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An Hour of Study is an Hour of Prayer

Residents of Bayridge in Boston recently held a 26 hour "Study Marathon" to show their solidarity with the students at Virginia Tech who experienced the tragic shootings.

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On Monday, April 16th, the girls at Bayridge Residence were enjoying a holiday. In Massachusetts the second Monday of April is Patriot's Day. It is also the day of the Boston Marathon.

And since the residence happens to be on the 26.2 mile marathon route, we enjoyed watching the runners from our front door.

A few hours later, however, we learned about the tragic shootings that had occurred that morning at Virginia Tech. We were shocked, and deeply saddened.

Our house shared in the grief of the VTech community: we posted pictures from their website, prayed for the victims, wore the Hokie colors. But we felt the need to do more.

It then occurred to us to have our own marathon, a study marathon: 26.2 hours of study in honor of our fallen peers, their families and the entire VT community.

There are many girls at Bayridge who are not Catholic, and several with no religion at all. But most of

these girls love living here, and they understand, in their own way, the teachings of Saint Josemaría which inspired the residence: that it would be a place for young women to grow in their ideals, living a healthy lifestyle and studying diligently.

During our study marathon I was eating lunch with one of these residents, and she asked me to explain the concept behind what we were doing. She didn't quite see how our hours of studying were helping the victims, their families, or their friends.

I told her how Saint Josemaría taught that "an hour of study ... is an hour of prayer" when it is done with a supernatural motive and offered to God. "Oh," she said slowly, "so it's like you're sending them energy?" We both laughed, but I realized later just how much of our spirit she had grasped.

Another friend of mine who lives outside the residence joined us for the entire weekend. She also has no religion, but she eagerly added her hours of study to our efforts, and she loved every second of it.

The house helped her study well: she could sense that what we were doing was meaningful, and it kept her motivated and peaceful as she cranked out multiple papers for her graduate classes. She got so much out of the study marathon that she came back to study here twice more in the following week, and even brought her sister over to show her the house.

At the end of the weekend, we put together a package for the president of Virginia Tech, with pictures, a record of our hours, and a letter explaining the spirit in which the Bayridge girls had dedicated a weekend to this study marathon -

offering up each hour of study as a prayer for their community.

In all, we had studied for 283.5 hours. That's a lot of prayers; but even before we knew the total, we were seeing the fruitfulness that God brings out of our work.

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