

# 'Great authors can illuminate a culture'

*Catholic students operate an online literary lighthouse showcasing Catholic culture in Canada*

By C.S. Morrissey  
Special to The B.C. Catholic

Do you have literary talent? Do you love God and want to serve Him? What should you do with your talent?

Last year at the Franciscan University of Steubenville's annual Christian philosophy conference, I interviewed Catherine Nolan, the editor of *The Alexandrian Journal of Catholic Culture in Canada*, an online journal at [www.TheAlexandrian.org](http://www.TheAlexandrian.org) run by some very talented Catholic students.

**Hi, Catherine, great to see you again! Tell me, how has God been at work in your life recently?**

It's been such a surprise: I really didn't want to go to university at all after high school, but now I'm about to start my doctoral studies! It's easy for me to settle for a plan that requires less work, even if I know I could do better. Throughout my life, though, God has seen to it that these "escapes" are blocked and I'm faced with a more challenging opportunity.

**You're doing your PhD in philosophy, with a focus on medieval philosophy and philosophy of religion, at the State University of New York at Buffalo. How do you think God is calling you to serve?**

A person trained in philosophical thought can engage in rational discussions with believers and non-believers alike. I can't say that I know

all that God has planned for me! I organize and lead the *Alexandrian*, an online quarterly journal edited by young Catholics. Our goals are to serve in three different ways: by helping new authors and artists get a start in publishing their work, by providing a network for submitters and readers to get to know each other and support each other, and by presenting the world with a journal of well-crafted stories, poetry, and thought.

**Is there a story about how the *Alexandrian* got started?**

A few summers back I went to a writing workshop that focused on short story and poetry writing. I realized there how much our culture is influenced by our art and writing, and was struck by the absence of the voice of Catholic youth in Canada. It's easy to find magazines that criticize the state of our culture, but it's hard to find any that work to improve the culture by providing an avenue for Catholic artists and writers.

Without really thinking it through I promised a bunch of friends to start an online journal, and we're now about to publish our 11th issue. I've been amazed by the constant support of every-

one who has helped out with it.

**How did you come up with the name "The Alexandrian"?**

A common criticism of modern culture is that it has lost any sense of tradition. We wanted to express our faithfulness to the tradition of Catholic and Canadian culture, so we named it after the library of Alexandria, the largest library of the ancient world.

The lighthouse of Alexandria is another well-known reference and a useful metaphor: great authors can illuminate a culture, pointing out its flaws, just as a lighthouse illuminates hazardous waters for passing ships. Finally, we have taken St. Catherine of Alexandria as our patron, since she was a young philosopher who was martyred for her Christian faith.

**Who should read the *Alexandrian*?**

Anyone who enjoys a good story, poetry, or thought! We publish a wide variety of works: free verse and formal poetry, short stories, academic papers, and informal reflections. We have a number of international authors as well as Canadians.

**What should someone do if they have something they would like to publish in the *Alexandrian*?**

Send an e-mail to [editor@thealexandrian.org](mailto:editor@thealexandrian.org) with your work attached, and we'll start the editing process! On our website we

provide a list of future themes for the journal issues. If you feel that your work fits into one of these themes, you can submit it specifically for that issue. If you can't find an appropriate theme, we have an "open issue" every summer with no theme restrictions.

Don't be afraid of the editing team. They judge your work anonymously and are friendly in sending feedback about your work. They will tell you what they like and suggest changes. Without your approval, no changes can be made, and you will always be the copyright owner of your work.

**What do you like best about working on the *Alexandrian*?**

I really love hearing from new authors. There are so many talented and inspiring people out there. Helping these people share their work with the world is exciting and fun. Working closely with the editing team is also a great experience; these people are dedicated and intelligent, and have a sense of humour.

**What advice would you give to Catholic high school students starting their university studies?**

Don't be afraid of studying in



Alexandrian writers met at the Franciscan University of Steubenville last year for the annual Christian philosophy conference. From left to right: Catherine Nolan, Frank Monozlai, Dorian Pula, Nicole Lau, Amber Miller, Madeleine Gubbels, and Mark Gamez.

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the liberal arts, even if your primary focus is in a more practical field like engineering, business, or medicine. Philosophy, theology, and literature can expand your horizons, giving you new ways to

approach other areas of study and opening a world of enjoyment to you.

Become aware of the great thinkers and artists of the past. So much amazing talent and wisdom

can be overlooked if you focus exclusively on the contemporary.

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**IC Prayer Group in celebration of the 18th Anniversary of the Life in the Spirit Seminar and the IC Prayer Group presents**

## Generational Healing of the Family Tree

A retreat presented by Fr. Denis Phaneuf, from the Diocese of Saskatoon, and Moira Noonan, from the Diocese of San Diego

Learn about the many disorders and problems which can affect families from generation to generation. The teaching, based on Scripture, promotes healing and prayer for deliverance.



Fr. Denis Phaneuf



Moira Noonan

**Everyone is welcome to attend this retreat and receive this ministry on**

**January 28, 29 & 30**

**Immaculate Conception School Gym  
8840 119th St., Delta, BC**

**Tickets: \$20** *Seats limited; first come, first served*

Retreat schedule

<b>Fri, Jan 28</b>	<b>7:30 pm</b>	In preparation for the retreat: Anniversary Healing Service
<b>Sat, Jan 29</b>	<b>9 am - 5:40 pm</b>	Retreat <i>(please bring a bagged lunch)</i> Confession available
	<b>7:30 pm</b>	Mass: Homily on Generational Healing through the Eucharist
<b>Sun, Jan 30</b>	<b>9 am - 12 pm</b>	Generational Intercession & Standing in the Gap – Ongoing Ministry Blessing of religious articles

**For tickets & information:** Lennie David 604.597.8227 or [lennieptl@telus.net](mailto:lennieptl@telus.net)