

## Story from Council Bluffs Nonpareil

St. Albert Catholic High School student Brendan Stephany won national honors and \$100 in the annual education contest sponsored by the Catholic Daughters of Americas, St. Anthony Court 330.

"We hold our own contest (locally.) He wrote an essay and we sent it to the state competition. Then he went to national," event coordinator Mariann Hilderbrand said.

Many students submit entries in more than one category.

Categories include photography, poetry, essay, computer art, music and art, and Hilderbrand said students embellished on the themes of this year's contest: "The joys of God surround us" and "The joys life brings through others."

Students who placed first, second, third or honorable mention were invited to an award dinner, along with their parents, teachers and school administrators, held at St. Albert earlier this year.



### Brendan's essay:

Sitting in the silence, I hear nothing but the soft whisper of the wind against the trees. The darkness allows not even a glimpse of my hand in front of me. I feel nothing; I hear nothing.

But I know something is there. I know God's presence is there, because He is everywhere. I know God's love is felt by all, even those who don't know what they are feeling. When someone feels that love, no matter if they know it or not, they feel the Joys of God. Every smile, laugh, hug, kiss, handshake, high five, pat on the back, and any other loving human contact is one of God's joys. Every color, shape, number, object, taste, scent, game, sound, and any feeling of sinless content displays the joys of God.

Everywhere and everyday we see and feel the joys of God. Even one who does not believe in God would have to admit that the joys felt everyday by seeing their friends and family is part of

a higher power, something that partially knowing humans will not be able to full grasp until death.

So, we enjoy the feeling we have in knowing that the joys of God surround us. And, as I sit in the darkness, the wind against the trees being the only sound; I smile for I know God's joys are surrounding me, even if I can't see them.