

**LASALLIAN YOUTH
MODELING AND BEING INSPIRED BY JESUS**

Marisa Niemice

When I think of Jesus, I think of a statement once proclaimed by a good friend of mine: "Jesus is the coolest guy I know..." I never used to think like that; I just thought that Jesus was a guy who came from heaven and died on the cross for us. Never did I realize everything he's done for us until the past few years. I used to think that the Beatles really were more popular than Jesus Christ, just as John Lennon proclaimed years ago. Jesus became the prominent man in my life during my junior year of high school when I became part of Lasallian Youth, a group of students dedicated to faith, community and service. Through various activities, projects and interactions with people of all colors, ages and races I came to really know my faith and to realize that it wasn't something to be afraid of, rather, it was something to celebrate. And, being additionally blessed by God through my participation in Lasallian Youth, I had the best group of friends who were very supportive of my faith, my service and my dedication to helping the poor. They worked side by side with me and we became a very close knit community, serving in the name of Jesus.

There are innumerable images of Jesus that stem from the Bible, and especially the Gospels. I see Jesus in many different ways, but the chief image is one of serving: "Faith in Jesus is faith in a life of kingdom building, a life of serving." (1) Jesus was a servant, and that is what his whole mission was based on, serving the needs of others and reaching out to those in need, especially those who were social outcasts. I have found inspiration in the life, work and spirituality of Jesus. I have also gained the desire to strive to learn, explore and act on his story. I have come to know Jesus through Lasallian Youth, a group of people committed to the ideals of St John Baptist de La Salle which are faith, community and service. When we gather as a community in order to help the poor, Jesus' spirit is alive and in full force. Working in the name of Jesus, Lasallian Youth try to help one another by sharing and challenging our faith as a community.

Beneath all of the service we are providing and the community we are building, it all comes down to our image of Jesus. Together, Lasallian Youth experience Christ's powerful presence and work as a team doing as Jesus taught us. Jesus is the prime example of a servant and he has inspired many of us, from St John Baptist de La Salle to today's Lasallians worldwide.

Marisa Niemice
Student Coordination of Lasallian Collegians
Saint Mary's University of Minnesota
Winona, MN
October 1996

(1) Flynn, Eileen, and Gloria Thomas. *Living Faith: An introduction to Theology*. Kansas City, Sheed & Ward, 1995, 79.

TESTIMONIAL FROM A LASALLIAN GRADUATE

Brother Theodore Drahmman

Every Lasallian wonders from time to time if our students recognize the unique educational environment in which they are learning: a Christian education in the tradition of St. John Baptist de la Salle.

We ask: are we really touching hearts? Are our schools developing the adult Christian who loves God and knows that he/she is loved by God, one who consciously lives in that love? Do our students see Christ as their friend? Are they motivated to go out to others in spreading the Word, in service to others?

These questions can multiply and take many forms...

The Lasallian colleges and universities in the United States provide an answer to this type of questions in the process of application for Lasallian Honor Scholarships offer to outstanding graduates of the Lasallian secondary schools. As part of the application process, they are asked to write a brief essay on their experience in a Christian Brothers' school and how it has made a difference in their lives. The colleges and universities wish to make these substantial grants to young men and women who will continue to be Lasallians, in addition to having an outstanding academic record during their time in the high school.

In the past years, each college or university has received inspiring statements from the graduating seniors of the Lasallian secondary schools. These youth have recounted in detail and with enthusiasm the joy of their experience with the Brothers and Lasallian colleagues, as well as paying tribute to the effect they have had on their lives in many ways.

It is best to have one of these graduates speak for himself, as is done in the following statement submitted by a young man at Calvert Hall High School, Baltimore, Maryland, as he successfully applied for the Lasallian Honor Scholarship where he is now a student:

* * *

Paul Springer

In the midst of writing both college and scholarship essays, I have come across many questions that at times become both repetitious and seemingly unending. But it is in both reading and reflecting upon the Lasallian Honor Scholarship that I have been most challenged. One may not fully recognize how a Christian Brothers' school has made a difference in one's education unless one stops to think about it. For myself, a senior at the oldest Christian Brothers' school in the country, the answer is found deeply embedded in my faith. The emphasis of God both in the classroom and in our lives is what most stands out to me. It is in prayer at the beginning of every class that I am constantly reminded that whether I ace this test or slide by with a "C", God loves me and is present in my life. He is the one who provides the divine knowledge, a knowledge I can only hope to attain. But it is with his grace that I am both taught and that I teach. A Christian Brothers' school reminds me everyday that I am not only called to learn in the presence of God, but to teach others by example. To be Christ for one another and to give. For it is only in giving that we may ever hope to receive. Calvert Hall has given me the opportunity to keep Christ present in my life. When the dark clouds that you wake with in the morning do not clear, I have come to school to be welcomed by the outstretched arms of Christ ready to guide me and show me my journey. A Christian Brothers education has not allowed me to stray from the flock and become lost in the wave of declining social morals.

Yes, a Christian Brothers' education has given me a great many things, but it has given me one thing that would be very hard to find emphasized elsewhere. That is the *opportunity to give*. The opportunity to participate in the Big Brother's program of America. The opportunity to tutor in subjects that God has given me a natural gift in. The opportunity to take Christmas packages to families who may not have had a Christmas. The opportunity to be a vital part of Campus Ministry. A Campus Ministry that reaches out to the school and shows them that it is okay to be touched by God's loving hand. Whether it be through prayer services or liturgies, seasonal drives or retreats, many people who may not realize and recognize God in their life, have been served by Campus Ministry. The greatest experience has been this, an opportunity to give, and as I look back and reflect on the value of a Christian Brothers' education, I know that it has made a difference in my life. •