

Jackson Fuchs - Saint Xavier High School

In regard to experience, I was a newborn. The previous eight years of education had consisted of meager responsibilities, plenty of free time, and the basic facts of Catholicism. When I entered the doors of Saint Xavier, however, it was baptism by fire. The next four years required extensive maturation, countless hours of work, and a deep contemplation of faith.

Freshman year shocked this bright-eyed youth with new teachers, new schedules, and new hallways. I was aware of the impending changes, but unsure how to adapt. The schoolwork offered new challenges and the extracurriculars offered new friends. Sophomore year provided more of the same. Classrooms became familiar and the workload more routine. Those two years flew by.

Junior year, however, changed my life. The required theology course was Ethics and Morality, complete with lessons of philosophy broken down into PowerPoints. At first glance, it seemed insufficient. However, I was mistaken. Philosophical theories began to apply to everyday decisions, and with them I began to develop a greater understanding for how faith applied to life. Aquinas taught me about teleology, and how I too have a designated end. Plato taught me the forms, and how their presence construct everyday life. As a junior, more opportunities were available to pursue this newfound faith. In particular, the following year's mission trip to Jamaica.

Senior year presented me with a decision: remain comfortable or take a risk. I chose to risk missing school and go on the mission trip. The trip forever changed my faith. Saint Xavier provided an opportunity unlike any other. Twenty of my classmates, three of my teachers, and a week of firsthand service to others showed the importance of experiencing faith. We played with residents of a boys' home, helped organize a school library, and reflected on all of it at the end of

each day. On the final day at the boys' home, a boy named Tommy gave me a yellow bracelet. Although he didn't own much, he gave it to me as he said "this is so you'll never forget me."

Faith only implements itself in an individual through experience. From my first to my final day, Saint Xavier never ceased to provide me with this opportunity. From the classrooms on Poplar Level Rd. to the mountains of Jamaica, Saint Xavier offered me the opportunities to find my faith. The required courses provided the framework while the experiences provided its purpose.