



DUCESNE HIGH SCHOOL

shaping leaders in mind, body, and spirit

Welcome back and Merry Christmas,

I've been off campus the last few days attending my aunt's funeral in Ohio. Not exactly the ideal way to kick off the semester, I know. The time, however, has reminded me of one of the reasons I love Duchesne.

My family is from Ohio and it is where I was born—Youngstown, to be exact. When I was three, my dad's job took us to Phoenix; we moved to St. Charles when I reached middle school. I'm reminded of these moves every time I return to Ohio for family gatherings. Around the time my dad moved us to Arizona, his brother moved his family to Texas. My dad's sister stayed in Ohio. As a result of these moves, I grew up without knowing my aunts, uncles, cousins, or grandparents. Consequently attending family gatherings has always been a bit strange. I enter a world where I know everyone in a two-dimensional way, knowing without knowing.

My first real experience with this phenomenon happened in Junior High. My family had just moved to St. Charles, and we were now close enough to Ohio to drive "home" for Christmas. On Christmas Eve we went to my great-aunt's house for *The Feast of the Seven Fishes*. I had never experienced anything like that. The food was bountiful and fantastic. When I first got to the dinner table I wasn't sure where people were going to find the room for their plates. My dad's aunt made a pasta sauce from tomatoes grown in her husband's garden. The house was also flooded with people. I couldn't believe I was related to that many people and that they all fit in such a tiny house. While I was filled with wonder, I wasn't at home; I was a stranger observing. My dad was having a very different experience. Everything was normal to him. He was experiencing the comfort only familiarity can bring.

Over the last few days, my aunt's funeral was obviously sad, but as my dad said when he first told me about it, also a blessing. She was 84 and was diagnosed with Alzheimer's 12 years ago. She really started to suffer over the last few weeks. The wake and funeral really served as a celebration of her life. That celebration was obvious in the faces of my cousins, especially when they were able to enjoy the company of those relatives they've known their whole lives.

I always feel a loss at these gatherings, whether they are for sad or happy occasions. I am not only sad because my aunt died, but because I never really knew her, or her kids, or the other cousins present. That sadness, however, also reminds me of how blessed I am to have found a family at Duchesne. At the funerals for family members of friends I have made at Duchesne I felt what I witnessed my cousins experiencing this week. And for that, I will always be grateful.

Pax,

Dominic D'Urso



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Upcoming Events

January 10

Home Boys Basketball

January 11

Home Girls Basketball

Duchesne Reads: After a brief hiatus, the Duchesne Parent Book club returns. We will finish our discussion of *The Price You Pay For College*. Please join us if you can. Even if you've missed the first two meetings, or are a little behind in the book, the discussions about college selection are worth your time. If you plan to attend, please send an rsvp email Dana Bryan.

January 12

All School Mass: As always, all of our families are invited to our All School masses.

January 16

Home Girls Basketball

January 17

Martin Luther King Day: No School

January 20

Home Girls Basketball

Basketball Double Header: We will honor our state semi-finalist football team between the Girls and Boys games. Following that ceremony, we will honor the 2003 State Championship Girls team. Finally, we are also bringing back alumni to perform with our current Diamondline. It should be a great night.