

The Catholic Women's League of Canada
Edmonton Diocesan Council
15th Annual Essay Contest
2010 WINNERS

Category: Grade 11-12 Essay
Kirstyn Morley, 1st Place

Growing Closer to Jesus with the Help of my Priest

My priest plays a large role in guiding and nurturing my relationship with Jesus. He encourages me to live my life with a strong sense of faith in both God and myself, and in doing so inspires me to meet Jesus. My priest helps strengthen my relationship with Jesus in many ways, both inside and outside of church.

Within the walls of church each Sunday, through revelations of God's word like the Gospel readings and the homily, my priest inspires me to invite Jesus and God into my life. In church, surrounded by representatives of my faith and guided by my priest, it's almost impossible not to feel a significant connection to Jesus.

The messages I derive from the homily help me to relate Jesus' words and actions to my life, and help me to gain a deeper appreciation and understanding of my religion. Also, the homilies allow me to understand Jesus' works as much more than just outdated stories, and apply his teachings to a modern setting that I can use. My priest stresses the importance of attending church regularly, not just when it's convenient for me. His homilies often speak of the importance of hope, faith, and especially love. He presents Jesus' instructions in such a way that I no longer see them as cryptic, confusing messages. He interprets them, and allows me to make sense of my religion and what it teaches. My priest helps me to see my faith clearly so that I am not just blindly following the religion I was born into. I feel like I'm actually getting to know God rather than just holding onto a naïve understanding of him. With the help of my priest I am able to consider the values of my religion and take into account how Jesus suggests I live my life. I feel a closer connection with God and my faith.

With crucifixes, Bibles, and hands folded in prayer surrounding me as soon as I enter the church, it's hard not to be aware of Jesus' presence. However, ensuring that God's influence reaches into all aspects of a person's life is extremely difficult in this modern world, especially with distractions and temptations to lure us away from our faith. Thankfully, my priest helps me to remain aware of my religion even outside of church.

My priest helps to bring me closer to Jesus through his interest not only in my activities within the church, but also my interests outside the church. He ensures that my involvement in my faith doesn't just end at the conclusion of church each Sunday, but permeates into all of my pursuits. My priest asks me about school, about what's going on in my life. He takes notice of what I say, and encourages me to be the best person I can be. He shows that he cares in small ways, like asking how my driver's test went or wondering about the results of a doctor's appointment. On occasion, he even comes over for dinner. Also, he makes appearances at certain events, like Catholic Girls League meetings or Youth Group nights, and makes special effort to connect with the youth in the church. My priest plays cards and video games with us; he doesn't act as if he is too busy, or too unconcerned with us to be bothered to play an active role in our lives. This especially contributes to my feelings of being "linked" to Jesus, as it shows that Jesus doesn't overlook any member of the church. Jesus has time for everyone, and although He is our Lord and Savior, no person is insignificant in his eyes. Simply by showing that he genuinely cares about me, my priest assures that God is always present and always involved in my everyday life.

Through my involvement in my religious life both inside and outside of church, my priest inspires me to meet Jesus. He plays a significant role in ensuring that my faith and its values are always present in my life, and this greatly strengthens my relationship with God.