PEPPERDINE: is a Christian university where all are welcomed and encouraged to challenge each other in the pursuit of truth. Students, faculty, and staff members from all backgrounds participate in conversations of faith inside and outside of the classroom. Considering that Pepperdine is a Christian university, why are you interested in attending and how would you contribute to conversations of faith on campus?\*

The first thing I noticed about Pepperdine was the intense waft of sea salt; the second was my sister’s agitation. We were scouting universities and couldn’t wait to visit *Pacific Coast Academy* and Malibu’s palm trees.

Though I reached out to Mr. Mclamma for reasons beyond *Zoey-101* and coconuts.

I recalled thinking before my classmates snarfed up heated lasagna that they were unique. The difference lay seconds before they ate: Jessica laced her hands together. Oliver pointed his hands upwards, monk-like. Valen didn’t bother waiting. Me? I mimicked my parents—4 dots across my forehead and chest.

All my life, I’ve been tossed around with what to believe and where to go. I served as an altar-girl at St. Andreas Catholic Church. I’ve always wondered what it’d be like to sit on the opposite side of the mass; to absorb the lessons taught and not think of the church as ‘duty.’ My primary motive to go to church was for my parents instead of God.

However, it was high school that introduced me to a new perception of faith. With zero background in Christianity, the Student Council accepted me into their Ministry Committee. I asked Emma, our leader, what separates me from the other applicants. She said as if faith was habitual: “I prayed and heard your name.” I began understanding that faith played a huge role in religion.

During Pepperdine’s Bible Lecture on *YouTube*, Jeff Walling dared me to spend a week in Pepperdine, to simply sit in the chapel during Thursday Night. I knew Pepperdine takes their values seriously when he described their students to not ignore the cross when entering the school.

Months after hosting worship events and leading group devotions, I finally understood that there’s more to religion than labels. A church is a connection, not a building. Hence, finding the right place of solace is a crucial factor when opting for a university. A chance to explore my spirituality while being comfortable communicating with my surroundings. To share my story that sometimes Christ doesn’t need to be understood, just felt.

The first step of opening up to Christ is having reliable mentors to guide you. Coincidentally, my intended major (advertising) discusses ways an organization communicates an idea or product, which is something I need to hone on the spiritual side. I’m hoping to join the Seaver 200 program to get the best of both worlds. I’m hungry to have that indomitable faith and community to help me navigate through life in and outside the classroom. To tackle the ‘fixed’ consensus that if one doesn’t go to church frequently, they are not with Him. To show that we need communication, not numerical values to develop a connection. Thus, I chose Pepperdine because it’s the most wholesome community for me to explore my beliefs. 10% of international students makes up Pepperdine’s student body. I look forward to exchange perspectives from a Chinese-Indonesian catholic with perhaps a Malibu Buddhist.

Also, I wanted to practice my uphill parallel parking.