

St. Andrew School

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For the past nine years, I have had the privilege of being a student at Saint Andrew School. My time spent at Saint Andrew has provided me with a strong moral, academic, and social foundation for the future. Most importantly, my Catholic education has bestowed upon me a strong sense of pride in myself, my faith, and my school. It is in these memory filled halls and classrooms on Wrights Road that I have learned to establish myself as an individual and as a Catholic. In today's world, with Church scandals and school closings highly publicized, it is not a popular time to be a Catholic or to be involved in Catholic education. But I believe, in dark times it is important to highlight the bright side. I believe that with so much bad and negativity so highly publicized, it is my moral obligation to speak out and publicize all of the good Catholic education has done for me – all of the good you never read about in the newspaper or hear about on TV. Catholic education is so important to me, and I believe I am the confident, informed, and faithful individual I am today, not despite, but solely because of it.

During my time spent at Saint Andrew School, I have memorized my times tables, and states and capitals; I have studied the makeup of cells, and gerunds, and participles, too. But, the class that has had the most positive impact on me is religion. It is through my religious education that I can say I'm a Catholic, and actually understand what it means. And while the Bible study and church history lessons have been stimulating and informative, I believe the most important thing that religion class has done for me is that it reminds me why I'm here, what my purpose is in life, and most of all: it is a daily reminder to nourish and expand my relationship with God. It is extremely difficult in our busy lives to always remember our Christian call to love and service, but at Saint Andrew School, it is extremely difficult to forget. From religion class, to prayer services, and morning announcements to school liturgies, I have constant, daily access to my faith and constant, daily encouragement to heed my Christian mission.

While the spiritual aspect of Catholic education is perhaps the most important, it is necessary that I mention the friendships Catholic school has provided me. In my nine years spent at Saint Andrew, the friendships that I have formed will last a lifetime. There is much diversity among me and my friends: we play different sports, pursue different goals, have different interests; but, our Christianity and drive to better the world binds us. In my experience at Catholic school, I have met great people who share my Christian values. Catholic school feels like a family; when one member is hurting, we all seek to help and comfort them. Also, I have found that student friendships are not the only relationships flourishing; at Saint Andrew, the students and teachers are very close. The teachers I have known have taken a

personal interest in me and my peers, and have cared for us deeply. If you are struggling with a subject or maybe a more personal problem, the teachers are always available to help. I think my teachers are so passionate because they truly believe in what they are doing; they do not teach at Saint Andrew because of the high salary; if that was their purpose, they would teach in public school. My teachers believe in spreading the faith and empowering students. They are extremely admirable and devoted. Additionally, our school gives off a community, family feel from the second you enter the building. Unlike large public schools, where it is easy to get lost in the crowd, the homey atmosphere and small classes at Saint Andrew make it comfortable, and easy to be yourself and to shine. I always feel safe at Saint Andrew's. Public schools have higher bullying rate, than Catholic schools; if there is bullying at St. Andrew, it is punishable, treated, and ends immediately.

Going to Catholic school, I have acquired so much pride. When you meet someone from a Catholic school, there is an immediate bond. The Archdiocese of Philadelphia is a close-knit community, and your parish school is often more defining to your identity than your neighborhood. When I meet someone from another parish school, we usually don't have a hard time making a list of mutual friends; there is a strong bond and connection among the Catholic educated. Pride in the school makes students closer, especially when it comes to sports and clubs; students, teachers, faculty, and parents come together to cheer each other on. We each have a sense of care and pride. We are Saint Andrew's! Like any earthly organization, the Archdiocese of Philadelphia is not perfect. But since its founding, the mission has stayed the same: to spread the Gospel, and to educate Catholic youths to do the same. The Archdiocese has never failed in this mission. The problems will only make us stronger, and help us to reform and grow more devoted in our faith. My pride will never waiver that I am a product of Catholic education.

I am so grateful for the many opportunities Catholic education has provided me. I will never be able to thank my parents enough for making the sacrifices to send me to Saint Andrew School. From the curriculum I have been taught, to the friendships I have made, to the moral foundation that has been laid for me, I feel so lucky to be a recipient of Catholic education. Because of my wonderful experience at Saint Andrew School, I have chosen to further my Catholic schooling at Mount Saint Joseph Academy next fall. Also, if I have children one day, I vow to make the sacrifices necessary to send them to Catholic school. It is a cycle of goodness I wish to continue. I am who I am today because of my Catholic education; I am so thankful.