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A Chat With the Chaplain of the NSMC

Lily Frontero

Reporter-in-the-Field,
Freshman

Jane Korins is the director of spiritual care services of the North Shore Medical Center. She's been the Clinical Chaplain there for seventeen years and has developed the department. Jane didn't choose to be a Clinical Chaplain, but her college experience at 38 years old led her there.

"When I started my studies my interests were in Psychology and Philosophy. When I graduated, I became interested in Theology," Jane says.

After graduating from Salem State she later received her Master's Degree in Theological studies at the Harvard Divinity School. When Jane began her studies at Divinity School, she didn't know where studying theology would take her. She knew that she wanted her career to be somewhat related to theology, but she didn't know what she would do after graduating. However, in her last year in school, Korins hit a turning

point when she did Field Placement Studies at a Hospice in Brookline.

She explains, "It was then that I realized how much I loved being with those who are ill and are dying and how much I enjoyed providing spiritual and emotional support to them."

One of Jane's favorite parts of being a Clinical Chaplain is working with kids. Even though there is a Chaplain that is assigned to North Shore Children's Hospital, she has many opportunities to go over there to work with the kids. She also works in many other pediatric parts of the hospital. Jane regularly does spirituality groups with the kids.

I then asked Korins if spirituality is always about religion.

"Absolutely not," Jane responds. She also said that she has met so many spiritual people that don't follow any particular religion and that many people find meaning in religion, but many others that she's met find spirituality through nature and relationships.

"Spirituality is more about the core essence of who you authentically are and how you

find meaning in life," she explained.

I wondered that if being so courageous all day to help ones who suffered ever affected Jane. After I asked her she clarified,

"There are times that I have been deeply affected through the deep suffering and trauma that I have witnessed. But the silent retreats that I go on throughout the year and the spiritual director that I see on a monthly basis to process things helps quite a bit. However, my experience with those who are suffering has been an incredible gift to me. People who are facing challenges have an authenticity that has created me. And has shown me the fragility and the preciousness of life."

To end the discussion I asked her a difficult question,

"If you had to sum up your entire experience and perspective you have taken from this what would it be?"

Jane answered, "By working with the sick, suffering, and dying people, I am always amazed at the incredible strength and power of the human spirit."

A Sit-Down with Ms. Francois

Meredith Piela

News Coordinator, Junior

I have been studying French since the 7th grade. When I am in college, I would like to study abroad, most likely during my junior year. In order to get some information on studying abroad, I decided to interview someone who had done it. The person who I chose is my French teacher, Mary François.

Q: How long did you study abroad for (semester, year)?

A: I studied for one semester (Fall).

Q: Where did you go to study?

A: I studied in Aix-en-Provence in southern France.

Q: Did you go by yourself, or were there other people you knew going to the same place?

A: I went on my own.

Q: When did you go?

A: I went during the first semester of my junior year at university.

Q: Why did you decide to study abroad?

A: I always knew that I wanted to study abroad. When applying to colleges, one of the things I looked at was abroad programs. My research paper for AP English 11 was on study abroad. I've always been someone who loves to travel, and I also have two older brothers who studied abroad. They both went even further than Europe (Tanzania and Tibet) so I thought for a time about going somewhere exotic, but I couldn't give up a chance to live in France. I was a French major, so it made sense, but I also already knew that I loved the country. I had visited my high school exchange partner in southern France and loved it. That's why I chose to be in the south rather than in Paris.

Q: What was your favorite part of the experience and why?

A: I'm torn between the day to day life in the south and the possibility of travel. I loved just experiencing the daily life in Aix. Whether it was dinner with my host family, a coffee at a cafe in old town or exploring the various markets, Aix is a very beautiful city. It's one thing to learn about a different culture, but something else to live it and experience the differences in life, school, and cultural points of view. I also loved the ability to travel. There are many villages to visit in Provence, and I also made my way to different places in France. However, most weekends I traveled to different cities throughout Europe (Barcelona, Madrid, Porto, Rome, Athens/Santorini, Munich).

Q: What was your experience like?

A: It was certainly hard at times. And though France's culture isn't terribly different from the U.S., there is still enough of a change to cause a bit of culture shock. You start to miss certain aspects of home whether it's people, foods, and other things you might be used to like activities and sports. Host families are often picked carefully, but you're still living in someone else's home. My host family didn't have Wifi, and I had to go to an internet cafe in order to skype friends and family, so that could feel lonely during the week at night. And

I remember at the time, it was hard, however the lasting impressions are all very positive. On returning to Tufts, I quickly regretted not staying longer. I missed living in France for months after, and continued to until I moved back two years later! I met one of my best friends while abroad, and I have some of my best memories from those months. And knowing the experiences of my friends in other countries, I know that any experience in a different culture is just as exciting, educational and unforgettable. I had friends in Europe, but also some in China and Egypt, who had an even greater culture shock.

Q: What are three important pieces of advice you would give to someone who wants to study abroad?

A: My first piece of advice is to fully take in your new culture. It's sometimes hard when you're with other Americans to not spend most of your time with them. However, I would highly suggest spending time just at home with the family, meeting local friends (especially if you're in classes with local students) and getting the most of the opportunity. Secondly, I would say to anyone who's nervous about traveling away from what's familiar, that it's certainly worth it. It wasn't my first time traveling, which it may be for some, but I still felt scared about being far for several months. It's hard at first, but if you let yourself experience the first couple weeks, you'll quickly find yourself feeling at home. Thirdly, many students may not be sure about studying abroad because they're worried about class credits, or being away from friends and activities at university. I had some friends who were pre-med who felt that they were unable to take time abroad, however, in my experience; schools will help you find the right program that matches your major and helps with required credits. And I can say from experience that you have three years of university, the whole year is worth it!

Q: Would you recommend studying abroad to students? If so, who (specifically-high school/college students) would you recommend it to?

A: I know that I'm partial to the experience, especially since my passion is French and French culture, but I would highly recommend studying abroad. I think that it can be a great experience for high school students if that student is ready to try and immerse in the culture, which can be hard. I worked with American high school students in France and some of them were looking for more of a vacation with friends, which can be fun, but not as fulfilling. I would definitely advise college students to go abroad. Especially because it's becoming much more popular and universities are very supportive. Many of them have their own programs, or you can find your own and most universities will support most outside companies. My mother was one of the first students to go abroad to Paris in the 70s at Smith and it was very rare! Nowadays, depending on the school, you'll find most of your peers have left campus during junior year.

Old Holiday, New Traditions

Morgan Hardwick

News Coordinator, Junior

After seventeen Valentine's Days, I thought it was time to veer from the traditional fashion of chocolate and flower-giving America has fallen in love with. Around the world, countries have established their own traditions to celebrate February 14th, and I thought there was no better way to change up Cupid's Day than with customs of another country.

Germany, Spain and Austria all share similar traditions to us Americans, and show their love through bouquets of roses. I love flowers as much as the next girl, but I wanted a new tradition, so I set my sights on Japan.

Japan celebrates Valentine's Day on the 14th of February and March. On the first date, the woman gives a man a gift, and on the second date, known as White Day, the man returns the same gift to the woman. Ultimately the woman chooses her own gift, and the man doesn't have to pay for it. Seems like a win-win for both parties involved; it certainly eliminates the stress of choosing the perfect gift!

However, as much fun as it might be to choose your own gift, it probably wouldn't quite bring the same joy if you were spending Valentine's Day alone. Scotland, though, doesn't let anyone spend the day of love without someone beside them. The country throws a festival with an equal amount of unmarried men and women to celebrate the day. The women draw a name of a man to partner with for the night. What better time to look for a suitor than on the day of love? I'd say Scotland definitely has figured out a great alternative to online dating services.

Of course, not every relationship flourishes

and some are, inevitably, left alone on Valentine's Day. In that case, celebrate the way French women used to. In France, if a man wasn't enthralled with his valentine and left, women would build huge bonfires and burn photos of the man that left them, along with verbally abusing his "worthless heart." However the French government banned the custom because it left too much room for nastiness and ridicule. But hey, if it suits your fancy, it certainly hasn't been banned in the States!

Valentine's Day is all about sending love to those you love, including your friends. In Denmark, men send gaekkbrev, or joking letters to friends and lovers, with rhyming messages but no name. Instead there's only a dot for each letter in his name. If the woman correctly guesses the sender using the dots, she receives an Easter egg later in the year. This Danish tradition is one that must be tried if you're spending the 14th with your friends.

Italy also has traditionally celebrated Valentine's Day in a friendly way, by throwing a spring festival, where young people can gather and listen to music and poetry in ornamental gardens. It's a really interesting idea, but sadly this tradition however became less involved over the years. If it's dying in Italy, why not bring it over to America?

Around the world the day of love is being celebrated in ways that bring people together, and this is something us Americans are lacking in. Valentine's Day should be spent with the ones you love, not with the chocolate you love. Bring the traditions of another country into your home and spend the festivities with the ones in your heart. After all, no matter which countries' tradition you choose to celebrate, isn't that what Valentine's Day is about?

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