

DONNELLY COLLEGE DIGEST

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CONTAGIOUS LOVE

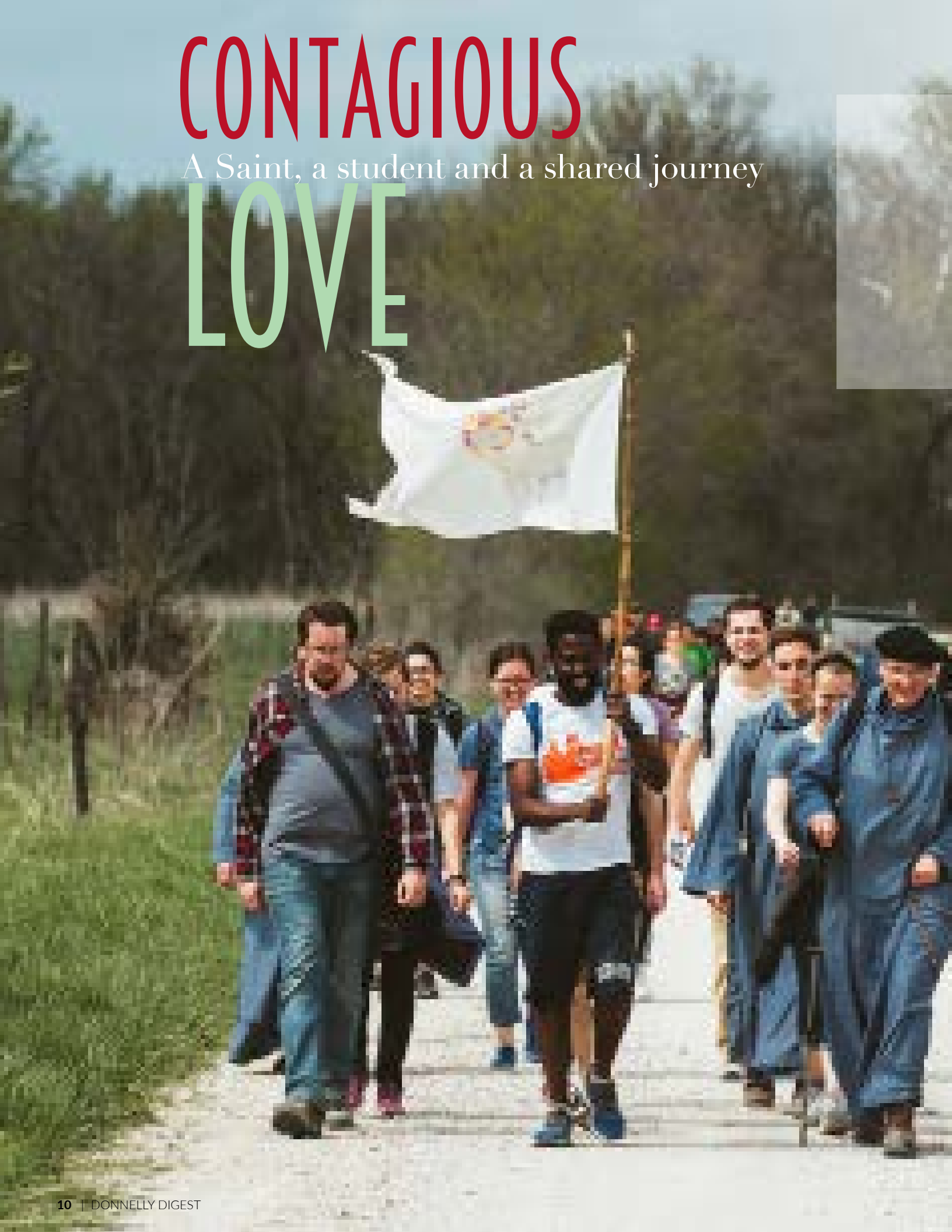
A Saint, a student and a shared journey



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LOVE



A hill, even in the Kansas prairie, can seem daunting after a two-day, 37-mile pilgrimage. After that distance, a hill is the last thing more than 50 travelers wanted to see. Tired, blistered and ready to be finished, they looked at the last part of their journey begrudgingly, but the Sisters of the Lamb began to sing, carrying the group forward to their destination. It was at the top of that very hill where the group learned that these religious sisters were not the only Sisters to traverse this terrain in hopes of keeping a tired people going.

Seven years before independence was declared for our thirteen colonies, Rose Philippine Duchesne was born to a politically active family in a small village in France and called by God to a life of religious service. She would eventually find her way to what we now know as Kansas, and she would eventually

become the only person who lived on Kansas soil to become a saint, canonized by the Catholic Church.

One hundred and sixty-six years after Philippine's death, a Donnelly College student embarked on a pilgrimage to remember and celebrate the life and legacy of Philippine.



Photo courtesy of the Little Sisters of the Lamb.

That student, Anette Amaya, was among the more than 50 people who traversed the Kansas landscape to eventually arrive at the shrine and park dedicated to St. Philippine. The best part of Amaya's journey may not have been the destination itself, but rather the journey and relationships formed along the way—perhaps the same as experienced by Philippine on her journey.

Philippine was educated by nuns and expected by her mother to dedicate herself to serving the poor. She entered the convent at age 18, but, by the time she was 20, the French Revolution had begun and her plans to enter a religious house were suppressed for 11 years. During that time, however, she attempted to live the rule of her order before she ever stepped foot in the convent.

After entering religious life in an official capacity in the early 1800s, Philippine expressed her desire to serve in the New World among Native Americans. Despite her desire, it was not until 1818 that Philippine was able to journey from France to New Orleans with Bishop DuBourg of Louisiana. After just six weeks in New Orleans, Philippine led a group up the Mississippi River where she was directed to open a school in the village of St. Charles, Mo. After serving 23 years in St. Charles, and after once again waiting for the right time, her longtime dream to serve among Native Americans would finally come true at the age of 72 when she was assigned to establish a school for Potawatomi girls near Sugar Creek, Kan.

By this time in her life, Philippine had become frail and was unable to help with the physical work that was commonly part of day-to-day life on the prairie. Instead, she spent much of her time in spiritual support and prayer for and among the Potawatomi people. After only one year, she was called back



Stained glass window depicting Philippine in prayer with Native Americans. Photo courtesy of Society of the Sacred Heart.

to St. Charles because of her health, but she nevertheless left an undeniable legacy of love and service among her newfound friends, in a newfound land.

Helen McLaughlin, former superior general of the Society of the Sacred Heart wrote, “What impresses me about Philippine is her ability to respond to difficult events and times; to accept and love a new and totally different country and way of life; to enter wholeheartedly into another culture, language, and system of values and to appreciate these.”

“The Sisters’ and Brothers’ love for the experience, for each other and their love for God was contagious. You couldn’t stay in your box, it was how I would imagine heaven would be—everyone as one big happy family.”

Anette Amaya

The same could be said about many Donnelly College students, especially those, like Philippine, who are

courageous, determined travelers who had to wait for the right time to follow their dreams and callings.

For Amaya, her journey of faith and her own personal pilgrimage started after a long, difficult period in her life. After seemingly endless hardships, on an especially difficult night, she called out in her room, “Jesus you are my shepherd, I will follow you.” This shocked even Amaya, who, as a freshman in high school, had never gone to church, never talked about God and never knew much about Jesus. She later had a religious sister, one of those Sisters who sang with her to the top of the hill, tell her to, “keep that moment in your heart, that was the Holy Spirit.”

From that point forward, Amaya's journey was inextricably connected to her faith. She found Catholicism and transferred to Cristo Rey, a Roman Catholic high school founded by the Sisters of Charity in Leavenworth. After graduation, she was determined to go to college, even with the uncertainty that accompanied it.

“I’m a DACA student and I’ve always been so worried about how I am going to arrive at my goal of getting my degree,” she said. “But I’ve said to people as they ask me what my plans are after college that I can’t control everything, so I leave it up to God. It is in God’s hands.”

Attending a Catholic college was her goal, but even with scholarship assistance, only one Catholic higher education option was feasible - Donnelly College.

Amaya arrived at Donnelly a bit apprehensive. She was anxious because she had grown up in the area surrounding the campus in Kansas City, Kan., where she experienced some difficult circumstances. She wanted to leave the past behind and never look back, but she was also determined to



Anette Amaya hangs artwork in the hallway from Donnelly's spring Painting I class in 2017.

reach her goals, no matter what path she had to take to get there. While her circumstances were difficult at the time and it was hard to trust, Amaya acknowledged that “God was leading me here.”

At Donnelly, Amaya found a community that welcomed her and loved her. She wishes “more people could come and experience the love and sense of community, and how people are encouraged to defy the odds.”

In addition to classroom education at Donnelly, she also found unexpected opportunities on campus that would change her life. It was early in 2018 when posters began to appear on the bulletin boards that advertised in large, bold letters, “PILGRIMAGE.” The word pilgrimage stood out to Amaya. She was drawn to it, and while it took her a couple months to convince herself to participate, she eventually did.

The pilgrimage was organized by the Community of the Lamb, both the Little Sisters of the Lamb and the Little Brothers of the Lamb, religious communities in Kansas City, Kan., focused on God, poverty and prayer. This fourth annual pilgrimage started with a group of more than 50 gathered at the home of the Little Sisters of the Lamb. A long drive the first evening took them to the home of a family who allowed the group to camp in their backyard before departing the next morning on foot. The first day led them to a parish in Mound City, Kan. after a 15-mile hike. The second day, after a 22-mile hike, the group finally arrived at the hill where the Sisters voices were raised in song.

When Amaya started the journey, she felt like she was embarking alone. But after only a brief time she realized she was anything but alone.

“It was impossible to seclude yourself,” she said. “[The Sisters’ and Brothers’]

love for the experience, for each other and their love for God was contagious. You couldn’t stay in your box, it was how I would imagine heaven would be—everyone as one big happy family.”

Amaya is set to graduate in December 2018 from Donnelly College with an associate degree. After graduation, she plans to transfer to University of St. Mary where she will pursue a bachelor’s degree in education with the plan of eventually teaching Spanish. Now Amaya has a new relationship, not just with God, or St. Philippine or Donnelly College, but with the Community of the Lamb where she now frequently visits and worships.

The pilgrimage was not a wakeup call for Amaya, but rather a gentle reminder that her life’s plans will not always happen on her timetable. Now she trusts God’s timing, as St. Philippine did.



More than 50 people gathered for a two-day, 37-mile pilgrimage across Kansas. Photo courtesy of the Little Sisters of the Lamb.