

# 2018 VOCATIONS ESSAY



THE QUESTION PRESENTED TO THE 7TH GRADERS THIS YEAR WAS:

“ How have the lives of the Georgia Martyrs inspired you to go on mission to spread the Catholic Faith to others in our Diocese of Savannah - as a priest, religious or lay person? ”

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VOCATION MINISTRIES

## 2018 CATHOLIC SCHOOL WINNING ENTRIES

### 1ST PLACE | \$250

#### EMMA FALLON

ST. JAMES CATHOLIC SCHOOL

The lives of the Georgia Martyrs have inspired me to stand up for my faith. The Georgia Martyrs are remarkable people who did stand up for their faith in a time of decision. The Georgia Martyrs are the people who came to a new place unknown to them to spread the Christian Faith. The great thing about that is they did it in honor of God, and the other people.

The first way I can be like one of the Georgia Martyrs is by continuing to altar serve. Not only is it a way to serve God with respect but to help other people praise him. While doing that I am sacrificing my time in which I could be doing something else. That is like one of the Georgia Martyrs because they sacrificed time to serve God and teach the people about the Christian Faith, which is something that makes the Georgia Martyrs special because most people wouldn't do something that big for other people.

The second way I can be like a Georgia Martyr is by participating in my school's Christmas Drive. I can help a family who could not afford gifts or a nice meal on Christmas Day. (I could have used the money I spend on the items I buy for the families for something else.) This is a good deed that relates to the Georgia Martyrs because they spent so much on the people only to be killed for teaching the Christian faith. That inspires me so much that they were so willing to do whatever God called them to do.

The final way I can be like a Georgia Martyr is by volunteering at the local soup kitchen. This good deed relates to the Georgia Martyrs because it helps the people with less than I have. There are lots of people who need everyday things, like for example, food, water, shelter, medical care, and the list goes on. By doing this, I am helping others who need things like those.



In summary, there are many ways to be like one of the Georgia Martyrs. I think that what I have learned from watching the video and typing this paper is I have so much to be thankful for so I should give back to the people who have less than me. I live in a nice house, always have meals, have good clothes to wear, and go to a Catholic School. From this point on I will try my best to be more like the Georgia Martyrs.

### 2ND PLACE | \$125

#### ABBY BROWN

ST. JAMES CATHOLIC SCHOOL

The Georgia Martyrs inspire me to go on a mission to spread the Catholic Faith because their stories encouraged me to be a better Christian. They were a group of Catholic friars who were sent to missions to preach God's word and convert Native Americans to the Catholic Faith.

However, by doing this they were killed. In September 1597, five of these martyrs were killed, and one survived. The friars that were killed were Pedro De Corpa, Blas Rodriguez, Miguel De Anon, Antonio De Badajoz, and Francisco De Verascola. The one that survived was Father Pedro Fernandez De Chozas. He defended the Catholic faith and preached God's word successfully while continuing to spread God's word throughout the Georgia coast.

So how do the Georgia Martyrs inspire me? They inspire me to help others and to be the best person I can be. This means to me believing and trusting in God by always doing my best even when things get tough. Each friar had a special mission that supports my feelings. For instance, Pedro De Corpa inspires me to help others on their spiritual journey to God by praying for them when they are sick or in need. Blas Rodriguez inspires me to pray for anyone who is in jail so that they may be forgiven by God. Miguel De Anon inspires me to help others with their mission by showing



support. Antonio De Badajoz inspires me to show others God's faithfulness even if they do not have belief in him.

Francisco De Verascola inspires me to show others the word of God through the bible so they know that God is always with them. But the one that really inspires me to be the best person I can be is the survivor, Father Pedro Fernandez De Chozas. Even though he was scared, he always trusted in God.

In summary, the Georgia Martyrs stood up for my faith, so I should do the same.

Although I am a lay person and not a Catholic, I am a Christian. I am baptized and have faith in God. By doing random acts of kindness, helping others, and spreading God's love to those in need is an example of how I can be a martyr in my community. This is why the Georgia Martyrs inspire me today.

### 3RD PLACE | \$75

#### EMMIE HALL

ST. JAMES CATHOLIC SCHOOL

The Georgia Martyrs put their trust in God to go to an unknown land to spread the Catholic Faith. They did not know the language spoken in the area but still went to spread the Good News.

They died for their religion and still taught the Word of God. The Georgia Martyrs teach me to spread the Good News and to be more like them placing my trust in God.

The martyrs taught their faith to others. They were probably scared but did it anyway for God. That teaches me to be a great Christian. My mission can be all the way from doing community service activities to teaching my family what I am learning in religion class. I can make hygiene packets for the homeless or send blankets in the winter. Also, I can volunteer at nursing homes, helping out the elderly.

The Georgia Martyrs showed their respect for God by teaching others. I show my respect for God by altar serving. When I serve, it



brings me closer to the Lord. John Hagee said, "The measure of a man's greatness is not by the number of servants he has, but the number of people he serves." The one we can look after as a man who served is our Savior, Jesus Christ. He showed his greatness by dying on the cross to save us from all the evil in the world.

The Georgia Martyrs represent people who followed Jesus' ways and actions. They

served others as Christ did, and died doing so. They did their good deeds as Christians following the light of the Lord, and I very much respect that. The question is, "Am I following the Word of God?" Am I following the right path to be a disciple of Jesus? I am being a good Catholic by going to church every Sabbath Day, following the Great Commandments, and serving others.

Learning about the Georgia Martyrs has taught me to do my best to make my way to Heaven. It also has brought me closer to God in a good way. I should be able to place my trust in God in any situation like the martyrs. Lord, help me to be like the martyrs serving others and guiding them in your way. Teach me the ways to be a better Catholic, and to become closer and closer to you every day. Amen.

## 2018 FORMATION PROGRAM WINNING ENTRIES

### 1ST PLACE | \$250

#### CATHERINE ELLISON

ST. ANNE CHURCH, COLUMBUS

In the late 1500s, six Franciscan friars left Spain and traveled to the New World. The friars established missions on the coast of Georgia and converted many Native Americans. In living out their vocation, the Georgia Martyrs showed great courage, perseverance, and love of truth.

"To have courage for whatever comes in life - everything lies in that," wrote St. Teresa of Avila. The Franciscans boldly traveled without soldiers or any sort of protection into an unknown land to preach the Gospel. When told of the coming danger, the martyrs bravely refused to flee for their lives. Through the Georgia Martyrs' intercession, I pray for the courage to instruct the ignorant and counsel the doubtful when my Catholic faith is spoken of wrongly.

Throughout all the trials of adapting to a new life, the Georgia Martyrs showed outstanding perseverance. They learned the difficult Native American language of the Guales. They gained the peoples' trust by adapting to Guale life in order to convert them to Christianity. The perseverance the Georgia martyrs showed gives me hope in my ability to spread my Catholic faith.

"It is easy to find the truth, though it is hard to face it, and harder still to follow it," said Archbishop Fulton Sheen. When the great chieftain of the Guales asked to be married to another woman, the friars forbid the laws of marriage to be broken, upholding reverence for the sacrament of Matrimony. They were willing to die rather than compromise on the truths of the Church. My love of truth has been strengthened by the example the Georgia Martyrs have set before me.

The Georgia Martyrs have inspired me in many ways. Whether I am to get married and have children, or I am called to religious life as a nun, I do not know. The path I am walking has a bend in it that I have not reached. The saints are like torches lighting my way. "If you are who you are meant to be, you will set the whole world on fire," said St. Catherine of Siena. Every man is called to live as a child of God, and soon I am to be knighted as a soldier of Christ in Confirmation. Learning and praying to the Georgia Martyrs has helped prepare me

for this. Their lives have inspired me to live my faith loyally and profess it outrageously.

### 2ND PLACE | \$125

#### OLIVIA CARAVELLA

SAINT ANNE CATHOLIC CHURCH, RICHMOND HILL

The Georgia Martyrs inspired me as a lay person to volunteer in my church community. The Georgia Martyrs were very dedicated to the Catholic faith. They were so committed to sharing their faith that they sacrificed their lives for what they believed. They also gave freely of their time and knowledge to help spread the faith. Leaving their families and friends in Spain to serve God and bring his message to others with the knowledge that they may not return home must have been very difficult.

In today's modern world, not everyone is willing to give up their time or share their talents to give back to their church, but I am happy I have the opportunity to do so. Similar to the good works of the Georgia Martyrs, I share my time and give back to my church by altar serving. I feel that by altar serving I serve God and help my church at the same time. As an altar server, I can demonstrate to people my age that there are ways to help out even as a youth. By volunteering as a lay person at a young age, I feel like I am more connected to my faith and that the assistance I provide to the priest saying Mass creates a better spiritual experience for parishioners attending Mass.

Even though I already altar served before I knew about the Georgia Martyrs, they have inspired me to consider other ways I can volunteer in my church community to make a difference. Some of those

options include participating in outdoor grounds maintenance work days at my church, volunteering at VBS (Vacation Bible School) and joining my parish youth group when I am eligible. My involvement shows others how youth can make a difference in their parish community. Perhaps by showing those my age how they can help their parish, I can inspire them to get involved and continue to spread the Georgia Martyrs example of dedication to faith by serving others.

I may contribute to my Catholic faith differently than the Georgia Martyrs did, but we share a common goal: serving God faithfully.

In conclusion, through their dedication to the faith, the Georgia Martyrs have inspired me to spread the Catholic tradition of service to my peers by continuing to altar serve at my church and seeking opportunities to volunteer in other parish ministries to share my time and talents.

### 3RD PLACE | \$75

#### GRACE SULLIVAN

SAINT ANNE CATHOLIC CHURCH, RICHMOND HILL

Before my religious education class, I would have never known who the Georgia Martyrs were. However, upon learning about the history of the early Church in Georgia, I found out how truly inspiring they were in their lifetime, and how tragic and unjust their deaths were.

Pedro de Corpa, Blas Rodriguez, Miguel de Anon, Antonio de Badajoz, and Francisco de Verascola, were five astonishing men who were Spanish Franciscan Friars that traveled, in the late sixteenth century, to America to minister to Native Americans living on the Georgia coast.

While living on the native's territory, the martyrs lived peacefully with the natives and converted them to Christianity.

Their lives, sadly, came to a close when all but one of the martyrs were murdered because a man did not agree with the Church's teaching of Holy Matrimony.

What inspired me the most about the Georgia Martyrs was that they left their families and homes, knowing they would not return back to the comfort of their families. After studying their story, I wanted to spread the word of God, but since I am only 12 years old, there is a limit on what I can do. So the most reasonable thing to do is to explain to my acquaintances and close peers the wondrous works of the Gospel.

Standing up to someone who disagrees or misunderstands our faith can be overwhelming. Using the Georgia Martyrs and Jesus Christ, our lord and savior, as examples, I feel I could win their hearts by turning the other cheek. In order to do this, I must learn and practice the faith, and let the Holy Spirit work within me. As with the Georgia Martyrs, we must understand that God's law, even if it seems difficult to mankind, is always true. We must also understand that God does everything for a reason: We may not understand it, but in time we will hopefully be with him; he will explain, only if we choose to listen.

