

Nicholas J. DiPol
Our Lady of Guadalupe School
Hermosa Beach, CA 90254

May 13, 2008

Values of a Catholic School Education

For the last nine years, I have attended Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic School in Hermosa Beach. I can tell you from experience that there are countless values in a Catholic School education. The three most important values are the special attention you get from teachers and staff who have known you since you were very young, the tight bonds you make with your classmates, and the influence of faith and good values in curriculum.

Like most Catholic grade schools, Our Lady of Guadalupe School is small, with less than 250 students. My class has often had fewer than twenty-five students. Because of this small size, teachers can focus on each student's personal struggles while providing the whole class with a rigorous curriculum not taught in public schools. At a Catholic school, each teacher knows each student very well, and the teachers challenge the students to reach their full potential. Catholic school teachers are motivated, and teaching is more than just a job for them; it is their life's work, and they love what they do. And when you have someone who loves teaching, they do a fantastic job. At Catholic schools, the staff is concerned with more than just your studies, they always set a good example and reinforce positive behavior.

When you have spent seven hours every school day with your classmates for nine years, you really get to know them. Being in an environment with motivated, college bound students like myself has been a positive influence. Being with my friends who have the same values I do, makes my schoolwork much easier and enjoyable. I know they are trying their hardest, just as I am. A great advantage of a Catholic education is the true friends you make for the rest of your life. You know that your classmates are hard working, kind, and motivated, and will never let you down.

While these are great advantages of a Catholic education, the most beneficial to me has been the integration of Catholic beliefs and values with everything we learn. At a public school, when you do something against the rules, you are simply punished. At a Catholic school, you are asked questions about how your actions are wrong, whether your actions are Christian-like, and why you acted. These questions make you think about what you did and help you understand the reasons for punishment. One thing I love about Catholic school is attending Mass. Mass gives us time to think about the day ahead and release any stress. The influence of Catholic values on my education has given me a good sense of right and wrong, and I know that just because something is legal, it does not make it right. This unique feature of a Catholic education is not found in public schools.

I am so glad that my parents sent me to Our Lady of Guadalupe School and support my choice to attend Bishop Montgomery High School. All my years at Catholic grade school have been productive, fun, and have helped me grow. I have had a great experience at Our Lady of Guadalupe, and I am excited to go to high school where I will continue to grow and learn in an environment based on my religious values with other kids who believe as I believe.