



## **Marietta Iannucci: Student Witness to Faith**



My name is Marietta Iannucci and I am a Glendon College student in the Concurrent Education Program at York University. I am majoring in French Studies and will be graduating at the end of this academic year 2011/2012 as a French teacher. I am a member of All Saints Parish and St. Benedict's Parish.

**If you had to create a Catholic Resume which highlighted ways you are a WITNESS to the Catholic faith, what would be on it?**

### **Children's Liturgy (All Saints Church):**

I am currently a volunteer for Children's Liturgy at All Saints Church. I am responsible for planning and explaining the Gospel of our Lord to children between the ages of about 4 to 14. I enjoy giving children the ability to participate in the Catholic faith in a way that is meaningful and relevant to their lives. I did not have this opportunity growing up and I believe I would have truly benefited from a program which highlighted and explained the teachings of Jesus in a way which related to me.

### **Savio Club (St. Benedict Church):**

During my grade 12 year of high school, I made a decision to give back to my community through a program which I attended as a child. Savio club is an after school homework help program offered at St. Benedict Church. This program provided a safe environment for students to get extra help with school work and meet people through their faith.

### **Religious Education Course (York University):**

I took a religious education course which focused on integrating the Catholic faith into the Ontario curriculum. This course was inspiring and provided me with excellent ideas and foundations upon which I can continue to build my faith as an individual and future educator. During the course, we focused heavily on an article entitled *The Heart of a Teacher* by PJ Palmer. This article brings life the vital role that faith teachers play in the lives of their students and how faith can provide a common ground and foundation to build on. "Good teachers join self, subject, and students in the fabric of life because they teach from an integral and undivided self; they manifest in their own lives, and evoke in their students, a "capacity for connectedness" (Palmer, 2). By reading this article and studying throughout this course, I was able to witness the indispensable role of educators and how, through faith, the connections discussed in the above quote, are made stronger and more powerful.

### **Young Women in Action (City of Toronto):**

I lead a young women's youth group called *Young Women in Action* at The Elms Community School within the City of Toronto. Each session, we provide the girls an opportunity to volunteer and give back to a community that has provided them with so much. Visiting St. Frances Table is one of the experiences I like to provide my participants with. This is a Catholic organization lead by Capuchins monks who provide meals to individuals who do not have the means to afford their own. St. Frances table is "more than simply another handout, but an opportunity for community, advocacy and friendship". The works of the individuals working here supremely highlight the core of the Catholic faith. The girls who have visited St. Frances Table with me, Christian or not, have always had an amazing experience and demonstrated what it means to have a heart and reach out to our brothers and sisters in need.

### **What kind of difference do you hope to make in living a life based on Jesus' teachings?**

As mentioned previously, I would like to teach in the Catholic school system and as a future educator, I hope to incorporate the teachings of Jesus Christ into my daily lessons. Social justice issues such as poverty and racism are problems that I believe strongly in raising awareness about. As an educator, I will include these issues in the classroom and hopefully create students who are aware. Leading by example is how I will hopefully inspire my students to look to our faith to become agents of social change. Creating community in the classroom and in the school at large, based on the Catholic faith, is essential in advocating for the eradication of these issues. A strong school community will allow students to extend that bond to the community at large and put the *Golden Rule* into action.

### **What advice do you have for a young Catholic finding ways to express their faith?**

As a future Catholic educator, I hope to provide my students with support in finding themselves in the Catholic faith. In my youth, I sometimes found it difficult to feel comfortable within the faith because of many pressures of society. In my heart I lived as a Catholic, but sometimes it was hard for me to explore

it further. For myself, experiencing a placement in the public school system allowed me to realize how important my faith was to me and I believe this is the best advice I could give a young Catholic. It is essential to discover the role faith plays in one's life through various experiences.

I would tell young Catholics to explore and start out slowly until you are comfortable. There are so many places to get involved in the faith- at Church, within the community, at school etc. And so many ways to explore it: through music, advocacy, friendships, volunteering, reading etc. The faith gives individuals of many likes and needs an opportunity to get involved and enjoy the spiritual benefits. Youth need to explore and find something that is meaningful to them through experience. Having an adult tells you what to believe and how to believe may not be as beneficial as perceived. Students need to explore their faith and engage in aspects that bring them joy and fulfill them spiritually. By being a role model to my students, I will hopefully provide them with different perspectives and insight into various avenues of faith discovery.