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CRITICAL

CROSSROADS



SPIRITUAL MEETS PROFESSIONAL

For students like Victoria O'Dore, the ICTC provides an opportunity to participate in dialogues they might not otherwise know about.

Though she loves studying theology, Victoria's busy nursing schedule doesn't allow much room for philosophy and theology classes. But last year she became the first student to take up the ICTC's invitation to join a Catholic Heritage Lecture reading group usually made up of faculty and staff.

It wasn't long before she found the seed of a question in keynote speaker Kristin Heyer's writings on immigration ethics: "As a nurse, when you have people who are undocumented, what do you do?" Victoria describes nursing not merely as a career path but as a vocation, one that requires discernment and critical engagement with such questions.

Throughout the year, Victoria has made time to deepen her understanding of theology, Catholicism and interreligious dialogue, attending Lisa Sowle Cahill's Ann O'Hara Graff Lecture on post-Vatican II issues of gender equality, Sister Mary John Mananzan's talk on human trafficking and the School of Theology and Ministry's 50th anniversary celebration of Vatican II and *Nostre Aetate*, the document which revolutionized the Church's approach to interreligious dialogue.

At the anniversary celebration, she was impressed by the way in which organizers and participants were "open about the good and bad," the myriad of issues that arise when religious communities enter into dialogue. "There's no perfect solution," she says, "but there are steps the Church is taking to improve its relations."

The event allowed Victoria to celebrate and critique different aspects of Catholicism. Rather than viewing the Church as a "vacuum into which diverse perspectives disappear," she began to see the Church in as an "interreligious space," one with plenty of room for diverse perspectives.

As Victoria enters her third year at Seattle University, the ICTC will remain a place where she can find resonance between the professional and the spiritual.

"So many aspects of ICTC programming echo why I wanted to go into nursing in the first place," she says. "I want to connect and help heal people."

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Young people demand change. They wonder how anyone can claim to be building a better future without thinking of the environmental crisis and the sufferings of the excluded.

POPE FRANCIS, *Laudato Si'*

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