

*Catholic Education Foundation presents*

# **THE CATHOLIC EDUCATOR**



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## A Word from Our Editor

I pen these thoughts in the lead-up to Catholic Schools Week 2014, whose theme this year is: “Catholic Schools: Communities of Faith, Knowledge, and Service.”

As you might suspect, the Catholic Education Foundation has been very involved in the national conversation on the Common Core Initiative. Kindly allow this editorial to bring you up to speed on the topic from both the purely secular point of view, as well as from the specifically Catholic angle.

I want to begin by making what should be a self-evident assertion: Catholic educators are not adverse to high standards and academic accountability. Indeed, we have been the perennial bearers of both throughout this very dark period of American education, now spanning more than fifty years. As a Mormon teacher in Idaho said to me more than three decades ago: “The story of Catholic schools in America can be summed up as, ‘Never has so much been done with so little.’” That assessment came back to me recently as I learned of a large city in New Jersey which expends nearly \$43,000 per child in the government schools, while the Catholic schools in that district spend less than \$10,000. Will anyone be surprised when I go on to say that the students in the so-called public schools of that city emerge with negligible skills in math and language arts, even as the Catholic school students perform at and even beyond national levels. Nor is such out-stripping limited to the inner-city phenomenon; evidence is continually mounting that shows similar results in suburbia as well. “More bang for the buck,” as some would crudely put it.

That said, let’s situate the current Common Core debate in history. Already in the early days of the Reagan presidency, concerns were raised about the embarrassing data surfacing which showed American youth lagging woefully behind young people in dozens of countries, including many “third-world” nations. The “Back to Basics” movement, which began in the 1970s, picked up steam in the Reagan years. “No Child Left Behind” and “Race to the Top” were other national efforts to improve student achievement. Everyone, it would seem, for a long time has realized that there is a problem; remedies have varied, often according to political stances. In that sense, the Common Core is no different from earlier attempts to fix the mess. If that is so, why the outcry now, when such a response did not occur with past initiatives?

Anthony Cody offers a valuable “back story” with his “Common Core Standards: Ten Colossal Errors” from an objective pedagogical position. Permit me to highlight a few of them.

Cody’s first objection is that “the process by which the CC standards were developed and adopted was undemocratic.” Unlike its predecessors in educational reform, this project had no input from the very people most affected: parents (on behalf of their children) and teachers (key to its implementation). Conversations on the process were labeled “confidential,” ostensibly to keep dissenting voices at bay.

A few months ago, the Archbishop of a major diocese told me that until I had discussed the CC with him, he had never even heard of it. I told him not to feel bad because, although 47 states had adopted it,



78% of the public had never heard of it, either! In point of fact, state legislators were voting for a program about which they knew very little, often because the final product did not even exist at that point. In other words, they were being asked to take a “pig in a poke,” reminiscent of the process leading to the adoption of Obamacare, as legislators who raised questions were told to accept it and then let it get worked out in time. Of course, we have seen in all too many ways how that has worked out. Interestingly, as of last count, at least seventeen states have backed out of the CC, or are in the process of doing so.

Cody and other critics maintain that the CC “violates what we know about how children grow and develop.” Amazingly, no experts on early childhood education were involved in the drafting or review of the CC.

A serious flaw in the program is its “market-driven” approach as it unabashedly places college- and career-readiness above all other educational goals. Surely, anyone imbued with a classical instinct—let alone a Catholic one—will be repulsed by such a thrust. True education is not about getting onto the next rung of the educational ladder, nor about making lots of money; it’s concerned with bringing about human flourishing or fulfillment. Thus, whether or not there is tangible “pay-back” to studying Vergil’s *Aeneid*, it is still a very good and worthwhile thing to do. Why? Because to know is always better than not to have known.

Other critiques of the CC point to: its rigid expectations, failing to take into account local and personal differences; the fact that it will add to the current testing mania (and, therefore, teaching to the test); ironically, a lowering of standards in many instances

(especially for the majority of Catholic schools); the collection of yet more data on students, thus heightening the potential for violations of privacy and confidentiality; the lack of evidence to support the need for the program and, most especially, for its effectiveness (which has never been seriously tested).

Now, there are some myths about the CC and Catholic schools that need to be dispelled. Contrary to some over-reactions: there is no mandate for Catholic participation; even if participating, there is no requirement to use the curriculum materials offered; college entrance exams (ACT or SAT) are not (yet) tied to the CC; for us, it is not a take-it-or-leave-it affair, which explains the divergent policies of dioceses: adopt, adapt, ignore—although it should be noted that many dioceses have given a strong “no” to the project (e.g., five of the six dioceses of Wisconsin). An issue to consider, however, is whether states with non-public school voucher programs can or will seek to mandate acceptance of the CC as a condition for voucher eligibility (if that happens, there would certainly be constitutional/religious freedom issues).

At a philosophical level, we should also reflect on the following: first, it is legitimate, from a political and social viewpoint, to question the involvement of the federal government in education; which leads to the second point, namely, that Catholic social teaching has always stressed the principle of subsidiarity, that is, engaging in activity at the lowest level possible (which helps explain why our schools have been successful); third, to ask why the Gates Foundation (no friend of Catholic values) so eagerly gave a \$100,000 grant to the National Catholic Education Association to promote the CC—and why



the NCEA so eagerly accepted it. One need not be a Catholic “Tea Partier” to call for discussion of such matters. Indeed, in a unique coalescence of people, both liberals and conservatives have expressed grave reservations about the CC, while no less an educational leader than Diane Ravitch of NYU has done the same and as the two major figures in the drafting of the CC (Sandra Stotsky/language arts; James Milgram/math) both dropped off the project because of their intense disappointment with its direction and outcome.

The Catholic Education Foundation weighed in on all this very early in the game. In my official capacity as CEF’s executive director, I was proud to be among the 130 Catholic signatories to the October 16 letter that went to every Catholic bishop in the country, bringing the issue forward in a very public way for the first time. In October, CEF co-sponsored (with the Catholic High School Honor Roll and the National Association of Private Catholic and Independent Schools, among others) a

workshop for Catholic school administrators on this topic. In November, we likewise co-sponsored an informational breakfast for the bishops of our nation during their annual meeting in Baltimore (more than a quarter of the dioceses were represented).

What is my advice to Catholic parents, teachers, administrators and clergy? Press the “pause” button. There is no need for us to jump on-board an untested program. Catholic educators have never been given to fads (which is, again, a reason for our ongoing success). Let’s see where and how the dust settles. My educated hunch is that we shall see that the project will die aborning; we shall be spared the expenditure of time and treasure, while we forged ahead with what we have known to be a winning product all along. “Faith, Knowledge, Service.”

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



## Pope Francis' Address to Students of Jesuit Schools

Dear Boys and Girls, Dear Young People!

I am happy to receive you with your families, educators and friends of the great family of the Italian and Albanian Jesuit Schools. I give you all my affectionate greeting: welcome! I feel truly “en famille” with you all. And the coincidence of our meeting with the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus is a reason for particular joy.

I would like to tell you, first of all, something that refers to Saint Ignatius of Loyola, our founder. In the autumn of 1537, going to Rome with a group of his first companions, he wondered: If they ask us who we are, what will we answer? The answer came spontaneously: “We’ll say we are the ‘Society of Jesus!’” (Fontes Narrativi Societatis Iesu, vol. 1, pp. 320-322). An exacting name, to indicate a very close relationship of friendship, of total affection for Jesus, in whose footsteps they wished to follow. Why did I recount this event to you? Because Saint Ignatius and his companions had understood that Jesus taught them how to live well, how to live a life that has profound meaning, that gives enthusiasm, joy and hope. They understood that Jesus is a great teacher of life and a model of life, and that He did not only teach them, but also invited them to follow Him on this path.

Dear young people, if I now asked you the question: Why do you go to school, what would you answer me? There would probably be many answers according to the sensibility of each one. However, I think that it all could be summarized by saying that school is one of the educational environments in which one grows to learn to live, to become adult and mature men and

women, capable of walking, of following the path of life. How does school help you to grow? It helps you not only in developing your intelligence, but it helps for an integral formation of all the components of your personality.

Following what Saint Ignatius teaches, the principal element in school is to learn to be magnanimous. Magnanimity: this virtue of the great and the small (*Non coerceri maximo contineri minimo, divinum est*), which makes us always look at the horizon. What does it mean to be magnanimous? It means to have a big heart, to have greatness of mind, it means to have great ideals, the desire to do great things to respond to what God asks of us and, precisely because of this, to do well the things of each day, all daily actions, commitments, meetings with persons. To do the little things of every day with a great heart open to God and to others. Hence, it is important to take care of the human formation aimed at magnanimity. School does not only widen your intellectual but also your human dimension. And I think that in a particular way Jesuit schools are careful to develop the human virtues: loyalty, respect, fidelity, commitment.

I would like to pause on two fundamental values: liberty and service. First of all, be free persons! What do I mean? Perhaps it is thought that liberty is to do whatever one wishes, or venture into limit-experiences to try intoxication and overcome boredom. This isn’t liberty! Liberty means to be able to reflect on what we do, to know how to appreciate what is good and what is bad, behavior that makes one grow means to choose always the good. We are free for the good. And in this fear not to go against the



current, even if it isn't easy! To be free to always choose the good is demanding, but it will make you persons who have a backbone, who are able to face life; persons with courage and patience (*parresia* and *ypomone*). The second word is service. In your school you take part in various activities that habituate you not to shut yourselves in on yourselves or in your small world, but to be open to others, especially to the poorest and neediest, to work to improve the world in which we live. Be men and women with others and for others, real champions in the service of others.

To be magnanimous with interior liberty and a spirit of service, spiritual formation is necessary. Dear children, dear youths, love Jesus Christ ever more! Our life is an answer to his call and you will be happy and will build your life well if you are able to respond to this call. Sense the presence of the Lord in your life. He is close to every one of you as companion, as friend, who knows how to help and understand you, who encourages you in difficult moments and never abandons you. In prayer, in dialogue with Him, in the reading of the Bible, you will discover that He is really close. And also learn to read the signs of God in your life. He always speaks to us, also through the events of our time and of our everyday existence. It is up to us to listen to him.

I don't wish to be too long, but I would like to address a specific word also to the educators: to the Jesuits, to the teachers, to the workers of your schools and to parents. Do not be discouraged in face of the difficulties that the educational challenge presents! To educate is not a profession but an attitude, a way of being. To educate, it is necessary to come out of oneself and to be in the midst of young people, to support them in the stages of their growth, put

yourselves by their side. Give them hope, optimism for their journey in the world. Teach them to see the beauty and goodness of creation and of man, who always has the imprint of the Creator. But above all, be witnesses with your life of what you communicate. An educator—Jesuit, teacher, worker, parent—transmits knowledge, values with his words, but will be incisive for children if he accompanies his words with his witness, with his coherence of life. Without coherence, it's not possible to educate! You are all educators; there are no delegates in this field. Hence, collaboration in the school can and must be the catalyst, the place of encounter and convergence of the entire educational community with the sole objective of forming, of helping to grow as mature, simple, competent and honest persons, who are able to love with fidelity, who are able to live life as response to the vocation of God, and their future profession as service to society. To the Jesuits I would like to say that it is important to nourish their commitment in the educational field. Schools are a precious instrument to give a contribution to the journey of the Church and of the entire society. Hence, the educational field is not limited to the conventional school. Encourage yourselves to seek new non-conventional ways of educating according to “the needs of places, of times and of persons.”

Finally, a greeting to all former students present, to representatives of the Italian schools of the Faith and Joy network, which I know well because of the great work it does in South America, especially among the poorest classes. And a particular greeting to the delegation of the Albanian College of Scutari, which after long years of repression of religious institutions, since 1994 has taken up again its activity, receiving and educating Catholic, Orthodox and Muslim



children and also some students born in agnostic family contexts. Thus the school becomes a place of dialogue and serene confrontation, to promote attitudes of respect, listening, friendship and a spirit of collaboration.

Dear friends, I thank you all for this meeting. I entrust you to the maternal intercession of Mary and I accompany you

with my blessing: may the Lord be always close to you, lift you from your falls and push you to grow and make ever loftier choices “with great spirit and liberality,” with magnanimity. Ad Maiorem Dei Gloriam.

June 7, 2013  
[www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va)



## Obama: Religious Schools Block Lasting Peace in Northern Ireland

President Barack Obama has argued that parochial schools are an impediment to the establishment of a lasting peace in Northern Ireland.

Speaking to a crowd in Belfast, during a trip to Northern Ireland for a G8 summit meeting, Obama said that “segregated schools” block the path to full reconciliation. “If towns remain divided, if Catholics have their schools and buildings and Protestants have theirs, if we can't see ourselves in one another, if fear or resentment are allowed to harden, that

encourages division, it discourages cooperation,” he said.

Ironically, President Obama made his comments just as Archbishop Gerhard Müller, the prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, told a crowd in Scotland that religious education upholds the dignity of the human person. Archbishop Müller said that Catholic schools should promote “all that is good in the philosophies of societies and human culture.”

*Catholic World News*  
June 18, 2013



## Lessons of Catholic Teachings Incisive, not Divisive

I don't know what President Obama was thinking.

Speaking in Northern Ireland last week, he said Catholic schools are divisive: "If towns remain divided—if Catholics have their schools and buildings and Protestants have theirs, if we can't see ourselves in one another and fear or resentment are allowed to harden—that too encourages division and discourages cooperation."

Begorrah! What was he thinking?

I was lucky to attend a Catholic elementary school through the eighth grade. I didn't know it at the time, but our church and our school reflected a religious tradition that was brought to America by millions of immigrants, many of whom arrived to work in Pittsburgh's mines and steel mills 100 years before I was born.

The immigrants built magnificent Catholic churches that were the centerpieces of their communities—churches that advanced simple values that seeped into the local culture: Be charitable and kind, tell the truth, take care of those less fortunate, don't cheat on your taxes.

And they built Catholic schools. My parents bought our house because it was within walking distance of St. Germaine Catholic School and Church. They wanted us to receive a solid education—something parochial schools still do way better than public schools—and be taught solid values.

And boy, were the nuns determined to teach us both.

The nuns were all business, you see. Their business was to work us hard in math, science, reading and writing. They had no

interest in or patience for obsessing—as too many adults do now—over our precious little egos and self-esteem.

When they weren't ramming home our lessons, they were teaching us to embrace the virtues: prudence, temperance and courage. They taught us about the competing ideas, too, the Seven Deadly Sins, and demanded we fend off every one of them: pride, envy, gluttony, lust, anger, greed and sloth.

And when they weren't ramming home lessons or virtues, they made us sit up straight and keep our shirts tucked in. They made us say "please" and "thank you." They didn't suffer fools gladly—they didn't suffer fools at all.

We envied the public-school kids. They got to wear blue jeans and tennis shoes to school—not uniforms and hard shoes. They didn't fear their teachers half as much as we feared ours—and nowadays, public-school teachers fear their students.

Though the old Catholic school was often unpleasant for a daydreamer like me, I have incredible, fond memories of my time there.

My older sisters, both fine artists, helped me create a beautiful picture for art class, but Sister Mary Angela refused to believe I created it alone—it was hard to fool the nuns.

Tommy Guillen and I got into big trouble on the last day of classes one year for riding our bikes to school and locking them out front.

And my eighth-grade nun confronted me in front of the class when I got a "B" on a test that she knew—had I studied for it—I should have gotten an "A" on.



Looking back, I realize that my Catholic school experience was marked by clarity, order and a sense of purpose—the seriousness of our teachers made us feel that we really were on Earth for a special reason and we’d better do our best to accomplish it.

That is why Obama has it wrong about Catholic schools: They teach tolerance, kindness, compassion and understanding—concepts central to Christianity—not division.

And while many of us former Catholic-school students frequently fail to live up to these high standards, we know when we have crossed the line.

We know when Obama has, too.

Tom Purcell  
June 29, 2013  
Omaha.com



# Uncoupling the Hookup Culture

## American Colleges Need to Stop Condoning Binge Drinking and Casual Sex on Campus

It appears that more young people are starting—finally—to question the "hookup" mentality that has become so common on many college campuses.

Harvard sophomore Lisa Mogilanski, writing in *USA Today* this month, put it this way: "Hookup culture is an unnavigable mush of vague intentions and desires.... We can try to dress it up as being freeing or equalizing the genders, but I fear it only leaves us equally impoverished."

Voices like Mogilanski's are still the exception, however, and even many of those who see hookup culture as a problem stop short of embracing better alternatives.

Casual sex on college campuses today, which often grows out of binge drinking, leads to sexually transmitted diseases, unwanted pregnancies and low self-esteem. It removes the romance, love and deep caring from relationships between men and women.

Yet many American colleges and universities seem to be at least tacitly condoning the culture.

While accompanying one of my children on a college tour several years ago, another high schooler asked the student guide about being able to drink and "have fun with my girlfriend" in the dorm rooms. The guide proceeded to tell him not to worry; no one enforced those rules.

Boston University religion professor Donna Freitas, in her new book "The End of Sex," suggests that the culture of casual hookups

is leading to an unhappy, unfulfilled and confused generation. She cites overwhelming research showing predominantly negative experiences that result from hooking up because, for one thing, "it is purely physical and emotionally vacant."

But still, she denigrates abstinence education as "extreme to the point that students cannot imagine living it, nor do they wish to."

Columnist Emma Teitel, writing in *Maclean's*, suggests that "if you have empty, meaningless sex throughout college, you'll become an emotional cripple, contract gonorrhea and, most likely, vomit." But then she adds: "These are lessons learned through experience, not indoctrination."

That seems nonsensical. I didn't have to learn that, say, heroin was bad for me through experience. I didn't learn it through "indoctrination" either. Young people who are given sound information can make rational decisions without having to engage in risky and detrimental behavior.

In a 2012 report titled "Strategies for Reducing Binge Drinking and a 'Hook-Up' Culture on Campus," Loyola Marymount University professor Christopher Kaczor found that "the ramifications of unhealthy behaviors in both drinking and sex go beyond the physical, psychological and social damage to the individuals partaking in the activities." This behavior "inhibits ethical development through the focus on private indulgence of using other people for pleasure, rather than on loving, committed relationships."



That emotional state affects academic performance, and as Kaczor notes, can ultimately diminish "the institution's ability to attract and retain excellent students and faculty."

It's clearly in the interests of colleges and the students they serve to change the culture. How? A college student spends no more than six hours a day, four to five days a week, in the classroom. Any attempt to reduce the incidence of hooking up should be aimed at that time and those activities.

One particular area of focus should be on freshmen when they first arrive at school. As Kaczor reports, "The first six weeks of the college experience are extremely important in establishing a student's habits and identity." It is during this time that "habits take root and patterns of behavior become established." First-year students are experimenting with a new level of freedom, and a desire to fit in with their peers often turns them into followers during this period, engaging in behaviors that produce unwanted consequences.

Curbing binge drinking should be another focus. Franciscan University of Steubenville professor Anne Hendershott and assistant Nicholas Dunn survey the many links between drunkenness and the hookup culture in their study, "The 'Hook-Up' Culture on Catholic Campuses: A Review of

the Literature." If the former can be mitigated, they conclude, the latter would be reduced.

For many families, education is among the largest investments they will make, and they should make those investments wisely. Parents should look beyond the academic credentials of the university before shelling out cash, asking tough questions of university administrators. Do residential assistants look the other way when drinking and visitation violations occur? Does the administration publicly condone such activity? What efforts do they make to educate students about responsible decision-making?

Universities that openly condone or turn a blind eye to casual sex and alcohol abuse should be called to account. College is a wonderful place for young people to develop deep and lasting relationships based on mutual respect and love. But that won't happen if they are simply focused on the next hookup.

Bob Laird  
May 28, 2013

This piece was originally published in the *Los Angeles Times*

*Bob Laird is director of programs at the Cardinal Newman Society.*



## Lecture at the Launch of the St. Andrew's Foundation, University of Glasgow, Scotland

I am grateful for the invitation to speak at the launch of the St. Andrew's Foundation as a new instrument in Scotland for the provision and support of Catholic Education and of Catholic teachers, and I wish, first of all, to acknowledge and celebrate the fruitful collaboration and partnership between the University of Glasgow and the Catholic Church in Scotland.

As a visitor from, and a representative of, the Holy See in Rome, it is heart-warming to be standing within the walls of an ancient University, whose degree-awarding power still stands upon the Papal Bull of Pope Nicholas V, granted to establish the University in 1451. It is good also to be in the city of Glasgow, which, as the Papal Bull acknowledges, is "a place of renown and particularly well fitted therefore, where the air is mild, victuals are plentiful, and a great store of other things pertaining to the use of man is found, to the end that there the Catholic Faith may be spread, the simple instructed, equity in judgement is upheld, reason flourish, the minds of men illuminated, and their understanding enlightened" (Papal Bull, 7 January 1451).

In my short visit, I can already testify to the truth of the air being mild and the victuals plentiful. It is clear that the links between the University and the Catholic Church being celebrated today have their roots in the very origins of the University. I am most grateful to the University that the launch of the St. Andrew's Foundation represents the continued commitment of the University to the provision of Catholic Education, even though the University itself has gone through various transformations regarding

its own mission and purpose in Scotland and the wider world.

It is opportune at this present moment, amidst the rapidly changing state of society, of higher education generally and also of the Church, to reflect on the nature and distinctiveness of Catholic Education and on the challenges it both faces and also presents. The substance of my talk today will be to offer some thoughts and reflections on these important areas.

### **The Nature of Catholic Education**

It is not insignificant to note that the vision and practice of Catholic Education has, throughout the Church's history, arisen out of a coming together of the Church with various cultures. The very mission of the Church, from its beginnings in the Upper Room in Jerusalem at Pentecost, has been to engage with the culture of the time and to seek to penetrate it with the message of the Gospel. At the same time, the Church has drawn on that culture and its wisdom, in order to help articulate her own self-understanding and to facilitate her own life and practice. From the beginning, therefore, faith and culture have interacted, even when in certain periods of history, the interaction was more hostile and combative than collaborative.

It is not unknown to any of us that for many decades there have been voices raised against the idea of Catholic Education, against the fact of distinct faith schools and increasingly, in today's society, there are great challenges to the very idea of a religious education. Various charges are



made which include the suggestion that religious education is a form of indoctrination and is contrary to the prevailing culture of freedom. Faith schooling is said to mitigate against social cohesion, encouraging intolerance, social prejudice, sectarianism and even bigotry. Within the Church herself, especially in the light of the call to the Church of recent Popes to the mission of new evangelisation, there are voices which question the need for a separate Catholic Education. Should the Church not encourage a simple engagement with the wider society rather than maintain a separate system of education? Such are some of the questions that remain today as part of the melting pot of debates around educational issues. They will, no doubt, continue to be questions discussed and researched within this very Foundation in the coming years.

### **What it means to be Catholic**

I would like to distinguish from the outset two important but different meanings of the word “Catholic” within the debate about Catholic Education. In the first place, we may consider “Catholic” to refer to a religious denomination, within society and the world-at-large, which is organised as a body of believers, who are admitted through Baptism and whose membership can be described at the level of family, parish, diocese, the national Church and the international Church with her leadership in the Holy See in Rome. From this point of view, “Catholic Education” is acknowledged by both Church and State as a fundamental right and primary responsibility of Catholic parents—the first educators of their children. In accordance with this fundamental right, the State has the duty and responsibility to facilitate the wishes of Catholic parents to educate their children according to their desire to pass on their faith to their children.

Particular national states have sought to fulfil their responsibility in a variety of ways, enshrining within their systems of law different arrangements for this provision but always recognising the fundamental principle that those primarily responsible for the education of their children are their parents.

The Catholic Church also recognises the rights and duties of parents in the matter of education and from the earliest times has sought to provide support to parents, not least in the area of religious education. Within the rite of Baptism, in which parents seek the gift of faith for their children, parents also express their desire and their commitment “to raise their children in the practice of the Faith.” The Church, for its part, has always regarded, as an essential element of its mission, the duty of providing the means for this. As John Henry Newman once wrote: For the Church “to baptise and not educate would be a grievous sin”! (Newman Sermon No. 162)

The first justification, therefore, for the Church and State collaboration in the matter of “Catholic Education” is rooted in the universal and fundamental rights of parents.

This leads me to a second meaning of the word “Catholic” which also has important implications for the Foundation whose launch we celebrate today. To illustrate my meaning, I would like to refer back to the great fifth-century saint and classical exponent of Christian education Augustine of Hippo, who wrote a work called “The City of God.” The occasion of the composition was the accusation being made against Christians, that they were responsible for the fall of Rome. It was claimed that the beliefs, and more importantly, the practices, of Catholics were



inimical to the Roman State and Roman society.

Augustine's response was to argue that far from undermining the State, Catholics practiced religious, moral and social virtues that precisely upheld the State. The reasons for the civil breakdown were to be found elsewhere—ultimately, within the very heart of man. “The City of God” is a comprehensive volume, which in many ways laid the foundations for dialogue between the civic state, the secular world, and the Catholic Church—in Augustine's language, between the “City of Man” and the “City of God.” He argued that what was best in Roman society had its roots in Plato and Aristotle and great Roman minds, who had articulated the truth of the supreme Good, as the *telos* or “End” of humanity—the Good that leads to happiness. They spoke of the good of the body, the good of the soul (of the mind and the will), and the good of the Common Weal (Society).

At the heart of all of these goods was the development of the rational mind in conformity with the truth and the nourishing of the will through the attainment and practice of the virtues, of which Justice was seen as primary. The foundation was the human person, in whom they discovered a natural drive towards the discovery of the good and the true. We can recognise in Augustine's analysis the basis of much of the way that we speak even today about educational goals, especially in our concern for the whole person. Nevertheless, there was a problem. In the end, thought Augustine, this philosophy was not enough. Individuals and also society could never achieve the good to which they aspired. It is a perennial problem. The classical philosophy was groping towards an answer.

Augustine argued that Christians not only belong to the City of Man but also to the City of God. Embracing all that was true and good in the classical philosophy, belonging to the City of God brought in a number of new elements that both transformed and completed what was lacking in the classical philosophy and Roman society. In the first place, what is and can be known by the human mind is supplemented and completed by the truth of Divine Revelation. Like many of the great Christian minds in the early centuries, Augustine discovered in the Sacred Scriptures of the Old and New Testament the element that the classical philosophy, from which he himself came, was groping towards. God revealed Himself in the history of the seemingly insignificant people of Israel and then most fully in the Person of Jesus Christ.

Knowledge, which in classical philosophy was somewhat confined as a result of limitations within the reasoning human person, is both confirmed and completed. All reality and all truth, including the human person, have their source in the One God. In the history of Israel and in the Person of Christ, God reveals His nature and also the ultimate nature and destiny of the human person—created by God in His own image and destined for eternal happiness, the ultimate good of humankind. The person of Jesus Christ is not only the fullness of God's self-revelation and the perfection of man, He is also the place of salvation, the place where the wounds in human nature are revealed and healed.

The Ten Commandments present as Moral Absolutes those goods that classical philosophy had perceived as the goods of the person and of society. But the Decalogue, and by implication, Greek and Roman philosophy, was in the end a pedagogue leading to Christ (see Galatians



3:24-25), Who not only reveals the full meaning of the Commandments, but both accomplishes them in Himself and provides the means of grace by which the very virtues of Christ become embodied in every other person. In Christ, said Augustine, the life of seeking the truth and living the virtues is realised, even though it means a slow progression with constant need of Christ's forgiveness and healing. Finally, for Augustine, the governing power in the City of God is a three-fold love—love of God, love of self and love of others. Love originates in the mystery of the Trinitarian relationships and is the motivation for Creation, Revelation and the Redemption in Christ. Within the City of God, love gathers, unifies and perfects all the human virtues.

If I can summarise Augustine's view of the key characteristics of the City of God, they are firstly **faith**—by which we have access to God and to the truth that He reveals in Christ; secondly, **hope**, by which, in Christ, human weakness and sin are overcome and earthly goodness and blessedness are made possible and the mystery of eternal happiness becomes a true goal; and finally, **love**, which provides both the motivation for living and the goal of life without end. It is precisely, these three—faith, hope and love—that are the gift of God, through Christ and the Holy Spirit in the Sacrament of Baptism. In the City of God, it is these three virtues that, in addition to the natural goods and virtues of the human person, are the heart of education.

We can see, therefore, that the word "Catholic" has a fuller, more inclusive, sense. It implies an overarching philosophy of life, which includes all that is good in the philosophies of societies and human culture. St. Augustine contrasts citizenship in the City of Man with citizenship of the City of God. This is not a contrast between a

worldly and an other-worldly approach, but concerns the breadth of one's philosophy of life and of education.

To equip Catholic teachers with this broad philosophy of life is the key to the mission of the new St. Andrew's Foundation. This will serve the self-confidence of Catholic teachers in their work in schools and provide a contribution to society as a whole.

### **What it means to educate**

It is time now to turn more specifically to the second word in today's subject—"Education." Few subjects are more contentious in today's society. Long gone are the days in which, in Christian Europe, there was a synthesis between Faith and Reason and a unity between the disciplines of various subjects in education, in which Theology was seen as the Queen of the Sciences. This was the atmosphere in which this University received its Papal Bull. It owed a great deal to the writings of the philosopher-theologian—St. Thomas Aquinas. Today there are a multitude of views about what education should be and how it should be carried out. There are views that emerge from Modernist and Post-Modern philosophies and ideologies; others emerge from State and political concerns, not least today because of the crisis in the economies of most European countries; and those from capitalist and market-driven theories and models. Finally, there is the overarching secular tone of society today with its emphasis on materialism and consumerism and the growing acceptance of a relativist stance with regard to truth and morality.

In his recent visit to Scotland and England, Pope Benedict XVI spoke of the serious danger of relativism which will undermine society and religion and in the end will be detrimental to the human person. A proper understanding of education plays a



significant part in providing an alternative to this relativist stance. From the time of Socrates, education has been what the underlying Latin word suggests—a drawing out from the human person, through the training of the human mind, will and emotions, the ability to perceive and act upon the good and the true. The good and the true stand in some way outside the person; they are transcendent. The human person has a natural drive and curiosity to seek and understand them. A danger in the relativism of modern society is the assumption that human freedom essentially entails creating one's own truth and moral good. Notwithstanding the clear perception of the flaws within our nature, there are logical absurdities in the relativists' position: first—in asserting as absolutely true that there is no absolute truth; second—in maintaining that each person's truth is as valuable as another's; and third—in asserting that each person's morality is as good as the other's. The first represents the collapse of reason; the second and third, if pursued to their logical conclusion, would lead to the breakdown of society.

This is not to say that tolerance or human freedom are not values to be highly esteemed. The problem seems to be that such values are underpinned by a weak philosophy of life and of education, or at least one that is unarticulated or not critically examined. The result is the danger of trying to build society and to educate on the basis of weak foundations.

Here we touch upon one key element of the goals of higher education. It is surely part of the enterprise of higher education that it not simply mirror back the values of the society-at-large, nor simply that it produce those who will serve the economy through excellence in business or industry, science or the arts. An important element is also the

ability to take a critical stance and examine the underlying assumptions, philosophies and ideologies in society today and especially those underlying the very disciplines that higher education pursues. There are those who will maintain that many of the disciplines are scientific and value-free. It is not difficult to refute such a claim. The bigger danger arises when the assumptions and philosophies are unexamined.

The St. Andrew's Foundation can be a place for critical engagement with the philosophies that underpin the various ideas about education, not least within the University itself and also in the wider society, articulating a philosophy of life and understanding the nature of education found within the Catholic Church herself. This understanding is especially enshrined in the various documents concerning education that have emerged from the Holy See over the last century. I would like to take a moment to pay tribute to those who have published *An Anthology of Catholic Teaching on Education*, [editor, Leonard Franchi, London 2007], an excellent volume that brings together the significant Church documents, while indicating at the same time those which more particularly pertain to Catechesis and those which pertain to Catholic Education more broadly. It would be hard to recommend a better resource for study within this new Foundation.

### **The Vision articulated by the Church**

Both before the Second Vatican Council and since, the Church has consistently proclaimed the dignity of the human person, and the pattern and destiny for the person that is to be found in Christ. Education has a central place in the assertion of that dignity. In the first place, there are the important teachings of Popes Pius X and Pius XI. The



particular challenge of their times concerned the extent and nature of the State's involvement in education. The Church had to struggle for her rights in the matter of teaching Christian doctrine in schools. Pope Pius XI's encyclical on Catholic Education, *Divini Illius Magistri* (1929), reflects the threat of the complete take-over of education by the State in a number of countries in which ideologies that deny or distort the dignity of the person, such as Communism, Fascism and Nazism, were prevailing. In this hostile climate, Pope Pius XI clearly articulated an alternative vision, rooted in the basic rights of parents, explaining and defending the good of the human person as involving happiness and justice in this life, as well as the attainment of the person's ultimate and complete happiness in Heaven. Happiness both in this life and definitively in Heaven, was to be understood and pursued through the life of faith—the life communicated through a properly Catholic education.

The period from the Second Vatican Council has seen, with the establishment of the Congregation for Catholic Education in Rome, the reaffirmation of the Church's teaching on the dignity of the human person and our destiny in Christ. The Council was expressly a time of returning to the Church's most ancient and secure sources; and of opening itself to the wider world. This was particularly focused on the Church's self-understanding and renewal and her salvific dialogue with the world. The Church looked afresh at the Scriptures and the Church Fathers in order to reflect on her own changing situation of being a missionary Church within an environment that was no longer a Christian culture. The Church needed to understand anew her own culture, with a history and a Tradition to transmit in a holistic way to her own future generations and to the world. As the Council itself says,

all Christians “should learn to give witness to the hope that is within them (see 1 Pet 3:15) and to promote the Christian concept of the world whereby the natural values, assimilated into the full understanding of man redeemed by Christ, may contribute to the good of society as a whole” (see *Gravissimum educationis* 2).

This process is ongoing and is a continued mining of the rich seams of Tradition. This is the underlying purpose of the Year of Faith that we are currently living in the Church. Pope Benedict's explicit invitation was to discover anew the documents of the Council and also the Council's primary fruit, the Catechism of the Catholic Church. The Catechism essentially represents a statement of Catholic culture expressed in the same structure as the New Testament statement of the culture of the early Church – “And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers” (Acts 2:42).

This notion of the Church's culture implies also its transmission through education and leads to an engagement with the variety of cultures within which the Church finds herself today. The whole concept and project had its roots in the early Fathers of the Church who articulated, as I stated earlier in my discussion of Augustine's *City of God*, a vision of Catholic culture within the context of Greek and Roman society. Christian culture, and its transmission through education, was the christianisation of the Greek concept of “*Paideia*”—a word that is difficult to translate but contains the idea of the holistic formation of the human person (body, mind and spirit), of the person **within** society and **within** civilization or culture. In its baptized form, this process is envisaged as being under the pedagogy of God Himself and directed towards a final



civilization within the mystery of the Trinity.

It was in this same period both before and after the Council that the thought and writings of John Henry Newman were being more widely disseminated, especially with regard to his teaching on Conscience and on Education. Newman himself was deeply influenced by the traditions of the Fathers, and the notion of “*Paideia*” stood behind much of his educational thought. It is not insignificant that the occasion of the recent Papal visit of Pope Benedict was also the time that Newman was beatified. At that time, Pope Benedict said of him:

*I would like to pay particular tribute to his vision for education, which has done so much to shape the ethos that is the driving force behind Catholic schools and colleges today. Firmly opposed to any reductive or utilitarian approach, he sought to achieve an educational environment in which intellectual training, moral discipline and religious commitment would come together. The project to found a Catholic University in Ireland provided him with an opportunity to develop his ideas on the subject, and the collection of discourses that he published as “The Idea of a University” holds up an ideal from which all those engaged in academic formation can continue to learn.*

### **The Nature of the Church as Mystery, Communion and Mission**

The reflection initiated at the Second Vatican Council on Catholic culture and its transmission has found articulation, not only in the Constitutions of the Second Vatican Council, and in the Catechism, but also in the structure of the Church as **Mystery**,

**Communion** and **Mission**. And its particular application to Catholic Education was enshrined in the most recent document from the Congregation for Catholic Education, entitled *Educating Together in Catholic Schools*, published in the same year as the *Anthology*.

It is important to understand what the idea of the Church as Mystery, Communion and Mission involves. Fundamental is Communion—which is another way of expressing Catholic culture and its central affirmation of human dignity as bearing the pattern and the destiny of Christ. Communion comes about through initial conversion to the Person of Christ and necessarily leads to communion with everything with which Christ is in communion. In other words, it leads to communion with His Body, the Church, with her life and sacraments, her teaching and with each and every person who makes up the Church. Communion with Christ also opens up to us all, as both its origin and its goal, entry into the Mystery of the life of the Blessed Trinity. And communion within the Body of Christ and communion with the Persons of the Trinity gives rise to the Mission of the Church to draw all of humanity into this life and culture. Indeed, this is ultimately the mission of the Trinity itself—to draw every created person, through the Church, into participation in the Trinitarian life.

It is in this vision of a truly Catholic culture that the most recent document, to which I have referred, *Educating Together in Catholic Schools* discusses the nature and purpose of education and in particular, the joint activity of lay and consecrated persons within the field of education. The document presents a new and challenging statement both of the human person and of the



purpose of education. This new statement is set in the language of “Communion”:

*Every human person is called to communion because of his nature which is created in the image and likeness of God (see Gen 1:26-27). Therefore, within the sphere of biblical anthropology, man is not an isolated individual, but a person, a being who is essentially relational. The communion to which man is called always involves a double dimension, that is to say vertical (communion with God) and horizontal (communion with people). It is fundamental that communion be acknowledged as a gift of God, as the fruit of the divine initiative fulfilled in the Easter mystery. (n. 8)*

This description of the human person is inspired by the Church’s understanding and vision of what it is to be a human being and as a response to the present cultural context. Young people are growing up in a world marked by moral relativism, individualism, utilitarianism and a lack of interest in the fundamental truths of human life. The Church is almost alone, it seems, in being prepared to assert the dignity of the human person as bearing the image of God—a vision available to reason, and once deep at the heart of western culture, but which is now so generally denied. It is when humans are no longer seen to bear the image of God, that human freedom is reduced to mere arbitrary whim, and the pursuit of true value is reduced to a consumerism that never satisfies. The Church must give back to young people the true understanding of their own value that has been taken from them. And this requires the communication of the Catholic Faith concerning our true destiny in Christ. This re-proclamation and defense of humanity and its true worth lies at the centre

of the Church's Mission—her calling of all people to their true destiny in Christ. We are duty-bound to use every possible opportunity to articulate this vision and form future generations in it.

In the midst of so many diverse and at times bewildering versions of educational aims and processes, the Church has a rich and vital vision to proclaim. At its heart is an ideal of the person as called to love and friendship—with God and with fellow humans as bearing His image. Catholic education is an expression of a Catholic culture that is ever drawing upon the richness of its Tradition and the cultures of the ages, ever seeking to renew and re-state itself, and always conscious that it does so within the pedagogical mission of God Himself in the world. It is a vision that needs to be heard in the world as the Church seeks to serve the world that God loves. As well as seeking to dialogue with today’s society, the Church also seeks to live out and incarnate in every place the vision that by God’s grace she articulates. May this new Institute play an important role in the study of this vision, its dissemination for the formation of Catholic teachers, and support of the schools in which this vision becomes realized.

### **Final Words**

I thank the University not only for its cooperation in the establishment of this new Foundation, but also for the previous years of partnership and collaboration with the Bishops Conference of Scotland in the provision of Catholic education and of Catholic teachers. I pay tribute to the Bishops’ Conference for the work that has brought this project to fruition and also for their unwavering commitment to Catholic Education in Scotland. I thank also the Sisters of Notre Dame and the Society of the



Sacred Heart whose dedication and commitment ensured the formation of Catholic teachers throughout the previous century.

Today, while the new Foundation will be at the hub of the provision of Catholic teachers, there are many more who contribute to Catholic education here in Scotland. I would not wish to miss the opportunity of thanking all those involved. At the heart of it all are the Teachers and Head Teachers and auxiliary staff in the schools, without whom Catholic Education would not be implemented. I thank you for your devotion to your vocation. I thank the Catholic Education Commission and the Scottish Catholic Education Service and its Director. I take the opportunity to congratulate you on the new Religious Education Curriculum document, “This Is Our Faith,” which expresses Catholic faith precisely as a culture to be transmitted. I

warmly pay tribute to many others who play a support role here in Scotland—especially Diocesan advisors and Chaplains. Finally, may I extend to all those parents, those who are Catholic as well as those from other traditions, a glowing tribute. It is your desire to educate your children integrally in the light of faith that is the bedrock of the whole enterprise of Catholic Education. May God continue to bless you all as you journey together and may God bless the children that He has called into communion in the Church and whose formation will play a great part in the building of society.

Archbishop Gerhard Müller  
June 15, 2013

*Archbishop Gerhard Müller is the Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith*



## Priest: You've Contracepted Our Parochial School out of Existence

June 24, 2013 ([LifeSiteNews.com](http://LifeSiteNews.com))—A stranger came into the sacristy after Sunday Mass. In an incriminating huff he said, “I have been away from the area for fifteen years; where are the people? And now you are tearing down the school? I went there as a kid.”

I put my hands up to quiet him from further talking and I calmly said, “Let me ask you a question: How many kids did you have?” He said, “Two.” Then I said, “So did everyone else. When you only have two kids per family there is no growth.” His demeanor changed, and then he dropped his head and said, “And they aren't even going to Mass anymore.”

I never thought I would be asking that question, but since I had to close our parish school, I've grown bolder and I started to ask that question more often. When I came to my parish five years ago, the school was on its proverbial “last legs.” In its last two years we did everything we could to recruit more students, but eventually I had to face the fact that after 103 years of education the school was no longer viable.

In one of the pre-closure brain-storming sessions with teachers, I was asked what to do to get more students. I replied, “Well, I know what to do, but it takes seven years.” The older teachers laughed, but the others needed me to state the obvious to the oblivious, *viz.* we need more babies. In my January 2010 letter to my bishop asking his permission to close our school, I wrote:

*Bishop, it is with a heavy heart that I request this of you. As you know,*

*priests were not ordained to be closing grade schools, but we were ordained to be Christ in the midst of sorrow and pain, which will be happening as we come to accept both your decision and the inevitable fact that St. Mary's Grade School is no longer viable. The efficient cause is simple....no children. The first cause is the habitual contraception and sterilization mentality of a good portion of married Catholic Christians—in short the Culture of Death. The final cause is the closure of Catholic Schools and parishes. Bishop, we need your leadership to address the contraception/abortion /sterilization mentality in as forceful a way as soon as possible.*

I, and St. Mary's, closed the school that May 2010. Now three years later, I am razing the school building. It breaks my heart every time I go into this closed school. It is only 50 years old and yes, the windows and heating are in need of replacement, but otherwise the building is in good shape. You could not build as solid a building these days. There has not been a week without someone bringing the school closure and now razing up to me and how sad it is.

But the cost of insurance and the cost of heating an empty building has become too burdensome for an aging and a decreasing congregation. A part of this decrease has happened because I have preached against the Culture of Death.

I have modestly preached against contraception and sterilization, but for many of my



parishioners it is too late. Most of them are done with raising more children. They have had their two kids twenty, thirty, forty years ago and some women don't want to hear about the Culture of Death. They decide to go to other parishes where the pastor doesn't prick their consciences.

I am reminded of a diocesan official in his talk to us young pro-life, pro-family priests twenty years ago. He said, "Yes, you can preach against abortion and contraception, but remember, you have to put a roof over your churches." Now, our diocese is closing and merging these same parishes, but you know what—they all have good roofs.

Pastors, if the demographic winter or bomb seems someone else's problem, try this at your parish as I recently did at mine. I took the last ten burials and printed out their obituaries. At Sts. Peter and Paul Cemetery we had six men and four women with an average age of 80 years. With the ten, I counted the number of siblings for a total of 45 and divided by 10 which came to 4.5 children per family. Then I counted the ten's children and divided by ten. The next generation had 28 kids which I divided by ten and came to 2.8 per family. I then moved on to the third generation, the grandchildren. These ten deceased had 48 grandchildren from their 28 children. When dividing these numbers, I came to a figure of 1.714 per family. The [national average](#) number of children per household is 1.91; while the replacement level is 2.1 children per family.

I don't claim to have answers on how to turn around a dying parish or diocese. In fact, I am more at a loss as to what to say than ever before. To defend the Church's teaching against contraception and sterilization is like going back to ancient Rome and warning them about the dangers of indoor lead

plumbing. No matter what you would say their only response back would come in various levels of volume, "But it's indoor plumbing!" In other words, no matter the real threat to one's physical health from contraception and sterilization, the immediate perceived benefits outweigh the moral and physical downside. And, if there is contraceptive failure, i.e., a baby, women must have access to abortion; and if a couple is infertile, they can always create babies—in vitro.

Having grown up in the 60's and 70's with many "Don't call me Father" Priests, I knew that the problem was a lack of orthodoxy. Twenty years ago when I was ordained, I thought that if I just preached the faith and celebrated a solemn Sunday Mass people would turn around. But, after twenty years, my experience is that a few parishioners will write letters to the Bishop, some will leave murmuring, but the standard fare is benign indifference. Instead of encountering joy and submission to the Natural Law and the Church's teaching on human life and its dignity, I have found Catholic Christians either complacent or complicit with the Culture of Death. It was reported that over fifty percent of Catholics voted for a pro-abortion president who at a recent Texas Planned Parenthood convention asked God to bless them. If I have found any fruit, it has mostly come from home-schooling families.

I have become convinced that there is a connection, a direct correlation, between contracepting or sterilizing one's fertility that parleys into an infertile relationship with Jesus, the Divine Bridegroom. In other words, mortal sin is the ultimate barrier method when it comes to God's gift of grace being implanted within our souls. It is known that Jesus expects us to be faithful in



small things before He will entrust us with larger issues.

What is smaller and yet has the greatest value than bringing new life into the world? The *realpolitik*, the *sitz im leben*, the situation on the ground, is that reproductive dissent has reached and surpassed a critical mass. Whether we are talking within or outside the church, tacit support is given to the culture of death when we don't support the Natural Law against all unnatural sexual actions.

Sometimes I feel like the Slim Pickens character from the 1964 movie, *Dr. Strangelove*, where he is riding the falling nuclear bomb; he, waving a cowboy hat; me waving a biretta. (If not a biretta, perhaps a sixty degree sand-wedge.) What I should be doing instead is to try to defuse the demographic bomb; but the thing is, "God always forgives, man sometimes forgives, but nature...nature never forgives!" If the vast majority of Catholics chose to contracept and sterilize themselves into the dust bin of history, what can God do? Of course, God could cause a miracle conversion a la the Prophet Jonah and Nineveh; or, the miracle of when God ordered Ezekiel to prophecy over the dead bones that then came together as he was prophesying—however, Ezekiel at least had bones to "work" with.

What can a priest/pastor do when there is a congregation with a contraceptive/sterilization mentality? Should he tell them to repent and have a reversal of the vasectomy or tubal ligation? If that fails, should he encourage his flock to adopt or become foster parents? Should he not be promoting Natural Family Planning which uses the best of science to help couples to be fruitful—not

to mention ecological breast-feeding (see <http://www.NFPandmore.org>)?

Of course, he should be doing all of these remedies and more, but at the very least he should be doing what the Curé de Ars, St. John Vianney did: fast, pray, eat potatoes for his people, his sheep. Take note that the Bishops of Great Britain have returned to Friday abstinence from meat as a corporate witness to bodily discipline and penance. Priests should be personally doing at least this much. (In the U.S., few even know that the guideline is that we should offer something up on Fridays, not necessarily meat.) Could something like what happened in England happen in the U.S.?

Cardinal Burke says not to wait for a national statement. In an [exclusive interview with His Eminence](#), Rome correspondent for LifeSiteNews.com (April 23, 2013) Hilary White reported that "the bishops of the world must, as individuals, take the lead in combating the Culture of Death, and not wait for the national conferences." Further, she quotes His Eminence as saying:

*It should be emphasized that the individual bishop has a responsibility in this matter. Sometimes what happens is the individual bishops are unwilling to do anything because they wait for the national bishops' conference to take the lead.*

Well stated, Your Eminence! Amen, alleluia!

Again, I do not know how to defuse the current demographic bomb we are collectively riding. While the Church does challenge faithful Catholics to be open to life and to be fruitful in having children, something serious needs to be done. I



believe Church historians will look back at this period of the post-Vatican II era and call it by some moniker—please Lord, let it not be an unfortunate one. Whatever this period will be called, it seems like we, as the Church, are living through a mass protest revolution; albeit perhaps unconscious, and perhaps unthinking, but we have done so, willingly. The flock is listening to a deceptive voice of a deceiving shepherd when it comes to not having many children or keeping sexual purity.

My purpose with this article is not to throw stones, but to have an honest discussion regarding the state of the Church—“a voice in the desert.” At the beginning of his pontificate, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI said, “The Church as a whole and all her Pastors, like Christ, must set out to lead people out of the desert, towards the place of life, towards friendship with the Son of God, towards the One who gives us life, and life in abundance.” (Mass of Imposition of the Pallium, April 24, 2005) He repeated these words in his opening to this Year of Faith. (see *Porta Fidei*, Oct. 11, 2012)

As shepherds and pastors of souls, priests and bishops must be willing to cast our nets in waters that may seem unsafe or unwell-

coming. But if we do not go out into the deep, we may find that the shallows have all been fished out. Yes, pastors must open the Doors of Faith, but we ourselves must be willing to walk in first. If we, the shepherds, are unwilling to defend the Natural Law against the onslaught of secularism, how can we expect the flock to do so?

The experience of closing and now razing a school is one I do not want to repeat. For if a bishop or a priest hates closing a school, he is really going to hate closing a parish. In the midst of this Year of Faith, let us pray to the Holy Spirit to lead us out of this desert, this demographic winter, into a new Springtime and may Our Lady, the undoer of knots, open up our hearts to the love of God the Father and His Son, Jesus, and the love of new life in the Holy Spirit. Amen!

Fr. Timothy Sauppé

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*This article has been abridged for publication on LifeSiteNews.com, to view the full article please visit the [Bellarmine Forum](#).*



## Our Lady at Archbishop Riordan High School

Archbishop Riordan High School in San Francisco is different. It is distinctive. One clue to this is the statue of Mary Immaculate that greets you as you enter the campus courtyard. That beautiful life-size Carrara marble statue of Mary which dominates the entrance was not part of the original architectural plan, but the added tribute of the students and staff during the Marian Year of 1954. The purpose was to remind us of the Marianist-inspired charism that Christian education prepares us for participation in Mary's apostolic mission to bring Christ to the world.

Our Lady is the spiritual mother of all connected with Riordan. After Jesus Christ, she is the most important person to walk the face of the earth. History itself is divided "before" and "after" the birth of her Son. She was present at His birth, Christmas; at Cana, His first miracle; at the foot of the cross when He died for us; at Pentecost when the Paraclete came to guide the nascent Church. St. Paul, St. Luke, and St. John clearly attest to her importance in God's plan in the books of the divinely inspired New Testament.

The testimony of renowned litterateurs also give witness to Mary's pre-eminence in salvation history. John Ruskin declared "every brightest and loftiest achievement of the arts, dreams, advancement, and progress of humanity has been the fulfillment of that poor Israelite woman's prayer, 'He who is mighty has done great things for me.'"

William Wordsworth extolled her as "our tainted nature's solitary boast."

"All things rising, all things sizing, Mary sees sympathizing..." claimed Gerard Manley Hopkins. The Riordan family has sensed over the years her maternal presence rising, sizing, and sympathizing on a campus enfolded in her mantle, and is grateful that the pioneer Marianists placed their school under her patronage at its foundation in 1949. She is Our Lady of Riordan.

ARHS does not attempt to be like prestigious schools, but like Bethlehem, Nazareth, Cana, Calvary, and the Upper Room at Pentecost—with Mary and the One who called Himself the Way, the Truth, and the Life. The goal of this school is not just a career, but a call; not just a degree, but discipleship; not just the "I" but the "we"; not just the grades but the gospel.

Our Blessed Mother brings to ARHS a touch of the transcendent, a hint of the beyond, a whisper of the sacred that reminds us that we are not just minds and bodies, but hearts and immortal souls. She reminds us that we are called not to a "crap shoot" called life but to an adventure in faithfulness that urges us to cast out into the deep toward the Son of God, the Son of Mary; that He has a plan for us which was unfolded here, and that we are happiest when our plans are consonant with His.

This is the secret of Riordan: not something but someone—Our Lady, who gave the Son of God a human nature, and equipped us in our high school years to do the same.

Remember and be faithful.

Brother John Samaha, S.M.



## Indiana Expands School Voucher Program

Indianapolis, Ind., May 10, 2013  
(CNA/EWTN News).

Six weeks after the Indiana Supreme Court upheld the state's voucher program, Gov. Mike Pence has signed into law a bill that makes more children eligible for vouchers.

"Our Hoosier students deserve every opportunity to be successful. That includes having the choice to attend the school that works best for them," Gov. Pence said May 9 at a signing ceremony at Calvary Christian school in Indianapolis.

He said the legislation would give more educational options to the state's students.

The present program allows a family of four with an annual household income of \$64,000 to receive vouchers up to \$4,500 per child. Unlike programs in some other states, it does not limit vouchers to low-income students in failing schools.

The new bill expands eligibility requirements for vouchers. More children will be eligible without having to spend at least a year in public schools. Siblings of current voucher students, students with special needs, and children living in the attendance district of a public school that received a failing grade in state performance evaluations will also be eligible, the Associated Press reports.

The Indiana Catholic Conference said in a legislative roundup that current Catholic school families who meet income requirements are eligible for a tax credit scholarship through a scholarship granting organization.

The two-year-old program currently provides vouchers to 9,100 students. The U.S. Census estimated the number of school-age children in Indiana at about 160,000 in 2011.

Opponents of vouchers object that aid to religious schools is unconstitutional and that vouchers draw funds away from public schools.

In response to a legal challenge, the Indiana Supreme Court unanimously upheld the voucher program on March 26.

The court said that because parents, not the state, paid the tuition to religious schools the voucher program is constitutional, CNN reports.

Chief Justice Brent Dickson said the public funds "directly benefit lower-income families with children" and do not directly benefit religious schools.

Alliance Defending Freedom senior counsel Gregory S. Baylor, whose organization argued for the constitutionality of the program, defended it on the grounds that "parents should be able to choose what's best for their own children."

"The ultimate winners in the Indiana Supreme Court's decision are Indiana families who want to provide the best education for their children, whether it is public or private," Baylor said March 26.



## Former Ravens Center Matt Birk Explains Why He Declined Invitation to White House

Retired Ravens center Matt Birk spoke out Thursday morning on Minnesota's KFAN about his reason for declining an invitation from President Barack Obama to be at the White House during the team's visit a day earlier.

Birk, a six-time Pro Bowler who was on the Ravens' 2013 Super Bowl team, said he has "great respect for the office of the Presidency" but decided against going with the team on Wednesday as part of an annual NFL tradition for Super Bowl winners. Birk said he based his decision on a comment the president recently made in which he applauded Planned Parenthood, a leading health care provider of reproductive and sexual health:

*I wasn't there. I would say this, I would say that I have great respect for the office of the Presidency but about five or six weeks ago, our President made a comment in a speech and he said, "God bless Planned Parenthood..."*

*Planned Parenthood performs about 330,000 abortions a year. I am Catholic, I am active in the Pro-Life movement and I just felt like I couldn't deal with that. I couldn't endorse that in any way...I'm very confused by [the President's] statement. For God to bless a place where they're ending 330,000 lives a year? I just chose not to attend.*

Obama spoke to Planned Parenthood at the end of April, saying the organization has "a President who's going to be right there with you," and then ended his speech with the comments that Birk took issue with.

*Editor's Note: Matt Birk is a graduate of Cretin-Durham Hall, a Catholic high school in St. Paul, MN.*

Marc Weinreich  
June 7, 2013  
*Sports Illustrated*



## Chart-Topping Sister Mary Josefa Reflects on Thomas Aquinas College

*The following is the second in a three-part series on the intersection of sacred music and Catholic education, in anticipation of the forthcoming in Rome. Thank you to [De Montfort Music](#), producers of the highly acclaimed album [Advent at Ephesus](#) and the new [Angels and Saints at Ephesus](#), for arranging a very rare and special opportunity to interview two of the [Benedictine Sisters of Mary, Queen of the Apostles](#), about their work on the new album and the influence of a Catholic education. The album is available for purchase from the [Benedictine Sisters of Mary](#), and proceeds from the sale will go to the order.*

The fact that authentic Catholic education is rooted in the sacred liturgy of the Church couldn't be more apparent to Sister Mary Josefa, whose path from Thomas Aquinas College in Santa Paula, Calif., to the Benedictines of Mary, Queen of the Apostles, near Kansas City, Mo., was marked by reverent prayer, music and the Sacraments.

Thomas Aquinas College is recommended in *The Newman Guide* for its strong Catholic identity, and the liturgical life of its students is as important to them and their tutors as is the top-rated academic program. It's no surprise when graduates are called to the priesthood or religious life.

Sister Josefa heard God's call to the Benedictines while studying at Thomas Aquinas College. But she could never have anticipated that by joining the contemplative Sisters and committing to a monastic lifestyle, she would soon be among America's leading recording artists.

The Sisters' *Advent at Ephesus*, an album of sacred music released in 2012, topped Billboard's Classical Music Chart for six weeks. Now Sister Josefa is among the stunningly beautiful voices on the new chart-topping album, *Angels and Saints at Ephesus*. Tim Drake spoke with Sister Josefa via email and received her responses through her superior, Mother Cecilia.

**Congratulations on the new album. Is such beautiful music part of everyday life at the Priory? What does it mean that contemplative Sisters are topping the music charts?**

Yes, thanks be to God, we are blessed with beautiful music every day, principally at the recitation of the Divine Office (some of the Gregorian chant on the CDs are hymns that we sing in the course of the liturgical year during the Office), but also for our daily Mass at which we use both chant and polyphonic pieces. We often bring music to our recreations, especially during festive seasons like Christmas and Easter, and we also enjoy learning special pieces to sing for feast days, especially as a surprise for Mother Prioress.

That contemplative sisters are making CDs that top the music charts indicates a desire in society for contemplative music: music that expresses truth, goodness and beauty, music that brings peace (which St. Augustine aptly terms "the tranquility of order," so absent from the hectic pace of modern lifestyles), music that ultimately draws the listener to the source of all these, to God Himself.

**Were you drawn to sacred music in high school or even earlier? How did music**



## **impact your formation as a young Catholic?**

I was drawn to sacred music when I was still quite young; I remember that my favorite tapes as a 7 year-old were recordings of the Trapp Family Singers, whose repertoire includes sacred as well as folk and classical music. From that age through high school, I studied classical piano and often learned hymns and other sacred music for keyboard. As a student at Thomas Aquinas College, I sang in the College Choir and there was able to sing the *a capella*, polyphonic music that I had enjoyed as a child.

This exposure to sacred music throughout my education helped to form my faith by teaching me love and reverence for sacred things through the beauty of music.

## **Why did you choose to attend Thomas Aquinas College?**

I chose to attend Thomas Aquinas College because it integrated classical and Catholic education; I was fascinated by the liberal arts program, with its consideration and discussion of original sources, introducing the student to the perennial questions with which mankind has always grappled, but I was further drawn by the Catholic identity of the school, which orders this program of studies in order to lead the student from the contemplation of created truth to the contemplation of God Himself.

## **What was your experience of the liturgy and sacred music while at the College? Did it help in the discernment of your vocation?**

At Thomas Aquinas College, I was introduced to the Latin Ordinary Form of the Mass, often accompanied by the Gregorian Schola or the *a capella* polyphonic choir.

The use of the liturgical language made a great impression on me; I found that I preferred to pray in the language of the Church. Both at TAC and later at the ITI, I often would join groups of other students to chant the Divine Office in Latin, particularly the Office of Tenebrae during Holy Week. This love for chanting the Office in Latin eventually became one of the principal factors in discerning my religious vocation. I realized that if I decided to become a religious, especially a contemplative religious, then this would be the way that I would want to pray. Through Latin and the ancient chants, I was able to enter into the mind and heart of the Church and pray with her voice.

## **Is reverent liturgy important to a Catholic education? How does it relate to the academic life of a high school or college?**

Reverent liturgy is indispensable to a Catholic education. The purpose of Catholic education is to lead the human person to know and love the highest things—truth, goodness, and beauty—and to know and love their ultimate source, God Himself. The liturgy places the person in direct contact with God and so must be faithful in expressing as much of His truth, goodness, and beauty as possible.

Reverent liturgy relates to a school's academic life because it forms the students' faith in invisible realities and teaches them the loving contemplation of the truths that they are studying.

## **Many Catholic colleges have become increasingly secular. How did Catholic identity at Thomas Aquinas College help to strengthen your faith, and play a role in your vocation?**



At TAC, I was blessed to be part of a community that was really unified and ordered by its Catholic identity. I attended daily Mass and Rosary with my teachers and fellow students; the chapel was the central point of the campus and teachers and students always would stop on the way to or from class for a visit; everyone acknowledged senior theology as the culminating point of the curriculum to which all the other classes were ordered; in these and countless other ways, I experienced a community that recognized that the invisible

realities are more real, more important than the visible ones. Naturally, this greatly nourished the inclination that I had had to religious life since I was young. Many of my fellow students were also drawn to religious life as a result of the strong Catholic community and contemplative program of studies, and having peers considering a vocation really strengthened my own.

**Tim Drake**

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*Catholic Education Daily*



## Teacher Tells 6-year-old: Jesus Not Allowed in School

A California elementary school is facing a possible lawsuit after a teacher allegedly confiscated a six-year-old child's Christmas candy canes and told him, "Jesus is not allowed in school."

Last December, Isaiah Martinez brought his first grade classmates at Merced Elementary School candy canes. Attached to each treat was a message explaining the religious legend surround the candies. The legend references a candy maker who created the candy cane to symbolize the life of Christ.

When the six-year-old boy arrived at school, his teacher noticed the religious message and immediately confiscated the gifts, according to Robert Tyler, the general counsel for Advocates for Faith & Freedom.

The teacher, identified by the AFF as Valerie Lu, then consulted with the supervising principal who instructed her to prevent Isaiah from distributing the candy canes.

"Ms. Lu then spoke to Isaiah and told him that 'Jesus is not allowed at school,'" Tyler wrote in a letter to the West Covina Unified School District: "In fear that he was in some sort of trouble, Isaiah then watched as Ms. Lu proceeded to rip the candy cane legend off of each candy cane and then throw the Christian messages back into the box."

Tyler said the little boy watched as his teacher threw the box and the messages into the trash.

"She then told Isaiah that he could distribute the candy canes now that the Christian messages were eliminated," Tyler wrote, noting that the teacher was following the "explicit instructions" of her supervisor, Gordon Pfitzer.

Isaiah was later allowed to distribute candy canes with a Christian message but he was forced to do so off-campus, outside the schoolhouse gate at the conclusion of the school day, according to his attorney

"Meanwhile, other students in Isaiah's class handed out Christmas gifts to their fellow classmates," Tyler wrote. "Some of these gifts expressed secular messages concerning Christmas and were packaged with images of Santa Claus, penguins with Santa hats, Christmas trees and other secular messages."

The Advocates for Faith & Freedom sent a letter to the district demanding they apologize to Isaiah and adopt a new policy "to prohibit school officials from bullying and intimidating Christian students and religiously affiliated students."

Tyler said it has been well established by the U.S. Supreme Court that students do not "shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech or expression at the schoolhouse gate."

Todd Starnes  
January 9, 2014  
Townhall.com

