



The Value of a Catholic Education

One subject, many authors.

At its best, education has always been about more than just an accumulation of knowledge. Catholic education, by its very definition, delivers an education that is grounded in a much wider frame of reference, that of a loving God who has come so that we “might have life and have it more abundantly” (Jn. 10:10). As such, Catholic education seeks always to engage a curious mind, a restless heart, a body built for earthly activity, and a soul designed for eternity.

Catholic education provides the opportunity for faith and knowledge to be interwoven, each providing reciprocal meaning to the other. In addition, Catholic education offers the challenge of taking this learning into the lives of our communities to seek the good and lead others to do the same.

For a Catholic family, a Catholic education connects all aspects of life – life at home, life in the parish and life at school. The values and beliefs of the family permeate throughout the school, whether in the classroom, on the sports field, in clubs, in the hallways and in the cafeteria. The consistency of values and belief creates a bridge and integration in the life of the student that is truly invaluable.

As a Catholic school student in the 1960s and 70s, I learned from incredibly intelligent, strong, and compassionate women – sisters of the Mercy and Notre Dame orders. The value of my own Catholic education inspires me as a lay Catholic educator to be a good Christian and a good scientist.

One of the ‘hidden’ values that has occurred to me over the years...as

kids pass from middle school to high school they tend to come out from the influence realm of their parents and into the influence realm of their peers. The only thing a concerned parent can do is to try to make that new value teaching realm be the best it can possibly be...a Catholic school, worth the investment.

When I first decided to go to Marist, the religion part of it wasn’t really part of the decision, it was just an added bonus. After being at Marist, the religion aspect has become much more than just an added bonus. Theology class has really opened my eyes to God.

My Catholic education has not only taught me academically, but spiritually and morally.

Catholic education emphasizes the necessity of community, which has its ultimate expression when students, faculty, and staff gather to celebrate the Eucharist. Although each of us come from various backgrounds and stories, we become one as we gather and are sent forth to live out the Eucharist that we celebrate.

The value of a Catholic education goes well beyond academics. In the classroom, at retreats, in clubs – there is a culture of helping students to see their unique skills and abilities and giving them the confidence to use those gifts. How wonderful to see kids explore their potential! Peer pressure exists but there is the counter-pressure of empowerment. Very rare. Very powerful.

What we do in this life requires the strength to live according to GOD’s plan for us. That takes all the skills that are being taught at Marist, but also what is being taught is how to live a life with a foundation in Christ.

Going to a Catholic school has changed my life and being able to pray at school is helpful when life gets stressful.

A Catholic school, particularly a Marist school, is a center of learning,

of life and of evangelization. A Catholic school leads its students to learn, to be competent, to live and, most importantly, grow as persons. A Catholic school is a community in which faith, hope and love are lived and communicated. Students are progressively initiated into their life-long challenge of harmonizing faith, culture and life. A Catholic school is a community of believers on their journey of faith intending to develop disciplined students who are academically prepared, morally strong, socially aware and responsible Christian students and models. Finally, a Catholic school reflects what Pope John Paul II said in his 1993 message to youth: “Allow yourselves to be drawn to Christ; accept His invitation and follow Him. Go and preach in a world which is often tempted to despair; become communicators of faith in a society which at times seems resigned to disbelief; become communicators of love in daily events that are often marked by a mentality of unbridled selfishness.”

At Marist, I know I belong. It’s a place where we encourage each other regardless of what you are or where you come from.

Looking back on my high school years I can hardly fathom not having gone to Marist. If I hadn’t transferred my sophomore year, I wouldn’t nearly be the person I am today. I wouldn’t have the same academic integrity and life skills I have today.

The value of a Catholic education is priceless. Our children are surrounded by a caring community of families and educators grounded in common faith, Catholic tradition and academic excellence. ☩

Contributors of this article include students, staff, priests, parents, friends of Marist, and alumni.