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Peace Students Named St. Catherine of Siena Scholars

Six Queen of Peace seniors defended three years of independent research to become St. Catherine of Siena Scholars at the ninth annual Catherine Congress on April 30. The Catherine program, unique to Queen of Peace and similar to a college-level independent study, is an innovative academic opportunity for Peace students to collaborate with a mentor and engage in rigorous research above and beyond their normal course of study.

“The Catherine Congress is a celebration of academic excellence, hard work, dedication and commitment to the Queen of Peace community and its values,” said Joyce Cruse, St. Catherine of Siena Senior Level Coordinator.

The six seniors presented topics that varied greatly. Emily Boyle explored the extent that a school’s Catholic identity influences adolescents to live the Catholic way of life. Megan Graves analyzed whether cosmetic testing on animals is humane if it only benefits the human race. Allison Kirwan focused her project on the risk factors and prevention of heart disease in women. Kelly Kosiewicz explored the challenges those with special needs face while attending school, emphasizing aspects such as law changes, diagnosis and funding. Marcella Perez analyzed how young women who self-injure are treated by institutions, societies and communities. Sara Seweryn focused her project on the effectiveness of recycling and why more people should recycle.

Students are accepted into the Scholars Program on the basis of a 3.8 grade point average, reflective essay, teacher recommendations and an interview. To become a St. Catherine Scholar, candidates must be involved in the program for at least three years and successfully defend their

projects by the time of graduation. Projects must be interdisciplinary in nature, linked to one of the five Dominican values or Catholic Social Justice Principles and attempt to answer a significant question with societal implications. Candidates also worked with community mentors as they conducted research, prepared their defenses and executed action plans. This year, a new category was created – St. Catherine of Siena Scholar With Distinction. Seniors Emily Boyle and Allison Kirwan earned this accolade through extensive research and action plans that spanned the course of two years.

The St. Catherine of Siena program, dedicated to one of the first woman saints to be declared a Doctor of the Catholic Church, demonstrates Queen of Peace’s encouragement of students to question the status quo and commitment to excellence inside the classroom and beyond.

Photo caption:



Six Peace seniors defended three years of independent research to become St. Catherine of Siena Scholars at the ninth annual Catherine Congress on April 30. Pictured - Front row, from left: Marcella Perez, Sara Seweryn and Emily Boyle; Back row, from left - Natalie Formica,

(Catherine Scholar Coordinator), Kelly Kosiewicz, Allison Kirwan, Megan Graves and Joyce Cruse (Catherine Senior Level Coordinator).