

***This is the speech given by Eve Moll, a St. Thomas Aquinas High School senior, at the second annual Women of Faith luncheon held Nov. 1, 2015 at Turnberry Isle. Eve received this year's St. Maria Goretti medallion for exemplifying the virtue of youth.***

Good afternoon everyone, my mom and dad, family, teachers, Archbishop Wenski, and everyone who makes up the fabric of the archdiocese of Miami. My name is Eve Moll, and I am a seventeen year old student at St. Thomas Aquinas High School.

I have been going to Catholic school for as long as I can remember. I attended St. David's Catholic School for preschool and elementary school. Then I attended St. Gregory's Catholic School for middle school, and I now study at St. Thomas Aquinas High School. Being a part of a Catholic community has become so integral to who I am today. I made my very first friend on a pew in church, I spoke in public for the first time giving the intercessions at a school Mass, and I even learned how to drive in a church parking lot.

Aside from providing the infrastructure to make friends and accrue skills, Catholic education provides a serious emphasis on scholarship. My intellectual journey at St. Thomas Aquinas has been nothing short of incredible. At St. Thomas, I have been pushed by my teachers to think deeper, study harder, and excel academically. For a high schooler, I am a pretty accomplished scholar. I am a national merit finalist, AP scholar with distinction, and on the principal's honor roll. There are plenty more like me, both at my school and at Catholic schools across the country. That's because Catholic education cranks out our nation's best and brightest.

Catholic education is not ordinary education because it doesn't stop at scholarship. Rather, it instills in individuals a sense of selflessness. This is the most important aspect of Catholic education. The morals of passages from the Bible, the meaning of each sacrament, and the teachings of Jesus help us to know brotherhood, acceptance, compassion, love, sacrifice, and service. For Catholic school students, thinking about other people becomes somewhat second nature. I have seen its effects manifest in my own life in two very special ways.

The first way is my service project, ArtbyEve, that started as a small act of kindness for a friend in some tough times. When I was in the sixth grade, my friend Jake was diagnosed with leukemia. I drew him a picture hoping to bring him comfort. But I thought we could do something more with the drawing. We printed that drawing onto thousands of Christmas cards and sold them around the community to help cover Jake's medical bills. We did this for the three years that Jake was receiving chemotherapy. The cards raised over \$10,000.

After Jake was cured, I figured I could keep drawing pictures to raise funds and awareness for worthy causes. I dubbed this ongoing and organic project "ArtbyEve." To date, ArtbyEve has raised over \$65,000 for various charities in the local and global community. I often reflect about the mission and genesis of ArtbyEve. It is entirely geared towards serving other people, a lesson I learned through my Catholic education. The values instilled in me through the teachings of my faith have made me eager to serve others. This is not only evident in my service project, but also in my family life.

My oldest brother Francis was born with Down Syndrome and autism. He requires a lot of service. As his sister, I'm called upon to feed him, bathe him, dress him, and watch out for him always. Over the years, I've learned so much about what it means to take care of another person, and defend their dignity. I am my brother's sister, one of his attentive caretakers, his advocate, his support, and his best friend. Caring for Frannie is a pretty tall task. But I think The Hollies put it best when they said "He ain't heavy, he's my brother."

Jesus courageously bore his cross and humbled himself to the position of the lowliest servant. It isn't always easy to answer the call to serve. It can be distasteful, tough, or even scary. You're right. But the lessons we learn in our Catholic education encourage us to follow Jesus' footsteps, no matter how tough it may seem.

Catholic education promotes a combination of scholarship and service. And I am a better person for it. Thank you.