself, quite often, being caught off guard by the overwhelming thankfulness that I had for the journey I was on, the time I had, the people I met, and so much more. So, instead of a more physically involved faith experience, I had more of a mindful and spiritual experience in faith while I spent my months abroad, one that I wouldn't trade for anything.

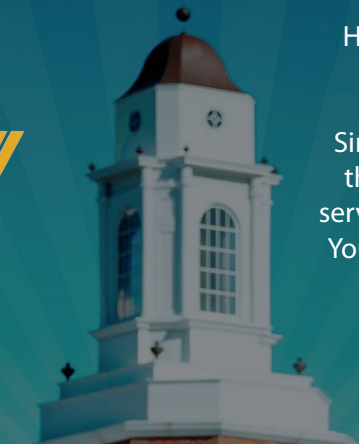
One of my favorite things to do while abroad was visiting various churches across Paris and other destinations like Spain, different regions of France, and Portugal. Not only did entering these spaces help me feel connected to my faith, but they also were some of the most beautiful and incredible places I visited. It was incredible to witness the true beauty and artistry of various cathedrals and churches around Europe and to see the love and devotion for these spaces, bringing us closer to God. I was so lucky that I was able to visit and see the true love and history of so many churches and cathedrals, some of which genuinely left me speechless.

*Zoe Eusemann '25, from Malvern, PA, spent her Fall semester studying in Paris.*



# ELON DAY

03 | 07 | 24



Help Elon CCM **IGNITE THE FUTURE** by making a donation on Elon Day - Thursday, March 7th.

Since 1977, CCM has been serving students at Elon through Masses, retreats, community gatherings, service trips, discipleship mentoring, and internships. Your gift ensures students can encounter Christ and grow their faith for years to come.

**All donations to CCM will be matched dollar for dollar, up to \$25,000!**

