

## Combust, Respire, Titrate: Science Lab!

By Cosette Lane

Whenever the weather turns cold and Term 2 rolls around, AP Biology and AP Chemistry students prepare for an infamous class to be added to their schedule: lab.

Led by chemistry teacher Jeanette Stewart and biology teachers Stephen Lorys and Peter Spalitto, lab students spend 12 weeks diving deeper into course concepts by seeing a real world application of how they work.

Although their course load nearly doubles, students leave the class with a deeper understanding of concepts in two challenging classes as well as life skills on how to manage their time and work hard.

In AP Chemistry Lab, students begin the term with a full procedure on how to perform the lab, but by the end, Stewart gives them an unknown substance that they must identify on their own, creating their own procedure and conclusion.

That experiment alone illustrates the problem solving skills that lab classes provide for students, skills that will prove helpful even if the student does not pursue science in college and beyond.

AP Chemistry student Merritt Grassi shared her views of the class. "Chem lab has helped me gain a deeper understanding of how the experiments work to formulate everyday substances and how they are used in our everyday lives," Grassi said.

In AP Biology lab, students dive deeper into cellular respiration by using a respirometer to measure the difference in respiration rates across different temperatures as well as between crickets and germinating peas.

AP Biology student Anna Cochran had this to say. "In AP Bio lab we do interesting experiments and work hard to write up lab reports. It is one of my favorite classes because I have learned not to procrastinate," Cochran said.

As Term 2 comes to an end, lab students will apply what they learned in lab to the AP exams and rely on their time management and problem solving skills in future courses.



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## Self-Defense Class Returns

By Kate Owens

Awareness and preparation are the keys to empowerment and safety. What better way to equip female students with these essential skills than by hosting a self-defense class here on campus?

The class came to fruition two years ago when seniors Lauren Drake '23 and Lily Deiters '23 heard of an attempted abduction in their local community in broad daylight. They were frightened that such devastating incidents could happen anytime to anyone.

The realization that the victim was able to escape because she had taken a self-defense class led the girls to spearhead our school's very own self-defense class, empowering girls to feel prepared as they graduate high school and become more independent.

One of their friends, Maria Kennedy '23, chimed in that her father has 30 years of experience in Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu

and is a third-degree black belt. Mr. Kennedy, passionate about helping girls develop self-defense skills, was on board to be the instructor. The class quickly became a reality.

After these senior girls graduated, the class was put on pause until this year, when Girls Support Girls worked with Mr. Kennedy to bring these helpful classes back to campus and continue to raise awareness.

On January 8, girls in grades 9-12 gathered after school in Laird Gym to learn basic self-defense techniques.

Mr. Kennedy started the session by sharing eye-opening statistics that 1 in 4 college girls and 1 in 3 women will experience physical assault at some point in their lives. Most importantly, Mr. Kennedy noted that alcohol is the leading factor in sexual assault. "Over 85% of all attacks on women are a result of either the woman or man drinking alcohol," Kennedy explained.

Walking through real-world

scenarios, Mr. Kennedy taught the girls practical escape moves, including how to break free from a choke hold and strike a palm punch.

Throughout the session, Mr. Kennedy highlighted important life lessons to help the girls set boundaries and develop confidence. His primary message was, "Never put another person's comfort ahead of your safety."

In agreement with all the girls in attendance, student Mallory Walsh reflects on the impact of the class on her life. "It really brought the females of Marist together and taught us how to be strong and defensive in the real world," Walsh said.

If you missed the class and still want to participate, grab a friend and join in on one of the upcoming classes planned for March 25 or April 29 (seniors only).

As Mr. Kennedy teaches, "Be smart. Be aware. Trust your gut!"

## Cooking Club Serves It Up

By John Elrod

Throughout the school year, students passing through the cafeteria during activity period might have noticed over a dozen of their peers working with the cafeteria staff and making a variety of foods and desserts.

This group of students belong to Marist Kitchen 101, the cooking club on campus that recently celebrated its 1-year anniversary.

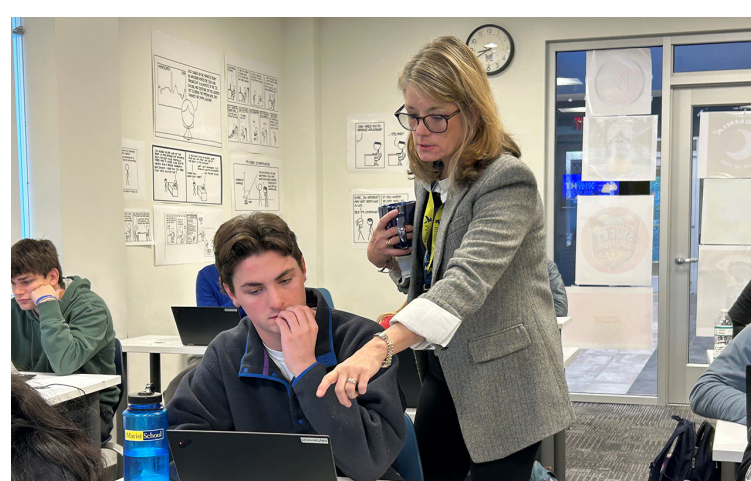
Last year, both Martin Laughlin and John David Lynch founded Kitchen 101 to share their love of cooking, as well as to address the lack of a culinary class at our school. "It felt natural to me to fill that empty space," said Laughlin.

Besides some assistance from faculty moderator Chef Lauren, the club is mainly student-run. Laughlin and Lynch determine the agendas for meetings, aiming to meet about three times per term.

The members of the club start out by making a dish as a group before enjoying it together in the cafeteria. Because of the busy location of the meetings, the cooking club is open to non-members to aid with the cooking or eating of meals, allowing any hungry student to participate in the club's activities.

This year, Kitchen 101 has made a barbecue meal, hand pies, and tanghulu, a fruit dish with a delicious sugar coating.

## Dr. Priestley: Innovation and Education



Photographer: Brian O'Connor

By Ella Weber

Dr. Jennifer Priestley has been a part of the Marist community since 1980. After graduating with the class of 1984, she followed her passion for data science all around the world. This past year, however, she decided to return to her roots at Marist. However, she feels like she nev-

er left.

To follow Priestley's journey to teaching in the Business, Computer Science, and Engineering Department, we must rewind to her first days at Marist.

Priestley entered as a ninth grader and became involved in many of activities, including cheerleading, swim, German

Club, and The Blue and Gold.

She attended Georgia Tech, where she studied economics. After college, Priestley studied quantitative business analysis at Penn State and became the youngest and first female president of the student body.

After graduating, Priestley worked in various jobs in Atlanta, Florida, New York, and London related to data science with companies such as AT&T, MasterCard, Accenture, and Visa.

Upon returning, Priestley decided to work towards her PhD at Georgia State. She then taught at Kennesaw State University as a professor, teaching math and statistics classes for ten years. Priestley started the Masters and PhD programs in data science and became the Associate Dean of the Graduate Program.

Priestley held that position

for eighteen years and retired from it in 2022.

Priestley wanted to keep teaching, so she decided to come back to Marist to teach classes in marketing and financial management. She has completely rebuilt those classes, making them more rigorous and more applicable to the business world.

She is currently working to create a new elective for next year in business analytics.

Priestley's decision to teach at her alma mater was not a hard one. Even though the buildings and the technology has changed, the Marist family is a long-time tradition, and Dr. Priestley is excited to return to the community as a teacher.

We welcome her wholeheartedly and wish her the absolute best.

## New Bible Study

As always, the newspapers does its best to keep up with the latest changes. Turn to the Faith section, where Staff Writer Anna Herrero highlights the newly formed Girls Bible Study.

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Photo Contributed

## Sports Page Take-down

No winter Sports page would be complete without an update from the wrestling team. Editor John Elrod shares the latest about the wrestling War Eagles.

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## New Year, New You?

Did you make a new year's resolution? Turn to the Opinion section to learn from Staff Writer Owen Ritger who did and who did not feel the need to turn over a new leaf in 2025.

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## Girls Bible Study Begins

By Anna Herrero

The Girls Bible Study, founded and led by students Connelly Hockin, Finley Sessions, Maddie Campbell, Mia Lorimer, Kaitlyn Kilbourn, and Katherine Harkness, is a new addition to the community this year.

The leaders aim to help other girls grow in their faith by sharing their experiences, creating a safe space for girls to share advice and listen to each other. Together, they inspire girls to strengthen their relationship with God.

Hockin described her inspiration to start the club after attending YMCA Camp High Harbour. "My relationship and faith with the Lord had grown so much," added Hockin. Going to camp pushed her to help others cultivate a similar relationship with God.

They currently gather about twice a month on Friday mornings before school, welcoming newcomers to join their current group of 30 members.

With coffee and donuts to bring a sense of community, they begin with a prayer and follow with a Scripture-focused devotional led by one of the leaders. Small group discussions afterward allow for deeper reflection on the devotional, and the meeting then concludes with a prayer.

Lorimer shared her thoughts on the club's inclusiveness. "We want to make sure everyone can feel comfortable and is able to share openly about anything they want to talk about, from schoolwork to friends or family to religion" stated Lorimer.

Because of the overwhelming stress or constant busyness of student life, finding time for God or having a chance to open up about faith can be challenging. The Girls Bible Study gives students a rare opportunity to spiritually connect with others while forming meaningful relationships.

The club continues to inspire girls to embrace their faith, find comfort in their community, and build lasting friendships grounded in shared values.

To stay updated on future meetings, check out @marist-girlsbiblestudy on Instagram.

## FCA Fills the Gym

By Finley Harris

This year, Fellowship of Christian Athletes has grown tremendously, both in attendance and impact. A major part of this year's success came from the incredible guest speakers, including former NBA player and general manager of the Atlanta Hawks, Landry Fields, and former NFL star quarterback, Matt Ryan.

Student President David Owens reflected on the growth of FCA in recent years. "FCA used to be a couple dozen students in the bottom of the cafeteria. Seeing 300-plus kids wake



Photo Contributed

## Maristes La Immaculada: Our Spanish Counterpart

Learn more about the Marist School in Barcelona

By Ella Weber

Settled in the heart of a bustling city, this school run by the Society of Mary teaches their students about academics, service, the arts, and the values of Mary. However, I am not referring to our Marist School. I am referring to Maristes La Immaculada in Barcelona, Spain.

Join me in learning more about our Marist friends on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean!

At Maristes and in Spain, juniors and seniors in high school enter into the Baccalaureate program, where students choose which academic path they want to complete in order to graduate. The choices are science and technology, social sciences, or arts.

Diana Orient, a senior at Maristes, describes her schedule flexibility over the course of junior and senior year. "We can choose four subjects, but we have to take Spanish, Cat-

alan, English, history, philosophy, and religion," Orient said. A student on the science track, she opts to take math, physics, chemistry, and biology.

Maristes has less emphasis on faith than our school. Susana Garcia, English teacher at Maristes, described the reason for this. "There is a wider range of faiths here as Barcelona is a more cosmopolitan city, and we have more diverse students," Garcia said.

The daily schedule of a student at Maristes starts at 8 a.m. when classes begin. One hour classes last until 11 a.m., when students have a break to eat a light breakfast. Classes resume at 11:30 and finish at 2:30. At this time, students leave school to have their lunch, which is traditionally the largest meal of the day in Spain.

Maristes senior Sofia Wang said that her favorite aspect of Maristes is "the atmosphere, the people, and the teachers." Di-

ana Orient likes that "the school really cares about their students. They know their names, they know who they are, and it is a community."

In March, 22 students from Marist will visit Maristes and learn about the school and culture. Mrs. Buchanan has led the Spanish exchange for the past five exchanges, and she shared her thoughts about Maristes. "It has an urban feel in the heart of the city, and the school is an active campus with lots of history," Buchanan said. She is looking forward to visiting again in a few short months.

All in all, the school culture of Maristes is similar to that of Marist, and we will always be connected by our Marist values, even though we are thousands of miles apart.

(Visit the online edition for the expanded version of this story.)

## Music Ministry Unites Through Melody

Students bring the community together through song and worship



Photographer: Brian Collier

By Anna Herrero

Music Ministry is an important group that is often unrecognized for its efforts. They encourage the community to use their voices to lift each other in praise during school Masses, building a stronger, more unified family

sharing a love for God.

Tim Johnson, the moderator of this group and teacher in the Fine Arts Department, selects music that will support the theme of the Mass and resonate with the student body. The group spends time learning the music Johnson arranges and re-

hearses several times leading up to Mass.

Although the preparation is extensive, it is important for students to see their peers in leadership roles, as this fosters a sense of belonging.

For Johnson, seeing students foster their musical talents for a higher purpose is particularly rewarding because of his own experiences playing music professionally in church. "My favorite memories are seeing students use their talents for God," Johnson said.

Similarly, singer Flannery Hipp shares how singing brings the community together. "My favorite thing about singing at school Masses is that I'm able to see all of the students, faculty, and staff coming together to celebrate Mass, and I get to do my part by lifting us up in song," Hipp stated.

## Catholic Invite 2024

By Juliet Powell

The swim and dive team hosted the 2024 Catholic Invite on December 28. Teams traveled many miles to join in the fun.

The schools in attendance included Cardinal Gibbons High School and St. Stephen's Episcopal School, traveling from North Carolina and Austin, Texas, respectively. Two Georgia Catholic schools, Blessed Trinity and St. John Bosco Academy, also joined.

The weekend kicked off with a service project benefiting the Atlanta-based organization The Sandwich Project. The Sandwich Project is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization founded by a Marist family, the Hiles. Reliant on community volunteers, the organization aims to combat food insecurity in Metro Atlanta in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

At the event, groups formed of swimmers from different schools made and packaged over 1500 sandwiches. Sarah White, a junior on the varsity swim team, remarked that her favorite thing about the Invitational was "meeting so many new people from all around the country."

Of course, the teams celebrated their hard work with a pasta dinner to pack in some carbs for the competition the next morning.

An annual event since 2013, this long-standing tradition fosters an atmosphere of friendly competition, teamwork, and the service that is so vital to the Catholic lifestyle. During such a critical time of year, this project proved especially meaningful.

This belief in the power of music aligns with the purpose of Music Ministry: to help our school express their faith through song.

According to St. Augustine, "he who sings, prays twice." Additionally, Scripture includes many instances of people praising God. Paul in Ephesians 5:19 declares that we should speak amongst one another "in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your hearts to the Lord."

Music Ministry not only enriches school Masses with beautiful songs but it also nurtures a sense of unity and faith, reminding the community that, through music, they can praise the Lord.

For many students, FCA has become a place not only to grow spiritually but also to build meaningful connections. Club Officer Kate Owens shared her take on the success. "Being surrounded by people who have similar goals has allowed me to be my best self and to enjoy time with others and God," Owens said.

With each meeting, FCA continues to inspire and offer opportunities for students to deepen their faith and relationships.



Photographer: Brian Collier

# Sign on the dotted line . . .

By Owen Ritger

On the morning of November 13 before school, Crest Lobby was filled with excitement for signing day. Signing day is a day for athletes to be with their friends and family to celebrate the athlete's achievements by signing with their college of choice.

These athletes work day and night, trying to perfect their sport they play by working out, playing games, and constant recovery to get where they want to be. Many people, however, tend to overlook the reasons why these athletes choose their college.

Most of the time the athletes go on visits to the college. This visit allows the athlete to meet the coaches and players in person, to see how they fit into the campus life, and whether it is the right college for them.

Once baseball player John Loudon visited the United States Naval Academy, he found out quickly that it was the place for him. When asked about the visit and how it impacted his decision, he had this to say: "Yes, the official visit there is mainly why I committed to the United States Naval Academy. I was able to live a day in the life of a baseball player and midshipmen," John said.

As students here at Marist, academics are even more important than sports. For soccer player and Marquette commit Mary Margret Fligg, several factors influenced her choice. "I wanted to go somewhere I had the chance to play as a freshman. I also loved the community and atmosphere they provided. I love how Marquette has an amazing balance between college soccer and academics," Fligg said.

For both of these athletes, they both talked about how campus life and the community around them are what really sold them when visiting their college. Being able to connect with your future teammates allows team chemistry to build.

As always at our school, we wish these students the very best in their future endeavors on their chosen college campuses.

# Defend the State Title

By Finley Harris

After an incredible 67-48 win over North Forsyth last March, the girls varsity basketball team is back in action this season, fueled by the energy of their second 6A State Championship in just three years.

Now playing in 4A after reclassification, they face new challenges and new teams, but the core principles of hard work and grit stay consistent in order to defend their title.

Head Coach Kim Hixon has



Photo Contributed

## Introducing the Bass Fishing Team

*War Eagles wet a hook for the very first time*

By Ian Westfall

Marist has always been known for its wide variety of extracurricular activities and events, and this year, a new sport has taken the spotlight: The Marist bass fishing team. Founded by students Tanner Karakis, Miller Moore, and Forrest Briesacher, this team marks the school's first step into competitive fishing as an official Georgia High School Association (GHSA) sport.

The idea for the bass fishing team was born during a discussion in the students' band class. "We found out that the thing we love to do most is actually an official GHSA sport," shared Tanner. "So, we decided right then and there that we would start the team. All of us love to fish and have been fishing since we grew up. Over the last few years, we've all gotten more involved in the sport, spending every spare moment we can

fishing. When we found out it could be a sport offered here at Marist, we knew we had to make it happen."

The team has not only brought attention to a lesser-known sport but it also inspired other students to consider fishing as a competitive event. As interest in bass fishing grows, the team hopes to expand its membership by adding more boats and to establish a lasting tradition of excellence at our school.

Although the Marist bass fishing team was founded last year, this is the first year they have competed against other schools such as Blessed Trinity, Mount Pisgah, and St Pius X.

The team operates with eight members across two boats. Each boat is captained by a designated adult and accommodates four fishermen who rotate in pairs for tournaments. According to Tanner, "You'll have, for example, Miller and Haze fish one tournament. Then Flynn

and I fish the next one."

Each tournament lasts from around sunrise to sunset and can have anywhere from 50 to 250 boats in the water. By the end of the day, the boat with the five heaviest-weighting fish wins the tournament.

The creation of the Marist bass fishing team would not have been possible without the dedication and support of several key people. "A huge thanks to Coach Jordan, Coach Keppen, Coach Bazemore, and Mr. Waugh for helping us get this team up and running," Tanner said.

Their efforts have not only made the team a reality but have also given these students a team where they can fish with friends for their very own school.

Interested students should contact a coach about future opportunities to join the team.

# Update From the Mat

By John Elrod

The 2024-2025 wrestling season proved to be one of the most captivating yet. With less than a month left in the season, wrestlers and varsity Coach Chuck Deason looked back on season's events.

The season began in late October of last year, with the first competition being a tournament at Brookwood High School on November 9. The wrestling program performed well, winning 16 of their 30 dual meets and participating in 6 individual tournaments.

Additionally, the team participated in two marquee tournaments, the Prep Slam at Holy Innocents' High School and the McCallie Invitational in Chattanooga.

This season has not been without adversity as Coach Deason explained. "We have had several key injuries this year that have made this season challenging," said Deason. The team as a whole, however, has persevered and made this season memorable. "The coaches are happy with the progress and development of the team," said Deason.

The practice and conditioning schedule for the wrestling season is challenging and intends to make the wrestlers fit and ready to compete. Starting in the preseason, athletes participate in weight training twice a week and live wrestling at daily practices.

The wrestling season concludes on February 14 with the state tournament. Students should mark it on their calendars make plans to attend to watch the best wrestlers at our school compete for the 4A state title in Macon.

## Diving Into the State Championship

*Last chances loom large as our dedicated swimmers give it their all*



Photo Contributed

By Clara Laskowski

The War Eagle swimmers and divers are closing out their regular season and heading to state from February 4-8, 2025, increasing the competition for surrounding schools.

The divers will compete at

Westminster School while the swimmers will take on the pools at the Georgia Tech Recreation Center. Senior Erin Reilly shares her excitement for her last state championship. "It is bittersweet preparing for state," Reilly said.

The two teams will be up against the usual competition this year. Schools such as St. Pius X and Clarkston will be competing alongside Marist for the state title.

To qualify for the state championship competition team, the swimmers must make a specific time in one of their events. The divers must reach a specific amount of points on their dive to qualify.

Led by the swim program Head Coach Chris Marshall and the dive program Head Coach Tim Hallisay, the programs spend four months getting ready, dedicating early mornings and afternoons to the end goal: a state title.

The swim and dive programs at our school are built on long days. Official swim and dive practice began in early Octo-

ber, occasionally consisting of two practices a day. Junior diver Carder Hutchinson comments on the dedication throughout this season. "The dive program at Marist prepares us all year long to try and qualify for the state team," Hutchinson said.

With 14 meets down and the Last Chance Meet coming up, the swimmers and divers are approaching their final attempt to qualify for the state team. Junior Swimmer Cece Watson comments on the Last Chance Meet. "The Last Chance Meet is an opportunity for swimmers and divers close to state qualifications to have one more attempt," Watson said.

As the Last Chance Meet and the state championship approach, the swimmers and divers will continue to prepare for the upcoming competitions.

led the War Eagles to two state championships and sent over 20 players on to play at the collegiate level. She reflected on the team's mindset as they prepared for the 2024-2025 season. "I think humility is just one game away, so we have to assume nothing and earn everything," Hixon said. She went on, describing the team as "family."

Just over halfway through the regular season, the Lady War Eagles show no signs of slowing down as they continue their 10-0 region record, demonstrating the same level of intensity



Photographer: Jillian Bauersfeld

and teamwork that propelled them to last year's state title.

In December of 2024, the team demonstrated their resilience at the Andrew Johnson Bank Classic in Greenville, Tennessee, an event that they won last year. This tournament was a crucial moment in their season since it showcased their ability to rise to the occasion and take home the win.

"Gritty," is how Assistant Coach Kevin Moore describes the team. "We went up to Greenville and played in a really tough tournament. We won,

and it proved to ourselves how good we could be. We just have to keep that mentality going forward," Moore said.

With each game, the War Eagles prove they are ready to rise to the challenge against new teams, hoping to secure their third state championship win in only four years.

## Do Resolutions Really Matter?

By Owen Ritger

New year's resolutions are a popular tradition across the United States where individuals set personal goals so they can grow, change, and have a fresh start for the new year.

Whether it is adopting healthier habits, learning new skills, or achieving specific milestones, resolutions serve as a motivating reminder to strive for improvement. Though challenging to maintain for some, resolutions offer a sense of purpose and a framework for personal development throughout the year.

The making of resolutions at the start of a new year dates back to the ancient Babylonians around 4,000 years ago. They would promise their gods to pay debts they owed and return borrowed objects in the coming year.

According to research, around 40% to 45% of Americans set new year's resolutions, but only about 8% successfully achieve them. With all of this information, do new year's resolutions really matter?

Senior Robert Babin had this to say about whether or not resolutions matter. "I didn't make specific resolutions for 2025 because I feel like they typically only last like a month at most, and it can be discouraging when you feel like you failed to follow through with something consistently" Babin said.

Dean of Students Reilly Campbell has a different stance on resolutions. He prefers to call his new year's resolutions his "goals or benchmarks" to accomplish. These goals are no different to what new year's resolutions might look like, except goals feel more satisfying when you complete them.

One main reason I think why most people tend to pull away from their new year's resolutions is because the resolution they set does not necessarily align with their primary focuses in life. It makes people feel that they have to pull away from their normal life just to fulfill this resolution.

I think that some people just make their resolutions too unrealistic. Everyone has such busy lives that sometimes, no matter what people do, it won't be enough or they might not have enough time to accomplish what they want to accomplish.

Starting with smaller goals and working your way up to larger goals is more beneficial for most people.

## Is Conclave Anti-Catholic?

*Berger's drama portrays the Church's humanity, not its flaws*

By Luke Childs

There's been major criticism of Edward Berger's masterful Conclave.

I won't delve into the conclusion of the papal conclave in this review, thereby spoiling the film, but I do want to address major criticisms of the film as anti-Catholic and hopefully shift public opinion by demonstrating that the film actually highlights the Catholic Church in a profoundly positive way.

The story follows Cardinal Lawrence, played by Ralph Fiennes, the Dean of the College of Cardinals, who manages the vote and oversees the cardinals during the papal election.

Around 30 minutes into the film, the first day of the Conclave begins, and Cardinal Lawrence delivers his introductory homily. He starts in Italian, accompanied by side profile shots, but then something overtakes him.

He switches to his natural language: English. He speaks from the heart, expressing his doubts and uncertainties about the Church, and about who should be the next Pope. He emphasizes the need to embrace doubt, sin, and the human condition, and asking for forgiveness.



Photo Credit: Film Nation Entertainment, House Productions, and Indian Paintbrush

As he begins to speak more authentically, the camera shifts to a frontal, close-up shot, and the scene becomes one uninterrupted shot, with a slight push-in as he continues to speak. He becomes so absorbed in his words that he loses awareness of those around him. His final line: "If there was only certainty and no doubt, there would be no mystery, and therefore no need for faith. Let us pray that God will grant us a pope who doubts."

These closing words are delivered with notable conviction.

Cardinal Lawrence's doubts and uncertainties make him human, relatable, and empathetic.

His truthfulness allows him to expose unworthy candidates and confront election rigging and abuse of power.

While some may dismiss the movie as a slight at the Church, the crises depicted feel more personal than institutional. They are not broad indictments of the Church but rather individual dilemmas.

The negative portrayals of cardinals are really a meditation on various aspects of the human condition, such as pride, anger, and greed. The fact that the cardinals reflect some of those sinful tendencies themselves is not a negative for the Church; rather, it shows that the Church is both a refuge and salvation for sinners.

The lead character stands for everything that is right. His non-traditional, controversial homily near the beginning of the movie lays the groundwork for his ideals and morals.

While there are problems, they are a reality. The Cardinals are also human beings with their own pasts. Rather than focusing on these flaws, the film emphasizes the search for a just leader, despite these personal dilemmas.

## Best 3 Albums of 2024

By Ryan Hewitt

From innovative alternative rock albums to deeply personal pop and hip-hop albums, 2024 gave us some of the best music of the decade. As always, some albums stood out above the rest, showcasing the artist's creativity in an innovative or interesting way and creating a beautiful atmosphere.

Starting off the top three best albums of the year in third place is HIT ME HARD AND SOFT, the third full-length release from singer-songwriter Billie Eilish, released in May.

Produced entirely by her and her brother Finneas, HIT ME HARD AND SOFT seems as though Eilish has fully matured into her art and challenged the idea that she is limited to only making "sad-girl" pop.

Eilish's vocals are as strong as ever, and the instrumentals seem to float around the listener. Best moments on the album include the enchanting synths on "CHIIHIRO" and "L'AMOUR DE MA VIE" and the emotional chorus of "THE GREATEST."

In second place falls the best hip-hop release of the year: Tyler, the Creator's Chromakopia.

Expectations were high for Tyler, and he did not disappoint. In Chromakopia, Tyler seems to fuse the soulful pop aspects of Igor with the brassy hip-hop of Call Me if You Get Lost.

Chromakopia, however, sets itself apart from the rest of Tyler's discography in its intimacy. He speaks of suppressing oneself on "Take Your Mask Off," and, in the centerpiece of the album titled "Like Him," Tyler sings about his absent father, wondering, "Do I look like him?"

Finally, at the top of the list is none other than BRAT, the eighth album from UK artist Charli XCX.

None of Charli's previous projects have come close to the popularity and critical acclaim of BRAT. Charli draws inspiration from the mid-2000s club scene, including its loud dance music and neon lights. She also ventures into personal experiences such as concerns about potential motherhood ("I think about it all the time").

All the while, Charli keeps the album loud and energetic with brash synths, bold drums, and an unexpected piano break ("Mean girls"). With BRAT, Charli managed to create an album that is as intimate and contemplative as it is exciting and abrasive.

## 2024 Films Worth Watching

By Marshall Lisenby

Now that 2024 has come to a close and the Oscar nominees for the year are beginning to be announced, let's look at some of the most memorable and excellent film releases from the last calendar year.

**The Brutalist:** László Tóth, a Hungarian-Jewish architect played impeccably by Adrien Brody, has to flee Europe amidst the antisemitism of the Second World War, finding himself impoverished in New York, struggling to reach his wife and niece still stranded and suffering across the Atlantic. A24's newest installment, The Brutalist follows the success, grief, and loss Tóth battles as he navigates the perils of a commodified American existence, exploring imperative themes about ambition and passion. Split into two acts with a fifteen-minute intermission, this movie is one of the most visually stunning of 2024 and a definite watch while it remains in theaters at the start of this year.

**Nosferatu:** For the horror-inclined, thrill-seeking movie fans, Robert Eggers' re-imagining of the 1922 Dracula story,



Photo Credit: Unapologetic Projects

Nosferatu, is a movie I highly recommend. With incredible set and costume design, Eggers creates beyond-eerie atmospheres to present the freaky tale of Count Orlok and his possession and usurpation of the Hutter family, as neither fire, fear, nor fury can keep the haunted couple separated. For those yearning for a fright, Nosferatu is an incredibly unique horror film that will have you persistently sitting on the edge of your seat.

**ANORA:** Another chaotic, vivacious film from Sean Baker, ANORA explores the intricacies of the American Dream by confronting themes of adulthood and ambition. Chaotic

and exciting but equally heart-felt and sweet, this movie has a place for both comedic relief and blood-pumping action, telling a vulnerable story through stand-out performances from Mikey Madison and Yuriy Borisov. Breaking genre boundaries through an engrossing and visceral story, this was one of the most unexpectedly impressive movies of the year.

**Didi:** Finally, highlighting one of 2024's directorial debuts, Sean Wang's Didi is a heart-warming coming-of-age story that follows 14-year-old Chris Wang as he navigates through an identity crisis while he enters high school, pitting social norms against family values. Chris navigates the perils of having the coolest MySpace account, impressing his crush, Madi, and making a name in his local skater scene. His story is awkward, embarrassing, and all the more relatable, making for a painfully funny and enjoyable watch. Didi is a seminal film for Wang as he begins to make a name of his own in the world of cinema.

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