

Catholic Education Foundation presents

THE CATHOLIC EDUCATOR



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A Word from Our Editor

Dear Friends of CEF,

With this latest edition of *The Catholic Educator* comes the wish that you find the material presented to be of use in your apostolate of Catholic education.

Permit me to use the rest of this editor's space to apprise you of an upcoming event that should be of significance to you.

As many of you know, every two years the Foundation sponsors a day-long symposium for high school teachers and an evening Mass, followed by a gala dinner to honor leaders in Catholic high schools. This year that event will take place on Friday, March 25 (the Solemnity of the Annunciation), in New York City. Furthermore, we are dedicating the day's activities to the memory of the Venerable Pope John Paul II in celebration of his impending beatification on May 1, 2011.

Let me take this opportunity to remind you of our mission.

What is the Catholic Education Foundation?

An organization committed to ensuring a bright and significant future for Catholic high schools in the United States:

- by providing scholarships to needy students;
- by strengthening Catholic identity through faculty workshops and our Catholic School Identity Assessment, which is an innovative program designed to provide a Catholic school with several options for assessing its Catholic identity;
- through our Interdependence Project, which seeks to expand and strengthen the cooperation and relationship that Catholic elementary and secondary schools have with Catholic colleges.

An organization enjoying strong support from bishops, as evidenced in our impressive episcopal advisory board:

The Most Reverend Michael F. Burbidge, Bishop of Raleigh

The Most Reverend Daniel M. Buechlein, O.S.B., Archbishop of Indianapolis

The Most Reverend Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap., Archbishop of Denver

The Most Reverend Robert J. McManus, Bishop of Worcester

The Most Reverend William Murphy, Bishop of Rockville Centre



The Most Reverend George V. Murry, S.J., Bishop of Youngstown

Sean Cardinal O'Malley, O.F.M. Cap., Archbishop of Boston

The Most Reverend Michael J. Sheridan, Bishop of Colorado Springs

The Most Reverend John C. Wester, Bishop of Salt Lake City

Donald Cardinal Wuerl, Archbishop of Washington

The Most Reverend David A. Zubik, Bishop of Pittsburgh

Visit our website: catholiceducationfoundation.com.

And then, let me answer the question:

Why does CEF want to honor Pope John Paul II?

Because he may well be dubbed “the Pope of Catholic education”! Consider these statements of his:

To the National Catholic Educational Association just months after his election, he indicated his desire to give “a new impulse to Catholic education throughout the vast area of the United States of America.” He went on to declare, “Yes, the Catholic school must remain *a privileged means of Catholic education in America.*”

To 20,000 Catholic high school students in Madison Square Garden in October 1979, he seized the opportunity “to tell [them] why the Church considers it so important and expends so much energy in order to provide. . . millions of young people with a Catholic education. . . to communicate Christ!”

And it was he who first referred to Catholic schools as “the heart of the Church.”

And what about you?

CEF wants to give you the opportunity to share in our mission and to honor the soon-to-be Blessed John Paul II.

With your tax-deductible contribution of \$125, you will receive:

- a beautiful miniature of Pope John Paul by renowned sculptor Timothy Schmalz;
- a rare collector’s edition of *U. S. News and World Report*, produced at the time of the Pope’s death;
- a one-year subscription to *The Catholic Response*.



Send your gift of \$125 or more to:

Catholic Education Foundation

500 Linden Oaks, Rochester, New York 14625

Telephone: (585) 899-1245, Fax: (585) 899-1265

Please accept this as my personal invitation for you to share in our biennial, day-long celebration of Catholic secondary schools on March 25, 2011 in New York City.

Theme: *Catholic Education – Holistic Education: A Tribute to Pope John Paul II, Promoter of Catholic Schools*

Presenters and topics are as follows:

Sr. Mary Thomas, O.P. (principal, St. Cecilia Academy, Nashville):

Faith Formation in the Current Cultural Climate

Dr. Michael Van Hecke & Dr. Andrew Seeley (Catholic Textbook Project):

Revisiting Catholic Textbooks

Dr. Gerald Cattaro (director, The Center for Catholic School Leadership and Faith-based Education, Fordham University):

Teachers and Administrators as Guarantors of Catholic Identity and Mission

Dr. William Thierfelder (president, Belmont Abbey College):

The Purpose and Place of Athletics in a Catholic High School

Mr. & Mrs. Richard Hough:

Why We Use Catholic Schools for Our Children.

Cost for the Professional Day, including lunch, is \$100, with a 50% discount for New York archdiocesan teachers. The Solemn Mass for the Annunciation will be celebrated at the Church of the Holy Innocents on 37th Street and Broadway by Sean Cardinal O'Malley of Boston, with the schola of the Church of Our Saviour at 6:00 p.m. Holy Mass will be followed by a formal banquet at Arno's Restaurant on 38th Street to honor outstanding Catholic educators, with Mr. Frank Hanna, Catholic school philanthropist, speaking on "*Why I Support Catholic Schools.*" Dinner, for table of ten, \$4000 or \$500 a plate.

For further information or to make reservations, call: 732-914-1222 or email:

fstravinkas@hotmail.com.



Join us in being a part of that sacrificial tradition of Catholic school support praised by John Paul II's successor Pope Benedict XVI during his 2008 visit to the United States:

This sacrifice continues today. It is an outstanding apostolate of hope, seeking to address the material, intellectual and spiritual needs of over three million children and students. It also provides a highly commendable opportunity for the entire Catholic community to contribute generously to the financial needs of our institutions. Their long-term sustainability must be assured. Indeed, everything possible must be done, in cooperation with the wider community, to ensure that they are accessible to people of all social and economic strata. No child should be denied his or her right to an education in faith, which in turn nurtures the soul of a nation.

I hope to see you in New York on March 25th.

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



Holy Father Recalls His First Days at School

VATICAN CITY, 24 SEP 2010 (VIS)— Yesterday evening in the Apostolic Palace at Castelgandolfo, Benedict XVI received a group of pupils, parents and teachers from the local Paul VI Pontifical School, which is run by the "Maestre Pie Filippini."

"Dear children," said the Pope in his remarks, "you go to school and you learn naturally, and I am recalling that seventy-seven years have now passed since I began school. I lived in a small village of three hundred inhabitants, ... yet we learned the essential things. Most importantly, we learned to read and write. I think it is a great thing to be able to read and write, because in this way we can know other people's ideas, read newspapers and books. We can also know what was written two thousand or more years ago; we can know the spiritual continents of the world and communicate with one another. Above all there is one extraordinary thing: God wrote a book, He spoke to us human beings, finding people to write the book containing the Word of God. Reading that book, we can read what God says to us."

The Holy Father went on: "At school you learn everything you need for life. You also learn to know God, to know Jesus and thus you learn how to live well. At school you make a lot of friends and this is a beautiful thing because in this way you form one big family, but among our best friends, the first we meet and know should be Jesus Who is a friend to everyone and truly shows us the path of life."



Papal Address to the Students of UK's Catholic Schools

What God Wants ... for Each One of You Is That You Should Become Holy

LONDON, SEPT. 17, 2010 (Zenit.org).— Here is the address Benedict XVI delivered today, the second day of his four-day state visit to the United Kingdom, during a meeting with some 4,000 students of Catholic schools at the Sports Arena of St Mary's University College in Twickenham. All the Catholic schools of England, Wales and Scotland followed the event via Internet.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,
Dear young friends,

First of all, I want to say how glad I am to be here with you today. I greet you most warmly, those who have come to Saint Mary's University from Catholic schools and colleges across the United Kingdom, and all who are watching on television and via the internet. I thank Bishop McMahon for his gracious welcome, I thank the choir and the band for the lovely music which began our celebration, and I thank Miss Bellot for her kind words on behalf of all the young people present. In view of London's forthcoming Olympic Games, it has been a pleasure to inaugurate this Sports Foundation, named in honour of Pope John Paul II, and I pray that all who come here will give glory to God through their sporting activities, as well as bringing enjoyment to themselves and to others.

It is not often that a Pope, or indeed anyone else, has the opportunity to speak to the students of all the Catholic schools of England, Wales and Scotland at the same time. And since I have the chance now, there is something I very much want to say to you. I hope that among those of you listening to me today there are some of the future saints

of the twenty-first century. What God wants most of all for each one of you is that you should become holy. He loves you much more than you could ever begin to imagine, and he wants the very best for you. And by far the best thing for you is to grow in holiness.

Perhaps some of you have never thought about this before. Perhaps some of you think being a saint is not for you. Let me explain what I mean. When we are young, we can usually think of people that we look up to, people we admire, people we want to be like. It could be someone we meet in our daily lives that we hold in great esteem. Or it could be someone famous. We live in a celebrity culture, and young people are often encouraged to model themselves on figures from the world of sport or entertainment. My question for you is this: what are the qualities you see in others that you would most like to have yourselves? What kind of person would you really like to be?

When I invite you to become saints, I am asking you not to be content with second best. I am asking you not to pursue one limited goal and ignore all the others. Having money makes it possible to be generous and to do good in the world, but on its own, it is not enough to make us happy. Being highly skilled in some activity or profession is good, but it will not satisfy us unless we aim for something greater still. It might make us famous, but it will not make us happy. Happiness is something we all want, but one of the great tragedies in this world is that so many people never find it, because they look for it in the wrong places. The key to it is very simple: true happiness



is to be found in God. We need to have the courage to place our deepest hopes in God alone, not in money, in a career, in worldly success, or in our relationships with others, but in God. Only he can satisfy the deepest needs of our hearts.

Not only does God love us with a depth and an intensity that we can scarcely begin to comprehend, but he invites us to respond to that love. You all know what it is like when you meet someone interesting and attractive, and you want to be that person's friend. You always hope they will find you interesting and attractive, and want to be your friend. God wants your friendship. And once you enter into friendship with God, everything in your life begins to change. As you come to know him better, you find you want to reflect something of his infinite goodness in your own life. You are attracted to the practice of virtue. You begin to see greed and selfishness and all the other sins for what they really are, destructive and dangerous tendencies that cause deep suffering and do great damage, and you want to avoid falling into that trap yourselves. You begin to feel compassion for people in difficulties and you are eager to do something to help them. You want to come to the aid of the poor and the hungry, you want to comfort the sorrowful, you want to be kind and generous. And once these things begin to matter to you, you are well on the way to becoming saints.

In your Catholic schools, there is always a bigger picture over and above the individual subjects you study, the different skills you learn. All the work you do is placed in the context of growing in friendship with God, and all that flows from that friendship. So you learn not just to be good students, but good citizens, good people. As you move higher up the school, you have to make

choices regarding the subjects you study, you begin to specialize with a view to what you are going to do later on in life. That is right and proper. But always remember that every subject you study is part of a bigger picture. Never allow yourselves to become narrow. The world needs good scientists, but a scientific outlook becomes dangerously narrow if it ignores the religious or ethical dimension of life, just as religion becomes narrow if it rejects the legitimate contribution of science to our understanding of the world. We need good historians and philosophers and economists, but if the account they give of human life within their particular field is too narrowly focused, they can lead us seriously astray.

A good school provides a rounded education for the whole person. And a good Catholic school, over and above this, should help all its students to become saints. I know that there are many non-Catholics studying in the Catholic schools in Great Britain, and I wish to include all of you in my words today. I pray that you too will feel encouraged to practise virtue and to grow in knowledge and friendship with God alongside your Catholic classmates. You are a reminder to them of the bigger picture that exists outside the school, and indeed, it is only right that respect and friendship for members of other religious traditions should be among the virtues learned in a Catholic school. I hope too that you will want to share with everyone you meet the values and insights you have learned through the Christian education you have received.

Dear friends, I thank you for your attention, I promise to pray for you, and I ask you to pray for me. I hope to see many of you next August, at the World Youth Day in Madrid. In the meantime, may God bless you all!

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Cardinal Foley: Catholic Schools Key for Holy Land

Urges Order of the Holy Sepulcher to Continue to Work, Pray

ROME, OCT. 29, 2010 (Zenit.org).— Catholic schools may be the greatest contribution the Church can offer the efforts to build a culture of peace in the Holy Land, according to the grand master of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulcher of Jerusalem.

Cardinal John Foley said this Tuesday during his opening remarks at the meeting of the Grand Magisterium, the governing body of the order, held this week in Rome.

The cardinal, who participated in this month's Special Assembly for the Middle East of the Synod of Bishops as a member by papal appointment, said it was a "privileged post [for him] to become more familiar not only with the Holy Land, which we are pledged to serve, but also with the Church in the entire Middle East, of which the Holy Land is such an essential part."

He noted that in his remarks at the synod, he underlined the important role of Catholic schools in the region: "During the historic pilgrimage of Pope Benedict XVI to the Holy Land last year, political leaders in the three areas we visited told me how much the Catholic schools in Jordan, Palestine and Israel contributed not only to the educational and cultural level of all three areas, but also to an atmosphere of greater mutual understanding and, we hope, eventual peace—because all the schools are open not only to Catholics but to all Christians and indeed to Muslims and Jews."

In the first draft of the propositions that were published for consideration for the synod fathers, however, no mention was made of Catholic schools. Cardinal Foley explained

how he had proposed an amendment "to correct this omission."

"Others in other small groups must have done the same thing because, when the final list of propositions arrived for our consideration, the proposition asking continuing support for Catholic schools on all levels open to all students was one of only two propositions out of almost 50 which received unanimous support," he reported.

"The work to which we as an order have dedicated ourselves over so many years has not only been welcomed but also very much appreciated," Cardinal Foley continued. "I ask not only that we continue not only what we have been doing, but that we do more on all levels: elementary, secondary and university."

"In this way, it is the Catholic Church which helps to form some of the best prepared leaders in the societies of the Middle East, young men and women of sound moral principles prepared to be well informed leaders in their societies."

The cardinal noted that the members are "fortunate to be part of our Order at a moment in history when it is truly playing so important a role," and urged all the knights to "please, keep it up."

"As sacred Scripture says, 'Do not grow weary in well doing,'" he added. "Continue to pray daily for our brother and sister Christians in the Holy Land; continue to pray that peace may finally come to that troubled land; continue to make known that essential step that needs to be taken to peace—that conversion of hearts and minds



through a formation not only in knowledge but also in mutual understanding which the Catholic schools supported by our order help to bring about."

The Redeemer

Earlier in the day, at the opening Mass of the meeting, Cardinal Foley reflected on what he calls one of the "most moving moments" in the investiture ceremony of a new knight of the Holy Sepulcher: when he is "reminded that it is fitting for him to repeat, 'We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you, because by Your Holy Cross You have redeemed the world.'"

"Jesus has indeed redeemed us and the whole world through His Cross and Resurrection, and we, through our vigil at the Holy Sepulcher, the empty tomb of Christ, remember that He truly is 'Jesus

Christ, the Son of God, our Savior'—whom we adore because, as our Savior, he has redeemed the world," the cardinal reflected.

"We, as Christians," he added, "find in Jesus the savior promised to us to free us from the sin of Adam and indeed from all our sins; we, as Christians, find in Christ, the anointed priest, prophet and king—Christ our King, Christ our High Priest, Christ the fulfillment of all that the prophets had said."

The Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulcher of Jerusalem, which dates back to the First Crusade in 1099, seeks to form in its members the spirit and ideal of the Crusades from which it originated. This includes preserving the Faith in the Middle East and defending the rights of the Catholic Church in the Holy Land.



The Story of Christian Music

Finding a resource on music to feature is not difficult; so many are now available just on-line that picking one is what is really difficult. For instance, I could have chosen to focus on CyberHymnal (now becoming NetHymnal), which has over 10,000 Christian hymns with brief stories about each hymn, biographies of lyricist and composer, and scores (here is a sample of one of my favorites, “Abide with Me”). Or I could strongly recommend The Teaching Company’s series, “How to Listen to and Understanding Great Music.”

Yet *The Story of Christian Music* by Andrew Wilson-Dickson stands out, especially as a resource for schools that recognize the importance of integrating various subject areas. Described as “An illustrated guide to all the major traditions of music in worship,” *The Story* is comprehensive in its scope and rich in its presentation. Yet it is made accessible by its author’s obvious love of his subject matter together with a teacher’s sense for what needs to be explained to those being newly introduced to the musical tradition of Christianity. Chapters, wisely limited to four or five pages, contain beautiful and intriguing illustrations, stories, and quotations from those who experienced the music. Wilson-Dickson places each kind of music or musical composer in living religious context by explaining the corresponding forms of worship and contemporary religious movements.

Although some of his comments reveal the author’s non-Catholic perspectives, *The Story of Christian Music* is still almost ideal for use in Catholic schools, especially as an important bridge between religion, history, music, and art. The music of any age or people tells so much about their tastes, their lives, who they were. This is especially true of the music of worship, which is often the highest, most sublime expression of a people’s spirit. Beginning with a description of the role of Psalms and chant in Jewish temple worship and ending with music of the Charismatic renewal, with stops in Europe, Asia, Africa and North America, *The Story* presents a great opportunity for deepening cultural understanding while developing a deep appreciation for the rich Christian musical tradition. Religion and social studies teachers could coordinate use of material from some of the chapters; sharing these presentations with the rest of the faculty would help deepen the entire community’s sense of its Catholic heritage.

You don’t have to take my word for it—Google offers an extensive preview of the book. I invite you to preview the book and imagine the possibilities.

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What Makes Music Catholic?

In Western society, music education has been valued since the beginning precisely because, as Plato wrote in the 4th century BC, it penetrates deeply into the mind and takes a most powerful hold on it, and, if education is good, brings and imparts grace and beauty, and if it is bad, the reverse (*Republic*, 401d). Music has also been at the heart of conversion. It was through the singing of St. Ambrose, that St. Augustine was converted to the Catholic Faith: The voices flowed into mine ears, and the Truth distilled into my heart, whence the affections of my devotion overflowed, and tears ran down (*Confessions*, IX: 6). Sacred music, in particular, is a powerful tool for teaching the faith. St. Bede records a certain "John, archchanter of the church of the Holy Apostle Peter, and abbot of the monastery of the blessed Martin (of Tours), who was sent to teach the Catholic Faith to the English people through music." Excellent sacred music is important to Catholic education and conversion, because it naturally supports faith and reason, the two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth (John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*). Catholics ought to take a good look at music, then, and specifically at music in our Catholic schools.

What makes music catholic, or universal? When literary convert and New-Englander Orestes Brownson wrote in defense of Catholic liberal education in the 1860s (against Horace Mann, John Dewey, and other advocates of Protestant, public education in Massachusetts), he identified the marks of a truly catholic education. One of them, he writes, is that our schools are obligated to teach *catholic*, or *universal*, truth. Citing the rule of St. Vincent of Lerins, *quod semper, et quod ubique*,

Brownson argues that Catholic schools must promote things which are always and everywhere true, good, and beautiful (*Brownson's Quarterly Review* for January, 1862). These things ultimately flow from, and lead us to, Christ our Creator and Redeemer, from Whom all good things come. Catholic music, therefore, ought to possess an enduring, universal beauty.

Justine Ward, a well-respected music educator in the early 20th century and the founder of the Ward Method, echoed these sentiments in response to Pope Pius X's reforms of music. [Catholic music] must reveal [the faith], even interpret it, and, through the outward manifestation of faith, raise the heart to an understanding of its inner meaning; it must, by means of the natural, help the weak human heart to rise to the heights of the supernatural (*Atlantic Monthly*, April, 1906).

In her time, as well as in ours, no music is better suited to this purpose than plainsong or Gregorian chant. The Second Vatican Council teaches, "The Church acknowledges Gregorian chant as specially suited to the Roman liturgy: therefore, other things being equal, it should be given pride of place in liturgical services" (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 116). As late as 2002, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops wrote, "Gregorian Chant holds pride of place because it is proper to the Roman Liturgy" (*General Instruction on the Roman Missal*, 41).

Gregorian chant draws its beauty and practical strengths from three memorable characteristics: chastity, poverty, and obedience. Gregorian music is pure, chaste melody, with no underlying harmony or



accompaniment necessary. As such, one person or ten thousand can perform it with ease. Gregorian music takes the vow of poverty: it uses a comfortably limited range of notes. It requires no expensive instruments or expensive copyrighted sheet music; it requires only the willing voice and a photocopier (all Gregorian music is in the public domain). Finally, Gregorian music is obedient to the sacred text. Through it, the little Catholic school child is learning to pray, not only in words, but also in song; not only in the Church's language, Latin, but in her musical language, chant. For the purposes of music education, this plainsong or Gregorian chant is ideal.

It may also be ideal for our parishes. As the new English translation of the Mass is introduced over the coming year, much of the vernacular music of the 1960s, 70s, and 80s will become categorically obsolete, and many parishes are already turning to Gregorian music to bring stability and beauty to their Masses. Ironically, multilingual parishes have been the vanguard in this movement, because of the practical advantages of Latin music, and chant in particular. The new Cathedral of Christ the Light, Oakland, California, is a good example. At the bishop's request, Dr. Rudy de Vos introduced chant as the ordinary for the Masses in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese, with great success and acclaim.

Furthermore, Gregorian chant is the foundation for most subsequent Western music, just as Latin is the basis of most Western languages and the human voice is the basis for most melodic instruments. Palestrina and J.S. Bach used chant melodies as the *cantus firmus* in most of their compositions. Mozart and Beethoven incorporated chant in their symphonies.

Schumann alluded to an Ave Maria in a lieder he composed as a wedding gift for his wife, Clara Wieck Schumann. The *Dies Irae* chant is a recurring motif in several works by Berlioz and Wagner. Messiaen, Reger, Fauré, Duruflé, and even Orff returned to the chant extensively in the 20th century. Many of the best-loved works of these composers have melodies stolen from the chant. Even Appalachian folk tunes trace their origins to chant modes and melodies. Understanding the chant renders all other music much more intelligible. It allows one to understand music from the inside out.

Catholic schools, therefore, ought to put a great value on high-quality music education, with a specific focus on teaching children to sing beautifully for Mass. Headmasters ought to seek out qualified teachers with specific expertise and training in healthy vocal technique and plainchant. Before mastering polyphonic anthems, hymnody, or instrumental music, every child ought to know how to sing the simple Gregorian setting of the Mass ordinaries (*Kyrie, Gloria, etc.*) and other basic music of the liturgy.

Many resources are available for learning to sing plainchant. Without question, the best guide to reading and singing chant is *Plainchant for Everyone* by Mary Berry, published by the Royal School of Church Music (RSCM). New copies are available through any online bookseller. In less than fifty pages, Dr. Berry explains the chant in simple terms which make even the most difficult music accessible. Her approach to chant is noble, simple, authentic, and free of the peculiarities which predominate in other interpretations and make the music unnecessarily difficult.



Online, numerous free resources are available from the Church Music Association of America (CMAA) at <http://www.musicasacra.com/communio>.

The sheer number of online books and .pdf files available here may be daunting, so let me recommend a few: *The Parish Book of Chant*, the *Liber Usualis* (visit the "Guide to Interpretation" beginning on page 17 in the .pdf), and the *Gregorian Missal* (containing side-by-side translations). The *Liber Usualis* is organized exactly like a hand-missal, only the proper texts for feasts and Sundays are set to music.

In the end, however, the best resource for learning plainchant is a knowledgeable person. Like many of our Church traditions, plainchant is a living tradition. If no one is experienced with plainchant in your parish, try listening to Mass on EWTN while following the music in the Gregorian Missal. If you have trouble learning a certain chant, search for that chant on youtube.com. If you are willing to travel, come to the annual summertime CMAA Sacred Music "Colloquium" in Pittsburgh, PA. For minimal cost, a week of classes is offered in all areas of Sacred Music, for musicians at all levels of experience. The CMAA also

occasionally offers sessions in local parishes.

What then, can a Catholic educator do to begin teaching this music? The answer is simple: begin singing it! Learn one bit at a time, and then teach it! Begin with a simple *Agnus Dei* and proceed to the other ordinaries (*Sanctus, Gloria, and Kyrie*). Next tackle a simple setting of the Nicene Creed, such as *Credo III*. Add a Communion verse and gradually add the Introit, Offertory, Alleluia, and then Gradual. Build challenges on successes. Take the time to sing beautifully, and teach the children to pray when they sing. Perhaps, then, when our children have restored beauty to our churches, we will echo the words of the Psalmist: "I was glad when they said unto me, 'Let us go into the house of the Lord.'"

Joel Morehouse teaches music and history at the St. John Bosco Schools (K-8) in Fairport, NY. He also serves as a music director and organist at St. Stanislaus Kostka Church in Rochester, NY.

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What Did Jesus Sing?

In the Gospel of Matthew, we are given an account of the Last Supper. Many scholars believe it was a Passover Seder where Jesus and his disciples most likely recounted, in story and song, the exodus of the Jewish people from their bondage in Egypt over a thousand years earlier. In verse 30 we are told that "when they had sung the hymn they went to the Mount of Olives." As the Old Testament Book of Psalms was the Jewish hymn book of the time, some scholars believe that perhaps Jesus and His disciples sang one of the praise psalms from Psalms 113-118. Given the theme of the Passover Seder, it is no surprise that Psalm 114 includes the words, "When Israel came out of Egypt."

As Christmas Eve approaches, monks and nuns in their monasteries will chant Midnight Mass and many of the world's one billion Christians will sing some sort of Christmas music, secular or sacred. And so, we ask: What did Jesus sing? The answer is not simple. But perhaps of even greater importance is the question of whether what Jesus sang influenced the future liturgical music of the Catholic Church, which came to be known as Gregorian chant. For 2,000 years, we didn't know the answers. But during the last century, modern musicology and ethnomusicology have given us some inkling of what Jesus sang — and what came of it.

It's important to remember that the peoples of the ancient eastern Mediterranean had many different kinds of folk music: songs for births, weddings, funerals and various celebrations throughout the life-cycle. We do not have any of the melodies from this time for Judea as there was no written notation and mechanical recording was not

invented until the late 1880s. But the music of those ancient times may have resembled, in both form and content, much of the folk music of the Jews, Samaritans, Armenians, Arabs and other inhabitants of the Holy Land during the Ottoman Empire and before — music of which we have recordings that are over 100 years old. These may represent the last gasp of a musical oral tradition that began centuries before the rise of Islam.

In Roman-occupied Judea, in addition to folk music, there was sacred music, including the chanting of the Psalms by the choirs and musicians of the Temple. It is likely that Jesus developed a practice that developed in the more than 300 synagogues that existed in Jerusalem before the Romans destroyed the Temple. This oral tradition of synagogue cantillation has survived unbroken among the Jewish people for more than 2,000 years and still flourishes today. Over the centuries, communities in Spain, Eastern Europe and as far away as Iraq, Persia, Yemen and Uzbekistan have developed their own unique styles of cantillation. One would think that after 2,000 years there would be no more "family resemblance" of a musical nature among these traditions. But there is.

At the start of the 20th century, communities from all over the Islamic and Western world began immigrating to the land of Israel, which had become a mandated protectorate of Great Britain after the First World War. A European-born Jewish musicologist by the name of Idelsohn made it his life's work to record and compare the full range of cantillation of these newly ingathered communities of Jews in their homeland. Apart from the great service of musical preservation that he carried out for the



Jewish people, and for the national archives of the future state of Israel, he also conducted the first comparative studies. He found that despite the relative historical separation and isolation of Jewish Diaspora communities, much of their traditional repertoires had similar melodic motives, especially when chanting the Psalms.

In 1938, a young Jew by the name of Eric Werner was allowed to come to New York as a refugee from Hitler's Germany. He was by then already a well-known musician and composer and one of Europe's finest musicologists. During that acme of European anti-Semitism, he asked himself a most counter-intuitive question. Was Gregorian Chant based on the cantillation of the Jewish synagogue?

He spent more than a decade trying to answer that question. In 1959 he published his landmark study on the relations between Jewish cantillation and Gregorian chant. It was called *The Sacred Bridge* and in it he argued that Gregorian chant was indeed a direct descendant of Jewish synagogue music. He never discovered a definitive medieval or early Christian text that bluntly announced that Christian cantillation was based on Jewish cantillation, but that is not how new religions develop. They adopt and adapt, and the evidence for adoption is circumstantial and comparative.

In 1974, Werner published an updated second edition of *The Sacred Bridge* with more data. Ever since, it has been at the centre of controversy. Some scholars support his thesis while others, such as the chant expert Peter Jeffery, argue that Werner stretched the evidence beyond reasonable expectations.

However, Werner and his supporters have made a number of arguments in support of his thesis. The first and most recent is that now that New Testament scholarship recognizes the Jewishness of Jesus and the strict adherence to Jewish law and ritual by the early church of James and his followers, one can assume that a strict adherence to the basics of cantillation practices among the Jews in the first century AD would have been transferred to the early Christian Church.

The second is the unique nature of the Old and New Testaments, and Christian ritual which had no counterpart in Pagan Hellenism. As Werner put it, the intonation of Jewish liturgical music is determined by "the structure of the sentence and its logical ... relations. Neither its music nor its notation ... [is] autonomous." Musicologists point out that the opening and closing tones of Jewish cantillation and Gregorian chant follow simple basic rising and falling patterns. Syllabic (one word one note) patterns are used throughout the service, but are punctuated with ornamented melismas (what jazz musicians would call improvs) at the most solemn moments in the service. Women were not allowed to participate and instruments were banned (until the rise of Western polyphony in the early Middle Ages).

The notation of Jewish cantillation and the "neumes" or signs of early Gregorian chant before the adoption of staff notation are similar to the Jewish ones as they emerged as visual "graphs" from hand gestures that give those who live within the oral musical tradition an understanding of varied musical phrases, as opposed to individual notes. This system is still in use in synagogues around the world. Finally, Werner provides the



readers charts of almost identical pieces of Gregorian chant with synagogue melodies.

Curiously, once Christianity had distanced itself from its Hebraic origins in the fourth and fifth centuries, there emerged written accounts of senior Christian authorities like St. Augustine warning of deviation from the old tradition of singing in the Church—implying an adherence to the musical traditions that came from Jerusalem. Despite the regional evolution of different kinds of church music, some early church fathers declared later musical innovations to be heresy.

Since Werner published his work, it has faced many criticisms, largely based on improvements in our understanding of the comparative history of chant in the Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Syrian, Armenian and other traditions. But that does not mean that Werner's thesis and comparisons are invalid. The earliest notated Gregorian chant comes

from 930 AD, almost 1,000 years after Jesus may have sung Hymn 114. It is really an argument about oral tradition and how new religions musically hive off from their parent creed.

But if hearing is believing, the most persuasive evidence available to the listening public can be found on the CD *The Sacred Bridge*, directed by Joel Cohen of the Boston Camerata early music ensemble. Song number three of the CD is Psalm 114. It oscillates between Latin and Hebrew, Gregorian chant and synagogue cantillation. The melodies are identical, and despite the alteration between Hebrew and Latin, you would think you were listening to the same song. In fact, you probably are, for no doubt this is a distant echo of what Jesus sang.

Geoffrey Clarfield
National Post
Dec. 20, 2010



Send High School Football to the Showers

In these pinched times of teacher layoffs, budget cuts and outright school closings, a prime way for school boards to economize is high school football teams. As the season opens, send them to the showers—permanently. No sport is more expensive, with uncounted dollars being squandered on field maintenance, helmets, pads, cleats, uniforms for players and cheerleaders, payments for refs, bus trips for away games, salaries for coaches—and not counting the health care costs for the inevitable injuries to limbs, muscles and craniums.

Depending on the size of a school system, the annual savings could range from a few thousand dollars to millions. Instead of football, direct the money where it's needed: everywhere from teacher's salaries to a school's music, drama or arts programs. Get those grunting hunks of male flesh into the glee club or teach them the manly art of playing the violin or cello. If they aren't up for that, and they probably won't be, considering how football-crazed the country has become, involve them in lifetime family sports: running, golf, tennis or swimming.

How many high school football players 20 years from now, and in full brawniness, will be suiting up their wives in pads and helmets for an hour of hard hits on the front lawn? Instead, for recreation they are likely to be on the golf course or tennis court—and probably inept because they didn't play those sports in high school when they might have.

In his Senate days, Minnesotan Gene McCarthy had it right when he said that “being in politics is like being a football coach: You have to be smart enough to

understand the game and dumb enough to think it's important.”

Right now, some of the dumbest people are in Texas where the high holy days are the upcoming fall weekends when football is worshiped and the unwritten state law—“Leave No Football Player Behind”—is religiously obeyed.

A few years back, two high school districts in Texas spent \$20 million each on stadiums. *The Dallas Morning News* reported that building 15 new high school stadiums in the Dallas area has or will cost \$179 million. At Allen High School, football players scoring touchdowns will soon be dancing in the end zones of a \$60 million, 18,000-seat stadium, cheered on by citizens who took lunacy to new levels by voting to tax themselves for the colossus.

This profligacy raises a question: What is so intellectually or culturally empty in these scatterbrain Texas towns that watching male teenagers violently hitting and mauling each other fills the void? Why are the values of school boards so off the rails that, by last count, the average salary of a football coach was \$73,000 while the average teacher got \$42,000?

One possible answer is that Texas is ground zero for academic stagnation: It ranks last in the nation in the percentage of adults with high school diplomas. At the same time that pampered high school football players are entertaining fans beneath the Friday night lights, Texas students lead the way in underachieving: The state ranks 49th in verbal SAT scores and 46th in math.



Football, a collision sport that should be called bashball, is brutish and bloody. Among high school sports, it has the highest injury rate, double that of basketball and baseball. An estimated one in 100,000 players suffers serious spinal cord injuries. Except for enriching orthopedists and keeping ambulance drivers and emergency room doctors busy, and satisfying the gladiatorial cravings of beer-drinking fans, of what value is football?

The answer is none, if the stand of a few educators means anything. Since 1990 more than 40 colleges and universities have dumped football programs. Last November it was Northeastern University in Boston, followed in December by Hofstra University in Long Island, N.Y.

Stuart Rabinowitz, Hofstra president, said it was time to “reinvest those resources [\$4.5 million a year] into new academic programs and need-based scholarships.” Other schools that have punted include Siena College in Loudonville, N.Y.; Fairfield University in Connecticut; St. John’s University in New York City; and Canisius College in Buffalo, N.Y.

The good news is that higher education is slowly seeing the light. The bad news: Secondary schools remain clueless. A favorite pre-game pep talk of high school football coaches is to send the boys from the locker room with the bellow: “Go out there and go for broke.” A fitting line for “financially broke” is now the state of most school systems.

[Colman McCarthy directs the Center for Teaching Peace in Washington D.C., and teaches courses on nonviolence at four universities and two high schools.]

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U.S. Catholic Universities Seeing Influx of Muslim Students

On a quick break between classes last week, Reef Al-Shabnan slipped into an empty room at Catholic University to start her daily prayers to Allah.

In one corner was a life-size painting of Jesus carrying the cross. In another, the portrait of a late priest and theologian looked on. And high above the room hung a small wooden crucifix.

This was not, Shabnan acknowledged, the ideal space for a Muslim to pray in. After her more than two years on campus, though, it has become routine and sacred in its own way. You can find Allah anywhere, the 19-year-old from Saudi Arabia said, even at the flagship university of the U.S. Catholic world.

In the past few years, enrollment of Muslim students such as Shabnan has spiked at Catholic campuses across the country. Last year, Catholic colleges had an even higher percentage of Muslim students than the average four-year institution in the United States, according to the Higher Education Research Institute. The influx has astonished and sometimes befuddled administrators. Some Catholic campuses are creating prayer rooms for new Muslim students and hiring Islamic chaplains to minister to them. Others are unsure how to adapt.

One of the sharpest increases in Muslim students has been at Catholic University in Northeast Washington. In the past five years, as the number of self-identified Catholics on the campus has decreased, the number of Muslims has more than doubled, from 41 in 2006 to 91 this fall.

The largest group of international students by far now comes from Saudi Arabia.

Muslim students say they enroll at Catholic schools for many of the same reasons as their classmates: attractive campuses, appealing professors and academic programs that fit their interests. But there is also a spiritual attraction to the values that overlap the two faiths.

"Because it is an overtly religious place, it's not strange or weird to care about your religion here, to pray and make God a priority," said Shabnan, a political science major who often covers her head with a pale beige scarf. "They have the same values we do."

A place to pray

Echoing Islam's conservative culture, the school separates men and women in its dorms and imposes visiting hours. The university prohibits sex before marriage. Daily prayer and periodic fasting are common concepts.

At the same time, Muslim students find themselves immersed in what can seem at times alien iconography. Almost every classroom is adorned with a crucifix. Statues of the Virgin Mary and Holy Child dot the campus. Professors often open their classes with an appeal to Jesus. Courses in theology are an undergraduate requirement.

That's how Shabnan found herself buying her first Bible, for a required Old Testament class. It's also the reason, she said with a smile, that she registered for an introductory course on Islam.



"I was looking for an easy course," she said. "I learned a lot that was new to me . . . and just seeing how someone completely outside our religion views it was fascinating."

But there are also drawbacks to being Muslim on an overwhelmingly Catholic campus.

Most of the students eat everything but the pork in the student union. For the more orthodox, eating can be a tricky proposition that involves driving as far as Potomac to find halal meat, which is slaughtered according to strict guidelines.

Although other Catholic schools have established prayer rooms and student associations for their growing Muslim populations, Catholic University has neither. For their five daily prayers, Muslims often scramble to find empty classrooms where they can kneel, face Mecca and bow before God.

Some students even meditate in the school's chapels and at the structure that looms over the entire campus—the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.

An adjustment

During his more than four years as a graduate student at Catholic, Ali Basiri has become one of the regulars at the small chapel in Caldwell Hall, the oldest building on campus. Basiri, 27, has spent so much time in the chapel's pews that he has befriended the organist who practices there.

It took him a while to adjust to life outside Iran. During his first semester, he lived in the dorms and tried not to be shocked when

women held out their hands to shake his and sometimes hugged him.

In Iran, Basiri said, all schools run by the Islamic government are religious. The Iranian university where he studied for his bachelor's degree was named after a Muslim cleric, and his engineering department had detailed rules for praying and a dedicated room separated for men and women by blankets.

But at Catholic, he has forged new ways to connect spiritually. Several times a week, the electrical engineering student makes his way past the marble statue of the Virgin Mary at the Caldwell chapel entrance and listens in the pews to Islamic prayers on his MP3 player.

"I feel there is something powerful here because people are thinking about God all the time and not just about their own life or studies," Basiri said.

He has struck up friendships with equally fervent Catholic believers.

"We do this thing where he teaches me his prayers in Arabic, and I share with him the prayers I say as a Catholic," said one of his friends, Kenny White, 20, a sophomore from Annapolis. "I've learned about God by learning about him and his own faith. It's been a really important and beautiful part of being here."

'Proud of who we are'

It was that kind of exchange that prompted Basiri's attempts to start a Muslim student association. He wanted to help Muslim students connect and gather for prayer in addition to helping spur conversations across religions.



He found a faculty adviser and filled out the required paperwork but heard nothing back for a while.

Then, an administrator pulled him aside and said it wouldn't work to have a Muslim group at such a major Catholic institution.

When asked about the experience, Basiri is hesitant to say anything negative about a school that he says has embraced him so fully and given him a chance to grow in faith and academics.

"I understand the difficulty," he said. "In Iran, if you tried to start a Catholic group at a Muslim university, that would be just as strange and hard to make it work."

Many other Catholic schools with rising numbers of Muslim students have set up prayer rooms and formed Muslim student associations.

Georgetown University, whose Muslim student numbers have also been climbing, has a prayer room, student association and an entire center devoted to Muslim-Christian understanding, and the school hired a full-time Muslim chaplain in 1999. Catholic administrators at colleges that have added similar features say they haven't perceived the efforts as a challenge to their religious identity.

"We're not going to take down the cross or change our name. We're proud of who we are," said Marco Masini, associate vice president of student life at Benedictine University in Illinois. "Hospitality is a part

of the Benedictine philosophy, so it's important we welcome individuals of all faiths."

When Catholic University has declined to officially recognize other student groups, such as a gay advocacy organization, it has been because their beliefs run contrary to church teaching. University President John Garvey said that although other religious services aren't offered at Catholic, its campus ministry collects information from nearby religious centers and offers those connections to students.

"I think there's a lot of benefits to having students of other faiths here," he said. "They bring the grace of many of their own religious traditions."

Muslim students there say they have benefited as well. In his years at Catholic, Basiri said, he has experienced a long list of firsts: meeting a nun and priest, celebrating Mass, witnessing Easter and Thanksgiving.

Basiri said his Islamic faith has grown and matured in the past four years while studying in buildings named after Catholic leaders, in classrooms adorned with crucifixes, and with classmates often named after saints.

"The face of my prophet and my God has changed," he said. "It is even more beautiful now."

William Wan
Washington Post Staff Writer
December 20, 2010



The Catholic Schools We Need

When St. Paul describes the gifts God has given the Church, he includes teaching among the most important (1 Cor 12:28). No surprise there. “Go teach!” was the final mandate of Jesus. History has long taught that without teachers to announce the Gospel and educate the young, the Church struggles to survive. Evangelization through good teaching is essential to Catholic life. Pastoral leaders in developing nations say that Catholic education is what attracts people to Jesus and His Church. When it comes to education, nobody has a better track record than the Church.

In the 20th century, for example, there was no greater witness to the effectiveness of Catholic schools than the Nazi and Communist efforts to destroy them. Pope Benedict XVI’s own beloved homeland—where to be Bavarian was to be Catholic—was perhaps hardest hit in all of Germany. By January 1939 nearly 10,000 German Catholic schools had been closed or taken over by the Nazi Party. Tyrants know and fear the true strength of a Catholic education: what parents begin in the home, Catholic schools extend to society-at-large.

But what of today’s Catholic schools that exist in a world largely free of those sorts of 20th-century threats? Are we not facing our own crisis of closure for the Catholic school in America?

The answer is yes. Statistics from the National Catholic Educational Association tell a sobering tale about Catholic schools in the United States. From a student enrollment in the mid-1960s of more than 5.2 million in nearly 13,000 elementary and secondary Catholic schools across America, there are

now only half as many, with just 7,000 schools and 2.1 million students enrolled.

The reasons for the decline are familiar: the steady drop in vocations to the religious teaching orders who were the greatest single work force in the Church’s modern period; the drastic shift in demographics of the late-20th century that saw a dramatic drop-off in Catholic immigration from Europe; the rising cost of living since the late 1970s that forced nearly every American parent to become a wage-earner and put Catholic education beyond their budget; and the crumbling of an intact neighborhood-based Catholic culture that depended upon the parochial school as its foundation.

The most crippling reason, however, may rest in an enormous shift in the thinking of many American Catholics, namely, that the responsibility for Catholic schools belongs only to the parents of the students who attend them, not to the entire Church. Nowadays, Catholics often see a Catholic education as a consumer product, reserved to those who can afford it. The result is predictable: Catholics as a whole in the United States have for some time disowned their school system, excusing themselves as individuals, parishes or dioceses from any further involvement with a Catholic school simply because their own children are not enrolled there, or their parish does not have its own school.

Widespread Benefits

The truth is that the entire parish, the whole diocese and the universal Church benefit from Catholic schools in ways that keep communities strong. So all Catholics have a duty to support them. Reawakening a sense



of common ownership of Catholic schools may be the biggest challenge the Church faces in any revitalization effort ahead. Thus, we Catholics need to ask ourselves a risky question: Who needs Catholic schools, anyway?

The answer: We all do. Much of the research on Catholic education conducted over the last five decades—from the Rev. Andrew Greeley to the University of Notre Dame; from the National Opinion Research Center to the work of independent, often non-Catholic scholars—has answered with a unanimous voice that without a doubt Catholic schools are an unquestioned success in every way: spiritually, academically and communally. More to the point, the graduates they produce emerge as lifelong practitioners of their faith. These Catholic graduates have been, are and will be our leaders in Church and society.

Consider:

- The academic strength of Catholic schools is unassailable. Researchers like Helen Marks, in her essay “Perspectives on Catholic Schools” in Mark Berends’s *Handbook of Research on School Choice* (2009), have found that when learning in a Catholic school is done in an environment replete with moral values and the practice of faith, its test scores and achievements outstrip public school counterparts.
- Updating the work of John Coleman in the early 1980s, Professor Berends also estimates that two factors—the influence of Catholic values and the fostering of Catholic faith and morals—are the single biggest supports for the success of many young people, Catholic or not, educated in inner-city Catholic schools.

- Sociologists like Father Greeley, in his book *Catholic Schools in a Declining Church* (1976), and Mary Gautier, in her more recent article “Does Catholic Education Make a Difference?” (*National Catholic Reporter*, 9/30/05), have found that graduates of Catholic schools are notably different from Catholic children not in parochial schools in four important areas: 1) fidelity to Sunday Mass and a keener sense of prayer; 2) maintaining pro-life attitudes, especially on the pivotal topic of abortion; 3) the personal consideration of a religious vocation and 4) continued support for the local Church and community, both financially and through service projects, for the balance of their adult lives.

- Catholic school graduates make good citizens, deeply committed to social justice, the care of the poor and the planet, proud volunteers in the Church and in community. The widespread institution of service program requirements in Catholic schools over the last two decades has helped to create an entire generation of generous, socially minded alumni ready to help, no matter the need.

More could be written, of course, about how Catholic schools continue to excel in so many ways, helping to form citizens who are unabashedly believers in the way they live out what is most noble in our American identity. The few points listed above are potent reminders of the many long-term effects that Catholic schools have on the formation of their students. As both history has shown and researchers have documented, there are plenty of reasons for all American Catholics to take proud ownership of Catholic schools.



Reviving Catholic Schools

Not only should the reasons behind changes in attitude toward Catholic schools give us pause, but also the consequences of letting this school system decline. If Catholic education promotes lifelong commitment to faith and virtue, a high sense of social justice, greater numbers of religious vocations and an embrace of a way of life based on responsible stewardship, then will not its continued decline risk further erosion in all of these areas? Catholic history can answer this clearly.

In New York, for example, a nagging concern from the 19th century is re-emerging at the start of the 21st. My predecessor, Archbishop John Hughes—famously known as Dagger John for his fearsome wit and readiness to fight for Catholic rights—struggled to rid the New York public schools in the 1840s of their anti-Catholic bias. He was convinced, after watching immigrant families fight discrimination, that “the days had come, and the place, in which the school is more necessary *than the church*” (from James Burns’s *A History of Catholic Education in the United States*, emphasis added). Quite a statement—one echoed by several of his brother bishops, including a saint, John Neuman, bishop of Philadelphia, and the scholar and reformer John Lancaster Spalding of Peoria, who said that “without parish schools, there is no hope that the Church will be able to maintain itself in America” (see David Sweeney’s *The Life of John Lancaster Spalding*). These men understood that until Catholic schools were up and running, Catholic life would be stagnant. They made the establishment of Catholic schools their priority, and, thank God, most other American bishops followed their example. In 1956, for instance, my own

parish in Ballwin, Mo., built its school even before its Church, and I am sure glad they did, because that year I entered first grade to begin the most formative eight years of my life.

Given the aggressive secularization of American culture, could it be that Catholics are looking at the same consequences that met those 19th-century prelates? Today’s anti-Catholicism hardly derives from that narrow 19th-century Protestantism, intent on preserving its own cultural and political hold. Those battles are long settled. Instead, the Catholic Church is now confronted by a new secularization asserting that a person of faith can hardly be expected to be a tolerant and enlightened American. Religion, in this view, is only a personal hobby, with no implications for public life. Under this new scheme, to take one’s faith seriously and bring it to the public square somehow implies being un-American. To combat this notion, an equally energetic evangelization—with Catholic schools at its center—is all the more necessary.

The 21st-century version of the Hughes predicament, which tried to establish Catholic rights in the face of a then anti-Catholic America, would seem to suggest that without Catholic schools the Church in the United States is growing less Catholic, less engaged with culture and less capable of transforming American life with the Gospel message. As long as we Catholics refuse to acknowledge that the overall health of the Church in the United States is vitally linked not only to the survival but the revival of the Catholic school, we are likely to miss the enormous opportunity this present moment extends.

It is time to recover our nerve and promote our schools for the 21st century. The current



hospice mentality—watching our schools slowly die—must give way to a renewed confidence. American Catholic schools need to be unabashedly proud of their proven gritty ability to transmit faith and values to all their students, particularly welcoming the immigrant and the disadvantaged, whose hope for success lies in an education that makes them responsible citizens. This is especially true for the Catholic Hispanics in the country, whose children account for a mere 4 percent of the Catholic school population. Failure to include the expanding Hispanic population in Catholic education would be a huge generational mistake.

To re-grow the Catholic school system, today's efforts need to be rooted in the long-term financial security that comes from institutional commitment through endowments, foundations and stable funding sources and also from every parish supporting a Catholic school, even if it is not "their own." Catholic education is a communal, ecclesial duty, not just for parents of schoolchildren or for parishes blessed to have their own school. Surely American Catholics have sufficient wealth and imagination to accomplish this.

It is both heartening and challenging to remember that Catholic churches and schools were originally built on the small

donations of immigrants who sacrificed nickels, dimes and dollars to make their children Catholics who are both well educated and fully American. Have we Catholics lost our nerve, the dare and dream that drove our ancestors in the Faith, who built a Catholic school system that is the envy of the world?

We cannot succumb to the petty turf wars that pit Catholic schools against religious education programs and other parish ministries. Pope Benedict XVI reminds us that the Church is all about both/and, not either/or. Strong Catholic schools strengthen all other programs of evangelization, service, catechesis and sanctification. The entire Church suffers when Catholic schools disappear.

As the Most Rev. Roger J. Foys, Bishop of Covington, has said: "While there may be alternatives to Catholic education, there are no substitutes."

America

September 13, 2010

Most Rev. Timothy M. Dolan, *Archbishop of New York*, has just released "*Pathways to Excellence*," a new course of long-term planning for Catholic schools in the *Archdiocese of New York*.



Weakening of Catholic Identity Contributes to School Enrollment Decline, Cautions Professor

Denver, Colo., Jan 18, 2011 (CNA/EWTN News).

In the wake of the Archdiocese of New York recently closing 27 of its schools, conversation on the sharp decline of Catholic school enrollment has once again been ignited. One education expert says a weakening of Catholic identity is a primary factor in the school closures.

Dr. John J. Convey, who holds the title of the St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Professor of Education at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., also explained that a lack of school-aged children and waning pastoral leadership have also significantly contributed to school closures.

The Archdiocese of New York announced Jan. 11 that after careful consideration, it will close 27 of its Catholic schools due to steadily declining enrollment.

The move will save the Archdiocese \$10 million a year.

The New York Archdiocese, which is home to 2.5 million parishioners, will continue to spend \$13 million annually to sustain its remaining 189 Catholic schools.

The Archdiocese released a statement on its website, saying that the closures of 26 elementary schools and one high school will affect 3,700 students. Thirteen of the schools to be shut down are in New York City and others are in counties north of the area.

With its recent closures, the Archdiocese has added to an ominous and growing trend of declining student enrollment in Catholic schools across the U.S.

Enrollment in Catholic elementary schools has dropped 15 percent nationwide since 2001-02 school year, reported the National Catholic Educational Association. In 2006 and 2007 in the U.S., 212 Catholic schools were closed or consolidated.

In a Jan. 17 e-mail, Dr. Convey, who co-authored the 2009 book “Weathering the Storm: Moving Catholic Schools Forward,” weighed in, saying that numerous factors have contributed to enrollment decline.

He noted that dwindling demographics, what he called an “insufficient number of school-age children,” is a large underlying problem.

The National Center for Health Statistics reported last August that the steadily falling birth rate in the U.S. fell 2.7 percent in 2009, an all-time low in the last 100 years.

Dr. Convey also said that “weak leadership” on the part of the principal or the pastor, including the “unwillingness of the pastor to support the school or to promote it to the parish” is another factor.

“This problem is exacerbated if diocesan leadership is not strong or is unwilling to act to rectify the leadership problem,” he added.

Perhaps most disconcerting, Dr. Convey cited a “weak Catholic identity” on the part of Catholic schools either based in actual fact or simply perceived as such by parents.

He said that many families today believe that a Catholic school is not strong enough in the “value-added” component that would make it different from a public or charter school.



The education expert added that families without sufficient income to afford tuition can be a problem which is “exacerbated if adequate tuition assistance is not available.”

“In some cases, money is an issue; families can’t afford the tuition and insufficient tuition assistance is available to help them. In other cases, parents are unwilling to pay for a Catholic school if they perceive that the public schools, charter schools or other private schools in their area are adequate.”

Dr. Convey also noted that accusations of sex abuse by clergy have “had an impact on diocesan budgets from huge legal settlements.”

Lastly, he said parents often “don’t sufficiently value Catholic education” and would rather “have their children educated in the public school even though they could afford to send them to a Catholic school.”

Dr. Convey explained that in order to combat plummeting school enrollment, the “Church and each individual Catholic school needs to be more vocal about the importance of the schools and their effectiveness in both the academic and religious formation of the students.”

He added that public relations and marketing along with effective leadership at both the local and diocesan levels are “essential for renewing interest in Catholic schools.”

“Locally,” he emphasized, “leadership rests in the principal, the pastor, the school board, and the faculty. The attitude and support of the pastor is especially important in that he signals to the entire community about whether the school is an important mission of that parish and the Church.”

In an article for *America* magazine on Sept. 13 last year, Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan of New York noted many of Dr. Convey’s same concerns on the decline in Catholic school enrollment.

He underscored the documented benefits of a Catholic education for students, such as better test scores, deeper spiritual lives and greater community involvement. He then called it the “ecclesial duty” of all American Catholics to increase the number of students in Catholic schools today.

Archbishop Dolan said that to “re-grow” the Catholic school system, “today’s efforts need to be rooted in the long-term financial security that comes from institutional commitment through endowments, foundations and stable funding sources and also from every parish supporting a Catholic school, even if it is not ‘their own.’”

“Strong Catholic schools strengthen all other programs of evangelization, service, catechesis and sanctification,” he wrote. “The entire Church suffers when Catholic schools disappear.”



New Catholic School Receives \$100K Grant

Associated Press, December 25, 2010

A prominent Boston community foundation has given a \$100,000 grant to a new Catholic academy that's become the city's largest elementary school.

The Campaign for Catholic Schools has announced it received the grant from The Boston Foundation.

The grant aims to increase the reading, writing and math skills of students at Pope John Paul II Catholic Academy by giving teachers the needed training and tools to improve instruction.

The academy includes more than 1,300 students on four campuses in the Dorchester and Mattapan sections of Boston. That makes it the largest public or private elementary school in Boston.

Made up mainly of low-income students, the school is the Boston Archdiocese's flagship for efforts to reform Catholic education in areas such as school governance, professional development, technology and academics.



Non-Catholic Giving to Catholic Schools on the Increase

NEW YORK —When Catholic schools in Boston, New York and Minneapolis open again in September, they'll have financial contributions at their disposal, many from a surprising source — non-Catholics. Who are the philanthropists, and why do they give?

Take retired hedge-fund advisor Robert Wilson, who made his millions as a growth-stock investor at his firm, Wilson Associates, and describes himself as an atheist. He took \$15,000 in 1949 and turned it into \$225 million by the time he retired in 1986 at the age of 60.

Then Wilson began giving it away.

Wilson says that he wants to donate 70% of his wealth before he dies. So far, he has given more than \$550 million to charitable causes, including more than \$28 million to the Archdiocese of New York to help Catholic schools.

Wilson began giving to archdiocesan schools in 1997 with a gift of \$10,000. In 2007, Wilson gave a \$22.5 million gift to support scholarships.

Like many who give to Catholic schools, Wilson does so because of Catholic schools' educational achievement record.

"Most of what the Catholic schools teach are the three Rs," Wilson told Bloomberg News. "And they do it better than the union-controlled inner-city schools."

Faced with Catholic schools having to close across the country, Wilson's most recent gift — \$5.6 million this summer — will fund the Catholic Alumni Partnership, a program he founded that helps elementary schools locate alumni and recruit them as potential donors.

According to the Archdiocese, 95% of New York Catholic school alumni have not been supporting the schools they attended

"Every private school ... relies on alumni support," said Wilson.

Already, there has been fruit from the alumni effort. The program has raised more than \$1 million from about 11,000 graduates.

"With a Catholic education, I can take the poorest kid in the most negative family situation and send him to college," said Cardinal Edward Egan, New York's former archbishop. "What Robert Wilson is giving us is hope for what can happen."

Matching Grant

Andrew Redleaf, who grew up Jewish, also made his fortune as a financial investor. Redleaf is the founder and CEO of Minneapolis-based Whitebox Advisors, an investment firm that manages approximately \$3 billion in assets.

When two members of Chesterton Academy's board, who knew Redleaf, began telling him about the independent college preparatory school in St. Louis Park, Minn., Redleaf took an interest.

"After just two years we've been able to prove we were turning out a good product," said Dale Ahlquist, president of the American Chesterton Society and founder of Chesterton Academy in St. Louis Park, Minn., which began in 2008 with just 10 students and now counts 38. "He was impressed that we had accomplished so much with so few resources."



Redleaf gave three reasons for his decision to support the high school. He was concerned with the “national decline in educational achievement among young men.” He was impressed with the school’s ability to offer a “rigorous classical education at a price middle-class families can afford.” And he liked the school’s focus on Western civilization.

“What the folks at Chesterton call ‘the Catholic tradition’ are really foundational values of our civilization,” said Redleaf. “I hope many more non-Catholics ... will join me in supporting that effort.”

Redleaf issued a challenge grant, promising \$75,000 if the school could raise a similar amount between May 17 and June 15.

Students, parents, faculty and others quickly jumped on board, soliciting donations from friends and family members — online and elsewhere. Students at the high school performed a talent show, raising approximately \$3,000 toward the cause.

In the end, Chesterton Academy surpassed its goal, raising a total of \$94,861 from nearly 300 gifts from donors in 37 states and two foreign countries.

“Redleaf gave us half of what we needed for our operating budget,” said Ahlquist. “We’re set for this school year.”

Students of Other Faiths

Boston real-estate company executive Richard Henken also grew up Jewish, but he gives between \$25,000 and \$30,000 annually to Catholic schools. He’s primarily interested in giving because the schools help educate the poor.

Henken’s donations go to help the needy, especially those who reside in a 500-unit Cambridge, Mass., housing complex that his company helped improve. Henken’s donation is given on the condition that residents of the housing complex get first priority for the scholarships.

Others who are non-Catholic give because they themselves have children who have benefited from the education that the institutions offer. The Archdiocese of Boston estimates that about 20% of its 45,000 school children are not Catholic.

According to the *Boston Globe*, Henken is one of several prominent Jewish contributors in the Boston area who routinely donate to Catholic schools. The *Globe* also identified New England Patriots owner Robert Kraft; real-estate executive Robert Beal; Howard Kessler, who pioneered the concept of affinity credit-card marketing, and his wife, Michele; and businessman Jim Coppersmith as major donors.

Coppersmith told the *Globe* that he was impressed with the education that his son received at St. John’s Preparatory School. Coppersmith started Boston’s Inner-City Scholarship Fund’s annual fundraising dinner, which has continued since the late 1980s.

“[The Catholic school is] attractive because it touches a couple of different things Jews tend to care about,” Barry Shrage, president of Combined Jewish Philanthropies told the *Globe*. “No. 1, it touches the poorest of the poor.... And it does it through education.”

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