

# Grappling with mental health with faith

written by Special to Arkansas Catholic |

Mental health issues such as depression and anxiety are increasingly affecting young adults due to societal pressures, stigma, and lack of support. Seeking help and faith can provide hope and closure.

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## Shannon Trantina: Putting away anxious thoughts

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## **What is one way the Church can reach young adults better?**

“I would just say having more youth group options that are in a natural environment. Just getting kids together while having fun, while also filling them with the Word as well. Having a good mixture of both and just trying to build more of a sense of community rather than strictly enforcing theology views on things at that age.”

### **CONWAY**

Shannon Trantina, 20, has a heart for ministering to girls, especially those striving to “navigate the hard things with God.” Trantina, a lifelong parishioner and graduate of St. Joseph High School in Conway, spoke a few times this past year to junior high girls on how her spiritual life saved her from anxiety and gossip.

“I had the realization that God has everything in control, and he has a plan I can’t see and it’s all going to work out for the best. That’s the moment my anxiety was completely gone. ... Whenever I started going to adoration and growing in my spiritual life, everything changed.”

She felt the most anxiety about being “perfect all the time” at school and in sports. She began a devotional series called “Beloved,” listening to Christian music in moments of panic and focusing on God rather than “trying to fix it myself.”

“I had a spiritual life, but I didn’t personalize it to myself. But once I started opening up and involving God in all aspects of my life,” things changed, she said, adding, “Just finding your purpose through God first will help everything else come more naturally.”

Her focus on God has led her to volunteer in several ministries, including The Upper Room high school youth group and being a mentor for Deliver Hope, a Christian-based nonprofit in Conway that helps at-risk youth.

“It’s fulfilling. Just seeing them let their guards down and you being the one person they can trust in their life is awesome,” she said of Deliver Hope.

Trantina, a senior dietetics major at the University of Central Arkansas in Conway, said, “Just knowing I can help one person just makes me very happy. ... It’s not me; it’s just the work of God going through me.”

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