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A Word From Our Editor

Catholic Schools Week is observed this year from January 29 to February 4. It is always an opportunity to promote our schools, to thank our selfless and committed teachers and administrators, and to applaud the parents who take their faith so seriously that they make often heroic sacrifices to ensure that their children learn in an atmosphere where faith and reason are the two wings by which those children can soar heavenward, as St. John Paul II rhapsodized in *Fides et Ratio* (1998).

With this celebration in focus, I have come across two articles in the past two days (one in Our Sunday Visitor and the other on Catholic News Agency) sharing most distressing information. The CNA headline summarizes it clearly and painfully: “Why Catholics are leaving the faith by age 10 – and what parents can do about it.” The OSV article is actually written by Dr. Mark Gray, senior research associate at the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA), who guided the study which revealed the epidemic of apostasy among the youngest Catholics. According to Dr. Gray, most of these young “apostates” (and the word is not an exaggeration because they truly eschew all religious faith) find it impossible to reconcile what they are learning in science classes with Christianity.

Dr. Gray reports that “nearly two-thirds of those surveyed (63%) said they stopped being Catholic between the ages of 10 and 17. Another 23 percent say they left the Faith before the age of 10.” Nor should this be viewed as some kind of adolescent rebellion, for “only 13 percent said they were ever likely to return to the Catholic Church.”

While I consider the survey results truly distressing, I must say that I am not surprised at them – except perhaps for the youthfulness of the apostasy. However, there is also a bit of very good news in the report: Only 19% of the fallen-aways ever attended a Catholic elementary school, and fewer than 8% attended a Catholic high school. Putting it more starkly, 81% of the young apostates are the products of public elementary schools, while 92% of them come from public high schools.

Why am I not surprised? How could it be otherwise? The government schools are hotbeds of anti-religion – and have been for decades. Not only is religion ignored (thus making an institutional statement of its irrelevance), but when discussed, in all too many places it is pilloried as the cause of ignorance and war.

Following the CNA article, 31 readers weighed in on the problem. To my amazement, not a single one connected the dots appropriately, which is to say, that attendance at the government schools was the source of the problem and that, conversely, recourse to Catholic schools was more necessary than ever before in our history.

The data is clear that only a tiny minority of Catholic school alumni have forsaken Catholicism in their early years. Why is that the case? I can share several anecdotes which put flesh and blood on the assertion that, in our schools, faith and reason are friends and that religion and science are

never perceived as enemies. As I have visited schools around the country to assist them in developing their “Catholicity quotient,” here are examples of what I have witnessed.

- In an elementary school, as the children are introduced to astronomy, they likewise study how stars feature in Sacred Scripture and pray the several psalms that deal with them.
- At the entrance to the science wing of a school, a life-size chart lists all the Catholic scientists in history (many of whom were clerics).
- In an opening lecture on the scientific method, the teacher (not a Catholic!) explored with the class the various ways of “knowing” or “coming to the truth.” The students identified modes of knowledge coming from theology, philosophy, art, music, love – and science. The teacher then reminded them that all these taken together bring one to the truth and that no one alone could fulfill the task.
- Three years ago, I had the pleasure of participating in a week-long seminar hosted by Dr. Christopher Baglow of Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans. That workshop brought together 25 pairs of religion and science teachers from high schools across the country as an occasion for practitioners of both disciplines to engage each other in conversation and then to return to their schools to institutionalize their fledgling efforts. I should also mention that no Catholic school should lack Dr. Baglow’s wonderful synthesizing text on this topic: *Faith, Science and Reason: Theology on the Cutting Edge* (published by Midwest Theological Forum).
- As an advanced biology class completed a unit on genetics, the teacher distributed *Donum Vitae*, the 1987 document of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on “respect for human life in its origins and on the dignity of procreation.” Students entered into the discussion with intelligence and interest.
- After a chapter on fetology, the class was led to see that the Church’s abhorrence for abortion was grounded in sound, modern science.
- In a junior high class on evolution, the teacher skillfully wove into her presentation the various theories of evolution, the biblical data, and magisterial applications.

Now, I am sure that some readers will say, “That’s nice, Father, but not all Catholic schools are doing that.”

Let me respond in this way:

1. No, that is certainly true. However, it is happening with sufficient frequency that the data informs us that the hemorrhaging of Catholic youth from the Church over the science-religion conflict is not occurring in serious numbers among Catholic school students.
2. The scenarios I have depicted can be replicated in any Catholic school that wants to do so.

3. These scenarios cannot ever take place in any government school at any time.

So, as we approach Catholic Schools Week 2017:

1. If you have a child who does not attend a Catholic school, realize that you are jeopardizing that child's soul by placing it in the hostile environment of government-sponsored atheism – and make the proper adjustment.

2. If you don't have children, visit your local Catholic school and (hopefully) be edified by what you see and respond with generous financial assistance and by serving as a public relations officer for that community of "faith, knowledge and service" (as this year's theme for Catholic Schools Week highlights).

3. And priests/bishops: Fulfill your obligation as shepherds to warn your flock of the dangers to the sheep lurking in the government schools.

Rev. Peter M.J. Stravinskas
Editor

Teachers Are the Proper Assessors

Today's assessment culture suffers from a misconception of education. It presumes that education can occur without a teacher's understanding the topic and independently judging student progress. Teachers are deemed incapable of making such decisions and judgments. Schools and school systems – both secular and Catholic – rely excessively on pre-packaged assessment products that in mind-numbing fashion exhaustively list the components of assessment and then train teachers like children to arrive at “objective quantitative measures.” Often these seem promoted more for their publicity value than for their merit in ensuring the best education.

The assessment culture which currently dominates education de-humanizes the entire education process. According to Mary Pat Donoghue, Director of School Services for the Institute, “Today's assessment culture violates the truth of subsidiarity by pretending that real assessment of the growth of human souls in knowledge and virtue can be made without the teacher, the human being closest to the students themselves.”

Michael Van Hecke, President of the Institute and Headmaster at St. Augustine Academy in California, sees a tendency to “factory-ize” education. External, quantitative, reportable assessment determines whether a program is succeeding or failing. If it is failing, the program is changed according to the latest creation of education publishing houses. “This is the tail wagging the dog. When students fail, most often it is because teachers are failing. Good teachers know this. All the books on successful students and schools have the same theme: Reform Teachers to Reform

Education.”

Teachers must be knowledgeable and committed. If they know their subjects and are committed to their students, they will continually find ways to determine what has been absorbed. This will include all the ways that teachers use to encourage their students to be active in the learning process. If they find the students deficient, good teachers will first ask what more they can do to help students progress. They will seek the advice of more experienced teachers. They will not rest until they find the way to have their students catch fire for their subject. Even when they determine the problem is in their students, they will look for extra ways to motivate, inspire, and discipline the student.

Mary Pat believes that it is a great mistake to think that assessment should determine what happens in the classrooms. “Teachers should focus on the truths they need to communicate and the virtues they want to form in the students. Then they can think about the different ways they can assess how well they have achieved these goals with the students.”

Mary Pat sees that teachers and schools often need to be pushed from the outside. “None of us really like to examine ourselves.” Administrators must see that their teachers have determinate goals in mind for each unit, along with means of deciding how well they have been met. But the administrator's chief task must be to put qualified teachers in the classroom and help them to grow as educators. “Do my teachers understand the most important concepts the students need to learn? Do they have a good grasp of the virtues we want to form in

them? Have they learned to pay close attention to their students, and found ways to have the students actively show what they have learned? If so, then I can be confident in their judgments."

Tests and other measures have their place in real assessment, but as Mary Pat says, "We have to remember that standardized tests only focus on the lowest level of skills. They are helpful for reporting to parents, and for making sure nothing is falling through cracks. But they are not guides to education."

"Soft assessments" are even more important. Mary Pat encourages teachers to make regular notes on each student. What kinds of questions do students ask of what they have read or of what others are saying? What do they show about their understanding? Do they have an active curiosity? Are they

willing to take risks in speaking and to receive correction from others? Are they learning to rely appropriately on their own judgments? Student conversation is essential to make these kinds of assessments, and Mary Pat recommends encouraging that as much as possible, such as through Touchstones Socratic discussion circles.

Truly assessment "dominates" teachers and schools; perhaps "tyrannizes" better captures the climate it brings about. It need not be this way. When teachers know what and why they are teaching, and have tasted the real, lasting good they are doing for students, they rejoice in both their freedom and the responsibility it brings. Mike has been teaching pre-Algebra for 20 years. "It is still alive for me, because I'm not teaching a subject, I am teaching kids! I am not checking off standards; I am forming virtues."

The Institute for Catholic Liberal Education
October 24, 2016

http://www.catholicliberaleducation.org/beyond-the-test-newsletter/teachers-are-the-proper-assessors?utm_source=Beyond+the+Test+--+Assessment&utm_campaign=BTT+October+2016&utm_medium=email

Catholic Priest Giving Away Every Penny Of Prize Money

How fun is this? Fr. Bill Matheny from Bridgeport, West Virginia, just won it big on the TV game show, *Who Wants to be a Millionaire!* And better than that, he's giving away every penny of his prize money.

Talk about persistence. The 61-year-old priest from All Saints Church had been trying to be a contestant on *Millionaire* for 17 years. It was a personal goal of his to be on the show, knowing his love of trivia could pay off. He'd been watching the show ever since it debuted. This year he wasn't going to bother trying out again, but a friend convinced him to give it another try.

Not only did he win \$250,000, but he announced he's giving it all to his alma mater, St. Francis of Assisi near Charleston, West Virginia.

"It's weird. Certain things I can just remember, no problem," Fr. Bill said to the Charleston Gazette-Mail. "But don't ask me where I laid my pen. My short-term memory is terrible."

Growing up, Fr. Bill attended St. Francis of Assisi school, where his teachers noticed his knack for memorizing things. He spent his spare time memorizing presidents in chronological order and all sorts of other lists.

When he was in third grade, his grandfather came home with a road atlas, and the two memorized state capitals, the largest cities in every state, the number of counties in every state and the total square miles of every state. As he got older, he loved trivia and being in trivia tournaments.

Fr. Bill competed on the show over the summer and the episode aired September 29th. He came back to his grade school to watch the show with the school lunchroom full of students, teachers, friends and family members watching along with him. He kept answering question after question correctly, with the packed lunchroom erupting in cheers. He was asked what an ailurophile is. He knew the answer — a lover of cats — because he'd just submitted that as a possible question to a team trivia event. By the end of the half-hour episode, Fr. Bill had won \$250,000!

In an interview on Relevant Radio, Fr. Bill credited his alma mater with his Catholic faith, his love of learning, and love of reading.

"Academically, we were pretty advanced. I didn't know that at the time, but I talked to my friends who went to public schools, and we were always about a year ahead of them," he said. "I was always encouraged to learn here. They could tell I had God-given gifts."

Fr. Bill started trying out for the show soon after he first became hooked on watching it. He'd make it through the preliminaries, but his fingers were too slow. He knew all the answers, but he just wasn't as fast as the others. He kept trying for 17 years, each time falling short. This year, he planned to give up but a friend suggested he try one more time. "I told people in churches from around the state to say prayers for me...."

Fr. Bill surprised host Chris Harrison and the *Millionaire* audience with the wonderful announcement that he's donating all of his winnings to his alma mater, St. Francis, as a

gesture of gratitude for his start in life. He said he hopes the money helps the school fund their scholarship program, raise teacher salaries, and enhance the infrastructure.

What a way to give back to your Catholic school!

Patty Knap
October 14, 2016

<http://aleteia.org/2016/10/14/catholic-priest-wins-big-on-millionaire-show/?ru=45fce01f0efa954a2ce2b1346eb8607b#sthash.xao6JaUY.dpuf>

Sending My Kids to Religious School Helped Me Reconnect With My Faith

I thought I was sending my kids to Catholic preschool so they could learn something, but I'm the one getting the lessons in faith.

If I'm being honest, I'm a "lapsed" Catholic. My relationship with God isn't what it used to be. Somewhere between college, getting married, and starting a family, I stopped talking to God, and I haven't figured out a way to start up the conversation again.

Sure, as soon as the Thanksgiving pumpkin pie is cleared away I'm running to grab the Christmas tree out of the attic. I still find value in the sacrifice that comes with observing Lent each year. I own a Bible (even if I can't remember quite where it is at the moment). I make regular contributions to my parish when the family budget allows.

But it's more that I'm going through the motions than that my heart is really in it. I can't recall the last time I prayed outside of Mass, and since my twin boys were born three years ago, even managing to get the family to church on Sundays is a rare occurrence. I know we were there when they were baptized and for Easter, but beyond that, well ...

Last month my sons started preschool three days a week at our parish's Catholic school. And while the decision to send them there was partly because it was family tradition (both my husband and I received a Catholic education in elementary school), the real reason we enrolled them in that particular program had less to do with religion and more that it happened to be the best program in town. Spanish lessons and computer classes for three-year-olds? And the incredible playground? We were sold.

Their teacher explained to us before the start of the school year that the religious

curriculum was pretty light. They would say basic prayers before meals, at the start and end of the day and read a weekly parable. I didn't think the boys would get much out of the religious part of their school experience, especially since we hadn't introduced them to the concept of prayer or God at home very much. I expected them to come home from preschool telling me all about what happened at recess or the songs they sang in music class. I thought that Jesus at school would be an afterthought, just like at home.

But within the first week of school, I learned that little kids are sponges, and mine were soaking up the word of God. "Mommy, you did NOT say the food prayer!" they admonished me as I set down the last dinner plate and picked up my fork. I was stunned. Although we both said blessings before meals with our families as children, my husband and I had never prayed over our meals as a couple, and it never occurred to us to start doing it once the boys came along. But the boys were now clamoring to pray, and they weren't going to take no for an answer. In that moment, I realized that I thought *I* would be the one to decide what my children's relationship to God would be, but in fact everyone's relationship to God is personal, no matter how young that person is. They're only three, but they know what it means to pray.

The school had sent home a sheet of prayers for us to practice if we wanted to, so my husband fished it out of the backpacks before our food got cold. We prayed over a meal as a family for the first time, the boys carefully watching us to make sure our "prayer hands" were in the proper position. As we finished the brief blessing with the boys' resounding "amen," I found myself

feeling something. Perhaps it wasn't the presence of God exactly, but more like a wave of nostalgia. This was how my own family began our meals together for years. It felt right, like a homecoming of sorts.

In that moment I realized it doesn't matter why we never prayed as a family before meals before—what matters is that we do it going forward. My husband and I discussed what had happened that night after the kids went to bed. We were both surprised that they were the ones who had led *us* to prayer, but agreed that it was like something we were being called to do going forward. Now we say prayers before dinner and when we go to bed, and I have my kids to thank for it.

In their classroom is a small alter with electric candles. The other day one of my sons took the battery-operated candle out of our Halloween jack-o-lantern and held it out to me as I sat working on my computer. "Mom, do you know what this is?" he asked me. "It's a candle," I answered him,

Megan Zander
October 5, 2016

<http://forher.aleteia.org/articles/sending-kids-religious-school-helped-reconnect-faith/>

surprised that he would ask me a question he already knew the answer to. "It has a battery in it so it won't burn you, it doesn't have a flame." "Yes, Mommy," he said with his eyes locked onto mine like he was trying to make me understand something important, "But it's also Jesus' love."

The profoundness of his response shocked me. Here was this tiny child who's still learning how to wipe himself after using the bathroom, and he's telling me that Jesus' love is everywhere around us. In that moment I understood what people mean when they say that we are born again through our children. Not only does he have my eyes and chatterbox personality, but I get to experience childhood all over again as his mom, and part of that is watching his own developing spirituality. It's made me realize that I can reestablish a connection to God any time I want to. I thought I was sending my kids to Catholic preschool so they could learn something, but it looks like I'm the one getting the lessons in faith.

Heading to School With Jesus, In the Flesh

First-hand account of what happened when a Catholic school brought the Tabernacle into its re-dedicated chapel.

My buddy Rob called me the other day and asked me if I'd be available to "take a few photos" of All Saints Regional Catholic School's re-dedication of the chapel housed there. Thinking I'd fulfill my good deed for the day by lending a hand, I said, "Sure!"

As I hung up the phone, though, I wondered why a chapel would need a "re-dedication." Meeting up with my buddy and the school's new principal on another matter, I got the back-story.

It seemed the chapel had been pretty much ignored in previous years — even used as a storage area. Now keep in mind, this is the room where Christ was present. Something may have been amiss.

I also learned that the school had recently re-installed crucifixes in the main foyer and classrooms and had even put up some statues of saints in very visible places. It seemed the school, like so many people, was undergoing a kind of Catholic reversion. Pretty cool, really.

So I arrived the next day to "take a few photos." The entire school body celebrated Mass at the church down the street, and there the celebrant explained to the students that Jesus was "coming to the school." I was sitting by some of the younger students, and you could see their faces light up with hopeful expectation. Exiting Mass, each student was given a white carnation, ("we give flowers to those we love," said the priest) and then the entire congregation, from pre-schoolers to eighth graders,

processed through the parking lot to the school.

It was a sight to behold. Flower-bearing kids, teachers, parents, priests and Jesus Christ, really Present, heading to school.

As the students entered the building followed by the priests and the Blessed Sacrament the mood became strangely intense. There was no music, just the sound of bells, rung every few seconds, and...silence. Silence among all those kids. The students knelt in the tightly packed halls as Christ entered, and looking around I could see that almost every single staff member was in tears. You could actually *feel* the difference as Jesus made his entrance.

The Blessed Sacrament was transferred into the very heavy tabernacle and was then carried into the chapel by a rather sturdy priest. Each student then went, one by one, into the chapel, placing a carnation at the doorway and genuflecting — individually welcoming the King with a gift.

As I said, there wasn't a dry eye in the house. The school and its poorly-used chapel became awash in holiness, transformed into a truly sacred space, and every one of us could feel it.

I have had the great fortune of being in the Presence of Christ in extraordinary ways over the past several months: in Krakow with 30,000 youth with Bishop Robert Barron, in a private chapel in New York with the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal. Blessed to adore in Calcutta, with the Missionaries of Charity at the Tomb of Saint Teresa of Calcutta, and in the small chapel

at Good Counsel Homes for mothers in crisis, and I can tell you that the experience is always the same. In the silence, and the witness of faith amid those around me, and the unmistakable sense of Holy Presence, I am shaken to my core.

So, my “good deed” for a pal turned out to be a privilege for me, in that I got to experience that very moment when Jesus went to school with the kids, and came to stay. A school that was adrift has, in making Him the very center of what they do and who they are, declared themselves a very Catholic school.

Jeffrey Bruno
September 29, 2016

http://aleteia.org/2016/09/29/heading-to-school-with-jesus-in-the-flesh/?utm_campaign=NL_en&utm_source=daily_newsletter&utm_medium=mail&utm_content=NL_en#sthash.gN78ECbM.dpuf

So for those of you who think that Catholic schools *aren't*, here's some good news: this one *is*. There is hope, and that hope is Christ.

Please pray for all those schools in need of a spiritual renovation because after what I witnessed, and learned from the staff and parents, prayers were heard and answered.

Once again I'm in absolute awe of how good God is and how he works in every small corner of the world for the salvation of our souls, we pitiful wayfarers.

Seeing Children Pray Out Loud In School Changed Me

Somewhere along the way, during my time as a full-time work-from-home mother of four, juggling all of the school runs and the lunch packing and the laundry folding and the toilet scrubbing and the never-ending trips to the grocery store (seriously, why is this all my life consists of ??), I lost sight of something that used to be very important to me:

I lost sight of my prayer life.

Prayer was once a very vital part of my life. Growing up, one of my most beloved possessions was my Missal for Mass—my parents gifted it to me for my First Communion, and I know that back then, it was a huge financial sacrifice for them to be able to afford that. I'll never forget the feel of the smooth leather under my hands as I flipped through the pages, or the way the plastic edges accommodated all of my favorite prayer cards. I loved all of my daily prayers and I continued my habit of praying every day well into college, where I made time every morning and night to read prayers out of my "little blue book." I found solace in their words and comfort in their promises.

But slowly, over time, much like my ability to fit into a size below double digits, I stopped praying. It was never anything deliberate, but rather letting go of something that didn't feel like it fit in my life anymore. Praying? Nobody got time for that. I told myself that as a mom, my life is a walking prayer as opposed to actually sitting and praying out loud.

A few—or ten—years passed and I hit a point in my life where we encountered some

losses. I went through my first miscarriage, mourning what would have been our fifth

baby, and we had a death in the family that really sent many of us reeling in shock. The day I learned about my cousin's death was also the day that I visited my oldest daughter at her school, where she was celebrating being the special "star" student of the week. My youngest child and I brought in donuts to the class, and while we were there, we witnessed something that brought me to tears right there in the back of the classroom, something that made me realize how very wrong I had been for letting prayer slip from my life.

As I stood back, pouring cider and organizing donuts, the teacher started prayer time, and 24 eight-year-olds took turns saying their prayer intentions out loud. My own daughter stood tall, eyes closed, as she prayed for my cousin and our family, and the entire class raised up her intention in prayer. Each student went around the room saying their own prayer intention and when a little boy broke down in tears that his aunt had passed away, several students got out of their seats, crossed the room to embrace him, and then the entire class said extra prayers for both him and his aunt.

I was blown away.

Here I was, a 30-year-old woman pretending that I was "too busy" or "too good" for taking five seconds out of my day to actually pray out loud, and I witnessed a group of kids put into literal words the power of prayer.

Seeing those students all join together and raise their voices in prayer reminded me that

collective prayer—out loud—has power. Standing in the presence of that prayer, I felt its palpable weight in the room, and I knew that I was being shown the power of what happens when we join our voices in prayer. Since that day, the day I learned from a room full of third-graders that we are never too busy for prayer, I've been trying harder to make prayer a part of my life again. From the smallest whispers under my breath when the four-year-old is trying my patience again, to the list of what I am thankful for anytime I feel the stirrings of discontent, to the nightly prayers we are saying as a family, I am feeling, for the first time in a long time, the power of prayer again.

Chaunie Brusie
December 8, 2016

http://forher.aleteia.org/articles/seeing-children-pray-loud-school-changed/?utm_campaign=NL_en&utm_source=daily_newsletter&utm_medium=mail&utm_content=NL_en

I may have forgotten what prayer used to mean to me, but now that I have it back in my life, I don't ever want to let it go. Because with prayer, nothing is off limits—I love hearing my kids pray for spelling tests and the poor in the same breath.

With prayer, and especially prayers said out loud together, we join our voices together in times of sorrow, in times of gratitude, and in times of love and hurt. And that is something that should never be pushed to the side, no matter how busy we are.

Pope To Italian Pilgrims: Defend The Parents' Right To Educate Their Children

Among those present in Wednesday's audience were the members of an Italian federation of institutes dedicated to education. To them, he said: "I invite you to continue in the path of supporting Catholic schools, so that parents' freedom to choose their children's education is always safeguarded."

Pope Francis has spoken about this before. For instance, in May 2015, he denounced the fact that parents have "exiled themselves from educating their children," but also had critical words to the "intellectual critics" who he said have "silenced" parents in order to defend younger generations from real or

imagined harm, and lamented how schools now are often more influential than families in shaping the thinking and values of children.

"In our days the educational partnership is in crisis. It's broken," he said, and named various reasons for this.

"On one hand there are tensions and distrust between parents and educators; on the other, there are more and more 'experts' who pretend to occupy the role of parents, who are relegated to second place," he said at the time.

Inés San Martín
November 30, 2016

<https://cruxnow.com/vatican/2016/11/30/pope-takes-syria-hivaidis-parents-right-choose-schools>

How to Make America Great

Our Founding Fathers intended that no particular religion should be the national religion, but they never intended that the State should be devoid of religion. It never entered their minds that we would grow up to be an irreligious nation, nor did they ever think that education would be divorced from religion and morality.

This is evident from the fact that no signer of the Declaration of Independence was educated in a non-religious school. For a century the United States did not have a President who was educated in a non-religious school. It is true that the First Amendment of the Constitution forbade the establishment of any religion as a national religion. This was because there was an established religion in ten of the thirteen colonies: The Congregational religion in three; the Episcopalian in seven. But the same amendment ordered that Congress should make no laws prohibiting the free exercise of religion.

In the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, our Government insisted that “schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged,” because “religion, morality, and knowledge” are necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind. Nor is the insinuation true that religious schools are not American schools. A Lutheran school which teaches religion, or a Baptist school which teaches religion, or a Catholic school which teaches religion, even though they are maintained at the expense of these religious groups, are public schools.

Why is it more important now than at any other time to restore religion and morality to education? Because we are entering into a

new era of history wherein the grave threat to man’s freedom is from the Omnipotent State. Once a nation ceases to believe it begins to obey. As William Penn warned: “Men must be governed by God or they will be ruled by tyrants.”

The choice before the world is this: Truth or Power, that is, either live by God’s Truth or exist under State Power. We are coming into the days of Omnipotence where we will live under the Omnipotence of God or squirm under the Omnipotence of Power.

When Hitler came into power in 1933, the first to capitulate were the professors, and the one force which has never capitulated is religion, as the Catholic bishops and pastor Niemoeller bear witness. It was the professors who allowed the independent administration of the universities to be abolished, the universities offering no objections to State elected “Rektoren” and “Dekane” who were forced upon them.

It was a bitter disappointment for all who considered the German universities the defenders of right and justice; but when one considers that specialization had been carried so far, and a unified philosophy of life so universally abandoned, there was no one idea around which they could rally.

Given a crisis in any country in the world in which Totalitarianism in any form threatens the liberty of its citizens, and the first to capitulate will be the non-religious educators. How could it be otherwise, for without a faith, how could they oppose a faith? It will be only those schools which give a moral and religious training which

will challenge the right of the State to dominate the soul of man.

That is why the safeguard of American democracy and freedom is in the extension of religious and moral training, and not in its suppression through excessive burdens. There is no reason in the world why any school in the United States which teaches religion and morality should be penalized for being patriotic, or why it should bear all the expenses for giving to the nation the two supports without which, as Washington told us, a nation cannot endure.

It is not fair, it is not democratic, to cater only to the nonreligious in education. A child who goes to a religious school may walk on streets maintained by public funds, but in many instances may not ride to school in a bus operated at public expense.

The State will build a chapel for citizens when they get into a penitentiary; how about building a few schools to prevent them through moral discipline from getting into a penitentiary?

We are preparing an army of ten million men to defend Christian liberty and justice on the battlefields. Shall we not tell them something about that Christian liberty before we give them a gun?

A government “of the people, for the people, and by the people,” should respect the will of those who believe in religion and

Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen
From a 1943 radio broadcast.

<https://www.thecatholicthing.org/2016/11/24/how-to-make-america-great/>

morality, even though they be in the minority for democracy is not the custodian of majority privileges, but the preserver of minority rights.

Would it not be a good idea for America to cease talking about the right to worship, and to begin talking about the duty to worship? . . . For 150 years we have been celebrating our Bill of Rights. How about celebrating our Bill of Duties? The first ten amendments to the Constitution are our Bill of Rights; the Ten Commandments of God are our Bill of Duties.

God grant that America will not be blind to its duties to God Who has given us our rights; that parents will realize that when God made each of their children, He made a crown for each in heaven, and that a vacant crown is their unfulfilled responsibility and their severe judgment; that children will harken to the call of Him Who said: “Suffer the little children to come unto Me. . . For such is the Kingdom of heaven.” (Mark 10:14)

Given another generation of Godless education and we will have tyranny; given religion and morality in education and we will be the most potent national influence for peace in the world. Then shall America be great. And we will love it not because it is great; it will be great because we will love it in the name of God and that makes anything great.

Memo: Please Stop Being Intimidated

“They don’t let you do Nativity plays any more, do they?” There is a conviction – or at any rate a sort of half-formed belief morphing into a conviction – that “they” have banned Nativity plays from Britain’s primary schools. It is rubbish, but because it represents a well-founded fear that Christianity is being marginalised from community life, it is fast becoming part of popular mythology.

Facts first. There is no law preventing an ordinary primary school in Britain from putting on a Nativity play this Christmas. Naturally, if the school is 90 per cent Moslem, it would be a fairly stupid – or, to use the currently fashionable word – an inappropriate thing to do. But where most of the children come from religiously ignorant, incoherent, or indifferent households, it could be a most useful exercise, introducing pupils to one of the great narratives (that’s another very ‘now’ word) of our civilisation, and giving them a chance to sing the carols that are a standard part of our annual collective noise. A Nativity play gathers echoes from folk memories – and not just from Britain – and taps into a need to mark the seasons of the year, our sense of community, and a recognition that we are not spiritual and cultural orphans.

For a Catholic school, there is no question about it at all. Catholic primary and secondary schools can, do, and should, as a matter of course, mark Christmas on a great scale. (In fact, the problem is, at a liturgical level, precisely that: in a laudable desire to encourage a joyful celebration, they inevitably sideline Advent, and pre-empt Christmas as term

ends with plays and carols and mince pies galore. But that’s a separate issue...).

Nevertheless – and this is the important point - there is this sense of worry. An air of “Are we allowed to do this?” pervades discussions about Nativity plays, sometimes accompanied by a sort of coy laugh, an assumption that, officially, we’re all meant to be either atheists or adherents of some non-Christian religion now. And sometimes fervent Christians are among the worst at this.

It’s somehow satisfying to be the bearer of bad tidings: “They’ll be banning Christmas outright next”, “Mark my words, Catholic schools are doomed” “They’ll make it a hate-crime to say prayers in school”.

Such chat is enjoyable but misses the point. The issues at stake are deeper, and of real importance.

“They” are indeed intruding into areas where religious freedom is at stake, and this needs addressing.

No one is stopping Catholic schools from being Catholic in the sense of having Mass and the sacraments, celebrating the feasts and seasons of the Church’s year, crowning a statue of Mary in May, praying for the dead in November, celebrating Christmas. Religious Education with a Catholic syllabus is encouraged – if material in a Catholic school is useless or worse, it is the fault of the Church authorities and not those of the State.

But look at what is being urged, through the tax-funded bureaucracy of the education authorities, seeking to impose new

ideologies such as “gender diversity” and “anti-homophobia”. In Cornwall (why Cornwall?) a weird document[1] concocted by the education authority and various groups including, worryingly, the police, announces that a child who thinks that he or she would like to be a member of the opposite sex, should be urged to succumb to the fantasy and begin the process that will lead to the use of physical mutilation accompanied by hormonal drugs.

No Catholic school need go along with this cruel nonsense. It carries no legal force. The current fashion for announcing that a child is “trans” instead of male or female is just that, a fashion. A troubled child needs help, not an ideology imposed by campaigners paid by public funds.

No Catholic school need invite in any lobby group promoting a lesbian or homosexual lifestyle. No Catholic school need distribute contraceptive materials or drugs or devices to pupils. Catholic schools can and must teach the Catholic faith in ways appropriate to pupils’ ages and needs, and use relevant literature including the Catechism of the Catholic Church and its associated materials especially those aimed at the young.

Our Catholic schools are hugely popular and over-subscribed. The faith and values that these schools represent must be allowed to flourish without bullying from officialdom. Education authorities, national and local, must be, if necessary, told that they have no right to intimidate schools by trying to force the use of materials which the school is within its rights to reject as unsuitable and unhelpful.

Things are going to be difficult for Christians in Britain over the next years as an increasingly angry and confused society struggles to make sense of itself. Our model

in working within this must be that of saints and heroes of the recent past, who have much to teach us. As Archbishop of Krakow, Karol Wotyla never sought unnecessary confrontation with the authorities, but insisted, again and again, on the rights that the Church had negotiated. And the faithful built up the Church: packed Masses, processions, public pilgrimages, open-air gatherings at the great shrines. It must all have looked at one stage as though the whole ghastly Communist regime might last indefinitely, and the Church would have to struggle on in survival-mode for decades. But things turned out differently: God intervened with a Papal election in 1978 that turned history on to a new course.

Poland’s story has a message for Christians in the post-Communist Europe that is now succumbing to the ghastly crudity of angry secularism. We need Bishops of courage. We need Catholics who are prepared to give public affirmation of their faith. We need to make it clear that the Christian faith will outlast any and every political slogan and system, and that as Christians we can and will work within whatever nonsense history imposes upon us and will do so with hope and with trust in what is true.

There are many troubled and hurt people in Britain today. Living in a post-Christian country can be fairly wounding: the emphasis on a narcissistic “look at me! I’m wonderful” consumerist approach to life, an endless nagging sense of a need to be happy, a leering attitude towards sex.

And many children have grown up confused about their identity, unclear about which of the various groupings of adults in their lives they should really regard as being their parents. Who is really in charge? Mum and new boyfriend? Mum’s former boyfriend, who was a sort of Dad figure for many years

but has now been superseded? Dad, much-loved but now living far away and with a new wife?

Hurt people carry their wounds with them: into politics and lobby groups, into industry and commerce, into professional life in law and medicine and academia. The Church is wounded too, in this culture. But she has access to the cure: Christ can make all things new.

Catholics should not be intimidated. Let us celebrate Christmas with vigour and hope: organize Nativity plays in school and parish, get groups of carol-singers going from house to house. And more: arrange carol-singing at a local railway station (oh yes you can – you

need official permission so that different choirs don't all arrive on the same day, and you need to make sure that any funds raised are for a registered charity. that's all). Ditto outside supermarkets. Leaflets through doors with details of Christmas Masses and other services? An outdoor Nativity scene by the church, facing on to the street? Put a Christmas poster in your window. Put up a crib scene in your home, ask a priest in to bless it and invite the neighbours. Buy Christmas cards with a proper Nativity scene on them. Ask for proper Christmas stamps with Mary and Joseph and the Christ-child on them. Wish people a Merry Christmas. And please: stop giggling coyly and saying "Oooh...are we allowed to?"

Editorial

[1]http://www.intercomtrust.org.uk/resources/cornwall_schools_transgender_guidance.pdf

<http://www.faith.org.uk/article/memo-please-stop-being-intimidated>

Will Catholic Education Benefit From the 2016 Election?

Perhaps the most contentious election in our nation's history is now behind us, with Donald Trump set to become the next U.S. president. The Republican Party also held its control of the House and the Senate on Tuesday. So what does this mean for Catholic education?

Without yet having clear specifics on implementation of the Trump agenda, we can look back upon the Obama administration and anticipate that Trump — who has generally pledged [1] to support religious freedom — will be inclined to reverse current policies. Catholics will be eager to hold Trump to his promise.

Certainly, the current political and cultural climate has not been friendly toward faithful Catholic education. And Trump's opponent in the presidential race, Hillary Clinton, signaled that she would continue to foster this hostile climate as president. No matter the political climate, it's up to Catholic bishops, educators and families to remain vigilant in defending religious freedom [2] and promoting faithful Catholic education at our schools and colleges. But the policies of the Obama administration have made those efforts more difficult.

President Obama's signature achievement, Obamacare, placed immoral obligations [3] on Catholic schools and colleges that threatened their religious freedom. The HHS mandate, which is still [4] being challenged [5] in the courts, forces Catholic institutions to cooperate with the mortal sins of abortion, sterilization and contraceptive use.

The Obama administration also refused to enforce [6] federal law against California's mandate to cover abortions in health care plans, including those of Catholic colleges and institutions, which leaders within the U.S. bishops' conference called "shocking."

The current administration's reinterpretation of Title IX to protect "gender identity" has been disastrous for every school, religious or secular. In higher education, Catholic colleges have been forced to explain why the new interpretation is a threat to their religious mission [7] in order to obtain an exemption from enforcement. Under pressure from LGBT activists, the Obama administration published the list of colleges that sought religious exemptions from Title IX, which were then targeted in national smear campaigns as being "bigoted" for adhering to Catholic teaching.

The Obama administration's actions inspired one member of Congress, working with the same activist groups attacking the colleges, to sponsor a bill [8] — which went nowhere — that would have essentially branded faithful Catholic colleges across the country as bigoted. A lawmaker in California [9] was inspired to sponsor state-level legislation targeting [10] Catholic and other faith-based colleges within the Golden State for supposedly using "faith as an excuse to discriminate" against individuals who "identify" as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ). The measure would have denied any religious exemptions to nondiscrimination laws, threatened colleges' funding and opened them up to lawsuits. The bill almost passed with the offensive language included but was significantly amended [11] at the last

minute, in part thanks to a protest by religious educators, joined [12] by The Cardinal Newman Society.

The promotion of gender ideology by the Obama administration also reached directly into K-12 public schools [13] and could eventually impact Catholic schools as well if the policy isn't changed. That's why the Newman Society recently asked [14] the U.S. Supreme Court to take up a case involving bathroom and other facilities policies for students suffering from gender identity confusion. The Court will review the case [15] during its next term.

The Obama administration's decision not to defend marriage as between one man and one woman, related so-called nondiscrimination policies and the Supreme Court's decision [16] legalizing same-sex marriage have made it more difficult [17] for Catholic schools and colleges to uphold Church teaching on sacramental marriage without facing public pressure and legal threats. President Obama helped shape the current court with two new justices. It's possible that President Trump could appoint several new justices to the Court with a different outlook on the U.S. Constitution.

Trump could also decide to stop interpreting Title IX as having anything to do with

Adam Cassandra

<https://cardinalnewmansociety.org/will-catholic-education-benefit-2016-election-results/>

perceived gender identity. The Obama administration changed the plain meaning of the law — protecting against discrimination based on sex — through administrative action without an act of Congress, as would have been proper. The Trump administration could just as quickly undo the policy change, though it may take years to heal the damage already done.

The Trump administration, working with the Republican-controlled Congress, could also repeal Obamacare or at least get rid of the HHS mandate, providing relief to Catholic institutions.

Clearly, a number of policy changes in a new presidential administration could improve the climate for Catholic colleges and schools to boldly defend their Catholic identity and thrive in their educational and religious mission. It's too soon to tell how the Trump administration will handle these issues, but it's clear that Trump intends to set a new direction, and the policies of the Obama administration were hostile to and endangered faithful Catholic education.

If this election brings about a repeal of those policies and political leadership dedicated to protecting religious freedom, Catholic education can indeed benefit greatly.

Brockel's 'Nun Better' Boosts Billings Catholic Schools Campaign

Almost anything can be better, but Gary Brockel wanted to create a confection of which there would be none better.

Make that Nun Better.

That was the name chosen for a new confection from Brockel's Chocolates he concocted to help the Billings Catholic School Foundation raise money for its new K-8 school, now under the first phase of construction on Colton Boulevard.

Proceeds from the sale of Nun Better will go to the Billings Catholic Schools construction project, according to Janyce Haider, president of the Billings Catholic School Foundation.

The candy idea was inspired by Gary's daughter, Jaci, who graduated from Billings Central High School after attending Catholic grade school, Last Best News reports. Her journey through the Catholic school system was only briefly interrupted when, as a teenager, "the grass looked greener on the other side," she said.

"Oh, I was young and I thought it would be fun, but after a year in public schools, I went back to where I felt more at home," she laughed.

Jaci knew she wanted to help with the building of a new school for Billings' children. The way she could help "was pretty sweet," Haider joked.

Citing the Biblical story of the widow's mite—where Jesus lectures the disciples that a poor woman's gift was exceptional not only because she gave what she had, but because she did so with an open heart—

Haider said the Brockel family's contribution is an example of how that New Testament lesson will help the fundraising campaign.

"If everybody could do what they could do, we'd be done fundraising," she said.

The Brockel family, lifelong members of the Little Flower Catholic Church (now Mary Queen of Peace), read of the great strides being made for children with the building of a K-8 school that will consolidate three Catholic schools in Billings.

The \$18 million, 90,000-square-foot building grew from a 1959 dream when the land was purchased. In April a celebratory groundbreaking was attended by schoolchildren, parents, school staff and administrators, school board and foundation members as well as local dignitaries. The new school is scheduled to open in the fall of 2017. Haider said the foundation needed to raise another \$3.5 million to complete the building program.

It will be a "dream come true," for today's children, Jaci said.

Jaci sees Brockel's effort as a way to support education for all children. Roughly 30 percent of the students attending Catholic schools in Billings are non-Catholic.

The generous 25 percent donation from Nun Better sales is especially appreciated since the Brockel family has struggled with its own challenges. First, keeping a 40-year-old family-run business in downtown Billings is not easy, and, second, even more difficult, health scares for Gary, his wife, Patti, and Jaci.

Five years ago Gary was diagnosed with multiple myeloma, a form of bone marrow cancer. He endured three different chemotherapies. He still worked, but it was difficult. Gary was the muscle behind stirring popcorn with caramel in a huge vat, a tough task for a healthy person, Jaci noted, as just one example of how illness effected Brockel's production.

"We just couldn't do caramel corn for a long time," she said. "He was pretty weak."

But Gary never complained even though he was feeling poorly.

"He smiled and joked with everybody, just like he always did," she said.

Meanwhile Gary's wife, Patti, struggled with ill effects from spinal surgery, rendering her less mobile than normal. Hobbled with a cane, she worked mostly in the backshop with another daughter, Jodi Green, while Jaci became the main front store greeter and clerk.

On the heels of the health issues Gary and Patti were dealing with, Jaci learned last year that she had breast cancer. A total mastectomy was followed by a second surgery to remove lymph nodes which, fortunately, were cancer free. Still, she underwent five months of chemotherapy and then six weeks of radiation.

The store closed temporarily while the family focused on getting healthy, but not for long. Soon, Gary, Patti and Jodi were back amping up production and Jaci was back greeting customers with a hearty hello and welcoming smile.

The Nun Better campaign began right after Halloween, one of the family's busiest times.

Gary said he decided only the best ingredients could go into Nun Better. He chose to layer nonpareil almonds, covered in fresh cream caramel, then coated with Brockel's signature dark chocolate and drizzled with white chocolate.

Nun Better had to be particularly exceptional, he noted. Since Brockel's purchased the candy outlet from Wilcoxson's when that company sold its candy store and restaurant in 1978, Gary said his family made it a mission to always use only quality ingredients and couple that with great service.

"We don't compromise on either," he said.

Haider hopes sales will boom as the holiday gift season begins and people look for fun presents.

Nun Better will sell for \$28 for a one-pound bag or \$30 for a one-pound gift box. Brockels will handle all orders, which is an additional help to the foundation since its resources are strained raising additional funds.

"This is important for our community. With the new school we have a 30 percent chance for growth, instead of suffering a slow death like so many Catholic schools across the nation," Haider said. "We will have space not only for the 550 children we educate now, but for 760-780 we will be able to accommodate when the new St. Francis opens."

What the Brockel family is doing "is so wonderful because it demonstrates their commitment," Haider said. "As Catholic school alumni, Jaci and Jodi are giving back what they are able to do and it means we can go on providing the kind of education they enjoyed."

And like the widow in the New Testament story, they are certainly doing what they're doing cheerfully.

And sweetly.

Dan Burkhart

<http://www.ktvq.com/story/33625295/brockels-nun-better-boosts-billings-catholic-schools-campaign>

3 Lessons for Young Catholics

Last week, I had the privilege of speaking to around 9,000 middle school and high school students from the Catholic schools of the Los Angeles Archdiocese. They were gathered in the cavernous Galen Center at the University of Southern California, and the atmosphere in the room was electric. There was a good deal of upbeat music and games, but when Archbishop Gomez processed into the arena carrying the Blessed Sacrament for Benediction, you could hear a pin drop. There is just something uniquely moving about seeing 9,000 energetic kids suddenly falling to their knees in silent adoration.

At the very end of the morning, I came on stage to address the crowd. My first move was to ask all of the young people to scream as loudly as they could. What ensued could be compared to about 10 jet airplanes taking off at the same time, or perhaps, to a Beatles concert circa 1964. When they finally settled down, I said, "I want you to remember that sound, because if we could harness that energy for the purposes of Christ, we could transform this entire city overnight." I do indeed believe that Vatican II's universal call to holiness is a largely unrealized dream. Most Catholics still don't get that their vocation is to carry their faith into the marketplace, into schools, into office buildings, into the corridors of government, into sports stadiums, and into the streets. I wanted those kids at USC at least to start thinking about this great mission.

I then shared three spiritual truths that I invited them to internalize. First, I said, if they want to be happy, they have to play an emptying game rather than a filling game. The secular culture, in a thousand ways, tells them that the key to happiness is filling up

their lives with the goods of the world, more specifically, with money, sensual pleasure, power, and fame. Watch, I told them, practically any movie, listen to practically any popular song, attend to practically any pop star, and you'll hear this message over and over again, repeated ad nauseam. But precisely because we have all been wired for God, which is to say, for an infinite happiness, none of these finite goods will ever satisfy the longing of the heart. Indeed, the more relentlessly we seek them, the less satisfying and more addictive they become. The game, instead, should be contriving a way to make your life a gift. The formula behind this resolution, I explained, is rather straightforward. Since God alone fills up the emptiness of the heart, and since God is love, then only a life of radical love will actually fulfill us and make us happy. Though it conforms to the strictest logic, this message has always been hard to take in. It has always appeared as counter-cultural.

The second lesson I shared was this: don't settle for spiritual mediocrity! Quite appropriately, we strive for excellence in every arena of life: business, sports, medicine, the arts, etc. But somehow we think it's alright to ignore the spiritual life or, if we think of it at all, to give it a modicum of our time and attention. But compared to worldly activities, the spiritual endeavor is infinitely more important, for it has, literally, eternal implications. When the young Fr. Karol Wojtyla (Pope John Paul II) took young people on camping and kayaking excursions in the forests around Krakow in the mid-twentieth century, he was instilling in them a sense of the high adventure of life with Christ. At a time when the Communist government of Poland was endeavoring to stamp out the Catholic faith, Wojtyla was

summoning his young charges to be saints. And when those kids came of age, they were the great Catholic business leaders, great Catholic writers, great Catholic scientists and politicians who spearheaded the revolution that eventually led to the breakdown of the Soviet Empire. They weren't satisfied being lukewarm Catholics, and neither, I told the young people at the Galen Center, should you.

The third spiritual lesson that I shared was this: be rebels! We worship the crucified Jesus, someone who stood so thoroughly athwart the religious, cultural, and political powers of his time that they saw fit to put him to death. Every one of Jesus' apostles, with the exception of St. John, died a martyr's death. Every single bishop of Rome, for the first century of the Church's life, was put to death for his faith. And if you think the age of martyrs is over, I informed the young people, think again. The twentieth century had more who witnessed

Bishop Robert Barron

<https://zenit.org/articles/3-lessons-for-young-catholics/>

to the faith with their lives than all of the previous centuries combined. We Christians are a rebellious lot—and this should appeal to the idealism and contrary spirit of the young. And don't tell me that the rebels are singers and pop stars! Such people, obsessed with wealth, pleasure, fame, and power, are absolutely mainstream, run of the mill, ordinary as dirt. If you want to see a real rebel, I said, take a good hard look at the recently-canonized St. Jose Sanchez del Rio, the fourteen-year-old boy killed during the Cristero uprising in the early twentieth century. Tortured, mocked, forced to march on lacerated feet, shot on the edge of his own grave, he never renounced his Catholic faith. Stand, I said, with the great rebels in the company of Christ.

What a joy it was to see so many of our young people gathered together in fellowship and enthusiasm for the Lord Jesus. May their tribe increase!

For Bobby Vee, Family And Faith Trumped Stardom

While Bobby Vee was a pioneer of rock 'n' roll, it was his sincere humility and deep love for his Catholic faith that family and friends said they will remember most.

"He was always smiling, always happy, always very affirming," said retired Benedictine Father Eugene McGlothlin.

Vee, born Robert Thomas Velline, died Oct. 24 at age 73 after battling Alzheimer's disease. The international recording star was diagnosed with the illness in 2012 and was under hospice care at a facility in Rogers at the time of his death.

A funeral Mass was to be celebrated Nov. 2 at St. John's Abbey and University Church in Collegeville.

In an interview with The Visitor, newspaper of the Diocese of St. Cloud, McGlothlin talked about being a close friend of Vee's family for almost 50 years, after having met Vee's wife, Karen, first.

When Karen was 16, Father McGlothlin was associate pastor at her home parish, Holy Rosary Church in Detroit Lakes. A few years later, he participated in the couple's wedding.

He stayed in touch with the young couple and visited them when they lived in California, where Vee - a native of Fargo, North Dakota - worked on his recording career. They later moved to Watab Lake in Minnesota and attended St. John the Baptist Parish in Collegeville, where McGlothlin eventually was pastor.

McGlothlin received several visits from Bobby and Karen at St. John's Abbey, and

made many visits to their nearby home. He spent numerous Christmases with the family, which includes their four children, Jeff, Tommy, Robert and Jennifer. He also visited their family's vacation home in Tucson, Arizona.

"We had a lot of good times," he said. "I feel privileged to have had that time with them. It was a wonderful, wholesome relationship God gave to us. I feel very blessed to have been included in their family for so long."

Professionally, Vee had his first big opportunity in 1959 when he and his band, The Shadows, were called in unexpectedly to play at the Winter Dance Party tour in Moorhead, Minnesota. Vee filled in for Buddy Holly after he, Ritchie Valens and J.P. "The Big Bopper" Richardson were killed the previous day in a plane crash near Clear Lake, Iowa.

Vee's musical career skyrocketed, resulting in 38 hit singles including some of his most famous songs "Rubber Ball," "Take Good Care of My Baby," and "The Night Has a Thousand Eyes."

McGlothlin will miss Bobby and Karen, who died in August 2015 from complications of lung disease. He said he feels blessed that his relationship with the family has continued with the Vellines' children, especially their son Jeff, who visited Father McGlothlin at the abbey just days before Vee's death.

McGlothlin said Vee taught him a lot about life.

“He had a very strong faith. I learned from him how to be accepting of everyone and to always have something good to say about someone. Bob always did that,” he said. “He was a wonderful man. Most people knew him from his popularity. To me, his humility was outstanding. He had acclaim, but he kept all his old friends. I was very proud of him.”

Dr. Rick Rysavy met Vee more than 35 years ago when the Velline family first moved to the St. Cloud area, renting a house across the street from Rysavy’s sister. At the time, Vee was looking for a physician and Rysavy offered his services.

“Bob and I shared so many common interests - music, travel, family values - that we became best friends,” Rysavy said.

Like Vee, Rysavy always had a love for music. Early on, his parents sang in the church choir and now Rysavy and his wife, Wendy, sing in the choir at St. Paul Church in St. Cloud. Singing with Vee is one of the things he will miss most.

“That was the hardest part - seeing him losing his ability to communicate, not being able to talk with him, to sing with him,” Rysavy said. “But he went through this with such grace. It was inspiring.”

Over the years, the Rysavys traveled to various shows around the country with Bobby and Karen. Some of their most memorable experiences include the 50th

Kristi Anderson

<https://cruxnow.com/church-in-the-usa/2016/11/01/bobby-vee-family-faith-trumped-stardom/>

anniversary Clear Lake concert and a celebration of Buddy Holly’s life in New York City, where they met Paul McCartney.

After Vee’s diagnosis, Rysavy said he visited him regularly - having lunch, taking walks and just spending time together. In the past few years, Vee adopted the mantra, “Don’t pass up any parties,” which he shared with Rysavy often.

“He loved people. He truly loved them,” Rysavy said. “I think the greatest thing he taught me was simply to find joy in life.”

Mike Mullin, now president of Cathedral High School, met Vee for the first time over a cup of coffee in the autumn of 1980. The Vellines had just moved to St. Cloud and enrolled their children in Catholic school, with the two oldest at Cathedral and the two youngest, at Sts. Peter and Paul School.

Over the years, Vee and his family helped with many a fundraiser for Catholic education. Their cumulative in-kind gifts over the years totaled more than \$1 million, according to Mullin.

Mullin warmly remembers Vee for his genuine, humble, friendly personality.

“Someone of his fame could have easily been arrogant or aloof, but he was neither,” he said.

Voucher Programs Offer Promise for Catholic School Enrollment

William Blackwell is currently an assistant professor of special education at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, TX. He has spent his professional career working as an educator in both public and private K-12 schools and universities. Before moving with his family to Texas, he taught at Lewis University, a Catholic university in the LaSallian tradition in Romeoville, IL. His work focuses on examining ways to improve access to Catholic education for diverse families, with a particular emphasis on increasing access for children with disabilities.

Synopsis: *The increase in state-funded school choice voucher programs is a promising development for reversing the decline in Catholic school enrollment. My recent work with Catholic schools in Indiana provides evidence of the positive impacts that voucher programs can have on Catholic school enrollment and growth.*

Over the past 25 years, state-funded school choice voucher programs that allow parents to use public funds for tuition at private schools have increased dramatically. These programs provide tuition vouchers to eligible families that can be used to cover all or part of their child's private schooling costs. According to a recent report from the Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice, 15 states plus Washington, D.C. now offer voucher programs, and another 14 states offer other tuition incentives such as scholarship programs and tax credits. The impact on enrollment in private schools is impressive. In 2015-2016, over 166,000 students participated in voucher programs.

Catholic schools stand to be beneficiaries of these school choice programs. As has been discussed widely and often, enrollment in Catholic schools has declined over the past several decades. The efforts of diocesan leaders to provide tuition incentives has seemingly done little to curb the tide of declining enrollment, particularly at the high school level. However, the growing popularity of voucher programs presents an opportunity for Catholic schools to stabilize and possibly increase enrollment. According to that same Friedman Foundation report, annual tuition voucher amounts average

approximately \$5500. While this amount will not cover full tuition and attendance costs at many Catholic secondary schools, it still functions as significant monetary incentive for families to enroll their children in Catholic education. Considering that many of the early court cases that opposed voucher programs have now been defeated, there are enrollment opportunities that Catholic schools can look toward for stabilization and growth.

I have recently had the opportunity to work with three Catholic diocesan school systems in Indiana, the location of the nation's fastest growing school voucher program. Principals from over 30 schools provided their insights about the impact of the voucher program on school enrollment. Their experiences highlighted the positive impact of the program on student enrollment. In several cases, the principals cited increases in the number of students from low-income and ethnically diverse households. Many of these were children from Catholic families who lived near the schools but had previously been unable to afford tuition. The voucher program made it possible for families to enroll their children in Catholic education at their local parish schools. Principals also reported that many

families were now able to send multiple children to their schools, as opposed to either enrolling only one child or not any of their children. There were also reported increases in students from non-Catholic backgrounds and students with disabilities, which are both examples of how the voucher program has assisted Catholic schools in reaching out to broader audiences. Perhaps the most striking statement came from one principal who stated that the school “would cease to exist” without the tuition incentive provided by the voucher program.

The benefits of the voucher program on enrollment are countered somewhat by challenges. Resources in many of these schools remain limited and the principals indicated a need for teacher professional development in meeting the needs of an

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increasingly diverse student population, including addressing cultural differences, issues related to economic status or poverty, and disability support needs. However, the principals felt that the benefits of stabilizing and sometimes increasing enrollment far outweighed the new challenges that were presenting themselves. As our political leaders continue to debate school choice policies, it is hoped that voucher programs will continue to be a priority in many states. As is the case in Indiana, these programs offer great hope for turning the tide of Catholic school enrollment trends and providing access to the academic and spiritual benefits of Catholic education to a much broader audience.

What Play Are You In?

This fall I gave presentations to all of the high-school teachers, staff, and administrators in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. These talks take place on an annual basis, and they are dedicated to a regular cycle of topics. This year, the theme was morality. Lucky me! My guess was that disquisitions on doctrine, Church history, or pastoral practice wouldn't raise too many hackles, but ethics is practically guaranteed to rile people up, especially now, when the issues of same-sex marriage, transgenderism, and assisted suicide are so present to the public consciousness.

I am not sure whether I delighted or disappointed my audiences, but I did not order my talks to address these hot-button questions. Indeed, it is my conviction that a good deal of mischief and confusion is caused precisely by characterizing Catholic morality primarily as a matrix for adjudicating such matters. A purely rational or deductive approach to controversial ethical choices is largely an exercise in missing the point. To know how to behave as a Christian is a function of knowing, first, who we are as Christians. Understanding how to act is, if I can pun a little, a function of understanding what play we are in. The great Anglican biblical scholar N.T. Wright has said that most of us are like actors who are dressed up for *Hamlet*, who have memorized all of the right lines from *Hamlet*, and who thoroughly grasp the thematics of *Hamlet*. The only problem is that we are in *Romeo and Juliet*. Therefore, what I shared with the good teachers of the L.A. Archdiocese is largely Christian anthropology — a fancy way of saying the articulation of what play we're in and what role we've been given in that production.

Like the great Shakespearean plays, the drama of salvation history consists of five acts: Creation, the Fall, the Formation of Israel, the Coming of the Messiah, and the Church. Comprehending the dynamics of all five acts is indispensable to knowing how to behave. So, let's take things one step at a time.

According to the still-breathtaking poetic account in the first chapter of Genesis, all created things come forth in an orderly and harmonious manner from the hand of the Creator. Sun, moon, planets, stars, the earth itself, animals, even those things that crawl upon the earth come into existence in a sort of stately liturgical procession. What the author is showing, first, is that none of these things — all of which at one time or another in the ancient world were the object of worship — is divine. What he is demonstrating, second, is that all of them find their purpose in giving praise to the Creator. It is of crucial significance that the final element in the parade — like the last figure in a liturgical procession — is man. We are meant to see our identity and our task: to give praise to God on behalf of all creation. Before the Fall, Adam was the first priest.

So, what is the Fall? What takes place in Act Two is the loss of our priestly identity. Grasping at the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, we end up worshipping our own egos rather than God, and from this misdirected praise, chaos follows. Things fall apart, both inside and out — that is to say, in our hearts and in the natural order — and the Garden becomes a desert. Throughout the Bible, the basic problem, though it manifests itself politically, culturally, psycho-dynamically, etc., is

always bad praise.

But God does not abandon His people; on the contrary, He sends a rescue operation. Beginning with the covenant with Abraham, God shapes a nation according to His own mind and heart; He teaches a particular tribe to worship Him aright, to be His priestly people. His ultimate intention is to use Israel for the instruction of all the nations of the world. Mount Zion, the locale of the Temple, the place of right worship, is meant to become a magnet to the whole of mankind: “There all the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord” (Ps. 122:4). The entire drama of Israel is the content of Act Three.

But we hear, over and again, that Israel does not live up to its high calling, that it falls short of its vocation to worship the Lord alone. And so the best and the brightest among the chosen people commence to dream of a Messiah, a figure who would represent the full realization of Israel’s mission and identity. The coming of this Anointed One is the central drama of Act Four. The still-startling claim of the first Christians is that Jesus, a carpenter from Nazareth, is this long-awaited Messiah, the One in whom faithful Yahweh finally meets faithful Israel. Notice, please, how Jesus is consistently presented as a priestly figure. John the Baptist declares Him to be the “Lamb of God”; at the climax of His life, He comes into the holy city of Jerusalem and cleanses the Temple, declaring, “I will destroy this place and in three days rebuild it,” referring to the Temple of His own Body; and on the Cross, bearing the sins of the world, He offers a final priestly sacrifice, offering right praise to His Father and bringing sinful humanity back in line with Him. This is precisely why, in the light of the Resurrection, St. Paul would refer to Jesus as “the new Adam” — which is to say,

the One who restores the human race to correct praise.

Now we are ready for Act Five and the proper context for speaking of morality. Act Five is the life and work of the Church. Grafted onto Jesus, members of His Mystical Body, all of the baptized are meant to do what Jesus did and be who Jesus was. We are meant, as Paul put it, to “offer our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God” (Rom. 12:1). This implies that we are to turn every aspect of ourselves — our minds, our wills, our personal affairs, our jobs, our recreation, and, yes, our sexuality — into acts of worship. To make it more pointed, our bodies and their desires do not belong to us; they are not intended to serve our selfish purposes. They are designed to be turned to God’s purpose, which implies that they be placed under the aegis of love. Now we can understand why the Church is so demanding in regard to sex, why she stands so staunchly athwart divorce, contraception, same-sex marriage, masturbation, etc. It is not because the Church is against sex, against pleasure, or against self-determination. It is because the Church is for turning the whole of life into an act of radical love. And her dearest hope is that the very quality of her right praise will attract the whole world to Christ. I realize that it sounds strange to put it this way, but the moral lives of the baptized are not meant finally for them; they are meant to be salt and light for the rest of mankind.

What I told the Catholic high-school teachers of L.A. is what I want to tell all Catholics: You won’t know how to behave until you know who you are. And you won’t know who you are until you realize what play you’re in!

Bishop Robert Barron

<http://www.newoxfordreview.com/article.jsp?did=1216-barron>