

I am a cradle Catholic. Throughout my life I found myself in Catholic spaces, with little connection to my spirituality. That being said, I eagerly accepted my offer to join the X Teacher Corps in the spring of 2020. I knew I enjoyed working with children and I wanted to further my education and research at X College. Admittedly, I also found it amusing to explain that I would be living in a convent with twenty three other teachers. After all, it was a stark contrast to how I had spent the first months of the pandemic. I could not have anticipated the ways in which living in intentional community during my first year of teaching would transform me.

I am currently a proud teacher at a Catholic elementary school in the X neighborhood in City X. I love working in a school that is diverse and I serve families from many ethnic, racial, socio-economic and religious backgrounds. Social justice is an integral part of my teaching. Last year, I taught students virtually and in-person and needless to say, it was stressful. On top of planning and executing rigorous lessons and assessments, I was anxious about the coronavirus and what that meant for my students and family. I found myself leaning on my community members and God.

My experience as an educator has opened my eyes to what a school provides the community beyond instruction and childcare. Schools provide food, technology, specialized support services, relationships, and gathering spaces. The reality is that schools are central to the lives of many families and the productivity of many communities. The COVID-19 crisis has highlighted the essential role of schools in our society and exacerbated pre-existing systemic inequities, especially for people of color and families who are economically disadvantaged. Additionally, I have become cognizant of the many laws that impact students, teachers, and school communities. Furthermore, education laws and policies do not happen in a vacuum and

areas of law are interrelated. For this reason, I want to learn how to effectively advocate for children in cases involving not only education, but also healthcare and juvenile justice.

During religion class, my students and I often discuss how Jesus calls us to be peacemakers and I pose the question “How can you be a peacemaker today?”. This has led me to my own reflection: “How can I be a peacemaker?”. I have decided that the next step on this journey is law school. My race, gender, and family background have long shaped my identity and experiences which inform my worldview and decisions. Now, my spirituality also guides me. Ultimately, I want to make society more just by advocating for my clients. I look forward to applying the communication and critical thinking skills developed as an educator while contributing to the law school community.