

ORANGE COUNTY CATHOLIC

LEADERSHIP IN ORANGE COUNTY CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

SPOTLIGHT ON: ELLA ORTIZ, JSERRA CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

BY MIKE ZINN 6/11/2024



RECENT JSERRA GRADUATE ELLA ORTIZ PLANS TO ATTEND THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME IN THE FALL.
PHOTO COURTESY OF JSERRA CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

THROUGHOUT HER HIGH school journey at JSerra Catholic High School, senior Ella Ortiz has excelled academically and embraced three core values that outline the school's aspirations for all students: Faith, Intellect and Character have been guiding principles for Ella, shaping her into the well-rounded individual she is today. These values have shown her growth since freshman year, reflecting her maturity and readiness for higher education.

The school's principal, Eric Stroupe, has witnessed Ortiz's faith and academic journey while at JSerra. Stroupe commends Ortiz for her dedication to her studies, her mature faith, her social awareness and her compassionate nature – all of which have contributed to her success.

Ortiz's favorite subjects include English, Business, Theology and Dance. She is also involved in the Business Magnet program. She admitted to having some challenges with Algebra 2/Trigonometry Honors in her sophomore year. This tested Ortiz, but with the help of her teacher, Mrs. Kathy Lee, she came to excel in these subjects.

Ortiz has been actively involved in the Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA) program at JSerra. This program sets up competitions against other high schools, similar to the "mock trial" program, but with a business emphasis.

For her junior year, Ortiz placed in the top 10 in California for the Entrepreneurship Individual Series event at the state competition. She qualified for the International Career Development Conference international competition in Orlando, Florida, and was also placed in the top 10 there. This year, Ortiz is president of the JSerra chapter of DECA. She is also a member of the National Honor Society, California Scholarship Federation and Mu Alpha Math Honors Society. Ortiz tutors other JSerra students through these honor societies and completes community service. She also uses her tutoring skills to help her brother, a freshman at JSerra. Ortiz has also participated actively in the Pep Squad, Dance Team and an advanced dance company.

Ortiz's interactions with fellow students and teachers have not gone unnoticed. Mrs. Anna White, chair of the Theology department, recalls meeting Ortiz at a Kairos retreat, where the then-junior was a retreat leader.

"She is incredibly cordial and polite," said White. "She is a unique, gifted and faithful young woman. When she gave her testimony at the retreat, she had the eloquence and courage to make this testimony impactful to her peers."

Ortiz has been admitted to the University of Notre Dame on a full-ride scholarship and has gained admission to the inaugural cohort of the Business Honor program. When asked why she chose Notre Dame to continue her education, Ortiz said, "It is perfect for me. It is the best Catholic university for faith formation and academics."

While at Notre Dame, Ortiz would like to explore on-campus faith programs, continue with dance programs and possibly be a campus tour guide for incoming students.

Role models have played an important role in Ortiz's life. She calls her maternal grandmother her academic role model.

"She taught me to read and speak Spanish," said Ortiz.

She also points to St. Therese of Lisieux.

"She joyfully dedicated everything to God, which I also strive to do."

Ortiz is proud of her many accomplishments at JSerra.

"Strengthening my faith and involvement in the Business Magnet program is at the top of my list," she said. "Being part of the Business Magnet Leadership Team allowed me to speak at and organize events."

Ella Ortiz is a great example of the virtues of a strong Catholic education. She calls her Catholic education “an opportunity to make faith the center of my life.” A strong faith, supportive family, great work ethic and a strong academic base make Ortiz a great addition to Notre Dame and beyond.

If you would like to nominate a student to be featured in our Leadership in Orange County Catholic Schools series, email mike.d.zinn@gmail.com