

What I Value Most Now from My Catholic Education

Esther Robinson is working as a Ministerial Advisor in Parliament. She went to Catholic primary and secondary schools in Gisborne and has an MPols.



During my schooling I wasn't particularly aware that my education was specifically Catholic as I didn't know any different. Although Religious Education was a significant part of the curriculum I was taught, I didn't view the subject as any different from my other

mainstream subjects – it was just what we did. It wasn't until I reached university that I realised the depth and breadth my Catholic education provided me. For instance, I had an awareness of a variety of religions, not just Catholicism. I had an appreciation for basic philosophical

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It's hard to write about what I value the most about my Catholic education and upbringing as it has always been such a large part of my growing up. It's hard to imagine a life without it. However, by looking at the

friends I have made over the years – people of many different faiths and walks of life – I can gather an image of the values I learned that have made me, in turn, who I am. You see, by looking at the friendships I have

Georgia West is married to Stefan and works for ACC. She is renovating their home in Ngaruawahia and assists with the College rugby teams.



I come from a loving family of Catholic faith. My brother and sister and a lot of my extended family went to Catholic schools – something that is a privilege. My parents, aunts, uncles, cousins and my siblings all have something in common from our family life and

fostered in our education – each of us is a kind person and we are all hospitable.

I didn't really love the school work at Sacred Heart Girls' School in Hamilton – but I did love the extracurricular activities it provided, particularly the opportunity to be

Cavaan Wild is completing a law and arts conjoint degree at Victoria University. He is looking forward to starting work next year and being able to read something that isn't cases or academic articles.



My first thought about what I gained from my Catholic education was an overriding guilt, superstitions and a ban on meat on Fridays.

So, I asked my Mum. And she said a lot of things in the space of a few texts. "A mandate to care about people. To build a life based on virtues. To think about the common good."

But perhaps what stuck out the most was when she said: "a fascination and talent with words born out of the rich language within Catholic ritual. And a bottom line of goodness."

I went to a Catholic primary school. We fed some of our students, we couldn't afford sports equipment. Even as children, the practical importance of caring for each other

Hannah Bergin finished at Marist College in 2011, then studied a law and arts conjoint at Auckland University. She now lives in Wellington and loves exploring this new city.



I attended Marist College for seven years and many of the valuable lessons and experiences I learnt there still serve me today. There was a strong sense of community at Marist. We were always encouraged to extend our network beyond our

immediate group of friends. There was a strong sense of connection between year levels. I value this experience because it taught me it is possible to connect with a huge variety of different people from different backgrounds, and the importance of

We asked a group of young adults to write about what they value most from their education in Catholic Schools at this time in their lives.

questions. I understood symbolism in art and culture. I could analyse religious conflict in an informed way due to a basic understanding of historical and biblical context. However, what I value most from my Catholic education, something that I perhaps didn't appreciate at school,

is the value of social justice. Viewing political, social and economic issues through the lens of the social justice principles I was taught at my Catholic school followed me through my tertiary education and into my career path. Albert Einstein talks about education as being something that

remains after one had forgotten what one has learnt in school. In this sense, I may not be able to quote scripture or remember every Station of the Cross, but my Catholic education, specifically social justice principles, have remained embedded in my moral compass and this I highly value. ■

formed, I can easily say that these are the most important part of my life. My Catholic education has taught me just how precious each individual person is, that all lives are equal and in turn, all people should be treated equally.

This makes forming friendships easy. Respect is given, not earned, and I have found that this respect has been given back time and time again. The values I have been taught are a baseline for how I treat other people.

I've lived in flats with the people I got to know during my school education so I know these friendships and more will always last, if respect is given. ■

involved in Young Vinnies (St Vincent de Paul). Being able to provide a caring hand for those struggling and in need really taught me to value people, the meaning of true empathy and most importantly, to be kind to everyone. Practising Catholic values, I realise, will be something I continue

to cherish in my adult life, especially in the everydayness of life. It is what prompted me to work in areas where careful listening and making a difference, especially for families finding it hard to cope, is important. And also it has led me to become a volunteer at the SPCA and in

supporting young peoples' sports.

My husband and I are currently expecting our first child – a wee girl due at the end of August this year. Before we even fell pregnant we knew that our child would be getting the same thing we did – a Catholic education. ■

was an imperative. After all, how can children be children if they go hungry? How could children be happy if they had no-one to play with?

In Year 13 English we read a book called, *How Many Miles to Babylon?* It gets its name from a nursery rhyme quoted as:

How many miles to Babylon?

Fourscore and ten, sir.

Will I get there by candlelight?

Yes and back again, sir.

What I gained from my Catholic education: a compulsion to do all the good I can, by all the people I can. That eventually, like everyone else I'll die, reaching Babylon in hopefully more than fourscore and ten years. And in that time, far better I use it for something gainful, making the most of the candlelight. Metaphors. Catholic education and an English teacher

for a Mum made me an inescapable disciple of the metaphor. God helps those who help themselves. That might be Protestant. But Catholicism was always more guidelines than strict rhetoric. It doesn't matter if the arms holding you are tattooed, scarred and beaten. The embrace is everything. ■

forging strong personal connections with those around me. The strong community at Marist made for a fulfilling and rewarding experience at school. Secondly, I highly value the emphasis that was placed on social justice during my Catholic education.

The importance of social justice and of being "other-centred" rather than "self-centred" was an important value that extended into all our classes at school. I learned that a community is always stronger when individuals look out for one another. We all have

a responsibility to serve the needs of others and to use our individual skills to assist others. Coming to learn and understand the significance of social justice is what I value most from my Catholic education. ■