

Catholic Schools Week

Written by Mateo F. '24

There I was: the new kid. It was the first day of middle school, and I was both nervous and excited. When I first came to Prince of Peace, I was amazed. It started off right away with a warm welcome from my fellow students and teachers and I felt like I was at home. Throughout my years at Prince of Peace, I've shared great memories with my peers, experienced a strong sense of community, and learned many valuable lessons.

One of my favorite memories at Prince of Peace was when we watched the eighth grade walk. I was in seventh grade at the time, and I thought the eighth graders looked so proud to be at the school – walking down the street, all the students cheering. They looked prepared for high school. Something that really stood out to me is how confident they seemed. The look in their eyes told me that Prince of Peace did something right. I wanted to be just like them, and now here I am, feeling the same way. I'm about to leave this wonderful school behind, but I will always keep with me the special memories.

The community here at Prince of Peace is very happy. The students and teachers always get along, and that's what makes a school great. Students are never afraid to ask for help. Students always feel safe wherever they are on the campus; with the new fence being built, the school has never been more secure. I've experienced the strong community here on many occasions, but there is one that stands out the most. On my first day at Prince of Peace in fifth grade, I was so nervous and eager to make friends. While I was at my locker, another student stopped to show me an act of kindness by stopping to talk to me. Shortly after, we became good friends, and we still are to this day. I felt so good that day, that week, and even that month.

The most valuable lesson I have learned here is that God will always be with you. I know that it doesn't sound like much, but if you look deeply into its meaning, you'll realize there's a lot in just one sentence: *God will be with you wherever you are*. No matter when, He is at your side. He's helping you with all your difficulties, and nobody should take that for granted. Jesus's love is unimaginable and is shown in so many ways. Whether it's grades, athletics, or whatever you may need help with, He's by your side. You never need to feel alone or hopeless. This school

helped me further understand God's love and grace. It now means a lot to me and has transformed me into a very religious person.

In the end, Prince of Peace has really made me who I am today: faithful, prepared, and confident. I feel ready for whatever obstacles that life will throw at me. I have courage that I will be able to overcome anything with God's help. I've shared good times with classmates, experienced the great community, and learned lessons that I'll never forget. I will remember this amazing school and its lessons forever.

Mateo is now in his fourth year at POP. Mateo is a member of National Junior Beta Club and Random Acts of Kindness (RAK) in addition to serving as a Student Ambassador. Mateo is highly involved as a student-athlete and competes year-round on the varsity cross country and varsity track & field teams as well as the 8th grade D1 basketball team. Last year, Mateo won a DPL Championship with his current basketball teammates.