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Religion 11  
3 February 2022

***Catholic Schools Week Essay 2022***

In a world that has abandoned everything from human dignity to the formation of solid conscience, Catholic schools have the opportunity to be a light in the darkness of our secular world. Catholic schools give students an academically and morally rigorous education, while cultivating a community that seeks to foster a sense of family throughout the world.

In the past year, we have been able to, in many ways, return to a more normal way of life following the pandemic, and being in a Catholic school helps me find peace in a world that only seems to be getting busier. Faith-based friendships have given me more fulfillment than any other type of bond could, and having Jesus perpetually present in the Blessed Sacrament, right in our school chapel, is a truly irreplaceable gift. As a Catholic school student, God has given me easy access to the sacraments, the promise of support in my faith journey, teachers who show genuine care and commitment to Catholic education, and a large group of people whom I believe care about me and my hopes for the future.

This school year, being co-president of the Pro-Life Club with one of my closest friends has been a beautiful and unique experience, which is only available like this in Catholic schools. While we live in a culture that perpetuates the idea that there is no objective moral law, being in the pro-life movement has helped me understand more deeply that every human being is made with inherent dignity that is always worth fighting for, regardless of the circumstances. My basis for being pro-life is that each human being is faced with decisions in their life, where they must choose whether love or fear is stronger, and we must stand as a beacon of light to the

world showing that love is, in fact, stronger. Being pro-life is the greatest example of this, as a mother facing a crisis pregnancy must choose her love for her child and his or her life over the fear of the struggles they may face. It is our mission, as the pro-life movement, to offer support that will make this decision of love as easy as possible.

Being part of a Catholic school has given me the opportunity to voice my belief that life is precious and love is stronger than all else. Contrary to the public schools in our area, Lourdes has done everything possible to remain open every day this year in spite of the pandemic, and this has helped instill the idea that love is stronger than fear and that we remain united.

Therefore, attending Catholic school is a true blessing in my life because it provides me, as a high school student, a community of extended family and the opportunity to create a culture of life, which cannot be found, whole and complete, anywhere else.