

## Part I:

I would have told you that this is a science-fiction story but it actually happened to me while I was in high school. My experience in high school was just like everyone else's that I knew. There were good days and bad days. It was a lot like my older sister's experience in high school until it wasn't due to COVID-19. The whole experience of the pandemic came in three parts for me: the pre-pandemic period, the lockdown period and then the post-pandemic permanent changes in the world.

The first COVID-19 period was shortly before the lockdown. In school, everyone seemed on edge and there were concerns from the students and teachers about everything. There was a tension between students because we knew small pieces of information, but looking back on it now, I did not understand how serious it was going to become. We somehow knew something was going to happen but we never thought what would come next.

The world shut down and everyone stayed at home. How could that be? How do you just stop the world? The lockdown period was just that ... an end to everything. Sports, school events, parties and everything that was part of the high school experience was on hold for an indefinite period of time. It was worse for my sister because it was her senior year. She had a drive by graduation, her prom was canceled, she was unable to complete her college visits and she didn't know what college would be like when she got there.

Even now that we are in the post-pandemic, things are still not the same. There are changes in how we interact with people, there is hand sanitizer everywhere, the routines in church seem to have permanently changed, and wearing a mask is no longer foreign or strange anywhere. Most of my experiences are similar to the way they were before and I am constantly grateful that I have the opportunity to try to live life the way that I always expected.