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ILLUSTRATION BY TRACY ESCOBEDO & JOANNA CHAVEZ

GARDEN CULTURAL KALEIDOSCOPE 360 DEGREES
11AM-2PM

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Faith and religion are a personal experience.

Religion is a sensitive subject, and the various experiences both negative and positive within differing faith communities make hosting an open dialogue about the matter challenging. This is because everyone’s experience with faith and religion is unique. We’d like to begin this issue by explaining how faculty in San José State’s religious studies department choose to teach their courses and the messages students are taking away from the curriculum. In addition, some members of the editorial board confront their own struggles with religion and how it has shaped the respective beliefs we are comfortable supporting. Interpret as you please, and in this issue, we want to reflect the diversity of faith on our campus.

We focus on a variety of religious organizations and centers on and around campus and what members of these groups value the most and how their involvement has enhanced their connection with faith. We explore the intricacies of religion’s roots, the role faith plays in everyday life for college students and how beliefs influence individuals. There is value in every religion and spirituality. Oftentimes these ideologies are intertwined with culture, environment and identity.

Many major religions are inherently and dogmatically opposed to the LGBTQ+ community according to a 2022 scholarly article by Sue Westwood. 3m of the seven Spartan Daily editors are a part of the queer community. While many of us have similar identities, our backgrounds and ideologies differ, reflecting the diversity every religion offers.

Many of us who grew up in any religious-based environment were told that our fundamental existence was flawed and that our lifestyles were not conducive to a journey with God. And while some of us have had somewhat of a beneficial relationship with our faith, it is important to recognize how the broader SJU community views its relationship with or without any sort of higher person.

Religious texts and experiences are up to the individual to A person’s individual experience with faith can be passed down from generation to generation and it can be found through self-exploration.

Whether we reject or accept secular beliefs into our lives, religion, faith and spirituality are all still present and influence us daily. Religion and faith have the ability to both bring people together and divide them. Our intention is to respectfully cover the various religions, faiths and beliefs that bring solace to so many people in our community. In every way, religion is nuanced and personal. This issue reflects that sentiment.

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Faculty focus on human connection

By Brandon Nicholas
sjsunews.com/spartan_daily

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2023

Religious studies senior John Wagas is currently enrolled in Zárate's Middle Eastern Traditions and Islam course.

"Students in my classes learn about the human side, and that's a thing that is completely relevant to every aspect of your life," Zárate said. "It is part of his duty to ensure they open their minds and hearts to different faiths."

Zárate said he encourages students to talk about the similarities and differences of world religions from a human perspective by inviting them to share their personal experiences, but not limiting the discussion to one story.

"I want to hear about where they came from, and I want to hear about religion, I think it's really hard to hear those perspectives," Wagas said. "I want them to use that cultural knowledge they have in their classes and I try to help students both honor their own perspectives and engage with different cultures and religious disciplines," Zárate said.

He also said first-generation students tend to come to classes with a rich and deep understanding of their cultural background from immigrant communities.

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One of the exciting things that you get to do in religious studies is trying to get everybody to take a step back and open their minds and hearts to different faiths.

Marianne Delaporte Kabir
Religious studies lecturer

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Students in my classes learn about the human side, and that's a thing that is completely relevant to every aspect of your life."
By Dylan Newman

The Muslim Student Association (MSA) is a recognized student organization on campus that brings students together through faith, specifically in the religion of Islam. This year, MSA has an official membership required, the group on campus has more members than ever before and the event attendees.

MSA was founded in 2014, however Muslim students have been forming at SJSU since the early 1990s, according to previous Spartan Daily reporting. Maryam Ayadi, assistant administrative officer and president of the Muslim Student Association at SJSU said one of the club’s missions is to be the voice for Muslim students on campus.

Ayadi said to support this mission, the club hosts networking, social, spiritual and educational events for any student to attend.

Ayadi said that other clubs, they have official memberships, they have fees and things like that, our goal is not really like that. We want them to have a lot of levels of communication between us.

Suhba Khan, administrative officer and secretary for the organization, said the Muslim Student Association helps provide a space for Muslims to study, socialize and to be a part of the Islamic faith to practice their religion.

Khan said the club also works very closely with the MOSAIC Cross Cultural Center to secure a place where students can pray.

The MOSAIC Cross Cultural Center is a student resource center that offers programming and resources for students on campus, across the Bay Area and the world.

Khan said the organization is open to students of all faiths and is a space where students can come together and explore new cultures and faiths.

MSA also provides data by demographics including gender, age and ethnicity, but not by religion, according to the university’s analytics website. Ayadi said there could be nearly a thousand Muslims who attend SJSU, each requiring their own spaces daily to pray.

“This space is not a luxury, it’s necessary,” Ayadi said.

"MSA/IC has been really helpful," said Natalie Khan, an industrial and systems engineering senior.

The club makes students feel like they have a sense of comfort, “Qureshi said. “I never once questioned where it all came from – how did we start and how we end, “ Cho said.

Qureshi said this course dares to ask questions about death and dying challenged, and this class feeling sleepy, because it opens a forum for thorough enjoyment of the world’s religions is not the fault of any people, rather it is the result of there is simply not a lot of education about religions in most K-12 public schools.

Gilmore said. “I really think that everybody would be better off if everyone had to take at least one religious studies course while they were college student."

Follow Dylan on X (formerly Twitter) @th3dylanproject

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Gilmores said that the increased awareness of the study of religion is to try to help people understand the content of various religious beliefs and practices.

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The Newman Center Catholic Campus Ministry, which holds events throughout the year for its members, sits on the corner of East San Carlos Street and 10th Street.

Students bond at Newman Center

By Nikita Bankar

As a student-run organization at San José State, the Newman Center Catholic Campus Ministry promotes not only the importance of devoting oneself to religion, but the value of community and friendship.

The Newman Center was founded in 2011 and is affiliated with the Diocese of San José Catholic Schools, according to its Facebook.

Students, who are part of the SJSU Newman Catholics Student Association, devote their time to sharing their faith with fellow students, alumni, and family. According to the same site, Lily Cabello, animation sophomore and public relations officer at Newman, said the facility offers an open and welcoming space for those who have trouble finding a community in college.

"We are open to both Catholics and non-Catholics, so if you are looking to just learn about the faith, make friends, study or hang out, we are the place for that," Cabello said. "We want to help people build friendships and feel comfortable."

Cabello said she also spends a lot of time at the center, which gives her the chance to build new connections while also meeting with other officers to plan upcoming events.

The Newman Center has numerous collaborative events throughout the year, according to its website. During an event called "Lock In," members stay over at the facility and have an opportunity to get closer to one another, according to the same site.

During the Spring Retreat, members also engage in talks and activities around a theme selected by the officers at a retreat center, also according to the Newman Center website.

I get to have such deep conversations with them that I don't usually have with other people in my classes. It's not just friendship, it's love.

Joshua Milstead
Newman Center Treasurer

Pimentel also said he has become more social with others at SJSU because of his time and participation at the center. "I probably wouldn't have been able to talk to other people on campus had I not joined (the Newman Center)," Pimentel said. "The center holds Mass at 5:15 p.m. Mondays through Friday, and at 6:30 p.m. on Sundays, according to its website. Mass is the Church's way of fulfilling Christ's command in the Last Supper, and was always been the central form of Catholic worship, according to Learn Religions, a faith and religion-based publication.

Pimentel said before Mass, there is a form of worship called "adoration." "Adoration is a moment of silence for worshippers and adheres to be in the presence of God, " Pimentel said. "After that, we have a Mass."

The retreat influenced him to become an officer. "I probably wouldn't have been able to talk to other people on campus had I not joined (the Newman Center)," Pimentel said. "The center holds Mass at 5:15 p.m. Mondays through Friday, and at 6:30 p.m. on Sundays, according to its website. Mass is the Church's way of fulfilling Christ's command in the Last Supper, and was always been the central form of Catholic worship, according to Learn Religions, a faith and religion-based publication.

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Hindu Yuva offers sense of community

By Navin Krishnan

Hindu Yuva, a religious and cultural chapter that was established at the University of Washington to combat issues they face as young Hindu practitioners, developed a branch at San Jose State in 2008. Hindu Yuva SJSU dates back 5,000 years in India and is the oldest documented religion in the world, according to the Hindu American Foundation. Hindu Yuva SJSU is an organization consisting of students who look to unite the broader Hindu community and students from around the world to celebrate the philosophies of Hinduism, according to the Hindu Yuva website.

Hindu Yuva SJSU also aims to educate young Hindu students at San Jose State and looks to shed light on the stigma they face as a group, according to the organization's treasurer for Hindu Yuva. According to Hindu Yuva SJSU, Hindu Yuva arranges numerous events and features on campus. "Through these events, members contribute to their community by promoting a transformative journey," Deshmukh said. "An [average] participant definitely feels a connection to a spiritual root, but it also creates interpersonal skill." Prasad Khandat, a regional coordinator for Hindu Yuva, said the club is a non-rigid and friendly introduction into the world of Hinduism to educate anyone willing to learn about methods of wellness.

Khandat said one of Hindu Yuva SJSU's main priorities is to carry on the traditions of Hinduism away from India. "The purpose of Hindu Yuva is to create a platform and to preserve, promote, and practice laws and principles," Khandat said. "We aim to develop character and leadership skills and all of our members emphasize values such as self-discipline, self-confidence and selflessness. Hindu Yuva SJSU has an event to welcome new students called "Shwagammit," which translates to "whole welcome" in Sanskrit, the primary language used in Hinduism, with individuals who shared similar values and beliefs. Deshmukh said the concept of "Dharma" or principles crafted by years of practice of their religion, seems to be lost in an ocean of rich culture. This concept is derived from American Foundation. "Hindu Yuva derives its universe of knowledge and understands the task ahead of them," Khandat said. Hindu Yuva SJSU plans to bring this platform to bring together Hindu college students and community members who share similar values and beliefs.

I became a member of Hindu Yuva because I was drawn to its presence on the SJSU campus and opportunity to connect with individuals who shared similar values and beliefs. Ankita Arvind Deshmukh, Artical Intelligence graduate student

Hindu Yuva SJSU also focuses on personal development, spiritual well-being, and cultural awareness and service to others. The organization emphasizes Dharma and Seva. "Hindu Yuva's purpose is to bring together Hindu youth on college campuses across North America and create a sense of unity, cultural and national background and living on every continent," Khandat said.

Hindu Yuva SJSU is an organization consisting of students who look to unite the broader Hindu community and students from around the world to celebrate the philosophies of Hinduism, according to the Hindu Yuva website.

I became a member of Hindu Yuva because I was drawn to its presence on the SJSU campus and opportunity to connect with individuals who shared similar values and beliefs. Ankita Arvind Deshmukh, Artical Intelligence graduate student
I’ve built my own interpretation of faith.

I’ve never felt the need to subscribe to a singular religious ideology. I felt so distant from the Catholic religion, tall pillars towered over me in the church and carried its weight so high I would simply look up and be left grounded in confusion.

I recalled the daunting stained glass of the walls on my home church with the ominous smell of oil and lavender and the wallpaper of Jesus’s impending death. I always felt so desolate and alone when people would rise after mass, and I would turn and see my father towering over me in the church. He would attend Lutheran churches, Western Protestant churches, friends. He would attend classes for Catechism, my mother would clutch her rosary close to her chest and out her hand before daily dinner during holidays. My faith became a mosaic of different religions. I’ve read from multiple religious texts throughout my education, and even though I never considered my virtues to be pious, I would learn lessons from each text and select what I wanted to practice.

My faith is rooted in the idea that if we reach enlightenment, we fulfill our true purpose. If we reach enlightenment, we fulfill our destiny.

At our family dinners, we would share our day as an environmentalist working for a gas refinery.

I’ve learned I don’t need the need to find peace in a community, to find solace in the community. As Muslims believed God to be an ever compassionate being to create us and as we die we give back what ideologies were significant to us or to our own. We give back what makes me happy, what makes me happy, what makes me happy.

I’ve read other texts from different cultures and religions, and I’ve learned about the theory of evolution from my education, and even though I don’t necessarily think there’s one god, but I believe in some power out there and the spirituality of work, that humans are meant to exist without limitations.

I’ve read “The Book of Siddhartha” and “Tricycle.” I read “The Book of Siddhartha” and “Tricycle” organization, a website that goes with every religion I’ve read and practices I’ve adopted.

There are still plenty of texts I want to read and learn from. Even though sometimes I disagree with some aspects of these beliefs, I’m grateful to have an understanding of the diverse religions that make up our world.

Even when there was a looming tree that I didn’t belong in every experience to realize it to its fullest extent?

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I'm still faithful

Matthew Gonzalez
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

My Catholic faith is all I know, and I'm standing by it.

Trigger warning: Suicide
As a child, I was taught to combat personal hardships with my Catholic faith. It was simple. Didn't get the toy I wanted? Say three Hail Marys. Not allowed to go to a sleepover? Two Our Fathers were in order. Going to a Catholic middle school was a generally positive experience for me, attending Mass on Fridays with my church family was a blast and singing songs whose lyrics were much too complicated for my little mind to comprehend was a great time.

My worries were rooted in what game I was going to play at recess and what time my mom was going to drop off my Subway sandwich for lunch. Incredibly, I grew up and my hardships became more complex. It was in my senior year at St. Monica Catholic High School that the not-so-well-kept secret of my homosexuality began to haunt me every time I prayed. I was scared that God didn't accept prayers that came from the closet.

I was fortunate enough to be a part of a church that I believe to be welcoming, and will continue to pray to a God I know to be forgiving and full of love.

The overarching notion that being gay was a sin in Catholicism weighed heavily on my religious psyche in my teenage years. How could I find comfort in praying to a God who may not love or accept me? As backwards as that might sound, I chose to believe that my faith, even if I was gay, was still valid in my personal God’s eyes. While I subscribed to the idea that my sexuality simply didn’t align with the views and beliefs of the religion I grew up practicing, I continued to pray. Comfort in my religion came with a lot of reflection.

The mantra of my high schools church was “All Are Welcome Here” and I have always found great solace in that phrase, and it gave me hope that my sexuality didn’t completely negate the faith I had built since I was a kid.

Along with this, I didn’t ever remember hearing teachers, priests or my church’s monsignor condemn same-sex relationships or embrace homophobic or misogynistic viewpoints. For so much of my fear and doubt in my religion came from generalizations of Catholicism and the “man shall not lay with man” philosophy that I never personally saw. Granted, I went to school in Santa Monica, so I am fully aware that my positive experience in Catholic school might be personal to me.

Just because I was never exposed to a cult-like, punitive form of Catholicism, I cannot disregard other people’s negative experiences with the church. My heart breaks for queer kids who have had religion thrown in their face as a way to scare, demeans or invalidate them at their lifestyle. At its core, I believe that true Catholicism should embrace diversity and consider putting people for something they cannot control, including sexuality.

Buddhism, identity and sexual orientation can contribute to the destruction of physical and mental well-being among religious queer according to a 2015 Polish study done by Igor J. Piusiewicz and Miroslawa Klosowska-Nowak.

Queer participants reported having depressive moods, self-hatred and suicidal ideations in regards to religious identity according to the same study.

The dichotomy between growing up in a religious environment and being a gay man is something I struggle with everyday. I am often uncomfortable when people around me ask religion, but I also understand that the center of one’s conception of faith is their own experience. Unfortunately more often than not, queer kids are subjected to the worst parts of religion, the deep-seated hateful side that is present in many religions, not just Catholicism.

I was fortunate enough to be a part of a church that I believe to be welcoming, and will continue to pray to a God I know to be forgiving and full of love.

To me, the beauty of religion is its mosaic. Scriptures are to be interpreted individually, everyone’s vision of a “higher being” is different.

I continue to be steadfast in my faith, a faith based in Catholicism but shaped by me and my relationship with my God.

I’ve lost faith

Irene Adeline Milanez
NEWS EDITOR

Catholic elementary school pushed me away from the Church.

Trigger warning: homophobia, transphobia and suicide.

Having to face your own mortality at the ripe age of six-years-old is not best for your psyche.

The Catholic Church’s moral absolutism devastated me before I could even really understand the difference between “good” and “bad.”

Try pulling the moral implications of your everyday decision making on top of leading youths’ quest. From second to eighth grade, I attended a private Catholic school in Sacramento. The nicest thing you could describe my experience would probably be akin to being in a cult for six years.

I remember how uncomfortable I felt in class when my seventh grade religion teacher said the only marriage valid in the eyes of the church was between a man and a woman.

I sank into the wooden church pew as the priest droned on about the shame our country put on its queer children.

Learning that your existence as a queer middle schooler is “objectively disordered” and the best way to accept yourself is to see yourself as an object.

I have always been a curious child growing up, asking incessant questions about how the world worked and the answer the adults that had to deal with me. Catholicism always left me with more questions than answers.

What was so bad about me eating the apple to know the difference between good and evil?

Was God really cruel enough to wipe out all life on Earth except for one family and their boat full of random animals?

Why do I feel guilty for existing?

If you’ve never been to a Catholic Church, it’s a lot of sitting down, standing up, sitting back down again and thinking about the inevitability of death.

As I get older, I realized that some of the questions I had could not be answered by my religion.

I had to figure it out on my own.

When I finally realized consuming for Catholicism was no longer sustainable and I turned towards atheism, I was able to talk to others my age who went through similar struggles to me, as well as a professional therapist who never told me to just “pray it away.”

I find comfort in talking about these feelings with my friends from elementary school who experienced growing up in the same confusing, hateful environment.

Despite receiving baptism, holy communion and confirmation, I felt like I have truly distanced myself entirely from the Catholic Church.

I have stopped attending church for six years now and I am at peace without a religion that I ever was following a church that did not want me.
Religious experts discuss death

By Dominique Huber
SJSU SPARTAN DAILY

Many religions have specific rituals, traditions and beliefs geared towards making the concept of death easier for people to grasp and accept, according to Todd Perreira, a religious studies lecturer. He said there is a reason why so much effort has been put toward this cause.

"My theory is that human beings need meaning in their lives," Perreira said. "It's not enough just to exist. It's not enough just to be conscious beings. We need meaning in our lives and death, if we're not prepared for it, (it) can sort of violate all of that."

SJSU librarian Kathryn Hsu said, "It's a way of honoring them and their lost loved ones as a Mexican holiday in which they maintain with their own mortality.

"I see it as spiritual," Blackmer Reyes said. "I'm recognizing those who have prepared my life and certainly the gratitude that I have with them." She said Dia de los Muertos has shaped the way she deals with death and the connections she keeps with those who have passed on.

Todd Perreira, religious studies lecturer

He said that after my parents passed away, he said. "There's an idea that the person who's passed away might have attachments to their family and might not want to leave this world, pass away, and the next world, so you can do many sorts of prayers and ceremonies to encourage him to move on." He said when she attends service, the temple is divided into two sales, one for those who are participating in the 49-day service, and the other for those who aren't.

"I did that after my parents passed away," he said. "It's a way of making the concept of death easier for people to grasp and accept, according to Todd Perreira, a religious studies lecturer. He said there is a reason why so much effort has been put toward this cause.

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SJ celebrates Día de los Muertos

#1. A man dressed in traditional Aztec regalia plays a drum while incense burns and dancers perform for a crowd during the annual Día San José festival.

#2. Classic Mexican goods, such as dolls from Querétaro, line the tables at a vendor’s booth at the event to celebrate Día de los Muertos on Oct. 21.

#3. A woman paints an attendee’s face at a small booth in a style to mimic sugar skulls.

#4. A vendor wraps up a tamal for an order from their booth, Super Tamales, in Downtown San José on Oct. 21.

#5. San José State University amluna Alma Cruz poses as event attendees take photos of her in front of a mural.

#6. Various classic cars and low riders line up to exhibit ofrendas, a traditional display of photos and goods in memorial of lost loved ones during Día de los Muertos.
Healing with faith through recovery

By Bryan Nicolas Sheppard

Student athletes at San Jose State come from all over the world, possessing a variety of cultural backgrounds and religious ideologies and religions. When it comes to practicing for a competition or training, many athletes turn to faith, as a form of meditation, some incorporating their religious beliefs into their daily routines in order to better understand themselves and their teammates.

"I worked with a mental coach, Lauren Sheppard is a cheerleader for SJSU's spirit team who has always had faith in herself, but her faith grew stronger during the pandemic," said student athlete Malia Luna. "Faith is something that is a part of my daily life."

One of the biggest moments for a cheerleader is competition, according to Sheppard. "When you’re standing and watching at the back of the mat to go on, the nerves and the stress is truly high. To reduce the competitive nerves, Sheppard said she has learned to collectively take a deep breath and she follows up by taking individual deep breaths of her own.

Being her second year on the spirit team, Luna said she has asked her to talk about her experience and perform during competitions.

"It feels great to be on the mat just standing there breathing," she said. "Nobody else really does that." Sheppard said she ends her day by preparing material offerings for her altar, which is a religious expression of the Buddhist faith. "Being a college student, a lot of us have anxiety and don’t manage it well," she said. "I grew up in Turlock, Calif. where I practiced Buddhism. But over the last year and a half, I have converted to Christianity."

"God knows more than I do, and I can know more than he knows, which knows what’s going to happen, and he will use every situation,” Sheppard said. Since coming to SJSU, Shallou-Enes has attended Westminster Christian Church in San Jose. "(God) used that experience, to grow me and strengthen my relationships with others because people have to have to reach out and I did have to trust in other people," she said. Luckily for Shallou-Enes, she had a support team, just a block away from campus in an organization named Called Up.

"She’s one of our main leaders right now. She has been with a couple years of age," she said. When Elliott heard about the news he said she was humbled by hearing about Liz’s injury and couldn’t believe any negative changes in her attitude. "I get the world running and when you see someone go down with injury I know they’re going to pray over them," Elliott said. "I want to be there to pray over them to come alongside them."

Despite her injury, Shallou-Enes continued her daily routine by continuing to go to Called Up’s weekly dinners and represent her faith in Sunday services. "Called Up was the big thing for me and how they were relating your relationship with God, since my kids knew how to glorify God through the organization and praying before meals, going to church and having a relationship with God, according to its Instagram bio."

Environmental science senior Malia Luna is a Christian athlete who plays for SJSU’s softball team. Raised in a Christian-Lutheran household, Luna said she grew up praying before meals, going to church and having a relationship with God.

She said she also attends Monday dinners at the Called Up house where they sing songs to praise God, said she attended the organization for over 15 years, she said. "That’s pretty special to see," she said.

"Called Up is a Christian athlete who plays for SJSU’s softball team. Raised in a Christian-Lutheran household, Luna said she grew up praying before meals, going to church and having a relationship with God, according to its Instagram bio."

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As an athlete for over 15 years, Luna has learned to emphasize religion more upon entering college-level softball. "I started being more open with sharing the word of God with people and really finding myself in a deeper relationship with God," Luna said. She was able to find solace with her faith in her teammates during her first year at SJSU, after moving away from home and losing the ability to confide in her family on a regular basis.

Luna said she also attends Monday dinners at the Called Up house where they sing songs to praise God. She was encouraged to visit Called Up’s Monday dinners by a senior athlete last year, and since has been attending meetings and growing closer to God.

Feeling that her teammates keep their faiths and battles to themselves, Luna said she feels her teammates keep their faiths and battles to themselves and becomes more approachable with one another. "I can help athletes reach breakthroughs."

"I’ve noticed that my teammates keep to themselves and don’t like talking about their faith," she said. "But we want to share our faith, in a safe place."

She said she practices the word of God by praying each morning and reading the Bible. "I was born and raised in the Catholic church, and right now, I’m still in the Church, but I’m also taking Christianity or Catholicism," Rico said. "At the end of the day, I’m in God and follow his word."

"I get the athletic world to talk about their faith, " she said. "But we want to share our faith, in a safe place."

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"In the past month to involve her fellow athletes in sharing their testimonies and how they try to present to others the good news as a group to make the conversation of religion less judgmental," Rico said.

Luna said her softball coach Burns said to make things less judgmental with one another to create deeper relationships within the team. "She also said the team prayer is not meant to be sacred, but rather to allow us to talk to God and their fellow teammates in a safe space.

"I was a little bit before when a girl was going through something and we were able to pray amongst her, as a team, which was something very special to see," Luna said.

Isabella Shallou-Enes recovery in the hospital after her non-malignant injury.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ISABELLA SHALLOU-ENES

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How Spartan athletes use faith on the field

By By Bryan Nicolas Sheppard

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By Alina Ta
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

Some Asian Americans are trying to reconnect with Buddhism, but they still struggle with feeling like they don't understand the language. "It's become very much like a submissive floor, essentially. You'd be kneeling on the floor, or bowing, essentially," Ching said. "In China, there would be no monks and nuns that used to provide services. So it’s become very much of just feeling lost when you don’t understand the language."
Students talk winter holidays

By Tracy Escudero

With winter holidays fast approaching, the overshadowing of Hanukkah is imminent.

A list of the most popular religious events in the United States in 2023 survey by Statista. The survey shows that December is a religious time with Jesus Christ, followed by Christmas while only 58% chose Hanukkah, although both holidays and Christmas carry in their minds and hearts.

Avila said she creates art in a spiritual zone, where all her intuitive it is to her.

Muñoz said that iconography expresses pride in culture.

“Icons are the imaginations painted as expression from churches and have been important that Hanukkah is celebrated in the U.S. identify as Christian and about 2.4% of Americans in the U.S. identify themselves as Jews. About 93% of Christians celebrate Christmas and 24% of Jews celebrate Christmas and most American Jews celebrate Hanukkah and Christmas.”

Huddlestun said she prefers painting in oil, and the dark oil paint can dip into the canvas used to light up the candles.

“Art is like a root, a source of seeing the world and helps to transport us to a spiritual zone, where art where people often see iconography don’t even know the names of. ”

With every stroke I paint, it’s like I’m in a bigger world. ”

SJSU Art and Art History Department

“I have a tattoo of an eye on the back of my neck and just wishing there were enough. “I don’t see a lot of Mexican tradition that most important that Hanukkah is imminent. “Although sometimes I feel weird about celebrating Christmas, I do enjoy the calmness that comes with lighting the candles, not worrying about who gets what and all that. “I don’t still enjoy shopping for a Christmas tree though! she said.

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 Churches bolster togetherness 

By Nikita Bankar

Vibrant communities, supported by a strong spiritual base, have diverse settings and are just a few of the many pieces that make up a healthy and diverse collection of Christian churches in the Bay Area. The Bay Area is known not only for its diversity with regard to people, cultures and environments, but for the same within its Christian communities, according to The Christian Post.

Those who run New Beginnings Community Church, which has locations in both Redwood City and San Jose, believe that the diversity of their church reflects the truth that God loves all people, according to its website. According to its website, New Beginnings Community Church has a vision with four key elements: to reach people who feel far from God, to make disciples, to build families and to transform communities.

A disciple is someone who adheres to the teachings of another and takes up the ways of someone else, according to Desiring God.

Mandy Santos, spiritual formation pastor at Echo Church, said the church’s main goal is to develop a pathway for people, no matter where they are, to the faith of Christianity. The Spiritual Formation Pastor’s primary responsibility is to create and implement a strategic plan that embraces, supports and resources small groups, missional communities and large adult groups for the purpose of fostering continuing, spiritual growth of every person has intrinsic value, according to its website. The church focuses on encountering people and transforming their lives, families and communities across the Bay Area and beyond, according to the same site.

“Just giving people space, that’s what it felt like,” Santos said. “It was beautiful seeing the diversity of young people, old people and nationalities.”

In 2008, four families moved together from across the country to start Echo Church (previously called South Bay Church), according to its website. They were propelled by a vision to start a church that communicated the timeless truths of Scripture in a way that could be practically applied and understood, even for those who felt estranged and far from God.

“I want to help provide some type of journey for them,” Santos said. “It doesn’t matter how old you are, or what you believe on.”

Echo Church has locations in Fremont, Redwood City and San Jose, said having a diverse congregation within their church is important, since as humans, we are made to coexist with other people.

“

We think our faith is expressed through community, since you are able to share your true love and honor for God by expressing your true love and honor for other people,” he said. Browne also said diversity is paramount in churches, as it mirrors the reason for God making humans different from one another.

“Through the church, we can make people different, so they have different aspects, features, cultures, phenotypes and things that really work together to make something beautiful,” Browne said.

Ed Ware, online campus pastor at New Beginnings Community Church, said making people feel comfortable and coming as they are is one of the church’s biggest goals.

“If people want to dress up, they can dress up,” Ware said. “If they want to dress down, they can dress down. We try to make everyone feel comfortable for most people that come, that is the experience that they have,” he said. Ware also said diversity is important within a church because of the different experiences the members bring with them.

“Churches, just like any other groups, can be very biased in a lot of ways,” Ware said. “However, by having people that look different than you and talk differently than you, you realize that we are all one family.”

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Robby Browne Worship pastor at New Beginnings Church

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Catholicism is undeniably influenced by brujería

While brujería and Catholicism are inherently different, those who have melded into a gorgeous practice that honors modernity and tradition.

Alecia Alvarez

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