

CATHOLIC EDUCATION

Submitted by Samara Draganiuk

Some choices are made by us, and some for us. Either way, we must live with the consequences. In the early years of childhood parents have the honor of making every decision for their kin. Their name, their toys, and even the immense decision of existing or not is in the hands of their parents. In today's new and ever changing world the most controversial decisions seem to be those regarding children and religion. Is it fair to baptize a child without knowing their wishes? Is it right to enroll a young boy or girl into the Catholic School system without their consent? I believe so, because I believe it is a gift and a great opportunity to birth a deep and close relationship with God. My parents did me the honor of enrolling me in this wonderful school system, which has watered my ever-growing faith. If it weren't for the welcoming environment that God creates in our schools I can surely say I wouldn't be the same easy going person that I am today. Knowing that for the better part of my day I am surrounded by those that share my love for God and accept Him as I do is unbelievably comforting. Every aspect of my life has been shaped by my religious values and it is all thanks to my parents and their choice

in placing me in the Catholic School system. I would be lost without this school and the pathway to God's house. High school especially is a time of self-discovery and during these years life altering decisions are often presented. At Archbishop Jordan High school I feel that my faith is strengthened and thus I am more confident that the decisions I am making are the right ones. Every time we have a school mass to celebrate God's grace I cannot help but praise him with song and hope to enlighten the rest of the school with music. "Lift up your hearts to the Lord," for through music and praise we travel closer to God and his love deepens our hearts so we may love even more. I cannot rightly say that school alone has led me onto this path of singing because it has always been a part of my life even outside of school. My family has always sang at church and I always dreamt of leading the parish in song, but the school has given me the great opportunity to not only sing with those at church but also with those who do not attend mass. Maybe, just maybe my love for singing will be passed on to those clicking their heels during a school celebration and maybe, just maybe they will be moved enough to come to church again and be in the house of God. It is so easy to feel welcome and accepted at a school that offers faith, hope, and love to its students. It has taught me to not be afraid of others

and what they may think of me. My praises are true and my intents are holy. I wish only to inspire and to give my love up to the Lord most high.

In teaching we shall learn and in learning we shall teach. By learning of God's grace and by studying Jesus' life and sacrifice I can now go out and share the Good News of the Lord. I have tried many times to read the Bible on my own but I would easily get confused and find myself asking questions where there is never a straight answer. I am so grateful for the class times dedicated to teaching Jesus' journey here on earth and I am equally as grateful that I learnt it all with my peers. We all had questions, some the same and some different. We all found that not every question had an answer and we all came to accept and cherish that. It made me feel human that even in rare times my teachers did not know the answers to my religious inquiries because it meant that the teachings of God are ever lasting and never ending. It meant that no matter how hard I try in life I will still make mistakes, and, that it's okay to do so because I know now how to learn from them. It meant that forgiveness is key in living life. When I see others hurting I can pray for them and pray with them. If they

choose to pray with me I can teach them how and tell them about Jesus' life by word of mouth, just like it used to be. I wouldn't be able to do any of this if I wasn't taught how to. Religion class is a class that teaches life lessons and teaches us how to be servants of God. Being in a Catholic School every class has some semblance to a religion class because the teachers all share in my faith and I am calmed by that. It is not that I am uneasy around those who have not found their faith, I am simply revitalized when I am around others who openly love God as I do.

"And I will raise you up on eagles wings." If for no other reason am I thankful that I have been brought up with religion in my life, it is that one day I may soar above the clouds on eagles wings and feel the love of God surrounding me for eternity. I think it is obvious that there is not one clear thing that has been changed in my life as a result of my Catholic education, rather, my whole life has been affected by it. Everything would be different if it wasn't for my faith. Everything would be different if it wasn't for this glorious school. If for a moment I imagine myself in a public school I can't say it would be terrible. The difference between those who believe and those who don't doesn't really make a

huge difference while learning mathematics 30, and the difference between what people do on Sunday morning doesn't affect my life in a huge way either. It is the simple fact that among all of us God connects us, for He is the one that made us, and the difference between the believers and the lost is that those who believe accept that God is our creator. This difference won't change the way I find the solution to my math equations but it will however connect my soul with others. I am so lucky to have attended a school where my soul is intertwined with everyone else who shares my passion for Christ.

God created us equally. God created us in His image. God created us. We weren't given the choice of whether or not we wanted to live. We were given the gift of life. God, ever loving and magnificent also gave us the choice to love Him or not because He knew that if we chose to love Him it would be true and pure. This life that I am leading is powered by my love for the Father and my love has grown thanks to my religious education. I have learned that He loves me and will always love me just the way I am. I have learned that I should also love others just the way they are. I have learned how to live. I may not have had a choice in entering a Catholic school but I had the choice of whether or not to be

accepting of it. I have accepted it and treasured it with all my heart. Any place that holds God is holy. My school has been a holy place for me. My school has been my sanctuary.

–Samara Draganiuk