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Mr. Clement Period E

### **Catholic Schools Week Essay 2021**

I have attended Catholic school over ten years, and this has shown me what a great opportunity Catholic education is. When I was young, I was blessed to go to St. Martin de Porres School, which is right down the street from Lourdes, and it gave me roots in the Catholic faith and a faith formation I would not have received in public school or anywhere else. I grew up periodically receiving the sacraments and learning about the faith, and this gave me the foundation necessary to choose the faith for myself as I grew older. When I came to Lourdes, I found a rich community, not present anywhere else. The opportunity I have attending Catholic school has fostered an environment in which I can grow in faith, friendship, and love.

One of the beautiful things about Catholic school is that we can openly profess our faith. In an increasingly secular society, we are often told to be quiet about matters of faith. Attending Mass can be dangerous in the current political and cultural climate, where people will break into churches to violently protest what we believe. Last year, I even witnessed my church being vandalized by someone who brought in a hammer to destroy church property. In Catholic school, we are granted safety in our faith and have people there to protect us. Every Catholic student is promised the opportunity to receive the sacraments, pray together, and study and discuss matters of faith as a part of our daily life in school. Being taught Scripture and theology is a great educational opportunity that can be hard to come by. This Catholic-rooted life and education is one of many things that has greatly influenced my life and personal faith journey.

Also, the educational opportunities present in Catholic school are often superior to those in public schools. We are given access to technology and resources that others in public districts may not ever receive. I am especially grateful for attending Lourdes during the coronavirus pandemic because although it has not been easy or ideal, we never had to stop learning. Many of my friends in public school went months without attending school after the original lockdown, and some are still unable to go into their school and lack the technology to attend remotely. Lourdes, however, gave us the resources to study at home and was ready to teach remotely within a few days of the lockdown. Nothing about this situation has been ideal, but going to a Catholic school, I have the privilege of continuing my education in a time of global chaos and suffering when so many others have not. Even when it is difficult, all we do here is an offering to God, and there is so much strength and power in that.

Another source of strength in this difficult time is knowing that the Church is a family, and our school community, rooted in the Church, is no different. We are a group of people that learns, works, plays, and prays together. This creates a community and a sort of family that is not found anywhere else. At Lourdes I have found friendship and love stronger than anything I have ever known. My faith, brought to life by the Lourdes community, has brought me close to people I have known my whole life who I never really knew or noticed in my childhood. These people are now my best friends, and I have grown to consider them a Church family.

I am so grateful to have the opportunity of this education rooted in faith, hope, and Catholic values. It is beautiful and powerful that all we do here is for the sake of our Lord. Even in the scariest and saddest of times, we can have hope in God and in one another. It is because I grew up rooted in my faith through Catholic school that I have the life, happiness, friends, and family I do today. This is the greatest gift in my life, I couldn't imagine being anywhere else.