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A Word From Our Editor

An Analysis of a Debacle

For the past several days, my phone and email have been hyperactive as I have been asked by dozens of people for my "take" on the firestorm surrounding a group of students from Covington Catholic High School following the March for Life in Washington, D.C., last Friday. I have been contacted because most know that I have spent my entire priestly ministry in Catholic education, actually beginning to teach high school while still a college seminarian; honesty compels me to say I have some degree of expertise and competence in this area. Not without reason, then, am I often introduced at Catholic school events as "Father Catholic Education."

So, what did/do we know? It is somewhat like "A Tale of Two Cities."

Scenario A: A group of high school boys disrespected a Native American man with a drum.

Scenario B:

Act One: The boys, fresh from the March for Life, go to the Lincoln Memorial and wait for their bus to take them home. While there, they are confronted by a hostile, vile group of black supremacists who hurl at them anti-Catholic, anti-white, anti-gay and anti-American slogans – even calling the two black boys from the school "niggers". This activity goes on for nearly two hours.

Act Two: A Native American man interposes himself between the hostile black agitators and the "CovCath" kids, getting directly into the face of one of the boys – who "smirks."

Within nano-seconds, the media is all over the story, reporting Scenario A: Catholic high school boys, in D.C. to work against women's reproductive rights, are also racists. In short order, the administration of the school and the Diocese of Covington get on board and condemn the boys, even threatening expulsion. As real "facts"and video emerge, the story moves in the direction of Scenario B, causing some media outlets to apologize, including Jake Tapper of CNN. Even the peripatetic Father James Martin expressed a willingness to apologize (I somehow or other doubt he was at the March for Life); perhaps when he heard the anti-gay slurs from the black supremacists, that changed his mind!

Analysis

1. Shame on the Diocese and the school for rushing to judgment, especially in this Francis era of "Who am I to judge?" In this terrible time of instantaneous "news," have we not learned to keep our counsel until a full picture develops? How many police officers have been unjustly condemned by rash evaluations, only to be vindicated when full, unedited videos become available?

More to the point: As a former high school teacher and administrator, I have no delusions about the sanctity of teenagers. However, I always made a presumption of innocence (isn't that a basic tenet of American jurisprudence?), but was likewise confident in the human and Christian formation to which my students had been exposed. I was able to troop them around the country and even Europe with nary a care about their conduct.

If "CovCath" felt compelled to believe the worst about their kids, what does it say about their level of confidence in what they have taught those young men and what those students have or have not absorbed. I would be happy to offer their faculty and administration one of my popular workshops on Catholic identity!

When the media contacted the school and the Diocese, an appropriate and fair response would have been: "We have no comment at present, pending a full investigation of the episode." Period. And no fair-minded reporter could have balked at that.

2. Why were some of the boys wearing MAGA hats? To be sure, there is nothing immoral about them, but they are unnecessarily provocative, skewing the pro-life cause in the minds of an already-negative culture. If the boys were in the nation's capital to learn, first-hand, about American civics, it would have behooved adults to tell them that we don't need to be "in your face" to win a cause; truth be told, the pro-life movement has gotten as far as it has (and it has gotten very far, largely due to now two generations of Catholic school students), precisely because we have always taken the high road – which has always infuriated the proponents of the Culture of Death. I am a Trump supporter (albeit at times a reluctant one) but would not have worn a MAGA cap to the March and, as a principal, would not have allowed my students to do so, either.

3. Where were the chaperones? Some adults were clearly present since the boys asked their permission to chant the school fight song – and got it from someone. The very minute that the black racists started in on the boys, I would have said, "Guys, let's go. We're out of here!" Instead, they allowed the situation to escalate for nearly two hours! They did not teach the boys how to handle a bad situation and actually endangered their welfare.

If those chaperones were faculty or staff, they should be terminated. If they were parents, they should never again be given a position of trust.

4. The Native American activist certainly did not enter the fray to de-escalate the impending crisis; he went to agitate (as his unfolding history now demonstrates). He has the temerity to say that he felt threatened by the boys, when it was he who marched into their midst, coming within inches of Nick Sandmann's face. Had a white supremacist done that to a Native American or African American boy, all hell would have broken lose in the mainstream media.

5. The "Statement of Nicholas Sandmann" is a powerful account of the unfolding of events, with every detail corroborated by subsequent audio and video; indeed, none of it shows any wrong behavior by the kids: not a hint of malice or prejudice, even under fire. I must say that as impressed as I am by the "Statement," my long years in high school work cause me to question

that the document was written by a sixteen-year-old! It would have been better to call it a "Statement on Behalf of Nicholas Sandmann."

Where do we go from here?

The school sent the boys to Washington to advocate for justice for the unborn, and it should be praised for that. Unfortunately, the kids themselves didn't get justice from the anti-life media and, even more sadly, from their own Church.

In this professional educator's opinion, how should this be resolved? The Diocese and school ought to apologize to the boys. The adults present should get the axe. But I'm not holding my breath.

Rev. Peter Stravinskas

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What Happened to These Catholic College Students After They Took a Required Theology Course

A Notre Dame professor notes the changes in his students after completing his course on the Catholic understanding of the development of character.

I teach a theology course that studies the Catholic understanding of the development of character. Because my university requires every student to take two theology courses as part of the core curriculum, a good number of my students wouldn't take a course like this unless they had to. They may be sort of interested in thinking about their character, but with all the pressure to prepare for their projected career field, they probably wouldn't sacrifice a slot in their schedules if they didn't have to.

At the beginning of the course, I ask the students to write a short essay response to each of the following three questions:

- Who is God?
- What is the world? (i.e., the universe, all that exists)
- What is the human being?

The first time they answer these questions, they haven't studied anything in the course yet. The answers tend to range from what you might expect from typical Sunday school students to confessions of disbelief as to the existence of God, purely physical conceptions of the world, and individualistic, self-determining notions about the human being. I call these essays the "Foundational Principles Essays."

Over the following 16 weeks, we do a lot. We study the Christian doctrine of creation, closely reading Genesis 1–2 alongside ancient creation myths as found in the Babylonians and Romans, as well as modern creation myths such as you might find in Apple commercials. We see how in the Judeo-Christian imagination, creation comes about only because God wills it, that the cosmos is described in terms of a temple and ordered towards an ultimate end of worship in fullness of God's presence. We see how the human being is not only the image and likeness of this free and gracious Creator, but also purposefully formed from the good earth and animated in the most intimate way: through the sharing of breath. We see how original solidarity precedes Original Sin, how speech first communicates blessings before curses, how trust and transparency are natural while deception and self-consciousness spoil this created goodness, and ultimately how the person of Jesus as encountered in the resurrection appearances narratives shows himself as the redemption of all that has been spoiled.

In short, God is free and gracious, the world is God's good creation, and the human being is the union of intentionally formed earth stuff and donated breath. In the light of the Resurrection, it is all seen as good and redeemed as good. This is the foundation of human life.

That's the first third of the course. In the second third of the course, the students examine the complexities of communication and intention, or how lying, manipulation, and deception make human community impossible. Heaven, by contrast, is truthfulness itself, where lying, manipulation, and deception are driven out so that true and everlasting peace is given (see Rev. 21). The personal question that arises from this is something like "What do you love?" We may say that lives we love

truth and goodness and joy and community or even God, but in practice, do we? Are we attached to our own ways, the ways in which we reconceive the world in our own image, in love with the little mini-dramas that we wrap others in unawares? Do we really love that attempt at control, after all? In the Christian diagnosis, the answer to those questions is "yes." Yes, we love our own fabricated ways, and so we must be liberated from them.

So we study the stages of mystical ascent, from the purgative stage (separating from the old way) to the illuminative stage (slowly and habitually practicing a new way) to the unitive stage (where we learn to love what we previously didn't). St. Francis's transformation shows all three of these, though perhaps it is easiest to see the purgative in him. St. Benedict's monastery is a prime example of the illuminative, while someone like St. Thérèse of Lisieux shows what the fruit of holiness is: to desire what your beloved desires, which she shows to mean loving in the way in which Christ, her beloved, loves. She wills to sacrifice for the sake of others. In the Christian view, that is the highest potential for human life.

If that end is the deepest and ultimate Christian desire – to become the sort of person capable of bearing the cost of love – the question then becomes, "So how will you live?" If you want to become such a person, how do you get there? The simple but demanding disciplines of solitude and community are central. Solitude is far more than simply being alone, while community is far more than simply being with others. Both are practices of presence, of rapt attentiveness, of the focus and commitment of oneself. The practice of leisure – as, for example, Josef Pieper describes it in his classic text – gives a glimpse into what solitude both demands and affords.

Similarly, the Works of Mercy are the prescription for those who must, as Dorothy Day puts it, "subordinate our impulses … And live as though we were actually members of one another."

I should repeat that this is an academic course. It is not Sunday school. It is not faith-sharing. What we do is study the Catholic understanding of the development of character: of who the human person is and what the human person is called to become. The students are not required to buy in to this vision, but they are required to study it and seek to understand it. What they end up seeing is that it is a coherent vision.

At the end of the course, the students are asked to craft a final draft of their "Foundational Principles Essays." When compared to the final drafts, those first drafts from 16 weeks prior don't always appear to the students as wrong as much as they read as rather vague, abstract, and imprecise. This is just as true for those who are the products of Catholic education as it is for those who have never had any real religious upbringing. What I have come to see is that the foundational principles on which most young people just happen to build their lives lack substance and form. Those principles are themselves not unlike the indeterminate stuff that is in need of God's order at the beginning of Genesis.

The differences in the final draft are sometimes dramatic and sometimes quite subtle. I revel in the subtleties of slight shifts. For example, one student wrote "I still don't completely believe in God as a caretaker figure." I know just how much that little word "completely" means here. This is a student who came in with a totally mechanical view of the world and a view that God, if there is a God, is at best a distant and uninvolved figure. From her theological study, though, those assumptions

were ever so slightly troubled. That word "completely" is the signal of that.

What is most beautiful of all, though, is that, by and large, the responses that the students write at the end are far more coherent than the ones at the beginning. They see how the belief in who God is and what the world is and what the human being is are all related in the Christian understanding. Even without necessarily making an act of faith themselves, they have learned to articulate that coherence in their own words, and they claim that articulation as their own.

Like I said, this is the kind of course that students at a Catholic university would not necessarily take unless they had to. A core curriculum that requires theology courses ensures that students engage inquiries like this. In the landscape of higher education where a technocratic paradigm is becoming more and more pervasive, this kind of education is a reminder of what university education was meant to be in the first place: the cultivation of young minds towards a coherent and well-informed view of the world and of human beings. It was meant to be about examining and solidifying foundational principles, and then engaging the project of developing not just skills for the marketplace but indeed personal character.

Leonard J. DeLorenzo

https://aleteia.org/2019/01/02/what-happened-to-these-catholic-college-students-after-they-took-a-required-theology-course/

Signs of Hope

The church in Egypt rises again, reaching out to those on the margins

(Original) Editors' note: Through countless efforts across Egypt, the Coptic Catholic Church — although numerically small — works tirelessly to elevate lives and promote the flourishing of communities. The challenges are great, particularly when serving those who are marginalized. But some of the success stories offer inspiration and, in so many ways, signs of hope.

Fefi Abdel describes the home life of her youth with a sense of isolation and sadness. "My parents do not know sign language," the 24-year-old says. "When I used to live in their house, I didn't feel well; nobody understood me and I didn't understand what was going on around me."

When she goes on to say the Better Life ministry changed her life, it is easy to see why. The program, which addresses the needs of deaf and hearing-impaired Egyptians, has provided her not only with care, but also a sense of community.

"When I come here, I feel connected to the world. I'm very happy when I'm amongst them," she says, signing her words faster than Mariam Nassif, the leader of the program, could translate.

Through this community, the young woman even met her husband, 22-year-old Dawood Milad.

"I liked him in secret for a long time, and he liked me in secret," she says, face shining with a shy smile. "He proposed to me at a conference in Alexandria."

Employed in a limestone quarry in Minya, a city south of Cairo, Mr. Milad works hard but earns little money — a limitation felt all the more acutely now, as the couple is expecting their first child.

"God has chosen Dawood for me," Mrs. Abdel says. "We will live happily in peace, even with little money."

Fefi and Dawood are just two out of about 100 hearing-impaired people who are served by the Better Life. Established by the Rev. Boulos Nassif — Mariam Nassif's brother — the ministry has been serving the Coptic Catholic Eparchy of Minya directly for more than 20 years.

To the group's members, the Nassif siblings are pillars — practically parental figures, as some say — always willing to discuss problems and share advice.

"The ministry here is not only spiritual," Ms. Nassif says. "The families bring us their children early on and we become everything for them."

Every Friday, two buses arrive at St. Joseph School in Minya around 11 a.m., after collecting participants from surrounding villages. The program begins with some recreational time, followed by group prayer. Finally, each age group is given a choice of workshops to attend in the various classrooms, where instructors — themselves often deaf — teach a variety of topics.

Through what the ministry receives in donations, Ms. Nassif says, it provides assistance to its members, including clothing, food, health care and school tuition. Furthermore, the program offers members translation services, which is

particularly helpful when dealing with governmental entities.

Ten of its youngest members have received assistance to attend a primary school in Cairo for the deaf, as their local schools could not accommodate them.

Susanna Akram, 25, joined the group as a toddler, as did her sister. Her mother, Mary Farouk, also assists with various church programs that serve the deaf community.

“When Susanna and her sister were 3, I told myself, if they will not be able to live with me with [spoken] words, I could live with them with sign language,” Mrs. Farouk says.

Ms. Akram attended training in Lebanon two years ago and now assists younger group members, leading in prayers and then hosting one of the workshops.

“Deaf people have a lot of dreams, but to no avail,” Ms. Akram says.

“The deaf are absent from their own environment,” Father Nassif adds, “because there is not enough attention given to their condition.”

Father Nassif has a keen awareness of the special needs that often go unmet, especially at the margins of society. In addition to his work with the deaf community, he has spearheaded a number of other local initiatives, including a prison ministry.

In Egypt, he says, there are many faults in the popular understanding of disabilities in general. Deaf people may be viewed as lesser in intelligence or fitness for employment.

“They are normal people, like us,” he says, adding that they merely face a communication gap.

The Coptic Catholic priest believes the church can and must play a greater role in assisting such underserved communities. “Churches in general don’t have priests who speak sign language,” he says.
One of Father Nassif’s dreams is to build a school for deaf students in Minya. Although the ministry has the necessary experience and trained personnel, gathering financial resources remains the principal challenge.

Nevertheless, through this and countless other efforts across Egypt, the Coptic Catholic Church — though numerically small — works tirelessly to elevate lives and promote the flourishing of communities. But it is a challenge that the church is facing with determination and a renewed sense of resolve.

In August 2013, amid clashes with security forces, supporters of ousted President Muhammad Morsi formed mobs and attacked Christian institutions across Egypt. More than 80 church and religious service buildings were looted and razed.

Among those buildings burnt was the Franciscan Sisters’ School in the town of Beni Suef, about 60 miles south of Cairo.

For more than 120 years, this primary school opened its doors to all members of the community, regardless of social class or religion. However, amid a conflagration of sectarian violence, the cross atop the building became a target.

In the reception room of the school, the sisters recount the horror they felt that day.

“They gave no choice to the four sisters at the building,” says Sister Nagat Samaan, superior of the community of women religious.

“The sisters fled without knowing where to go. The closest place that took them in was the home of a Muslim woman who used to work in the school.”

Sister Nagat recalls with sorrow the first time she set foot in the building after the attack. “The scene was very painful,” she says. “They destroyed and stole everything. I don’t want to remember it.”

Most Muslims in Beni Suef were upset, even angry, to learn what had befallen the school; many enrolled their own children there. A longtime community fixture, it was seen as neither religiously nor politically provocative.

“After the events, Muslim young people from the neighborhood came to apologize that they were not able to protect the school,” Sister Nagat says.

Although the sisters could not have afforded to rebuild with their own resources, the seeds they planted over decades of work within the community bore fruit.

When the army pledged to rebuild the buildings destroyed in the attacks, General Taher Abdullah, an alumnus, came to visit the school. Reminiscing about his time there, and speaking of his debt to the sisters, he helped to move the school on the top of the repair list.

About a year after its destruction, the building stood once more. It reopened to students in September of 2015.

Before the opening day, parents of the students came to help clean, decorate and otherwise prepare the classrooms.

“We all came to help because we consider this place part of our home,” said Eman Ali, mother of two students — Ali, in second grade, and Abdul Rahman, who recently graduated to a secondary school.

Abdul Rahman, 14, loved the sisters’ school, and would go as early as the doors would open. Adjusting to the “chaotic” system of the secular school he now attends has been a challenge.
“There is no education,” he says. “They deal with everything with beating and insulting. If you want to run from the school, nobody cares if you come or not.

“I got used to a high standard of education at the Franciscan Sisters’ School. But what I miss the most is the system.”

Mrs. Ali and other parents wish the Franciscan Sisters would add a secondary school, so their children could continue their studies with the same level of warmth and encouragement.

“Here, the children learn strong moral values, which helps us at home,” Mrs Ali says.

Shereen Bibawi, mother of second-grader Mahriel, agrees with Mrs. Ali, and is another voice urging the sisters to extend their school through the higher grades. Her older son, Philopater, now in his first year at a secular school, was ranked first in the class in his final year at the sisters’ school.

“I was crying when Philopater had to move to another school,” Mrs. Bibawi says.

Out of the 15 Franciscan schools in Egypt, the sisters' school in Beni Suef is the only one without a secondary section. The school's administration has responded to the wishes of the parents; last year, they began building a preparatory school in a building attached to the primary school.

But the work is proceeding slowly, Sister Nagat says, because of the lack of resources. But with the confidence and support of their community behind them, it is only a matter of time.

For 27 years, Fadel Labib Tobia, 47, has been working as a custodian at Salama Nashed Service Center in Samalut, about 120 miles south of Cairo.
While once alive with guests and activities, now Mr. Tobia says he cleans the rooms and finds them dusty again before they see use. "I feel sad that there are no activities at the place," he says. "I have spent all my life here."

But where many might see a dusty conference center, Coptic Catholic Bishop Botros Fahim of Minya sees opportunity.

In his vision, the future of the Coptic Catholic Church begins with youth formation. The bishop believes that Salama Nashed Center is the best place to continue this mission — a site for education, training and community-building activities, much as those it once hosted.

Originally a hotel, the building's previous owner was a Coptic lawyer named Salama Nashed. He donated it to the Catholic Church in the beginning of the 1980's. As a sign of gratitude, the center was named after him.

In the years after, it was constantly busy with conferences and seminars.

After his own ordination in the 1980's, Bishop Botros spent five
years organizing seminars and conferences in the center — especially during the busy summer months, when the center would host retreats and longer seminars.

"This house was part of my life," Bishop Botros says.

In the years since his work there, it slowly deteriorated and fell out of use. Amid the political upheaval of 2011, it briefly ceased to operate altogether — and then again after terrorists staged a major attack on a bus transporting Copts in Minya in 2017, killing dozens.

When he was named bishop, he went to visit the center. When he saw its decrepit condition, he could not hold back his tears.

"Most of the events are usually held in the summer, and as you can see there is no air conditioning," says Marco Eisa, 27, the manager of the center. "That makes it very difficult to host such numbers in the summer."

He walks through the conference halls, taking stock of the work ahead. "There is no sound system; the kitchen is not equipped; we have too few blankets." Only one of the three halls, which can accommodate 200 guests, is currently usable.

Bishop Botros began renovating the center about a year and a half ago with what resources he could allocate. Restoration has come a long way — the bedrooms are more comfortable, and the bathrooms function.

But much work remains to restore the luster he so fondly remembers.

“A lot of people met each other and became friends at this place,” he says. Soon, he knows, it will serve a new generation in the same way.

And the hope that has already taken root will continue to grow.

Magdy Samaan

http://www.cnewa.org/default.aspx?ID=3968&pagetypeID=4&sitecode=HQ&pageno=1

Why Catholic Millennials Need These Four Urgent Life Skills

Many complain that young people are not getting the basic life skills so needed to survive in the world. Parents and schools no longer teach skills like cooking, laundry, budgeting, or car repair as in times past.

At the same time, our culture encourages young people to extend their adolescence well into their twenties. They postpone future responsibilities indefinitely as seen in a third of young adults between 18 and 34 that now rely upon their parents for room, board or financial support.

The result is a surge of young people ill-prepared to by adults. Indeed, the act of young people doing adult-like things has given rise to the new verb "to adult." Making a bed in the morning is an exercise in adulting as would be arriving on time for work.

Marketers would be amiss if they did not take notice of an opportunity. Hence, adulting classes have sprung up all over the country.

The Rise of Adulting Classes

The Adulting Collective of Portland, Maine, for example, offers a wide variety of classes which include bicycle safety, gift-giving, budgeting, and nutritional planning. Other courses can be found at the Brooklyn Brainery or the online Society of Grownups. The target demographic is that 93 million strong sector of people in their twenties and early thirties that missed out on the art of taking care of themselves that was once learned in the home and school.

As one who has worked with and taught young people, I think we need to be careful about writing them all off as melting snowflakes or incurable cell phone addicts. Not all millennials are equally in need of adulting. Some have developed good work ethics and practical skills from heroic parents.

However, many still need help. What I see in the young generation is not something new, but a logical consequence of defects from prior generations, starting with my own boomer generation. The sixties started the destruction of the morals and rules that restrained our passions and bad tendencies. They devastated the social framework that kept order in society. The result is lives without structure and rules.

This is complicated by new technologies that help make people progressively more impulsive and distracted. Today's frenzied lifestyles leave a lot of people without time to fix, teach, and learn. Despite all their online connections, young people are more isolated and lonely than previous generations.

Are Adulting Classes the Solution?

Adulting classes claim to help millennials develop those skills left behind, and ease them into full adulthood. The tasks can be as simple as fixing a car, writing letters, cleaning house, digging a hole, changing a tire, cooking, sewing, preparing for job interviews or managing money.
As much as these abilities are needed, I believe they do not represent the life skills that millennial Catholics desperately need to survive in this world. I note that so many millennials (following in the footsteps of their parents) hardly think about those skills that develop the more spiritual side of the human condition.

These more spiritual skills lead to wisdom, perfection, and sanctification. Learning these skills will give millennials the means to deal with the other more practical tasks. The higher resolves the lower. It is a case of "Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God, and his justice and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33).

Thus, I would propose four adulting classes for Catholic millennials that I think they need, based on my observation of young people over the years. That is not to say older people do not need these same skills, but rather they are specially required by young adults who have yet to assume adult responsibilities.

A Schedule Class

The first adulting class would be developing a sense of schedule. A schedule class would put a person's life in order by developing the idea of method and routine in flighty souls. The postmodern tendency is to walk away from problems that become difficult especially those that involve regular attendance. The spiritual writer, Dom Jean-Baptiste Chautard notes that "a soul cannot lead an interior life without the schedule we have referred to, and with the firm resolution to keep it all the time, especially where the rigorously fixed hour of rising is concerned."

A schedule avoids the pitfalls of postmodern life with its constant cyber-distractions and impulsive wanderings. I cannot help but think that such lessons could contribute toward preventing people from leaving jobs, commitments, and marriages that tire them and keep them from living spontaneous lives without a course…or a cross.

Schedules provide a framework of order, and it is a much-needed commodity for millennials who aspire to become adults.

Reading Is Important

A second adulting class would be a reading course. I am not saying that millennials do not read. I suspect they read a lot. What concerns me is what they read, where they read it and how it is read.

I have seen studies that report many young people do not read a single book during a year. Others never read a newspaper. Many start and do not finish their books.

My experience is that reading is a habit that can be acquired with much coaxing. I have personally helped young people who never read a book become avid readers by constantly encouraging them to read the right books.

Millennials need to read the right books to fill their minds with perennial truths they need to deal with life. Thus, a reading course would feature classical books, extremely interesting stories, biographies and history long abandoned by postmodern educators. It would include those tried and true religious books and saints' lives that have been taken off the reading lists of Catholics for decades.

The course would start by asking students to finish their books to the end and then develop the habit of reading and savoring good books. Once they start reading, they gradually develop their appetites for profound commentary and populate their minds with interesting material that develops strong personalities.

I might add that good reading skills tend to improve writing skills that I notice have

become ruleless and sloppy in our digital age.

Lessons on Failure

Postmodern life tends to be shallow because people are afraid of failure. Studies show millennials and the next Z-generation are adverse to risk. One very important adulting class would be a class on failure.

Students would be taught the value of lessons learned from failure. They would be required to read tales of spectacular failures and defeats that nevertheless developed character. They would learn about the defeat of Leonidas at Thermopylae or the failed expedition of Sir Ernest Henry Shackleton in Antarctica. They would especially read the accounts of martyrs like Saint Isaac Jogues or heroes like Saint Louis IX who suffered setbacks, defeats and even death. They would learn that even failure can be fruitful.

In Catholic theology, this lesson is found in the concept of the cross of Christ and the need for us to carry our crosses. Thus, Catholics would gain much by tapping into the rich literature about the Cross of Christ.

Indeed, after Original Sin, we all must suffer. Those who do not resolve to embrace the cross of suffering, to do their duty and carry its weight until the end, will not develop their character. Those who accept suffering and often failure—the cross—are transformed by the experience. They become adults.

Learning to Pray

The final adulting class would be on prayer. Many people and especially young people have very superficial notions of prayer and spiritual life. At best, many consider prayer a kind of dispenser of God's favors for those who ask. At worst, prayer is deemed a psychological crutch that helps people deal with times of difficulty. Like reading, many never pray at all.

I notice many young people have a very vague notion of what prayer entails. They are unaware of the ends of prayer: adoration, reparation, thanksgiving, and petition. They limit their prayer to petition without employing it to know, love, and adore God.

Prayer is necessary for salvation. It helps us obtain goals that are impossible without it. Prayer is a great and powerful means to deal with adversity. This unique adulting course would include the learning of the rosary and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. It would open up the treasures of the Church about this necessary means for salvation. It would introduce students to the concept of spiritual life and the action of grace in souls.

The Important Spiritual Side

There are many more adulting classes that might be taught such as the art of conversation, norms of courtesy and leisure. All these things involve our now lost Christian tradition that seeks to look beyond material well-being. Barry Goldwater rightly affirmed this universally recognized outlook in his Conscience of a Conservative (ghostwritten by Catholic convert L. Brent Bozell, Jr.) that every man is a unique and "spiritual creature with spiritual needs and spiritual desires."

If we are to solve the problems of a childish world, we must address this superior spiritual side of man's nature. Focusing on this spiritual side gives rise to political, social, cultural, and religious activities and solutions that tower far above the practical skills now offered to adulting youth.

John Horvat II

https://www.crisismagazine.com/2019/why-catholic-millennials-need-these-four-urgent-life-skills

French Chapel Where Missionary Vocation in the U.S. Was Born To Be Restored

More than 200 years after Mother Rose Philippine Duschene left France to come to the United States and found a network of Catholic schools, restoration efforts are now underway to preserve the mystical chapel in France where her missionary vocation first began.

The Chapel of Les Feuillants is nestled in the heart of Poitiers, France - a city known for its Romanesque architecture, and a place of strategic military defense during both the battle of Tours and during the Hundred Years' War.

Today its most notable tourist attractions are the city's churches and its Chapel of Les Feuillants, which has special ties to the United States. The chapel is the subject of both spiritual and cultural renewal.

In 1800, Mother Madeleine Sophie Barat founded the order of the Sacred Heart with a mission to educate young women, particularly the poorest of society. In 1806, the order founded its third school in Poitiers and, in 1818, they launched a massive effort to build a chapel alongside.

For Mother Rose Philippine Duschene, the chapel was the place where she prayed that she might be able to travel to the U.S. to follow her lifelong dream of working with young girls to provide them education.

In 1818, she traveled first to New Orleans, then up the Mississippi River by steamboat, where she would spend the rest of her life opening or teaching in schools throughout Missouri, Kansas, and Louisiana - a life's work that would lead to her canonization by Pope John Paul II in 1988.

Years later, that chapel would provide inspiration to another nun, Sister Josefa Maria Menendez - an emigrant from Spain who joined the order in her twenties. While in prayer in the chapel, she is said to have received hundreds of apparitions from Christ revealing to her insights into the Sacred Heart devotional. She would later transcribe those revelations in her autobiography, *Christ's Appeal for Love*, which has now stirred one of the restoration project's backers to support it.

Over the past 200 years, the neoclassical chapel - a rarity in Poitiers, which is known for its medieval style - has fallen into disrepair. Its rare wood frame, with only two others of its kind in the world, was in jeopardy of crumbling.

In 2000, facing the prospects of massive maintenance, the order of the Sacred Heart sold off the property to a local real estate company who turned the adjacent school buildings into retirement facilities. The chapel, however, was left untouched and largely forgotten.

In 2017, however, a group of three young people seeking to create a space for both culture and spiritual life rediscovered the chapel and hatched a plan to save it.

Luc Desroche, a 26-year old board member who serves as vice-president of the association, told Crux that "this very place has a long story and deep spiritual roots that speak to my personal beliefs."

"I believe this place can offer a strong spiritual and cultural force," he added.

For Desroche, who spends most of his time traveling around the country performing his one-man show about the great French playwright Molière, he believes the space has the potential to introduce a new generation to the country's rich heritage.

"In France, we have a tendency to lose and forget our history and not transmit it to the next generation," he lamented. "We need places like this to transmit our culture - and translated to the largest audience possible."

While performances have already been underway, efforts have been launched to raise $4.5 million so that by 2020 a full cultural program can be launched to inhabit the chapel.

"We intend to design a cultural program that can speak to the largest audience, but it's not going to be a trendy place with rock and roll music that nowadays is so trendy," he said.

The program will consist of pedagogical concerts, where major composers and writers can both perform and explain their work, along with conferences on contemporary issues and art classes.
While the program is intended to have a wide appeal beyond religion, Desroche insisted that it's impossible to talk about music and art and not discuss faith.

"The starting point is to help people understand man in his right place in creation," said Desroche. "We don't want to talk about everything that matters to man and not mention God."
Christopher White

In fact, it's that very connection to God that has inspired Paulo Duro, a now patron of the chapel, to help fund the restoration.
He first heard of the place after a friend recommended the writings of Sister Josefa, whose book he describes as a powerful dialogue with Christ.

Duro believes that by introducing people to the chapel, it will provide an occasion for some of them to encounter Josefa, and hence, Christ.

He describes reading her writings as preparation for first communion, adding that he sees the restoration project as part of "a step toward that preparation."

"I don't want to keep the message just for me," he added.

In preparation for the full launch of its cultural programming, priorities will be repairing the dome of the chapel, which has serious structural damage, along with the roof, which has been severely damaged.

While Desroche may only be 26 - and his other two founding board members only 32 years old - they recognize that their project is both ambitious, but they are confident that the cultural and spiritual benefits will both pay off.

"Our challenge is to get people to come the first time," he said. "Once they visit, we know they will come back."

https://cruxnow.com/church-in-europe/2019/01/14/french-chapel-where-missionary-vocation-in-the-us-was-born-to-be-restored/

Catholic High Schoolers Give Extraordinary Witness at March for Life

Faithful Catholic schools play no small part in the renewal of our culture.

Some of the nation's best Catholic high schools will be displaying their strong Catholic faith by joining the March for Life in Washington, D.C., this Friday.

These are schools recognized by The Cardinal Newman Society and our Catholic Education Honor Roll. They agree to uphold key principles of Catholic identity, and participation in the March for Life is an excellent way of witnessing to human dignity and teaching a Christian worldview.

Many of the school groups are traveling significant distances to make it to this year's March, including The Atonement Academy in San Antonio, Texas; Everest Collegiate High School and Academy in Clarkston, Michigan; Bishop Thomas K. Gorman High School in Tyler, Texas; John Paul the Great Academy in Lafayette, Louisiana; The Lyceum in South Euclid, Ohio; St. Francis Xavier High School in Appleton, Wisconsin; St. James Academy in Lenexa, Kans.; St. Joseph High School in South Bend, Indiana and West Catholic High School in Grand Rapids, Michigan These schools make the most of their time in D.C. St. Francis Xavier, for instance, has an impressive agenda! Students will attend the pro-life youth rally and Mass before the March, visit and celebrate Mass at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, visit the Holocaust Museum (a great pro-life activity), celebrate Mass at St. Matthew's Cathedral, visit the St. John Paul II National Shrine, pray outside of a Planned Parenthood center, participate in Eucharistic adoration and confession, and share their experiences and impressions during small-group sessions and talks. On the way home, they will stop at Mundelein Seminary for Mass, a tour and breakfast sponsored by the Diocese of Green Bay Vocations Office.

Students in the Schola Cantorum at The Lyceum will sing Palestrina's Missa Brevis during an Extraordinary Form Mass at St. Dominic's Church in D.C. before the March. They too will visit the Holocaust Museum and President George Washington's Mount Vernon.

In addition to several sites in D.C., John Paul the Great Academy makes its long journey from Louisiana a pilgrimage, stopping along the way at the Shrine of the Most Blessed Sacrament in Hanceville, Alabama; the Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes at Mount St. Mary's University in Emmitsburg, Maryland; and the St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Shrine in Emmitsburg.

Students from schools closer to Washington are able to participate more easily, and their numbers are impressive. More than 250 students from Paul VI Catholic High School in Fairfax, Virginia, will be marching this year, after attending the pro-life rally and Mass with Bishop Michael Burbidge of the Arlington Diocese that morning.

Bishop O'Connell High School in Arlington, Virginia, is closing its doors on Friday to allow a group of more than 150 students and chaperones to attend the March in person – and many more are with them in spirit. As part of their "March for Me Initiative," students from the school's Pro-Life Club visited parishes in the area and solicited names of parishioners unable to attend the March. The students carry the names with

them and pray for their intentions while marching.

Other schools may not make it to the March for Life in Washington, but that doesn't stop them from attending other pro-life events around the country. Students from St. Anne Catholic School in Rock Hill, South Carolina, partnered with the parish youth group to attend last weekend's March and Rally in Columbia, South Carolina. And in Spring, Texas, Frassati Catholic High School's Culture of Life Club will sponsor a daylong pilgrimage to the Texas Rally for Life in Austin on Jan. 26.

Faithful Catholic schools play no small part in the renewal of our culture, especially when they bear witness to the dignity of all human life. The sacrifice and witness of these students and their families is an inspiration and blessing.

Patrick Reilly

http://www.ncregister.com/blog/reilly/catholic-high-schoolers-give-extraordinary-witness-at-march-for-life

Not So Neutral: Colorado's Sex Ed Bill Could Marginalize Catholics

A "comprehensive sex education" bill in the Colorado legislature would require public schools to adopt a curriculum that could stigmatize Catholic beliefs about sexuality and gender, one critic warned.

"These matters are best left to local school districts in direct consultation with parents and teachers," Jennifer Kraska, executive director of the Colorado Catholic Conference, told CNA Jan. 22. "Each community and school are different, and on matters as important as sex education parents should take the dominant role in deciding what type of instruction is best."

House Bill 19-1032 proposes "significant changes" to Colorado's sex ed curriculum and its requirements for comprehensive sex education, Kraska said.

The bill says that nothing in it shall be construed to prohibit discussion of individuals' "moral, ethical and religious values" related to relationships, sexuality, or family formation.

However, the bill summary says that comprehensive sex education "prohibits instruction from explicitly or implicitly teaching or endorsing religious ideology or sectarian tenets or doctrines, using shame-based or stigmatizing language or instructional tools, employing gender norms or gender stereotypes, or excluding the relational or sexual experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender individuals."

Kraska encouraged a skeptical approach to such language.

"What this language is really saying is that people or families with certain beliefs and teachings about sex, relationships and gender (like those of the Catholic Church) are basically wrong in their beliefs and teachings," she said. "The likely result of this type of language will be to stigmatize kids and their families that do hold beliefs that are different from what will be taught in this type of 'comprehensive sexuality education'."

Currently, public schools have a limited ability to use state funding for abstinence education, also known as sexual risk avoidance education, although they can use funding from Title V federal funds or can pay outside contractors.

The bill would remove this ability. It would prohibit the state board of education from granting content requirement waivers for "any public school that provides comprehensive human sexuality education." Such waivers had previously allowed charter public schools, such as the three Colorado schools associated with the Michigan-based Hillsdale College's Barney Charter School Initiative, to teach their own standards, including abstinence, marital commitment and fidelity.

"The bill does not say that abstinence cannot be taught, but it must be taught in the context of a comprehensive curriculum that includes sharing information about condoms, contraception and STDs," Kraska explained.

If a school district would not want to teach the state-designed comprehensive sex ed curriculum, it could not teach any sex ed, the *Colorado Springs Gazette* reported.

Joneen Mackenzie, a registered nurse and president and founder of the Denver-based

Center for Relationship Education, praised risk avoidance education over risk reduction.

"Relationship education that focuses on sexual risk avoidance rather than sexual risk reduction is actually helpful, resulting in this positive trend of adolescents delaying sexual debut and wanting more from their relationships," Mackenzie told the Gazette.

Almost 65 percent of teens in Colorado were not sexually active in the year 2015, according to the Center for Relationship Education.

Parents who believe the school curriculum dealing with sexuality and gender does not comport with their values or beliefs may not be able to opt out, Kraska warned.

The bill explicitly says a school is not required to give written notification to parents "for programming on gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, or healthy relationships that occurs outside the context of human sexuality instruction."

"This means that parents likely wouldn't be notified regarding this type of instruction and would not have the ability to opt their child or children out of this instruction," Kraska said.

Backers of the bill include Planned Parenthood, the largest U.S. abortion provider and a major distributor of contraceptives, as well as the American Civil Liberties Union. Proponents cited studies saying abstinence-only curricula are "ineffective at best and overtly harmful at worst," the Colorado Springs Gazette said.

"Given the current make-up of the legislature this bill is likely to pass," Kraska said.

The proposal's main sponsors are Sen. Don Coram (R), Sen. Nancy Todd (D), and Rep. Susan Lontine (D). In the 2018 elections, Democrats won all major statewide offices and took control of the State Senate.

The Colorado bill is similar to one passed in California. One parent, Carolina Riofrio of Palo Alto, Calif., told the *National Catholic Register* in 2017 that a curriculum designed to comply with the California law required students to orally analyze scenarios in order to clarify and reassess their views. Pressure was exerted on students to conform to a morally neutral position in public, and religious values judged to reflect an unacceptable "bias," were effectively excluded, she said.

Other schools have drawn parental objections for reading children's books that advocate transgenderism and children undergoing purported gender transitions. A kindergarten teacher at a public charter school in California read such books to her class as a way to introduce a male classmate whose parents said he was undergoing a gender transition to a girl.

The incident reportedly upset several children in the class, several of whom later voiced fears they would turn into the opposite sex. Parents were not informed of the incident until their children told them about it, the *Washington Times* reported in September 2017.

The Colorado bill proposes to set aside at least $1 million in annual funds for the state's comprehensive human sexuality education program. It would add eight representatives to the program's oversight board and require at least seven members to be "members of groups of people who have been or might be discriminated against."

There is no guarantee this will make the board representative of all citizens, however.

"I believe that Christians and especially Catholics can make a reasonable and strong argument that they have been discriminated against, but this will likely be an argument that falls on deaf ears," said Kraska.

Kevin Jones

https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/not-so-neutral-colorados-sex-ed-bill-could-marginalize-catholics-74082

Bishop Barron on the Internet and Satan's Game

By now the entire country has seen a video of a supposedly racist confrontation, in front of the Lincoln Memorial, between a grinning young high school student and a Native American elder, chanting and beating a drum. The immediate and ferocious judgment of the internet community was that the boy was effectively taunting and belittling the elder, but subsequent videos from wider angles as well as the young man's own testimony have cast considerable doubt on this original assessment.

My purpose in this article is not to adjudicate the situation, which remains, at best, ambiguous, even in regard to the basic facts. It is to comment, rather, on the morally outrageous and deeply troubling nature of the response to this occurrence, one that I would characterize as, quite literally, Satanic.

When the video in question first came to my attention, it already had millions of views on Facebook and had been commented upon over 50,000 times. Eager to find out what this was all about, I began to scroll through the comments. They were practically 100% against the young man, and they were marked, as is customary on social media, by stinging cruelty. As I continued to survey the reactions, I began to come across dozens urging retribution against the boy, and then dozens more that provided the addresses and email contacts of his parents, his school, and his diocese. I remember thinking, "Oh my goodness, do they realize what they're doing? They're effectively destroying, even threatening, this kid's life."

At this point, my mind turned, as it often does today, to René Girard. The great Franco-American philosopher and social commentator is best known for his speculations on what he called the scapegoating mechanism. Sadly, Girard maintained, most human communities, from the coffee klatch to the nation state, are predicated upon this dysfunctional and deeply destructive instinct.

Roughly speaking, it unfolds as follows. When tensions arise in a group (as they inevitably do), people commence to cast about for a scapegoat, for someone or some group to blame. Deeply attractive, even addictive, the scapegoating move rapidly attracts a crowd, which in short order becomes a mob. In their common hatred of the victim, the blamers feel an ersatz sense of togetherness.

Filled with the excitement born of self-righteousness, the mob then endeavors to isolate and finally eliminate the scapegoat, convinced that this will restore order to their roiled society. At the risk of succumbing to the reductio ad Hitlerum fallacy, nowhere is the Girardian more evident than in the Germany of the 1930s. Hitler ingeniously exploited the scapegoating mechanism to bring his country together—obviously in a profoundly wicked way.

Girard's theory was grounded in his studies of Shakespeare, Dostoevsky, and other literary figures, but his profoundest influence was the Bible, which not only identified the problem, but showed the way forward. Take a good, long look at the story of the Woman Caught in Adultery in the eighth chapter of John's Gospel to see what Girard saw regarding both the sin and the solution. It is surely telling that one of the principal names for the devil in the New Testament is ho Satanas, which carries the sense of the accuser. And how significant, thought Girard, that it is precisely ho

Satanas who offers all of the kingdoms of the world to Jesus, implying that all forms of human community are tainted, at least to a large degree, by the characteristically Satanic game of accusation, blaming, scapegoating.

All of which brings me back to the incident in Washington and the nasty reaction to it on the internet. I have used the internet to great positive effect in my evangelical work for many years; so I certainly don't agree with those who denounce it in an unnuanced way. However, there is something about social media comboxes that make them a particularly pernicious breeding-ground for Girardian victimizing. Perhaps it's the anonymity, or the ease with which comments can be made and published, or the prospect of finding a large audience with little effort—but these forums are, increasingly, fever swamps in which hatred and accusation breed.

When looking for evidence of the Satanic in our culture, don't waste your time on special effects made popular by all of the exorcism movies. Look no further than your computer and the twisted "communities" that it makes possible and the victims that it regularly casts out.

A few weeks ago, the Wall Street Journal published a piece on me and my work. The author referred to me as "the Bishop of the Internet," a title which I find more than a little strange. But for the moment, I'm going to claim it, only so I can make a pastoral pronouncement to all those who use social media. When you're about to make a comment, ask yourself a very simple question: "Am I doing this out of love, out of a sincere wish for the good of the person or persons I'm addressing?" If not, shut up. If it becomes clear that your comment is simply spleen-venting, scapegoating, or virtue-signalling, shut up.

The internet can be a marvelous tool, and it can be a weapon used for Satanic purposes. Applying the test of love can very effectively undermine the scapegoating mechanism and drive the devil out.

Bishop Robert Barron

https://aleteia.org/2019/01/22/bishop-barron-on-the-internet-and-satans-game

Providence Alliance for Catholic Teachers (PACT)

Applications for the next PACT cohort are now open!

Established at Providence College in 2001, the PACT Program is a unique teacher education program that invites recent graduates to contribute two years of service as teachers in Catholic schools in New England. PACT is a proud member of the University Consortium for Catholic Education (UCCE).

PACT members teach classes in language arts, English literature, British and American literature, history, biology, chemistry, physics, mathematics, Spanish, religious studies, and other subject areas. They also coach sports teams, act as advisors to students, and are leaders of school retreats.

Arts and Sciences graduates with a major (30 credit hours) in English, foreign languages, history, math, biology, chemistry, physics or theology, study toward a Providence College Master of Education (M.Ed.) degree and teacher certification as a secondary school teacher, in a program approved by the State of Rhode Island, which is reciprocal with other states in the United States.
Education graduates, who already possess teacher certification, follow a Master of Education program in Literacy, School Administration, History, or Mathematics and teach in elementary, middle, or high school.

If your undergraduate major does not correspond with those described above, but you are still interested in PACT, please contact the PACT office.

Providence Alliance for Catholic Teachers

https://pact.providence.edu/

A Cheer: Science Honors Father Georges Lemaître

As 2018 was coming to an end at a time when Catholic priests in Western Culture are under suspicion and public ridicule, one priest was globally honored, and *These Stone Walls* played a small part in bringing that about.

At the end of January, 2014, priest and physicist, Father Andrew Pinsent wrote a TSW guest post, "Fr. Georges Lemaître: Father of the Big Bang." Father Pinsent was formerly a physicist at CERN, the European Union's Center for Nuclear Research, and at the Large Hadron Collider in Switzerland.

Today Father Pinsent is Research Director at the Ian Ramsey Center for Science and Religion at England's Oxford University. An avid reader and supporter of *These Stone Walls*, we have been in contact for several years. In his TSW guest post, he wrote of the science and history behind Fr. Lemaître's "Big Bang":

"In 1927, The Belgian priest-astrophysicist Fr. Georges Lemaître published a paper in the Annals of the Scientific Society of Brussels presenting the idea of an expanding universe. When invited to a meeting of the British Association in London in 1931, Fr. Lemaître proposed that the universe began and expanded from a single point which he called the 'primeval atom.' Shortly before his death in 1966, Father Lemaître learned of the discovery of cosmic background radiation widely accepted in science as the faint echo of the Big Bang.

"Among Catholics with some kind of popular outreach, Fr. Gordon MacRae, through his widely-read blog, *These Stone Walls*, has done more than almost anyone I know in recent years to draw attention to Fr. Lemaître. Inspired by Father Gordon's work, my colleagues and I created a series about Catholic contributions to science for the Catholic Knowledge Network."

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (297) teaches us that Scripture bears witness to faith in creation "out of nothing."

Among the many science books profiling the discovery of the Big Bang by Father Lemaître, Einstein's Heroes by mathematician Robyn Arianrhod characterized the science in terms remarkably similar to those taught by the Catholic Church:

"Before this point there was no time and no space. No geometry, no matter, nothing. The universe simply appeared out of nowhere. Out of nothing." (Einstein's Heroes, P. 187)

In November, 2018, the International Astronomical Union voted to recognize this discovery about the origin and expansion of the universe by changing the name of the scientific law behind it. What had up to now been known in science as the "Hubble Law" is now the "Hubbel-Lemaître Law" in recognition of both Edwin Hubbel and Fr. Georges Lemaître for their immense contributions to modern cosmology.

The strangest part of this "Cheer" was another discovery against astronomical odds. Father Georges Lemaître, Father of The Big Bang and Modern Cosmology, was also a life-long close family friend of Pierre Matthews. Pierre is today Pornchai Moontri's Godfather. There is a photo of Pierre with his family and Father Lemaître in my TSW post, "The Science of Creation and a Tale of Two Priests."

Fr. Gordon J. Macrae

http://thesestonewalls.com/gordon-macrae/knights-of-columbus-other-cheers-jeers-i-missed/

How a Pennsylvania Tax Credit Program Works for Catholic Schools

For Catholics sympathetic to Catholic schools, the financial expense of tuition is always a concern. But continuing efforts from donors and recent programs like Pennsylvania's tax credit system are opening new ways to make tuition affordable for Catholic and other private schools.

"Many people who would benefit from a Catholic education are afraid they couldn't afford it," Dr. Greg Bisignani, an orthopedic surgeon in the Greensburg area, told the *Pittsburgh Tribune*. "My personal goal is no one will be able to use the excuse that they can't afford it again."

Bisignani chairs the advisory council and enrollment committee at Greensburg Central Catholic High School. He said the Diocese of Greensburg doubled its scholarship fund in 2018 and aims to grow it each year.

Pennsylvania's Education Improvement Tax Credit program, which dates to 2001, allows any company that does business in Pennsylvania and owes state taxes to apply to the program for approval to join organizations that Pennsylvania recognizes as "special purpose entities." If the application is approved, they can divert state taxes to a scholarship organization and receive business tax credits.

Donations go directly to a state-approved Opportunity Scholarship Organization which then distributes it to a school or schools. Donors can claim up to a 90 percent tax credit on a two year-commitment against their state taxes, Catholic Philly reports.

The tax credit-funded scholarship program is not limited to low-income families. A family of four with two children can earn up to about $116,000 a year before hitting eligibility limits set by Pennsylvania. For each additional child, the cap increases by about $15,600.

About 66 percent of Pennsylvania families with children are eligible for the program. In 2017, the program produced more than 34,000 scholarships for Pennsylvania students at participating private schools, according to figures from the school choice advocacy group EdChoice, formerly known as the Milton and Rose Friedman Foundation. The average scholarship value was more than $1,600.

In 2014, legislators expanded the donor base by allowing individuals to divert their state taxes to the program through membership in a special purpose entity.

Michael Lucotch, director of development for the Greensburg diocese, told the Pittsburgh Tribune that the 2014 modification was "a game changer." The total of available tax credits was not affected but it widened the pool of potential donors in the diocese, with increased participation from Catholic parishioners.

"It allows participants to redirect their personal income tax obligation to a Catholic school of their choice for use as tuition assistance," Lucotch said.

The availability of funding depends on both participation from donors and on allocation limits set by the state legislature. The most recent state budget allocates $160 million statewide to the EITC program. Another $50 million goes to the Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit, for which only about eight percent of Pennsylvania families with school-age children are eligible.

In 2018 about there were about 4,900 applications seeking the tax credit, an increase from 4,100 in 2014.
In the Archdiocese of Philadelphia the Foundation for Catholic Education aims to distribute over $2.4 million in grants this year to parish schools and regional Catholic schools, Catholic Philly reports. In addition to fundraising through galas and direct donations, it also takes advantage of the opportunities provided by the tax credit program.

The Greensburg diocese established its Scholarship Partners Foundation to take part in the tax credit program. It promoted its scholarship program through the Central Pennsylvania Scholarship Organization.

There are about 2,300 students in the Greensburg diocese's 11 elementary schools and two high schools. Many students who begin in the diocese's Catholic elementary schools leave between junior high and high school, when tuition increases from about $6,000 per year to almost $9,000.
Backers of Catholic schools hope Pennsylvania's tax credit programs and other aid can help reverse a steep decline in enrollment.

In the Greensburg diocese's elementary schools, enrollment dropped 35 percent from the 2007-2008 school year to the 2017-2018 school year. Its high school enrollment dropped 31 percent.
For the Diocese of Pittsburgh, school enrollment numbers fell from 26,000 to 17,000.

While Pennsylvania public school enrollment numbers have also declined in the same period, they fell only by two percent, the *Pittsburgh Tribune* says.

The National Catholic Education Association said its member schools witnessed a decline of 19.4 percent in enrollment. Declining enrollment means school closures and mergers.

The Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit program dates back to 2012 legislation. It allows eligible residents living in the catchment boundaries of a school with low-achievement on student assessments to apply for a scholarship to attend another school, whether public or non-public. About eight percent of students are eligible in Pennsylvania. About 14,500 scholarships were awarded from 2016-2017, with an average value of about $2,400.

Jan. 27 to Feb. 2, 2019 marks Catholic Schools Week. Many Catholic school systems are marking the event by highlighting the contributions of schools and holding open houses for prospective students, their parents and the community.

CNA/EWTN News

https://www.catholicworldreport.com/2019/01/29/how-a-pennsylvania-tax-credit-program-works-for-catholic-schools/

Science and Christian Theology Mutually Inform One Another

Popular consciousness in the West has affirmed over and over again, like the beating of a drum, that natural science and theology are in bitter conflict. Recently, evolutionary biologist Jerry Coyne made this claim in a predictable piece, claiming that the two are incompatible and are at war with one another. In recent years, scientific materialists—at full throttle—have pushed forward the notion that natural science is a beacon of light and that the latter—religion—is at best an archaic fairy tale that offers nothing more than false hope, and is at worst a collective madness which stagnates human progress and reason, causing the majority of wars and irreparable psychological damage to human beings. The truth is that explicitly atheistic regimes have been the cause of much more bloodshed than all religious wars combined; only seven percent of all wars have been explicitly religious (i.e., 123 of the 1,763 violent conflicts over 3,500 years).

This sort of superficial analysis reminds me of the book, *Contact*, written by the late astronomer Carl Sagan, which was adapted into a motion picture in 1997. Sagan perpetuated this myth that theology and natural science were engaged in an ongoing struggle. The movie features Ellie Arroway (played by Jodie Foster, who I presume was to some degree the female embodiment of Sagan himself), an astronomer who is obsessed with bringing the SETI (search for extra-terrestrial intelligence) program to its fruition, and her love interest Palmer Joss (played by Matthew McConaughey), a theologian who argues that science and technology have failed to provide any remedy to humanity's existential angst.

In a scene relevant to our discussion, Arroway conjectures that science has demonstrated God's nonexistence since science operates by proving things and no such proof exists for God. Joss retorts by asking Arroway to prove her love for her deceased father. The point made by Joss is well put, i.e., if he meant that science cannot account for the subjective experience of love. Empirical observation of the causal connections between emotional states and the neurochemical and physiological events within the brain and other parts of the human body would just provide one level of analysis (i.e., a physical explanation) and not the substance or object of one's love; love involves an act of the will and intellect which is irreducible to the material.

Having recently watched *Contact* again after a number of years, I've pondered how I would tackle Arroway's assertion. To my dismay, many individuals across differing Christian denominations have received impoverished and misguided responses to legitimate questions. The relationship between the sciences and theology is a fundamental obstacle for many inquisitive minds (at least on the surface). On the other hand, it has also distressed me to witness the lackadaisical approach of many believers when it comes to the articulation and understanding of arguments and reasons that support the Christian faith. Indeed, Christianity is undergoing an intellectual crisis; philosophical and theological illiteracy is pervasive in our culture. The average believer would be surprised to learn that there are a number of cogent reasons to accept the existence of God (including the Christian conception of God). It would also astonish lay Christians to learn that science and theology are not in conflict but mutually inform one another. I have sought to demonstrate the plausibility of these two

propositions in my book: *On the Origin of Consciousness.*

A Historical Consideration

An early historical example of how theology and science can be integrated is found in the work of the sixth-century Christian philosopher John Philoponus. A thinker who remains obscure outside of academic circles and who specialized in ancient Greek philosophy, Philoponus was known for both his polemical and non-polemical commentaries on the works of Aristotle. Following this unique approach he wrote a substantial amount of material combatting Aristotle's notion of the eternality of the world. Philoponus's belief that God created the universe out of nothing played a significant role in questioning the reigning philosophy of his time. Many Christians and Jews were embarrassed by the doctrine of creation ex nihilo and were divided over whether God created from pre-existing matter through reorganizing it or created matter itself from nothing. The reason for this embarrassment was precisely because of the natural philosophical consensus that pointed toward an eternal past. As philosopher and renowned Philoponus commentator Richard Sorabji notes: "Up to AD 529, Christians were on the defensive. They argued that a beginning of the universe was not impossible. In 529, Philoponus swung round into the attack. He argued that a beginning of the universe was actually mandatory, and mandatory of the pagans' own principles."

Instrumental to Philoponus's approach was a separation between Creator and creation. This belief allowed him to argue not only that the past was finite, but also that the sun was made of fire, which he acknowledged as a terrestrial substance as opposed to a celestial substance. Thus, Philoponus established that heavenly bodies are not divine and are subject to decomposition, thereby collapsing a central Aristotelian doctrine in the face of a Christian doctrine. Philoponus's Christian worldview permitted him to also create a coherent system of thought where he could provide argumentation and evidence to support his belief system—one that was fruitful to scientific discovery. Historians of science have noted that Philoponus's rigor was beneficial to the future direction of cosmology.

Philoponus proposed a syllogistic argument for the existence of God:

Whatever comes to be has a cause of its coming to be.
The universe came to be.
Therefore, the universe has a cause of its coming to be.

Thus, Philoponus's understanding of reality, which was heavily influenced and guided by his Christian faith, brought about several fruits that are relevant to this very day. His theological and philosophical reasoning has been confirmed by modern empirical science, which affirms that the universe is not eternal. This affirmation is made through two lines of reasoning: the standard big bang model which argues for the expansion of the universe and the second law of thermodynamics. Remarkably, both of these can be traced in Philoponus's thought. Even though the evidence provided by the empirical sciences is typically provisional and can indeed change in the future, we have good reasons to believe in the beginning of the universe as established by modern scientific data. Philoponus, in the sixth century, exemplifies the strong consonance between science and theology in the Early Middle Ages. Philoponus's argument for the finitude of the past has come to be

known as "The Kalam Cosmological Argument." Today, its foremost defender is philosopher and theologian William Lane Craig.

The Interaction between Science and Theology

The assumptions regarding the intelligibility and rationality of reality came to shape much of the empiricism in science, as well as the use of mathematics to describe natural processes. Indeed, theological insights and understanding inspired developments in modern scientific thought. This is especially true of great scientific minds such as Isaac Newton, Johannes Kepler, René Descartes, Galileo Galilei, and Nicolas Copernicus, who posited that the structure of physical reality was knowable. These explicitly theological ideas—according to which there is intelligibility and comprehensibility in reality because of God's role as Creator—inspired scientists to adopt a type of reverse engineering mode of thinking (whereby humans could possibly even modify and perfect creation) in order to understand how things were created (this was precisely the mode of thinking practiced by Isaac Newton). This would help us to perceive how the universe functioned. The point here is that, from the early modern period until the early twentieth century, scientists were explicitly aided by theological thoughts and notions to discern the existence and operation of nature. The inescapable conclusion here is that modern science was born out of a Christian worldview: these theological notions set a framework for scientific research and discovery. Throughout history theological thought and science have gone hand in hand more often than not.

Due to the collapse of the verification principle, the field of natural science and theology has had a burgeoning discourse with the potential for valuable new discoveries and insights. Despite popular caricatures that the two great fields are at odds with one another, they have had much to say to one another in mutual cooperation throughout history (as demonstrated with Philoponus's insights and arguments). Such cooperation continues to this very day. Ever since the 1960s, a number of peer-reviewed journals devoted to this dialogue have sprung into existence. They include *CTNS: Theology and Science Journal*, *The European Journal of Science and Theology, Zygon: Journal of Science and Religion*, and the latest addition: *Philosophy, Theology and the Sciences*. Indeed, the field is growing and gaining interest from scholars of a variety of disciplines.

There have also been a series of typologies outlining the relationship between science and theology offered by scientists and theologians such as Ian Barbour, Ted Peters, Willem Drees, John Haught, and Robert John Russell. Of these, the most promising method is Russell's Creative Mutual Interaction (CMI). What is novel and promising about this method is that not only do scientific research programs influence theological research programs, but theological research programs, in turn, influence scientific research programs. Russell uses a theology of nature for his CMI. In my book, I have transposed this and utilized instead a natural theology for my CMI method. Natural theology functions as a rational endeavor to adduce God's existence and purpose in nature through understanding the natural world (through using philosophical tools and the best scientific evidence available, sans the aid of biblical revelation). By contrast, a theology of nature like Russell's begins through the Christian tradition via religious experience, and historical and biblical revelation.

Furthermore, a theology of nature suggests that certain Christian doctrines may require revision in light of modern scientific findings. Both approaches have their fruits and purposes.

Intelligibility, Science, and God

One intriguing argument emanating from the 1970s, is found in the work of philosopher and theologian Bernard Lonergan: *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*. It lends support to the fact that Christian thought was a vital component for the emergence of modern scientific thought (as was argued above). He demonstrates God's existence based on intelligibility. I will relate it also to a scientific argument. Lonergan's own argument is stated as such:

If the real is completely intelligible, then complete intelligibility exists.
If complete intelligibility exists, the idea of being exists.
If the idea of being exists, then God exists.
Therefore, the real is completely intelligible, God exists.

It is worth pointing out that finite intelligibility is grounded upon complete intelligibility. The fact that we are able to formulate general laws of science, use mathematics and logic, possess the ability to communicate, and discern truth in its different manifestations is a reflection of an unbounded intelligibility—the sort of thing we should expect if there is any correspondence between reality and our minds.

Philosopher and theologian Jay Richards and astrophysicist Guillermo Gonzalez have developed an argument based in science which is highly relevant to Lonergan's argument for God and intelligibility. It provides the scientific basis for Lonergan's onto-epistemic argument. In their book *The Privileged Planet*, Gonzalez and Richards lay out a scientific argument with deep metaphysical implications. They provide a host of different lines of evidence to suggest that the earth occupies a special place in the cosmos. Their argument goes against the popular notion held by many scientists and popularized by Carl Sagan. Sagan argued that the Earth had no special or privileged place in the cosmos and that it was merely an insignificant cosmic accident, which he dubbed a "pale blue dot." His book and the saying were inspired by a famous photograph taken of Earth on February 14, 1990, by the Voyager 1 space probe, which depicts Earth as a tiny speck in the vastness of space and bands of sunlight. This is strongly connected to the misnamed Copernican Principle, which Gonzalez and Richards refute as well. Gonzalez and Richards argue that there is a deep correlation between habitability and scientific observability. The fact that we exist on a particularly special type of planet (i.e., Earth), is also related to the fact that we are in such a place, with a purpose, to observe the universe and discover, measure, and understand much of the cosmos. They provide examples of the correlation between habitability and measurability. Richards and Gonzalez illustrate, in a scientific manner, the very intelligibility which Lonergan describes as being intrinsic to a reality grounded upon the ultimate source of all intelligibility.

Thus, we have examined various lines of reasoning which demonstrate that neither science nor reason are in conflict with theology. God's existence is supported by logic and scientific argumentation. In fact, the real culprit for the dissonance between science and religion is found in the atheological worldview of metaphysical naturalism; metaphysical naturalism is the

belief that nature is all there is and that no supernatural beings such as God exist. It is a philosophical prejudice that has little grounding in actual science and is increasingly challenged on both philosophical and scientific grounds. A believer in a Creator God should not find this surprising but it is comforting to know that contemporary scientists are increasingly recognizing the debt modern science owes to theology.

Scott Ventureyra

https://www.crisismagazine.com/2019/science-and-christian-theology-mutually-inform-one-another

The Lazy and Hateful Gray Lady Targets Christian Schools

The other day Dan Levin, a reporter for *The New York Times*, went trawling online for stories from "survivors" of Christian schools. Word got out, people were appalled, and Levin ended up publishing a miserable and meaningless little piece, in which a couple of tributes from grateful students—see, even in the Sahara you can find an oasis or two—were set beside predictable accounts of sexual repression, anachronistic dinosaurs, and a whimsical Slave Day for raising money. The sexual repression had to do with desires *contra naturam*, no surprise.

The episode reveals two things. The first is hatred. The second is laziness in the broadest sense: acedia, that smoky gloom in the presence of what is good; carelessness; a stolid lack of curiosity; and vanity, the fat confidence that you know all you need to know already.

Hatred and laziness. On the other hand, when Jacob Riis reported on the crowded public schools in New York, he had an egregious wrong before his eyes, and he did the leg work: investigating what qualified as playgrounds and recess, and describing what the children were compelled to endure. He was righteously indignant, but he had no animus against schools, public or otherwise. You don't need an ideology to tell you that children need exercise and fresh air. I have read a few of his articles in my volumes of *The Century Magazine*. By comparison with Levin's piece, they are like entries from the *Encyclopedia Britannica* compared with a broadsheet self-printed by its inky visionary in his basement.

But you do need an ideology to seek to harm thousands of private Christian schools, be they evangelical, Catholic, or otherwise. Seek, and ye shall find; the words of the psalmist: "If thou, O Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, who could stand?"; or Hamlet: "Use every man after his desert, and who should 'scape whipping?" If we ferreted out the worst sins of every human being around us and of every human institution, we would need to impound the world. If everyone were to be judged by the Accuser, it would be off to the everlasting bonfire for the lot of us. It astonishes me that our cognitive elites know so little about themselves or about man's sorry history that they do not see this. They are like sewer-dwellers who have lost the sense of smell. Still the question stands: why would anyone want to single out Christian schools for scrutiny, when they are a minority of all schools, and when public schools are basket cases of social pathologies and ineptitude? It is like saying, "I wonder what those Knights are doing, really," when there are strip joints and gang hangouts across the street. Or worse. It's as if they were made desperate by hope, and are now terrified by the possibility that there might be more to life than ambition, gain, and sensual indulgence.

We might replace Christian school with another descriptor, thus: "Ernst," says the man with the bad mustache, "we must find out what really goes on in the shul and the yeshiva. Allow me to introduce you to Jakob, who has become one of us." The alteration reveals the bigotry, but not the incuriosity. It explains the bigot, not the blockhead.

As we know, Christian schools are everywhere to be found; Mr. Levin might have considered the bold move of arranging a visit, sitting in on a class, and chatting with students and teachers in the cafeteria. He might then have been rewarded

by learning something. The most important educational reform in our time has been the instituting of the "classical Christian" school, both protestant and Catholic. Who is more likely to study Latin—a protestant at the evangelical Patrick Henry College, or a student at Harvard? Who is more likely to read Dante's *Divine Comedy*—a third-grade girl at The Academy of Classical Christian Studies, in Oklahoma City, or a graduate student in comparative literature at Princeton?

I know the answer to that one, having been regaled by a little girl in a restaurant, who recited to me by memory forty lines from canto two of Dante's Inferno—Beatrice's conversation with Virgil. Perhaps the secularists do not visit because they are afraid to be shown up. They with their hyper-modern curricula, which are ephemeral and incoherent but reliably "religious" in their adherence to the secular creed, are like their own caricatures of evangelicals startled by the existence of astrophysics. Evangelicals study Dante, and the secularists tremble.

"But school is not only about what you study," they may say. No, school is also a social place, because we are social beings.

Let me describe then what an ordinary day is like for me at Thomas More College of the Liberal Arts.

I pull into the parking lot next to the building where my office is, as well as the chapel and the cafeteria. It's eight in the morning. I cannot get to my office without waving hello to two or three students and greeting them by name. We are a school on a human and not an inhuman or transhuman scale. People know one another.

I go to my office to get ready for class. I'll be there for an hour, and almost always there will be a knock on my door. So it was also this morning. A cheerful young man is working on his senior thesis on Robert Frost's wary evaluation of technological developments, and the influence of Darwin upon his vision of the natural world. We chat. He has read a book of Frost's correspondence and is about to order another book on Darwin and Frost. He has read most of Frost's poetry. He's almost ready to start writing. This is good, because he will be presenting his thesis in April and will defend it in front of three professors and his fellow students, who will be there for moral support. Our students pull for one another.

One of my colleagues is chanting in his office nearby. He leads the chant at Mass, though there won't be Mass this morning; our good chaplain is elderly and can't make it in the snowy weather. Chant is a big part of life here. The students train themselves in chant, polyphony, and folk singing. It's common for me to pass by a knot of students practicing Palestrina's Sicut cervus or arrangements composed by one of our instructors.

I go to my first class for freshmen. It's Ancient Rome and the Early Christian World. Today we are reading Livy's account of the second Punic War. Hannibal has cut the Romans to pieces at Lake Trasimene and at Cannae, in both battles taking advantage of the ambition—that is an accusatory word, as I've explained to the students—and the recklessness of the Roman generals. More Roman soldiers die in those two days than the United States lost in the whole Vietnam War. Then comes Quintus Fabius Maximus, the Delayer, who commits Rome to a long, inglorious, and successful campaign of attrition. We read these things to enter into the minds and souls of the Romans, to learn

what they thought of themselves when they were at their best and worst.

We share the same lunch, in the same cozy cafeteria. One of our deans rings a bell and announces, to much cheering, the appointment of two freshmen to the student council. She carries a sturdy little toddler on her hip, while her other boy toddles about the room much to the pleasure of the students.

I return to my office, and another student comes by. He is preparing a junior presentation on Erasmus's Praise of Folly. We bat around several ideas and settle on a plan: he will hunt down all Scriptural references to fools, folly, and vanity, and consider how Erasmus plays upon them. He's a chess aficionado, so we go through a game by Mikhail Tal, featuring an early sacrifice of the queen. We've played two games together, one win each.

My second and last class of the day is a tutorial open to juniors and seniors on seven of the more theologically oriented plays of Shakespeare. We're in the middle of *As You Like It*, and we are free and easy in our talk. "Know you not I am a woman?" says the sprightly Rosalind to her cousin Celia. "When I think, I must speak!" You can't enjoy Rosalind's playacting at being a boy playacting at being a girl unless you see the goodness of both boys and girls, and their foibles and their differences. Two of my students have a special reason to enjoy the differences. They are seniors, and they are married; we get a lot of marriages among our students.

It's late in the afternoon, and I'd hang around some more because I'm never in a hurry to leave a place that feels like home, except that there's a snowstorm brewing and I want to beat the traffic.
This is an ordinary day for me at Thomas More; it is ordinary because good things are in order.

If Mr. Levin visited us, this is what he'd find. I do not say that he would like it; I don't know him. But we must face the truth. Some people lead bad lives, and look with longing upon the goodness they do not share. But other people hate the good, and the better it is, the more they hate it and wish to spoil it. This may be the choice the Church faces in our time: to be despised by her enemies for being lukewarm, or to be hated for being good. Christ was not lukewarm.

Anthony Esolen

https://www.crisismagazine.com/2019/the-lazy-and-hateful-gray-lady-targets-christian-schools

Statement by H.E. Archbishop Bernardito Auza
Apostolic Nuncio, Permanent Observer of the Holy See
At the Maiden Celebration of the International Day of Education
United Nations, New York, 24 January 2019

Madame Moderator,

Your Excellencies, Dear Friends,

I am very happy to represent the Holy See today at this inaugural celebration of the International Day of Education. Prior to the adoption of Resolution 73/25 on December 3 last year, there were 158 different international days observed by the United Nations. While some deal with education, like the International Literacy Day on September 8th and World Teachers' Day on October 5th, it is fitting to have a day dedicated to the work of education as a whole, as a good in and of itself, as well as a crucial element in integral development and the building and maintenance of peace and security.

When Pope Francis addressed the General Assembly of the United Nations in September 2015, speaking immediately before the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, he spoke three times about the importance of education and stressed that this means education for all. To enable men and women to escape from extreme poverty, he said, we must allow and assist them to be dignified agents of their own destiny.

In United Nations parlance, this means that education is a fundamental enabler and key to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). That is why the international community, in adopting the 2030 Agenda, committed itself resolutely in SDG 4 to ensure that by 2030, all girls and boys have access to early childhood development, care and preprimary education, to free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education, and to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education. These commitments flowed from the fact that there are still 120 million children in the world who have no access to primary or secondary schooling and another 130 million who go to schools that are of such poor quality that they don't acquire even the basics of literacy or numeracy.

Resolution 73/25 extended an explicit invitation for faith-based organizations to observe today the International Day of Education in an appropriate way. The Catholic Church is very proud that over the course of its 2,000-year history, it has played a major role in the rise of schools, universities and other forms of institutions of learning across centuries and in so many places. Thousands of Catholic religious orders were founded with the explicit purpose and charism to educate children at a time when none but the richest families with private tutors received any formal education at all. I am grateful to Her Excellency Mary Robinson and to Her Excellency the Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations, Ambassador Geraldine Byrne Nason, for paying homage to the tremendous contribution to education of the Irish missionaries in many regions of the world, in particular in deprived areas. Saint Mother Teresa arrived in Calcutta through Ireland, and with the Irish missionaries of her Religious Order taught at Saint Mary's School for Girls in Calcutta before she received her specific vocation to serve the poorest of the poor.

Today the Catholic Church runs approximately 220,000 schools in all pre-University levels in all regions of the world, educating more than 65 million children and youth, and millions more at its thousands of technical schools and universities. More than half of these students are girls, and more than half of them are not Catholic and not even of the other Christian Churches; they belong to other religions or no religion, because we believe that education, quality education, is for all. In all of this, the schools run by the Catholic Church seek not to supplant neither the parents nor the State: they assist parents who are the first teachers of their children in the irreplaceable school called home, giving them the opportunity to choose the education of their children; and they help the State to provide greater educational opportunities for its young citizens.

Providing access, however, to schools and basic education, although essential, is not enough. For children to grow into flourishing adults, much more is needed. Education is far more than instruction. As the Latin word edúcere indicates, it means leading people out of the darkness of ignorance into the light of knowledge, from immaturity to true maturity. Its aim is not just at helping people become smarter, but wiser and genuinely good. It involves not just imparting information but formation. Its aim is not only to develop the brain, but, more importantly, the heart, the character. In this regard, I can't help but recall the haunting words of Haim Ginnott who after surviving the horrors of the Holocaust became an educational psychologist and wrote to teachers about the indispensable place of proper ethical formation in education. "Dear Teacher, I am a survivor of a concentration camp. My eyes saw what no man should witness: Gas chambers built by learned engineers. Children poisoned by educated physicians. Infants killed by trained nurses. Women and babies shot and burned by high school and college graduates. So, I am suspicious of education. My request is: Help your students become human. Your efforts must never produce learned monsters, skilled psychopaths, educated Eichmanns. Reading, writing, arithmetic are important only if they serve to make our children more humane."

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today we celebrate education, not the one that produces learned monsters and skilled psychopaths, but the one that makes us more humane and human.

Thank you for your invitation to join in today's festivities.

Archbishop Bernardito Auza

https://holyseemission.org/contents//statements/5c4a1c6b41cfc.php

How This Classical Catholic School Welcomes Children with Down Syndrome

Students with Down syndrome study Latin and logic alongside their classmates at Immaculata Classical Academy, a Catholic school in Louisville, Ky., that integrates students with special needs into each of their pre-K through 12 classrooms.

The school emphasizes “education of the heart,” along with an educational philosophy tailored to the abilities of each student. About 15 percent of students at Immaculata have special needs.
“When you look at these students with Down syndrome in a classical setting, it is truly what a classical education is all about -- what it truly means to be human,” the school’s founder, Michael Michalak, told *CNA*.

“You can't learn compassion in a book,” Michalak explained. He said the students at Immaculata are gaining “the ability to give of yourself to help others” through mutual mentoring constantly taking place in the classrooms.

Michalek founded the academy along with his wife, Penny, in 2010. The couple saw a need for a Catholic school in which students like their daughter, Elena, who has Down syndrome, would not be segregated from their siblings. They wanted to keep their children together without compromising educational quality or spiritual formation.

"A classical education is, I think, the best education for a child with special needs because it is an education in everything that is beautiful, true, and good. It is perfect for these children,” Penny told *CNA*.

The school’s course schedule is configured so that students can move up or down grade levels by subject at each class hour, according to individual needs. “A second-grader might go to third grade math class and a child with Down syndrome in second grade might go over to first grade or might stay in 2nd grade,” Michael Michalak explained. “Nobody is looking around and saying, 'Oh, they are going to special classroom.’ They are just going where they need to be.”

"In the midst of all of this we are not leaving students behind,” Penny added, “We keep our high academic standards while integrating students with special needs.”

Since its founding, the independent Catholic school has grown to a student body of 160. Other Catholic schools across the country have begun looking to Immaculata as a model, the Michalaks say.

"Whenever anyone visits our school, they always say, ‘Oh my goodness the joy of this place!’” Penny told *CNA*.

The couple attributes the school’s sense of joy to the Holy Spirit and “the joy of belonging.” “Inclusion is more of a buzzword these days, but it is true that we all want to belong and we all want to be loved,” said Michael Michalek.

"Prayer is the air that we breathe. We start the day with prayer. Every class starts with a prayer and ends in a prayer,” said Penny, who entrusted the school to our Our Lady at the school’s founding with St. Maximilian Kolbe as its patron.

"Our whole philosophy is to teach every child as if we were teaching the Christ child, so that is how we handle each and every student," Penny continued.

A developing religious community, the Sisters of the Fiat, also teach at Immaculata. The sisters take an additional vow to serve those with with special needs, along with the traditional vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience.

The school's founders say they are aware of their unique witness and role in a world where many children with Down syndrome are aborted. The estimated termination rate for children prenatally diagnosed with Down syndrome in the United States is 67 percent; 77 percent in France; and Denmark, 98 percent, according to *CBS News*.

At the annual March for Life in Washington, DC, students from Immaculata Classical Academy hold signs that read, "Abortion is not the cure for Down syndrome." The students are united in mission as "a pro-life school" and pray together for an end to abortion for their brothers and sisters with Down syndrome around the world, Michalak said.

The Michalaks have also adopted three children with Down syndrome.

Michael sees the founding of a school like Immaculata as the natural Catholic response at a moment in history when children with Down syndrome are especially at risk.

"Look at what the Catholic Church has done throughout history: We see orphans; we build orphanages. We see sick people; we build hospitals. It is in this particular time and place that we saw the need to take the lead on this and to start a school that incorporates the whole family."

His wife adds, "When you are doing something that you feel called by God to do, it is a vocation, it is a mission, it is a calling...how can you not be full of joy when you know that this is the will of God. It is very rewarding."

Courtney Grogan, CNA/EWTN News

http://www.immaculataclassicalacademy.com/news/2018/2/15/catholic-news-agency-how-this-classical-catholic-school-welcomes-children-with-down-syndrome

The Good Reader

Reading virtuously means, first, reading closely, being faithful to both text and context, interpreting accurately and insightfully. Indeed, there is something in the very form of reading – the shape of the action itself – that tends toward virtue. The attentiveness necessary for deep reading (the kind of reading we practice in reading literary works as opposed to skimming news stories or reading instructions) requires patience. The skills of interpretation and evaluation require prudence. Even the simple decision to set aside time to read in a world rife with so many other choices competing for our attention requires a kind of temperance.

If, like me, you have lived long enough to have experienced life – and reading – before the internet, perhaps you have now found your attention span shortened and your ability to sit and read for an hour (or more) nil. The effects on our minds of the disjointed, fragmentary, and addictive nature of the digitized world – and the demands of its dinging, beeping, and flashing devices – are well documented. Nicholas Carr explains in *The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains* that "the linear mind is being pushed aside by a new kind of mind that wants and needs to take in and dole out information in short, disjointed, often overlapping bursts – the faster, the better." Our brains work one way when trained to read in logical, linear patterns, and another way when continually bouncing from tweet to tweet, picture to picture, and screen to screen. These effects on the brain are amplified by technology developers who intentionally build addictive qualities into programs in order to increase user engagement, as some industry leaders have acknowledged. Whether you feel you have lost your ability to read well, or you never acquired that ability at all, be encouraged. The skills required to read well are no great mystery. Reading well is, well, simple (if not easy). It just takes time and attention.

Reading well begins with understanding the words on the page. In nearly three decades of teaching literature, I've noticed that many readers have been conditioned to jump so quickly to interpretation and evaluation that they often skip the fundamental but essential task of comprehending what the words actually mean. This habit of the mind can be seen in the body. When I ask students to describe or restate a line or passage, often their first response is to turn their eyes upward in search of a thought or an idea, rather than to look down at the words on the page in front of them where the answer actually lies. Attending to the words on the page requires deliberation, and this improves with practice.

Practice makes perfect, but pleasure makes practice more likely, so read something enjoyable. If a book is so agonizing that you avoid reading it, put it down and pick up one that brings you pleasure. Life is too short and books are too plentiful not to. Besides, one can't read well without enjoying reading.

On the other hand, the greatest pleasures are those born of labor and investment. A book that requires nothing from you might offer the same diversion as that of a television sitcom, but it is unlikely to provide intellectual, aesthetic, or spiritual rewards long after the cover is closed. Therefore, even as you seek books that you will enjoy reading, demand ones that make demands on you: books with sentences so exquisitely crafted that they must be reread, familiar words used in fresh ways, new words so

evocative that you are compelled to look them up, and images and ideas so arresting that they return to you unbidden for days to come.

Also, read slowly. Just as a fine meal should be savored, so, too, good books are to be luxuriated in, not rushed through. Certainly, some reading material merits a quick read, but habitual skimming is for the mind what a steady diet of fast food is for the body. Speed-reading is not only inferior to deep reading but may bring more harm than benefits: one critic cautions that reading fast is simply a "way of fooling yourself into thinking you're learning something." When you read quickly, you aren't thinking critically or making connections. Worse yet, "speed-reading gives you two things that should never mix: superficial knowledge and overconfidence." Don't be discouraged if you read slowly. Thoughtfully engaging with a text takes time. The slowest readers are often the best readers, the ones who get the most meaning out of a work and are affected most deeply by literature. Seventeenth-century Puritan divine Richard Baxter writes, "It is not the reading of many books which is necessary to make a man wise or good; but the well reading of a few, could he be sure to have the best."

Read with a pen, pencil, or highlighter in hand, marking in the book or taking notes on paper. The idea that books should not be written in is an unfortunate holdover from grade school, a canard rooted in a misunderstanding of what makes a book valuable. The true worth of books is in their words and ideas, not their pristine pages.

Karen Swallow Prior and Pawel Kuczynski

https://www.plough.com/en/topics/culture/literature/the-good-reader

Instead of Jordan Peterson, Young Men Should Turn to This Saint for Guidance

This is not the first time in history that a society has faced a population of young men having difficulty finding their place.

Recent studies show a crisis for young men in society. Increasingly, men in their late teens and early 20s are abandoning the job market for hours playing video games, eschewing relationships and marriage and turning to pornography—in essence, they are putting off adulthood and clinging to adolescence.

The Canadian psychologist Jordan Peterson has become a popular and somewhat controversial figure in this area. His YouTube videos exhorting young men to put aside these pursuits and seize their futures, to "clean up your room and stand up straight," have inspired many to do just that. (His material has also raised certain questions about attitudes toward women, among other issues).

But while Peterson has become popular, some have been concerned that his approach is lacking something important: namely, God. Peterson quixotically has claimed both that he could generally be called a Christian and that he doesn't necessarily believe in God, "though I'm afraid he might exist." Should we look for guidance for our young men from someone with such contradictory ideas?

Of course, this is not the first time in history that a society has faced a population of young men having difficulty finding their place. One example in the not-too-recent past is still relevant to us today.

Fr. John Bosco was a priest from the Piedmont region of the Kingdom of Sardinia. Born in 1815 and dying in 1888, in his own lifespan he saw many changes in his society, from a united Italy to massively increased industrialization. As politics and economies shifted, many young men in his day in cities like Turin had trouble finding work, and many turned to petty crime and lives of dissolution. Don Bosco, as he came to be called, went out to meet them where they were, in the streets and marketplaces, to offer them wisdom and guidance—to offer them something more. He won them over with his kindness and humor, even employing sleight-of-hand tricks to catch their attention. (Today Don Bosco is the patron saint of magicians.)

He not only talked to them, but actively tried to help them in their circumstances. He assisted them in finding work and permanent places to live, even taking in some to live with himself. Within a decade he was helping provide shelter for more than 600 young men! His following grew so numerous that some even worried Don Bosco was gathering an army, and even went so far as to attempt to kill him. Don Bosco survived several assassination attempts by those who fundamentally misunderstood his purpose.

Eventually, some of the young men he guided decided they wanted to become priests like their mentor and help others who were in the situation they'd been in. Don Bosco gathered these followers into a religious order that took as its patron St. Francis de Sales, the great 16th-century guide to the holy and devout life. It was not long before the order came to be called "the Salesians of Don Bosco."

Don Bosco emphasized the importance of acting well, of finding the opportunity to do good and doing it. He famously said, “Do not put off till tomorrow the good you can do today. You may not have a tomorrow.” Likewise, cautioning his young followers against actions they might later regret, the Don colorfully said, “Act today in such a way that you need not blush tomorrow.”

Don Bosco was canonized in 1934 by Pope Pius XI, who had known him personally as a boy. Today the Salesians are one of the largest religious orders in the world, continuing his work of guiding young people to great closeness to and imitation of Christ. Don Bosco has inspired the lives of young men for nearly two centuries. Perhaps young men would consider his example rather than that of a Jordan-come-lately.

Nicholas Senz

https://aleteia.org/2019/01/31/instead-of-jordan-peterson-young-men-should-turn-to-this-saint-for-guidance

Michigan Catholic Schools Find Formula to Boost Enrollment

As Catholic schools in many areas of the country struggle to keep attendance up, one Michigan diocese has enjoyed a significant boost in enrollment, after the local bishop introduced a plan to prioritize Catholic education.

"[Catholic schools] are at the heart of the mission of the Church," said David Faber, Superintendent of Catholic Schools for the Diocese of Grand Rapids.

"Catholic schools are good all around, not only for the Church, but for the community and the good of our country," he told CNA.

Faber said the recent growth in Catholic school enrollment followed a 15-year period of decline. The decrease had been due to a drop in the state's economy, a reduction in church attendance, and the Michigan Blaine Amendment that bans the state from providing funds to Catholic schools, he said.

But over the past four years, the diocesan school district has overcome obstacles, adding 254 new students for a total of 6,555 students. Faber said the diocese is currently seeing the biggest preschool class in 21 years and the biggest kindergarten class in six years.

He attributed the growth to the efforts of Bishop David Walkowiak, who in 2015 created the Bishop's Catholic Schools Initiative, a program that classified Catholics schools as a high priority in the diocese.

Bishop Walkowiak "really believes that Catholic schools are the single most effective means the Church has created for evangelization," he said. "He wanted every child to have the opportunity for a Catholic education. The same opportunity that he had."

The program consisted of three parts, Faber said. "One was to increase affordability through scholarships, the second part was to grow our professional capacity in our office of Catholic schools, and the third party was to plan for the future vitality of our schools."

The diocese tripled its need-based Bishop Scholarship and created the Welcome Scholarship, which is given to any first-time families attending Catholic schools or families returning to Catholic schools after a major absence. The Welcome Scholarship can range from $250-$1000 depending on the grade level.

In addition, Grand Rapids Diocese created a marketing team for diocesan schools, hiring an admissions enrollment field consultant, a marketing communications coordinator, and several admission advocates.

This year, Faber said, the diocese is launching a new five-year strategy, "Catholic Schools: Bridging Faith and Future," to extend and build on the success of the previous initiative.

Developed over the last three years by three rounds of community forums, with input from all the deaneries of the diocese, the five-year plan looks to unite the diocesan schools by strengthening programmatic excellence, accessibility, sustainability, and Catholic mission.

Faber said the plan emphasizes the need "to make Catholic schools a ministry of all Catholics in the diocese." As part of this focus, Catholic parishes without schools are required to give 4 percent of their offertory

to aid diocesan schools. This will gradually increase to 8 percent.

While funding education is a sacrifice, the superintendent said, there are numerous studies showing statistical evidence that Catholic schools benefit the Church and broader community.

Catholic school students are more likely than their peers to graduate high school, attend college, and be civically engaged with politics, he said, and Catholic education is associated with an increase in Mass attendance after high school, discernment to the religious life and priesthood, and eventual salaries and charitable donations. "An education centered in Christ offers the best possible learning environment, in which students achieve more in school and life, feel welcomed and cherished, develop creativity and character, and grow in faith and grace – leading to outcomes that are second to none," he told MLive.

CNA Daily News Service

https://www.catholicworldreport.com/2019/02/01/michigan-catholic-schools-find-formula-to-boost-enrollment/

Archbishop Aquila Releases Letter Opposing Colorado House Bill 1032

Dear brothers and sisters,

This Sunday marks the beginning of Catholic Schools Week. This is an annual, national celebration when we celebrate the great gift of Catholic education to our communities and country. The work of Catholic schools cooperating with parents in forming the minds, hearts and souls of our children plays a key role in the future of our Church and society.

The surrounding culture has become increasingly challenging for Christians, particularly as Colorado's legislature looks to pass House Bill 1032, which will require public and charter schools to either use a comprehensive sex-ed curriculum that contradicts human nature and is inconsistent with Christian values, or to provide no instruction on sexuality at all. We know that God made us male and female, in his image and likeness, but the comprehensive curriculum route which most schools will likely adopt teaches innocent children this is not true. Specifically, public schools would have to promote abortion as an equal option to life, and parents wouldn't be notified before lessons were presented on gender-identity and sexual orientation. Each of us must do our part to fight this legislation.

Today I join our pastors, principals, teachers, staff, parents, students, and benefactors to say that our Catholic schools will stand firmly against all ideologies that defy natural law and contradict the truth that has been revealed to us about the human person through the teachings of Our Lord, Sacred Scripture, and the Church.

Our Catholic schools are more than you realize. They provide a haven amidst our morally confused culture, educate the whole person and assist parents in forming their children in an authentically Catholic worldview, one that recognizes the dignity of the human person created for God. This week many of our schools will host open houses and information nights. I encourage every parent with school-aged children to consider this opportunity to learn about how a Catholic education can greatly benefit their children.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Samuel J. Aquila, S.T.L.
Archbishop of Denver

https://archden.org/archbishop-aquila-releases-letter-opposing-colorado-house-bill-1032/#.XFYXks9KhbU

Catholic School Principals Get Creative in Their Snow Day Announcements

Catholic Schools Week 2019 featured some wild weather, including snow and record-breaking subzero temperatures that created dangerous climatic conditions.

Most schools in the Archdiocese of Dubuque had four snow days between Jan. 27-31, which was most of Catholic Schools Week, observed Jan. 27-Feb. 2.

Several principals got very creative with how they announced the school closings, even making toe-tapping music videos in some cases.

"The CSW (Catholic Schools Week) weather was frightful but these videos were delightful," said Archdiocesan Superintendent of Schools Kim Hermsen.

Links to all the announcements can be found at https://bit.ly/2G4kSnh, the online version of this article in *The Messenger*, Dubuque's archdiocesan newspaper.

Principal Beth Globokar of Regis Catholic Middle School in Cedar Rapids reworked the lyrics of the classic Vanilla Ice hit "Ice Ice Baby" for a social media post telling her students there would be no school Jan. 29-30.

Principal Geoff Kaiser of Marquette Catholic High School in Bellevue reminded his audience of all the positive aspects of being home because of inclement weather when informing the community of the Jan. 28 school closing. The list he ran down in a rap included: curling up with a good book and learning a casserole recipe.

"'Iowa grows' is our whole state slogan, but the deep freeze that we're in has put us in slow motion," he quipped.

After offering a song parody of Foreigner's 1977 classic "Cold as Ice," Marcel Kielkucki, principal of Beckman Catholic High School in Dyersville, capped off his message for Jan. 29-30 on a more serious note.

"Please pray for those who work outside in the cold these next couple of days, especially our farmers and their livestock," he said.

Dan Russo, CNS

https://cruxnow.com/church-in-the-usa/2019/02/03/catholic-school-principals-get-creative-in-their-snow-day-announcements/

Sister Wendy Beckett and the Power of Innocence

4 Lessons we can draw from the life of the beloved cloistered nun and art historian.

I first encountered Sister Wendy Beckett when my college humanities class watched her video series, *Story of Painting*. I wasn't Catholic at the time and don't know that I'd ever met a nun. My opinion of them, to the extent that I had one at all, would have been that they were kind-hearted, but naive and out-of-touch. The image of Sister Wendy that appeared in her video did not dispel those preconceptions; there was one quality writ large across her face, inherent in her defenseless smile and the brightness of her eyes: Sister Wendy was a picture of childlike innocence.

Innocence is disarming. Oddly, it's often associated with not being very clever. The smart, sophisticated people, it seems, are cynical and cunning. These are the world-weary intelligentsia who occupy positions of power and prestige, and there's a faint whiff of disdain for those who don't engage the world to conquer it, those who choose a simpler path. Sister Wendy might appear, at first glance, a perfect example of a woman who had run away from the harsh realities of the world because, as it's all too easy to think, she didn't have what it took to engage in the affairs of the real world.

On the contrary, though, Sister Wendy has quite a life story.

Wendy Becket was born in February 1930 in Johannesburg, South African, and died just this past December, on the day after Christmas, at the age of 88. In her youth, she entered the Order of Notre Dame de Namur and was sent to study literature at Oxford, where one of her professors was J.R.R. Tolkien.

"I had a wonderful time at Oxford," she says in an interview with the *Catholic Herald*. Even though, as a religious sister, she was limited socially, she says, "All the students were trailing crowds of glory to me because I never spoke to any of them."

After graduation, she taught for a few years, but then suffered a series of epileptic seizures, at which point she became a contemplative hermit. She lived the rest of her life in solitude and prayer, occasionally emerging from the quiet to record a profoundly insightful video about great works of art. At the news of her death, I offered a prayer of silent gratitude for her wise, subtle, and penetrating insights as she had shown me how to look at a piece of art.

When she died, she was as innocent as ever, but that doesn't mean she wasn't also very wise. Sister Wendy was deceptively intelligent, and not in spite of her innocence, but because of it. We must look past our initial reactions to her smiling face and shy humility to attend very closely to her words. We must look very closely at her, in exactly the same way she looked at a painting.
I say Sister Wendy was wise because of her innocence, and there are a number of ways that innocence fosters wisdom in us, lessons we can draw from the life of Sister Wendy.

First, those who are innocent maintain a sense of wonder.

Wonder, as Socrates teaches, is the beginning of wisdom. Cynicism, fake sophistication, and irony actually keep us from true insight, because cynical people are unduly dismissive. The awe of Sister Wendy as she stood before an artistic masterpiece

slowed her down and allowed her to see the painting more clearly. She had no preconceptions, no need to criticize the work to fit her view into an ideology or to appear smart to others. She simply appreciated what was presented to her. Hers is the romance of human thought.

Second, innocence is open-minded.

Innocence doesn't prejudge and it seeks to learn more. Think about a child patiently watching a caterpillar crawl across a leaf, or a poet gazing into a starry sky. Sister Wendy would talk about all sorts of paintings, ranging from ancient icons to modern art. She could appreciate it all, see its most interesting aspects, and she was able to speak with wisdom and joy about everything she studied.

Third, innocence is empathetic.

Sister Wendy would look at an icon of the Blessed Virgin Mary and almost weep as she felt what Mary felt. She would stand in front of a painting portraying a horrible murder in an ancient Greek myth and she would be able convey the horror and power of the scene almost as if she was being confronted by the gods themselves. Innocence allows us to be receptive to the lived experience of others, to feel what it's like to walk a mile on their shoes.

Finally, innocence is winsome.

This winsomeness explains Sister Wendy's popularity. Her wisdom was modest, and when I watch her I never feel that she's talking down to me. Instead, she invites her viewer to join her on a treasure hunt. Through her innocence, her wisdom was easily passed on to those who she taught.

Perhaps the real challenge with innocence is that it makes us vulnerable. With all the tragedy, arguing, and selfishness out there, it seems smarter to defend ourselves from the world rather than to welcome it with open arms. But welcome it is precisely what Sister Wendy courageously did. And this may be the greatest wisdom of all, because what we're really eavesdropping on when we observe her encounters with art is a woman who genuinely loves what she is seeing.

She was willing to be wounded by it.

The risk is worth it, because it is the eye of the lover that sees most clearly. All of life is a painting, this is what Sister Wendy taught us, but to really, truly see it, we must be wise enough to remain innocent.

Fr. Michael Rennier

https://aleteia.org/2019/02/03/sister-wendy-beckett-and-the-power-of-innocence

Catholic School Students, Diocese Sue Over Exclusion From Vermont College Program

The Diocese of Burlington is joining two students and their parents in filing a federal lawsuit challenging a Vermont policy that excludes students at private religious schools from taking part in a college credit program.

The Dual Enrollment Program in Vermont allows high school students to take college courses funded by the state. Students from public schools are eligible, as are students from secular private schools, and homeschooled students. However, attendees of private religious high schools are excluded from the program.

Eligibility for the program mirrors the criteria for a separate Town Tuitioning Program, which does not include private religious schools due to a 1999 Vermont Supreme Court decision which held that the use of public funds to pay tuition at private religious schools was a violation of the state constitution.

But plaintiffs in the lawsuit say the dual enrollment situation is different, since the state is paying for college courses, not the tuition for a religious high school.

Two students from Rice Memorial High School, along with their parents and the Diocese of Burlington, which runs the school, filed the federal suit on Tuesday.

"Vermont is discriminating against students purely based on which kind of school they come from," said Christen Price, legal counsel with Alliance Defending Freedom, which is representing the students, parents and diocese in the lawsuit. "Vermont's program includes public, private secular, and home-school students. Only students from private religious schools are completely excluded."

"Students should have every opportunity to pursue their educational goals. That's especially true in this case, where the government isn't spending any money on religious education," Price said.
Alliance Defending Freedom pointed to the U.S. Supreme Court's 2017 decision in Trinity Lutheran Church v. Comer. In that case, the court ruled that a state cannot deny public benefits to religious entities simply because they are religious.

"The government is constitutionally required to treat religious people equally," Price said, adding that "a state cannot discriminate against students by excluding them from generally available public benefits simply because they attend a religious school."

Vermont Secretary of Education Dan French said this week that he was not sure how many schools were excluded from the program, the *Burlington Free Press* reported.

CNA Daily News

https://www.catholicworldreport.com/2019/02/03/catholic-school-students-diocese-sue-over-exclusion-from-vermont-college-program/

An Interview with Fr. Paul Robinson

The Angelus' Editor's Note: The following is an interview with Fr. Paul Robinson concerning his recent book, *The Realist's Guide to Religion and Science*.

Father, it has now been nine months since the publication of your book, and it seems to have stirred up some controversy!

Indeed, it has. And while I did not write the book for that purpose, I did anticipate that it might make some waves.

What has the controversy centered on?

Really, something that is a small part of the entire work, namely, the contents of chapter 7 (there are 11 chapters all up). In that chapter, I voice some strong objections to Young Earth Creationism (YEC) and point out that Catholics are free to embrace the Big Bang Theory, if they wish.

Why do you object to YEC? Isn't that the safest of positions?

On the contrary, I find it to be quite dangerous. It runs straight into theological, philosophical, and scientific problems.

How so?

Well, it all starts with the assumptions that the adherents of YEC make. The first assumption is that of "biblicism," namely, the idea that the Bible is authoritative over all other sources of knowledge, including science, reason, and especially the Catholic Church. Based on this assumption, they conclude that Genesis is meant to teach truths about all areas of knowledge, including science.

Then, they proceed to read Genesis as teaching that the universe must be 6,000 years old. Since this, in their minds, is the inspired sense of Scripture, it cannot be wrong, regardless of whatever evidence might counter that idea.

Like what evidence?

Such as, for instance, the entire body of evidence brought to us by our high-powered telescopes. They show that the light coming to us from distant stars and galaxies is millions of years old, not thousands of years old.

But isn't that based on some assumptions?

Absolutely. For scientists to conclude that the light coming from the stars is really millions of years old, they have to assume a principle called uniformitarianism. This is the idea that the laws of nature are the same throughout the universe (sameness in space) and for the entire history of the universe (sameness in time). Scientists have to make this assumption to even be able to do science, since they are looking for laws of the universe, and the universe cannot have laws without this uniformity.

As I point out in *The Realist Guide*, this assumption only makes sense if there is a consistent God, outside of the universe, who is able to establish laws for it and make it run consistently. Let atheist scientists take note of the implicit theism of their assumptions.

Couldn't God have changed the speed of light sometime in the past and so made it that the light only looks old, but is not really old?

Of course He could. And this question of yours brings me to the second assumption of YEC adherents. Because the universe appears old and this contradicts their interpretation of the Bible, they refuse the principle of uniformitarianism. They claim that God periodically changes the laws of nature and this is the reason why, for example, the light from distant galaxies looks old, but is not actually old. The laws for light now are not the same as they were in the past.

Why do you find this problematic?

I have three problems with this. The first problem is a theological one. A God who periodically changes the laws of His own universe is one who wants to prevent humans from investigating it using their reason. The modern scientist, for instance, makes measurements of distant light, assumes uniformitarianism is true, performs certain mathematical calculations, and then reasons that the light is a certain age. But, in actual fact, his conclusion is false, if God has periodically reconfigured the universe. If such is the case, there is no way for the scientist to use natural reason to discover the age of the light.

But doesn't the Bible teach him that?

Well, that is precisely the claim of YEC, that all knowledge comes from the Bible and thus that the Bible is meant to teach us science. For them, our senses and reason tell us that the universe is old, while the Bible tells us that the universe is young. Thus, we are meant to reject reason for revelation. In other words, the YEC position sets up an either-or situation for the believer: you either take reason or revelation, but you cannot accept both.

And you say this creates a theological problem?

Yes, because it makes God out to be something of a tyrant. He creates humans in His own likeness by giving them a rational soul. Then, they use their reason to discover fascinating facts about the universe He created. But God steps in, revealing to them that what their reason found is false, because He made a world that only appears old, but is not actually old.

Can't such a choice be justified on the part of God?

It can…for all the wrong reasons, especially by someone like Martin Luther. You see, he saw reason as an enemy of faith, because his was a faith without reason, a faith held on the basis of presumption, not on the basis of reasonableness. This was why Luther attacked reason with his typical vehemence. He thought that God shared his own hatred of reason. Thus, he claimed that God purposely reveals things in the Bible that are against reason, so that humans will learn not to trust their reason. Through revelation, believers learn to abandon their reason for the glory of God.

Does this view also line up with sola Scriptura and biblicism?

Yes. If God put all knowledge in the Bible, then He needs to teach humans not to look for knowledge in other areas. He has them think they have learned something from the world around them, then He steps in with a revelation from the Bible to say, "No, that is only a trick of your mind. If I was consistent, your inference would be true. But I have not run the universe consistently, so that you will learn not to trust reason and instead will trust the Bible alone."

For me, this is not a fatherly God, but an overbearing God, one who gives a gift (reason) for the purpose of taking it away. I blame much of the modern world's theophobia on this Protestant idea of God.

I think I understand what you are saying. But I am not following how that theology follows from a young universe. Didn't the Fathers all agree that the universe was young?

Yes, they did, but they did not have telescopes and so did not have solid scientific evidence indicating that the universe is ancient. Since their science was primitive, Pope Leo XIII instructs us in Providentissimus Deus that we do not have to follow the Fathers in physical matters, where they sometimes erred. We only have to follow them in matters of faith and morals.

Besides, the Fathers did not have the biblicist mentality that sets Scripture against reason and all other forms of knowledge. Thus, we can expect that they would have been willing to accept evidence for an old universe, if the science of their day was able to find that evidence.

Luther did not have telescopes, either.

This is true. But he did have the theology I have described. Though he did not consider the Bible as contradicting reason on the question of the age of the universe, he did consider it contradicting reason in other areas. My claim is that the YEC movement, which has its origin with Protestant fundamentalism, embraces the same theology as Luther. YECers admit that the universe appears old; they just claim that God either directly created a young universe with an old appearance, or that He changed the laws of nature. Either way, they are lining up with Luther's theology.

But Catholics have to believe that God created Adam and Eve directly. Wouldn't this entail the same conflict between faith and reason?

Not at all, for two reasons. The first is that Adam and Eve are just two individual persons, not the whole universe. Even if God created them with the appearance of having passed through childhood, when they had not, this would not spell the end of science. When God creates the universe in a fully formed state, with the appearance of being old, or when God periodically changes the laws of the universe, then we have a problem.

Secondly, we may presume, God did not create Adam and Eve with the appearance of having passed through infancy and childhood. Our first parents would have concrete reasons to believe what God was telling them by revelation, namely, that He had created them as adults. They would not have navels, they would not have memories of childhood or adolescence, they would not have memories of their putative parents, there would be no other humans around, and so on.

So the problem is not really with God creating something fully formed?

Exactly! The problem is God creating something fully formed AND creating it in such a way that it seems to have a long history, when it doesn't, and then telling us that He created it fully formed. This is the scenario that the Reformers wanted to project on the Christian God, in order to turn Him into a Creator who hates the very gift of reason that He gives man and so finds ways to convince man to distrust reason.

You mentioned two other problems with the YEC position.

Yes, a philosophical problem and a scientific problem, both deriving from Protestant theology. What we must realize is that the idea of a God who is consistent in the running of the universe and one who is not consistent are two very different ideas of God. The inconsistent God is more willful than reasonable. He is what is called a "voluntarist" God, a God who does not have to be reasonable in His activity.

The Reformers' dislike of reason and the Reformers' corresponding desire that revelation be the only source of human knowledge made them see God in this way. For them, not only must we expect God to be arbitrary, we must see that He needs to be arbitrary. Only then will the universe be unintelligible to reason.

How does that cause philosophical problems?

It makes one gravitate towards a false philosophical position called "nominalism." Nominalism denies the existence of natures or essences outside the mind. An essence is a distinct way of existing, like dogness or catness. It indicates a nature that belongs to a certain class of individuals that all exist in the same way. All of the concepts in our minds are essences. This is why there have to be essences really existing outside of our mind for our ideas to tell us anything about reality.

How does this connect with a voluntarist God?

Well, if God were to give essences to things, it would be because He has ideas in His own mind, certain patterns according to which He creates things. And if He has ideas according to which He creates, then His will must conform to His intellect in creating. William of Occam and the Reformers two centuries later did not want there to be any restriction on God's will. Thus, they held that God does not give essences to things.

The result is that humans must conclude that the concepts they form from reality are not actually true of reality. We have again a terrible blow to reason, but the Reformers were more than content to strike such a blow—it saved them from seeing the irrationality of their rebellion against God and His Church.

What about the scientific problem deriving from YEC?

I explained above how uniformitarianism is a necessary assumption to do science and how YEC attacks that assumption. Allow me to provide an example of how this destroys science. Consider the work of Newton. The apple (supposedly) plunked down on his head and set him thinking about gravity. His insight was that the law of gravity working on Earth also applies in outer space, for the heavenly bodies. This enabled him to describe the motion of the planets around the sun using the same laws that we observe on Earth. In other words, the entire success of his three laws for planetary motion depended on the assumption that the laws of nature on Earth are the same as the laws of nature in heaven, that they are uniform throughout the whole universe.

You also gave the example of light above.

Yes. That example shows how the historical sciences rely on the laws of nature being consistent throughout time, as well as space. Looking into a telescope is like looking at the history of the universe in the trails of

light coming from galaxies. The history is true, however, only if the laws for light have remained the same throughout time.

The light from the Large Magellanic Cloud that I can see here in Australia, for instance, would seem to be 163,000 years old. If God changed the speed of light, however, in 2,000 BC, my calculations would only be valid for the last 4,000 years. The same would hold true for any other calculations I would make about other galaxies. It would be the death of astronomy.

And you are saying that is what the YECers want?

No, I don't think they want that necessarily, but it is certainly what the Reformers wanted. Regardless, YEC adherents must come to grips with the fact that such is the result of their theology, whether they like it or not. Their position makes religion an enemy of science and reason.

Which eventuality, I take it, you are not fond of?

Indeed, no. My entire book after all (not just chapter 7!) is about maintaining a proper harmony between religion and science, between faith and reason. This has always been the Catholic spirit. St. Augustine famously says that we must show the world that there is nothing in our sacred books that conflicts with reason. Catholics hold that reason is a precious gift from God and that He wants us to use it for His glory, not destroy it for His glory.

So it is a respect for reason that pits you against YEC?

Yes, certainly. But, in the end, my opposition to YEC dates from my seminary formation, where I was taught why Catholic exegetes reject YEC, under the guidance of the Church. God willing, I was also given a Catholic intellectual balance in Scriptural matters which, in turn, I hope I communicate to my own students.

What else is in your book?

An explanation of how the Catholic Middle Ages gave birth to modern science, why the Allah of the Muslims is also a voluntarist God, an in-depth criticism of atheistic science, including Darwinian evolution, and much more! The book also has a website with a blog, therealistguide.com. There, readers can find many resources related to the book.

How can people help get word out about the book?

I would think things would have to start with purchasing a copy from Angelus Press! Then, after having some familiarity with the book, a favorable reader could assist the book's cause by writing a positive review on Amazon, rating the book on Goodreads, purchasing copies for friends and family, and sending possible reviewers my way. It's a good cause!

Early Screen Exposure Linked to Cognitive and Developmental Problems in Children

The statistics from France are frightening and the problem is the same in North America.

Once again, experts are sounding the alarm regarding the dangers of exposing children to electronic screen use. This isn't a surprise — experts have been saying this for a while now —but the numbers (from France, in this case) are alarming.

In a forum published in the French newspaper *Le Monde* on January 17, professionals at the French Screen Overexposure Collective (Collectif Surexposition Ecrans, or CoSE) expressed their concern about the sharp increase in intellectual and cognitive disorders in children, and warn about the need to fight against early overexposure to electronic screens (television, computer, tablet, and phone).

The National Education department published its benchmarks and statistical references for 2018, including the number of school children who are suffering from some variety of cognitive handicap. "The results are striking," laments a representative of CoSE. "The number of children between the ages of 2 and 11 suffering from intellectual and cognitive problems, psychological problems, and language disorders is increasing dramatically. Since 2010, cases of intellectual and cognitive disorders have increased by 24 percent, psychological disorders by 54 percent, and speech and language disorders by 94 percent." In the space of 10 years, children have developed more and more difficulty expressing themselves, learning, and managing their emotions.

A link with overexposure to screens?

Pediatricians, child psychiatrists, psychologists, and experts from related fields are all asking: might not the environmental factor explain the progress of these serious disorders in children? They highlight the many studies conducted over the last 20 years, establishing a causal link between too early exposure to screens and sleep, language, behavior and attention disorders.

For older children, other studies confirm the impact of excessive exposure to screens on physical activity, weight, vision, mood (anxiety, isolation, and depression) and hypersexualized or violent attitudes due to pornography and violence.

Young children watch too much TV

The battle promises to be tough, since parents themselves don't seem to take this fact into account. While many experts advocate not exposing children to screens before the age of three, the Longitudinal French Study From Childhood reveals that two-thirds of two-year-old children watch television every day. (Statistics in America suggest the situation is no better on the other side of the Atlantic.) The Collective calls on public authorities to support research teams, so that France can carry out studies that would remove all doubts on the subject, and to develop a national strategy for risk prevention, including creating support for parents.

Don't wait for someone else to act

There's no doubt that screens are an easy way to entertain children of all ages and to free parents up for work and other activities, but everything points to the price for such an

"easy out" being too high. It's time for parents everywhere to take action to protect their child's future by limiting children's screen time, and turning to other forms of age-appropriate entertainment and education, especially direct parent-child interaction (playing board games, reading and telling stories, engaging in crafts, etc.). It will certainly require sacrifices—for example, maybe we need to start by limiting our own screen time—but the reward will be a richer life for our children.

Mathilde De Robien

https://aleteia.org/2019/02/09/early-screen-exposure-linked-to-cognitive-and-developmental-problems-in-children/

7 Famous Authors Who Overcame Struggles to Read and Write

If your child has a hard time reading and writing, take heart!

There is enormous pressure to not let your child fall behind in reading and writing. And if he's already behind, the fear is he'll never catch up. No one wants their child held back for a year or put into a remedial reading group that may make him vulnerable to bullying. The anxiety is understandable — after all, parents want the absolute best for their children, including academic success.

It may be, though, that the push to learn to read and write at an early age is intellectually damaging some of our children. We figure that, if it's good to read in first grade, it's even better to read in kindergarten. Some children are ready and eager to read at that age. On the other hand, some children aren't developmentally ready yet, and by pushing them into reading too soon we're setting them up for a lifetime of frustrated animosity towards learning.

In fact, in places like Finland, teachers aren't allowed to start teaching kindergartners literacy unless the child specifically asks. Instead, the teachers spend their time with the students helping them develop pre-literacy skills through singing rhymes and clapping out syllables. The goal is to instill in the children a joyful interaction with learning and school. What we learn with joy, we retain.

Children all learn at their own pace; some read early, some late. This could be for a number of reasons ranging from simple lack of interest all the way to serious learning disabilities. However, as long as they don't give up, late readers typically catch up with their peers. Struggling to read at a young age doesn't mean a child isn't inclined towards a lifetime of love for literature. For encouragement, here are seven famous authors who, for various reasons, were late readers and writers.

Agatha Christie

Agatha Christie, who created and wrote about the detective Hercule Poirot, was actually not a slow reader at a young age. She was, however, a horrible speller and struggled mightily with handwriting. Her troubles probably sprang from a form of dyslexia, and she reportedly admitted, "I, myself, was always recognized … as the 'slow one' in the family … Writing and spelling were always terribly difficult for me." She never outgrew her struggles with spelling, and as an adult she would often dictate her books so she didn't have to write.

W.B. Yeats

Yeats is one of the most influential Irish poets and playwrights of the modern era. He was a slow starter, though, and says, "Several of my uncles and aunts had tried to teach me to read, and because they could not, and because I was much older than children who read easily, had come to think, as I have learnt since, that I had not all my faculties." Yeats remembers how frustrated his father was; "My father was an angry and impatient teacher and flung the reading book at my head." He eventually learned to read, and went on to win the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1923.

F. Scott Fitzgerald

F. Scott Fitzgerald struggled so badly at school that his teachers kicked him out at the age of 12. He never finished his homework

and had a great deal of trouble with spelling. Even as an adult with a gift for storytelling, his writing was poor. After reading a typo-filled version of his novel, This Side of Paradise, a literary critic called it, "one of the most illiterate books of any merit ever published." Based on his behavior, Fitzgerald may have struggled with Attention Deficit Disorder. He persevered and now, ironically, millions of high school students read his book, *The Great Gatsby*.

George Bernard Shaw

George Bernard Shaw hated school, irregularly attended, and dropped out as soon as he could. Later in life he compared school to a prison, "in which children are kept to prevent them disturbing and chaperoning their parents." He had trouble focusing and adapting to a structured learning environment, preferring to work at his own pace. He turned out to be prodigious and was a highly successful essayist and playwright.

John Irving

John Irving, whose screenplay for *The Cider House Rules* based on his own novel won him an Academy Award, still reads using his finger to follow the words. His teachers in school regarded him as "lazy" and "stupid." He was neither, but his reading issues put him in remedial classes. He says it wasn't until his own son displayed the same slowness with reading comprehension that he understood that his own issues weren't entirely his own fault.

Gustave Flaubert

Gustave Flaubert has written some of the greatest novels in the French language, but as a youth he would burst out crying when his grandmother tried to teach him to read. In spite of the tears, he didn't give up and by doing extra work was able to catch up with his peers when he was 10. By the time he was 13 he was reading *Les Miserables*.

Beverly Cleary

In second grade, Beverly Cleary was behind all her peers in both reading and writing. She was motivated to catch up, though, and eventually became so enamored with books that she became a librarian. This is before she became a Newbery Award-winning author of beloved children's books.

The lesson for children and parents alike? Don't give in to frustration or defeat, work hard, and a lifetime of literary joy awaits.

Fr. Michael Rennier

https://aleteia.org/2019/02/10/7-famous-authors-who-overcame-struggles-to-read-and-write/

Vigilance by Parents and Their Children Called Key to Safe Internet Use

In his internet safety presentations at schools, Justin Gaertner emphasizes that safety "comes back to parents and kids being vigilant."

"If you see something, say something," he tells his audiences.

Wounded in war while serving in Afghanistan as a Marine veteran, Gaertner works with the Department of Homeland Security, pursuing predators who collect and trade child pornography - more accurately termed, child sexual abuse imagery - on the internet.

"We all have to be very careful," Gaertner told Catholic News Service.

One resource for guidance on internet safety is the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, or NCMEC, runs the website netsmartz.org with tip sheets and guidance tailored for various audiences. The site is one of more than a dozen sites with child safety resources the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Secretariat for Child and Youth Protection lists at https://bit.ly/1DlKIJR.

For parents, NCMEC suggests the best way to protect your children is to actually engage with them in accessing things online: offer to play the games they like, ask them to show you what platforms they use, discuss being respectful online and never responding to sexual questions or requests for pictures.

"Your kids might not tell you everything but ask anyway," the center says. "Regular conversations about safety can go a long way in increasing trust and communication."

The site www.faithandsafety.org tells parents: "No technology, no piece of software, no parental control is ever a substitute for active and involved parenting. The most effecting internet safety tool is you!"

Launched in 2013 by the USCCB's Department of Communications and the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, the Faith and Safety website has a variety of resources, including reviews of mobile apps; ways to address issues faced by children online, such as bullying; and resources to educate parents on protecting their home networks.

It also features regular columns by leading Catholic and Orthodox figures on connecting faith and technology, as well as news updates, how-to guides and video content.

"All safety - especially mobile and online safety - begins at home," the site's homepage says. "The habits you exhibit about technology use in your home will be the same habits your children learn. … Model the behavior you yourself expect from your children."

Eleanor Kennelly Gaetan

https://cruxnow.com/church-in-the-usa/2019/02/10/vigilance-by-parents-and-their-children-called-key-to-safe-internet-use/

Mother Tells How Daughter Became Victim of Sex Trafficking, Lost her Life

Yvonne Ambrose had one of the worst experiences any mother can suffer: Her daughter Desiree, age 16, was found in a garage on Christmas Eve 2016 murdered by a man who beat her, slashed her throat and left her to die, painfully alone, in the Chicago cold.

The internet was the key element that turned Desiree from a happy "A" student to a tragic victim of sexual violence.

First, she met a man in his early 20s on Facebook. He "groomed" her, a technique used by exploiters to earn trust to manipulate or control a potential victim of sex abuse.

Desiree ran away from home in late November that year.

Soon after, her new "boyfriend" sold her for $250 to a pimp who took photos of her, advertised her on Backpage.com - an internet platform that earned the vast majority of its multimillion revenue from ads selling human flesh until it was shut down by federal investigators eight months ago - and drove her to "dates," where she was raped for money.

It was a sex buyer, Antonio Rosales, 32, who murdered Desiree.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, child sexual abuse includes commercial sexual exploitation as well as using children in pornography and exposing them to pornographic material - whether or not there is physical contact.

In her new book *Invading the Darkness: Inside the Historic Fight Against Sex Trafficking in the United States*, former Congresswoman Linda Smith, R-Washington, describes how she first encountered girls and women kept as captives in brothels in Mumbai, India.

Touching the face of a child no older than 11, condemned to endless assault by men using her body, Smith committed herself to combating the phenomena of international sex trafficking. She started Shared Hope International in 2000 as a faith-based nongovernmental organization providing shelter and services for survivors abroad.

But "I was missing something essential," she told *Catholic News Service*. "Something that made my blood run cold. The fact that child trafficking was happening in our own neighborhoods. I had a global view, not realizing this was a domestic issue too."

Under U.S. federal law, any minor exploited in the commercial sex industry is a victim of human trafficking, but until about 10 years ago, especially at the state and local level, children who got caught up in prostitution were blamed for what happened to them.

"As a matter of routine, kids were being arrested, charged, and convicted for prostitution," recounted Smith, "They were called 'bad kids,' runaways, or worse. Yet, they were all victims."
Shared Hope International did one of the first studies of Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking for the U.S. Department of Justice in 2006.

She continued, "Meanwhile, a man would go to an ATM, drive to a designated location to receive the product he bought and commit a premeditated crime - the rape of a child -

but instead of being seen as a violent predator, he's an anonymous 'John.' It's the child who's usually considered a criminal, while the 'John' goes home."

To prevent child sex trafficking, Smith advocates for stronger state laws including harsher penalties against sex buyers to shrink the demand for vulnerable bodies.

In 2007, the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant took a similar view about stronger laws directed at sex buyers, or "clients," who the council said "need help in solving their most intimate problems and in finding suitable ways of directing their sexual tendencies.

"'Buying sex' does not resolve the problems that arise primarily from frustration and lack of authentic relationships, and from the loneliness that characterizes so many situations in life today," it said. "An effective measure toward cultural change with respect to prostitution could derive from associating criminal law with social condemnation."

The Catholic Church has designated Feb. 8 as an annual International Day of Prayer and Awareness Against Human Trafficking and invites people to host or attend a prayer service that fosters awareness of and support for victims of trafficking.

The annual day, created with Pope Francis's encouragement in 2015, is the feast day of St. Josephine Bakhita, who was kidnapped as a child and sold into slavery in Sudan and Italy.

Covenant House, which shelters homeless youth in 14 states most ages 16-20, estimates that 20 percent of the young people it serves have been victims of human trafficking. On the streets, too often, they have sold, or bartered, access to their bodies in exchange for food, drugs, alcohol or a bed.

Ninety-five percent of all sex trafficking victims reported childhood experiences of abuse, according to a study commissioned by Covenant House from the University of Pennsylvania's Field Center for Children's Policy, Practice & Research.

"Traffickers can sense (past sexual abuse)," said Angela Aufdemberge, president of Vista Maria, a social services organization in Dearborn Heights, Michigan, told an anti-trafficking conference in Washington last May. "The biggest need is to address maltreatment in homes and regulating who our kids are communicating with on the internet."

Ten months ago President Donald Trump signed a new law making it illegal for online platforms to knowingly facilitate sex trafficking. It was a law Yvonne Ambrose had helped lobby for in Congress.

Standing next to him as he signed the measure in the Oval Office was a bittersweet experience for her.

Ambrose told the president: "Our fight against online sex trafficking has made a change - a change that will save the life of someone else's daughter."

Eleanor Kennelly Gaetan

https://cruxnow.com/church-in-the-usa/2019/02/10/mother-tells-how-daughter-became-victim-of-sex-trafficking-lost-her-life/

Covington Students 'Did Not Instigate' Lincoln Memorial Encounter, Bishop Says

The Roman Catholic bishop of Covington, Ky., released an investigative report on Wednesday that he said showed a group of high school students from his diocese "did not instigate" a widely publicized encounter with a Native American man outside the Lincoln Memorial last month.

"Our students were placed in a situation that was at once bizarre and even threatening," the bishop, Roger J. Foys, said in a statement with the report. "Their reaction to the situation was, given the circumstances, expected and one might even say laudatory."

Bishop Foys said the report realized his hope that an investigation would "exonerate" the students.

The diocese hired a private detective agency that developed a detailed account of an encounter that was captured on video and quickly became a lightning rod for political and racial tensions in America.

The mostly white students, many of them wearing "Make America Great Again" gear, were in Washington on Jan. 18 to attend an anti-abortion March for Life rally when they intersected with a Native American man, Nathan Phillips, and others from an Indigenous Peoples March. Nearby, a group of black Hebrew Israelites were shouting slurs at the boys and Native Americans on the scene.

Covington Catholic High School and the diocese, along with a chorus of political commentators, had at first condemned the behavior of the students after a short clip spread rapidly on social media that showed an apparent standoff between Mr. Phillips and an unidentified teenager in a MAGA hat. The diocese even said the students could face expulsion.

But within a day, longer videos began to circulate that showed a more complicated scene at the memorial, and supporters of President Trump rallied to their side.

Through a public relations firm, the teenager in the MAGA hat put out a statement identifying himself as Nick Sandmann and stating that he had been confused by the encounter and had been trying to avoid conflict.

Bishop Foys later apologized for rushing to judgment, telling parents in a letter, "We should not have allowed ourselves to be bullied and pressured into making a statement prematurely."

The agency hired by the diocese, Greater Cincinnati Investigation, said it had spent about 240 hours on the investigation, including examining online video and interviewing 43 students and 13 adult chaperones, including educators and parents. Investigators could not reach Mr. Phillips for an interview, despite traveling to his home in Michigan, and had to rely on Mr. Sandmann's written statement, according to the final report.

Among the findings:

• When Mr. Phillips approached the students, students told investigators, they thought he was coming to join in their school cheers, which they had begun to drown out "offensive statements" by the Hebrew Israelites. "None of the students felt

threatened by Mr. Phillips and many stated they were 'confused,'" the report said.

• Investigators found "no evidence of offensive or racist statements by students to Mr. Phillips or members of his group." But the report said some "joined in" with his chanting and some performed a "tomahawk chop."

• Some boys said a chaperone warned them they would face detention "if they engaged in a verbal exchange" with the Hebrew Israelites.

• Most students bought their "Make America Great Again" apparel while in Washington. In past years, chaperones said, some students had bought "Hope" hats in support of President Barack Obama. Investigators said there was no school policy prohibiting political apparel on school trips.

• Investigators did not find evidence that the students chanted about building a wall at the border with Mexico, as Mr. Phillips had said.

"The immediate worldwide reaction to the initial video led almost everyone to believe that our students had initiated the incident and the perception of those few minutes of video became reality," Bishop Foys wrote.

L. Lin Wood, a lawyer for Mr. Sandmann, said the report released by the diocese confirmed the truth of the teenager's account. Lawyers for Mr. Sandmann have pledged to examine the actions of the school, diocese, various commentators and news organizations, including The New York Times.

"Every member of the mainstream and social media mob who falsely attacked, disparaged, or threatened this 16-year-old boy should hang their heads in shame and be held fully accountable in a court of law for their wrongdoing," Mr. Wood said in an email.

Mr. Phillips could not be reached for comment about the report, which said there were inconsistencies in his accounts of what happened.

On Wednesday, Chase Iron Eyes, a spokesman for the Indigenous Peoples Movement, which organized the march, criticized the investigation as showing "a serious lack of understanding about the intrinsic, racist culture" in the United States.

"We feel that our elder is vindicated by the videos that are out there right now," he said. "We would expect the adults that are responsible for these children to take responsibility for the racism, or ignorance, that is represented by their children doing the tomahawk chop."

Sarah Mervosh

https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/13/us/covington-catholic-investigation.html?emc=edit_th_190214&nl=todaysheadlines&nlid=470686460214

Hungary Waives Income Tax for Mothers of 4 In Bid to Restore Sustainable Birthrate

The prime minister emphasized the need for Hungarian women to have more children.

As part of a national effort to increase the birth rate of Hungary, Prime Minister Viktor Orban announced that the government would exempt mothers of four or more children from paying income tax for life. As added incentive, the prime minister also offered reduce mortgage payments for those with children, offered state aid in purchasing larger family vehicles, included grandparents in paid maternity leave, added day care options, and introduced new loans available for families.

CNA reports the population situation is looking dire in Hungary, where the fertility rate has dropped to 1.45 children per woman. In order for a population to be considered sustainable, it needs a fertility rate of 2.1 children per woman.

In 2017, it was estimated that 94,000 babies were born in Hungary, but nearly 132,000 people died. For a country with fewer than 10 million people, losing 40,000 people per year is threatening. That more young people are leaving the country in search of better wages has only made the fertility crisis worsen.

State Secretary for Families Katalin Novak told the *BBC* that "increasing the number of births is very difficult, because we have fewer and fewer women of child-bearing age."

The number of women of the right age to bear children is expected to drop by 20 percent in Hungary over the next decade. This means the nation will rely on fewer women to have more babies. Their goal is for the fertility rate to return to a healthy 2.1 children per woman before this drop occurs.

Prime Minister Orban emphasized that Hungary is not interested in bolstering its workforce through immigration. Hungary has some of the most stringent immigration policies.

"Instead of just numbers, we want Hungarian children," he said, according to the *Washington Post*. "Migration, for us, is surrender."

The fertility rate is universally in danger across Europe, as currently every country in the EU is below the replacement rate. Countries like France and Germany have seen their rates rise with the implement of similar incentives for having children. These benefits range from tax breaks and write-offs to monthly stipends, which increase per child and as the children age. France in particular also offers free family passes for museums and swimming pools, hoping that the availability of family activities may encourage familial growth.

Unfortunately, while the fertility rates are on the rise in France and Germany, they have yet to reach the sustainable rate of 2.1 children per woman.

J-P Mauro

https://aleteia.org/2019/02/13/hungary-waives-income-tax-for-mothers-of-4-in-bid-to-restore-sustainable-birthrate

Can Reading Books Save Your Soul?

A joyful refusal to surrender the True, Good, and Beautiful.

Do you want a shortcut to salvation? There isn't one. There is, however, a reliable path. Better said: There are reliable companions to take with you on the holy pilgrimage between this life and the next. The constant companions of every faithful Catholic should include good books. (Particularly, these companions should include good old books, as we'll see.)

Surrounded by electronics (as I type this my mobile phone is being rung by an automated service that won't let me rest until I buy insurance) and the attendant noise and flash, it may seem quaint, perhaps even contrarian, to talk about books, especially in relation to the good of the soul. Am I guilty of the (apparently "unforgivable" but surely impossible) sin of trying to "turn back the clock"? Many serious Catholics don't think so. A case in point: Joseph Pearce. (Be sure to visit his website at JPearce.co)

Pearce is an author and all-around Catholic man-of-letters. He's the kind of man who would have been at home with the likes of G.K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc, as a Briton, a fellow Catholic, and a lover of the true, the good and the beautiful—especially as these are brought to us by books and the culture of reading. I had the good fortune of interviewing him last week. (The audio of the broadcast, and a resources list: HERE.) We addressed the question, "Can books save your soul?"

We might summarize our answer as follows: "Only Jesus saves, but books can help—a lot." Pearce and I have had long experience in the college classroom. We've both lamented a slipping away from reverence for the printed word towards a culture that promotes mass addiction to pixels swirling on electronic screens. He sees this change as an inversion of progress. He noted that, ordinarily, we start teaching children with pictures, with an eye towards moving them to words. Now the momentum is backwards, yet the culture still insists that this disintegration is actually progress.

What to do? Let's take a deep breath, and remember who we are and who we're made for. We're made in the image of God as rational, free, and therefore moral, and therefore with a need for beauty. We're saved by the Eternal Word of the Father. Our souls are better fed by the perennial beauties and truths that nourished the saints for generations. It's a matter of life-and-death for the Catholic soul to learn how to read wisely and well, and to learn how to pass on the love of beautiful words to the next generation.

When I taught rhetoric, we'd begin class by standing at the front of the room to recite poetry. The students marched to the front like condemned prisoners. No one had ever asked this of them; no one had taught them how enjoyable and beneficial this could become. I told them: "You must learn to enjoy how words taste. And you must be able to enter into the story yourself before you can lead others into a story." Much to their surprise, they came to love the tasks of selecting, savoring and reciting poetry. Many of them even began to write their own.

How can we get our children on the path of a lifelong habit of soul-nourishing reading? Pick up a fresh copy of John Senior's *The Death of Christian Culture* (found HERE).

An appendix there lists 1,000 (!) books to read with your children between the ages of five and 18.

For the rest of us, Jesuit Father James Schall's little masterpiece, *Another Sort of Learning* (found HERE), can introduce a thoughtful Catholic adult to a lifetime of companionship with great books. And there's another step—one often overlooked. We should not be satisfied with reading alone. Solitary reading is essential. Every monastic order I know of requires daily, solitary spiritual reading. But the joys of beautiful and Godly words are meant to be shared. People who are true friends, friends who pray with and for each other, and for one another's salvation, must share their favorite books. They must meet to read beautiful and true words to each other (preferably over a meal, and continuing on long after the meal is over). Such friends in the Lord, lovers of the true, the good and the beautiful, glad to cultivate other souls while tending to one's own, are also more likely than most to begin to pen beautiful words themselves. We have Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* because he first read it to faithful friends, with whom he first shared books, faith and laughter. Why not walk in the footsteps of such soulful giants?

When I write next, I will speak of a Jesuit hero who deserves to be better known. Until then, let's keep each other in prayer.

Fr Robert McTeigue, SJ

https://aleteia.org/2019/02/13/can-reading-books-save-your-soul

Toxic Femininity

Those who study "inflected" languages such as Latin soon confront the problem of modifiers. Once you realize that the genitive "Marius" is modifying the nominative "book" ("the book of Marius") then you must ask whether the book was written by Marius, belongs to Marius, or is about Marius. So too, in English, when you say, "Silly men don't ask for directions," the question is whether you mean "Men who are silly don't ask for directions" or "Men, who are silly (as a group), don't ask for directions." Vocally you could indicate this by saying, "Silly men don't ask for directions" (are you one of that kind?), or "Silly men never ask for directions."

All of this might seem fussy and pedantic until we come across the sort of confusion generated by Gillette's new "Toxic Masculinity" ad. Is masculinity what's toxic? Or is there a special category of toxic masculinity? I haven't seen the Gillette ad, so I have no idea. Nor would I turn to an advertisement to get my ideas about "masculinity." What am I supposed to say to my friends with beards? "Hey, Gillette says that real men shave!" I don't think so. But having not seen the commercials, I have nothing to say about them.

I also have nothing to say about the dispute the ads have generated among people who care about such things, other than to take this occasion to point out that grammar and logic matter. So why aren't we teaching them? You want better civic discussions? Then you have to give people the tools to engage in them.

Gillette has made the usual *apologia* for the controversy, claiming that they have done a service by "generating an important discussion." Virginia Governor Ralph Northam's comments about letting a child born alive die "generated an important discussion," but that didn't make those comments any less odious or repulsive. You wonder what the response would have been if the ad had been called "Toxic Femininity." Would the same people now be saying that it generated a helpful discussion or would they be demanding the heads of the people at the offending company?

I don't think femininity is toxic, and I actually have no idea what a toxic femininity would be, but I gave this column that title just to test the proposition. Be honest: were you extremely offended by that title in a way you simply weren't by the words "toxic masculinity"?

I don't know what it would mean if you did, but it might be worth thinking about. I am, after all, simply trying to generate a useful discussion.

Serena Sigillito has written a very good piece on the "toxic masculinity" brouhaha, pointing out that, "as distasteful as the term may initially seem to conservatives, the concept of 'toxic masculinity' shouldn't be alien to those who adhere to traditional norms of morality."

Indeed, there used to be a term for a young man who had learned the appropriate sort of behavior he ought to show others, whether they were parents, teachers, the elderly, his fellow workers, or women he didn't know well. It was called "being a gentleman." Mothers and fathers would say to their teenaged boys: "Be a gentleman!"

Now people mock that idea. As C.S. Lewis once pointed out: "We make men without chests and expect from them virtue and enterprise. We laugh at honor and are shocked to find traitors in our midst." If "being a gentleman" seems too quaint and Victorian, then perhaps the Gillette people could have said something like this: "Hey, guys, the country needs men, not adolescent boys."

I would not be the first person to note the critical lack of eligible men available to date all the beautiful, talented, and very eligible women I know. The endless horror stories of women who have ventured onto Catholic Match.com suggests that Catholic men are not doing much better than their secular counterparts.

Catholics are right to be critical of the forces of society when they persist in ignoring the basic principles of nature about our embodied existence and about the relationship between sex and families. But are there some other enduring truths about the nature of human development we are ignoring?

So, let's review. Human beings are biologically "adult" (meaning they can reproduce the species) at roughly 14 or 15 – women sometimes a little earlier, men a little later. Wise cultures find ways to make these young adults capable of taking on adult responsibility, especially with regard to marriage and family; unwise cultures who don't suffer the consequences.

We, especially from the 1950s on, have simply decided to suffer the consequences.

We created "adolescence," an absolutely absurd construction of a developmental stage where emerging adults are given all the freedoms of adulthood and none of the responsibilities. And we're surprised when problems arise?

Instead of doing what wise cultures do, which is to take "young adults" and make sure they spend their time with actual adults so that they can learn the disciplines and virtues they need to take on adult responsibilities and manage adult freedom, we have our young adults spend all their time with other young adults, who are mostly as clueless as they are, doing mostly childish things.

Don't get the young women in my classes started on the young men at the university, their addictions to video gaming, texting, and social media, and their inability to carry on an actual conversation with an actual, living, intelligent woman.

What do I propose? The "Dating Project" at Boston College is a good idea. Training young men and women in ballroom dancing would be another. But nothing is going to work very well until we stop treating our "emerging adults" like children and start incorporating them into adult society.

If you want adult men, then you need boys to spend time with responsible, mature adult men, probably working. Teens spending all their time with teens is a recipe for disaster. It creates – pardon the expression – toxic teens.

Randall Smith

https://www.thecatholicthing.org/2019/02/13/toxic-femininity

If Your Kid Never Makes the Honor Roll, Here's What You Need to Know

Our children all have different, God-given talents, and it's vital that we celebrate this.

When I was growing up, I was always on the honor roll. I loved school because it came easy to me, and I although I was a diligent student, the classes that required me to work hard were few and far between. I got used to seeing my name on every honor roll and getting academic awards at the end of each school year.

My own kids are now in the years when academic achievements are beginning to be recognized. For my oldest, middle school is the beginning of the honor roll and academic achievement years, while my two elementary schoolers are entering the brave new world of spelling bees and speech meets. While the 3rd and 4th graders are holding their own academically, my 7th grader's academic experience couldn't be more different than my own. When the honor roll list is released each quarter, she checks it religiously … even though we both know her name won't be there.

So when I read this post at *Scary Mommy* about one mom's experience, it resonated with me:

Every week my daughter waits, but she doesn't get it, because the other kids are more noticed, and sometimes they are more likable. They fit the description of the school's idea of a hardworking student. My daughter doesn't get an award for trying as hard as the other children try. She has to put in twice the effort just to achieve half of what comes easy to other children. It is a struggle for her not to get distracted or to stay still in her seat. She works at it every. Single. Day. She is resilient and always makes an effort. It's hard for her and she keeps persisting; but she doesn't get an award for that.

Sienna doesn't struggle with ADHD like this mom's daughter, but in many respects her experience is the same. It takes her twice as long to complete her homework, and studying for tests is a constant battle to stay focused. She's habitually forgetful, and often has to complete the same work twice because she misplaced it or left it in her locker. It's been hard for me to figure out how to help her because her struggles are so completely foreign to my experience, and I'll admit that at times I've felt both frustrated and hopeless.

Luckily for both of us, Sienna's teachers are amazing. They spend extra time with her, both before and after school, helping her develop better study and organizational skills. They hold her accountable when she's not diligent, and they celebrate her successes every bit as genuinely as they celebrate the kids on the honor roll. They've taught her things I never had to learn, but things I wish I had learned, because those lessons will serve Sienna well in her future.

For my part, I've begun focusing more on my daughter's strengths than her struggles. Having the blessing of supportive teachers allows me the freedom to support her in other ways. I remind Sienna every day that she is an incredibly gifted athlete and blessed with remarkable social skills. Her talents might not shine as brightly in the classroom as my own did, but when it comes to sports and relationships, her talent is so brilliant it's sometimes blinding.

My 3rd and 4th graders are almost the opposite; their gifts are far more concentrated academically. They're unlikely to be shining stars on the field, and that's hard for them in a different way. But each of their gifts comes with a struggle, and for that I'm grateful.

I'm so glad that none of my children are equally talented across the board. If one of them was a brilliant student, a gifted athlete, and popular among their peers, that's the child I would worry the most about. Kids need adversity to learn and grow, and it's the child who doesn't face adversity early on who suffers the most when challenges finally arise.

That said, it's important to find those areas where our kids shine and celebrate them, especially when they're facing adversity in other areas. It's equally important to find different tools and resources to help our kids when they struggle, especially when those struggles are ones we haven't faced ourselves. Don't be afraid to ask for help or advice from teachers or other parents — it doesn't mean you're failing your child. In fact, it's a way of going above and beyond to help them.

It can be hard to be the kid who never makes the honor roll or the sports team, so if, like me, you're raising kids whose experience in school is vastly different from your own, don't despair. Remember that God gave them their own unique talents because He has a plan for them — and remind them, and yourself, of that truth every day.

Calah Alexander

https://aleteia.org/2019/02/13/if-your-kid-never-makes-the-honor-roll-heres-what-you-need-to-know

Plus Signs for Catholic Schools

A Homeschooling Family Discovers the Importance of the Church's Educational System

With seven children under the age of 19, my wife and I have sought to embrace fully the Catholic faith we returned to during the papacy of St. John Paul II. Having read in John Paul II's 1981 exhortation *Familiaris Consortio* that parents are the "first and foremost educators of their children," and not finding a school nearby that seemed right for our family, we decided to homeschool.

God blessed our decision. In Connecticut, there is an excellent homeschooling support group as well as a classical homeschooling hybrid program. We homeschool our four youngest children to this day.

But when our oldest child graduated from the classical high school program last year, our family was at a crossroads. Homeschooling was working well for some of our children, but not others. And that is when we learned just how fortunate Catholics are to have our own school system.

Today, our oldest child is in her first year at a Catholic college that takes its identity seriously, and our two other teenagers attend excellent Catholic high schools in Connecticut.

Sending our children to three different Catholic schools is expensive. But true to their mission, the schools work with families to reach a price they can afford. And the benefits far outweigh the cost.

From our perspective, as a mostly homeschooling family at a turbulent time in the life of our Church, these are some of the plus signs we see in Catholic schools:

1. With three children going off to school, the teaching load at home is lighter, and we can give our younger children more of the attention they need.

2. Our older children are in the company of other adults — teachers and administrators — who take their faith seriously. The male high school teachers, in particular, have given my son healthy role models of Catholic masculinity. This matters to me at a time when unhealthy male behavior both in the Church and in society is so much in the news.

3. We now attend more extracurricular, friend-building activities than when we only homeschooled. Enrolling in schools that provide these programs as part of their mission takes the burden off parents to organize them.

4. Our children have more opportunities to be around priests and women religious and to discern the possibility that God may be calling them to a vocation.

5. Surrounded by other Catholic young adults on campus, our teens have opportunities to build lifelong friendships and perhaps meet their future spouse.

6. My wife and I also have opportunities to meet with other Catholic parents and widen our social circle.

7. We are now better homeschoolers! Prior to sending our older kids to Catholic schools, we had time management problems, as we tried to balance our duty to the younger children with our efforts to give the

older children the best education that we could.

8. An added bonus has been the joy of seeing our teens fit in well and work to their abilities in a larger school setting, knowing that we have given them a firm foundation at home.

Catholic schools are not necessarily the best choice for every family and budget, but they are the right choice for us, and for millions of other families.

Nor do Catholic schools absolve parents from the obligation to teach the faith and virtues at home. As the Church has consistently taught, Catholic schools were never meant to take the place of mom and dad, even in the days when they were booming and staffed by religious communities.

My wife and I have come to greatly appreciate how Catholic schools can help us in our God-given tasks as educators, and we are grateful to find Catholic schools that can help us in this mission.

Peter Wolfgang

http://www.kofc.org/en/columbia/detail/plus-signs-for-catholic-schools.html

Cardinal Newman Could be Declared a Doctor of the Church, Expert Says

Soon-to-be saint had ideas that were ahead of his time.

Catholics are not the only ones celebrating the Vatican's announcement last week that Cardinal John Henry Newman will be declared a saint. According to Ryan J. Marr, Director of the National Institute for Newman Studies in Pittsburgh, Anglicans are likely to be celebrating as well. Although Newman left the Church of England halfway through his life and had some critical words about it, many Anglicans today see Newman as "one of their own," said Marr.

Marr, who spoke with *Aleteia* about Newman's life and what his thought has to offer to the Church today, also believes there's a good chance that once Newman is canonized, the Vatican will take a further step, declaring him a Doctor of the Church. Newman's specific expertise was in explaining the importance of conscience, and his writings are likely to have much to say today, when many people believe that conscience takes precedence over the pursuit of truth.

Who was John Henry Newman?

Cardinal Newman's life spanned almost the entire 19th century, from 1801 to 1890. The first half of his life was spent in the Church of England. In 1845, he was received into communion with the Church of Rome. He was a prolific poet, theologian, educator, and philosopher, and so he had his hands in a lot of different pots. When Pope Paul VI talked of Newman, he said he was especially to be remembered for his pursuit of the truth. I think you can see that in that Newman was a prominent Anglican, he was a fellow at Oxford, and a well-known minister, and he left behind career prospects and friendships to convert to Rome. That was the driving passion of his life; I think that's why he's remained an inspiration for a lot of people.

What does his thought have to offer the Church today?

One thing that stands out for me from his writings is that he recognized there was a growing skepticism in society at large. So he was really deeply concerned to give an account of faith that responded to some of the challenges of the modern day. He was concerned not simply for intellectuals but all people of faith. Newman said that he wrote his *Grammar of Assent* (1870) to defend the faith of the simple and unlearned. He argued that it was reasonable for such persons to believe in God even if they had not studied all of the arguments for God's existence. Newman noted that in other areas of life there are many beliefs we come to hold that we cannot demonstrate using strict logical proofs. Just as an experienced farmer is able to recognize the signs that point to an impending storm, so also the committed believer draws upon an array of evidence (what Newman called "converging probabilities") to conclude that there is a loving God who created all things. In Newman's view, putting one's trust in God is a reasonable commitment to make, even though most of us don't have the time to weigh all of the arguments involved or to study the history of theology in depth. Newman put a strong emphasis on what I call the urgency of holiness, and he recognized that this is for all people. You could really see a precursor to the Second Vatican Council's emphasis on the universal call to holiness.

Why is he being declared a saint?

For me, as this news has unfolded, I was thinking back to the way canonizations used to be done. In the early Church and through a large part of the Middle Ages, there wasn't the formal process we have today. If the Church added a saint to the liturgical calendar, it was a confirmation of devotion that already existed on the ground. And I think that's really the case with Newman. Catholic student centers on college campuses are called Newman Centers. Here in Pittsburgh, we have the Pittsburgh Oratory [Newman was an Oratorian], and it's a center of great devotion and communal life of prayer.

So I think for a lot of scholars, for a lot of Catholics who come to the faith or come back to the faith in college, they've already felt the impact of Newman's intercession. And I think that Pope Francis making this decision is a confirmation that there are already places, certainly throughout North America but also around the world, where Newman's legacy, both as an intellectual but also as a man of deep personal sanctity, is already felt.

Is there anything controversial about him or the cause for canonization?

During the modernist crisis in the early 20th century, when Pope Pius X condemned modernism, there was a bishop in England who wrote a letter to Pius and said, "Does this condemnation fall upon Newman as well?" Pius wrote that it doesn't. I think that some folks, looking back in their minds, have found Newman to be a liberal or progressive because he talked about the development of doctrine, because he talked about consulting the faithful—ideas that really didn't come into their own fully until the 20th century. But if you read Newman's speech when he was declared a cardinal by Leo XIII, he was quite insistent that the thread running throughout his entire life was in opposition to liberalism. He meant something different by that than how we think of the term today. He was thinking of liberalism as the notion that doctrine doesn't matter, that a person could believe whatever he wants or be a part of this, that or other religion. Newman was opposed to that idea.

There are conversations about Newman's sexual orientation. He had a very close, intimate friendship with Ambrose St. John, who was another Oratorian. Talking about this relationship in terms of sexual orientation is anachronistic, really. It's a testament to the fact that in our own day and age, we don't have good models of same-gender friendships among men. That says more about us than it does about Newman.

Since he was a convert from the Church of England, were there concerns about offending Anglicans by advancing his cause?

Not that I've heard of. After he became a Catholic, he did occasionally have some blunt words regarding the Church of England. In our own context some of those can sound kind of unecumenical. But the ecumenical movement didn't take off in full until the 20th century.

I don't think Anglicans are going to find themselves offended. I've met a lot of Anglicans who see Newman as one of their own. He has a huge body of writings that he composed as an Anglican. He was a leader of the Oxford Movement [in the 1830s, which sought to draw Anglicans to their Catholic roots]. So Anglicans, especially those who are Anglo-Catholic, continue to revere Newman, to study his writings and to see him as part of the Anglican heritage, not

simply as a Catholic. So I think that especially for that group, Newman's canonization is kind of a confirmation of their own sort of devotion to this great figure from the 19th century.

Who are some of the people most likely to be happy about this news?

Any community of Oratorians around the world is certainly excited. When he came into the Catholic Church he was wondering what sort of religious order he should join, and he eventually settled on the Oratory communities, which trace their heritage back to St. Philip Neri.

A lot of scholars too. Some have suggested that Newman may be the patron saint of scholars, or intellectuals. He wrote a famous book called The Idea of a University. He talked a lot about what it means to love God with all your mind.

And I think a lot of Catholic converts have a devotion to him. His *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* (A Defense of My Life) is one of the great modern spiritual autobiographies. I've talked to a lot of individuals who came into the Church from Protestant communities, and Newman helped them to work through some of the theological questions they were wrestling with.

Is there any talk that he may eventually be proclaimed a Doctor of the Church?

Yes there is. I think there will be some discernment around that after a canonization date is determined. One of the founders of the National Institute for Newman Studies is Fr. Drew Morgan, who is an Oratorian here in Pittsburgh. He wrote an article several years ago saying that Newman should be and may be declared the Doctor of Conscience. Especially around the time of the First Vatican Council, Newman wrote a great deal about what is the proper understanding of conscience, and what does it mean to follow your conscience in light of the fact that we're part of a Church that says there's this authority that we have to listen to in our lives.

How would you explain his teaching on conscience?

Newman described conscience as "the aboriginal vicar of Christ." What he meant is that it is through our conscience that we first hear the voice of God speaking to us. Building off this point, Newman was insistent that we are compelled to follow our conscience at all times. Doing otherwise would undercut the ability to live a coherent moral life. The Church, Newman argued, would be foolish to attack the importance of following conscience. In doing so, the magisterium would be in effect sawing off the very branch that it sits upon, because it is precisely through heeding conscience that persons are able to recognize the truthfulness of Catholic moral theology and follow the path to sanctity.

All that being said, Newman also warned against a false understanding of conscience, which understands conscience as "the right of self-will"— the prerogative to define right and wrong for oneself. In this light, it's not enough to talk about the primacy of conscience without addressing the importance of having our consciences properly formed. Those who pit conscience against Church teaching fail to see how God has providentially ordained the Church as a trustworthy guide in the moral life. Conscience and Church authority exist in a reciprocal, not competitive relationship.

What book or books of Newman's might serve as a good introduction for someone who knows nothing about him?

When folks first approach me about where they should start, I usually point them to his sermons. Especially from his Anglican days, he has six volumes of *Parochial and Plain Sermons*. Those can be really helpful resources for meditation.

Another great resource is his *Meditations and Devotions*, which is a collection of some very beautiful, profound prayers.

John Burger

https://aleteia.org/2019/02/21/cardinal-newman-could-be-declared-a-doctor-of-the-church-expert-says

Learn Music Theory from a Berklee Professor … For Free!

This is an invaluable tool for anyone who wants to play music, but has had no formal training.

One of the greatest aspects of music is that it doesn't take a formal education to sing or play an instrument. If you can figure out how to make sound, all it takes is a little practice and you'll run through "When the Saints Go Marching In," all from the intuition of your own ears. Even some of the most famous musicians, like The Beatles, never studied music formally and rose to prominence by immersing themselves in the craft.

That being said, it is always of benefit to learn from the masters, which is what makes a musical mentor so invaluable. Anyone who wishes to delve more deeply into music than their own imaginings will inevitably have to study a bit of music theory, which is the study of the language of music. That's right, written music is so complex that it is widely regarded as its own language, one based in math.

To someone who has never learned the basics of music theory, a page of sheet music may look like an alien bar code. This should no longer be daunting, however, as a new, free series of music theory courses has been made available by edX.org, an online learning center founded by Harvard University and MIT in 2012.

The course, Introduction to Music Theory, covers the key concepts and approaches needed to understand, create, and perform contemporary music. Backed by Berklee College of Music, the 6-lesson series is run by their own Professor of Harmony and Piano, George Russell, who seems like a knowledgeable teacher and an all around cool dude who enjoys spreading his own love of music to eager students.

Students of this free online course will learn the theory behind the intervals between notes, scale and chord building, identifying keys and key changes, and chord patterns, and they will even write their own blues song.

In the promotional video, President of Berklee College of Music Roger Brown explained that the program began as a way to better prepare incoming freshman classes, but as they received positive feedback from the students, they decided to make it available even to those who could not come to attend their school. Of George Russell, he said:

"He is one of the most deeply musical people you'll ever meet. He's gonna be great at helping you see how these concepts apply to real things that you care about. He's typical, I think, of what Berklee faculty are like; People who are just so deeply in love with music that they want to share it with other people."

If you'd like a certificate at the end of the course, then there is a small charge, but the lessons are free. All interested parties should visit their website to sign up.

J-P Mauro

https://aleteia.org/2019/02/11/learn-music-theory-from-a-berklee-professor-for-free/

Improved Enrollment Key to Keeping Schools Open

Shortly after the New Year, I took a personal weekend and flew to Ireland. While I always cherish a visit to the Emerald Isle, this was not really a "vacation" and I certainly wasn't there for the weather! No, what caused me to cross the Atlantic was something much more meaningful: the opportunity to visit, however briefly, with Sister Bosco and several of the other Mercy Sisters who taught me at Holy Infant parish school in my hometown of Ballwin, Missouri. It was they who, along with my Mom, Dad, and grandparents, nurtured my faith, inspired my vocation, gave me a first-rate education…and instilled in me a profound appreciation and love for Catholic schools.

Last week's announcement that seven elementary schools here in the archdiocese would close at the end of the academic year saddened me greatly! No priest, no bishop, especially this one, wants to see a Catholic school close. I'd rather open new ones! They remain an important part of our Catholic community, whose value reaches far beyond the academic excellence they are rightly known for, as they help to form young men and women morally and spiritually as well. Several people tried to console me and point out a few positives after the announcements were made. It's been several years, some said, since the archdiocese had to close any of its schools. For six of the schools, others observed, there are Catholic schools very close, which are ready, eager, and anxious to welcome the students, and the outreach to parents and students has already begun. One of the thoughtful principals of the neighboring school, I'm told visited the one to close, and told the kids, "We're sad this building is closing, but you still have a Catholic school next door." A few reminded me that, disappointing though it is, the decision to close these schools involved extensive consultation and involvement of the regional boards that now oversee the regional schools throughout the archdiocese, proof that the Pathways to Excellence strategic plan has been successful. The people, parishes, benefactors, and the archdiocese can hold their heads high, some mentioned, as together they subsidized Catholic schools by more than $43 million in 2018 alone.

All of this is true, but it provides little consolation to the students, parents, faculty, and administrators whose schools will close in June. My heart goes out to them.

The sad reality is that these closures could all have been avoided if our Catholic school enrollment would increase! Believe me, I do understand that for many, if not most, of our school parents, it is a sacrifice to choose a Catholic school education for their children. That is why we have continued to intensify and expand our scholarship opportunities (last year we distributed more than $23 million in scholarships), to help ease the financial burden on our parents, and why we labor so diligently for justice for Catholic school parents by way of government support for school choice—be it vouchers, education tax credits, or some other means. It was heartening to hear President Trump in his State of the Union last week call on Congress to pass legislation for school choice in order to help support working parents, and I remain grateful to Governor Cuomo (with whom I've sure had grave disagreements as well) for his own past efforts to pass similar legislation in New York State, even if the effort ultimately proved unsuccessful in his own party and the legislature. (I do know that, in the coming days and weeks, I'll hear from

numerous politicians, asking why the archdiocese is closing a school in their district. When I ask, "what have you done to support Catholic schools?" I'll be met with little more than a blank stare.)

There are many who will continue to work and fight for Catholic schools, including the women and men who make up our regional boards, the hardworking, dedicated administrators and teachers who devote their lives to educating our children, our priests and religious who help provide religious instruction and sacramental preparation, our benefactors, Catholic and not, and, most importantly the parents who continue to entrust their children to our Catholic schools.

Still, in order to ensure the continued stability and vigor of our Catholic schools, more parents must choose a Catholic school education for their children! It is my hope that parents with kids in our schools might encourage their friends and neighbors to make a visit to their school, and see for themselves everything our schools have to offer. Perhaps new grandparents can encourage their children to consider Catholic schools for the next generation. We can all let our political leaders know that school choice is a matter of justice, and an important issue we need them to support if they wish to continue getting our vote.

So, those of you hurt by this painful decision can write me to blame the archdiocese; or, you can write, call, or chat with Catholic parents who do not send their kids to our schools, encouraging them to do so; and you can buttonhole your state senator and assembly member and ask them to help you promote justice in parent choice.

Way back in the second grade, Sister Bosco taught me a simple prayer that I still say every morning: "Sacred Heart of Jesus, I place my trust in You." And so, I place the future of Catholic schools in the hands of the greatest teacher of them all, Jesus, because everything ultimately depends on Him. But I will continue to work for our schools as if everything depended on me. Won't you join me? I don't want to close any more! I don't want to see our beautiful kids crying as their school closes.

Cardinal Timothy Dolan

http://cny.org/stories/improved-enrollment-key-to-keeping-schools-open,18614?

Doctors Find Teen Girls Using Contraception Are Alarmingly Losing Bone Mass

Teen girls who use hormonal contraception like 'the pill' showed significant bone loss, increasing their risk of "later life fractures," a new scientific study has found. The authors of the study say that their findings are "of concern" and present a "potential public health problem."

According to Dr. Jerilynn C. Prior of the department of medicine at the University of British Columbia (UBC), a meta-analysis of controlled, observational studies found that healthy teenage girls who used combined hormonal contraception (including estrogen and progestin via several delivery methods) showed significant spinal bone loss over two years.

Dr. Prior is a professor of endocrinology and metabolism at UBC, and founder and scientific director at the Centre for Menstrual Cycle and Ovulation Research in Vancouver. She told *Endocrine Today*, "Instead of using combined hormonal contraception as the go-to, routine therapy in adolescent girls, we need to use evidence-based and physiological ways to treat cramps, heavy flow, irregular cycles and acne, and nonhormonal methods for contraception." The study, titled "Adolescent use of combined hormonal contraception and peak bone mineral density accrual: A meta-analysis of international prospective controlled studies" was published Jan. 7, 2019.

The study indicates "adolescence is a key time in women's life cycle for bone accrual, for decreasing later life osteoporosis and lifetime fragility fracture risk," and peak bone mass density (BMD) is "gained in women ages 16 and 19 years and lumbar spine peak BMD is achieved between ages 33 and 40…" Citing the risk of loss of BMD, the study states: "Those who achieve a lower peak BMD are widely believed to be at increased risk of later life fractures, although prospective BMD and incident fragility fracture data are scarce."

The study was conducted in Brazil, Canada, China, and the United States and showed bone mass density loss over one to two years. Prior and her colleagues analyzed data from nine clinical trials and observational, longitudinal studies that included teen girls who were using hormonal contraception (including estrogen and progestin in oral, patch or ring preparation). Those monitored for 12 months showed bone loss, while bone loss continued to be evident for the girls in the 24-month study.

In summary, the study showed that teen girls on contraception showed significantly less bone growth than those not using contraception, even when they are prescribed lower estrogen doses than in previous years. Because hormonal contraception is increasingly used even for "treatment of mild symptomatic, non-contraceptive reasons such as acne and cramps," the authors of the study fear that a "negative public health impact" may result.

Martin M. Barillas

https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/doctors-find-teen-girls-using-contraception-are-alarmingly-loosing-bone-mas

Are You Hindering Your Child by Being a "Lawnmower Parent"?

Mover over helicopter parents, the lawnmowers are here ...

Yesterday, my 12-year-old forgot her lunch. Can you bring lunch for Sienna? my mom texted me after first period. She works at the school Sienna attends, so I'm sure Sienna caught her between classes and asked her to text me the lunch request.

I'll admit that my reaction was not quite as gracious as it could have been. Actually I sighed heavily and rolled my eyes, because Sienna told me earlier that morning that she had hot lunch. I swiftly double-checked Renweb only to discover that no, she did not have hot lunch. "Be sure you pack a lunch before you leave!" I told her as I went to chase down the 2-year-old and wrestle him into clothes.

I wanted to refuse to bring her lunch, but I didn't. I knew she had a volleyball game after school and would have no time to come home and eat beforehand. But I did text my mom back and say, Sure, I'll bring her lunch. But can you make sure she knows that this is the only time I will do this? She knew she needed to pack a lunch and she didn't do it. From now on, if she forgets her lunch she'll have to go without.

I think my mom might have been a little annoyed, because she asked if it was out of my way. It wasn't — the school is literally around the corner from the house. But that's not the point. The point isn't whether or not it's convenient for me. The point is that Sienna has to learn that if she doesn't bring her own lunch, she won't eat. Otherwise, I'll inevitably end up bringing her a refrigerated lunch bag every day to college and y'all, I am not about that life.

I know all too well what that kind of parenting does to kids. It's not even helicopter parenting — there's a brand-new term for it, according to *We Are Teachers*: lawnmower parenting:

"Lawnmower parents go to whatever lengths necessary to prevent their child from having to face adversity, struggle, or failure. Instead of preparing children for challenges, they mow obstacles down so kids won't experience them in the first place…"

But in raising children who have experienced minimal struggle, we are not creating a happier generation of kids. We are creating a generation that has no idea what to do when they actually encounter struggle. A generation who panics or shuts down at the mere idea of failure. A generation for whom failure is far too painful, leaving them with coping mechanisms like addiction, blame, and internalization. The list goes on.

Having spent so much time around college kids, I can tell you that this is 100 percent true. I have heard stories of professors fielding phone calls from outraged parents who are attempting to argue the validity of a grade their child got in a class. I have heard stories of parents writing papers for their child, and being mystified when their child was accused of plagiarism. And I have read the endless, nasty comments left about professors on anonymous "rating" sites.

Even worse, I've seen college kids crumble in the face of failure. Good kids, who try hard but just need to fine-tune their study skills. Or choose a new major. Or even just try again.

But they don't try again. They give up, go home, and get a job waiting tables because they don't know what else to do. They believe they can't overcome failure because they've never learned how to.

I do not want to raise children who don't know how to get back up after life knocks them down. But teaching kids to accept consequences and overcome their faults doesn't start with grand gestures or inspirational speeches. It starts with the little things. It starts with letting them feel consequences in the first place … especially the consequences of their own actions. It starts with letting them go a little hungry because they forgot their lunch.

So the next time Sienna forgets her lunch, she'll have to be hungry for an afternoon. Same for the littler ones — although the grace will extend further the younger they are, there's a hard stop for everyone because everyone has to learn that ultimately, they are their own lawnmower. I won't tackle those obstacles for them — if they want to overcome the hard things in life, they're going to have to find a way to do it themselves.

Calah Alexander

http://aleteia.org/2018/09/07/are-you-hindering-your-child-by-being-a-lawnmower-parent

Chastity: The School of Love

To all the faithful, religious, deacons and priests:

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.
2 Cor 13:13

[1] In Homer's epic poem the *Odyssey*, the hero Ulysses on his way home from the Trojan War has to pass by a lovely island where the Sirens dwell. These beautiful sea-nymphs were known to lure sailors to their death by their sweet music. To avoid hearing their bewitching song, Ulysses orders his sailors to fill their ears with beeswax. With this ruse, his men successfully escape the fatal danger of the Sirens' seductive song.

[2] Like the Sirens' song of ancient mythology, modern advertisers lure their audiences with the seductive appeal of sex. Companies in business to sell everything from clothes and cars to food and beauty products have adopted the strategy of programming sexual imagery into their commercials. In fact, seductive images and appealing promises of pleasure pervade one out of every three commercials aired on television. Advertisers understand that sex sells.

[3] According to a recent study by the Parents Television Council, television programming spotlights more promiscuity and adultery than marital fidelity during primetime broadcasting. A staggering 70 percent of TV shows that target teenagers have sexual content. Films, magazines, billboards and TV routinely use sexually graphic language, nudity and sexual activity. As a result, the authentic understanding of human sexuality is being undermined.

[4] In the 1950s, sitcoms like *Father Knows Best*, *I Love Lucy* and *The Honeymooners* gave America a chaste image of the reality of sex. These programs showcased the traditional family of husband and wife and mother and father with their biological children. Today's TV sitcoms portray divorce, infidelity, homosexuality, promiscuity, pregnancy out of wedlock and abortion with a regularity that is reshaping the American understanding of sexuality itself.

[5] We reap today the harvest of ideas sown in the 18th century. On its ruthless gallows, the French Revolution guillotined the Christian concept of the human person as created by God and ultimately responsible to him. With the Enlightenment that followed, reason alone became the guiding light; and, man, as the Greek philosopher Protagoras once taught, was now "the measure of all things." With the rejection of divine revelation as a source of knowledge came the demise of absolute moral values and the reign of relativism. As a result of these philosophical changes, human sexuality has become merely a social construct that can be changed at will with no reference to the design of the Creator. (cf. Gabriele Kuby, *"How a rolling sexual revolution is crushing freedom,"* July 8, 2016).

[6] Our secular culture rejects human sexuality as a gift given by God to be enjoyed according to his plan. It denies the very distinction between man and woman. Society says that every individual can be whatever he or she chooses to be. As sex is divorced from God's design of responsible love at the service of fatherhood and motherhood, more children are born out of wedlock; cohabitation, promiscuity and infidelity are becoming commonplace; and,

healthy families are more and more rare (cf. the Pontifical Council for the Family, "The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality," no. 6).

[7] The sexual revolution that began in the 1960s has changed people's attitudes about human sexuality. It has led to man-made laws that contradict the natural law inscribed in creation itself. It has trampled objective morality underfoot. It has lessened the restraints on sexual behavior. It has confused the license to indulge in sexual intimacy with the freedom to love another person.

[8] In such an environment, every follower of Jesus is called to witness to the true meaning of human sexuality by embracing the virtue of chastity. Abstinence from sexual activity is not in itself chastity. It is merely "the lamp without the oil" (St. Bonaventure). Chastity is love in action. A chaste love in accord with the Creator's design leads to personal freedom. A chaste love builds up a healthy environment for families to thrive. Chastity for the married and unmarried is the way of authentic love.

[9] Sadly, some individuals do not see chastity as something good or attainable. Rather, they portray chastity as harmful to the psychological and emotional well-being of the individual. They argue that sexual desires are so essential a part of human nature that denying them is unnatural. For these individuals, chastity is a repressive attitude that limits one's development. As C. S. Lewis once remarked, "Chastity is the most unpopular of the Christian virtues." But, not so for those who faithfully follow the teaching of Jesus!

[10] God has imprinted the fundamental capacity to love on our very bodies. Creating us either male or female, God has inscribed a nuptial meaning on human sexuality, leading man and woman to find fulfillment in the gift of self to the other. Truly, "it is not good that man should be alone" (Gn 2:18). Man and woman realize their full potential by loving each other.

[11] Sexuality, therefore, is not something purely biological. It touches the intimate nucleus of the person (cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2332). Sexuality affects all aspects of the human person. It concerns affectivity, the capacity to love and the ability to form bonds of communion with others. By fashioning us in his own image, God who is love gives every individual the fundamental vocation to enter into communion with others by loving them (cf. 1 Jn 4:8).

[12] In God, love is the total and complete self-giving of each person of the Blessed Trinity to the other. So, too, for each of us. Love is the gift of self to another. But, no individual can truly give himself or herself to another if that person has not achieved a possession of self. One cannot give away what one does not possess. An individual who has not mastered his or her passions remains dominated by them and is not in full control of self. In such a case, the individual lacks the self-giving necessary for love. (cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2338-2339; 2346)

[13] This side of the Garden of Eden, self-mastery means a daily struggle. Our human nature suffers the results of Adam and Eve's rejection of God's plan for our happiness. In committing original sin, our first parents rejected their dependence on God. They cast off the moral norms that God had established for the authentic use of freedom. Their sin not only shattered the harmony of creation but also destroyed "the control of the soul's spiritual faculties over the body"

(cf. ibid, 400).

[14] As a result of original sin, there is a tension between our body and soul. "Each of us is like a charioteer who must control two steeds: one material, instinctive, unruly, and seeking only its own low pleasures; the other spiritual, brimming with nobility, honor, and courage. The charioteer's identity survives death, for it is spiritual, the rational principle, the soul. But the steed that is his body must perish" (Thomas Cahill, *Heretics and Heroes*, pg. 5).

[15] The apostle St. Paul speaks about this struggle as the rebellion of the "flesh" against the "spirit" (cf. Gal 5:16-24; Eph 2:3). We experience this rebellion as concupiscence, that is, the strong desire or tendency to satisfy our sensual appetites without regard to God's plan. The waters of baptism wash away original sin. But, the effects of original sin remain.

[16] Because of concupiscence, we are inclined to indulge our desires rather than to control them. It is easier to satisfy our hunger and thirst than to fast. It is easier to lose our patience than to remain calm. It is immediately more gratifying for the moment to indulge our sexual appetites than to control them.

[17] Human sexuality cannot be separated from God's design for love. It is a gift given by God to unite a man and a woman in a faithful, exclusive and mutual love lived within the commitment of marriage open to life. Even when there is some affection and love in relationships other than that of husband and wife, these relationships are not the total giving of one person to another in faithful love according to God's plan. There is a holding back, a self-centeredness, that inhibits the authentic freedom to love. (cf. *Amoris Laetitia*, 292)

[18] Any sexual activity outside of marriage is outside of God's plan for our happiness (cf. 1 Cor 7:4-5). In varying degrees, adultery, fornication, masturbation, artificial birth control, in-vitro fertilization, same-sex relations, cohabitation and the use of pornography all belie the nuptial meaning of marriage that God intends for sexuality. It is for this reason that the Church urges her faithful to avoid these sins and counsels both the married and unmarried to be chaste (The Pontifical Council on the Family, "The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality," 17).

[19] God intends sexual intimacy in marriage to give joy and pleasure to spouses. Through their bodily expression of love, they "become two in one flesh" (Mk 10:8). God wants them to be total in their giving of love to one another, not holding back and remaining open to life. When each spouse reverences each other and expresses the total giving of self in sexual intimacy, the marriage mirrors Christ's self-sacrificial love of the Church. Such chaste love sanctifies the couple and builds up the Body of Christ, the Church. (cf. Candice Watters, "How is chastity lived out within marriage," Sept. 1, 2008)

[20] Chastity for the married means not using the other merely to gratify one's own desires. It excludes using sex to hurt or humiliate. It means respecting the other, not making selfishly excessive demands as well as not denying one's spouse conjugal rights without sufficient reason. Chaste conjugal love is unselfish and open to the gift of children.

[21] For the unmarried, chastity means living a continent life. No doubt the very idea of not engaging in sexual activity for someone who is not married is counter-cultural in our secularized world. But, it is

important to realize that sexual activity cannot be separated from who we are. We are not simply spirit or body. We are both. And, so we cannot simply engage in giving ourselves away sexually again and again outside of God's plan for marriage without diminishing our own integrity.

[22] The engaged who live a chaste courtship prepare best for marriage. They use their time of engagement to mature in their relationship. They grow in respect, self-sacrifice and fidelity. They are well-prepared to face the challenges of married life with a strong foundation of patience, reverence and self-control so necessary for a happy marriage.

[23] Statistics report that 60 percent of couples who live together do not go on to get married. Thirty-nine percent eventually break up. Couples who live together before they marry have a divorce rate that is 50 percent higher than those who do not. Chastity before marriage is the best preparation for the life-long commitment of marriage itself.

[24] In terms of chastity, "parents always influence the moral development of their children, for better or for worse. It follows that they should take up this essential role and carry it out consciously, enthusiastically, reasonably and appropriately" (Amoris Laetitia, 259). Both by word and example, they should encourage their children to be modest and chaste.

[25] Sadly, some parents and grandparents do just the opposite. They condone sexual relations as just part of growing up. Too often children see their elders living with others outside of marriage. The witness of such a casual attitude toward sexual intimacy undermines chastity. Sometimes parents encourage their children to cohabitate before marriage by their silence or even their actual support. Jesus had strong words for those who lead others to sin (cf. Mk 9:42).

[26] Parents who encourage their children to value and live the virtue of chastity teach them the profound meaning of love as self-giving. They prepare them for a joy-filled life on earth, enabling them even now to see God in their lives. As St. Augustine taught, "Chastity, or cleanness of heart, holds a glorious and distinguished place among the virtues, because she, alone, enables man to see God; hence Truth itself said, 'Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God.' "

[27] As long as we are alive, chastity will always be a challenge. Even such great saints as Augustine, Francis of Assisi and Catherine of Siena struggled with temptations. Certainly, during our early years of adolescence and youth, the temptations to yield to our sexual urges are greater. But no age is exempt. We must constantly renew our efforts to be in control of ourselves and live holy lives (cf. Ti 2:1-6). Prayer, frequent reception of the Sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist give us the grace and strength to be chaste. Works of charity, moving beyond our own desires to meet the needs of others, is a most effective way of dealing with temptations.

[28] We belong to the Lord (cf. Rm 14: 8). He himself loved us to the point of his death on the Cross and now he gifts us with the Holy Spirit. In the struggle to be chaste, the Holy Spirit enables us to achieve what we cannot do on our own (1 Jn 3:3). Thus, a life of chastity is possible when we are in right relationship with Jesus.

[29] Chastity brings its own reward.

"Chastity is beauty to our souls, grace to our bodies, and peace to our desires" (Solon). It is the positive harnessing of our inward urges for a good greater than self-satisfaction. It matures us and brings inner peace. By chastity, we take control of ourselves. We are not dominated by our appetites and passions. We are not slaves to our instincts and urges. When we are chaste, we are free and can truly give ourselves to others in love. As St. John Paul II wrote, "Only the chaste man and the chaste woman are capable of true love." In a word, chastity is the school of love.

Given at the Pastoral Center of the Diocese of Paterson, on the Feast of St. Agatha, Virgin and Martyr, the sixth day of February in the year of Our Lord, two thousand and nineteen.

Arthur J. Serratelli, S.T.D., S.S.L., D.D.
Sr. Joan Daniel Healy, SCC

https://bishopserratelli.rcdop.org/news/pastoral-letter-2019-chastity-the-school-of-love

After Students Kidnapped, Cameroon Bishop Said 'Only Crime' Was Providing Education

About 170 students at a Catholic school were taken by separatists in Cameroon earlier this month and later regained their freedom.

Bishop George Nkuo of Kumbo told Crux that the kidnappers complained that the school was not abiding by Anglophone separatists' call for a school boycott.

"That is the crime we have committed: Allowing children to go to school," the bishop said.

According to a diocesan statement, unidentified gunmen came into the campus of Saint Augustine's College shortly after 6 a.m. on Feb. 16 and abducted 170 students, 2 college security guards, one teacher and three of his children.

"The children were in the dormitory and they (the attackers) first picked the girls, and by the time they got to the boys' dormitory, some of them had hid themselves in the ceiling. So, only 15 boys were taken. The rest were girls," Nkuo told *Crux*.

The bishop said they took the students "without a single gunshot."

Nkuo said the children were shepherded "far off into the forest, about 30 kilometers, on foot."

Asked whether the students were ill-treated by their captors, the bishop answered in the negative.

"From the echoes I got while they were still out there, they were well treated. They were given good breakfast - rice - and they even commented that there was some good meat inside."

Nkuo said the children and the staff were released in the evening of Feb. 17.
He said the release was "a big relief" for him as their bishop, but an even "bigger relief for the parents."

"I could see pain and anxiety; the parents were so traumatized. They weren't sure whether the children would come back alive or dead. There is great joy, great celebration to see them all return," the bishop said.

"We managed to recover all of them, they are back in school and the parents have come and collected them. It was a very difficult and horrible experience for the parents," he said, "a good number of them (the children) have had a very difficult experience. Some of them were crying, some could barely walk, and some even fainted."

The bishop said he was horrified with how the children looked when they returned.

"It's painful, very painful indeed to see the state in which the children came back looking worn out with swollen feet," he said.

Quizzed on whether the church paid any ransom to secure the release of the children, the bishop blurted out: "Ransom to whom? No, no, for God's sake, we paid no ransom."

The Northwest and Southwest regions of Cameroon are majority English-speaking, a legacy of the colonial history of the country: Cameroon was originally German, but after World War I the defeated country

transferred it to the allies, and it was divided between France and Britain.

At independence, the two parts were reunited, and currently about 20 percent of the country's nearly 25 million people is anglophone. The Catholic Church is the largest religious group in the country, representing about 40 percent of all Cameroonians.

In October 2016, strikes by lawyers and teachers over perceived attempts by the Francophone administration to assimilate the legal and educational systems practiced in the two English-speaking regions turned violent, and morphed into rising demands by Anglophone Cameroonians for independence.

The government has been accused of razing entire villages and extrajudicial killings in their hunt for separatists, who are calling on the English-speaking areas to form a new country, called 'Ambazonia.'

Separatists have also been accused of atrocities, and have attacked Cameroonian security forces, and kidnapped opponents for ransom.

The militants have also called for a school boycott and have enforced their demands with violence.

Nkuo said Kumbo has been infested by several separatist groups making the school environment very dangerous for students.

"Most of the parents have taken their children home because it is no more safe for the kids here."

As a result, the bishop has now closed down the school.

"We have no choice other than to close down the school. That has been our only crime: That children are going to school," he said. "I close this college with deep tears and regrets. That the children are deprived of the great opportunity to excel is something that we really worry about." Nkuo said he was grateful to all the sympathizers and persons of goodwill who gave the community moral support in these two days of "grave concern and anxiety."

It's not the first time the school has come under attack. Some months back, the principal was taken, along with some members of staff. On Feb. 12, some students and staff were taken by yet another group.

The latest kidnapping happened barely three months after nearly 80 students were kidnapped by suspected separatists in a Presbyterian school in the regional capital, Bamenda.

On Monday, the Vatican's Secretary for Relations with States, Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher, reportedly offered to mediate in the conflict when meeting with Cameroonian officials on the sidelines of the UN Human Rights Council meeting in Geneva.

Crux Staff

https://cruxnow.com/church-in-africa/2019/02/27/after-students-kidnapped-cameroon-bishop-said-only-crime-was-providing-education

Sister Miriam: The Dominican Nun Who Helped Discover DNA

The discovery of DNA, or deoxyribonucleic acid, was a groundbreaking step in understanding the building blocks of all living creatures. DNA is a molecule in each cell that bears the genetic instructions for the development and reproduction of living organisms, including viruses.

The credit for the discovery of the DNA double helix has gone to American biologist James Watson, English physicist Francis Crick and New Zealand biologist Maurice Wilkins, but they would not have won their 1962 Nobel Prize without the work of several scientists before them, including Wilkins' colleague Rosalind Franklin and Dominican Sister Miriam Michael Stimson. Sister Miriam (December 24, 1913 – June 17, 2002) was an Adrian Dominican and a professor of chemistry at Siena Heights University, Adrian, Michigan.
Her obituary notes:

"Her early success in chemistry, working on early research examining cells, led to an invitation to lecture at the Sorbonne in Paris. She was the second woman to lecture there; the first was Marie Curie. She later received international recognition for her early work with the spectroscope, a tool used for analyzing chemicals, and wrote manuals for using the instrument."

Beyond that, Sister Miriam worked on wound-healing hormones, helping to create Preparation H. She established a research laboratory at Siena Heights in 1939, where she researched cancer for more than 30 years. Known at Siena as "M2,"Sister Miriam introduced undergraduate research and an addiction counseling program.

Arguably, her most significant contribution in cancer research was her solution that unlocked the shape of DNA nucleobases. Jun Tsuji's book *The Soul of DNA* records:

"For lack of knowledge of the DNA double helix, scientists were unable to understand the genetic roots of cancer, and subsequently they were unable to develop effective methods of treatment. In the early 1950s, scientists were on the verge of discovering the DNA double helix and unveiling cancer as a genetic disease. Stumped by the uncertainty regarding the shape of the DNA bases, the structural and functional "soul" of DNA, the male-dominated scientific establishment – from James Watson and Francis Crick to Linus Pauling – proposed models of DNA that were, in effect, inside out. In contrast, a woman, Sister Miriam Michael Stimson, OP, an Adrian Dominican sister and chemist, dared to imagine a solution to the DNA base problem. Using potassium bromide (KBr) to prepare the DNA bases for analysis by infrared spectroscopy, Sister Miriam Michael successfully developed a chemical method that affirmed the structure of the DNA bases and of the double helix itself."

Sister Miriam saw her scientific work as a means of discovering truth that would lead us closer to God. Indeed, DNA investigations led prominent atheist philosopher Antony Flew to affirm God's existence:

"What I think the DNA material has done is that it has shown, by the almost unbelievable complexity of the arrangements which are needed to produce (life), that intelligence must have been involved in getting these extraordinarily diverse elements to work together. It's the enormous complexity of

the number of elements and the enormous subtlety of the ways they work together. The meeting of these two parts at the right time by chance is simply minute. It is all a matter of the enormous complexity by which the results were achieved, which looked to me like the work of intelligence."

Let us pray for teachers and scientists like Sister Miriam, who "was interested in each student as a person, not simply as a mind to be taught," and was so humble about her brilliant work that students only learned about it through a book. Scientific knowledge will lead us to God, if we maintain a disposition of humility and love. As the first Director of NASA Wernher Von Braun said: "Scientific concepts exist only in the minds of men. Behind these concepts lies the reality which is being revealed to us, but only by the grace of God."

Jean Elizabeth Seah

https://aleteia.org/2017/09/10/sister-miriam-the-dominican-nun-who-helped-discover-dna

Recovering from Cultural Dementia

The other day at Thomas More College I had an experience I'd never had, in my thirty-four years of teaching college students. I had stayed in the room after class, chatting with several of the students, who didn't have to get anywhere fast, because the class was over at 11:00 and Mass wouldn't begin until 11:30. One of the students, the only one in a class of twenty-five, had spent two years in a public high school, and we were talking about what kinds of literature were and were not taught there – or in almost any high school, public or private.

She told me one thing I suspected, and one thing that, in my naiveté, I had not. The thing I did not suspect was that hardly anybody read any of the novels the teachers assigned. They read bad crib notes online. No delight, I guess, in Charles Dickens. It's a little like being at Yellowstone Park, but staying in your hotel room, looking at a few pictures of the place, playing video games, watching porn, and not bothering to go outdoors. The thing I did suspect, because it confirms what I've seen all these years, is that poetry has been almost wholly abandoned.

I guess there are three reasons for that.

One is that the teachers themselves don't know poetry, because we are into the third generation of its neglect.

Another is that poetry is thought to be hard. Modern poetry is hard because modern poets indulge themselves in distortions and disruptions of language. Earlier poetry is "hard" for the same reason Dickens supposedly is: our linguistic range is narrow.

The third reason is that you can't teach the old poetry without knowing a lot about the Christian faith, and without being willing to take on their own terms ways of life that are not ours. Multiculturalism might more accurately be called multi-modernism: the same old modernism, wearying unto death, gussied up in a variety of dress. It is a yawn.

But my students like poetry, and one of them brought up the poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins. We're going to have a Poetry Night, so they were thinking about possibilities for recital. That got them going, and all at once, the three of us, without hesitation, began to recite his famous sonnet, "God's Grandeur":

The world is charged with the grandeur of God;
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil
Crushed. Why do men then now not reck His rod?
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod,
And all is seared with trade, bleared, smeared with toil,
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.
Yet for all this, nature is never spent:
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things,
And though the last lights off the black west went,
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs,
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with, ah! bright wings.

Nothing like that had happened before, in my whole career.

Mos amandi, mos cantandi: as we sing, so shall we love. If we don't sing, our love will become, or must already be, frail and thin. Singing is what the lover does, said Augustine. To know the truths of our faith, but not to sing them, is like knowing that God exists, but never to feel His presence; it is to know that we are loved, but never to feel the race of the heart.

"But we do sing at Mass," someone says. Yes and no. There are songs, but most of the congregation is silent or is murmuring, because the songs are for Mass entertainment, having been conceived in form and content after the patterns of mass entertainment.

No one remembers the words, because the poetry is bad or nonexistent, and no one remembers the melodies, because they are bad or because they never were written to be sung by an entire congregation and its full range of human voices.

If people are defined by the poetry they share – by the songs they can all sing together with maybe one or two prompts to jog the memory, then we are undefined, not a people at all, only an aggregate.

When Jesus and his disciples prayed and sang at the Last Supper, they didn't have to pick up a hymnal, good or bad. They prayed and sang from their hearts, where they had kept their people's poetry as treasure. What pearls do we possess?

I have watched young Christians go into the world like minnows into Leviathan. They go with imaginations unformed, and that is that. They may attend services on Sunday, but they are as worldly as anybody.

So I am issuing a challenge to every Catholic school and parish – a poetic challenge:

First, get rid of the lousy poetry and lousy music. Stupidity is always a vice, says Maritain. Nobody says, "It doesn't matter what movies my child watches, so long as he watches movies," or, "It doesn't matter what my husband drinks, so long as he drinks." Get rid of it. Nobody but the church performers enjoys it anyway.

Replace it with real hymns. Don't think you can get those from the big presses, OCP and GIA and such, because they have mangled the texts and dragged them through the mud. Sing the poems, as they were composed.

Second, return to poetry. The time is short, and the reward immense. Fifty lines of Tennyson can be committed to memory; five hundred pages of Dickens, not so fast. Have every student in your schools learn, say, twenty poems by heart. And their elders, too, might join in – have a Poetry Night in your parish, with the stipulation that every poem be written in meter.

We are suffering from cultural dementia, muddied and dulled by the strokes of the modern. It is time, little by little, for recovery.

Anthony Esolen

https://www.thecatholicthing.org/2019/02/23/recovering-from-cultural-dementia/

Notre Dame is Offering a Free Online Class on Roman Architecture

The Eternal City has a voice. This class will help you hear it.

Tourists and pilgrims are equally awestruck upon witnessing the glory of Rome. The city's ancient architecture allows each building to stand as a masterful monument to the past, but while the artistry of each individual structure may speak to us, the city as a whole has a "voice" that requires an understanding of its architecture to hear.

Now, we can all learn to hear a city's "voice," thanks to a free online course, "The Meaning of Rome: The Renaissance and Baroque City," offered by the University of Notre Dame on Class Central. Students will focus on Rome during the Renaissance and Baroque periods and how the city utilized urban form, art, and architecture to project its image to the citizens and the world.

One of the course's professors, David Mayernik, explains the artistic significance of a city in the accompanying video:

"In the past, society strove to make their cities manifest their values and aspirations. Cities were works of art, deliberately designed to say something about those aspirations and the societies that made them. If we find [these cities] as particularly beautiful, it is because that beauty was a vehicle for ideas … The city, in many ways, was the richest of all art forms, because it was lived in and experienced dynamically."

Rome was shaped through ongoing investments from popes, architects, scholars and sculptors. Each addition worked to create a narrative that would become a visual history of the city, as well as a force to encourage harmony between citizens and the growth of a shared societal identity. "The Meaning of Rome: The Renaissance and Baroque City" is organized around three themes—the city and memory, the city as reliquary, and the city as theater. The teachers believe that by learning to uncover the meaning of Rome students will be equipped with the necessary skills to determine the meaning that could be attached to our own modern cities and communities.

The course is estimated to take between 4-6 weeks to complete. It is self-paced, meaning the student will complete the work on their own schedule, although it is suggested to reserve 4-6 hours of study per week. The course is completely free of charge, so sign up now.

J-P Mauro

https://aleteia.org/2019/02/25/notre-dame-is-offering-a-free-online-class-on-roman-architecture

Having a Hard Time Getting Your Kids to do Homework?

If you let them do this one thing first, you might be surprised by the results.

At the beginning of the school year, I set a routine for my kids when they came home from school. They were to get a snack, then immediately sit down at the kitchen table to complete their homework before playing outside.

I imagined this would be a relatively painless task that would leave the rest of the evening free. Practically, it became a time of weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth — a time that grew longer and longer the later into the school year we got.

Over Christmas, I started listening to an audio book about the effect of exercise on the brain, and particularly the brains of children. It reminded me of the way Finnish schools structure their school days around play — a structure that American schools are beginning to tentatively implement:

Eagle Mountain Elementary is a public schools in the Fort Worth area trying out LiiNK, a new program that boosts the amount of recess for the youngest students. The goal: to help children focus and learn better once they're back in class.

"You start putting 15 minutes of what I call reboot into these kids every so often and … it gives the platform for them to be able to function at their best level," said Debbie Rhea, a kinesiology professor at Texas Christian University who created the project … The key is "unstructured play," which Rhea described as kids being allowed to run, play and make up their own games while teachers mostly stay on the sidelines to make sure everyone is safe.

The breaks should take place outdoors because fresh air, natural light and vivid colors all have a big impact on the brain and its function, she added.

When school started up again after Christmas, I decided to change the way I approached homework. Instead of immediately pressing the kids to complete it, I started letting them play outside for half an hour when they got home. They have snacks outside and ride their bikes or play hopscotch, visibly letting off steam and unwinding from the stress of the school day. Sometimes they come inside on their own, sometimes I have to call them in, but either way, they are significantly more compliant when I tell them to start their homework. They might complain or roll their eyes, but we no longer have pitched battles about the relative injustice of homework. And they complete their work much more quickly than before, often finishing it up about the same time that they finished their homework before Christmas — which proves that starting their homework before playing really wasn't the best strategy.

I'm lucky to have my kids at schools that understand the value of unstructured play, offering my kids several recesses a day to play 4-square or GaGa Ball with their friends. All 4 of my school-aged kids have had marked academic improvement this year, and I'm 100 percent convinced that getting more than double the time to play outside than they had last year is the reason why.

So mamas, don't worry if your kids want to play outside before they do their homework! Just let them. Kids need to play — and I

promise, the homework will be half as painful if you let them.

Calah Alexander

https://aleteia.org/2019/02/25/having-a-hard-time-getting-your-kids-to-do-homework

Do Catholics Care about Art?

In December 2013, Dana Gioia, the poet and former chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, published an article in *First Things* magazine on a certain "paradox" of American culture: "although Roman Catholicism constitutes the largest religious and cultural group in the United States, Catholicism currently enjoys almost no positive presence in the American fine arts – not in literature, music, sculpture, or painting."

Half a century ago, America's most revered authors included many Catholics in their ranks, most of them writers for whom the vocation of literature and the vocation of baptism were deeply and fruitfully intertwined. One need only think of Thomas Merton and Flannery O'Connor to get a sense of that.

As readers know only too well, most public debate these days takes place in a spirit of thoughtless outrage and rash denunciation, and there was a hint of that in the critical reaction to Gioia's essay. Among the many published responses, most were indignant: if Gioia did not see an abundance of Catholic art and literature, that was only because he was not looking hard enough. It was out there, in spades, waiting for readers.

Earnest though I am sure those ripostes were, they missed the point. It was clear that "The Catholic Writer Today" was written specifically to provoke Catholic authors and readers alike to catch sight of one another "Today" as they had in the past. Authors, most of the time, rightly concern themselves simply with making a good work; readers, with reading whatever sounds good.

That is a fine foundation, but to build up, renew, or change a culture, those two activities need to be done with a certain consciousness or intention. And, most people just do not reflect on such matters, if they have not been stirred up by a good lament. They have other things to worry about.

But, Gioia got people worrying. Authors raised their hands in irritation that they were not being recognized; many readers expressed, perhaps for the first time, dismay that there was no one as great as T.S. Eliot writing today. Gioia's aim was not, of course, just to exasperate, it was to inspire institution building. He wanted every interested person to ask: What kind of institutions could be created to harbor and cultivate a renewal of Catholic literature?

The answers came quickly. The literary journals Image and Dappled Things had been founded years earlier; a small press Wiseblood Books has begun publishing novels, poetry, and criticism in the spirit of O'Connor. They now had a hook by which to alert the world to their work. Gioia himself organized a three-day conference, at USC's Institute for Advanced Catholic Studies, on the Future of the Catholic Literary Imagination. Hundreds of people showed up, including students from local Catholic high schools.

And in the months that followed, those who had convened in Pasadena went home and tried something new. The English professor Mary Ann Miller founded a magazine, *Presence*, focused on Catholic poetry. Others, at Fordham and Loyola Chicago, agreed to establish the conference as a biannual event; it was held at Fordham, in April 2017, and will be held in Chicago,

on September 19-20, 2019. Still others began reading and lecture series, at their universities or in their hometowns, to bring writers and readers together.

I review this brief history today as I consider my own minor part in it, one that is just beginning.

About a year ago, Franciscan University Press in Steubenville, Ohio asked me, to launch a series in poetry. I proposed the establishment of Colosseum Books, whose mission reads as follows:

In the ancient world, the civilizational achievements of Rome were transformed and leavened by the spirit of Christianity. The Colosseum stood as a symbol of the struggle and suffering such a new birth entailed, but also of final victory and union, as Christendom emerged to take possession of the treasures of Athens and Jerusalem with Rome as its spiritual capital. In the modern age, the English writer Christopher Dawson edited the review Colosseum as a forum for the Catholic intellectual world to engage contemporary arts and culture. In its pages such great minds as Dawson, Jacques Maritain, and E.I. Watkin studied and discussed the literary achievement of T.S. Eliot, Sigrid Undset, and other writers of the Catholic literary revival and beyond.

In such a spirit of struggle and revival, transformation and synthesis, we propose to publish important new books by contemporary poets worthy of the serious reader's attention. The volumes will be at once works of humility and ambition, of craft and spirit, by authors attentive to the workmanlike responsibilities of the artist and to the classical understanding of the fine arts as occasions of epiphany and beauty. They will remind us of the true scope of the intellect, the great drama of human life, the discipline and dedication of serious work, and the great destiny of the human person.

Even as we moved toward publication of the first two Colosseum Books, this spring, I was also asked to establish a program for aspiring writers, and so the first Colosseum Summer Institute will be held, this July, bringing fifteen young writers to the Franciscan University's campus for four days of discussion on the philosophy of art and beauty, the history of poetic form, and a proper workshop to hone their own craft. We plan to invite distinguished authors to come read from their work and share their wisdom as we try to build up, in some small way, a Catholic literary culture in need of renewal.

Such an enterprise is unlikely to stir much indignation or outrage. But, someday a few years from now, someone will no doubt complain, "Why are there no great Catholic writers anymore?!" And some casual reader will be able to reply, "Well, I don't know about great, but I can name you a dozen good ones." That will be a good start.

James Matthew Wilson

https://www.thecatholicthing.org/2019/03/09/do-catholics-care-about-art

How Can I Explain the Holy Spirit to a Child?

We find the Holy Spirit hard to understand as adults;
How, then, can we explain this Person of the Trinity to children?

The Holy Spirit and the Trinity is hard enough for adults to understand, so how can we explain who the Holy Spirit is to children? The key points for children to understand are that the Holy Spirit is God, but also has a distinct personhood from the Father and the Son. This Person comes from the love that the Father and the Son have for one another. Throughout Scripture (and in the Church today), we can see the Holy Spirit at work. The following are some ways you might approach teaching about the Holy Spirit to your children.

We believe in one God, who is three divine Persons.

It is difficult to understand how one God could be three divine persons. Of course, God is not a creature like us, and so we can never fully understand the fullness of who he is. However, he has revealed to us that though there is one God, he is God the Father, God the Son (Jesus Christ) and *God the Holy Spirit.*

Have you ever seen a three-leaf clover? You might see them among the grass. St. Patrick used the example of the three-leaf clover to talk about the Trinity: like a clover that is one plant with three leaves, there is one God, but three Persons.

This chart is also helpful to learning more about the Trinity. You'll see here that Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all God; however, the Father is distinct from the Son, who is distinct from the Holy Spirit and so forth.

Out of the love of God the Father and God the Son comes the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is a very important person in the Trinity. At Mass each Sunday we recite the words of the Creed: "I believe in the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father and the Son."

Do you know what "proceeds" means? In the Creed it means that from the love of the Father and the Son comes the Holy Spirit. He is the love that exists between the Father and the Son.

Think about your parents. Your mom loves your dad. Your dad loves your mom. You could say that they are "in love." There is a love that exists between them, and that love brings about a lot of great things, including you!

It is in the same manner that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. And, like any love that exists between two people, the Holy Spirit is sent forth to make an impact on us here on earth.

The Holy Spirit has a special role in history because he is the one who is sent to be our guide.

Can you think of any instances in the Bible where we see the way in which the Holy Spirit fulfills his particular mission as the Person of the Trinity sent forth to help us?

In the Old Testament:

- The Holy Spirit inspired the human writers of the Old Testament so that it would truly be the Word of God.
- He gave words to the prophets so that they might preach to the people of Israel. As St. Peter tells us, "for no prophecy ever came through human will; but rather human beings moved by the holy Spirit spoke under the influence of God" (2 Peter 1:21).
- When Moses led the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt, they were guided by the Holy Spirit. In Exodus, we read: "The LORD preceded them, in the daytime by means of a column of cloud to show them the way, and at night by means of a column of fire to give them light. Thus they could travel both day and night."

In the New Testament:

- Before Jesus returned to Heaven at his ascension, he told his disciples that the Holy Spirit would be with them (and with us!): "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always: the Spirit of truth, which the world cannot accept, because it neither sees nor knows it. But you know it, because it remains with you, and will be in you."
- At Pentecost, which is the birthday of the Church, the Holy Spirit descended on the Apostles in the form of a flame of fire and suddenly they were able to speak in languages that they had not known before.
- St. Peter told everyone gathered on Pentecost that the Holy Spirit had come to the Church: "'It will come to pass in the last days,' God says, 'that I will pour out a portion of my spirit upon all flesh. Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. Indeed, upon my servants and my handmaids I will pour out a portion of my spirit in those days, and they shall prophesy'" (Acts 2:17-18).

At Confirmation, you'll receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit; he'll be with you to help you throughout your life!

Just as he has been with the Church in the Bible, the Holy Spirit is also with the Church today to guide and strengthen us through many gifts. The seven main gifts given to us by the Holy Spirit are understanding, right judgment, courage, knowledge, reverence, wonder and awe, and wisdom. We are blessed to be able to pray to the Holy Spirit to ask him for these gifts as we try to live lives of holiness.

When you receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, you'll be blessed by the Holy Spirit in a particular way. *The Baltimore Catechism* teaches us that "Confirmation is a Sacrament through which we receive the Holy Ghost (Holy Spirit) to make us strong and perfect Christians and soldiers of Jesus Christ" (*Baltimore Catechism*, 670). It goes on to say that "In Confirmation, the extending of the bishop's hands over us signifies the descent of the Holy Ghost upon us and the special protection of God through the grace of Confirmation" (no. 678).

So you see, the Holy Spirit is sent to us by God the Father and God the Son to be with us as we strive to resist temptation and to practice virtue. We can rely on him to give us the spiritual gifts we need to persevere, and we can pray to him many times a day, simply saying, "Come, Holy Spirit!"

Caitlin Bootsma

https://aleteia.org/2013/01/21/how-can-i-explain-the-holy-spirit-to-a-child

Utah Teacher Forces Student to Wash Off Ash Wednesday Cross

A teacher in the predominantly Mormon state of Utah was placed on administrative leave after she forced a Catholic student to wash off the Ash Wednesday cross from his forehead.

William McLeod, 9, had just returned to his school near Salt Lake City after attending Catholic Mass when his fourth-grade teacher called the ash marking "inappropriate" and gave him a hand wipe to clean it off in front of his classmates, grandmother Karen Fisher said.

At first William explained that he couldn't remove it because it was important for the beginning of Easter, but eventually obliged, Fisher said.

"He went to see the school's psychologist crying," said Fisher. "He was embarrassed."

The incident at Valley View Elementary in Bountiful, Utah, is being taken very seriously and an investigation into whether disciplinary action will be levied against William's teacher has been opened, said Davis School District spokesman Chris Williams. In the meantime, she isn't teaching, he said.

"The actions were unacceptable," Williams said. "No student should ever be asked or required to remove an ash cross from his or her forehead."

The teacher, Moana Patterson, was called into a meeting with the principal and the school board about the incident, Williams said. After that meeting, she called Fisher to apologize, he said.

Fisher, who lives with William, said Patterson gave a handwritten note and candy bar to William as an apology.
Patterson didn't immediately return an email seeking comment about the incident.

Williams said he doesn't know Patterson's religious affiliation.

In Utah, Catholics are a minority. The 330,000 Catholics in the state account for about 10 percent of the population, according to Jean Hill at the Catholic Diocese of Salt Lake City.

Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints account for about two-thirds of the state. The faith's headquarters is in Salt Lake City.

Mormons celebrate Easter, but don't observe Ash Wednesday, a Christian holy day of prayer and repentance that falls on the first day of Lent, six weeks before Easter. The use of ash is a sign of mortality and has a long history in Christian and Jewish worship.

"We understand that mistakes happen," Hill said in a statement. "The diocese is also very grateful to the young student who used the situation to educate his teacher about a part of his faith and its importance to him."

Fisher said Patterson asked if she could reapply the ashes herself.

"I told her that's not how it works," Fisher said.

A Catholic deacon who happens to be a member of the school board came to the school to reapply the ashes, Williams said.

"Learning about one another is one way we build community across religious, political, racial, ethnic and other borders," Hill said.

The Associated Press

https://nypost.com/2019/03/08/utah-teacher-forces-student-to-wash-off-ash-wednesday-cross/

The Scientist Nuns: In Pursuit of Faith and Reason

Meet 3 Sisters in science who simultaneously trod two paths to ultimate truth.

Making a career out of science, just like joining a religious order, requires dedication and discipline. Some tireless souls have managed to do both.

In 1965, Mary Kenneth Keller became the first woman to obtain a PhD in Computer Science. She was also a nun.

Born in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1913, Keller entered the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Dubuque, Iowa, in 1932. Eight years later, she professed her vows, before obtaining B.S. and M.S. degrees in mathematics from DePaul University in Chicago, where she became fascinated by the incipient field of computer science.

As a graduate student, she spent semesters at other schools, including New Hampshire's Ivy League college Dartmouth, which at that time was not coeducational. For her, however, the school relaxed its policy on gender, and she worked in the computer center, where she contributed to the development of the BASIC programming language that became so instrumental to the early generation of programmers.

She became the first person of either gender to receive a PhD in computer science from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She then was offered a faculty position at Clarke College, a Roman Catholic institution in Dubuque, Iowa. There she established a computer science department, which she chaired for two decades.

During her tenure, she oversaw the composition of computer programs, such as one that enabled Clarke College chemistry students to run simulated experiments, as related by Jennifer Head, archivist for the Sisters of Charity, BVM.

Keller was an early advocate for increased female involvement in the study of computers. She also instructed adult students, including working mothers, who were allowed to bring their small children with them to class.

Some of her remarks have proven quite prophetic. Speaking long before the age of internet ubiquity, she said, "We're having an information explosion, among others, and it's certainly obvious that information is of no use unless it's available."

Also foreseeing the significance computers would play in research, she once said that the computer's aptitude for quickly retrieving information "will make it the hub of tomorrow's libraries."

She died on January, 10, 1985, at age 71. The college where she taught now has the Keller Computer Center and offers the S. M. Kenneth Keller Scholarship to first-year Computer Science majors.

Keller has not been the only nun, however, who successfully pursued a career in the sciences.

The Solar Nun

Sister Paula Gonzalez, of the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati, was known as the "solar nun" for her work in sustainable energy.

She was born in Albuquerque, New Mexico, in 1932. After attending Mount St. Joseph University in Cincinnati, she entered the Sisters of Charity in 1954, according to the organization's website. She proceeded to teach high school before earning her Master's and PhD in biology at The Catholic University of America in Washington, DC.

After earning her doctorate, she taught at her alma mater Mount St. Joseph. A turning point in her life came in 1970 with the occurrence of the first Earth Day, which inspired her own personal campaign on matters concerning the environment and alternative energy – subjects on which she began to lecture across the country.

She also lived what she preached: During the early 1980s, she had a chicken coop converted into a 1,500-sq-ft insulated solar house that she inhabited with another nun on the Sisters of Charity grounds. Without any heaters, this residence – which cost a mere $10 per square foot to build, according to greenenergyohio.org – remained at a livable temperature no matter how cold it became outside.

Also on the motherhouse grounds, she founded the EarthConnection Center, an environmental learning facility that offers tours, internships, and other programs.

Additionally, Gonzalez – who had been observed operating a solar-powered golf cart – co-founded Ohio Interfaith Power and Light, which advocates for a religious response to climate change and assists Ohio faith communities in increasing their energy efficiency. In 2005, Green Energy Ohio presented her with their Lifetime Achievement Award. She died on July 31, 2016, at age 83.

Official Cheese-Maker

Another PhD-level biologist, Benedictine nun Noella Marcellino, is the official cheese-maker of the Abbey of Regina Laudis in Bethlehem, Connecticut.

Born in June 1951, she grew up in Massachusetts and attended Sarah Lawrence College in Bronxville, New York, before dropping out and heading to her current Connecticut abbey. There, her cheese-making calling began in 1977, when the order received its first cow, according to a 2003 *Boston Globe* article titled "Nun has cheese down to a science."

In the mid-1980s, the archbishop of Hartford enabled members of her order to pursue degrees in higher education. Marcellino headed to the University of Connecticut, where she took courses in agricultural science.

On a Fulbright Scholarship, she went to France, where she studied how putrefaction affects the flavors of cheese and analyzed countless samples of microorganisms in traditional French cheese caves.

In 2003, she earned her PhD in microbiology from the University of Connecticut. Around the time she received her doctorate, PBS aired a 52-minute documentary that followed Marcellino on her travels through France, where she learns the secrets of prominent artisan cheese-makers.

Owing to the documentary's title, "The Cheese Nun: Sister Noella's Voyage of Discovery," people took to calling her the "cheese nun" – a sobriquet she rather dislikes, but one which has proven difficult to shed.

Traditional cheese-making is a physically rigorous activity, and Marcellino no longer does it herself, according to a 2013 *New Haven Register* article. She instead supervises the process and seeks to transmit her knowledge to a younger generation.

As recently as May 2015, Marcellino partook in an artisan food festival held on the abbey grounds, where yearlong Sister Mary Kenneth Keller internships have been held – perhaps inspiring another scientist, nun, or scientist-nun.

For those with enough talent and determination, the scientific and religious vocations needn't be mutually exclusive: they are simply different paths to ultimate truths.

https://aleteia.org/2017/08/05/3-scientist-nuns-you-might-not-know-about

10 Ways to Encourage Your Child's Spiritual Life

Kids are naturally open to God. We just need to guide them along the way.

As parents, we want our children to develop a strong faith in God and to deepen that faith throughout their lives. We bring them to Mass on Sundays, enroll them in sacramental prep, and teach them moral lessons at home. But if that's where it stops, we've missed perhaps the most important aspect of spirituality — a real relationship with the living God. And the only way to have such a relationship is to develop a spiritual life. So how do we encourage this in our children?

Young children are especially open to spiritual truths. Their innocence, curiosity, and present-moment living often makes them more receptive to the workings of God. To build on this in your little ones, or to encourage your child's spiritual life at any stage of development, here are 10 things to pay attention to as a parent:

Welcome the big questions they ask.

What happens when we die? Will our dog go to heaven? Why do we have to keep saying the same prayers if God has already heard them a million times? Why are we here? Children are often much better than adults at asking meaningful questions and pondering life's biggest mysteries. It's important to welcome these questions, even when they leave us stumped, because they're part of a child's search for understanding, meaning, and identity. In some cases, we'll have answers — even if imperfect or incomplete — and in other cases we won't and we can say so. But if we welcome our children's questions rather than brush them off or dismiss them, they'll continue to seek and ask questions as they grow older, which is an important component of the spiritual life.

Spend time in nature with them.

Educator and botanist George Washington Carver once said, "I love to think of nature as an unlimited broadcasting station through which God speaks to us every hour if we will only tune in."

Throughout the ages, saints, monks, and spiritual masters have sought and found God in forests, caves, mountains, deserts, and at sea. It can be the same for all of us. Time in nature tends to quiet our minds, stirs our souls, and inspires reflection. Children are drawn to the natural world, so make sure they spend time there, even if it's just in a local city park. Point out the sights and sounds, the changes in seasons, the plants and animals. Talk about God as the Creator of it all, and how we are connected to this incredible, majestic world.

Expose them to beauty.

Beauty isn't only found in the natural world, but in great works of art around us — paintings, sculpture, architecture, music, film, novels, crafts, etc. If you live near any museums, make regular short trips with your kids. When walking or driving around, point out interesting buildings and monuments. Play a variety of beautiful music at home and in the car. Encourage the arts in your children's education.

There's plenty of beauty to be found in every day life, too — the birds that regularly come to the feeder in the backyard, the colorful bouquet of flowers in the grocery

store, a treasured heirloom, the impeccable presentation of a meal, the face of a new baby or beloved grandparent. When we teach our kids to be attuned to beauty, we are encouraging their spiritual life.

Bring the Holy Trinity into daily life.

As parents do we talk about God as our Father? Do we bring Jesus into our daily conversations and speak of Him as a living Person in our lives? Do we call upon the Holy Spirit when we need help or inspiration? And do we do this aloud, in front of our children, as well as quietly in our own prayer time? Kids need to see that their parents have a relationship with God, that He is real in our lives, and that we make regular efforts to grow in our own spiritual lives.

Read the Bible together.

Scripture is the living Word of God, and we can spend our lives reading the same passages over and over again and still receive something new. Open the Bible with your children. There are various editions designed for children at different stages. With older kids, consider you might do the daily Mass readings together — a subscription to *Magnificat* is helpful for that. [And *Magnificat* has an edition for children, too.)

Institute quiet times.

It's a noisy world and children today rarely experience quiet time. But knowing how to be comfortable with silence is important to a spiritual life. One of the best ways to help with this is to institute a quiet time each day where your kids must read or play quietly for a certain period of time. Once children have the ability to sit still for a few minutes, you can begin to teach them the basics of Christian meditation by introducing them to ancient practices in Catholic spirituality. One place to start is a book called *Sitting Like A Saint: Catholic Mindfulness for Kids* which takes prayer practices from the lives of saints and helps children learn to be still and attentive to God in the moment.

Talk about saints and angels like friends.

Children are naturally fascinated with angels and saints, who are helpful aids when it comes to developing our spiritual lives. Encourage your child to regularly call on his or her guardian angel. Help your child to identify some favorite saints to be close friends with — perhaps a saint that your child is named after, or whose feast falls on your child's birthday, or whose story resonates with your child.

Serve others as a family.

Part of the spiritual life is being aware of our connection to other people and our call to care for each other. When children are exposed from a young age to the needs of others, they grow in empathy, charity, and gratitude. Depending on the age and sensitivities of your child, consider volunteer activities that allow you to serve others as a family.

Go to confession regularly.

Once your child has made his First Confession, don't make it another year until you bring him back. Instead, try to attend Confession once a month — and go together. Print out a child-friendly Examination of Conscience and review the sacramental prayers with your child. On the way there, and afterwards, talk about God's mercy and love for us and how regularly confessing our sins and receiving absolution

helps us to grow in our relationship with God.

Have prayer routines at home.

There are many ways to pray as a family at home. Family meals, first thing in the morning, and bedtimes are perfect times to do so. Prayer routines with your children helps them to understand that we depend on God every moment of our lives. And don't forget things like fasting, which is a kind of prayer. Abstaining from meat on Fridays, going without dessert, or making special sacrifices during penitential seasons like Lent and Advent, are all helpful ways to incorporate spiritual practices into children's lives.

Zoe Romanowsky

https://aleteia.org/2019/03/07/10-ways-to-encourage-your-childs-spiritual-life

Wisdom First, Job Skills Second

A promising humanities program at Clemson
Puts the emphasis on the great works of the Western tradition.

The higher-education crisis in the humanities has a simple solution, which applies as well to airlines and movie theaters: fill the empty seats. Humanities majors accounted for less than 12 percent of bachelor's degrees in 2015, according to the Humanities Indicators Project. A July report from the Modern Language Association found that three-quarters of English departments had seen the number of majors dropping in the last five years. In an effort to boost enrollments, humanities departments are trying everything from digital curricula to sophisticated marketing plans.

To help professors, administrators, and advocates make the practical case for a humanities education, the Washington, D.C.–based National Humanities Alliance has issued a digital "Humanities Toolkit." Written in the style of a PowerPoint presentation, the report offers "learning outcomes and performance metrics" that show how humanities degrees prepare students for a broad range of careers. It provides job and salary data, and it claims that employers "seek the skills that humanities majors develop"—for instance, those that make them effective managers. The message of the NHA's relentlessly optimistic document: "The humanities cultivate fulfillment."

Yet the toolkit makes not one reference to Milton, Beethoven, Bernini, Cervantes, Virgil, Ralph Ellison, or any other notable names; the great books, artworks, and compositions don't figure in the presentation. The humanities instill critical thinking, workforce readiness, and empathy, the NHA insists—but those virtues get developed, presumably, in humanities course work, through the direct study of Thucydides, Dante, the Civil War, War and Peace, and so on. Why not highlight those things?

The NHA seems to believe that students need utilitarian justifications for studying fields like philosophy and art history. To market the humanities, on this view, we must play up money and success, and add a few sentimental effusions. It's not working, though, as the poor enrollment figures underscore.

A better approach comes from Clemson University, where a Great Books–style initiative called the Lyceum Program is thriving. Each year, the program admits ten "scholars" out of high school, providing them a $2,500 annual tuition credit. The Lyceum offers eight courses per semester, taught by six professors. The students take the courses as a group, in a set sequence—for example, "Wisdom of the Ancients" for freshman year, "American Political Thought" for sophomore year, and so on. Participants then meet individually every week with their assigned tutors—professors who engage them in Socratic discussion of the readings. After completing the eight required courses, students earn a political science minor. A Lyceum certification may soon appear on transcripts and diplomas.

I met some of the students on Clemson's campus in September. "I heard about this program in high school," one told me, and "that's why I came to Clemson."

"Are the courses tough?" I asked.

"Definitely," he said with a laugh, "the hardest ones I've ever taken." The three others who joined us nodded. They kept citing the works that inspired them—*Anna Karenina*, *The Closing of the American Mind*, Cicero's *On Obligations*, and a quote by C. S. Lewis that one took as his motto: "It's not the remembered past, but the forgotten past that enslaves us." One of the students was majoring in philosophy, two in English, and one in economics, but I sensed their camaraderie.

I asked if they really found those old books relevant in contemporary America. "Relevant to what?" one remarked, noting that other teachers might insert "pop culture references" to bring the material up to date, "but I don't need them in the classroom." Another found it "uplifting" to be in a class that offered a sanctuary from topical affairs.

The posters for the program set the tone. "IDEAS HAVE CONSEQUENCES," one announces at the top. Lyceum scholars, it says, "will graduate with a robust training in the essential ideas that form the foundation of free institutions, thus preparing them to move into careers in law, academia, policy making, and the business world." This language sounds as though it was lifted from the Humanities Toolkit, but the rest of the poster gets back to the program's true aim, listing the books that the scholars will read—including Plato's *Apology*, Machiavelli's *The Prince*, Marx's *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*, and Milton Friedman's *Capitalism and Freedom*. Another poster displays two stacks of books against a black background: Cicero, Tocqueville, Marx, Kant, Hume, Weber. The books (and authors) speak for themselves.

Mark Bauerlein

I asked the Lyceum's founder, C. Bradley Thompson, about the program's remarkable growth. "I never thought it would explode like this," he admitted. "We began with a tiny marketing budget, but as soon as the materials went out, the calls started coming in." Parents told him that they wanted their kids to get a decent classical education; bookish high schoolers told him that they wanted to find peers like themselves; and the admissions officers told him that more and more applicants, especially on the high end of the pool, were inquiring about the program. (Last year, 320 of the applicants had SAT scores of 1,400 or above, and 180 were at 1,500 or above, on a scale of 2,400.) "The administration is wholly supportive," Thompson said. "We are now, along with the football program, one of the president's main talking points." When I brought up critical thinking, workplace skills, and other supposed humanities attractions, Thompson shook his head: the point of the program is to engage students with the big questions of life. "We live in such an unserious time," he said. The students "long for participation in something great." Or, as one of the program professors, J. Michael Hoffpauir, told me, "In these books, the students find themselves taken more seriously than they normally take themselves."

Academia touts so many new initiatives, institutes, and majors these days that skepticism about any of them is warranted. But Thompson and his team have built a thriving humanities project, on traditional grounds. Clemson's Lyceum Program is an exacting curriculum that honors the Western heritage—and students are hungry for it.

https://www.city-journal.org/humanities-crisis-in-higher-education

Catechist Compendium: New Masterwork Appears for Teaching the Faith

Dominicans release catechetical work named Echoing the Mystery, a resource for those wishing to catechize and evangelize.

Dominican St. Thomas Aquinas gave us one monumental *Summa*. Now, the Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist have their turn with a summa of a catechetical work named *Echoing the Mystery*, a master resource for those wishing to catechize and evangelize.

Sister John Dominic Rasmussen, a foundress of the Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist, in Ann Arbor, Michigan, led the project and served as the general editor of this masterwork co-written by Barbara Morgan and Dominican Sister Athanasius Munroe.

Technically speaking, it was seven decades in the making because Morgan began that long ago as a teen catechist assistant on a Native-American reservation in Arizona. By the 1990s she founded the catechetics program at Franciscan University of Steubenville at the invitation of the school's president, Franciscan Father Michael Scanlan, who recognized her unique talents. Providently, the Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist got to know Morgan and invited her to instruct the sisters in catechetics. Sister John Dominic realized Morgan's seven-decades-long knowledge and outstanding successful methods had to be not only preserved but continuously spread and employed. She had been one of Morgan's students, along with others, including EWTN mainstays Chris Stefanick, Edward Sri and Jeff Cavins.

When Morgan retired to Ann Arbor, an initiative to bring such a masterwork to fruition was interrupted numerous times because of her health's ups and downs. In 2016, Sister Athanasius Munroe, who has a degree from Franciscan University's Catechetical Institute, was assigned to work with Morgan, composing the content.

For the record — regarding the method and title of the work — catechesis comes from the Greek word meaning "to instruct orally, to echo down."

The middle of the word sounds like "keys," and Morgan concentrated on what "keys" to each doctrine should be grasped to unlock and understand God's revelation: "Divine Perspective," "Theological Virtues," "Scripture and Essentials," "Related Doctrines," "Common Errors," "Liturgical Sources" and "Teaching Through Beauty." Through her book, Morgan presents her teaching method to unlock 62 doctrines for the catechist in an orthodox way.

Sister John Dominic shared several insights about this monumental project with the Register via a recent email interview.

Why do you see this as a master resource?

It was a work that developed over decades of field experience.

How long was it in the making?

I became involved more than 12 years ago. However, the method of analyzing doctrine was developed over Barbara's lifetime as a catechist.

What makes it so accessible to anyone desiring to evangelize and catechize?

For each doctrine the template is the same. It follows the "Seven Keys."
This consistency aids anyone seeking to study the doctrines to enrich their faith and to be equipped to evangelize or catechize with confidence, but most especially to "echo down" what they know and believe — in sum, to study, to contemplate and to give to others the fruits of one's study and contemplation.

Why is this book being called "the first catechetical book ever written to clearly instruct anyone desiring to evangelize and catechize?"

If we are going to make a difference in evangelization and catechesis, those entrusted with this awesome responsibility need a resource that is accessible and beautiful and draws them into the mystery.

St. John Paul II wrote, "The primary and essential object of catechesis is … 'the mystery of Christ.' In a way, catechizing leads a person to study this mystery in all its dimensions." You follow that understanding, don't you, in the work and even in the title itself?

A mystery is not that which is "unknown"; it is that which is "made known." So the book was written keeping in mind those who will be instructing others in knowing and understanding all God has revealed.

How does this work rate as "all the information you need to know about that doctrine in one place"?

The seven keys enable you to analyze each doctrine and to "see" it from different perspectives. It also has Scripture references, as Scripture drives doctrine. It also has many references to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and other Church documents. It can be challenging to find all the references for each doctrine in the *Catechism*. This resource cites the *Catechism* and brings them all together in an easy way to understand.

Why do you describe the method or approach as "the 'new wine' to be poured into the 'new wineskin' of catechesis, which draws the catechist into knowing, understanding and living God's loving plan of salvation?"

This method brings together the transcendentals of truth, beauty and goodness. And it offers different approaches to draw someone into the mystery of God's revelation. Art or music, the liturgy, Scripture or even a common error — there are so many different ways that can be used to unlock the doctrine for someone.

Just like a new wineskin, it can expand and grow with the new wine. From a different angle — in the preaching of the *kerygma*, we [are] being the apostles, who were filled with a new wine, the joy of knowing and experiencing the Good News and desiring to proclaim God's love.

In a nutshell, what was it like to learn with Barbara Morgan?

Barbara was able to teach with passion and conviction. Her students knew that she bore witness to Jesus Christ. It was always a mission, never a job, to hand on or echo down God's revelation.

Can this resource complement existing catechetical programs?

Yes, it is not intended to be in competition, but to enhance any scope and sequence and any standards.

What are some of the beautiful highlights that make this a substantial work — from Dominicans again! — a "summa of catechesis"?

Dominicans have three mottos:
1) Veritas (Truth); 2) To Praise, to Bless, to Preach; 3) To contemplate and to give to others the fruits of one's contemplation. *Echoing the Mystery* contains the truth of God's revelation. Once one is able to study and encounter the truth, one is ready to go forth and not stand around idle, but to praise, to bless and to preach the word. And most importantly, it all begins in prayer, in contemplation, in taking the time to sit and study and meditate. The highlights are the keys to analyzing the doctrine. It can be overwhelming to see the size of the book (more than 700 pages), but if one can just take it a little bit at a time, it will be transformative.

Imagine if every catechist had this resource to study! Religious ed and catechesis would change.

Joseph Pronechen

http://www.ncregister.com/daily-news/catechist-compendium-new-masterwork-appears-for-teaching-the-faith

And the Children Shall Lead Us

Catholic school kids in the archdiocese are practicing the virtue of daily prayer during the 40-day season of Lent that began Ash Wednesday, March 6. They're seeking to amplify their prayers by harnessing the power of social media in a campaign called #IPrayed.

The idea is a simple one that puts a faith-based twist on the ubiquitous #IVoted campaign on Election Day last November. Each time a student prays, they can log the prayer on Twitter with the I Prayed hashtag.

Judging from the postings on Ash Wednesday, a good number of Catholic schools in the archdiocese were praying and posting, including the kindergarten class at Transfiguration School in Tarrytown; fourth-graders at St. Patrick's School in Bedford, who prayed the Way of the Cross together and then watched a related program from EWTN; and the student body at St. Rose of Lima School in Washington Heights, who were led in prayer by one of the seventh-graders.

Many of the Twitter posts tagged @Cardinal Dolan as well as the Catholic schools in the archdiocese, and a couple tweeted at CNY.

The cardinal shared a short video expressing his support for the campaign and offering suggestions to students and others who want to participate. He said they could post #IPrayed after their prayers to start the day, when they offer grace at meals with their family and after attending Mass on Sunday.

"I pray you have a blessed and holy Lent," the cardinal said.

The simplicity of #IPrayed is a large part of its appeal.

You can also see some other positive attributes in the campaign. Just as bad habits develop over time, it's possible to acquire good habits in the same way. As the kids pray each day, even multiple times, and then log the prayers online, they are reinforcing a good habit. For the young, and the not so young, participating in online activities is as natural as breathing. Youngsters who are too young to log in by themselves can rely on their teachers and parents for guidance and support.

Even though the campaign is called #IPrayed, the school participation means that it's not just individual students, but classes and entire student bodies. In other words, the kids are part of a community that is praying together. That positive reinforcement from their friends, teachers and family members will help the campaign flourish, and help the kids grow in their faith.

There are also natural additions to a campaign like #IPrayed. It could most likely be expanded to include parish catechetical programs, youth ministry groups, young adult groups and parish communities, among others.

In the meantime, I'm curious to see how this year's campaign turns out.

TJ McCormack, director of communications and public relations for the archdiocese's Office of the Superintendent of Schools, told me there are plans to continue the rollout of #IPrayed as Lent progresses. One initiative may involve asking high school students to take the lead with some of the postings.

Seeing the students at prayer is also a great natural form of evangelization as they go

beyond their own families and schools to share their faith.

John Woods

http://cny.org/stories/and-the-children-shall-lead-us,18782

Student Conference Looks at How Media Climate Affects Catholics

Isabella Acierno said she will read and watch news differently after attending the third annual Student Leadership Conference at the Sheen Center for Thought and Culture in Manhattan March 8.

The junior at Notre Dame Academy on Staten Island was one of 240 students from 31 Catholic high schools in the archdiocese to attend the conference, "The Media Landscape: A Catholic Lens."

"You have to think about all the sides" of a story, the 17-year-old parishioner of St. Christopher and St. Margaret Mary on Staten Island told CNY. "You have to think about what you're reading, what you're looking into and what it means. You need to look into your facts before you really go out in public to say what you believe.

"This opened my eyes to things I never thought it would."

Sister Nancy Usselmann, F.S.P., director of the Pauline Center for Media Studies in Los Angeles, was the keynote speaker. She said she hoped she provided tools in her talk to offer students ways to discern and respond or not to respond to the media climate in a virtuous way.
"That's a challenge because it requires reflection and discernment," Sister Nancy said. "It's not something we're born with. We have to practice, and it's really challenging in this political climate but also just in general social issues dealing with social media.

"How can we be that presence that responds in a holistic and joyful manner, and really witness to our Gospel values by how we respond and deal with people on social media and in the whole news climate?"

Following her talk, Sister Nancy participated in a panel with Msgr. Edmund Whalen, vicar for clergy in the archdiocese and former principal of Msgr. Farrell High School on Staten Island; Georgia-Renee Boamah, a junior at Cardinal Spellman High School in the Bronx; Obinna Nwako, a junior at Regis High School in Manhattan; and moderator Rob Astorino, a CNN contributor and former Westchester County executive who serves as Cardinal Dolan's delegate to the Mother Cabrini Foundation.

"This was a great opportunity to speak in front of a large group about how you feel about things, and things we don't normally talk about," Obinna said.

"I'm not a perfect person. I see a headline and want to take it as fact. I think everyone should be more informed to do their research before they commit something to fact and believe it's true."

The panel discussed a highly scrutinized example from this year's March for Life involving student Nick Sandmann and his classmates from Covington Catholic High School in Kentucky in which the media was accused of failing to initially report all facets of the story.

Later, the panel spoke about the First Amendment and how far an individual or media outlet can go in using their rights. "Are you using your freedom for love or hate? We are called to love one another," said Georgia-Renee from her panel seat.

Dr. Timothy McNiff, superintendent of schools in the archdiocese, delivered the opening and closing remarks. He challenged students to communicate what they learned with their schoolmates."I've grown to love

our Student Leadership Conference because the students never disappoint us," Dr. McNiff said. "To get them to come and join us on some very topical issues and we raise that level of conversation about the issues is an experience they obviously enjoy, they need and it speaks volumes as to who we are as a Catholic school."

Caitlin Reith, a freshman at St. Jean Baptiste in Manhattan, said she learned it's important to remain civil in discussing all sides of a story.

"I thought that was very powerful and knowledgeable to take from this, a sense of maturity and respect," Caitlin said.

Stella O'Brien, a junior at St. Joseph Hill Academy on Staten Island, said she learned more about discernment and how to approach the media within a Catholic context.

"It's really easy to agree with the news that's put in front of you or to agree with news that confirms an opinion you already have, but it's harder to sometimes face the news or reality that challenges what you believe and facing that challenge is very important," said Stella, a parishioner of Holy Rosary on Staten Island.

"Approaching things from all sides is very important. Keep an open mind when you're approaching things and leave your bias at the door when you're seeking the truth."

Dan Pietrafesa

http://www.cny.org/stories/student-conference-looks-at-how-media-climate-affects-catholics,18783

Caesar's Enduring Influence on Western Civilization

"Beware the Ides of March!" So heard Gaius Julius Caesar, Rome's just-declared Dictator for Life, as he walked to meet the Senate on this day in 44 BC. Hours later, Caesar lay dead, murdered by a group of senators conspiring to rid Rome of his tyranny. In death Caesar became larger than life; declared a god by his contemporaries, his prominence today among figures of antiquity is second only to Christ himself. And it is the image of Caesar that, however far from historical reality, still has import for us today—especially as Catholics and Americans.

For English speakers, it is William Shakespeare's eponymous play that shaped Caesar's legacy and opened our imagination to it. "Beware the Ides of March!" and "Et tu, Brute?" are Shakespearean—not Latin—quotations. But Caesar's grip on our world today extends beyond even the powers of the English bard. "The die is cast," "crossing the Rubicon," and "I came, I saw, I conquered" are all popular phrases that, taken from Caesar's military career, convey decisive action. A jeep model is named for his crossing the Rubicon River, and a calendar still in use—the Julian—takes its name from him. Even the manner by which so many of us are born into the world—Caesarian section—is named for how Caesar was supposedly (but almost certainly not) born. (The famous salad, by contrast, takes its name not from the Roman but from Tijuana.)

Who is Caesar, and what has made him so memorable, so important, and so fascinating? Caesar was born in 100 BC to a noble but marginal family who claimed descent from the goddess Venus and Aeneas, the exiled Trojan founder of the Latin race. Young Gaius reportedly was extremely ambitious for political and military prestige from his earliest years. One story, most likely apocryphal, illustrates this: as a young man, Caesar was captured by pirates, who demanded a ransom of 20 talents. Caesar was insulted by so low a bid: He told them they should demand 50 talents because of who he was, and that, once ransomed, he would come back and crucify them. After his ransom, Caesar returned with a flotilla of ships and did just that.

Caesar got his political break when he became consul in 59 BC thanks to some back-room dealings with Rome's power brokers. He then spent ten years adding Gaul—modern France—to the Roman Empire through a series of conquests and wars of dubious legitimacy. In 55 BC, Caesar and his men became the first Romans to cross into Great Britain. The victorious general wrote a very elegant Commentary on his campaign in Gaul that is read even today by high school Latin students and is the source of that other famous line from Caesar: "All Gaul is divided into three parts."

When his commission in Gaul was finished in 49 BC, rather than face certain arrest for crimes he committed as consul, Caesar "cast the die," "crossed the Rubicon" (the territory marking the outer boundaries of Rome from the northern provinces), and marched on Rome. He defeated his elder rival Pompey in 48 BC in the civil wars, had a brief and famous romance with Cleopatra in Egypt the following year, and then returned in triumph to govern Rome, where he was named Dictator for Life—an unprecedented event in Roman politics.

This power grab was too much for many of Caesar's envious senatorial rivals, who, led

by Brutus and Cassius, the self-called Liberators, orchestrated his murder on the Ides of March. This day endures in infamy for both the event itself and for the mysterious portents that preceded it: Caesar's declaration that the best type of death was an unexpected one; his wife had a dream warning him not to go to the Senate on this day; and a roadside prophet told him to beware the Ides of March. When a doctor examined Caesar's corpse after the deed, he opined that only one of the twenty-three stab wounds he received was fatal.

Though hated by many aristocrats, Caesar was loved by the common people, and his legacy rose to epic levels immediately after his death. Each Roman citizen received a small sum of money from Caesar's estate. In his will, he named his grandnephew Octavian his adopted son and heir. Octavian then took the name "Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus." The famous orator Cicero called him "the boy who owed everything to his name." Octavian would eventually do what his famous uncle could not: solidify dominance over the entire Roman Empire. He took a new name as Rome's first emperor: Imperator Caesar Augustus.

For Catholics, Caesar's name is prominent in Sacred Scripture. Caesar Augustus was the ruler when Jesus was born and the one who had called the census that sent Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem. When asked whether the Jewish people ought to pay their taxes, Jesus responded, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's." Later, Peter called Jesus "the Christ, the Son of the living God," in Caesarea Philippi, a city named for Augustus Caesar and built on a rocky area, symbolic of the new Rock of the Church. On Good Friday, the crowd demanding Jesus's crucifixion shouted, "We have no king but Caesar."

Hence, in the Bible, the name "Caesar" is the symbol of Roman and temporal authority, and it is deliberately contrasted with God's spiritual authority. As debate over the proper relationship between temporal and spiritual powers raged through the centuries, the former was always represented by Caesar.

Caesar has captivated art, literature, and drama for two millennia, sometimes appearing as a hero, other times as a villain, depending on the sensibilities of a given age. Dante, to name but one artist, placed Caesar in limbo along with Abraham, David, Homer, Aristotle, Virgil, and other famous men of antiquity. By contrast, Dante placed Brutus and Cassius in the lowest circle in Hell, the place for betrayers of their patrons and benefactors, along with Judas Iscariot and Lucifer.

Unlike Dante, our Founding Fathers saw Caesar as the greatest possible enemy, and they revered Brutus and Cassius as liberators from tyranny. In arguing against the Stamp Act in 1765, Patrick Henry invoked Caesar's fate to warn King George III: "Caesar had his Brutus, Charles I had his Cromwell, and George III may profit by their example." John Adams and Thomas Jefferson each pejoratively compared Alexander Hamilton to Caesar. And Hamilton, for his part, was quick to throw the "Caesar label" to tar his own rivals: "If we have an embryo-Caesar in the United States, 'tis Aaron Burr."

As a general, politician, and as a man, Julius Caesar was ruthless, cunning, and pragmatic but also generous, charming, and humorous. Such is the multifaceted personality—and hence the fluctuating legacy—of history's most famous ruler. The indelible stamp he left on the Roman world has spilled into eternity due to his influence in the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth.

Shakespeare's Cassius declared: "Men at some time are masters of their fates: The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves." Caesar's political fate was hastened by his personal faults. Yet, over 2,000 years removed, his star burns bright in our imaginations. For this, we owe Caesar a toast on this, his ironically special day.

David G. Bonagura Jr.

https://www.crisismagazine.com/2019/caesars-enduring-influence-on-western-civilization

Desperate Parents and Smiling Administrators

Celebrity strivers turn to fraud to guarantee places for their children at elite schools
The college admissions cheating scandal is an embarrassment for everyone except in one spot: The marketing office of elite schools. Yes, the admissions office feels chagrin over being duped, but if parents will go to these lengths to get their kids into the school, the publicists and recruiters have done their job well.

The deans like to see parents and high schoolers lining up for those campus tours led by bright-eyed, backward-walking seniors. They cheer when they climb two notches in *Forbes'* rankings or find a bunch of pleasing comments at *College Confidential*. The admissions office loves to be super-choosy. The more desperate the parents, the happier to administrators.

Selectivity is crucial. Institutions are rated on it. College leaders talk about "inclusivity" all the time — don't believe a word. They want more exclusivity than Augusta Country Club. Yale takes only 6 percent of its applicants, and it wants to take less. It admits the same number of kids each year, but if Yale can make 200 more high schoolers apply for admission, the admitted ones appear more precious. *U.S. News & World Report* will take note and boost Yale in its all-important college rankings ("student selectivity" is one of its main criteria).

The top schools are hyper-competitive about this. If my institution, Emory, finds applications fall while Vanderbilt's and Duke's rise, the admissions dean frets. That's his job — to outdo rivals in the admissions race. We hear a lot about the stress college applicants suffer in acceptance season, but the admissions office is a boiler room all year long.

And so the marketers at each Tier 1 school broadcast the message: There is no place like Princeton, or Williams, or Stanford your child will thrive at our life-transforming, future-ensuring haven, you must come here They send out brochures showing happy sophomores on the quad, in the lab with goggles and white coat, on the basketball court The One Percent parents believe it. Their child's admission to a Top Ten college keeps the family in the elite. Evidence is everywhere. President Trump went to Penn, Sen. Elizabeth Warren is at Harvard, Judge Brett Kavanaugh taught at Harvard, Samuel Alito went to Princeton, Elena Kagan and Sonia Sotomayor, too. President Obama went to Columbia, Michelle Obama to Princeton, Sen. Cory Booker to Stanford How is a Wall Street manager to tell his colleagues that his son's going to SUNY-Buffalo, same as Harvey Weinstein?

The actresses in on the dodge knew, perhaps, that Meryl Streep went to Vassar and Yale, Lady Gaga attended NYU's Tisch School for the Arts, 2019 Oscar winner Olivia Coleman went to Cambridge and 2018 Oscar winner Frances McDormand to Yale. Lori Laughlin didn't, having taken up acting full-time as a teen-ager, but getting her daughters into USC was worth $500,000.

All of the fraudsters have heard over and over that college is the gateway to success, and elite college the road to elite success. The Obama administration said so, and its "College Scorecard" project rated colleges heavily on the salaries graduates earn 10 years after entering the school. That dollar figure urged parents right up front to align

the schools with the paycheck that will follow. USC students earn $74,000, the Scorecard reports, while UC-Santa Cruz kids only reach $47,000, a $27,000 difference. That makes the $500,000 that Ms. Laughlin shelled out for her two daughters pay for itself in less than 10 years. These parents love their kids, and they're anxious for them to do well. Ensuring their children's admission to a top school is like providing them with nice clothes, enriching vacations, music lessons and sports camps. Those things they can supply on their own. Why should such an important threshold as college be any different?

I had to laugh when UCLA appeared on the list of colleges. I applied there in 1977 by walking into the counselor's office, filling out a two-page form listing UCLA as my first choice and telling her I'd taken the SAT the year before. No campus visit, no test prep, no tutors, no AP courses (I wasn't a great student). My parents barely noticed.

The actions these parents took began with moral distortions, yes, but also with their vulnerability to the propaganda that issues from government and media — and, of course, the colleges themselves. The whole thing is nauseating. It gives a fresh savor to a statement of Candidate Trump's in Nevada in February 2016, perhaps the most offensive one in the eyes of the liberal elite: "I love the poorly educated!"

Mark Bauerlein

https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2019/mar/14/desperate-parents-and-smiling-administrators/

Banner in the Sky: One of the Best-kept Secrets in Children's Literature

I have a confession to make: when it comes to good literature, especially good children's literature, I'm a bit of a snob. I'm working on it, but despite my best efforts, my snobbish tendencies tend to come out from time to time. To be fair, I have read a great deal of good literature, I have read about good literature, and I have had countless discussions with my friends about good literature. I feel like I have a good grasp of it as a whole (at least of the European and American variety). So, several years ago now, when I was looking over the list of books I was expected to teach to a middle school Language Arts class, my eyebrows raised in a slightly snobbish way when among the expected regulars on the reading list such as Stevenson, Verne, and Twain, I came across the name James Ramsey Ullman. This name was not familiar to me nor was the title of the book I was soon to be reading with my class: *Banner in the Sky*. But, despite the initial inklings of my snobbish self, I was in for a very pleasant surprise—which is, frankly, one of the more pleasant things about being a snob.

In 1865, an Englishman by the name of Edward Whymper became the first man to climb the mountain in the Swiss Alps known as the Matterhorn. Until then, the Matterhorn was thought to be unconquerable and indeed it took the lives of four of Whymper's companions during the difficult and treacherous descent. Ullman took inspiration from this real-life account when he penned his fictional work, Banner in the Sky. The book tells the story of the first climbing of an intimidating mountain in the Swiss Alps named the Citadel; a mountain that has also claimed the lives of those who have tried to reach its tantalizing summits. Among those who perished in the attempt was a man named Josef Matt (with an obvious nod of the head to the real mountain). Banner in the Sky tells the story of his son, Rudi and his dream of one day climbing the mountain on which his father perished.

The conflict of the novel is between Rudi Matt and the Citadel, which almost plays the classic role of antagonist. But it is also about climbers and climbing and it is, for a children's book, uncharacteristically technical, but in a delightfully unobtrusive way. Ullman, a serious climber himself, subtly draws his readers into the exciting world that he describes as "the sport, the craft, the adventure of mountaineering." By the time I finished the book, I felt that I was just about ready to give it a try. I had learned what to do and what not to do alongside of Rudi. I had learned why a good climber often holds his body well out from the rockface and how one can, and sometimes must, climb with the knees and the elbows. I discovered that conquering a perilous mountain takes not only physical fitness and skill, but also art.

Banner in the Sky fulfills most of the criteria for a good book. It tells a good and, at times, gripping story. It is full of interesting characters. It is a moral book, addressing such topics as virtue and vice, prejudice, and what it really means for a boy to grow into a man. This last theme is especially well done. Rudi wishes to be a man like his father and thinks he will accomplish this goal by climbing the mountain his father never did. Throughout the book, however, Rudi slowly comes to understand that imitating his virtuous father means much more than that. Rudi discovers that becoming a man like his father is in fact much more difficult and requires much more sacrifice than the climbing of the Citadel.

It is the ravishing ending of the book, however, in which Ullman really reveals his excellence as an author, and which raises this work from the ranks of the good into the select company of the great. (I have no intention of giving anything away, so you can continue reading with confidence.) The ending of this book came as a delightful surprise to me as it is not at all typical. Ullman eschewed the normal, somewhat worn-out ending books of this sort almost always have, instead giving us something much deeper and more meaningful. After reading the end of the book I was completely convinced that this was truly a great work of children's literature.

There is one more—perhaps minor—point I wish to make. *Banner in the Sky* is an unmistakably Catholic book. In an English literature landscape dominated by Protestant writers, this is no insignificant aspect, especially considering that this book was written for children. I do not mean to suggest that we should not read Protestant literature, far from it. John Senior says in *The Restoration of Christian Culture*: "And so Catholics have to live with a difficulty. The thousand good books which are the indispensable soil of the understanding of the Catholic Faith and indirectly requisite to the Kingdom of Heaven, are not Catholic but Protestant." English literature has been done—and excellently done—argues Dr. Senior. We must know and love it despite its Protestant heritage. We must have our children read the best of English literature and we must ourselves supply what is lacking in them as far as the Faith is concerned. This is simply the situation we find ourselves in. Thankfully, this is not the case with *Banner in the Sky*. It is, as I said before, unmistakably Catholic, but not at all obnoxiously so. The Faith is ever present just under the surface, coming to the forefront when appropriate. It is simply an assumed and natural fact with the characters, as it should be an assumed and natural fact of our own lives.

I hope I have inspired you to read *Banner in the Sky* or to give it to the young reader in your household. I know all too well that supplying a voracious reader with excellent and age-appropriate material can be challenging at times. This book, as one of the best-kept secrets in literature, is worth purchasing and I would specifically recommend it for children around the age of 12. It is also, like all excellent children's literature, a very enjoyable read even if your age is many times that number—and especially if you are one of those well-read readers who could use a wake-up call from an obscure work to shake off some snobbishness.

Stephen Fitzpatrick

https://www.crisismagazine.com/2019/banner-in-the-sky-one-of-the-best-kept-secrets-in-childrens-literature

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Sr. Elizabeth Anne Allen, OP, Ed.D. (Director, Center for Catholic Education, Aquinas College, Nashville)

Gregory Dolan (Catholic Education Partners)

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Checks in the amount of $600 should be made payable to: Catholic Education Foundation
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**"This is a most needed initiative,
and I hope you obtain a healthy response from the dioceses."**

Cardinal Sean O'Malley, CEF board member, Archbishop of Boston

"The role of priests in catholic schools is crucial and now more than ever before. There are many who can teach, many who can coach, many who can administer, but only the priest can bring God physically into the school. . . . A Catholic school with no Mass and no confession is as good as dead."

Alvaro DeVicente, Headmaster, The Heights

"The role of the priest in shaping the identity and mission of our Catholic schools is indispensable. This summer's CEF conference is sure to give excellent guidance to our priests in carrying out this role with renewed dedication and wisdom."

Most Rev. James Massa
Auxiliary Bishop of Brooklyn