

Dear Notre Dame Student:

It was August 2009. I had finished seven years of study following high school and had successfully completed the Missouri Bar exam. I had done it, I was a lawyer. I had aspired to go to law school since I was a student at Notre Dame High school. I worked hard for what I wanted and had reached what I thought was my destination. Then the struggle to find a job began. I wrote numerous cover letters, went on multiple lunches, submitted my resume at dozens of companies and I continued to come up short.

Then after several months of job searching I realized what was missing, my faith. One morning I got up to do my normal routine of brewing some coffee and sitting down to apply for yet another job, when I realized something had to change. I decided to take my journal and coffee and sit on the front porch of my St. Louis apartment. It was then that I found what I had been searching for all along. Strength from Christ to get me through this time. I began to write and pray, reflecting on several Bible passages and finally started to turn it all over to God. I started asking God what HIS plan was for my life and what HE wanted me to do. For the first time in my life I stopped focusing on what I wanted and just listened. Listened to the silence and it was here that I found peace. And while my struggle to find a job continued until September 2010, I finally had, hope. Hope that there was a plan for me, I just needed to be patience. I learned once again to rely on that stillness and quiet that comes from a deep relationship with Christ. The relationship that truly began when I was a Notre Dame student.

There will be many struggles, excitements, accomplishments, disappointments, joys, firsts, lasts, new beginnings, new friendships, new loves and broken hearts in your journey through life. But building a close friendship with Christ will give you the strength and drive to get you through all these moments of life. Christ will be with you no matter what you go through. He is the one person you can always rely on, talk to, vent to, cry with, be happy with, and most importantly, just sit quietly with. Only He can read our hearts and minds. And He will never turn away from us. It was at Notre Dame High School that I had the opportunity to find this deeper relationship with Christ.

I certainly had my struggles in High School and didn't always remember to put God first, but when I did, my life had so much more peace, joy and meaning. Throughout the years, I have had my ups and downs and often forget to rely on Christ to guide me, but His friendship and love got me to where I am today. I couldn't have survived the year following Law School without my relationship with God. His patience with me gave me the strength to get up every day and live my life with hope.

As you embark as a Notre Dame student this year, be prepared to embrace it all. Experience something new, be willing to do something crazy or different. Introduce yourself to someone new and always be willing to step into the unknown. Be open to encountering Christ in the classroom, halls, activities, and people of Notre Dame. God will always surprise you when you are willing to let Him in. You will bond with old friends, make new friends, and find comfort and strength from the teachers, staff and alumni at Notre Dame. We truly do become a family that you are now a part of forever.

Still today, I look back on my times at Notre Dame and realize how blessed I was to attend a school that puts Christ first. I have met many friends over the years who didn't have the same high school experience that I had. Now is the time to open your heart to Christ and see what He has in store for you. Every day can bring something or someone new to your life that can help shape your future. Take advantage of this time you have and experience all that you can. Join different clubs, try out for different sport teams, try a new academic class, audition for a musical or play, or sing in the choir. Reach out to the support you have around you and know you always have someone to turn to in this Notre Dame family. When you feel lost or struggling, or just want to share some excitement, stop in for a quick word with God in the Chapel. Many life changing moments have happened through the years and will happen for you also in this sacred space.

I want to welcome you to the Notre Dame family. Know this is only the beginning of your journey with Notre Dame. I will be praying for you as you start this new adventure and start to really learn who you are. Don't be afraid to welcome all the feelings into your heart. Your ND family will be here praying for you and supporting you along the way. Remember you always have a friend in Christ and don't forget:

"God's plan will always be greater and more beautiful than all your disappointments".

God Bless you and welcome home,

Amy
Class '02