

Hi, my name is Claire Hickson, and I am a 7th grader at Palombi Middle School. Although I have gone to public school for my entire life, I have always had a strong connection with the church. I have gone to CCD every year since 1st grade. This year, as well as taking my Confirmation class, I have, through the grace of God, started to be a 2nd grade teacher helper on Wednesdays. We are learning about the Eucharist, and they will soon make their First Communion. As I help them learn, I am reminded weekly that we need Christ in our lives, and that he is present in the Eucharist. I feel very lucky that I get to share my thoughts about our faith with them, and that they get to inspire me to think differently about the world and our faith.

To me, the Eucharist is Christ that enters into us and purifies our bodies and souls. He gives us the strength that we need to last us through the week, and helps us to make the right decisions. At mass, when I consume the Eucharist, I always feel more complete and whole, and suddenly not empty anymore.

The Eucharist has helped me through many struggles, including one of the biggest of my life that happened this past October. In the middle of October, I fell off my horse during a riding lesson. I hit my head and neck, suffered a concussion, and have been dealing with the symptoms ever

since. There were some days when I thought that I would never fully recover, that I would always have these lingering headaches and side-effects. I believe that the grace of God through communion has helped me to recover, and helped me to continue to get better every day. I know that many people have been praying for me, and I know that it is working. I am getting better, slowly but surely. I am hopeful that I will be fully healed sometime soon. Without God with me, I don't know what would have happened. From Doctor to Concussion Specialist, to Physical Therapy two times a week, it has been a long 5 months. Even so, it has helped me to grow stronger in my Faith. It comforts me to know that my friends and family are praying for me, and that God is always looking out for me. I know that everything that happens to me is part of His divine plan, and that it is for a good reason.

Another way that God has been with me through Communion is S3, or Students Standing Strong. This is my after school bible club. Through the grace of God, I have come to be one of the leaders. I am always known to share my thoughts and actively participate in the lesson, even when I am not leading. I am a very talkative, and friendly person, and I am usually a leader, not a follower. I owe this all to God. I know that he has helped me, through the Eucharist, to have a strong voice and speak out for what is

right. He has blessed me with the ability to talk so that I can use this gift to share his message and word with everyone, which I am doing through S3.

God has guided me through the Eucharist since I first received it almost 5 years ago. Everything I have done that I am proud of is all thanks to Him. Thank you for listening, and God Bless.