

## **Catholic Schools Week**

*Written by Ashton N. '24*

Excited children and happy faces filled the school as I walked down the hallway toward my last class of the day. It finally hit me: I realized what an amazing school of which I am a part. Kids are joyful and eager to learn every morning at the crack of dawn through the mid-afternoon. With supportive teachers who care about their well-being, students prosper in this perfect school environment. Although the learning is the focus at Prince of Peace Catholic School, it goes much deeper. Students develop a strong faith rooted in the Lord and are forever connected with the beauty He has made. While the curriculum at POP is challenging, this school has taught me how to be a good human, developed in me a powerful relationship with God, and prepared me for the world.

In life, you must learn how to be a good human. Communication skills are key, and common sense is necessary to be a good coworker, student, or friend. Fortunately, POP has taught me over the years what it means to be a good person. Helpful teachers and staff members check that your behavior is in line with what God wants you to do. They don't reprimand for fun; they do it so that you can become a better child of God and strengthen your natural gifts. Although having a big brain is a large component of success, poor conduct can pose a ginormous roadblock. With superb behavior and God by your side, anything is possible. No other school teaches you to be an amazing, well-rounded child as well as POP.

Parents decide to send their children to a Catholic school for one major reason: the religious component. Other schools, unlike POP, lack the ability to promote and instill in students a strong faith in the Lord. Here, families have the assurance that their children will grow up in the comforting love of God and the peace of knowing that their children will have God by their side. Children spend the school day not only growing their knowledge of basic subjects, but also of the Lord. They learn from an early age what it means to be a child of God and how to act as Jesus would. Friendships rooted in faith start here and continue to grow much greater into high school and beyond. The love of God is obvious throughout the beautiful campus at POP and shines through the students.

As I have grown up, I have realized that this earth is far from perfect. Hate and violence are normal activities. However, Catholic education has prepared me for the troubles of the world and has taught me to stay patient. Even though times may get tough for me, I have the knowledge to know that God is always next to me, ready to help. This understanding is uber important for handling this world and the difficult events that may possibly come my way. Life is not this perfect bubble that I have grown up in; it's a tough place. Luckily, though, I'll come out strong with the help of a fabulous education and a strong mindset that will take me far in life.

I have mixed feelings about this being the last year of my POP education. This school has given so much to me and been the best experience I could have ever imagined. Even though it will be sad to leave, I am confident in my abilities as a child of God. POP has taught me how to be a good person, how to develop a relationship with the Lord, and has prepared me for the rest of my life in the world. Catholic education leaves a lasting impact of children and can change lives forever.

*A "Lifetime" student, Ashton has attended POP since PreK3. Ashton is a member of the POP cheerleading and 8th grade D1 basketball teams and competed last fall with the 8th grade D1 volleyball team. In addition to DPL Athletics, Ashton is a member of National Junior Beta Club and Random Acts of Kindness (RAK).*