

PRAY Giver of our lives and creator of our cosmos, transform us in the image of Jesus, your beloved. Amen.



SPiRIT

A BATTLE WITH BULIMIA

by Katie Struckel

No one thinks the average-looking girl who sits in the next desk in chemistry class is fighting a terrible disease. People with eating disorders can look just like the girl next door.

I am a popular, attractive, straight-A student with a plethora of friends and a variety of extracurricular activities. In high school, I played varsity volleyball and basketball. I served as a student body officer and class officer. Now in college, I'm in three honor societies and an editor of the university newspaper. I come from a loving family. My hard-working, middle-class parents regard me as their pride and joy. It could be because I'm an only child, or maybe because I'm always winning awards and achieving impressive goals. I've never had trouble finding a date. Guys practically beat down my door. If my appearance is not striking enough, I strive to develop it any



way I can. If my arms look flabbier than usual, I lift an extra 10 pounds. If my hair looks slightly out of place, I wear a hat. I have to look my best. People are watching.

I also have a passion for food and its richness. I love large family gatherings with plenty of different dishes. Then after I eat, I make up excuses to go to the bathroom. I hoard pills and laxatives to make my job easier. I expertly jam my fingers down my throat.

People often associate eating disorders with extreme thinness, but that's characteristic only of anorexia. Individuals with anorexia starve themselves. Their bodies react to prolonged periods of starvation by burning fat and then eventually muscle

and thus leaving the person looking emaciated.

Bulimics, on the other hand, look normal. Unlike anorexics, bulimics ingest food (often in large amounts) and then purge themselves of what they consider its harmful effects. We take laxatives to remove excess water and nutrients we don't want our bodies to absorb. We learn how to thrust our fingers down our throats as a means of removing the food from our systems.

However, bulimics still retain water and some of the calories we ingest. We usually don't look as thin as an anorexic. We suffer from fainting spells and ruined teeth since the enzymes from our bodies eat away at the enamel of our teeth. However, we maintain a normal body weight, which makes our eating disorder less visible.



For me, bulimia acts like a warm, down blanket I can pull safely over my head when I'm scared. But the blanket never quite covers my entire body; it always leaves some part of me exposed—my feet sticking out like two cold icicles. I feel that no matter what I do I never satisfy myself. I constantly think I can do better or be stronger.

I developed bulimia over five years. I suppose it began as images of thin teenage girls who had yet to reach puberty bombarded me. I mistakenly thought that in order to be popular and well-liked, I had to be thin.

Kids teased me about my weight in grade school because I began developing faster than everyone else. In fifth grade I was 5'4" and 130 pounds—10 pounds more than doctors recommend.

In high school my classmates caught up. I found my niche and became active. I had just as many dates as other girls.

A change happened my junior year. I was 5'7" and 135 pounds. I started dating someone a

little older and figured in order for him to love me, I needed to be thin. My career as the girl with the eating disorder began.

I ate small portions of food. I accounted for every calorie and fat gram. I wouldn't ingest more than 10 fat grams a day, even though the required amount for a girl my age is 60 grams.

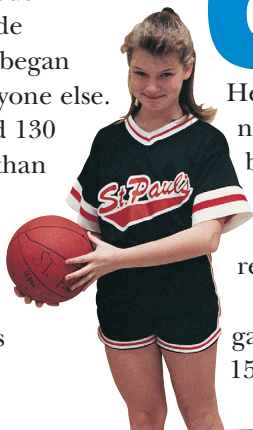
I ate a plain bagel for breakfast. Then, a carton of nonfat yogurt, 20 pretzels, and a fat-free granola bar for lunch. For dinner, I ate a dry salad and two pieces of dry bread. My meals never included something like a small bag of Doritos. The seven

grams of fat in one bag left only three more fat grams for the day.

I worked out until I nearly collapsed or my parents made me stop. By the end of my junior year I weighed 120 pounds—15 pounds below normal weight for my height.

During my senior year, I fell madly in love with a guy who constantly ridiculed me and made ego-demolishing comments. He told me no one would love me if I was fat. Only him. I believed his harsh words. He told me to exercise and said it was because he loved me and didn't want to see my health deteriorate.

Kids teased me about my weight in grade school because I began developing faster than everyone else. In fifth grade I was 5'4" and 130 pounds—10 pounds more than doctors recommend.



People with eating disorders look like the girl next door

Once I colored my hair and it turned out a lot lighter than I expected. He told me to wear a hat so no one would laugh at me. I bought into everything he said until I went to college and freed myself from the relationship.

Like most college girls I gained weight. I was 5'8" and 154 pounds. I became bulimic.

I enjoyed the cafeteria food to the fullest extent and gorged myself with delicious treats. Then I returned to my dorm room, drank two glasses of water, and popped two laxatives—that

was all I needed to make my meal complete. Within minutes, I was in the stall making myself vomit. A few hours later I'd be running down the hall and racing into a stall so I could purge the remainder of the water and nutrients in my body.

Last year, however, things changed. I fainted in the shower one morning only to wake up minutes later with a huge gash on my lip where I'd bitten it. I didn't say a word because I knew fainting meant I was getting rid of everything the way I should be.

One night I ordered a pizza with a friend and stuffed my face only to run to the bathroom minutes later and purge the food from my system. This time another friend told me she heard me in the bathroom. I said it was the flu. But a few weeks later, my friends confronted me and forced me to see a counselor.



I constantly think I can do better or be stronger.

Going to a counselor was the hardest thing I had to do. I felt as if I had failed and was no longer perfect. Then I had to tell my parents. I drove the longest three hours of my life to tell them about what I'd become. I cried the whole way. I wondered what they'd think of me. Would they be disappointed in me? Would they turn me away? Would I be an embarrassment to them?

When I walked into the house, I broke down sobbing in my mom's arms. She just held me and rocked me back and forth, apologizing and asking me what they'd done wrong.

Those few days I was home were the longest and hardest of my life. I had to explain something for which I didn't have all the answers. I didn't

know how to stop the disease or how to handle it when I felt the need to vomit after a meal.

I still don't have all of the answers.

Each day is a struggle for me. I try to teach myself it's okay not to be a waif. It's okay if I am not the best at everything. It's normal for



Each day is a struggle for me.

SUNDAY GOSPEL

2nd Sunday of Lent

Jesus' friends see him transfigured.

NARRATOR 1: Jesus took Peter, James, and his brother John and led them up on a high mountain by themselves. He was transfigured before their eyes.

NARRATOR 2: His face became as dazzling as the sun, his clothes bright as light. Suddenly Moses and Elijah appeared to them, conversing with him.

PETER: Lord, how good it is for us to be here. With your permission I will erect three booths here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.

NARRATOR 1: Peter was still speaking when a bright cloud overshadowed

them. Out of the cloud came a voice.

VOICE: This is my beloved Son on whom my favor rests. Listen to him.

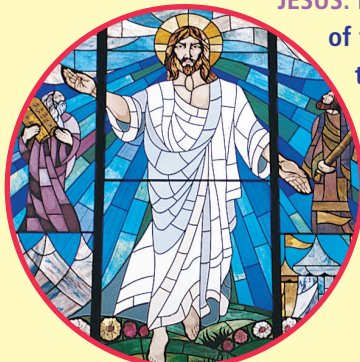
NARRATOR 2: When they heard this, the disciples fell forward on the ground, overcome with fear. Jesus came toward them and laid his hands on them.

JESUS: Get up. Don't be afraid.

NARRATOR 1: As they went back down the mountain, Jesus ordered them—

JESUS: Don't tell anyone of the vision until the Son of Man rises from the dead.

Matthew 17.1-9



me to be 5'8" and 137 pounds. It's okay if I indulge in three pieces of pizza once in a while or enjoy an ice cream sundae with my boyfriend from time to time.

However, darkness usually overcomes me at least once

a day, and I have to keep searching for the end of the tunnel. Sometimes I still want a blanket that will cover my entire body—including my feet.

QUESTIONS 1 What is your ideal self-image? How is your ideal self different from your real self? 2 Why do you think control over one's body works like a security blanket? 3 What images of Jesus' real self does the gospel give us?

The whole Trinity appeared: the Father in the voice; the Son in the man; the Spirit in the shining cloud.

Catechism of the Catholic Church #555

OUR CATHOLIC FAITH

Who tells me who I am?

Her parents named her Marisa at her baptism. Lately, she has been asking friends to call her Lacy. She pauses in front of a Macy's window at the mall. She's wearing a American Eagle top, Levi's, and Birkenstocks.

She runs two fingers idly over a strand of hair. She sees her reflection in the glass. She stares at the dress in the window—the one in Teen Vogue. It costs \$395—too much.

In her Coach purse she carries emergency eyeliner, lip gloss, and mascara guaranteed to add pounds to her lashes. America's look is Cover Girl! The dress would be just perfect, Lacy sighs.

His baptismal name is Albert but his buddies call him Nico. The colorful, noisy mall makes Nico feel warm. He wanders into the Foot Locker next to Macy's. He notices Lacy in front of the window.

Nico stares at the Jordans he wants. He doesn't have the money—\$215. At home he had visited Footlocker.com, printed a picture of the Jordans, and left it on the kitchen table with a note—"for my birthday." His dad said, "In your dreams."

Nico wants to touch the Jordans but decides not to put himself through the pain. Instead, he sits down in the mall and watches everybody hurrying by. He wants a gold chain, new cell phone, and a genie to grant him at least three wishes.

- Who do you know like Lacy and Nico?
- Who teaches us to want so much?

Somehow Lacy and Nico have learned that “you can be everything” by having the right stuff, by having the right look. They find it hard to resist their wants, their desires. Tempting messages bombard them in store windows, on TV, in magazines, on billboards, at bus and subway stops. “Just do it,” advertising voices say. Buy. Spend. Consume.

The word *consume* means *to take more, to do away with completely, to use up, or to eat or drink a great quantity*. It can mean to waste, squander, or destroy, but it also means to engage fully, to engross.

What do we consume? What consumes us? Who tells me who I am? My family, my school, my church, my friends, my country, my purchases?

In 2018, young people ages 10-19 earned \$91 billion and spent over \$250 billion. Parents make up the difference. Thousands of buy message assail teens each day but Engage engage maybe 200. Teens shop online. Two thirds have iphones. They buy more than shoes, clothing, and coffee for themselves. They influence big-ticket family purchases such as refrigerators, entertainment centers, digital cameras, computers, cars. Some teens set the menus and cook the meals at home. Some do the family shopping every week.

Young people are prime targets for the advertising and entertainment businesses. No big surprise. Advertising and entertainment pretend to name their dreams and deal with their problems, to care about their happiness and images, but for only one reason—selling products.

Our desires are infinite. We will always want more. We are made to seek God and follow stars. What happens if advertisers can train our desires for God into desire for more things?

Advertisers see teens both as consumers with money today and as tomorrow’s householders. Specialists keep up with teen trends and interests. They dream up the right looks, the right stuff, so they can cleverly convince us (or teach us through commercials) what we will need to live their way. They do this to make money. They don’t care if their stuff makes anybody a better person or the world a more whole community.

Why care what advertising tells us? Because somebody is choosing for us who we will become. Each of us faces the same daily struggle Lacy and Nico do. Will we let other voices control our choices, our freedom? Or will we choose and shape our own ideas of who we want to be? What communities will help shape us?

What about the gospel? What influence will Jesus have on who we become?

FAITH in ACTION

- 1 Attempt to count how many advertisements you see and hear during a day. Which is your favorite? Which makes you want to buy? What product does the ad sell?
- 2 What products set trends in your school? Who do these products want teens to be? What slogans promote these products?
- 3 Create a positive ad that affirms teens’ abilities to work through their own identities.
- 4 Add up what you have spent in the last week. Tally the amounts in your class to find an average amount.
- 5 What major family purchases have you influenced in the past year?



Match the people and events from the 2000-year history of the Church with the phrases on page 4 that identify them.

A 50-60s
Priscilla and Aquila

B Died 64
Paul of Tarsus

C 383-439
Melanie the Younger

D 1225-1274
Thomas Aquinas

E 1491-1556
Ignatius Loyola

F 1580-1654
Peter Claver

G 1586-1617
Rose of Lima

H 1713-1784
Junipero Serra

I 1850-1917
Frances Cabrini

1 ____ Early missionary who founded churches in Asia Minor, Greece, Italy.

2 ____ Dominican friar, teacher at the University of Paris who writes about every theological question of his time.

3 ____ Jesuit doctor and missionary who cared for slaves in Bogota, Colombia.

4 ____ Many use his *Spiritual Exercises* to discern where the Spirit is leading them.

5 ____ Founded schools, orphanages, and hospitals among Italian immigrants in New York City.

6 ____ Gave her wealth to the poor, freed her slaves, and founded a convent in Jerusalem.

7 ____ Early Christian teachers and coworkers of Paul

8 ____ Hermitess who cared for the destitute in Peru.

9 ____ Franciscan founder of nine missions in California, including San Diego, San Francisco, San Juan Capistrano.