

cover story

By Kate Andrews

A photograph of three women sitting on a light-colored couch. The woman on the left is wearing a blue cardigan over a white collared shirt and a brown belt. The woman in the middle is wearing a floral patterned top. The woman on the right is wearing a red and white striped shirt. They are all smiling and holding white mugs that have 'The Gist' printed on them. In the background, a large red 'GIST' logo is visible on a blue wall.

Getting  
**The Gist**  
on CatholicTV

**F**or almost three decades, women have dominated the day-time talk show forum. Oprah built an empire. Ellen DeGeneres dances her way into the homes of millions each week. The women of *The View* not only fuel political and tabloid fodder, but also inspire countless spin-offs, such as *The Talk*.

These women discuss everything from celebrity gossip to civil rights, weight gain to social issues. They've made an impact on the way society communicates by sitting in front of a camera and sharing their thoughts on what's going on in the world. But there has been one voice that has not been heard from: the voice of the Catholic woman.

Come January, that will change. CatholicTV's new show *The Gist* premieres in 2012. *The Gist* will be CatholicTV's first women's show since *Women in God's Spirit*, a panel-discussion program, went off the air in 2008 after only one season. Each week, *Gist* hosts Danielle Bean, Rachel Balducci and Carolee McGrath, all formidable Catholic personalities, will discuss topics such as abortion, raising teens in the faith and confession.

But Danielle, who presented the show concept to CatholicTV in May, stresses that this will not just be about the issues that confront the Church in the modern-day world. It will educate and inspire the whole person, because the show's hosts believe that being Catholic is not just a compartmentalized part of life, but part of every aspect of every day.

"Why can't we just give women television that women like, that happens to be from Catholic women?" she

asked. "Why can't we also talk about those other things that don't have the Catholic stamp on them that women care about? Fun things — that make life enjoyable."

So not only will they discuss faith and Church, but also exercising, make-up and how to stay sane, the last subject they are particularly well-versed in. After all, among the three, they have 18 children, with another one on the way for Carolee.

After pitching the idea to the network, Danielle had one woman in mind as her co-host. Rachel Balducci is a former journalist who

issues of the day and also minutiae — stuff like how to keep up with the laundry and products out there to make life a little easier," Rachel said. "To me, *The Gist* is all the stuff you are thinking about and talking about with your favorite girlfriends, right here on the television!"

It was the day of the first meeting of *The Gist* when Danielle met Carolee, who also had written for her on the Faith & Family website. Carolee was in filming *Blink* segments called "LifeLines." The two clicked and the show's line-up was complete. And Carolee shares her co-hosts outlook on the show. "I think *The Gist* is about what Catholic moms deal with every day: marriage, kids, laundry, the checkbook, and work for some. It's a lot and if I didn't have Christ in my life, it would be very hard to make it all work," she said. Over the past few months, since then, they've been preparing topics to



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had written for Danielle's popular website, Faith & Family. And Rachel's idea for the show was completely in sync with Danielle's concept.

"*The Gist* is a show that talks about

discuss while we've been working hard on providing a set that will make them feel right at home.

But the real challenge will come when they get on the set. Danielle is positive the energy will start to flow when they step into the studio. "I'm confident it's going to be a conversation, not just an interview," she said.

Rachel has high hopes for the show, too, and she plans to fulfill them with the help of her experience as a mother — and with the love of God.

"I hope our show shows women that you can love your faith and live wholeheartedly for God while enjoying your life," she said, "Those things are not mutually exclusive. I think *The Gist* is going to do a great job of showing that the Catholic faith is alive and not worth being sold out for!"

For Carolee, she's hoping the show will create a sense of community amongst Catholic women. "It's nice to know that you're not alone," she said, "that there are other moms out there that do have the same Catholic values and are excited to share them."

Before *The Gist*, Carolee was the only one of the three who had television

experience, having worked as a news anchor and reporter and she hopes to bring her experience to the table to discuss the message of Christ, something she calls a privilege. So not only do Rachel and Danielle hope to educate their viewers, they are looking forward to getting an education as well.

"I'm hoping to learn a lot," Danielle said, "I haven't done television before. I'm a communicator of all kinds. I like

to talk, I've done a lot of radio and I've done blogs, podcasts and books. Now I'm looking forward to servicing the needs of Catholic women through television."

### **Carolee McGrath**

Carolee McGrath is a pro-life reporter for the Diocese of Springfield on its Catholic television program *Real to Reel*. She also writes for the *Catholic*

*Mirror*. Her work has been featured in the Knights of Columbus' *Columbia Magazine* and *Faith & Family Magazine*. Her primary focus is to change hearts on the issue of abortion.

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– Rachel Balducci



Before dedicating her time to pro-life reporting, Carolee, a graduate of Boston College, spent several years as a local television news anchor and reporter in Springfield and Connecticut at WGGB-ABC 40, Fox 61 News in Hartford and WTNH-TV in New Haven. She also spent a short time anchoring and reporting in Philadelphia.

Week of:	Topics:	Airs:
Jan. 2	<b>Working Moms:</b> with guest Lisa Hendy, author of "The Handbook for Catholic Moms"	<b>Premieres:</b> Wed. 10:30 a.m. <b>Repeats:</b> Thur. 8:30 p.m. Fri. 4 p.m.
Jan. 9	<b>Pro-life:</b> with guest pro-life activist Carmel Waters	Sat. 6:30 a.m. Mon. 8 a.m. Tue. 10 p.m.
Jan. 16	<b>Confession:</b> with guest, Lino Rulli, radio host and author of the book "Sinner"	
Jan. 23	<b>Family:</b> with guests Martin Sheen and Emilio Estevez	
Jan. 30	<b>Saints and Saving:</b> with guest Father James Martin, SJ	



Carolee's busiest and most rewarding job is being a mother. She and her husband John are the proud parents of four children, with a fifth on the way! Carolee and John are active members of their parish, where she enjoys teaching catechism and singing at the family holy hour. She also sings with the Catholic music group "We Believe," which recently was invited to sing at the Catholic Women's Conference in Springfield. Carolee served as the chairwoman of the Pioneer Valley Mass Citizens for Life's Annual Mothers' Day Dinner.

### Rachel Balducci

After receiving her master's in journalism from the University of Georgia, Rachel Balducci took a job as a reporter for *The Augusta Chronicle*. She has since given up her life as a newspaper reporter, but uses those skills to write a weekly column for *The Southern Cross*, the newspaper for the Catholic Diocese of Savannah.

For the past four years, she's maintained her blog, "Testosterhome," which chronicles the joys and challenges of being a wife to her attorney husband, Paul, and mother to five boys and a baby girl. She's been

writing for *Faith & Family Magazine* under the direction of Danielle Bean since 2008. During that time, she's covered everything from how to handle the holidays to Down syndrome children. She's also written for *The Word Among Us*.

In April 2010, Rachel's first book, *How Do You Tuck In A Superhero? And Other Delightful Mysteries of Raising Boys* was published. Rachel has been featured in *Good Housekeeping* magazine as one of its "Bloggers We Love." Rachel says she writes what she knows and what she's passionate about. She'll bring that talent to the table when she sits down to give us *The Gist*.

### Danielle Bean

Danielle Bean, formerly editorial director of *Faith & Family Magazine* and *FaithandFamilyLive.com*, will take on the role of editor-in-chief of *Catholic Digest* in January 2012. She is author of *My Cup of Tea: Musings of a Catholic Mom*; *Mom to Mom, Day to Day: Advice and Support for Catholic Living*; and *Small Steps for Catholic Moms: Think. Pray. Act. Every Day*. She authored the forward on Jason Free's book *Parenting on Purpose!*

Up until January 2011, she also wrote for the *National Catholic Register*. She still writes for *Crisis Magazine* and *Catholic City*. Dubbing herself a communicator, she also has a large following on Facebook and Twitter, where she spreads her message of faith and family. She also works as a Catholic speaker. She does all this on top of raising and home-schooling her eight children with husband Dan.

Danielle has been featured on CatholicTV's *This is the Day* and has written for the "On Faith" section of *The Washington Post's* website.