



## **Annual Fund Dinner Student Presentation**

*September 19, 2018*

Good evening! My name is Nick Ford and I am a senior here at Bishop Chatard High School. First and foremost, I want to thank you all for attending this evening. I believe that Bishop Chatard is a special place, a unique place. So many of my classmates and I would not be able to attend this school if it were not for generous people like you. Thank you!

In the spring of 2017 I made the groundbreaking decision to come to Bishop Chatard. In my short time here I have already concluded that Bishop Chatard is more than just a school to me. Bishop Chatard is home, and one of the greatest traits that this place has is that everyone is family. Bishop Chatard is a community; a community that has allowed me to become a better version of myself.

I wanted to share a couple of experiences I have had here that I believe have changed my life in a multitude of ways. Three of my favorite teachers are Mr. Huffman who taught me Environmental Science, Mr. Shaughnessy who taught me Theology junior year and 'Sis' who is teaching me theology now as a senior. These teachers, as well as all staff in the building, show that their primary mission and concern is to help each student develop as a whole person.

Mr. Huffman helped me stop having doubts in my ability to understand what he was teaching me, and he taught me to be confident. He reaffirmed the need for all of us to be critical thinkers. That we should not believe anything someone tells us without examining and identifying true and reputable sources of information.

Mr. Shaughnessy is passionate about helping each of his students understand the Catholic faith better. As someone who had been confirmed just a few months prior to taking his Theology course, I was interested to know more. And he was ready to teach me. He helped me understand the depth of the Holy Spirit. That I am marked with a permanent mark that stays on my soul forever – that says I am a child of God and the gifts of that Spirit remain with me.

Early on during the first week of school, 'Sis' took our class on a walk along the trail and taught us about how God has acted in the lives of our peers and about some significant historical Catholic figures. On the trail, I spoke to her briefly and she told me that she comes to the school early each morning and walks the trail. When she reaches the top of the hill, closest to the softball field, she follows the example of Joshua from the Old Testament and prays over the land of Bishop Chatard. One morning she was walking the trail and a large hawk flew from the light pole on the football field to the next pole ahead of her. Each time she would begin to pass the light pole on the trail, the hawk would fly to the next pole, until she finished. It was as if God was guiding her and leading her through the journey. I wanted to grasp my own moment.

It's been 57 years since Bishop Chatard opened, and I had the pleasure of being part of the first senior class to host a home football game. Game day morning I walked the trail just as Sis did. And as I walked the trail and reached the summit that overlooked the land of our home, I prayed that every person

that would come to Bishop Chatard's campus would be blessed. I prayed that the land be washed of any and all impurity and iniquity. I prayed that all within the boundaries be blessed, and that love, faith, and gratitude would fill each person. I prayed for safety of each person, and finally, that God would shine on Bishop Chatard. I had my moment. I've learned valuable lessons from Sis, Mr. Huffman and Mr. Shaughnessy. Work hard, believe in yourself, pray, ask for help sometimes, serve with humility, lead with integrity, and never give up. They have helped make my experience here at Bishop Chatard not only memorable, but remarkable.

When I look back at my life before Bishop Chatard...where I was and where I was going, I simply shake my head. Bishop Chatard has provided me the opportunity to come to a better understanding of who I am and who God is calling me to be. It has prepared me for the man I am and the man I want to be.

Again, I would like to thank you all for making the Bishop Chatard experience possible for me and for so many other students. Without your generosity, I may never have had the gift of Bishop Chatard in my life. However, and most importantly, without an extremely loving, unselfish, and hard-working mother, I would most definitely not have become a Trojan for Life. Mom, thank you for all that you do for me. Thank you for loving me, and for making Bishop Chatard my home. Trojans together. Trojans forever. Thank you!