

*Catholic Education Foundation presents*

# **THE CATHOLIC EDUCATOR**



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## A Word from Our Editor

The Catholic school apostolate has been the focus of my entire adult life, beginning when I was but a seventeen-year-old seminarian, including more than twenty years of teaching and administration in high schools, and now with a responsibility for assisting schools to enhance their Catholic identity having been propelled into this mission at the height of the sexual revolution, I was always concerned about the dating habits of my students, since I was convinced (as I still am) that, in the Catholic scheme of things, the only purpose in dating is to find a spouse. For that reason, I never supported dances that required dates, even (and maybe especially) proms. Why? Because I believe that such events put young people at risk (theologically, we call them “a near occasion of sin”).

Hundreds of memories came flooding back recently when it was announced that a Jesuit high school in upstate New York had decided to allow two boys to attend the prom as a couple. That fact triggered yet another memory from 2005 when two high schools on Long Island (one all boys, the other coed, but both administered by the Marianists) had cancelled their proms because of the out-of-control nature into which those dances had devolved in terms of sex, alcohol and drugs, let alone the extravagance displayed (often enough with parental knowledge and complicity).

In some measure, it was almost inevitable that a Catholic school would be put in the position of having to deal with such a same-sex request/demand. What do I mean? For decades, Catholic educators (and here I include priests, teachers and parents) have been gun-shy or intimidated about addressing the psychosexual issues of our

youth. Immodesty in dress, public displays of affection, crude language and jokes, inappropriate and unchaperoned encounters, access to contraceptives—these sources of temptation have been topics studiously avoided by most adults, for fear that they will be perceived as “out of it” or “nagging.” Worse still, how many “educators” actually see nothing wrong with my laundry list and thus give wholehearted approval to such behaviors? And then, when unfortunate results ensue, everyone seems befuddled, asking how such things could happen. I am not thinking simply of unplanned, out-of-wedlock pregnancies; I am also thinking of the incredibly high rate of teenage depression and suicide, not unrelated to putting youngsters into a position for which they might be physically capable but certainly not psychologically prepared—let alone dealing with the underlying moral issues at stake.

Because these matters have not been handled sufficiently or at all within the context of boy-girl relations, they are now emerging within the context of same-sex relations, fraught with the political baggage and social pressure of the moment, as well as the general sexualization of any affection. Of course, if we had been diligent and responsible in handling these concerns within the heterosexual frame of reference, we would not find ourselves engaged in a rear-guard action now within the homosexual frame of reference. Indeed, the Church would simply be perceived as “an equal opportunity” employer, upholding the same standards for all her children.

Particularly disturbing about the scenario with the two boys is that the official statement of the school’s administration



never states clearly just what the Catholic position is on same-sex relations. Further, has anyone even asked why teenagers should be discussing their sexual proclivities at all (regardless of orientation)?

A few years back, doing a high school evaluation, I came across a school where the prom ended with a midnight Mass! What a lovely way to conclude an evening of good, clean fun and how much more difficult for students to leave Mass and engage in immoral behavior.

When I began my teaching career, a very wise old Sister told me that the fundamental job of a Catholic school teacher was two-fold: first, to foster virtue, so as to make saints; and second, to make the good thing

the popular thing. Winking at, or even encouraging, immoral behavior fails on both scores.

The Obama Administration's attacks on our religious liberty have had the salutary side-effect of causing clergy to address the immorality of contraception for the first time in decades. Similarly, calls for "sexual equality" can provide us with a golden opportunity to pick up the ball we dropped forty years ago.

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



## N.J. Catholic School's Civility Code: Only Girls Pledge Not to Curse

Female students at the Queen of Peace High School in North Arlington, N.J., stood up during homeroom Friday, raised their right hands, and recited a pledge in unison.

"I do solemnly promise not to use profanities of any kind within the walls and properties of Queen of Peace High School. In other words, I swear not to swear. So help me God," they said.

Meanwhile, boys at the school were free to use whatever language they wanted.

The co-ed Catholic high school started a civility campaign in concurrence with National Catholic Schools Week to try "to go back to some old fashion values," resource room teacher Lori Flynn said.

Flynn told ABCNews.com that for the month of February, girls at the school were asked to try not to curse. While their language wasn't a serious problem, she said there were plenty of instances of "subtle swearing."

Female students were given pins with a red slash through a pair of lips to wear. While Flynn thought the no-cursing crusade would come off as a joke to many students, she was surprised by their positive reactions.

"They said, 'This is serious. We're going to do this Mrs. Flynn, we love it!'" she said. "They put their buttons on and took the pledge seriously."

In addition, Flynn said the school put up polite zones posted near the school's chapel

and by the main office where many parents came in.

But some boys at the school felt snubbed, she said, when they weren't asked to take part.

"It was supposed to be a really sweet, innocent, special treat for the ladies specifically for the month of February kind of thing," Flynn said. "And I guess it made the boys feel a little slighted."

But the school soon distributed buttons for the boys to take part as well.

"A lot of the boys said, 'I have to excuse myself, there's a lady present,'" Flynn said.

Even though the no-cursing ban was only instated on Friday, Flynn said she's already received a phone call from the all-boys Seton Hall Preparatory School in West Orange, N.J., about instating their own civility code for the month of Lent.

Flynn said the school was just trying something new with the no-cursing ban, which is technically over for female students on March 1. But if students wanted to continue the clean language crusade, "we'd bring it on the boys, and then we'd do a whole entire Queen of Peace campus with no swearing."

"We're just starting here," Flynn said.

Alexis Shaw  
Feb. 2, 2013  
Abcnews.go.com



## A Catholic Schools Week 2013 ~ Diocese of Gaylord

I recently read an article in the New York Times titled, “*Catholic Education, in Need of Salvation.*” The authors of the Op-Ed piece opened with the sentence, “Parochial education is in crisis” and went on to note the trends of rising costs, declining enrollments and inevitable school closures.

Reading the article *could* leave one feeling both helpless and hopeless. The track record of recent decades might seem to foretell a bleak predestined outcome; the impending inevitable collapse of Catholic education as the harbinger of a declining and increasingly inconsequential Catholic presence in America.

There can be no denying that the past 10 years has been difficult for all schools, both public and faith-based. In that time the State of Michigan has seen a nearly 9% decline in student population; and in the geographic region where our Catholic schools reside, the student decline in public schools averages above 12% (three counties are above 20%). The heartache of the recent economic downturn is well known to the 21 counties that make up our diocese.

Nevertheless, as I reflect on the recent trends exhibited in our Catholic schools in the Diocese of Gaylord, I am filled with nothing but optimism and yes, hope. The 17 Catholic schools scattered throughout our diocese are more than bucking the disappointing trends of the past. We have reason to believe they are setting the foundation for nothing less than a renaissance of our Catholic communities in the not-so-distant future!

Consider the following statistics. Since 2001, 130 faith-based schools have closed in

the State of Michigan. Alternatively in this same time period, the Diocese of Gaylord has *not closed a single school*. That’s right...none of the schools in our diocese have closed. This fact is a testament not only to the will of our communities, but also to the long-standing commitment of individual parishes with schools to invest 40% of their ordinary Sunday income in support of that school. If I were to report a trend in our diocese, it would be for *increasing* the availability of Catholic education not reducing it.

For the past two years a grassroots effort has been under way in the northwest corner of our diocese to *re-open* the Catholic high school that was closed over 40 years ago. I am pleased to report that the effort has recently garnered enough support to warrant a full-scale feasibility study. If you are interested to find out more about this effort, visit their website at [www.regionalcatholichighschool.com](http://www.regionalcatholichighschool.com). This committee’s effort has sparked interest in other areas of the diocese as well; so much so, that in my travels it is becoming quite common to field the question, “When can *we* open a Catholic high school?”

Moreover, while public schools across northern Lower Michigan continue to experience substantial drops in enrollment, recent registration trends for the Diocese of Gaylord show only slight variances. Since 2002, the average loss of total students across the diocese had been a disappointing 83 kids per year. However, the 2011-12 school year actually saw a 90 student *increase* in total enrollment across all diocesan schools. Although we experienced a slight drop this year (23 students), enrollment trends have stabilized over the



past four years. In fact, the 2012-13 total diocesan enrollment is now at 2,617 students; which is *exactly* the same number that were registered for the 2009-10 school year.

This means that by God's good grace we are 249 students stronger today than a trend that had held true for nearly 10 years would have projected. Bucking both state and national statistics, 76% of our schools grew last year and 41% grew this year. Some schools have demonstrated sustained growth over the past four years. Remarkably, one of our schools has even posted a 50% jump in enrollment in the past two years, returning the school to registration levels that were enjoyed nearly ten years ago. What makes this example all the more extraordinary is that over the past ten years, the public school in the same area lost over 18% of its student population.

While it is true tuition remains the greatest obstacle for most households, it is the policy of all our schools to not turn away any families who are active parishioners and who remain willing to enter into a partnership with the parish/school. Our diocesan formula for school funding is 40% parish investment and 40% collected tuition, with the remaining 20% coming from fundraising. As I stated earlier, it is laudable to note our parishes' sustained commitment to invest a substantial amount of their ordinary Sunday income in support of our Catholic schools. Additionally, foundations, endowments, and private benefactors provide over \$500,000 a year in support of our schools; while CSA provides an additional \$250,000.

One last note of historical interest pertains to longevity and a legacy of perseverance. Many of the Catholic schools in our diocese have a proud tradition and honored place

among the emerging secular communities that comprised northern Michigan in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Of the 17 schools that remain today, 11 of them are over 100 years old! Of those, six have histories that actually extend well beyond the century mark, the oldest dating back 131 years with ties to the great missionary Venerable Bishop Frederic Baraga. These schools were founded in an era in which the teachings of the Plenary Councils of Baltimore were fresh in the minds of our bishops and pastors; namely that 1) "*Catholic Schools should be erected in every parish,*" 2) of the "*absolute necessity and obligation of pastors to establish schools,*" and 3) *that it was desirable that these schools be free.*"

It is truly remarkable that so many of our schools were established by young missionary parishes with very little capital or resources at a time when Protestant America was hostile toward Catholicism. I continue to be inspired by the humble beginnings of those first communities. The attitude of those years was not so much to ask "How can we afford to have a Catholic school?" as it was "How can we afford not to?"

Across the last three centuries, the Catholic Church in northern Michigan has had in its schools a powerful voice and an effective tool for proclaiming the Gospel and testifying to the truth. In our time, how can *we* not faithfully labor with as much perseverance and conviction as those who came before us on behalf of those who are yet to come?

As we kick off Catholic Schools Week 2013, I would like to say thank you for all of the many things that each of you do to help realize the mission of our schools. Thank you to all of our schools' benefactors for





your support and investment in our society and in the future Church. Thank you for the loving example that so many of you witness at home and in our parish/school communities every day. It is truly a privilege and an honor to serve this diocese.

May God grant us the wisdom and grace equal to the task before us.

Charles H. Taylor  
Superintendent of Catholic Schools  
Diocese of Gaylord

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## Bishop Joseph McFadden Describes Catholic Schools as Centers for New Evangelization

In a [statement](#) commemorating Catholic Schools Week, Jan. 27 - Feb. 2, Harrisburg, Pa. Bishop Joseph McFadden, Chair of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Education Committee acknowledged the vital work of Catholic schools and described them as centers for New Evangelization.

“Catholic schools are centers for the New Evangelization for families of a variety of socio-economic backgrounds and diverse cultures,” said Bishop McFadden. “The unique atmosphere of our Catholic schools is a space and place where the New Evangelization can reach out to parents and children in a way that is respectful of the human person, presents the teachings of the Church, and supports family life.”

“Catholic schools have a rich history in supporting the work of on-going evangelization of the Catholic community in the United States,” he said. “For more than two centuries Catholic bishops, pastors and parents have educated children in parish and private schools with the intention of offering

the life giving Word of the Gospel in an environment that shows respect for the human person, the virtues of good citizenship and academic excellence.”

Catholic schools in the U.S. educate over 2 million students every day. There are 151,395 teachers in over 6,841 K-12 schools.

Bishop McFadden said that “based on public school per pupil cost, Catholic schools save the nation more than \$20 billion dollars a year.”

“99% of Catholic high school students graduate each year, 84% of those students go on to graduate from a four-year college, and 15% of students are from non-Catholic families,” added Bishop McFadden.

[Tim Drake](#)

January 30, 2013

<http://blog.cardinalnewmansociety.org>



## Study: Catholic Education Influences Choice to Become Nun, Brother

Catholic education in high school and especially in college stands out as a significant factor in men and women choosing to enter a religious order, according to an annual survey of Sisters and Brothers who recently professed perpetual vows, according to a new study commissioned by the [U.S. bishops' Secretariat of Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations](#).

The survey "*New Sisters and Brothers Professing Perpetual Vows in Religious Life*," conducted by the Georgetown University-based Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA), confirms the importance of Catholic education.

About four in ten religious (43 percent) attended a Catholic elementary school, about the same as that for all U.S. Catholic adults (42 percent). These respondents, however, are more likely than other U.S. Catholics to have attended a Catholic high school (36 percent of the religious, compared to 22

percent of U.S. adult Catholics overall) and much more likely to have attended a Catholic college (33 percent of the religious, compared to just 7 percent of U.S. adult Catholics overall).

The religious are highly educated. Twenty-two percent earned a graduate degree before entering their order (including 37 percent of brothers and 19 percent of sisters/nuns). Six in ten (60 percent) entered their order with at least a bachelor's degree or more (58 percent for women and 70 percent for men).

Researchers reportedly surveyed religious who professed perpetual vows in 2012, reaching a total of 108 sisters and 24 brothers, a response rate of 85 percent of the 156 potential members of the Profession Class of 2012 identified to CARA by their religious superior.

[Matthew Archbold](#),

January 23, 2013

<http://blog.cardinalnewmansociety.org>



## How Theology Forms the Good Educator

I was once working as a substitute teacher at an international school in Rome, Italy, while pursuing doctoral studies in theology at a local university. I already held degrees in Systematic, Moral and Dogmatic Theology. When a part-time position opened up in the department of Religious Studies I was offered the post. While continuing to work on my doctorate I ended up teaching the entire range of the school's religion courses including World Religions, Social Justice, Morality, and Philosophy of Religion.

In hindsight my philosophical and theological education not only prepared me academically to teach these courses, it also helped me inspire my students to see them as serious subjects. I was therefore able to deal with one of the major challenges facing theology professors today. My students came to see that the knowledge and thinking skills acquired in these courses were directly applicable to their daily lives, especially in the fields of Social Justice and Morality. In fact, my students often continued their classroom discussions on ethical issues outside the classroom and even at home.

The qualities I gained from a theological education also allowed me to serve the institute by teaching, when needed, in other fields such as Western Civilization, Art History and even Science. While other professors were engaged only in their own disciplines, I was not. I competently taught a series of theology courses along with other subjects seemingly unrelated in diverse branches of knowledge. This was because my area of specialization—theology—and the educational process required to attain the academic level I achieved incorporated the basic principles of knowledge and the sub-

branches of the most speculative and practical sciences.

To enter a theology faculty in Rome it was required to firstly hold a philosophy degree. During my philosophical formation I studied Logic, Epistemology, Cosmology, Metaphysics, Natural Theology, and a host of other courses, even science and mathematics. While studying theology I undertook courses in Theological Methodology, Fundamental Morality, Specialized Morals, Christology, Mariology, Eschatology, Pneumatology, Ecclesiology, Patrology, Canon Law, Spiritual Theology, Pastoral Theology, Sacramental Theology, Trinitarian Theology, Anthropology, Ecumenism, Inter-Religious Dialogue, Church History, even Archaeology and Methods and Techniques of Learning. The list goes on.

My philosophical formation, as a prerequisite to studying theology, provided me with a firm, rational basis to study the sacred sciences. My area of theological specialization provided not only a perennial value of knowledge, but also a holistic vision, grounded systematically and historically in God, humanity and the world, and also an ability to dialogue with contemporary culture.

One afternoon while at work I was stopped in the corridor by a colleague who engaged me in a rather inquisitive conversation regarding the fact that I was teaching in three different departments—Religious Studies, Science, and the Arts. She mentioned that the courses I taught seemed so entirely unrelated—so she thought—that it appeared as if I were enchanted with



divine omniscience. She also mentioned that a parent had questioned why her daughter had me as her instructor for Biology, World Religions, and Western Civilization. After sharing some general information regarding my background and education she grasped an insight into the fact that it was not so much my own academic prowess that afforded me the skill to teach so liberally, but the fact that I had a theological education. She then recalled how her own niece had studied theology and was perfectly adept to engage in a whole host of scholarly conversations in various fields of knowledge. It was the all-encompassing nature of theology—surely one of the reasons why this discipline obtained the title “Queen of the Sciences”—that gave me the aptitude to teach in what only seemed to be unrelated disciplines, for theology unifies the theoretical and practical aspects of all knowledge.

During the course of my theological studies, especially while also working as a docent (*operatore didattico*) at the Vatican Museums, I was often asked as a layperson what I intended to do with a terminal degree in theology. It struck me that the inquirer was operating from the assumption that theology was a rather useless discipline for a layperson, or that it involved no practical dimensions. Immanuel Kant would have been pleased. “Doing”—I often replied—“was secondary to being”; or to *be* someone, I argued, was greater than to *do* something.

Sometimes lacking the time to engage in an in-depth philosophical discussion on the relationship between *being* and *doing*, I simply stated that I was “doing” what I wanted. When time and the occasion warranted I sought to elaborate on the fact that theology was not necessarily end-oriented, or geared towards some practical

or finite goal, but that it was a fundamentally human enterprise, one that exerted a marked influence on the broader civilizing process, and a discipline that even formed character and established personal identity.

Clearly theology is a more fundamental discipline than any practical science because its goal is more intimate to humanity. While the latter directs towards perfecting human actions and lives, theology perfects human nature. It is not the practical sciences that unify, or establish truth, or make the person good. Neither is it these that make the world a better place to live in. Nevertheless, although theology is essentially a speculative discipline, it is also highly practical and surprisingly useful in effect.

Moreover, since theology is an organized branch of knowledge with deductive rigor, and given that the university is the institutional *locus* for the diffusion of knowledge, then the study of theology should be indispensable to all serious university curricula. In fact, as John Henry Cardinal Newman acclaims, theology is the guarantee of liberality both in the educational system and for the educator. It is a discipline considered not only as one among many, but as the architectonic discipline.

Today, even though I am a theologian by training, I am also Professor of Philosophy at a prestigious, independent, public, coeducational university—Al Akhawayn in Ifrane, Morocco—a predominantly Muslim country teaching international undergraduate students from all over the world, and young Imams from among the finest *madāris* in the country. This is, without question—concerning both subject matter and pedagogical proficiency—the result of nothing



more than a comprehensive theological education.

Finally, I was frequently at lunch with a professor of Woman's Studies at Al Akhawayn university. During our conversations she often professed her dislike for theology and admitted to not taking this branch of knowledge seriously. Oddly enough however, nearly all of her conversations, free of my input, revolved around theological issues—the existence of God—the nature of marital union—the impact of feminism on those outside the feminist movement—non-oppressive social conservatism, etc., etc. Perhaps a too limited understanding of what theology is, coupled with a subconscious denial of her own intellectual insecurities, resulted in an attack on the discipline that haunted her the most.

In sum, theology forms the good educator. It communicates knowledge across a plethora of disciplines and supports those branches of knowledge nearest to us—psychology, anthropology, sociology and cosmology. Moreover, it touches on the final things—death, immortality, human suffering, and the afterlife, striving to provide answers, critical and comprehensive answers, to the profoundest questions in life. In short, it makes the student more sensitive to the outworking of all creation and surely this is the ultimate goal of all genuine education.

Dr. Christopher Evan Longhurst



## Students Get to Learn about Process, Select 'New Pope' in Mock Conclave

ALEXANDRIA, Va. (CNS)—Students from St. Louis Catholic School in Alexandria erupted in cheers as Ghanaian Cardinal Peter Turkson was elected the "new pope" during a mock conclave held at a gym-turned-"Sistine Chapel" March 4. The "conclave" explained the pope selection process in a tangible way. Middle schoolers acted as cardinals, Swiss Guards, priests, sisters, nurses, reporters and security personnel to re-enact a conclave for the whole school. "It was a lot of fun for them just to dress the part but they really got into it. Some even picked this or that cardinal they knew (of)," said Father Matthew H. Zuberbueler, pastor of St. Louis, which is in the Arlington Diocese. "During the selection, they were very solemn. Every word mattered." The 34 "cardinals" of St. Louis School included well-known members of the College of

Cardinals, along with representatives of all the continents. The "cardinals" spent two weeks learning about their specific role in the church and following media speculation about who was likely to replace Pope Benedict XVI. "It's a really good experience for us to learn what really happens in Rome," said John Ferguson, a seventh-grader who played Canadian Cardinal Marc Ouellet. The rest of the school learned about the cardinals' native continents to prepare for the conclave. On March 1, the "cardinals" visited the elementary school classrooms to introduce themselves.

*Catholic News Service*  
March 6, 2013



## Diocese Affirms Need for Catholic Fidelity after Teacher Fired

Columbus, Ohio, Apr 26, 2013/ 05:20 p.m. ([CNA/EWTN News](#)).—Following controversy over the firing of a Catholic school gym teacher who was in a homosexual relationship, the Diocese of Columbus, Ohio has said that educators must respect Catholic teaching and morals.

The Diocese of Columbus said that personnel matters are confidential under diocesan policy and cannot be discussed specifically.

Speaking “in general terms,” the diocese said in a statement, all Catholic school personnel agree at the beginning of their employment to “abide by the rules, regulations, and policies of the Catholic Diocese, including respecting the moral values advanced by the teachings of Christ.”

“The Catholic Church respects the fundamental dignity of all persons but also must insist that those in its employ respect the tenets of the Church,” the diocese continued. “Personnel who choose to publicly espouse relationships or principles that are contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church cannot, ultimately, remain in the employ of the Church.”

The diocese’s statement comes after media controversy surrounding the firing of Carla Hale, a former physical education teacher who had taught for 19 years at Bishop Watterson High School in Columbus.

The teacher was fired after a parent noticed her same-sex relationship listed in her mother’s obituary and reported it to the diocese.

Hale told the CBS TV affiliate WBNS she was “shocked” that she has been fired over her relationship.

“I don’t think I’m immoral, I don’t think I’ve done anything that’s unethical,” she said.

Her attorney has said they will file a civil rights complaint with the City of Columbus’ community relations committee.

In 2008, the city passed an ordinance barring discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. However, according to the NBC TV affiliate WCMH, the school’s principal explained to Hale that her termination was not due to the fact that she was a lesbian, but because she had a relationship with another woman, an action that violates Church teaching.

Morals clauses have been invoked to end the employment of heterosexual teachers at Catholic schools as well. In 2009, Xavier High School in Appleton, Wis., declined to renew the contract of a male physical education teacher and baseball coach, reportedly after it learned he spent the night at a girlfriend’s house.

The Columbus city ordinance lacks an exemption for religious organizations, but present jurisprudence might protect the diocese from legal action.

It is not clear how the diocese would be affected if it is not exempt from the law. Violators of the ordinance can be criminally prosecuted for a first-degree misdemeanor and can face up to six months in jail and a \$1,000 fine, the National Catholic Register reports.





## School-choice Movement Gains Slow but Steady Momentum

WASHINGTON (CNS)—School-choice initiatives—akin to the quiet students in the back of a classroom—have kept a relatively low profile in recent years while steadily working their way to the front. The movement was given a big boost in late March when the Indiana Supreme Court upheld one of the country's most comprehensive school-choice programs. The state court backed a 2002 U.S. Supreme Court ruling that said that because school vouchers primarily benefit families, they could not be viewed as an unconstitutional state support for religion.

Currently, there are 30 school-choice programs in 17 states and the District of Columbia, serving more than 250,000 students. School-choice programs—primarily vouchers and tax-credit scholarships—have continued to grow since 1990, when the first school-voucher program started in Milwaukee, followed close behind by similar programs in Ohio and Florida.

In the past two years, five new states have added school-choice legislation, while other states have expanded programs already in place.

But for all the steps forward, there are still school-choice programs that do not get approved, including a recent voucher proposal in Kansas. Congress also has not been keen on voucher legislation. Recently, the Senate voted down more than \$14 billion in federal money for school vouchers for low-income families in an amendment to a spending bill.

John Schoenig, director of the University of Notre Dame's Program for Educational Access, acknowledges that the "pace may be slow" with school-choice initiatives, but he also thinks the movement is seeing a positive turn.

"We've never had so much wind at our back," he told Catholic News Service May 2, noting that public opinion on the issue is changing. He said states that have accepted some type of school choice in recent years are "across the political spectrum," such as Utah and Rhode Island.

Schoenig heads a program that was formed in 2010 to conduct research, training and outreach efforts to help low-income families obtain financial access to a faith-based education.

He said that as more states use vouchers or tax credits, it improves the likelihood of other states adopting them, noting that "the more we can demonstrate success, the easier it is to debunk the myths out there and to say it is in our best interest to put educational choice on the table."

Schoenig said school choice provides unique opportunities for Catholic schools that the church should be "taking more advantage of." For example, he said, there are "400,000 empty seats in Catholic schools nationwide and approximately 36 percent (of them) are in states that have a school-choice program."

Recent Catholic school closings, he added, may provide an impetus for creative thinking about ways to ensure these schools remain vital, such as lobbying for and tapping into school-choice legislation.



"We shouldn't be afraid of what will happen if we work to transform Catholics schools, but we should be afraid of what will happen if we don't do anything," he stressed.

Dominican Sister John Mary Fleming, executive director of the U.S. bishops' Secretariat of Catholic Education, said the bishops have "supported and referenced parental choice for years," particularly as a social justice issue.

She said they emphasize "parental choice" instead of school choice in discussing the issue to highlight their support for parents' right to choose the best education for their children.

Sister John Mary said the issue was a top priority of Harrisburg Bishop Joseph P. McFadden, chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee on Catholic Education, who died May 2 while attending a meeting of Pennsylvania's Catholic bishops.

The bishop supported scholarship tax credit programs in Pennsylvania, where companies or individuals receive credit for donating to nonprofit groups that provide students with scholarships.

She said his work on the issue inspired him to urge other bishops to similarly support

legislation to enable low-income families to attend religious schools.

In January, 40 bishops met in Washington to discuss school-choice options and how Catholic leaders can be more involved. Sister John Mary noted that when bishops have been active in promoting some type of school-choice legislation, it often passes. But she also stressed that the bishops approach this with "their eyes open" being sure to avoid school and government entanglement and federal and state officials "reaching into Catholic education."

Bishop McFadden's promotion of school choice was praised by the American Federation for Children and the Alliance for School Choice, which described the bishop as a "tireless advocate." The Pennsylvania Catholic Conference said he was effective in public policy because of his "willingness to engage with legislators and his ease around all people."

Sister John Mary called the work his mission.

"We're going to miss him," she said. "His work on this was wonderful."

Carol Zimmermann  
May 3, 2013



## Median Age of New Priests 32; Two-Thirds Caucasian, Third Born Outside The U.S.

*Most completed college before entering seminary More than 40 percent attended Catholic college. Over a quarter carry educational debt.*

WASHINGTON—The median age of men ordained to the priesthood in 2013 is 32, two-thirds are Caucasian, and 26 percent carry educational debt.

These figures stand out in *The Class of 2013: Survey of Ordinands to the Priesthood*, the annual national survey of men being ordained priests for U.S. dioceses and religious communities. The study was conducted by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA), a Georgetown University-based research center. The entire report can be found at [usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/vocations/ordination-class/](http://usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/vocations/ordination-class/).

The report is the 17th annual survey of ordinands commissioned by the Secretariat for Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). About 74 percent of an estimated 500 men to be ordained priests in the United States in 2013 responded to the survey.

On average, most of the ordination class were baptized as infants, but nine percent became Catholic later in life. Eight in ten report that both parents are Catholic, and more than a third have a relative who is a priest or religious.

On average, respondents report that they were nearly 17 years old when they first considered a vocation to the priesthood. Two in three (67 percent) say they were

encouraged to consider a vocation to the priesthood by a parish priest. Others who encouraged them include friends (46 percent), parishioners (38 percent) and mothers (34 percent).

Two-thirds of the respondents (67 percent) report their primary race or ethnicity as Caucasian/European American/white. Compared to the U.S. adult Catholic population, men to be ordained are more apt to be of Asian or Pacific Islander background (10 percent), but less likely to be Hispanic/Latino (15 percent). Compared to diocesan ordinands, new priests for religious orders are less likely to report race or ethnicity as Caucasian/European American /white.

Three in 10 respondents (31 percent) were born outside the United States, with the largest numbers coming from Mexico, Vietnam, Colombia, Poland, the Philippines and Nigeria. On average, respondents who were born in another country have lived in the United States for 14 years. Between 20 and 30 percent of respondents for the diocesan priesthood for each of the last ten years were born outside the United States.

In other findings: "More than half of the Class of 2013 (52 percent) report having more than two siblings, while one in five (20 percent) report having five or more siblings. Ordinands are most likely to be the oldest in their family (40 percent).

"Before entering the seminary, six in ten ordinands completed college (63 percent). Almost one quarter (23 percent) entered the seminary with a graduate degree. One in



three (29 percent) entered the seminary while in college.

"Ordinands of the Class of 2013 have been active in parish ministries. Two-thirds indicated they served as an altar server and about half (47 percent) participated in a parish youth group. One-fifth (20 percent) participated in a World Youth Day before entering the seminary.

"More than four in 10 of respondents (42 percent) attended a Catholic elementary school, which is a rate equal to that for all Catholic adults in the United States. In addition, ordinands are somewhat more likely than other U.S. Catholic adults to have attended a Catholic high school and they are much more likely to have attended a

Catholic college (44 percent, compared to seven percent among U.S. Catholic adults).

"Many ordinands specified some type of full-time work experience prior to entering the seminary, most often in education, accounting, finance or insurance. Four percent of ordinands indicated that they had served in the U.S. Armed Forces at some point.

"The survey also found that new priests in dioceses and religious orders have educational debt. Just over a quarter (26 percent) carried debt at the time they entered seminary, averaging just a little over \$20,000 in educational debt when they entered seminary.



## St. Rose Venerini

Saint **Rose Venerini, M.P.V.**, (February 9, 1656 – May 7, 1728) was a pioneer in the education of women and girls in 17th-century Italy and the foundress of the Religious Teachers Venerini (Italian: *Maestre Pie Venerini*), a Roman Catholic religious institute of women, often simply called the Venerini Sisters. She was canonized by Pope Benedict XVI on October 15, 2006.<sup>[1]</sup>

### Early Life

Venerini was born in Viterbo, Italy, in 1656, then a part of the Papal States. Her father, Goffredo, originally from Castelleone di Suasa, Ancona, after having completed his medical studies at Rome, moved to Viterbo where he practiced at the major hospital of the city. He became noted for his work. From his marriage to Marzia Zampichetti, of an ancient family of the city, four children were born: Domenico, Maria Maddalena, Rosa and Orazio.<sup>[1]</sup>

According to her first biographer, Father Girolamo Andreucci, S.J., Venerini made a vow to consecrate her life to God at the age of seven. At age twenty, though, Rosa had questions about her own future and chose to accept an offer of marriage; her fiancé, however, died shortly after this.<sup>[2]</sup>

In the autumn of that year, on the advice of her father, Venerini entered the Dominican Monastery of St. Catherine, with the prospect of fulfilling her childhood vow. With her aunt, Sister Anna Cecilia (who was already a member of the monastery) beside her, she learned to listen to God in silence and in meditation. She remained in the monastery for only a few months, however, the sudden death of her father forced her to

return to care for her mother. Her brother, Domenico, then died, at only 27 years of age. A few months later, worn out by grief, her mother also died.

In the meantime, Rosa's sister Maria Maddalena married. There remained at home only Orazio and Rosa, by now 24 years old. Rosa began to gather girls and women of the area in her own home to recite the rosary. The way in which the girls and women prayed, and above all, their conversations at these gatherings, showed Rosa a sad reality: the average woman of the town was a slave to cultural, moral and spiritual poverty.

After Venerini's first contacts with the Dominican friars at the Sanctuary of Our Lady of the Oak Tree, near Viterbo, she chose to follow the spirituality of St. Ignatius of Loyola under the direction of the Jesuits, especially Father Ignatius Martinelli, who became her spiritual director. Under his guidance, she then saw a higher mission for herself, namely, the urgent need to dedicate herself to the instruction and Christian formation of young women, not with sporadic encounters, but with formal education.

On August 30, 1685, with the approval of the Bishop of Viterbo, Cardinal Urbano Sacchetti, and the collaboration of two friends, Gerolama Coluzzelli and Porzia Bacci, Rosa left her father's home to begin her first school, according to an innovative plan that had matured in prayer and her search for the will of God. The first objective of this foundress was to give poor girls a complete Christian formation and to prepare them for life in society. Without great pretense, Rose opened the first public



school for girls in Italy. The origins were humble but the significance was prophetic: the human development and spiritual uplifting of women was a reality that did not take long to receive the recognition of the religious and civil authorities.

## Expansion

The initial stages were not easy. The three teachers had to face the resistance of clergy who considered the teaching of the catechism as their private office. But the harshest suspicion came from conformists who were scandalized by the boldness of this woman of the upper-middle class of Viterbo, who had taken to heart the education of ignorant girls. Rosa faced everything for the love of God and with her characteristic strength, continuing on the path that she had undertaken, by now sure that she was truly following the plan of God. The fruits proved her to be right. The same pastors recognized the moral improvement that the work of education generated among the girls and their mothers.

The validity of this initiative was acknowledged and its fame went beyond the confines of the diocese. Cardinal Marco Antonio Barbarigo, Bishop of Montefiascone, had the insight to understand the Viterbo project and he invited Venerini to come to his diocese. From 1692 to 1694, she opened ten schools in Montefiascone and the villages surrounding Lake Bolsena. The cardinal provided the material means and Rosa made the families aware of the value of education for their daughters, trained the teachers, and organized the schools

When she had to return to Viterbo to attend to her first school, Venerini entrusted the Montefiascone schools and the teachers to the direction of a young woman, St. Lucia

Filippini, in whom she had seen particular gifts of mind, heart and spirit and whom the cardinal had entrusted with the leadership of the project in his diocese. Filippini organized the teachers of that diocese as a separate religious congregation known as the Religious Teachers Filippini.<sup>[3]</sup>

After the openings in Viterbo and Montefiascone, other schools were started throughout the region of Lazio. Venerini was invited to Rome in 1706 to establish a school, but the attempt was a failure, which caused her to wait six long years before regaining the trust of the authorities. On December 8, 1713, with the help of Abbot Degli Atti, a friend of the Venerini family, Rosa was able to open a school in the center of Rome, at the foot of the Campidoglio.

On October 24, 1716, the Sisters received a visit by Pope Clement XI, accompanied by eight cardinals, who wanted to observe the lessons. At the end of the morning he addressed these words to Rosa: “Signora Rosa, you are doing that which we cannot do. We thank you very much, because with these schools you will sanctify Rome.”

From that moment on, governors and cardinals asked for schools for their areas. The duties of the foundress became intense, consisting of travels and hard work, interwoven with joys and sacrifices for the formation of new communities. Wherever a new school sprang up, in a short time a moral improvement could be noted in the youth.

## Death and Legacy

Rosa Venerini died a saintly death in the community at the Basilica of San Marco in Rome on the evening of May 7, 1728. By then, she had opened more than 40 schools.



Her remains were entombed in the nearby Jesuit Church of the Gesù, so loved by her. In 1952, on the occasion of her beatification, they were transferred to the chapel of the General Motherhouse in Rome.

The Sisters went to the United States in 1909, primarily to help the Italian immigrants to that country, establishing the first day care centers in many cities of the Northeastern United States. They served in Switzerland from 1971 to 1985 and the congregation has since extended its apostolic activity to other lands: India,

Brazil, Cameroon, Romania, Albania, Chile, Venezuela and Nigeria.

Venerini was canonized by Pope Benedict XVI on October 15, 2006.

### References

1. <sup>a b</sup> Vatican News Service
2. Patron Saints Index "Rose Venerini"
3. Filippini Sisters "History"



## Parents Told to Pay to See School Curriculum

A controversial school curriculum management system in Texas that once included a description of the Boston Tea Party as terror, and has referenced Islamic terrorists as freedom fighters, now has been found to be trying to charge parents hundreds of dollars to see the instructional materials being used by their own children, officials said.

However, under Texas Education Code Chapter 26, all parents have the undisputed right to see any and all instructional materials used in state classrooms.

The program is CSCOPE, and Amy Zimmerman, a mother in the Collinsville Independent School District, asked to see the 7th grade CSCOPE science lessons used between September 2012 and May 2013, citing her “parental right” under state law.

However, instead of the materials, what she got was a letter from an attorney for the district requiring the payment of \$770 to see the materials.

Gerry Miller, an attorney with expertise in education law, said that doesn’t appear to align with the law.

“Suffice it to say the statute is mandatory because of the use of the word ‘shall,’ it is therefore incumbent on the school to comply with the parent’s request. No provision is made for payment by a parent as a ‘condition precedent’ to obtaining the teaching material,” Miller said.

“If a school district demands fees, especially exorbitant fees, to review teaching material, such action has the effect of invalidating the statute’s intent,” he said. “I would fully

expect a judge to apply the statute as written and order the school to provide the information without charge.”

Miller also explained an added complication would be that property taxes have been used to support CSCOPE, which has faced heavy criticism by parents, teachers and legislators, culminating in hearings that revealed serious academic deficiencies in the areas of math, science and English, as well as what many critics believe is an agenda-driven bias in social studies content that promotes a negative view of America.

WorldNetDaily.com (WND): has reported on lessons claiming the Boston Tea Party was a terrorist act, and lessons requiring students to design flags for a new communist country.

Teachers also have told WND

- Lessons are not matched to grade level; a ninth-grade lesson asks students to circle capital letters in a sentence.
- One social studies lesson teaches that capitalism is obsolete and communism is the best economic system, using a diagram that shows a man climbing a ladder towards communism.
- A third-grade lesson defines American “equality” as “fair share.” Competing definitions that include “equality under the law” or “equal opportunity” are not discussed.
- Muhammad is portrayed as a social justice crusader. There is no mention of his marriage to a young girl or his beheading of indigenous population groups.





- Political parties are taught from what critics claim is a subjective and left-leaning perspective, e.g. Democrats “benefit each individual” while Republicans “favor big business.”

WND has also recently acquired lessons covering the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights, teaching students that “medicine” and “food” are “rights,” and not a matter of personal responsibility.

Students who do not answer that “medicine” and “food” are “rights” have their answers marked as incorrect, sources report.

Other controversial lesson content includes a science lesson that instructs students to set things on fire in the middle of class and also lessons that promote anorexia and mercy death, according to Mary Bowen, a curriculum expert and teacher of 30 years who corresponds with WND.

CSCOPE also has come under fire for its secrecy and lack of transparency, forcing teachers and districts to sign “user

agreements”—what whistleblowers say amount to “gag orders.” Teachers are exposed to legal liability if they share lesson content or other class materials with the general public, and threats of termination have been reported by teachers who attempt to engage parents about controversial CSCOPE content.

One result of legislative hearings was the suggestion for changes in user agreements, but sources have told WND that existing users are not included in any changes; they are only for new groups who want to sign up.

A CSCOPE program advising on the privacy requirements for the content notes users are required to not allow “unauthorized users to have online access ... or gain permanent possession of ... content.”

WND Education  
May 7, 2013



## Job Posting

Education: Ave Maria University seeks applicants for Assistant Professor in a newly established Department of Education beginning in the fall of 2013. Candidates should have an earned doctorate (PhD or EdD) from an accredited post-secondary institution in Education. Along with a record of scholarship, the desired candidate will have proven administrative abilities and a working knowledge of the state approval process. In addition, the desired candidate will have a record of excellence in teaching in a teacher preparation program. Applicants should submit a cover letter, curriculum vitae, three letters of reference, and a short

statement relating the University's Catholic mission as expressed in Ex Corde Ecclesiae to their philosophy of teaching to: Ms. Mercedes Cox, Administrative Assistant to the Vice President of Academic Affairs, Ave Maria University, 5050 Ave Maria Blvd., Ave Maria, FL 34142. Electronic applications are strongly preferred and should be sent to [mercedes.cox@avemaria.edu](mailto:mercedes.cox@avemaria.edu). Review of applications will continue until the position is filled. Ave Maria University is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

