

Catholic Education Foundation presents

THE CATHOLIC EDUCATOR



Volume 13 | Spring 2012

In This Edition

<i>A Word from Our Editor</i>	Reverend Peter M. J. Stravinskaskas	Page 4
-------------------------------	-------------------------------------	--------

<i>Six Filipino Boys in Trouble with Catholic School over Facebook Kiss Photos</i>	<i>The Associated Press</i>	Page 7
--	-----------------------------	--------

<i>Baltimore Catholic School to Name Community Center After Bill and Camille Cosby</i>	Erica L. Green	Page 9
--	----------------	--------

<i>Catholic Schools Week – How You and I Can Help</i>	Archbishop Charles Chaput	Page 11
---	---------------------------	---------

<i>Chicago Catholic Schools Continue to Grow</i>	Michelle Martin	Page 13
--	-----------------	---------

<i>Department of Education: Catholic Schools Beat Public Schools</i>	Terry Jeffrey	Page 15
--	---------------	---------

<i>Family Credits Strong Catholic Education for Daughters' Career Choice</i>	Christina Leslie	Page 17
--	------------------	---------

<i>“Formation of the Whole Person” (Can. 795): A Perspective on What It Means and How It Might Be Achieved</i>	Dr. Christopher Evan Longhurst	Page 18
--	--------------------------------	---------

<i>Modern Education versus Classical Education</i>	Norman Davies	Page 21
--	---------------	---------

<i>National Standards and Benchmarks Established for US Catholic Schools</i>	<i>Catholic News Service</i>	Page 22
--	------------------------------	---------



Philadelphia Archdiocesan High Schools to Stay Open; Foundation Formed *Catholic News Service* Page 23

Santa Fe Catholic High School Considering Random Drug Tests to Deter Students *The Associated Press* Page 24

The Great Catholic Science Textbook Debate Murray S.Daw Page 25

Keeping the Faith Timothy Cardinal Dolan Page 32

In Praise of Raps on the Knuckles: Requiem for the Tiger Nuns Richard & Elizabeth Gerbracht Page 33

Stop the Press! Catholic Schools Teach Catholic Ideas about Gay Marriage! Brendan O'Neill Page 36



A Word from Our Editor

As our regular readers would know, the Catholic Education Foundation has initiated a program to help Catholic grade schools and high schools evaluate their Catholic identity.

Called the *Catholic School Identity Assessment (CSIA)*, it is a diagnostic tool to help schools spot their strengths and weaknesses. The program was inspired by the Church's vision of what a Catholic school should look like:

From the first moment that a student sets foot in a Catholic school, he or she ought to have the impression of entering a new environment, one illumined by the light of faith, and having its own unique characteristics. The Council summed this up by speaking of an environment permeated with the gospel spirit of love and freedom (*Education in a Catholic School*, 25).

The *CSIA* is an innovative program sponsored by the Catholic Education Foundation (CEF) and the Catholic Education Initiative (CEI) to help a Catholic school assess its Catholic identity. A school can choose from three levels of evaluation, depending on the depth of analysis it desires.

The first level (silver) consists of participation by all employees in a self-assessment questionnaire. The school's leadership uses that data and a report from a third-party evaluator to determine which areas of the school are doing well and which ones need attention.

If a school chooses the second level (gold), in addition to the self-assessment, a team of

two to five experts in Catholic education (the size of team depends on the school's size) visits the school for an onsite evaluation. Team members visit classrooms; interview students, faculty and parents; observe interactions at the school; and write up an evaluation.

The third and most comprehensive level (platinum) of assessment includes both the self-assessment and onsite evaluation in addition to a follow-up visit to the school by a facilitator, who is selected by the Foundation. Called the *Catholic School Group Facilitation*, this day-long in-service gives the school's employees an opportunity to discuss the assessment results and consider concrete ways to implement what the school has learned through the process.

The goal of the *CSIA* is to provide the Catholic school a means for 1) self-reflection by its administration, faculty and staff on how each of them works to support the Catholic identity of the school, and 2) provide the school with feedback from an independent third-party using a standard, objective set of criteria.

Because these standards are uniform and objective, the school can measure its progress longitudinally, to chart over the course of years how well it is adhering to its primary mission. As part of each assessment, the school receives a set of conceptual and concrete recommendations that can be reassessed on a regular basis.

In essence, the *CSIA* is designed to help Catholic schools create an environment in which Catholic culture permeates every aspect of the school's life. The *CSIA* can help Catholic schools form a concrete plan



of action for creating this environment, to give glory to God and help its students love God above all things and their neighbors as themselves.

The *CSIA* differs from other assessment programs in several key ways:

- I. It provides a school with third-party analysis increasing objectivity
- II. Because the report is independent, it can be used as part of a school's marketing program
- III. The *CSIA's* narrative format allows for nuances and detail not available in a purely objective format
- IV. The *CSIA* is comprehensive, covering every aspect of a school's philosophy and life
- V. A school may use the instrument over and over again, providing the school with a longitudinal option for comparison over time
- VI. The CEF offers extensive support and follow-up with its staff of trained and experienced Catholic school educators.

The assessment was originally created for Catholic high schools, then last year some pastors and principals said they wanted something like that for their grade schools. This reinforces the trend in many Catholic schools to focus on what it means to be Catholic in an educational context and on a renewed commitment by many of these leaders to improving their schools' Catholic identity.

This assessment tool is an opportunity to discuss the subject. By just asking the questions, one already has started to address the identity issue. Atmosphere, mood, and attitudes, like charity, are among what a team will observe at a school. Teams also consider the physical environment, look for

Catholic art on display, gauge the reaction of students to the presence of clergy and religious, and see whether prayer is a normal part of school life, not simply at a once-a-month Mass.

When I lead workshops about the identity issue and talk about the assessment tool, I find no resistance to increased Catholic identity; in fact, such proposals are greeted with enthusiasm. If the Catholic identity is not there, we have no right to be in business — it's deceptive advertising.

Sean Cardinal O'Malley, Archbishop of Boston, finds the instrument to be invaluable: "One of our most crucial tasks is to promote the Catholic identity of our schools. The Catholic Education Foundation has produced a most valuable assessment tool that affords us the opportunity to have an accurate diagnostic instrument for which every Catholic educator should be grateful."

Principal Joseph Skerjanec of St. Anthony Catholic School in Sterling, Colorado, which is in the Denver Archdiocese, said that through the Foundation's assessment tool, "we were able to identify our areas of strength and our areas in which we need to grow." It helped "us in expressing our Catholic identity" and a detailed follow-up prompted the school to develop a new Catholic Lay Leadership Formation Program for all parish and school employees, Skerjanec said.

Atonement Academy in San Antonio also participated in the program. The pastor of Our Lady of the Atonement Parish, Father Christopher Phillips, said:

The *Catholic School Identity Assessment* was a useful way for our school leadership to look objectively



at our institution as a Catholic school. Because we operate daily in a Catholic atmosphere, it is sometimes easy to lose sight of whether or not the school is serving effectively as a witness to the Gospel. The assessment provided a method of measuring how we were doing, and when we released the final report to the wider school community, we found that it generated a great deal of constructive conversation about what we were doing well and where we needed to improve. A practical result of our participation came about because we were required to look seriously at how well we were assisting our students in living out their Catholic social responsibilities, and this resulted in a significantly enhanced service program for our entire school. Going through this assessment was a very positive experience, and led to some important improvements in our institution.

"Measurable standards offer the best hope for bench-marking, influencing and strengthening a vibrant recognizable

Catholic identity within our schools, which is why our Diocese is embarking on this program," said Charles Taylor, superintendent of Catholic schools in the Diocese of Gaylord, Michigan.

In 1979, during Pope John Paul II's first pastoral visit to the United States, he reminded thousands of Catholic high school students at Madison Square Garden that the purpose of a Catholic education was "to communicate Christ." Our Catholic identity assessment project is aimed at helping educators determine how well they are achieving that goal and how they can improve. For further information, go to: <http://catholiceducationfoundation.com/projects/csia>.

Become a supporter and promoter of this essential program by adopting it for your own school, by letting others know about it, and by assisting us financially so that we can get the word out and also assist schools who cannot afford the costs involved.

Devotedly yours in Christ,
Reverend Peter M. J. Stravinskis, Ph.D.,
S.T.D.
Executive Director



Six Filipino Boys in Trouble with Catholic School over Facebook Kiss Photos

MANILA, Philippines — A Philippine Catholic school is withholding the diplomas of six high school boys who uploaded Facebook photos that appear to show them kissing one another, an education official said Friday.

A day earlier, a Philippine court rejected another Catholic school's decision to bar five girls from graduation ceremonies because they had posed in bikinis for photos posted on Facebook. The cases test the limits of privacy in a conservative Catholic nation that is also among the world's most prolific users of social networking sites.

Department of Education officer Samuel Mergenio said the six boys told him they had taken prank photos to make it appear that their lips touched. One of the boys uploaded the pictures on Facebook and mistakenly made them available to others, Mergenio said.

The pictures were not taken at the boys' school, Infant Jesus Academy in the Manila suburb of Marikina, but the students were wearing school uniforms, he said.

Mergenio said the school's chancellor informed the department late Thursday that the boys will be allowed to participate in the graduation ceremonies but "the release of their diplomas will be delayed." He said the school did not say when the diplomas will be handed over and that he was awaiting a formal written report from the school.

The school chancellor was not available for comment Friday.

The mother of the boy who uploaded the photos said she works as a nurse in Saudi Arabia and went home only to attend the graduation of her son, one of twins.

She said she refused to attend the graduation ceremonies because her son would only be subjected to ridicule since he won't be called to the stage to receive his diploma. "It will be like an insult," she told The Associated Press.

On Thursday, a judge in central Cebu city issued a restraining order against St. Theresa's College High School, ordering it to allow the five students who appeared in the bikini photos to take part in Friday afternoon's graduation ceremonies.

The school, which declined to comment to the AP, asked the court to reconsider. The girls' lawyer, Cornelio Mercado, said Friday that the school was still insisting on banning the students while its motion for reconsideration is pending.

Mercado said one Facebook photo at issue showed a girl holding a cigarette and a liquor bottle, while others showed all five wearing bikinis at a beach party on the sixteenth birthday of one of the girls in late December.

The mother of the girl who hosted the party said a security guard barred the group Friday from entering the school campus.

"They were really hurt," she said.

School officials took action against the girls for what they called "engaging in immoral,



indecent, obscene or lewd acts,” according to court records. They said the students would graduate but could not participate in activities or ceremonies.

Earlier this month, the five girls were summoned by the principal and other school officials, “dressed down” and called “sluts,” Mercado said.

The judge, Wilfredo Navarro of the Regional Trial Court, castigated school officials for calling the girls “inappropriate names.” He said not allowing them to participate in graduation activities “would indeed be most un-Christian if not entirely inhuman.”

The Associated Press
March 30, 2012



Baltimore Catholic School to Name Community Center After Bill and Camille Cosby

A historic Baltimore Catholic school will name its community center in honor of Bill and Camille Cosby, the biggest donors in the school's 184-year history and fierce champions of education, the school announced Friday.

St. Frances Academy, which serves 162 primarily low-income high school students, will host the comedian, his wife and their relatives in a ceremony at the St. Frances Community Center on April 20.

In addition to giving \$2 million to St. Frances in 2005 to support its scholarship program, Camille Cosby also has a strong connection to the founders of the Baltimore school, having been educated by the Oblate Sisters of Providence, the oldest order of African-American nuns in the country, for seven years.

"I can still hear their voices when I'm writing something, when I'm giving a speech," she said in an interview, adding that the sisters were sticklers for grammar. "They just wanted us to go into the world prepared with knowledge — knowledge about ourselves and the different disciplines."

Bill Cosby, who was raised Methodist and Baptist and attended public schools, said that the St. Frances center dedication "is my wife's story."

St. Frances was founded by Mother Mary Elizabeth Lange, who established the Oblate Sisters of Providence in Baltimore more than 180 years ago. Camille Cosby attended the now-closed St. Cyprian Elementary-

Middle School in Washington, also founded by the Oblate Sisters.

St. Frances' community center opened ten years ago, serving as a bridge to the community by offering voter registration, GED classes, after-school programs, and other community services and events. According to the center's website, its mission is "uniting the school to the community, and the community to the school."

Camille Cosby said her experience being educated by the Oblate Sisters was among the most formative of her life. She said she committed the Cosby name to the community center in honor of "an extraordinary order of women."

She still has strong ties to many of the nuns and speaks with passion about the important role they played, and continue to play, in educating black children. It was at St. Cyprian, she said, that she learned there were three African popes.

"They gave us a sense of history pertaining to being black, and because they are women, they gave us pride about our gender," she said. "They didn't show any prejudices, they nurtured us, they wanted all of us to be educated."

Her husband said, "This is the education that she remembers, that fueled her and stays with her. When you hear Mrs. Cosby talk about her formal education, she faced systems and schools that devalued children because of the color of their skin."



"But when she got to this particular order, they left all of that behind, and these people became champions to her, teaching and psychologically resurrecting in her the better parts of how she felt, and could feel about herself."

Three-quarters of St. Frances' high school students qualify for free and reduced-price lunches, and the school boasts a 98 percent college-acceptance rate among its seniors. Between 2003 and 2012, 98 percent of the school's alumni earned a college degree within five years of graduating from St. Frances.

Camille and Bill Cosby, both of whom have doctorates in education, said that given the

state of public education in Baltimore and the country, St. Frances should be held up as an example for what others should strive for.

Bill Cosby said he wanted the attention to be on the school, not his name.

"I do know that in Baltimore, there is a place that is taking care of business the way it ought to be taken care of. And for that, I honor them," he said.

Erica L. Green
The Baltimore Sun
March 30, 2012



Catholic Schools Week – How You and I Can Help

Monday, January 29, begins Catholic Schools Week. It's a time to honor the unique value of Catholic education. Here in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, we have a long record of dedicated service by the women and men who teach in our classrooms and run the "business" of Catholic schools. That record includes the legacy of thousands of women and men religious and diocesan clergy. In the single academic year of 1963-64, more than 4,100 religious and 1,600 laypersons taught more than 263,000 students enrolled in our schools. Today, scores of our pastors make extraordinary commitments of parish funds to keep our schools open and excellent.

Unfortunately, schools run on resources, not simply good will and heroic service. Our schools can no longer count on unlimited Church support. The resources simply don't exist. Many of our parishes are financially strained. The archdiocese itself faces serious financial and organizational challenges that have been developing for many years and cannot be ignored.

So where does that leave us? We can honor Catholic Schools Week this year by actually doing something about the fiscal problems hurting our schools. We need to press our lawmakers, respectfully but vigorously, to pass school choice.

First, we need some clarity: School vouchers do *not* mean "government support for religious schools." That argument is flatly false. *No vouchers go to any school, religious or otherwise.* Vouchers do, however, return the power of educational choice to parents, where it belongs. In doing so, vouchers make all schools more

accountable for the quality of education they deliver. Parents get the voucher. Parents choose the school. This makes perfect sense. And if a school offers a poor education for young people, parents will rightly vote with their feet — and their vouchers. Of course, most Catholic schools do the opposite: They offer a strong education, in a safe environment, with a focus on developing good moral character. That's why parents are so upset when they close.

Some people argue that school choice legislation only helps families in poor areas. Helping the poor is obviously vital, and vouchers would accomplish that. But vouchers would also assist many more families than the poor. If vouchers are approved, they will free up what's known as EITC funds — Educational Improvement Tax Credit funds — along with other grant and scholarship monies for many thousands of other school families. In effect, the positive impact of vouchers translates to millions of dollars of additional educational resources potentially available to a wide range of school families each year — including Catholic school families.

Now here's an unhappy fact: In 2011, the bishops of Pennsylvania made the passage of vouchers one of their priority legislative issues. People like Bob O'Hara in our statewide Catholic bishops' conference and Jason Budd in our archdiocesan Office of Catholic Education worked hard to mobilize Catholic support. Their efforts failed — and not because they didn't try, but because too few people in the pews listened. Very few Catholics called or wrote their state senators and representatives. Even fewer visited their offices to lobby as citizens. *Despite* this,



vouchers passed in the state senate, before stalling in the house. One non-Catholic school choice activist — who has poured years of his time and millions of dollars of his own resources into fighting for vouchers as a social justice issue — was baffled at the inability of Catholics to mobilize around an issue so obviously vital to the public interest and so clearly helpful to the survival of their own schools.

In the coming week I'll be writing every state senator and representative in the territory of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia to press them to support school vouchers. And I'll continue doing it until vouchers pass. I hope my brother bishops and pastors across the state will do the same. More importantly: *Our Catholic people need to do the same.* Elected officials do listen, and they act when the noise gets loud enough. If nothing else, the crisis of Philadelphia's Catholic schools is an unpleasant but finally very healthy wake up call. The bill for our failure to pass school choice over the past

decade has come due. Now we're paying for it.

When vouchers stalled, yet again, in the Pennsylvania house last fall, a frustrated Catholic school teacher friend of mine said "Catholics are suckers." I don't believe that. But then, I'm new in town. If we Philadelphia Catholics love our Catholic schools, and we obviously do, then the time to get active and focused is now. We need to begin pressing our state lawmakers to pass the school choice legislation — including vouchers and expanded EITC credits — that's currently pending in Harrisburg. And we need to do it this week, today, *right now.* I plan to do that. I hope you'll join me.

Most Rev. Charles Chaput
Archbishop of Philadelphia
Catholic Philly
January 26, 2012

For more information on school choice, and to contact your legislator, please visit:
<http://tinyurl.com/PASchoolChoice>



Chicago Catholic Schools Continue to Grow

Chicago, Ill., (CNA) — Catholic schools in the city of Chicago are celebrating the news that for two years in a row, enrollment has gone up.

That's the first time that has happened since 1965.

It might be too early to say Catholic schools have turned a corner, but Catholic schools superintendent Sister Mary Paul McCaughey of the Archdiocese of Chicago is optimistic that efforts to promote the schools while keeping them on a sound financial footing will pay off.

"We think we can do it," she said. "We think we can turn it around. It would be so much fun to see that across the system. Large Catholic school systems haven't seen that since '65. But we're a good city to have this happen to."

The efforts to spread the good news about Catholic schools, combined with changing demographics in Chicago, are leading to full classrooms, she said.

"We're really growing in those places where young families are staying in the city, and they've grown to love it and they don't want to leave," Sister Paul said. "And with the focused scholarship efforts, we're holding the line in the poorer areas."

Across the entire archdiocese of Chicago, enrollment is stabilizing, with a drop of less than 1 percent this year. But with 86,502 elementary school students this year, Catholic schools have fewer than half the students they did in 1979-80, when enrollment was 189,611.

Reviewing themselves

The Office for Catholic Schools of Chicago has asked each of its schools to review where they are in terms of maintaining academic excellence and Catholic identity, financial status and their efforts to attract and keep new students. Each school also will be asked to come up with a plan to move forward in the next year, although many are already doing quite well.

"The schools that are doing it have a strong Catholic culture and excellent academics," she said. "They are engaging parents and refocusing on getting the 'good whispers' out there."

One school that has seen such efforts pay off is St. Therese Chinese Catholic School in Chinatown, which principal Phyllis Cavallone-Jurek said was on the brink of closure when she came seven and a half years ago. Then, the school opened with 180 students. Now, with ongoing efforts to strengthen an already rigorous curriculum and work spreading the word about the school across the city, it has waiting lists at all the lower grades.

There are 286 students, and Cavallone-Jurek has started to consider the possibility of adding space, although that would be difficult in its neighborhood.

The school will likely become even more popular in the next couple of years, as it proudly flies its national Blue Ribbon Award flag for all to see. It's the first Blue Ribbon in 20 years for a school supported by the Big Shoulders Fund — a local nonprofit that offers scholarships and other financial



help to schools where a significant percentage of the students are low-income.

At St. Therese, all students are expected to be two years ahead of grade level in math by the time they graduate, and all students study Mandarin Chinese and Spanish throughout elementary school. Because of the unique curriculum, Cavallone-Jurek said, she has to be careful when admitting transfer students to the upper grades.

Getting the word out

The school's enrollment grew as Cavallone-Jurek worked with staff and parents to get the word out about the school's strengths — its academics and its focus on Chinese culture. A student dance group performed whenever and wherever it could, including on morning TV news shows and at neighborhood festivals.

"Schools have to look at what their strengths are," she said. "What are the non-negotiables that make us really special and unique?"

At St. Hyacinth School in Logan Square, enrollment jumped from 119 students last June to 187 students this year. Principal Annmarie Mahay said that what helped most in terms of marketing was really everything.

"No one thing works," she said. "Everything we did brought in a few more kids."

Perhaps the biggest single change the school made was opening a second preschool classroom, so that there are now 40 preschoolers instead of 25. Parents realize that full-day preschool costs less than

daycare, and that their children get more out of it, Mahay said.

That follows the pattern for the archdiocese, where preschool enrollment is up 15 percent.

Families who have transferred older children into the school are generally coming from three area public schools, all of which are crowded, Mahay said, so they appreciate the small classes at St. Hyacinth. They also were able to get to know the school through a series of "family fun nights," when they could mingle with existing St. Hyacinth families and teachers while doing activities in the school's classrooms.

"It gives them the opportunity to take a look at us," Mahay said.

The biggest obstacle to families choosing the school is nearly always the cost of Catholic education, Mahay said, although breaking it down into 10 monthly payments helps.

Sister Paul said Catholics should continue to push for more public funding of Catholic schools, whether in the form of vouchers or tax credits, because that would make it easier for families to choose Catholic education, which would be good for the state as well, she said.

"It saves the state money in the long run," she said. "They just don't see it."

Michelle Martin
Catholic News Agency
Feb 4, 2012



Department of Education: Catholic Schools Beat Public Schools

When two schools meet in a basketball game, the winner is indisputable. One team outscores the other.

The same is true in certain types of academic competition. When students take standardized national tests, students from some schools outscore students from others.

In the most recent round of National Assessment of Educational Progress tests, which are administered by the U.S. Department of Education, the winners were indeed indisputable. Catholic schools thrashed public schools.

It wasn't close.

"In 2011," says the Department of Education in a report on the NAEP tests, "the average reading score for eighth-graders attending public schools was 19 points lower than the overall score for students attending private schools, and 20 points lower than for students attending Catholic schools specifically."

If the Catholic school in your community beat the public school in basketball by 20 points, partisans of both teams would deem it a rout. If the Catholic school beat the public school by similar margins year after year, people would wonder what was wrong with the public-school basketball program. Were the coaches incompetent? Did they not care about instilling excellence in their teams?

Well, in the Department of Education's national eighth-grade reading test, the Catholic schools not only routed the public

schools by 20 points last year, they have made a habit of such routs.

In every round of NAEP reading tests over the past 20 years, Catholic-school eighth-graders have defeated public-school eighth-graders by double-digit margins. The closest the public schools ever got to the Catholic schools was 17 points — and that was in 1992, long before today's elementary school students were even born.

The Catholic victory margins are not as great in mathematics, but the history of unbroken domination is the same.

"In 2011," says the Department of Education, "the average mathematics score for eighth-graders attending public schools was 13 points lower than the overall score for students attending private schools and 13 points lower than for students attending Catholic schools specifically."

In math, the closest the public schools ever got to beating the Catholics schools was when they lost by only 9 points — but that was 22 years ago. Since then, the Catholic schools' victory margin in math has gradually grown.

So, what is the matter with public schools? Why can't they compete with Catholic schools in basic academic disciplines like reading and math?

One thing is certain: It isn't a lack of money.

In the 1998-99 school year, according to the Department of Education, U.S. public elementary and secondary schools spent \$9,923 per pupil (in inflation-adjusted 2009-



2010 dollars). In the 2007-2008 school year, they spent \$12,236 per pupil (in 2009-2010 dollars). In just eight years, America's public schools increased average per-pupil spending by \$2,313 in inflation-adjusted dollars — a real increase of 23 percent.

But in that same period, the average public-school eighth-grade reading score virtually flat-lined — going from 261 (out of a possible 500) in 1998 to 264 in 2011.

The average public-school eighth-grade math score showed slightly more improvement for the additional \$2,313 per student. It crawled from 272 (out of 500) in 2000 to 283 last year.

If significantly increasing the money transferred from taxpayers to public school administrators and teachers cannot significantly increase the math and reading scores of the students these administrators and teachers are supposed to serve, what will?

Ideally, organized on a community-by-community basis, all parents of all students would get a voucher equal to the cost of educating a child in the local public school, and the parents would be able to choose, in a free market, exactly where they wanted their child educated.

But, unfortunately, if we did this in today's America — where the president believes he can order Catholics and Catholic institutions to act against their faith — people in government would surely use a voucher program as a political weapon to sap the spirit from religious schools and turn them into dismal facsimiles of the failed public schools that the voucher-bearing parents and their children have fled.

The truth is the primary purpose of the average American public school — like the Catholic school — is not to teach children reading and math. It is to develop character — to help assimilate students into the school's vision of our civilization.

And here, even more than in reading and math, our public schools have become the leading indicator of national decline.

In the public schools today, children are not taught to believe that the traditional family is the indispensable foundation of our society, or that every human being — including those still unborn — has an inalienable God-given right to life, or that the United States of America enjoys an exceptional place in the history of nations because our Founding Fathers instituted a government that was constitutionally limited in its functions, leaving it to a moral and self-reliant people to thrive and prosper in a free society.

The liberal elites who generally define and determine what is taught in our public schools do not believe these things and do not want the children who graduate from the government academies to believe them, either.

Today, public schools are competing with Catholic and other religious schools not just in developing the math and reading skills of their students, but for the very soul of America.

May the private religious schools win this all-important contest, too.

Terry Jeffrey
Townhall.com
February 22, 2012



Family Credits Strong Catholic Education for Daughters' Career Choice

TRENTON, N.J. (CNS) — In the parable of the sower, Jesus taught his disciples that God's word must be nurtured to yield a fruitful harvest, words that four members of the Briant family — sisters — have taken to heart. Alison Briant Burley, Ellen Briant Reilly, and Susan and Katelyn Briant are Catholic educators. Their parents, Doris and Thomas Briant, made sure they all had 12 years of Catholic education, despite the prospect of all that tuition. "My motivation was to show (our) commitment to Catholic education," Doris said. "We didn't have family vacations, we went to Cape May for the day. You can give up all those trips to Disney World. The benefits you get (from Catholic education) are better than all those trips to wherever." Doris herself is the product of 12 years of Catholic school. She and Thomas, who became a Catholic when daughter Susan was born, will be married 35 years this September. The couple praised

two people in particular for having a good influence on their daughters: the late Sister Juliana Naulty, a Dominican Sister of Hope who was principal of St. Joseph School in Toms River, and the late Father William P. Gardner, parochial vicar at their parish, St. Joseph, also in Toms River. "Sister Juliana demonstrated to all the girls that being a Catholic educator went beyond the classroom walls," Doris told *The Monitor*, newspaper of the Trenton Diocese. "She celebrated with them in their victories and supported them when they were down, (and) she knew the best way to help her students was to help their families. All four were honored to have known her."

Christina Leslie
Catholic News Service
January 23, 2012



“Formation of the Whole Person” (Can. 795)

A Perspective on What It Means and How It Might Be Achieved

In the section on “Catholic Education” (Book 3, Title 3), the Catholic Church’s Code of Canon Law calls for “the formation of the whole person” — “Education must pay regard to the formation of the whole person, so that all may attain their eternal destiny and at the same time promote the common good of society” (Can. 795). In the context of Catholic education this means much more than just teaching the student. It requires a total dedication to the student’s overall formation — spiritual, physical, emotional and social, even environmental.

In Catholic education, formation of the whole person refers to the process of transforming the inner and outer self in such a way that they become like the inner and outer being of Christ Himself, a developmental process that takes place, as St. Paul states: “[...] until Christ be formed in you” (Gal 4:19). Regarding imitating Christ’s inner being, what contributes to this is nourishment of the soul — to be a person of great virtue, innocent and mature. Regarding imitating Christ’s outer being, nourishment of the body is required — to be temperate, modest and wise, of serene bearing. This process focuses entirely on imitating the Person of Jesus Christ — the model for what it means to be whole. St. Paul underscores the fact that wholeness is a divine quality: “God is not a God of disorder but of wholeness” (1 Cor 14:33).

Formation of the whole person thus calls for helping the student know and understand the complexity of his body-soul relationship. Mastering this relationship means rightly ordering the spiritual, intellectual, moral and

physical levels. This will eventually lead to “fullness of life” — precisely what Jesus taught His Apostles. Fullness of life produces a person transformed or as St. Paul puts it — “complete in Christ.” (Cf. Col 2:10). A person “complete in Christ” is what Scripture calls a “temple of the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor 6:19). St. Paul affirms: “And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit” (2 Cor 3:18). The transformed person then contributes to a transformed world — what Scripture refers to as the “Kingdom of God” (Cf. Mt 13:45; 18:3). Although its attainment is a life-long process, its most critical period spans the developmental stages from early childhood up until young adulthood.

This awesome awareness requires the Catholic educator, first and foremost, to transform himself and then to step inside the mind of the student to see the world through his or her eyes and then assist the student to step into another reality of Christ-like submission to the divine will. St. Paul says: “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will” (Rom 12:2).

Given that we are a composite of body and soul, formation of the whole person entails nourishing both. The faculties of the soul are intellect and will. The best food for the intellect is truth while the best food for the



will, or its proper object, is goodness. In other words, as the human intellect goes out towards the truth, the will goes out towards goodness, or as truth is attracted by the intellect, goodness is attracted by the will. That which nourishes the body is, of course, healthy food, sleep, fresh air, exercise and plenty of water. Formation of the whole person therefore requires nourishing both the intellect with truth, and the will with goodness thus contributing to the formation of the soul, and nourishing the body with what contributes to the proper functioning of the physical organism.

Jesus taught, however, that in this formation process primacy is given to the spiritual, that is, it is ultimately accomplished at the spiritual level: “It is the spirit that gives life, while the flesh is of no avail” (Jn 6:63). This is because everything we do in the physical, mental, or emotional realms flows from the spiritual, through the soul, and expresses itself in the body. Or in other words, formation of the whole person takes place firstly in the intellect and will which, in turn, give new life to the body and soul. Spiritual approaches to this formation are formal study, informal and independent study, prayer, worship and the sacraments, performing the spiritual works of mercy and living according to the Beatitudes. Bodily approaches entail exercise, recreation, healthful eating, sleep and temperance, along with the corporal works of mercy and obedience to the Ten Commandments.

Returning momentarily to Canon 795, there is an intrinsic social dimension in the Church’s law regarding Catholic education. This norm implies that the formation of the whole person is geared towards the common good and salvation for all. It has, therefore, a universal effect which is rooted in the social and universal aspects of human nature

and in the collective effects of human speech and action.

In the Catholic education system, the formation of the whole person becomes precisely a process of spiritual development, that is, the growth of the person by an intentional focus on one’s spiritual and interior life which spills over into the physical body, and human speech and actions, which have effects on the entire society. The pedagogy that seeks this formation aims to integrate ordinary daily routine with the spiritual practices of prayer, worship, study, fasting, humility, etc., which leads to growth of mind, body, heart, and will. The Catholic educator may work with different ways to augment this process but the results will always be the same — “fullness of life” and participation in the “Kingdom of God.”

The Church’s law implies that formation of the whole person is relational, that is, it involves loving God completely, ourselves correctly, and others compassionately. It is also spiritual — it cultivates an awareness of our supernatural capacity. It is disciplinary — it strengthens the will through hard work and perseverance. It is holistic — it allows every component of life to unite in the Lordship of Christ. It is transformational — it grasps our true identity in Christ. It is spirit-filled and communal in that it is shared by all and leads to a life in God’s grace. In the end it is self-motivating, that is, it continually renews unto perfection in the spiritual life.

For the Catholic educator, formation of the whole person is a demanding task. It requires total commitment, a lot of patience, understanding, and, above all, “speaking the truth in love” (Eph 4:15). The public ministry of Jesus was no easy task. This



same ministry is required of the Catholic educator, and Jesus provides the skills for it:

So Christ handed out gifts of apostle, prophet, evangelist, and pastor-teacher to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become perfect, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. (Eph 4:11-13)

This is exactly what Jesus was about during the last three years of his earthly life — the transformation of human lives. The teaching that He gave His disciples is the very same teaching that Catholic educators are required to give their students. If we read a Gospel account of how Jesus formed His disciples, we will have an idea of what it means to be a whole person (Cf. Mt 5-7).

Although times are different today and there are new demands and needs, human nature is still the same and that nature needs ever the more a Christ-like formation in order that the whole person may be formed. As St. Paul says: “For those God foreknew he

also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son” (Rom 8:29).

The Catholic educator who is authentically concerned with the formation of the whole person must admit two things: firstly, that transformation is primarily the work of God, and secondly, that he is God’s minister. To challenge students to become Christ-like, to prepare them to live lives of joyful and loving service and sacrifice, to realize that the whole of life is one of deepening faith and developing the human skills needed to be fully alive, is to live up to what it means to be created “in the image and likeness of God” (Gen 1:27). The image consists in our natural resemblance to God — our power of reason and will; and the likeness is our *donum superadditum* — the gift of God’s grace sanctifying our humanity. Formation of the whole person is, therefore, in sum, the Catholic educator empowering the student to be that “image and likeness.” In this lies the key to a complete human formation. In this lies the common good of society and the reward of eternal life.

Dr. Christopher Evan Longhurst
March, 2012



Modern Education versus Classical Education

From *Vanished Kingdoms: The Rise and Fall of Nation States*

“Modern education may have something to answer for here. In the days, not too distant, when all educated Europeans were brought up on a mixture of the Christian Gospels and the ancient classics, everyone was all too familiar with the idea of mortality, for states as well as individuals. Though Christian precepts were widely disregarded, they did teach of a kingdom 'not of this world.' The classics, propagating supposedly universal values, were the product of a revered but dead civilization. The 'Glory that was Greece' and the 'Grandeur that was Rome' had evaporated thousands of years before; they suffered the fate of Carthage and Tyre, but were still alive in people's minds.

“Today the barbarians have broken into the garden. Most school children have never

met with Homer or Virgil; some receive no religious instruction of any sort; and the teaching of modern languages has almost ground to a halt. History itself has to fight for a reduced place in the curriculum alongside apparently more important subjects such as Economics, or IT, or Sociology, or Media Studies. Materialism and consumerism are rife. Young people have to learn in a cocoon filled with false optimism. Unlike their parents and grandparents, they grow up with very little sense of the pitiless passage of time.”

Norman Davies

Excerpted from *Vanished Kingdoms: The Rise and Fall of Nation States*, Penguin Group (Viking), 2011, New York, New York, pp 7-8.



National Standards and Benchmarks Established for US Catholic Schools

WASHINGTON (CNS) — A set of national standards and benchmarks for Catholic schools — defining what makes them unique and providing ways to measure their effectiveness — was released March 7. The publication, "National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools," is the result of a collaborative effort by the Center for Catholic School Effectiveness at Loyola University Chicago's School of Education, the Roche Center for Catholic Education at Boston College's Lynch School of Education and the National Catholic Educational Association. "These standards and benchmarks should be looked upon as all-encompassing school effectiveness standards that give a common framework of universal characteristics of Catholic identity and agreed-upon criteria for Catholic school excellence," said Lorraine Ozar, director of the Center for Catholic School Effectiveness and an associate professor at Loyola's School of Education. She said the landmark

document was developed and vetted by a national task force of Catholic school educators and supporters through a process that began at a 2009 Catholic educators' conference. At the conference, educators said they were looking for a way to put all of the best ideas of Catholic schools — based on Vatican statements on Catholic education, remarks by Pope Benedict XVI and statements of U.S. bishops — into one statement that would "clarify the brand" of Catholic schools and give a framework for schools seeking accreditation or advocating for public policy efforts. The document's introduction says it hopes its description of effective Catholic schools will enable students, parents, families, faculty, staff members and donors to determine how a school measures up to what it should be doing.

Catholic News Service
March 8, 2012



Philadelphia Archdiocesan High Schools to Stay Open; Foundation Formed

PHILADELPHIA (CNS) — All four Philadelphia archdiocesan Catholic high schools that were recommended for closure will remain open, Archbishop Charles J. Chaput said to a round of applause from those gathered at a news conference Feb. 24. At the Archdiocesan Pastoral Center in Philadelphia, where he was joined by leading state legislative leaders and local philanthropists, he also announced the establishment of a new independent foundation to support Catholic education in the archdiocese called Faith in the Future: The Fund for Educating Tomorrow's Leaders. The foundation has a goal of raising at least \$100 million in the next five years, he said. In January, the Blue Ribbon Commission on Catholic education had recommended that four high schools — St. Hubert and West Catholic in Philadelphia and Conwell-Egan in Fairless Hills and Msgr. Bonner-Archbishop Prendergast in Drexel Hill — close at the end of the school year in June. The schools had an opportunity to appeal the recommendation made in January. It was expected that Archbishop Chaput would announce his final decision

on the appeals Feb. 17, along with announcements on final decisions on the grade schools. But the announcement was postponed, and behind the scenes, school communities, philanthropists and state lawmakers rallied to build support to keep the high schools open, especially through fundraising. That support was one reason for the decision to keep them open, Archbishop Chaput said. "The show of support of these schools from alumni, parents and friends in the community has been extraordinary," he said. "Twenty-thousand donations have come in from everyday working laypeople. These people believe in Catholic education and want to fight to make our schools healthy again. We have a long way to go to put these four high schools and our whole school system on a strong footing. But this is the kind of deep, grass-roots commitment we need to renew our educational ministry."

Catholic News Service
February 27, 2012



Santa Fe Catholic High School Considering Random Drug Tests to Deter Students

SANTA FE, N.M. — A private Catholic high school in Santa Fe is considering random drug testing for its students as a way to deter drug use.

A proposal to implement the testing in the fall was recently emailed to parents of St. Michael's High School students by Principal Sam Govea.

Hair samples will be taken by either Govea or one of his vice principals, all of whom will be trained by the Psychomedics Corporation, based in Culver City, Calif.

"We're excited about this opportunity to help our kids," Govea told the Santa Fe New Mexican (<http://bit.ly/Am7yk3>) on Friday. "I think this is a great thing, giving our kids another reason to say no. Drugs are everywhere — I don't care what school you are at. We can't stick our head in the sand about it; we have to be proactive."

The school serves about 700 students in grades 7 through 12.

Govea said many parents have told him they are behind the decision.

One is Dawn Wink. "Anything that detracts from a sense of safety takes away from learning, so I support it," she said. "There's no place for drugs on a school campus. Students' individual rights in the classroom end when they begin infringing on other students' rights — and drugs do that." But not everyone is pleased.

St. Michael's parent Ronnie Ortiz, referring to the school's Lasallian tradition of

displaying respect, servicing the poor and accepting all faiths, said, "You treat people with love, you don't look at them as suspects. This is not what Jean-Baptiste de la Salle (founder of the Christian Brothers) intended or how he wanted us to treat each other."

She said her son told her he doesn't have a problem with the plan, however.

Another St. Michael's mother, Carol Campbell, said, "I think that St. Mike's should stick to teaching academics and let us parents do the parenting."

According to the letter sent to parents, the school will choose students at random via a student lottery using their ID numbers. Govea said Friday that if a student tests positive, he or she will be given 90 days to straighten up before taking a second test. If that test comes up positive, he said, "Then they made their decision to leave St. Mike's."

Govea said that the school expects to test 10 to 15 percent of its student body annually.

St. Michael's was founded as a boys school in 1859 at the behest of New Mexico Archbishop Jean Baptiste Lamy and opened under the direction of four French Christian Brothers. The facility became co-educational in the mid-1960s.

The Associated Press

February 12, 2012

Info from: *Santa Fe New Mexican*



The Great Catholic Science Textbook Debate

Murray S. Daw is the R.A. Bowen Professor of Physics at Clemson University. He received his Ph.D. in Theoretical Physics from CalTech in 1981, and has worked in industry, government labs, and academia. He is a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the American Physical Society, and is a member of the Institute for Advanced Physics in Baton Rouge.

In the early 1960s the well-respected Catholic philosopher and scientist Vincent Smith sounded an alarm. Throughout the country, Catholic schools at all levels had begun introducing secular science textbooks in their classrooms. Smith warned that many of these textbooks contained an implicit philosophy antithetical to the Catholic view of nature. His announcement re-inflamed a debate that had been smoldering for years, in which many Catholics had been pushing for the demise of “Catholic science textbooks.” From our vantage point fifty years later, it is easy to see how the controversy was resolved: Virtually all Catholic colleges and universities use the same science textbooks that secular schools use. Catholic science curricula are deliberately molded to match their secular counterparts. This *de facto* resolution was achieved not on the basis of sound reasoning; rather, distinctively Catholic science curricula were swept away by the cultural tidal waves that washed over the country in that era.

Catholic Science Textbooks?

In 1964 *America* magazine published Smith’s article, “Catholic Science Textbooks?” in which he contended that all science texts are based on some implicit philosophy. All science must begin somewhere, and any approach to science

must begin with some attitude, some assumptions about the nature of the world around us. Smith’s argument was based on the age-old Catholic understanding of reason, knowledge, and science. He quoted several eminent modern scientists who supported this view, including the eminent Harvard paleontologist Prof. George Simpson, who said, “All science is philosophical.”

Smith then asked whether the implicit philosophy of secular science textbooks is in fact consonant with a Catholic view of nature. This view is founded on the acceptance of certain simple facts, such as the objective reality of the world, the order and intelligibility of nature, and the ability of our minds to understand that order. Things in the world have a nature of themselves, by virtue of which they exist. Animate things have a nature that is intrinsically higher (that is, more intelligible) than inanimate things. Humans have an even more elevated nature. Central to the scientific enterprise is the concept of causality: effects have a cause. So when someone wonders, “Why...?” the answer is given in the form of a cause, “Because...” These first principles form the philosophical foundation of science. Without them, whatever is done could not be reasonably called science. Opening the first principles to examination is the beginning of making science fundamentally more rigorous.

Smith wrote, “While there is no Catholic natural science, there is need for science textbooks intended for the education of Catholics. The need for such textbooks is shown by the nature of the philosophy found in the actual live science teaching in the classroom.” He goes on to detail briefly



some of the philosophical errors found in many of the secular science textbooks.

First on his list is the mechanistic view commonly found in biology textbooks. Simply stated, mechanism is the belief that living things are machines, composed of parts lacking any substantial relationship to one another. Thus, the source of a living being's activities is not the whole itself but its parts or an external influence on the parts. Mechanism is opposed to the conception of life articulated by Aristotle and supported by St. Thomas Aquinas. Smith warned that the mechanistic philosophy "undermines our Christian view of the sacredness of the body and the dignity of work," and that it would be "naive to assume that such commitments to mechanism (in the science texts) play no role in biasing a pupil against a later assimilation of Christian wisdom," such as "the incarnation, the crucifixion, the resurrection, and the ascension of Christ." Smith added, "Why, a pupil might ask, should the human soul, after the resurrection of the human body, be reunited for all eternity with what is after all but a piece of machinery?" Smith observed, "There might not be a 'Catholic biology' (as such), but already there is evidence that the Christian commitment is at stake in typical (biology) textbooks now current."

The list continued with the understanding of the relation between the brain and thought. He showed examples of textbooks that propound the view that man is only material and that thinking and willing are but physiological processes. This materialist view of nature denies substance, or the reality of form. "It is common to read in science texts that all substances are composed of molecules or that all substances are elements, compounds, or

mixtures. Such statements...make it easier to understand why the Catholic student...is prejudiced against the idea that the human soul and God are substances."

Smith concluded that "there is a kind of religion, a commitment concerning ultimates, in the teaching of even a subject so secular as science." His examples leave no room for the view that secular science texts avoid imposing a worldview upon their science. Science, by its nature, is never neutral on the subject of reality, but is always based on a view of the world, and to that extent is grounded in philosophy. It is precisely this philosophical factor that "creates the need in Catholic education for special science textbooks." A science textbook could be considered Catholic not because it employs pietistic examples (counting rosary beads in math, for example) but because of "its ultimate and philosophical orientation to or from the Christian message concerning man and the world."

How did the readers of *America* react to Smith's points? Though he did receive some support, succeeding issues for the most part carried a long string of letters to the editor that were strongly critical of Smith's view.

Sr. Mary Jacqueline, vice president of Webster College in St. Louis, advocated "the absolute demise of the so-called Catholic textbooks in Catholic schools." She contended, "I can't see how there is a Catholic physics, Catholic chemistry, or Catholic biology."

Raymond Barleon responded, "I agree that there is no such thing as Catholic natural science, but I see no reason to become alarmed at the statements of authentic modern science, and I oppose an attempt to



inject science with a solution of Catholic philosophy of nature, especially Thomism.” He contended that a pure science, stripped of any philosophical prejudices, is in fact possible, and that any admixture of philosophy corrupts both philosophy and science.

Sr. Virginia Maureen, S.S.N.D., objected that “a science textbook with a Christian philosophical undertone would...add little to the student’s insight. Our students (should) not be exposed to ‘censored’ scientific literature. After all, we are preparing them for life.” She contended that the teacher can “impart” a proper “philosophy of science” in the classroom. By being “interested in” and “loving” students, the teacher will give them a “way of looking at the world through Christian eyes.”

Sr. Rita Jean, C.S.J., a science teacher, contended that because most modern physicists and chemists are not taught basic philosophical concepts, Catholic science curricula likewise should eschew them.

But Smith was not alone in his alarm, nor was he the first to issue warnings about modern secular trends in science. Almost all of the popes for the past century have decried the philosophical errors buried in secular science. [For a review of recent papal discussions on the point, see “Science & Catholic Culture,” in two parts, by this author, Oct. and Nov. 2009 — Ed.]

For the most part, the issue is now moot. Catholic schools in this country have deliberately embraced the secular science curriculum. Some are quite open about it. The provost at one Catholic school told me that he did not want to “punish Catholic students” by teaching science differently from the way it is taught in secular schools.

But not all teachers and administrators at Catholic colleges and universities are happy with this situation. There is a widespread but inchoate feeling that somehow something is not right with secular science being taught at Catholic schools. But many science teachers (and parents) have neither the training nor the resources to deal with the problem in a deeper way.

Some will argue that the history of science is characterized by its gradual emergence from the shadow of philosophy, and that modern science only surfaced and made real progress once it shed any last vestiges of philosophical thought. In this view, modern science is characterized by a purity and clarity that is made possible only when it focuses on measurement and mathematics. We can only be clear about something by specifying how the measurement is done, and by relating those measurements to a mathematical theory that unifies all discovery. In that regard, science should confine itself to those things that are defined in terms of measurement, and that can be expressed in mathematical relations. Any discussion about broader meaning impedes scientific progress.

Against this argument, how are we to understand Smith’s contention that all science is unavoidably based on philosophy? And why should we think that such an understanding is in any way good for science?

The view of science as an empirically and mathematically pure essence is tantamount to the notion that human beings are blank slates when they begin doing science; or, more precisely, that our cloudy, befuddled slates can be cleaned and made fresh by the modern science teacher, who can then begin



the process of writing the clear messages of the empirical method.

But that view ignores the reality of how we know the world. As drawn out by Aristotle and reiterated by Aquinas, our only knowledge of the world comes through our senses. It is on the sensory images of the world that our intellect focuses and from which it determines the significance of what is sensed. It would be foolish to suggest that what our senses report to us is to be accepted at face value; rather, our intellect is able to sort through the sensory experiences to arrive at certain knowledge of the world. In fact, this is the most certain knowledge that we have: what is immediately sensible to us. It is the basis of science to assert, from the beginning, that nature is understandable, and that our minds are capable of understanding it.

The Cartesian attempt to purify science by denying its basis in sense and intellect is doomed to failure. As Ralph McInerny observed, “It is as if in doing [modern] science we are asked to hang on to the brush because the ladder will be taken away.”

Jacques Maritain, the twentieth-century scientist and natural philosopher, saw the modern approach to science as being extremely powerful, but also as being so narrow as to lack understanding. At its core, he observed, is a basic misunderstanding of the process of abstraction. Maritain built on Aristotle and Aquinas’s understanding of abstraction as a process, natural to the intellect, of extracting from our sensory experiences certain intelligible aspects, and regarding those aspects as though they could be separated from the original thing being observed.

For example, we see a red apple and our mind naturally — even without our being conscious of it — forms the abstraction of “redness.” The idea of redness is itself a universal abstraction, which originates in our seeing the individual apple. Over time, we see other red things and begin to form relations based on those observations. We sense particular things that are red, but our ability to abstract enables us to think about redness as though it were separable from physical things. It is important to note that redness as a universal occurs only in the mind — we never see a generic redness in the world, only particular things that are red. It is a potent thing to understand redness as an abstraction, and we can work in our minds with this abstract notion in very powerful ways. It would be a mistake, however, to forget that redness is itself an abstraction. In the real world, there are only things that can be red. Real things are much more than just one aspect of their essence.

Maritain observed that modern science has in fact made that fundamental mistake, not about the abstraction of color but about the abstraction of quantity. Modern science, especially physics, is based on the abstraction of quantity. All things have extension, which is the most fundamental aspect of material things according to Aristotle, and also the possibility of being divided into parts, from which we derive the abstraction of quantity. It is this quantity that forms the most powerful abstraction, precisely because it is the most basic aspect of physical being. The abstract power of resolving being into quantity forms the basis of mathematics (based on quantity and shape) and the applicability of mathematics to physics. It would be a mistake, however, to think that the mathematical abstraction is itself not the whole but is rather a



transcription of part of what we understand about reality.

Furthermore, the modern empirico-mathematical method ascribes to the act of measurement something it does not have. A student asked me, “How do we really know what something is until we measure it?” It didn’t take long to show him his error: I challenged him to measure the “quidlucky” of the air in the room. He looked puzzled. I then told him that a very good measurement of the quidlucky yielded a value of 0.572 “targans.” Did that help him? After a few moments I could see in his face when the resolution hit him: “Measure does not precede understanding, but rather the opposite.” We cannot know how to begin to measure something unless we’ve first got some understanding of the aspect we’re to measure.

In modern physics, both in the conduct of professional scientists and in how it is taught to students, there is an emphasis on the mathematical as explanatory. In the modern approach, the only answer to “Why...?” is often an equation or a kind of abstract visualization suggested by some mathematics. This is definitely a partial answer to the question, but it is never complete to give a formally mathematical answer to a physical question.

A complete answer in any science must make a solid connection with the first principles of the science. In the case of physics, the most fundamental first principles would be: things exist. Things have properties (color, place, etc.). Things change. All change has a cause. Thus, a principled foundation to physics begins with the basic things we know about the stuff around us.

I ask my physics students a simple question: “What is momentum?”

Those who have studied physics previously will want to answer quickly: “Momentum equals mass times velocity.” This is an example of a formal, mathematical answer. This affirms a relation between various concepts (momentum, mass, velocity); it is a transcription of some understanding that is real. However, it does not explain what momentum is. I point out to the students that experience with momentum is common, everyday, continuous. So I challenge the students to try again to explain what momentum is, but using common, everyday language.

At this point the students smile — this should be easy — but upon further reflection most of them begin to squirm in their seats. “C’mon,” I say, “you’re physics students! You’ve been studying momentum since your first course in physics. You should understand it very well. Wouldn’t you agree that if you understand something really well you should be able to give a simple explanation of it?”

Yes, they agree with that, but they’re still stuck. “Well, if you found that challenging, then please explain kinetic energy. And don’t give me that kinetic energy equals one-half mass times the square of the velocity. Just tell me what kinetic energy is.”

This has them completely flummoxed.

That’s the usual response. There have been exceptions — maybe one out of fifty physics majors will be able to give some simple explanation of what momentum or kinetic energy is. It’s not the students’ fault. By and large, simple ideas are not taught. Rather,



the students want to start writing mathematical relations — that’s what they’re comfortable with because that is all they have learned. But that means that they don’t really have a simple understanding of simple things. And if they can’t explain those simple concepts, how can they hope to understand more difficult concepts? Instead, they are positively encouraged to think that there is no understanding beyond the mathematical.

I’m not surprised to find people who have rather unpleasant memories of physics class, because to them the whole subject seemed quite abstract and dry. But how can this be? We’re talking about a deeper understanding of physical things, real things, moving and bumping and hitting things — things we have all experienced. How can such things seem remote?

Science based on principles is something that can and should be taught at an early age. Concepts such as change and causality are not in themselves difficult subjects. However, it is clear that such a principled approach cannot simply be added on to a traditional course. Rather, it must be integrated into the textbook. The author and teacher both must have a clear understanding of the principled approach.

A new textbook answers that call. I now teach freshman college physics using Anthony Rizzi’s *Physics for Realists*, which begins with a discussion of the first principles of science. These elementary principles should be familiar to all students, but few have ever heard or thought about them. In Chapter One they learn the fundamentals of the nature of properties, of change, of time, of causality.

Given this background, they are ready to make a simple step in the understanding of momentum: We know that every change must have a cause. Locomotion is a change of position. Therefore, locomotion requires a cause, which is what we call momentum.

(Nota bene: In case you think that force is the cause of locomotion, think carefully. After a force has acted and ceased, a body will continue to move unless acted upon by another force. For example, a ball will continue rolling unless it’s stopped. This continued motion is the result of a cause, which is the momentum of the body. The force was the cause of the momentum, and therefore is only indirectly a cause of locomotion.)

Simple enough: Momentum is a property of the body that causes it to change position. This simple statement invariably produces a reaction. One girl in the front row slapped her hand on the desk and said, “At last! I’ve been trying for years to get someone to explain momentum to me!” Instead, what she had been taught was a kind of circular reasoning based only on force, with momentum pushed to the background. To deny the full reality of momentum, however, is then to deny causality. My front-row student was frustrated with teachers who couldn’t answer “Why...?”

In denying the existence of the first principles of science, the outcome is to kill science. As Vincent Smith said, no matter how the debate he provoked proceeded, it “cannot have, as its end result, the banning of philosophy from the teaching of science. This would be an impossibility. It would leave us not only with a dead philosophy but with no science.” Smith’s words have an ironic resonance to them because the “debate” never really occurred, at least not



one based on principles and reasoning. The “impossibility” that Smith points to is exactly what is being attempted in Catholic schools these days.

The key, according to Smith, is establishing the proper relationship of principled thinking to scientific knowledge. “Philosophy is not only an instrument of the theologian but a critic of the sciences. To press it prematurely into the service of the theologian is to invite pietism. To ignore its implicitly critical function, even in elementary school teaching, is to court secularism. Balanced, in our genuine Catholic education, between these two extremes, we may advocate the demise of the pietistic textbook while awaiting the birth of a generation of truly Catholic textbooks.”

Vincent Smith was killed in 1972 in an untimely automobile accident. If he were alive today, he would have been disappointed by the long wait, because the generation of “truly Catholic textbooks” in science has been long in coming. The reason for their absence is the lack of the principled approach necessary to such an endeavor. Just two years ago, however, the best answer to Smith’s call was published: Anthony Rizzi’s *Physics for Realists*. This new textbook serves as a model for the use of the principled approach to science. It seems that the long wait for “truly Catholic” science textbooks might be over.

Murray S. Daw
New Oxford Review
December 2011



Keeping the Faith

I was not that surprised to read it, were you?

The *Wall Street Journal* a couple of weeks ago had [a fine piece by Peter Beinart](#), very effectively making the point that, if Jews in the United States are worried about their children and grandchildren keeping the faith — and are they ever worried! — well, the best course of action is to support Jewish grade and high schools.

Mr. Beinart convincingly shows that Jewish children who attend Hebrew private schools are statistically much more likely, as adults, to practice their Jewish faith, attend synagogue, marry a Jewish spouse, and pass on the faith of Israel to their own children.

He remarks that American Judaism is at a crisis, with more and more Jews leaving their faith, and not raising their own children as faithful Jews. A strong Jewish school system, argues the author, will correct that.

Sound familiar? We Catholics have known this for years: there is no more tried-and-true way of passing on our Catholic Faith to our kids than by sacrificing to put them in a Catholic school. Data proves they persevere in the faith at higher rates, pray better, are more faithful to Sunday Mass, live Gospel values, are more generous to their parish, even have happier marriages, volunteer more, and transmit the Faith to their own children, than those not in a Catholic school.

In our nation's history, Catholic schools had two goals: to educate excellently, and to form children in the Faith. Both are essential.

I recently had the pleasure of meeting with leaders in our Catholic high schools. They observed that, in some of their areas, the public schools were, thank God, offering a good education. Lord knows, they remarked, their facilities, and the frills in the government schools, were more dazzling than the Catholic high schools.

So, they asserted, there was only *one* reason for a parent to sacrifice financially to send his/her son/daughter to the Catholic high school: *formation* in faith, values, character, discipline, and religion . . . along with a first class education.

In other words, *Catholic identity* is a priority.

If our schools are not visibly and robustly Catholic, let's save a lot of money and close them in areas where our children can get a decent academic education free of charge.

Our Jewish neighbors have come to know that; we had best rediscover it!

Timothy Cardinal Dolan
Archbishop of New York
<http://www.archny.org/>
April 23, 2012



In Praise of Raps on the Knuckles

Requiem for the Tiger Nuns

When the tiresome complaint arose again recently on a television program about the nuns of yesteryear hitting Catholic schoolchildren on the knuckles with a ruler, we undertook a nostalgic time trip back to the days when we sat in such nuns' classrooms. When we were in eighth grade, one of us was laughing uncontrollably at the antics of a fellow student and was hit for it. The knuckle-rap was entirely deserved. Neither of us has ever felt any anger toward the nuns, then or now. At the time, it didn't occur to us that the nuns were following the lead of Aristotle, who understood the value of a little discipline. Now, with some maturity, we recognize that this was an assertive teaching method that produced *results*.

We remember how the nuns prepared us for Confirmation. Day after day leading up to the event, our entire eighth-grade class was directed to an assembly area, where we stood in formation in several rows, well spaced so the nun could walk between us, stand directly in front of us, or behind us. The nun would reach into her habit and pull out the *Baltimore Catechism*. We knew she would question each of us in order, but we didn't know which question she would ask — we had to know the answer to every one!

It was the same for math and English: memorize the tables and the rules, diagram sentences, and be ready for a test. The slow learners were ordered to stay after school or to come to school an hour early the next day. The nun would line up these slackers along the side wall of the classroom and drill them one at a time. Those who didn't catch on soon realized they'd never pass to the next

grade; sometimes the nun threatened to take a poor performer back to a lower grade classroom that very moment! The kids quickly shaped up and applied themselves to learning in order to avoid the humiliation. It was an iron-fisted approach and it worked.

The Catholic high schools we attended were single-sex institutions — boys attended boys' schools; girls attended girls' schools. One of the reasons for the separation was the difficulty of disciplining boys. In one boys' school, the assistant headmaster, a priest, was heard to say, "If we didn't have the nuns, we couldn't keep discipline."

In light of the current debate over American versus Chinese teaching methods, borne in large part from Amy Chua's bestselling memoir, *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother*, it seems only appropriate to christen the tough-as-nails, ruler-wielding nuns of the twentieth century "Tiger Nuns." They were not vicious, man-eating tigers but lovable tigers — though they were demanding and effective. In our comparison of the major differences between Chinese and American teaching styles, we found that a number of the Chinese approaches are strikingly similar to the methods used by the nuns who taught us.

More significant than the nuns' rulers was what they accomplished in teaching us. Up until the mid-1960s the Tiger Nuns told the students what they *must* learn. Contrast this with the "modern" approach, where it seems the students tell the teacher (or decide for themselves) what they want, think they need, or are willing to take away from the available material. Educators believe that the



modern method, known as the “facilitator approach,” helps build self-esteem in students and develops their thinking, reasoning, and creative abilities. But reasoning to what end — a conclusion arranged to meet the preferences of the reasoner?

Comparing today’s teaching methods with how we were taught exposes the catechetical dilution that has led to confusion between generations about the basics of Catholicism. Many older Catholics, observing the faith practices of their children and grandchildren, recognize that their own beliefs are much stronger than the beliefs of later generations. Data from *American Catholics Today*, published in 2007, compares the commitment to the Church of the generation of Catholics born before 1941 with those born after 1979. Among the pre-1941 generation (who attended Catholic schools or parish catechism classes in the 1950s-1960s), 43 percent maintain a “high commitment” to the Church. Of the post-1979 generation, a dismal *zero percent* maintain a “high commitment” to the Church. Why the discrepancy?

Might the shift away from the teaching methods favored by the Tiger Nuns — not to mention the disappearance of the Tiger Nuns themselves from educational institutions — have something to do with it? It seems that the old rap on the knuckles has been replaced by a blow to the brain.

The nuns started teaching in Catholic schools soon after the founding of our nation. Their numbers grew slowly and steadily, peaking at 104,314 in 1965. But by 2002 that figure plummeted by a staggering 94 percent. The number of parochial grade-school students peaked at nearly 4,500,000 in 1965, but by 2002 had declined by 70

percent. In little over a generation, a magnificent educational edifice collapsed, and a way of religious life all but disappeared.

The total effort and results of the work of the Tiger Nuns contributed immeasurably to the steady growth of Catholicism and the development of our country. In one community after another, individual stories of incredible resourcefulness and creativity in the building of schools, curricula, and convents; the recruiting of more nuns; and, often against great odds, the raising of money to repeat the process over and over can be found in John Fialka’s book *Sisters*. It is a moving account of the ingenuity of nuns throughout America in their determination to pass along the Faith.

How do we measure the loss of the Tiger Nuns, their productivity and accomplishments? About forty years after graduating from a Catholic high school, we sent questionnaires to every classmate, now living in 22 states, asking for their opinions about discipline. Our unscientific survey was undertaken totally independent from the school, yet 60 percent of the class responded. Some questions and answers were as follows:

Q: We faced a lot of discipline in high school; at the time did you feel the discipline was oppressive, overdone, or too tough? A: Yes 5%; No 95%.

Q: If you answered no, how did you feel about the discipline at the time? A (typical answers): “Necessary extension of discipline of parents.” “It was appropriate, fair, required.” “Adequate and good for my future.” “Without discipline other values erode.” “Helped me for tough decisions in



the work arena.” “Matured me for life, taught me respect.”

Q: Looking back, do you think the discipline was good for you and for your development? A: Yes 98%; No 0%; N/A 2%.

Q: Do you believe that more discipline in high schools today would help make for better lives in the future? A: Yes 96%; No 1%; N/A 3%.

Q: In general, do you think that today's young family is as strong in basic beliefs and discipline as your parents' family when you were in high school? A: Yes 9%; No 84%; N/A 7%.

None of the respondents mentioned fear of the ruler or any excessive disciplinary measures. The class appreciated what the nuns did for them. By and large, the class bemoaned the absence of strong discipline today: “No more nuns or priests” (in the schools); “Lack of values, loss of virtues”; “Parents’ poor attitude”; “Not enough attention of parents.”

In the world today, China and other Asian nations consistently turn out the best-educated students. In 2007 the U.S. education system ranked a dismal 14th in

reading skills, 17th in science, and 25th in math among 34 countries (not including China). Yet there is still considerable debate about which system is best — theirs or ours.

Recently, we went back to our eighth-grade classrooms, located in two cities 100 miles apart. The schools are still in operation but, save for a single exception, the nuns are gone. In today's educational, spiritual, and cultural malaise, we sorely miss the Tiger Nuns. They didn't teach for money; they didn't teach for retirement benefits; they didn't teach for an easy life. They taught in poverty; they taught for the love of God; and we, their students, benefited. Imagine how different our nation would be today, imagine the strengths the Catholic Church would enjoy, if the Tiger Nuns' single-minded dedication to strict and effective education had carried forward into the present.

Requiescant in pace.

Richard & Elizabeth Gerbracht
New Oxford Review
April 2012

Richard & Elizabeth Gerbracht, who have retired after operating their own research and consulting firm, write from Hudson, Ohio.



Stop the Press! Catholic Schools Teach Catholic Ideas about Gay Marriage!

Hold the front page: Catholics believe in traditional marriage

Hold the front page! Some Catholic schools in Britain are teaching their pupils Catholic ideas! Yes, according to shocking newspaper reports, [secondary schools run by the Catholic Church are teaching children that "traditional marriage" is superior to "gay marriage."](#) In assemblies, the children have been told that marriage between a man and a woman is a "natural institution" which brings "huge value to society." Some of these Catholic schools have even invited their Catholic children to sign a Catholic-leaning petition against the creation of same-sex marriage, on the basis that it would be a "profoundly radical" change.

What is the world coming to when, in the 21st century, in daylight hours, in an educational institution, the offspring of Catholics can openly be taught Catholic values? This madness must end!

At least, that is the impression one gets from reading the handwringing reports about how terrible it is that Catholic schools are promoting traditional marriage and, by implication, denigrating same-sex marriage — that they are doing something weird and shocking, that they are "politically indoctrinating" their pupils. The National Secular Society says Catholic schools are [promoting a "purely sectarian viewpoint" and that its pupils are being "encouraged into bigotry."](#)

Keep your hair on. This open-mouthed alarm at Catholic schools for promoting the virtues of traditional marriage is a bit like

being shocked to discover that a Friends of the Earth summer camp teaches children BS about the eco-End of Days or that a Jewish school says the Torah is a good read. Catholic schools have a certain amount of leeway to teach the Catholic view on life, sex and relationships. If they didn't, then they wouldn't be "Catholic schools." — they'd just be "schools." Maybe that's what the Catholic-bashing set wants — the evacuation of every smidgen of Catholic ideology from Catholic schools, so that they end up being indistinguishable from your average state school, and so that Catholic parents are denied the fundamental liberty to send their children to a school that embodies their values.

The irony is that while secularists accuse Catholic schools of "politically indoctrinating" their pupils, the real political indoctrination taking place here is the never-ending attempt to prevent Catholic schools from imparting their values to their pupils. It is this intolerant desire to force Catholic schools to bend their knee to every mainstream political idea — whether it's on "safe sex" or "same-sex marriage" — which smacks of indoctrination, of attempting to cleanse institutions of the "wrong" way of thinking and make them repeat chattering-class catechisms.

The attempt to drain religious schools of religion is a highly illiberal, intolerant exercise. As Hannah Arendt argued more than 50 years ago: "To force parents to send their children to [a certain] school against their will means to deprive them of rights which clearly belong to them in all free societies — the private right over their



children and the social right to free association." Today, forcing Catholic parents to send their children to schools which celebrated same-sex marriage, despite the fact that many of those parents don't like the idea of same-sex marriage, would represent a stinging attack on parents' rights over their children and on their right to "freely associate" with like-minded people.

This all goes to show how stiflingly conformist the idea of same-sex marriage has become, to such an extent that

campaigners can't even let alone Catholic schools which argue against it. Maybe these schools should create [priest holes](#), where they can safely uphold the virtues of traditional marriage away from the prying eyes of liberal indoctrinators.

[Brendan O'Neill](#)

The Telegraph

April 26th, 2012

