

Catholic Education Foundation presents

THE CATHOLIC EDUCATOR



Catholic Education in America: 2010

Volume 7 | Fall 2010

In This Edition

<i>A Word from Our Editor</i>	Reverend Peter M. J. Stravinskas	Page 4
<hr/>		
<i>Dana Gioia Laetare Medal Acceptance Speech</i>	Dana Gioia	Page 7
<hr/>		
<i>Pope Explains Why There's an Education Crisis</i>	Zenit.org	Page 10
<hr/>		
<i>Test: Educating in the Truth: Focus on Jennifer Thomas, St. Augustine Academy</i>	The Institute for Catholic Liberal Education	Page 12
<hr/>		
<i>Supreme Court Takes Up School-Choice Law</i>	Rev. Matthew Gamber, SJ	Page 14
<hr/>		
<i>Facing the Catholic-School Challenge</i>	Most Rev. Timothy Dolan	Page 16
<hr/>		
<i>Catholic High School Graduates Likely to Attend College</i>	Catholic News Service	Page 18
<hr/>		
<i>Lessons from Catholic Schools for Public Educators</i>	Samuel G. Freedman	Page 19
<hr/>		
<i>Massachusetts Catholic Schools Welcome Haitian Refugees</i>	Russell Contreras	Page 21
<hr/>		
<i>Quality Education for All of New Jersey's Children: The Importance of Supporting the Complementary Relationship between New Jersey's Public and Nonpublic Schools</i>	Governor's Commission on New Jersey's Nonpublic Schools	Page 23
<hr/>		



*Educators, Fundraisers Help Archdiocese
Carry out New School Initiative*

Catholic News Service

Page 27

*Schools Must Meet New Standards to Comply
with Church Teaching*

Valerie Schmalz

Page 28



A Word from Our Editor

Although Pope Benedict XVI has made clear his conviction that beatifications ought not to be presided over by the Sovereign Pontiff — as a rule — so as not to cause confusion between that rite and canonization, on September 19, 2010, the Holy Father did in fact beatify the arguably most important convert to the Catholic Church in modern history.

In 1845, the leader of the Oxford Movement “swam the Tiber,” rocking the English-speaking world with his conversion. Within fourteen years, John Henry Newman established the Oratory School,¹ intended as a Catholic Eton, “to create an intelligent and well-instructed laity,” according to Michael Hickson.² The author goes on to describe life at the institution that was undoubtedly “the apple of [Newman’s] eye”:

Newman took a leading role in each stage of the school’s development. Far from being the distant founder and aloof administrator, Newman was active in the everyday life of the school. Once a month, all the boys were required to sit through an examination given by Newman and the Headmaster, Ambrose St. John. Both Newman and St. John played instruments in the school’s orchestra, Newman taking the part of second fiddle. Most lively of all, however, was Newman’s participation in the school plays.

¹While many people are familiar with Cardinal Newman’s efforts to establish the Catholic University of Ireland and his magisterial work, *The Idea of a University*, not many realize how staunch a promoter he was of Catholic elementary and secondary schools. Of course, this only makes sense since a Catholic university needs a natural “feeder.”

²“A Cardinal Performance,” *Newman Studies Journal*, Spring 2005, 79-82.

Let me provide some additional vignettes.

Lord Acton observed: “The School is beginning, with great hopes indeed, but in a small way.”³ An “Old Boy” of the School, Arthur Hungerford Pollen recalled:

*At the Oratory we saw a good deal of the Cardinal. Nothing pleased him more than making friends with the boys, and the many opportunities we had of personal contact with him made the friendship a real one. Of course, to us he was the greatest of heroes. Slight and bent with age, with head thrust forward, and a quick firm gait, the great Oratorian might often be seen going from corridor to corridor, or across the school grounds. His head was large, the pink biretta made it seem still more so, and he carried it as if the neck were not strong enough for the weight. . . . In the Latin plays which he had prepared for the boys to act he always took the keenest interest, insisting on the careful rendering of favourite passages, and himself giving hints in cases of histrionic difficulty. In the school chapel he from time to time appeared, giving a short address, and assisting at the afternoon service. It is curious that it should have been in connexion with these two widely different occupations that we should have seen most of him. It is, perhaps, characteristic of his disposition, in which play-fulness and piety were so sweetly combined.*⁴

Yet another alumnus of the Oratory School, Dr. Sparrow, had poignant and fond

³Wilfrid Meynell, *Cardinal Newman* (London: Burns and Oates, 1907), 86.

⁴Meynell, 86f.



remembrances of the School's founder:
I went myself to the Oratory in 1863, and for eleven years enjoyed the privilege and blessing of the Cardinal's training. In those early days of the school we saw more of the Father (as we called him) than was possible for the students to have done in later years, owing to his age and physical weakness. Every month, in my time, each form went up to the Father's room and was examined by him vivá voce in the work done during the preceding month, a trying ordeal for those who were nervous or idle, notwithstanding the kindness and gentleness of the Father, who was one of the most considerate and sympathetic of examiners. The Father always attached great importance to the "lesson by heart," and insisted on perfect accuracy and readiness in its repetition. He was always most particular to urge upon the boys a higher standard of honour, and never would tolerate anything mean or shabby. At the end of each term every boy went to the Father for what we called his "character," that is, the Father spoke to him privately as to his progress and behaviour during the past term. When I was reading for the London University Intermediate Examination in Arts along with another, the Father took us himself in classics and English literature, and I shall never forget those lectures, especially those in literature.⁵

And Cardinal Newman himself, in an 1862 letter to the President of the seminary at Maynooth, gave this estimate of the project:
I am overworked with various kinds of mental labour, and I cannot do as much as I once could. Yet it would be most ungrateful to complain, even if I were seriously incommoded, for my present overwork arises from the very success of a school

⁵Meynell, 88f.

which I began here shortly after I retired from the [Irish] University. When we began it was a simple experiment, and lookers-on seemed to be surprised when they found we had in half a year a dozen; but at the end of our third year we now have seventy. . . . As all other schools are increasing in number, it is a pleasant proof of the extension of Catholic education.⁶

So strong was Blessed Newman's advocacy on behalf of Catholic schools, that the Archbishop of Sydney solicited his assistance for the cause in Australia:

We are now in the midst of a great educational fight. The Bishops have lately issued a joint Pastoral Letter condemning Public Schools, and urging Catholics to give their children a thorough Catholic education. We have found that these State Schools are hot-beds of indifferentism and infidelity: and unless a bold stand were made, the Church eventually would suffer terrible injury. I send Your Eminence three Pastoral Letters which I have written; and in the second you will see that I have taken some liberties (which I beg your pardon for) with Your Eminence's name. If in your reply to the Catholic laity you could say a word about their being thorough in their Catholicity, and becoming "Champions" against the great apostasy, it would be a great help to our cause. They want courage; and you, by your words, could give it them.⁷

To which the new Cardinal replied:

. . . I feel it a great honour on the part of Your Grace, that you have made use, in the Pastorals, which you have had the goodness to send me, of what I had occasion to say at

⁶Meynell, 89.

⁷Roger Bede Vaughan to John Henry Newman, 29 August 1879.



Rome last May on the subject of the special religious evil of the day. It pleased me to find that you could make it serviceable in the anxious conflict in which you are at this time engaged in defence of Christian education. It is indeed the gravest of questions whether our people are to commence life with or without adequate instruction in those all-important truths which ought to colour all thought and to direct all action; — whether they are or are not to accept this visible world for their God and their all, its teaching as their only truth, and its prizes as their highest aims; — for, if they do not gain, when young, that sacred knowledge which comes to us from Revelation, when will they acquire it? We here are in the same or, rather, worse peril than you can be.⁸

How thrilling to encounter two churchmen so cognizant of the importance of a youthful introduction to the Christian Faith and likewise so determined to make that awareness a concrete reality.

Although the success of the Catholic school apostolate in the United States was the result of the combined efforts and sacrifices of the entire Catholic community — and especially those of the Sisters — strong, unrelenting leadership came from priests and bishops. That part of the equation is often missing today, and without it, many of our educational institutions are at sea. How necessary it is to encourage the clergy to support with words and actions the advancement of our schools, without which we would be but a shell of a Church.

Last but not least, can we not hope and pray that Blessed John Henry Newman — the quintessential Catholic educator — would intercede before Christ the Teacher to

⁸Reply of Cardinal Newman to Archbishop Vaughan, 16 November 1879.

provide us with many more clerics after his own heart and example, thus ensuring a truly bright future for Catholic education in the United States and around the world?

Reverend Peter M. J. Stravinskas,
Ph.D., S.T.D.
Editor, *The Catholic Educator*



Dana Gioia *Laetare* Medal Acceptance Speech

Thank you very much. Thank you, Father Jenkins and all the members of the *Laetare* Committee. I am enormously honored by this award, which I receive with sincere humility and gratitude.

Humility and gratitude are not formulaic words for me today. When I received the letter from Notre Dame notifying me of the *Laetare* Medal and read the noble criteria for the award, I felt the same emotions I do kneeling at Mass each Sunday — first a deep sense of my own unworthiness — *Domine, non sum dignus*, Lord, I am not worthy — and then gratitude for such undeserved grace.

The parents and grandparents in the stadium today probably remember the old Latin Mass where we quite literally beat our breast as we repeated those words, *Domine, non sum dignus*. Even though we now live in a culture of boundless self-esteem, I am eccentric enough to believe it's not a bad idea occasionally to recognize our own unworthiness — if only because that recognition helps us appreciate how much we depend on the love, understanding, and forgiveness of others. Much of what is best in our lives we owe to God, our parents, families, teachers, and friends. Humility, we discover, leads to gratitude.

Please don't misunderstand me. I am not entirely undeserving. One reason I've been given the *Laetare* is that I served for six years in Washington as the Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts. I believe that anyone who spends six years in D.C. working for the federal government deserves a medal. But probably not such a nice gold one.

I was raised by a mother who never gave her kids a compliment — no, she wasn't Irish, she was Mexican. For example, when I called to tell her that the President of the United States had nominated me to be the Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, she responded, "Don't think I'm impressed." Don't get me wrong. I adored her. She was a wonderful mother. She was just training me to deal with the U.S. Senate.

This anecdote may explain why I feel uncomfortable in situations like today. When people praise how much I've accomplished, my immediate response is to realize how much more I should have done.

I've been very fortunate to have enjoyed some success in life — in fact, a level of success well beyond the expectations of the people I came from, Sicilians and Mexicans who were born among the working poor. They were all, to quote the Gospel of St. Matthew, "the salt of the earth," though some of my uncles were a bit saltier than they needed to be. I have never forgotten where I came from.

Last month I received a bundle of letters written by students at a school in my old neighborhood, a rough part of Southwest L.A. where I had given a talk. Folks there mostly don't grow up speaking English. One kid wrote that he was proud that someone from his neighborhood had "truly exceeded in life."

When I think about what helped me "exceed" in life, I know that I owe the most to my family and Catholic schools — the two institutions that shaped my early years.



I will not praise my family here. They were good and generous Latin people who had survived immigration, poverty, war, and discrimination with dignity and good humor. They taught me the virtues of work, love, and loyalty. I mention them now only to remind the graduates to consider how much they owe their families. And I'm not just talking about four years of Notre Dame tuition, though I'm sure many parents here today would be happy to provide their kids with a detailed accounting complete with check stubs.

But I do want to express my gratitude to the Church that educated me. I spent twelve years in Catholic schools in working-class L.A. — taught first by the Sisters of Providence and then by the Marianists — before I traded down to Stanford and Harvard.

Pre-Vatican II parochial schools are now lost, like the legendary cities of Nineveh and Tyre, to the mists of history. They appear now mostly as a subject matter for comedy. But they were an amazing and mysterious place for a six-year-old child to enter. The rows of nuns dressed in their formidable black and white coifed habits at daily Mass seemed as awesome and otherworldly as the blue-skinned aliens in Avatar.

Why am I grateful? Well . . .

For seven years Sister Camille Cecile gave me two piano lessons a week—at the cost of only three dollars a month. She started by teaching me the keys and eventually had me playing Bartok and Beethoven. She even took me to my first symphony concert.

In eighth grade, Sister Mary Damian kept me after school because she could barely understand a word I said in class. Did she

yell at me? No, she gave me elocution lessons three afternoons a week, eventually making me memorize and recite poetry. (You can see where those lessons led to.)

In high school, Brother Charles successfully drilled me in Latin for two years not only preparing me to discover Virgil, Horace, and Catullus, but also to understand the deeper roots of English.

Meanwhile Brother Terrence Wong instructed me in theology for two years, requiring weekly analytical essays — the experience which first taught me how to think logically and write clearly.

And finally, Brother John McCloskey introduced me to Shakespeare. He was a man of considerable girth, who often got so excited in his recitations that he climbed on top of his desk to bellow out his favorite lines—thereby teaching me not only Shakespeare but the divine madness of poetry.

Latin, theology, music, poetry, rhetoric. By the time I got to Stanford I had the advantage of a superb twelfth century education — which wasn't a bad way to prepare for the late twentieth century.

But these teachers did something even more important — they challenged me to take my life seriously, to search for a vocation, and to view the actions of each day in light of one's larger mission. And they embodied the spirit of service.

Brother Charles, Sister Mary Damian. These names remind us that the metaphors God has given us to understand Him come mostly from the family. When not with my own flesh and blood family as a child, I was educated by sisters, brothers, fathers, and



one especially formidable Mother Superior. I was a poor scruffy kid on whom they showered inexhaustible riches.

Like all Catholics, I am a pilgrim and a sinner. Life is an astonishing but difficult journey. What a blessing to have started out surrounded by such people. When I feel lost or confused, I try to remember where I came from. It's not a bad way to get your bearings.

And life is full of amazements! Today it brought a poet to play a football stadium. Thank you, Notre Dame.

University of Notre Dame
May 16, 2010



Pope Explains Why There's an Education Crisis

Suggests Two Roots to Overcome

VATICAN CITY, MAY 27, 2010 (Zenit.org).— Benedict XVI is supporting the Italian bishops in their priority of the decade — education — and explaining the two roots he thinks have given rise to an "educational emergency."

The Pope offered his analysis today when he received the Italian bishops, who are meeting in their plenary assembly.

He suggested going to the roots so as to find "adequate responses" to the educational challenge.

"One main root is, it seems to me, a false concept of man's autonomy," the Holy Father said. This concept calls for man to develop himself by and for himself, "without impositions from others, who can assist in his self-development, but who cannot enter into the process."

This concept is erroneous, the Pontiff explained, because man's self is defined in relation to others. "It is created for dialogue and for communion," he said.

"Only the encounter with the 'you' and with the 'we' opens the 'I' to himself," the Pope said. "That's why so-called anti-authoritarian education is not education but rather a rejection of education."

"So a first point seems to me to be this one," he stated, "to overcome this false idea of man's autonomy as an 'I' complete in itself."

Blocking the source

Benedict XVI pointed to a second root in skepticism and relativism, "or," he said, "with simpler and clearer words, in the

exclusion of the two sources that orient the human journey."

The sources, he indicated, are [human] nature and revelation. "But nature," the Holy Father observed, "is considered today as a purely mechanical thing, and because of this, no type of orientation comes from it."

Meanwhile revelation, he noted, is seen "either as a moment of historical development, and therefore relative, just as any historical and cultural development — or, it is said, perhaps there was revelation, but it doesn't offer content, only motivation."

"And," the Pontiff warned, "if these two sources are blocked, nature and revelation, then the third source as well, history, ceases to offer guidance because it becomes nothing more than a conglomeration of arbitrary, momentary cultural decisions that serve for nothing for the present and the future."

A true concept of revelation and of nature as God's creation that speaks to us must be recovered, he urged.

Introducing a friend

Benedict XVI said that "in this 'concert,' so to speak, between creation uncoded in revelation and made concrete in cultural history" are found the keys to education. He spoke of an education "that is not an imposition but truly openness of the 'I' to the 'you,' to the 'we' and the 'You' of God."



The difficulties in education are tremendous, the Pope acknowledged, but "we cannot give into discouragement and resignation."

"To educate has never been easy," he affirmed, "but we cannot give in. [...] To educate is to form the new generations, so they know how to enter into relationships with the world."

And youth, the Pontiff affirmed, "have a thirst in their hearts, and this thirst is a

demand for meaning and for authentic human relationships, which help one not to feel alone when faced with the challenges of life."

"Our answer," he proposed, "is the proclamation of God who is a friend of man, who in Jesus made himself close to everyone."



Test: Educating in the Truth

Focus on: Jennifer Thomas, St. Augustine Academy

Jennifer Thomas has taught history and literature to high school and junior high students in Catholic schools for twenty-five years. During that time, including a three-year stint at an inner city diocesan school in the Oakland Diocese, she has “never seen a student of good will fail to respond with an awakening enthusiasm for great literature.” She has spent the last fourteen years at St. Augustine Academy in Ventura, California.

Awakening excitement about great literature and great language is Mrs. Thomas’s number one goal as a teacher of literature. How does she approach this task? First of all, she says, the teacher needs to know and love the works she presents to her students. Intimate knowledge and personal excitement will shine out before the students and begin to get them interested. Knowing the great works means learning more about them on your own. For example, she recommends that teachers see as many performances of Shakespeare as possible, since Shakespeare is meant to be performed, not simply read. She warns against being too solemn in presenting Shakespeare, Homer or Virgil. “It’s a falsehood that these works are rarefied, only meaningful to the stuffy elite.” She frequently injects humor into her presentations: “Humor always helps.”

Mrs. Thomas helps her students to understand and appreciate the mastery of the great writers. For example, they spend time analyzing some of Shakespeare’s sonnets, studying his meter, rhyme scheme, use of metaphors and clever closing twists. They then write their own sonnets, going through several drafts and ending with products

which are often delightful. This gives students a sense of how difficult the sonnet form is. They then are amazed to see that a play like *Romeo and Juliet* contains several portions of dialogue that are written in sonnet form.

Annotating works is an important exercise for her students. “They hate to do it, but it introduces them to a skill that all scholars employ. Writing notes in margins is an ancient, venerable, and effective practice which will prepare them to be active readers at the college level. If nothing else, it helps them to find important texts again later.” Students are required to write up to three reasonable questions or comments per page. “I don’t want them to ask simply factual questions, like who was Hrothgar, but questions about the meaning of phrases, or how a new episode fits with what has been revealed about a character.”

These exercises culminate in seminar discussions. Each student writes a list of three “seminar-worthy” questions about a work, ones that are open-ended and conducive to discussion. They have to have quote-texts that provide a basis for the question and suggest some direction for discussion. The class will then decide together what are the most interesting questions. Each student then prepares for the seminar two to three pages of notes on the questions, providing texts pertinent to their opinion. Three or four days are then devoted to the discussion, with students bringing in special goodies to share during the periods. Besides grading the annotations, questions, and preparatory notes, Mrs. Thomas offers



three points for contributions with textual support, two for those without textual support, and one point for simply saying something. “I don’t like grading the seminars, but some of the more shy students need that as a carrot.”

Mrs. Thomas believes that appreciation and close analysis of great authors, along with remedial composition work when necessary, improve the writing of her students. “We read Aristotle’s criteria for tragedy, then apply them to Sophocles’ plays, *Oedipus Rex* and *Antigone*, trying to discover why Aristotle thought *Oedipus* the greatest tragedy. These sorts of exercises really sharpen their minds by making them pay careful attention to the greats. Graduates report that they excel in composition at the college level.”

Some people might think her approach to literature and writing elitist. She completely disagrees. “What is truly elitist is thinking that lower-class kids can’t respond to

someone like Shakespeare. When I was working with inner-city kids, who would threaten one another with nail-studded boards in class, I taught them Hamlet. We began with the more approachable style of C.S. Lewis, and worked our way up to Shakespeare. These eighth-graders ate it up. They wanted to understand it, and loved their knowledge of it. At the end, I took them to a professional performance of Hamlet. They arrived early, together with some high school kids from wealthier areas. The two groups began bantering about the play, quoting back and forth from Hamlet, and arguing about what it meant. They held their own, but more importantly, they were shining with intellectual excitement!” Awakening that excitement is what drives Jennifer Thomas as a teacher.

The Institute for Catholic Liberal Education
#11
June 2010



Supreme Court Takes Up School-Choice Law

IN SUPPORT. Students from Sacred Heart School in Washington participate in a May 2009 rally at the city's Freedom Plaza to support the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program, a voucher program that provides grants for private school tuition.

PHOENIX — The future of an Arizona school-choice program that gives scholarship money to Catholic and other children in Arizona's private and religious schools will be decided by the U.S. Supreme Court when it returns to work this fall.

The high court announced on May 24 that it would hear the case *Garriott v. Winn*. The court will decide whether a law that gives Arizona residents a state tax credit for their donations to private scholarship agencies that support students in religious schools violates the establishment clause of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. The establishment clause bars the government from endorsing any particular church or religion.

Defenders of the law said that the tax-credit program is constitutional because the government does not collect or distribute any of the scholarship money. All the money that is collected is given by private individuals and distributed by private organizations.

A 2009 decision by the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals said that the tax credit was unconstitutional because it favored religious schools, which were the predominant recipients of the programs' funds. Attorneys for the state of Arizona, joined by other interested parties, are asking the Supreme Court to reverse the lower court's ruling.

In Arizona there are 55 "School Tuition Organizations" which in recent years have distributed more than \$50 million to approximately 27,000 students at 370 different religious and other private schools in grades K-12. The Arizona program started in 1997 and has survived numerous legal challenges from the American Civil Liberties Union which argue that the tax-credit program favors religious schools over other schools and therefore limits school choice.

Under the program any religious or private entity is free to establish a scholarship tuition organization in Arizona to collect and distribute funds.

The Catholic Church operates two such scholarship organizations that help send children to Catholic schools. Ron Johnson, executive director of the Arizona Catholic Conference, calls school choice in the state "one of our largest priorities," and said he was confident that the Supreme Court will uphold the Arizona tax-credit system and that the law was eminently fair. Johnson said that besides Catholic tuition organizations, there are Lutheran, Jewish, Christian and various other religious groups that benefit from the tax-credit system. No single religion is privileged, he said.

Johnson fears that five or six Catholic schools in the Phoenix Diocese might have to close if the tax-credit system is abolished. Despite the economic downturn that has strongly affected the Arizona economy, he said, Catholic schools have seen an uptick in enrollment thanks to the scholarship program.



Politics in the Way

Defenders of the tax-credit program say that the law has increased school choice and does not favor one religion over another. Tim Keller is the executive director of the Arizona chapter of the Institute for Justice, a legal firm that is defending Arizona's school-choice program. Keller said he thinks the Supreme Court will uphold the Arizona law. "I think the Supreme Court took the case to reverse the 9th Circuit, which got it wrong on the facts and on the law," Keller said.

Keller believes a favorable decision by the Supreme Court will "remove any constitutional clouds hanging over the school-choice program; they can absolutely clarify that school choice is constitutional," Keller said.

Keller based his belief on the precedent that the Supreme Court set in 2002 in the case of *Zelman v. Simmons*. In that case, the court ruled that vouchers in a Cleveland program are constitutional and do not violate the First Amendment, freedom of religion or the establishment clause.

"The Supreme Court has said that when a program is based genuinely on private choice and when it is completely neutral regarding religion, then it will pass constitutional muster," Keller said. According to him, the Arizona law is completely neutral and gives no incentives to donate to one tuition organization over another.

Keller said that a favorable decision by the Supreme Court will show that the only thing standing in the way of school-choice programs around the country is politics, not the Constitution. In his view, the Institute for Justice and others defending the law are ultimately doing it for the sake of the students.

"It is the kids who have benefitted from the program," he said. "They have the opportunity to get the education they deserve."

Reverend Matthew Gamber, SJ
June 22, 2010



Facing the Catholic-school Challenge

The time for "business as usual" for our Catholic schools is over.

We all know what Catholic schools have meant, and continue to mean, both here in New York and elsewhere. Everywhere I go, everybody I meet has words of praise for our schools. But if Catholic schools are to remain strong, available, affordable and accessible, we need a new approach.

You are probably well aware of the history. For more than 200 years, the Archdiocese of New York has ensured that a rigorous, high-quality Catholic education is available to every child who seeks it.

Today, the Archdiocese educates more than 83,000 children in 279 schools in the boroughs of Manhattan, The Bronx and Staten Island, and seven counties north of the city. Of these students, about 35,500 attend one of our inner-city schools in New York City — nearly 35 percent of whom are non-Catholic, 94 percent are minority and more than two-thirds live near or below the federal poverty level.

Our students are extraordinary achievers — more than 98 percent of our seniors graduate, and an impressive 96 percent of our graduates pursue post-secondary education.

In addition to providing a superior education, our schools provide significant savings to taxpayers — it is estimated that Catholic schools in New York state, which together educate some 209,000 children, save taxpayers more than \$3.6 billion a year.

Despite such success, Catholic schools across the nation, and especially in the inner

cities, are facing serious challenges, including declining student enrollment (often due to shifting demographics) and escalating costs.

Instead of standing idly by and waiting for these challenges to permanently weaken our schools, we have embarked on a rigorous strategic planning initiative for the schools of the Archdiocese.

Our strategic plan, "Pathways to Excellence," which will be released soon, is designed to assist elementary schools throughout the Archdiocese. It calls for a number of important internal enhancements, such as innovative programs to attract dynamic new leaders as well as systemic changes in our governance and financial models.

As the plan begins to take hold, it is likely that some schools may merge and some may close — and, Please God, new schools will open, as well.

Know that the difficult and painful decisions of this sort will never be made lightly, as we are all very aware that school closings have a profound impact on the students and their families. Such decisions will only be made after long and careful consideration, with plenty of opportunity for input and discussion by all who have an interest in that school.

Part of the genius of Catholic schools is the involvement of the entire local community — parents, parishioners, pastors, principals, teachers, benefactors and civic leaders — in the life of a school. We recognize that all of these stakeholders must be involved in any decision to merge, close or open a school.



While I don't know what local decisions will eventually emerge as a result of this process, one thing I can guarantee is that there will always be a desk and a chair in a Catholic school for any child who seeks one.

We recognize that the prospect of change and transition can lead to anxiety for many. But we believe that "Pathways to Excellence" will ensure that strong Catholic schools continue to exist for generations to come.

The Archdiocese of New York is proud of the role that Catholic schools have played, and continue to play, in our city and our country, helping millions of children from all walks of life, including immigrants, and providing them with an equal opportunity to

share in the American dream of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Countless families have come to our schools over the years to help develop their children's characters, and to instill a love of learning, in a climate of faith. We honor that trust, and remain committed to maintaining the standard of excellence that has made Catholic schools such an integral and beloved pillar of the infrastructure of New York.

Most Reverend Timothy Dolan
Archbishop of New York
May 6, 2010



Catholic High School Graduates Likely to Attend College

WASHINGTON (CNS) — In brochures and online materials, Catholic high schools often boast of the high percentage of their students who graduate and attend college — often in the 90-100 percent range. According to a new study, this is not just happening at some Catholic high schools but is part of a nationwide trend. The report by the National Catholic Educational Association shows that students who attend Catholic high schools are more likely to graduate and attend college than students attending other schools. Catholic secondary schools report a graduation rate of 99.1 percent, higher than rates reported by other religious schools (97.9 percent), nonsectarian schools (95.7 percent) and public schools (73.2 percent).

Students graduating from Catholic high schools are also more likely to attend four-year colleges (84.7 percent) than students graduating from other religious (63.7 percent) and nonsectarian (56.2 percent) schools. Catholic school graduates are twice as likely to attend four-year colleges as graduates of public schools (44.1 percent). The figures are from the Annual Statistical Report on Schools, Enrollment and Staffing, United States Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools 2009-2010, recently released by the NCEA.

Catholic News Service
May 4, 2010



Lessons from Catholic Schools for Public Educators

Within the 242 pages of Diane Ravitch's lightning rod of a book, "The Death and Life of the Great American School System," there appear exactly three references to Catholic education. Which makes sense, given that Ms. Ravitch is addressing and deploring recent efforts to reform public schools with extensive testing and increasing privatization.

Yet what subtly informs both her critique and her recommendations for improving public schools is, in significant measure, her long study of and admiration for Roman Catholic education, especially in serving low-income black and Hispanic students.

In that respect, Ms. Ravitch and her book offer evidence of how some public-education scholars and reformers have been learning from what Catholic education is doing right. What one might call the Catholic-school model is perhaps the most unappreciated influence on the nation's public-education debate.

"If you're serious about education reform, you have to pay attention to what Catholic schools are doing," said Joseph P. Viteritti, a professor of public policy at Hunter College who has edited four books with Ms. Ravitch. "The fact of the matter is that they've been educating urban kids better than they're being educated elsewhere."

When Ms. Ravitch assails the emphasis on standardized testing, particularly under the No Child Left Behind law, and when she exhorts schools to use a content-rich core curriculum and emphasize character and build ties to parents and neighborhoods, she is, without overtly

saying so, extolling the essential traits of Catholic education.

The message, in turn, may be reaching a larger audience than ever through the book. With 50,000 copies in print, "The Death and Life of the Great American School System" has put Ms. Ravitch on The New York Times best-seller list for the first time in her 36-year, 24-book career as an author on education history and policy.

Part of the buzz has to do with the perception — actually, the misperception — that Ms. Ravitch has disavowed her previous dogma. While she does admit to "having fallen for the latest panaceas and miracle cures," like charter schools and the No Child law, she also espouses positions that have been in her educational platform for decades. And many of them reflect the influence of Catholic education.

That influence decidedly did not come as a matriculant. Ms. Ravitch, who is Jewish, attended public school in Houston. She had already written a masterly history of public education in New York City ("The Great School Wars") and battled against the educational left wing before starting to take notice of Catholic schools in the early 1980s.

Her interest was initially piqued by the work of James S. Coleman, a sociologist of education and fellow apostate. Despite his roots in civil rights liberalism, Coleman began arguing in the 1970s and early 1980s that segregation alone could not explain the achievement gap between black and white students. His research into various types of high schools — tens of thousands of students' records — convinced him that the same kind of poor, inner-city black



student performed markedly better in a Catholic school than in a public one.

In books like “High School Achievement” and “Public and Private High Schools,” Coleman particularly singled out Catholic schools for their core curriculum that embodied the “common school ideal” and for the “social capital” they built by involving parents and parishioners.

Ultimately, Coleman gave Ms. Ravitch all of his data, so she could inspect it herself. Not only did she concur with his conclusions, but she began to visit urban Catholic schools on her own, from Brooklyn to London. “They reminded me of my own public schooling in the 1950s,” Ms. Ravitch recalled in an interview this week. “The halls were quiet. It was orderly. And there was this commitment from the teachers.”

More than nostalgia, though, commended the schools to Ms. Ravitch. On the one flank, they never gave over to the obsession with standardized tests. On the other, they never conceded their curriculum to progressive trends like whole language, constructivist math and relativistic history. As a result, black and Hispanic students in Catholic schools did not necessarily score higher than those in public schools on standardized tests like the SAT, but they were far more likely to take rigorous classes, graduate on time and attend college.

At a personal level, Ms. Ravitch paid tuition for two students at Bishop Loughlin Memorial High School in Brooklyn under the Student Sponsor

Partners program. She even talked Suze Orman into picking up the bill for eight girls at St. Joseph High School in Brooklyn.

In terms of policy, Ms. Ravitch had her dalliance with the concept of giving publicly financed vouchers to low-income students. The idea was that they could attend private schools, including Catholic ones, rather than being consigned to abysmal public schools in their neighborhoods.

By now, vouchers qualify as yet another intellectual romance gone sour for Ms. Ravitch. The track record in Milwaukee, which has had vouchers and a school-choice program for upward of a decade, has shown her no substantial improvement for low-income, nonwhite students.

Her criticism of charter schools, though, arises partly from a desire to protect Catholic ones. Already reeling from a shortage of priests and members of religious orders as teachers, already losing enrollment because of rising tuition and falling aid from parishes, urban Catholic schools face direct competition from charters, which as public entities are free.

“Where charter schools are expanding, Catholic schools are dying,” Ms. Ravitch said. “But charter schools can’t do the same things. The Catholic schools have a well-established record of being effective, and they’re being replaced by schools that have no track record.”

Samuel G. Freedman
April 30, 2010



Massachusetts Catholic Schools Welcome Haitian Refugees

BROCKTON, Mass. — Floors cracked and walls collapsed in Christine Jennifer Delma's Port-au-Prince school when the catastrophic earthquake struck in January.

Outside, the frightened 10-year-old watched panicked victims with bloody faces running in the street of Haiti and screaming out for loved ones.

"I saw the people who lost their arms, their feet," recalled Delma. "I saw people who were crying. I was like... 'Oh no'."

The earthquake destroyed her school, her family's home and killed around 230,000.

Today, Delma and her 12-year-old sister, Sergine, are enrolled at the Trinity Catholic Academy in Brockton, Mass., close to where their family has relocated. The girls are among the 20 or so Haitian refugee children who have resettled in Massachusetts and have opted to enroll in Boston-area Roman Catholic schools instead of public schools. Another 100 are expected to enroll this fall.

The numbers are small, but local Catholic leaders are embracing the new refugee students as a way to diversify their student bodies and build relationships toward the Church's mission to help low-income and immigrant populations.

The refugees come at a time when Massachusetts Catholic schools are reporting stagnant or declining enrollment numbers, said Lynn Sullivan, senior program officer of the Catholic Schools Foundation in Boston.

At the same time they can offer spiritual guidance to the devastated families.

"I think we can help each other," Sullivan said. "This is a potential growth population with future students for our schools."

Among Catholic schools in the Boston Archdiocese, overall enrollment has dropped to 30,000 students from 153,000 in 1965 with a number of schools across the state closing or consolidating in the last decade.

About 75 percent of the Boston's current Catholic school student body is white with 14 percent black or Haitian. Latinos make up the rest of the student body.

Cardinal Sean O'Malley, who has repeatedly said that he believes serving low-income and immigrant populations are important missions of the Church, has been a big advocate at reviving area Catholic schools. He has also visited Haiti twice since the earthquake.

Along with learning English and catching up with school work, school officials say the new Haitian refugee students are still trying to come to terms with the horror of the earthquake — an emotional journey that sometimes includes random crying, poems describing amputations and tearful breakdowns over something as small as a fire drill.

Sarah Vendetti, a science teacher at Trinity, said teachers keep a close eye on the students and watch for cries of help. "Each student is different," said Vendetti. "Sometimes we try to talk it out. Other times we wait until they are ready to share. These students are strong."



Social workers have met with students. And students have been encouraged to pray to Our Lady of Perpetual Help, the patroness of Haiti. A picture of her image is posted in the hallway near the entrance.

The schools have limited resources and tight budgets, but in some cases they are waiving tuition and helping with other costs. The effort has been costly, Sullivan said. About a quarter of the \$100,000 Catholic Schools Foundation emergency tuition fund has been set aside for new Haitian students. Some private residents also have offered tuition assistance.

Cynthia Dunn McNally, principal of the Trinity Catholic Academy's upper campus, said if the schools recruit now, they will have better chances at enrolling their siblings later. That could help the Catholic schools' enrollment number in the future as Boston's Haitian population — estimated between 60,000 to 70,000 — continues to grow, said McNally. "We're building long-term relationships," she said.

The Boston Archdiocese isn't the only archdiocese to report more Haitian refugee students enrolling. About 100 have enrolled in elementary and high schools in Florida's Broward and Dade counties, said Brother Angelo Palmieri, associate superintendent of schools for the Archdiocese of Miami.

But Palmieri said there Haitian refugee students are enrolling in schools and areas with already-sizable Haitian student populations.

Sebastien Emile, 11, a sixth-grader at Trinity whose family resettled in Randolph, Mass. after the earthquake, said he was happy to come to a new school where he could speak his native French Creole whenever he got

stuck on an English word. "Everyone is nice here. They help out a lot," said Emile, whose family told McNally that he was "only buried in the rubble for about eight hours."

Despite those challenges, officials say students are quickly integrating.

During a recent afternoon at Trinity, Angela Osiris, 12, a seventh-grader and recent refugee who lost her grandfather in the earthquake, gleefully answered questions on a lesson about humidity. "I know all about that," she said in broken English.

But earlier in the day, Osiris had to be consoled. She found out that morning that her grandfather's dog, Blackie, had died. The dog had refused to eat or leave the site where her grandfather was buried.

"We handled it together like we handled a lot of things we do here," McNally said. "We prayed."

Russell Contreras
The Associated Press
April 28, 2010



Quality Education for All of New Jersey's Children: The Importance of Supporting the Complementary Relationship between New Jersey's Public and Nonpublic Schools

A report by the Governor's Study Commission on New Jersey's
Nonpublic Schools

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Meeting the Challenge

New Jersey's current challenges are many. The educational issues facing us are watershed matters to which we must respond with wisdom, creativity, and resolve. The circumstances, policies, and choices that have brought us to this point cannot be continued without jeopardizing the future of not only our children, but also of all of our citizens.

The *Study Commission on New Jersey's Nonpublic Schools* was created by Governor Jon S. Corzine pursuant to Executive Order 161 on December 22, 2009, and it is responsible for recommending specific actions state government can take to ensure that educational opportunities for nonpublic school students are preserved and enhanced. Successful outcomes of the Commission's work will ensure that the problems facing New Jersey are neither continued nor compounded by the loss or continued diminution of a vigorous and healthy nonpublic education community. Education is the keystone to the future well being of our state and its people, and nonpublic education comprises 1/8th of the entire educational system of the State of New Jersey from Kindergarten to 12th grade.

The children of New Jersey are the workforce of the immediate future. Intense global competition mandates that the best educational venues possible be accessible to all children of New Jersey. Then and only

then will our economy and the businesses which are its engine maintain their global leadership. Education, both public and nonpublic, is a mission-critical foundation to the success of our economy.

The recommendations of the Commission's work seek to ensure a vigorous and viable nonpublic school industry as part of a healthy and productive statewide education system.

Public vs. Nonpublic — The Distinction is Artificial

Consider:

- All children are part of the public, and New Jersey has a responsibility to provide for the quality education of all of its children.
- All property owners pay taxes that support education, whether or not they have students in publicly funded schools.
- No one type of school situation fits all students.

What does all of this mean when considering the application of state support for education?

Shared Responsibility, Shared Benefits

When New Jersey's students succeed, we all benefit. The Commission believes there are many sound and compelling reasons that the state should preserve and enhance support to nonpublic school students. These reasons are



presented in this report in three categories: economic, legal, and those that arise from our recognized common sense/philosophical reasoning.

Economic Rationale

- Over 1 out of every 8 of New Jersey's students attends nonpublic schools.
- Nonpublic schools save New Jersey residents over \$2.7 billion annually in operating costs and over \$1.1 billion in annualized capital expenses. Thus nonpublic schools save the New Jersey residents approximately \$4 billion annually.
- As an industry, nonpublic schools employ nearly 20,000 people, generating payroll and other tax income to the state, making it among the largest private industries in the state.
- Nonpublic schools spend hundreds of millions of dollars in goods, salaries, and services, thus generating revenue for NJ businesses and tax income for the state.

Common Sense/Philosophical Rationale

- All schools serve the public good.
- All children are part of the public.
- Not every school is right for every child.
- The long tradition of nonpublic schools excellence must be retained. Without nonpublic schools diversity and opportunity is lost.
- Taxes derived from the public should benefit all the children of the public.
- Nonpublic schools collectively serve a diverse universe of students, culturally and ethnically.

- Concern for the most vulnerable of our society is a valued common goal. Urban children are among the most vulnerable. Nonpublic schools have a proven record of success with urban students.

- Unlike elementary and secondary schools, the American higher education system makes no distinction in its support for either sectarian or nonsectarian colleges and universities and public institutions.

Legal Rationale

- Parental authority over the education of their children is a well-established legal principle.
- The Constitution does not prohibit all forms of state assistance to children (and/or the parents of children) attending nonpublic schools.

Conclusions from the Three Rationales

At this point the economic, philosophic and legal arguments converge and form an imperative to act:

- The economy will fail without a well-educated populous capable of providing for itself and for its governance. The closure of nonpublic schools would burden the taxpayers with billions of dollars of additional costs in operating and capital expenses.
- It makes sense for the state to ensure a vigorous, diverse, and healthy system of schools that ensures opportunity for all, the public good, and support of the people.
- The Courts have approved programs that benefit the education of all children.

Furthermore, case law requires that the provision of these benefits should be



accomplished in such a manner as to protect the right of parents to choose the education most appropriate for their children. Parents and children should not be limited only to what the state offers in government-run schools in a take-it-or-leave-it approach, which may violate a parent's world views and belief systems.

Existing Programs Need to be Retained and Enhanced

This report contains recommendations for ways to strengthen and enhance opportunities in nonpublic education for New Jersey's children. This Commission recommends that any viable programs or resources that are made available for New Jersey's public school students in future budgets also be made available to New Jersey's nonpublic school students, in order to provide a thorough and efficient education to ALL of New Jersey's children. Specific recommendations include the need to enhance support for current nonpublic school programs such as textbook aid, technology aid and special education services. New programs to enhance student access to nonpublic schools are recommended, including school choice and an alternative delivery of math instruction.

Challenging Times Call for New Models

The inclusion of nonpublic school students in non-traditional resources should also be expanded. The Commission investigated a number of new models for providing services to children across the spectrum. Included in this report are school-based programs, offered by state departments outside of the Department of Education, and community-based programs offered by non-profit organizations currently available to children attending public schools.

Appreciating that the state cannot currently bear the full weight of its obligation to children, the Commission has identified resources for grants, programs, equipment, and training available from a variety of sources to benefit nonpublic (and public) schools and their children.

All Children Deserve Every Opportunity to Succeed

It is in the best interest of our state that every student has every opportunity to achieve and succeed. New Jersey's commitment to education is among the best in the country. New Jersey has been innovative, responsive, and forward thinking when it comes to helping our children. This is evidenced by a range of programs developed in departments throughout state government (detailed in the following report), designed for, and currently delivered to, children who attend New Jersey's public schools. These efforts are laudable and should be continued, but they have overlooked 166,000 children* — those who attend our nonpublic schools.

Respectfully submitted, Members of the Governor's Study Commission on New Jersey's Nonpublic Schools

*Estimate for 2009-2010 school year

CONCLUSION

The importance of New Jersey's nonpublic schools to the citizens of the state is immeasurable. Maintaining the viable choice of a nonpublic education for parents and their children is a responsibility of the State of New Jersey.

New Jersey's most important resources are our children. Their ability to graduate after a Kindergarten to 12th education and become productive citizens in the state increases the



standard of living for all New Jersey citizens. Therefore, the ability of a child to learn in an atmosphere which considers his or her learning style and individual needs should not be a dream unobtainable as a consequence of poverty and/or residence. The success of all New Jersey children should be the rationale for all decisions

made by the public policy makers in our state regarding the mission-critical matter of education.

Excerpts from *The Governor's Study Commission on New Jersey's Nonpublic Schools*

March 4, 2010



Educators, Fundraisers Help Archdiocese Carry Out New School Initiative

ST. LOUIS (CNS) — Archbishop Robert J. Carlson of St. Louis said Catholic schools are his first priority in an archdiocese with a long, strong tradition of Catholic education. Few dioceses have as many Catholic schools: By population, St. Louis is the 38th largest diocese in the country, but the seventh largest in Catholic school enrollment. To help that tradition continue and grow, Archbishop Carlson has established a new Mission Advancement Initiative for Catholic education. The multi-year initiative, which is being planned with the help of a team of educators and fundraising professionals, will focus on helping parishes and schools implement the archbishop's vision for Catholic schools. "I believe in Catholic education," Archbishop Carlson told the members of the initiative earlier this summer. "I also believe as

archbishop of St. Louis I have a God-given responsibility to do everything I can to help our schools be 'Alive in Christ,'" which was the theme of this year's leadership conference for educators. He said the schools need to be "vibrant centers of faith and learning committed to excellence and to holiness." They must be "available, and affordable, for every Catholic family that desires a Catholic school education for their children," he said, and wherever possible, the archdiocese must offer "this ministry to other (non-Catholic) families who share our values and who want a Catholic school education for their children."

Barbara Watkins
Catholic News Service
August 16, 2010



Schools Must Meet New Standards to Comply with Church Teaching

SAN FRANCISCO (CNS) — Catholic elementary and secondary schools in nine states and Guam will be required to meet new and more detailed standards showing they are educating students in the Catholic faith and tradition, as well as nurturing the faith of the total school community. The standards took effect this year, and schools must adhere to them to be accredited by the Western Catholic Educational Association. It is the first time specific standards to measure Catholic identity will be part of the accreditation process. "The Catholic schools will only survive if we stick true to the mission of our faith," said Christian Brother William Carriere, the association's executive director and former schools superintendent for the Diocese of Orange. "I think this will go a long way toward getting Catholicism taught across the curriculum and not just relegated to theology classes," said Joe Tassone, theology chair at Marin Catholic High School in Kentfield. The association

accredits Catholic schools in 26 dioceses in California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Hawaii, Arizona, Utah, Nevada and Guam, encompassing about 308,000 students in 1,000 grade schools and high schools. A concern that some Catholic schools were losing sight of their Catholic identity motivated the bishops of these dioceses to formulate the standards in 2008, Brother Carriere said. The association's seven-member board of directors has approved the final version for elementary schools and began working on a final version for high schools this year. Brother Carriere said he expects the final document for high schools to take about two years to complete.

Valerie Schmalz
Catholic News Service
August 13, 2010

