



## *Ramadan Reflection - Week 2, 2022*

I grew up in Olean N.Y. and as a Pakistani Muslim it was not as easy as one could imagine. I was always approached with questions and comments regarding my faith on a spectrum that ranged from respectful to death threats from random people in my community. Unfortunately, I was not raised in Buffalo, New York City, or even Dallas where people were well informed

on religious months like Ramadan, or what it means to be a practicing Muslim. When reading this reflection, I wanted to provide you with what Ramadan means to me.

My parents raised me in a household where Ramadan is a month to look forward to and fully embrace its blessings. We have to abstain from eating and drinking from sunrise to sunset (no, not even water), but there is so much more to Ramadan than just fasting. I look at this month as a religious and spiritual reset. I try to give back whether it is charity or volunteering in the local community and spend as much time growing as a person. Trying to disconnect from social media, and watching television is very difficult for me, but I do try my best to limit it during the month of Ramadan. We live in a society where we are always go, go, go, but I feel that time shifts- in a good way during this holy month. I try my best to slow it down and just be thankful. Big or small I think we collectively take a lot of things for granted. Whether it is food, shelter, or given the chance of being able to attend college I say “Alhamdulillah” (praise be to God).

For some people, including myself at times, we tend to lose touch of who we are and what we truly believe in. Entering college, my freshman year I was worried that there were numerous distractions, and I would not be able to observe the month of Ramadan to my full potential. Thankfully, throughout the years here at Bonaventure my excitement has not dwindled. Our MSA (Muslim Students Association) club has met and we’ve bonded with one another throughout my 4 years at St. Bonaventure especially during the month of Ramadan. With that, bonds and friendships were formed that will honestly last a lifetime.

Community is a huge aspect of what Ramadan is all about. Muslims all around the area every weekend come together at our local mosque to share food, laughter, and joy with one another. Although, I do live in a small town I think I make the best of what I have been given, and I don’t think I could truly see the silver lining of Ramadan without my parent’s guidance. Finally, to my non-Muslims reading this, if you have friends, classmates, or students that you know are Muslim and are observing the month of Ramadan, a simple “how is your fast going?” or a “Happy Ramadan” will truly make a positive difference in their day. Perhaps even try and challenge yourself to fast for a day or two and see how it is!

To my Muslim brothers and sisters, may it be a Ramadan filled with lots of prayer, reflection, self-growth, food, kindness, and charity. Ameen Sum Ameen! Ramadan Kareem ☺

- Zayba Chauhdry, Class of '22