

## Reflection

*By Alexandria Harvey*

Upon arrival I'm surrounded by unfamiliar faces. The dwelling is welcoming, but unknown. I am at bay. I carry with me belongings for a trip with no expectations. I am accompanied by the memories of the ones back home. My thoughts linger with them, though I am away physically. I wonder what I will miss at home while attending this camp. I am unwillingly abandoning my obligations. Or is it willingly? There is no contact. No familiarity. Hesitation, confusion, and cold containment are my companions. My feet lack in swiftness outside my comfort zone. I move uneasily. I build a frozen wall separating me from this strange place.

Yet I keep a connection with curiosity. Introductions and acquaintances are made. I am not myself, but humor helps the icy walls begin to thaw. The spiritual warmth of this environment lurks and I am unaware at this moment. As time passes, a sudden transition is shown. I am thrown into situations in which my inner-self is exposed. I am tossed among groupings of different people and succumb to the enjoyment and warmth. I gave in. I am melting. I detect this and accept it. No, not just accept: I seek it. The once firm, negative grip is now released and insecurities are shared.

In the depths of myself I find emotions that I was unconscious of. I am learning. Specifically, I am taught the life skills of listening, self-acceptance, integrity, self-disclosure, and hospitality among others. I am further informed on the tragedies of humanity and how social justice can heal these wounds of this world. I learn from the teens around me. Sharing our secrets and stories has taught me. I feel stronger. So do others, my new friends. Everyone is revealing themselves. All around me there is warmth and the heat only increases. Each individual glows. I can feel myself ablaze.

How must I have been so blind to not have seen this beautiful light before? I have always known my Catholic faith. But until this week I have not fully acquired it. My past has been lived in ignorance. I had previously inhabited tundra, seemingly lonely. But through this week, the season has changed. This new warmer weather has revealed the presence of the son. The Baptismal renewal, the reconciliation, the Eucharist, the prayers, and the community have allowed me to walk with Christ in this summer of warmth. He's everywhere. He is in the air. I inhale it deeply. Grace fills my lungs. The

spirit circulates throughout me. It's incandescent. The glow is mutual. We all have changed.

But what shall become of us afterward? We cannot allow Christ to be extinguished. We must become informers, continuing this Marianist fellowship. This is a week to remember. Do not let it fade into a winter. Return home and sustain the flame. Fuel it through the skills and wisdom obtained this week. Set the world on fire – a fire of the Lord. Do not reside as a spectator. Let us truly live in faith experience.