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For further information: call 215-327-5754 or email fstravinskas@hotmail.com.

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A Word From Our Editor

"The Vocation of the Catholic School Teacher," a reflection of the Reverend Peter M. J. Stravinskas, Ph.D., S.T.D., for a Lenten afternoon of recollection for the faculty of St. Gregory the Great School, Plantation, Florida, 4 March 2020.

I want to suggest that an ideal passage on which Catholic school teachers would do well to reflect during Lent is Ezekiel 37, where the Prophet is confronted with a vision of a field of dry, dead bones and commanded to prophesy over them, so as to bring them back to life. Isn't that the situation in which we find ourselves in the secularized West? Unfortunately, like the Chosen People of old, most of our contemporaries don't realize that they are dead and that the culture is moribund. It is our task to demonstrate to them just how lifeless the whole culture is. Were it otherwise, how would one explain the vast array of children with learning disabilities of every kind; the couches of psychiatrists constantly filled; the suicide rate (especially among the young) the highest in our history? Too often, we Catholic educators have been intimidated into silence in the face of what is in reality an "anti-culture," lest we appear "out of it" or "uncool."

Back in the silly – and stupid –Sixties, we were told that if we could shake off the shackles of religion and morality, we would experience true and complete happiness. Religion, we heard, was an albatross, an inhibition, an obstacle to human fulfillment. Well, the shackles were certainly removed, and the result has been a disaster. With the depressing signs all around us, we are in an ideal position to be educators, in the root Latin sense of the word, "educere," to lead out – leading our students out of the misery and shackles of a godless modernity. We must convince them – being convinced first of all ourselves – of the truth put forth so powerfully by Pope Benedict XVI in his inaugural homily, which in turn was harking back to the inaugural homily of Pope John Paul II:

At this point, my mind goes back to Oct. 22, 1978, when Pope John Paul II began his ministry here in Saint Peter's Square. His words on that occasion constantly echo in my ears: "Do not be afraid! Open wide the doors for Christ!" The Pope was addressing the mighty, the powerful of this world, who feared that Christ might take away something of their power if they were to let him in, if they were to allow the faith to be free. Yes, he would certainly have taken something away from them: the dominion of corruption, the manipulation of law and the freedom to do as they pleased. But he would not have taken away anything that pertains to human freedom or dignity, or to the building of a just society.

The Pope was also speaking to everyone, especially the young. Are we not perhaps all afraid in some way? If we let Christ enter fully into our lives, if we open ourselves totally to him, are we not afraid that He might take something away from us? Are we not perhaps afraid to give up something significant, something unique, something that makes life so beautiful? Do we not then risk ending up diminished and deprived of our freedom? And once again the Pope said: No! If we let Christ into our lives, we lose nothing, nothing, absolutely nothing of what makes life free, beautiful and great. No! Only in this friendship are the doors of life opened wide. Only in this friendship is the great potential of human existence truly revealed. Only in this friendship do we experience beauty and liberation. And so, today, with great strength and great conviction, on the

basis of long personal experience of life, I say to you, dear young people: Do not be afraid of Christ! He takes nothing away, and he gives you everything. When we give ourselves to him, we receive a hundredfold in return. Yes, open, open wide the doors to Christ – and you will find true life.

That, my friends and colleagues, is our holy vocation, our noble calling – to teach those committed to our care that in following Christ and His Church, we lose nothing that is "free, beautiful and great" – and gain much more besides. However, every Catholic educator must understand his or her calling and glory in it. Just what kind of understanding will enable you to be effective proclaimers of Gospel living and Catholic truth?

First of all, before becoming a teacher, one must be a student, a disciple. An old Latin adage instructs us: "Nemo dat quod non habet" (No one can give what he doesn't have). One must enroll oneself in the School of Jesus and, having gone through a thorough education in the faith and a serious formation in virtuous living, only then will one be able to teach others. Here's what the Congregation for Catholic Education said in 1977:

By their witness and their behaviour teachers are of the first importance to impart a distinctive character to Catholic schools. It is, therefore, indispensable to ensure their continuing formation through some form of suitable pastoral provision. This must aim to animate them as witnesses of Christ in the classroom and tackle the problems of their particular apostolate, especially regarding a Christian vision of the world and of education, problems also connected with the art of teaching in accordance with the principles of the Gospel. ("The Catholic School," n. 78)

Only once we are evangelized can we become evangelists. Only once we become disciples can we be credible teachers. In this regard, it is worth recalling the insightful observation of Pope Paul VI in Evangelii Nuntiandi, his 1975 apostolic exhortation: "Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses" (n. 41). Or, as the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council before him put it in their Decree on Christian education, Gravissimum Educationis:

. . . let teachers recognize that the Catholic school depends upon them almost entirely for the accomplishment of its goals and programs. They should therefore be very carefully prepared so that both in secular and religious knowledge they are equipped with suitable qualifications and also with a pedagogical skill that is in keeping with the findings of the contemporary world. Intimately linked in charity to one another and to their students and endowed with an apostolic spirit, may teachers by their life as much as by their instruction bear witness to Christ, the unique Teacher. Let them work as partners with parents and together with them in every phase of education. . . . Let them do all they can to stimulate their students to act for themselves and even after graduation to continue to assist them with advice, friendship and by establishing special associations imbued with the true spirit of the Church. The work of these teachers, this sacred synod declares, is in the real sense of the word an apostolate most suited to and necessary for our times and at once a true service offered to society. (n. 8)

St. John Paul II, the great apostle of Catholic education – who often referred to Catholic schools as the very "heart of the Church" – in a 1996 discourse to the International Office of Catholic Education likewise addressed our topic in great detail:
It is of supreme importance that these educators, who have come of their own accord to offer their services in a Catholic institution or have been recruited by the administration of the school, have a precise vision of a Christian education based on the Gospel message. It is a sacred duty for all to bear witness individually and, at the same time communally, to their faith. . . . Each one, in the discipline he teaches, will know how to find the opportune circumstance to have the youth discover that science and faith are two different yet complementary readings of the universe and of history. . . . Catholic education must be outstanding for the professional competence of its teachers, the witness of their strong faith and the atmosphere of respect, mutual assistance and Gospel joy which permeate the entire institution.

Notice how the sainted Pope weaves together several threads: personal commitment to Christ, professional competence, permeation of the curriculum with religious and moral values (in other words, religion isn't only taught in a half-hour religion class) – all leading to an atmosphere of genuine Christian life.

Pope Francis the Jesuit, himself a former high school teacher of Latin and chemistry, in a 2014 address to the Congregation of Catholic Education spoke at length about the importance of a proper preparation of "formators" in our Catholic schools. After stating the obvious need for such teachers to be academically qualified, he also calls for them to be "coherent witnesses." And how is that achieved? He tells us:

For this, an educator is himself in need of permanent formation. It is necessary to invest so that teachers and supervisors may maintain a high level of professionalism and also maintain their faith and the strength of their spiritual impetus. And in this permanent formation too I would suggest a need for retreats and spiritual exercises for educators. It is a beautiful thing to offer courses on the subject, but it is also necessary to offer spiritual exercises and retreats focused on prayer! For consistency requires effort but most of all it is a gift and a grace. We must ask for it! Isn't that what we are doing today?

The Pope mentions prayer as an essential ingredient of the life of a Catholic educator. This is a strong echo of the admonition of the Venerable Mother Luisita, foundress of the Carmelite Sisters of Alhambra, who asserted – without fear of contradiction: "Do not simply be good teachers. Be souls of prayer or you will have nothing to offer the children."

In a conversation with students of Jesuit schools in June of 2013, Pope Francis zeroed in on the essential role of teachers, all the while encouraging them not to lose hope in the face of what Pope Benedict termed "an educational emergency," that is, a worldwide pedagogical meltdown. Francis said:

Do not be disheartened in the face of the difficulties that the educational challenge presents! Educating is not a profession but an attitude, a way of being; in order to educate it is necessary to step out of ourselves and be among young people, to accompany them in the stages of their growth and to set ourselves beside them.

Give them hope and optimism for their journey in the world. Teach them to see the beauty and goodness of creation and of man who always retains the Creator's hallmark. But above all with your life be witnesses of what you communicate. Educators. . . pass on knowledge and values with their words; but their words will have an incisive effect on children and young people if they are accompanied by their witness, their consistent way of life. Without consistency it is impossible to educate! . . .

Thus collaboration in a spirit of unity and community among the various educators is essential and must be fostered and encouraged. School can and must be a catalyst, it must be a place of encounter and convergence of the entire educating community, with the sole objective of training and helping to develop mature people who are simple, competent and honest, who know how to love with fidelity, who can live life as a response to God's call, and their future profession as a service to society.

I trust you did not miss his emphasis yet again on the need for a consistent witness of life on the part of Catholic school teachers. But he also stresses that this is a communal enterprise; to his way of thinking (and the Church's), this involves parents as well and especially. And don't miss his emphasis on providing young people with a perspective of hopefulness – in a world so driven to hopelessness and despair.

In another meeting with teachers, Francis observed that teachers are not generally well paid. While all of us would like to see that situation improved, let me also make a few comments in that regard. When I was a high school administrator, during Catholic Schools Week, we always had a teacher appreciation day, in the lead-up to which I distributed a faculty list to the students, identifying the teacher's field, the salary that person received from us, and what that teacher would earn in the government school down the block. Some of the teachers did not like the practice and thought it potentially demeaning. I disagreed. Why? Because, invariably, students would go up to a teacher and say, "Mrs. Jones, you mean to tell me that you could make $10,000 a year more by just walking down the road? Why do you stay here?" Those questions became "teachable moments," allowing the teacher to explain that he or she was in a Catholic school, not to make money, but to share a Christian vision of life, thus inviting the whole school community to life on high with Christ for all eternity. In our materialistic culture, that kind of witness is invaluable. At a practical level, I should also mention that there are trade-offs in life: If you enter a Catholic school at eight in the morning with four limbs, your dignity and a lesson plan, I can pretty well guarantee that you will leave at three with four limbs, your dignity and a completed lesson – plus so much more.

You will recall that in one Pope Francis' talks, he urged teachers not to give in to discouragement. Permit me to piggy-back on that idea in three ways.

First, at times we hear people say that Johnny went to twelve years of Catholic school but hasn't darkened the door of a church since graduation. While this is surely regrettable, it is also evidence that what we do in our schools is catechesis and evangelization, not brain-washing. If every Catholic school graduate emerged a devout, practicing Catholic, we might have cause to

wonder. Not that we wouldn't want that to be the case – we do – but grace is offered and can be refused. As St. John Paul was fond of saying, the faith is proposed, not imposed.
Second, we have something to learn from the parable of the sower, wherein we hear of the various types of soil in which the seed of the Word of God is sown. While we teachers are used to assigning a grade of 65 or 70 as passing, what does Jesus say about a passing grade for a sower of the seed, that is, a Catholic educator? The Master Teacher says a teacher who succeeds 25% of the time is indeed a success. Why? Because, as St. Thomas Aquinas taught, "grace builds on nature." We can only do so much with what we are presented. Or, as Cardinal Dolan of New York puts in a one of his homey and foody images, "You can only make gnocchi with the dough you're given." Which leads to my last point.

Children are coming to us today all too often from homes where the parents don't know how to parent because they were never properly parented. Therefore, teachers today – more than ever before – truly stand in loco parentis (in the place of parents). We need to, can, and must catechize and evangelize two generations at once – and not infrequently three. That ought not to be viewed as a burden but as an exhilarating opportunity.

St. Edith Stein was a consummate educator, a fact not often adverted to. The Carmelite martyr of Auschwitz maintained that it is the teacher's task to help students "develop their gifts and talents and find their own place in the community of the classroom where they can contribute to this community." She goes on: "Teachers who practice their vocation in the above manner pave the way for the recovery of family and nation." But then, very realistically, she adds: "Should it be too late for that, then in any case, [the teacher] works for the Communion of Saints."1

When all is said and done, that's what it's really all about – working for the Communion of Saints. That is, saving ourselves through our noble vocation as teachers and helping to save as many of our students and their families as we can. In one of the more revealing dialogues in the award-winning film, A Man for All Seasons, St. Thomas More engages the weasel Richard Rich in a conversation about his future. Rich says that he has thought about becoming a teacher but has dismissed it in the end. "Why?' asks More. "Who would know?" responds the egoistic Rich. More, who had a way of getting to the heart of the matter, replies: "You would know; your students would know; God would know. Not a bad audience!" Indeed, not a bad audience.

Pope Benedict, in speaking to a group of American bishops on 5 May 2012 on the Catholic schools of our nation, concluded thus: "I wish to express once more my gratitude, and that of the whole Church, for the generous commitment, often accompanied by personal sacrifice, shown by so many teachers and administrators who work in the vast network of Catholic schools in your country." It is my privilege to echo those sentiments of the Holy Father today.

I pray that you take to heart the divine challenge given to Ezekiel to bring to life dry bones which will rise up to form an army of Christian soldiers who will be a force for truth and goodness and

1Marian Maskulak, "Edith Stein: A Proponent of Human Community and a Voice for Social Change," *Logos*, Spring 2012, 74f.

renewal in the Church and in society-at-large. We have the assurance of God Himself that this can happen: "I have promised, and I will do it, says the Lord."
I always say that a teacher, a parent or a priest must develop the mentality of the long-distance runner. What do I mean? It is rare to see immediate results for our efforts. Sometimes the affirmation comes years later; sometimes, not at all. And so, I want to leave you with a meditation penned by the great John Henry Cardinal Newman – a pre-eminent promoter of Catholic education in nineteenth-century England and an inspiration for our schools to this day. His reflection is not valuable solely for us teachers, but something worthwhile to share with our students as well. St. John Henry writes:

God has created me to do Him some definite service. He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I have my mission. I may never know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next. I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons. He has not created me for naught. I shall do good; I shall do His work. I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place, while not intending it if I do but keep His commandments.

Therefore, I will trust Him, whatever I am, I can never be thrown away. If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve Him, in perplexity, my perplexity may serve Him. If I am in sorrow, my sorrow may serve Him. He does nothing in vain. He knows what He is about. He may take away my friends. He may throw me among strangers. He may make me feel desolate, make my spirits sink, hide my future from me. Still, He knows what He is about.

Yes, the Almighty knows what He is about, and He has given you the call to teach His little ones about Him. What a dignity! What a grace! What a responsibility! With St. Paul, I pray: "May the God who has begun this good work in you bring it to completion."

Rev. Peter MJ Stravinskas

(Cover Photo: Nicholas Sandmann at this year's March for Life in Washington, D.C.)

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Science Is A Way to Know God Better, Author Says

[Stacy A. Trasancos is a convert to Catholicism and an internationally recognized author, speaker, and educator on the topic of theology and science. She has a PhD in chemistry and an MA in dogmatic theology. She is executive director of the St. Philip Institute of Catechesis and Evangelization in the Diocese of Tyler and a teaching fellow for Bishop Robert Barron's new Word on Fire Institute, regularly appearing on Catholic Answers Live to answer questions about faith and science. She is the author of Particles of Faith, Science Was Born of Christianity, and 20 Answers: Bioethics. A new student edition of *Particles of Faith* has just been published. She spoke to Charles Camosy.]

Camosy: Can you tell us a bit about your personal story of how you came to be a Roman Catholic? Maybe with attention to the role science played?

Trasancos: I loved science even as a child. When my mom told me that God made everything, my fascination with science was fueled. The flowers were suddenly more beautiful because God made them. I took time to notice little bugs because they were God's creation. I remember staring into the big Texas skies thinking how much more God must know than any of us humans. It was simple back then growing up Southern Baptist. Faith and science went hand in hand.

In high school, I remember learning the chemical equations of photosynthesis and being duly amazed when I looked at leaves on trees thinking of all the particle interactions clicking away like nanomachines. By college I was so busy filling my head with scientific facts that I became convinced that science had all the answers.

Religion, meanwhile, seemed merely a crutch of my youth, something that had once shored up my ignorance but could be tossed aside in maturity. I left my faith behind in much the same way I stopped believing in Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny. Then I pursued a degree in biology. Evolutionary theory, plate tectonics, and the Big Bang explained my existence in depths that religion never had.

My pursuit of biology soon led to an appreciation of chemistry when I realized that the only way to understand biology at the mechanical scale was to learn chemistry. Like many young adults, I was concerned about global warming. I read books on the predictions of global devastation because of climate change. I pondered the greenhouse gas effect enough to stop using hairspray propelled by chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs). The booming new field of nanochemistry gave me a way to pursue both biology and chemistry to help save the planet.

I had a vision. If we could learn to simulate photosynthesis, we could find a powerful energy source to replace our dependence on fossil fuels. Photosynthesis takes light from the sun, carbon dioxide from our breath, and water to make all the biomass on Earth, producing some quintillion kilojoules of energy and one hundred billion tons of organic material per year. The byproducts are oxygen and energy.

I found the foremost researcher on nanocomposite artificial photosynthesis, learned about his work, and talked my way into the Thomas E. Mallouk research group at Pennsylvania State University. By this time, I was not even atheist, as that was too

religious a label for me. I was a "none", as they say, only back in the 1990s we didn't use that word. I actually lost my religion the same year, in 1991, that R.E.M. came out with the same named hit song, "Losing My Religion." I simply did not care about faith, God, or any of the social obligations that go along with belonging to a church. I, robed in my lab coat and adorned with safety goggles, was out to save the world with chemistry.

Three years into my doctoral work, I had my comeuppance, which was also a moment of grace. My research was at a standstill. I was trying to simulate a two-electron jump of the ten or so in the elaborate Z-scheme of the light reactions of photosynthesis. For two years one experiment after another failed. One day, in desperation, I reviewed the chapter on photosynthesis in my graduate biochemistry textbook, and I panicked. White-knuckling the windowsill next to my desk in my third-story laboratory, my eyes landed on, of all things, an old Ginkgo biloba tree.

For a moment, it was as if the whole world fell away, and it was just me and that tree. Me, that is, failing in a state-of-the-art laboratory; that tree flapping mindlessly in the wind doing what I never could, channeling streams of photons to reaction centers in a fraction of a nanosecond to make biomass. It hit me then just how feeble my human attempts were at trying to copy some Great Biochemist with intelligence beyond anything humanly possible.

There I stood, humbled. Although I did not convert for fifteen more years, I never forgot that confrontation. I also never forget what I did next. I got mad and cursed the tree. I did not care about big questions. I just wanted to graduate and get a job. My pride kept me back. I turned away from the chasm of truth and just got back to work, unwilling to accept the truth I had just glimpsed.

When I was in my thirties, I finally came to terms with the fact that science could not answer the most important questions about being human, those about purpose, meaning, and love. Intellectual conversion was not difficult. It's rather obvious to any scientist that a Designer is behind the order in nature. But personally, it was terrifying. To a chemist, God does not just know the number of hairs on your head. He knows where every electron is in every atom in every keratin protein that makes up every hair on your head. He knows the entire trajectory of every gas molecule you breathe in. He orchestrates all the chemical reactions that cause your heart to beat one more time. And He knows your heart, your inner life, your sins, your personal failures.

Accepting grace was the hardest part of conversion. But once I granted assent to the articles of faith, I suddenly saw the bigger picture. I understood my science in the greater context. I understood, just as I had known as a child, that science is the study of the handiwork of God. A chemist is privileged to know Christ in ways that few people ever do. The articles of faith are based on divine revelation. The particles of faith are discovered in creation.

Your important book, Particles of Faith, recently came out in a student edition. Why did you see a need for a version aimed particularly at students?

Because science is one of the main weapons that atheists use to coax young people away from Christ.

I want students to start out seeing the total system of reality that includes both the natural and the supernatural. Science only

makes sense in the light of faith if one is willing to push the logic all the way from the starting assumptions of divine revelation and observation in creation to final conclusions of purpose and destiny.

Atheists impose blinders by starting with the false and non-primary assumption that science has all the objective truth there is to know; we call this "scientism." In secular science classes, this truncation diminishes intellectual development. Why is nature ordered? Without faith, there's no answer for that. Why can humans discover laws and theories? No answer for that either. What's beyond science? We all know there's more if we're willing to let our minds go there.

High school students want their coursework to be legitimate; they want the knowledge they are gaining to all fit together and make sense both at the level of detail and at the level of living a good life. They grow up in a globally connected culture. They want the fullness of truth. The Catholic Church founded by Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity incarnate, the Word, the Logos, has the full truth. This is why modern science emerged in the Christian West in Catholic universities. Even atheists must adopt the worldview of Catholicism to do science, for nature must be ordered and intelligible to conduct the scientific method.

What do you think is behind our schools' struggle to teach students the facts surrounding the relationship between science, faith, and the Church?

There is so much misinformation and shallow thinking today, so many bags of facts that are crammed into students' heads but without unity. The integration of faith and science is as simple as what my mother told me as a child. God is the Creator of everything. Having walked on both sides of this fence, as a woman who lived the life of scientism for over a decade and then as a Catholic mother of seven, it seems to me that a lot of Catholic thinkers and educators are more influenced by "scientism" than they realize. This is not shocking, really.

Our knowledge of the atomic realm exploded in the last 200 years. In the early 1800s, John Dalton proposed that all bodies are made of hard little spheres he called "atoms". Today an American can post a picture of her breakfast on Instagram and an Australian can comment on it an instant later as he finished his dinner on the other side of the world. Astonishingly, smartphones are made from 72 of the 90 naturally occurring elements, and they very precisely control electrons and radiation to propagate data with our fingertips. There is so much to know in science today that a person can spend an entire lifetime just learning the scientific knowledge that has been gained in any specialized field of physics, chemistry, or biology, and barely have time to contribute new knowledge to the field. The struggle in our schools, then, comes from a lack of perspective due to a forest of facts.

We must step back from the enormous body of scientific and technological prowess, and remember that atoms themselves are creation. Modern science has caused a loss of faith in creation, but that's an easy struggle to conquer. Teachers and parents only need to tell students that science is the study of the handiwork of God. That little line sums up everything I try to teach, and it changes one's whole perspective of this conflict myth. If science is the study of creation, then science class is no longer just memorizing and applying theories and equations. Science becomes a way to know God better so we can love Him more.

It is now Christmas season: Where we tell each other about stars marking out the place of a virgin birth, angels speaking to human beings in dreams, and more. Do you have any advice for those of us who want to reconcile our belief in these stories with our commitment to science?

Yes, of course! Refuse anything less than full logical thought.

Through Christ, God revealed to us that He is triune: God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit. Through an act of intellect, the Father generates the Son, the Word. Through an act of the will, the Father and Son together as one substance spirate forth the Holy Spirit. We are rational creatures, body and soul, made in the image and likeness of God with the same, although limited, spiritual powers of intellect and free will. In the beginning God created everything out of nothing. In the beginning was the Word.

Only a thoroughly ordered, consistently interacting totality, a universe (in the purest sense of the word) is befitting an omniscient and loving Creator. As rational creatures, it only makes sense that we would study the handiwork of our Creator. And it only stands to reason that this Creator who is also our Redeemer would populate creation with bodiless rational spirits (angels) and work miracles to show us His loving presence by overriding the laws of nature He holds in existence.

Beyond buying him or her your book, what advice do you have for those of us who may have a family member whose main roadblock to (re)connecting to the Church involves a perceived conflict with science?

Encourage the skeptic to dive more into science than ever before. Join him or her in that quest for knowledge of creation. Lead him to the edge of what science can reveal, and be a friend when he allows himself to see beyond the confinements of nature.

I can tell you from experience that it is hard to convert as a scientist, not because faith is illogical but because the logic is so compelling. The leap of faith becomes intensely personal. It's hard to accept that the same God who creates the entire cosmos since the beginning of time knows and loves you, so much so that He became an infant born of a virgin to die and rise for your salvation.

We are made for relationship as much as we are made to think and make good choices. If you know someone who perceives a conflict between the Church and science, show him what science looks like through the light of faith, and try to get to his center and look out at the world through his eyes too. By the love of friendship, lead him to Christ through creation.

Charles C. Camosy

https://cruxnow.com/interviews/2019/12/science-is-a-way-to-know-god-better-author-says/

Singing Seminarians Use YouTube to Bring Back Latin Chant

Brother Stefan and Brother Alexandre launch OPChant.

Two friars from Fribourg in Switzerland have launched a YouTube channel to propagate and teach the treasure of the Dominican liturgy in ancient Latin chant. Originally intended for religious communities, this channel, though only a few months old, has already gained more than 2,200 subscribers.

"Alas, there were no online resources," say Brothers Stefan Ansinger and Alexandre Frezzato, two young men who have been studying chant for the past year.

The Dominican seminarians, 27 and 28 years of age, care deeply about the Dominican liturgy, a trove of riches that goes back 800 years. Having studied in Fribourg for two and three years respectively, they were hungry for more traditional music in their own community. So they decided to harness the power of new technology.

The two young men have launched a YouTube channel to share Dominican Latin chant melodies with other communities, and anyone willing to learn. "The advantage of Gregorian chant is that there is no problem of language or translation!" says Brother Alexander with a wink.

En-chant-ing the internet

The Brothers want to revive and teach the Latin chant tradition, but that's not all. "We want to blend aesthetic pleasure with the practical business of learning," Brother Alexandre tells *Aleteia*.

"The beautiful settings we choose for our videos encourage our own communities, but they also help to attract the greatest number of students of sacred song." Using beauty to communicate the Faith is a time-honored technique, but Brother Alexandre has come up with a clever slogan that brings it into the 21st century: "En-chant the internet!"

Brothers Stefan and Alexandre had a hunch that there were many in the world who wanted a way to learn chant online. After less than two months online, their bet paid has off. Yet there have been a few surprises.

One surprise has been the strength of the reaction. The OPChant YouTube channel already has more than 2,200 subscribers and 22,000 views. "We have benefited from word of mouth, thanks in particular to our American and Polish brothers, who were thrilled with this project. There are string chant traditions in those countries. More surprisingly, though, we have had great feedback from lay Dominicans in Holland, Argentina, and even India. They use these songs as part of their daily prayers, which I find really touching." There are 6,500 Dominican friars and 2,500 nuns in the world, but lay Dominicans (also called "Tertiaries") are much more numerous. This global network, build over generations, has helped the channel explode.

Homemade yet highly professional

On the technical side, the two Brothers show a level of competence one does not always associate with men in medieval robes.

Brother Alexandre explains, "When it's time to make a new video, we select our material and rehearse it at home in the priory. Then,

we scout out a church or chapel, if possible close to home, where the acoustics are excellent. We have found that the old churches are best. Here in Fribourg, the Cistercian sisters of La Maigrauge have welcomed us with open arms. Their monastery is 1000 years old."

Then there are the technological aspects. "When we get there, we set up a lectern, a microphone, a tripod, our digital camera, and that's it. All we have to do is sing."

The result is a simple but professional recording. All that's left to do is a little editing, synchronizing sound and video. For friars who grew up online, these are simple and not very time-consuming maneuvers. Their elders, however, are bemused.

The OPChant channel is unique because it is timed to the calendar of the Church's liturgical year. "During November and December, we posted the Christmas Mass entrance hymns, antiphons from the vigil of the Nativity and Midnight Mass, the Christmas Day Mass, and so on and on," says Brother Alexandre. The videos are posted with enough lead-time to allow students to learn the new material before it is called for in the liturgy.

For those who want to discover a new repertoire for the new liturgical year, it is not too late to start. All are welcome for a free weekly lesson, straight from the Alps. All you have to do is subscribe!

Bérengère Dommaigné

https://aleteia.org/2019/12/28/singing-seminarians-use-youtube-to-bring-back-latin-chant

Why Play Is So Important for Children

Keep these 10 benefits of play in mind.

The benefits of playing and games cannot be underestimated, especially in the face of the flood of advertising that arrives at Christmas. Play is as important for children as working is for adults. Playing is their way of progressing, of learning, and of growing. By playing they become better people, both cognitively and behaviorally.

Play is the best way for children to …

- realize their potential
- develop their talents
- reduce stress
- exercise creativity
- train for life

So, what are the benefits of playing games? There are many, but let's focus on 10 to keep in mind both at school and at home, for children under the age of 8.

1. Improving Behaviour

Teachers can confirm that after recess children come back to class with happy, rested faces, and they improve their behavior. On the playground, they forget about their problems and rest after spending time concentrating. Having this time of rest and relaxation helps them focus on their subjects after the break is over.

2. Exploring, Problem Solving, and Decision Making

A classroom cannot replace a forest with a stream kids can wade through, with ground populated with worms and flowers, and with breezes and rain kids can enjoy or seek shelter from. This exploration, recognition of the biodiversity and complexity of the great outdoors, and direct experimentation is beyond compare. Schools know this, and often make it part of their program to help kids have direct contact with nature, and camping and hiking are often part of family life.

3. De-Stress

Children also suffer from stress due to adversity, fatigue and—sometimes—conflict at school and at home. Children tolerate parental conflict poorly, and notice when they aren't taken into account. If you see that your children are always in a bad mood or constantly depressed, you need to identify the cause and take the necessary steps to resolve the conflict and help them find relief. Play time can help children to take their minds off their troubles; not enough recreation increases their stress.

Forced extracurricular activities can be a source of stress as well. When basic play time isn't respected, with its corresponding physical activity, children can become grumpier and more reserved. Play is a wonderful way to reduce stress and also gives them a sense of agency. At play, they feel like protagonists.

4. Promoting Executive Functions

Playing games builds working memory, self control, attention, and flexible, creative thought. That is achieved through games that are both fun and challenging. Similar fruits come from learning hobbies and skills such as playing a musical instrument, participating in drama and theater activities, reading, writing, and puzzles and recreational math games. These all have a

common denominator: they demand perseverance, self-control, attention, and problem-solving with some degree of precision.

5. Imagine Creatively, Create Imaginatively

Imaginative play is an important part of our children's world. They need to let their imagination soar and then express what they have discovered, created, and imagined using drawings, words, and representations.

Participating in storytelling, reading or leafing through picture books, or visiting a science museum can encourage children to play and enrich their imagination and creativity. They begin to see that the world is full of possibilities. They can think outside the box and come up with innovative solutions at school, and at home, and in the future, at work.

6. Improving The Parent-Child Relationship

Play promotes parent/child empathy, and when children are very young, the first meaningful albeit non-verbal interactions between mother and newborn are vital and a source of security. We can't ignore our children in this stressed and frenetic society that sometimes seems to turn them into obstacles in our path.

We must take the time to interact with them, talk to them, get to know them, win their trust, and know what they are like and what concerns them. Play is a privileged encounter between parents and children. Games are an ideal time to educate them. Children often say: "Dad, Mom, look what I'm doing!" They shouldn't have to see that their parents are more focused on their cell phones than on their children, or are physically or mentally absent from the playground. They must not be left with the feeling that their parents are ignoring them.

It is not a matter of being behind our children at all times: it's rather a matter of encouraging them to play alone or with friends and cousins so that they can learn about social interaction, rules, self control, etc.

7. Staying Active

Active children become active adults! Children who participate in physical activity instead of sitting in front of a screen (TV, cell phones, tablets) are more active as they grow up. Encourage your children to get up and get going with some form of physical activity instead of remaining sedentary. Habits of early childhood play will last and will improve their overall well-being as adults.

8. Developing Empathy

In order for kids to know how to respect their peers, they have to learn to read and accept their feelings. They learn through play to be sensitive to the feelings of others and to negotiate, cooperate, and adjust to others by reading expressions, discovering attachments, understanding attitudes, and adapting to different situations, including the need to sacrifice their own preference sometimes. This is where friendship and the ability to live together are born.

9. It Makes Them Sociable

They learn how to play well and to be a team player. They learn how to share tasks with friends, and how to lead, as well as how to follow someone who can be an effective leader. It is about listening, limiting oneself, taking initiative, and respecting rules. If children know how to

play cooperatively, collaborate, wait, respect their peers, and control their tempers, they'll know how to form successful work teams in the future.

10. It's Fun!

Childhood is the age to have fun and enjoy life. Simply put, it's about training for life by having a lot of fun playing! Play can help them form strong relationships with their siblings, friends, cousins, and above all, with their parents. Make sure your children have other kids to play with. Choose toys and games wisely, and keep screens to a minimum. Lastly, make sure you go out with your kids and engage in physical activity, interacting sustainably with nature.

Ignasi De Bofarull

https://aleteia.org/2019/12/30/why-play-is-so-important-for-children

Virginia Teen Writes Original Mass Music

A local teenager has written music
that has been officially approved for use in the Catholic Mass.

Matthew Brown, 15, a parishioner at St. Mark Church in Vienna, has played piano for Masses at the church since he was in sixth grade.

Brown recently composed the "Mass of the Resurrection," a four-part Mass setting, and St. Mark's has started using his music for Masses.

The "Mass of the Resurrection" features a "Holy, Holy, Holy," "Memorial Acclamation," "Amen," and "Lamb of God."

The talented teen, who attends Bishop O'Connell High School in Arlington, said he enjoyed the challenge of composing the music.

"I had to really get myself to slow down and take a little more time to work, to have a product I'm happy with in the end," Brown said. "These are powerful words. This is a prayer the entire church is going to be saying."

After Brown finished the work, he sent it to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, which oversees liturgical music.

To his surprise, the organization quickly got back to him with minor edits — capitalizations here and there, and various punctuation marks — and gave its approval.

Father Andrew Menke, executive director of the USCCB's Secretariat of Divine Worship, said he credits Brown for taking steps to ensure his work is liturgically sound.

"All we really look at is to verify that the text is accurate," Father Menke said. "We don't want someone to start singing a Holy Holy at Mass where the words have been rearranged or paraphrased or changed in any way that would undermine the text of the Mass, which people have a right to have in (its) integrity."

The words of the Mass parts come directly from the Roman Missal.

In the United States, the International Commission on English in the Liturgy holds the civil copyright on English translations of the Roman Missal, Father Menke said. When a composer wants to create a new Mass setting, he or she must approach the Commission to ask permission to use the text.

Writing new Mass parts can be a challenge for composers, Father Menke said. "These texts don't necessarily rhyme or have the same meter in every phrase."

"Part of the challenge and part of the art is to use these texts and find ways to express them beautifully in music," he said. "It's a challenge and an art, and we appreciate artists who are good at that."

The "Mass of the Resurrection" itself alternates between major and minor keys. Brown said he hopes the ebb and flow of his Mass parts will inspire people to be in tune with the meaning of the words.

It's meant to evoke the joy of the Easter season — hence the "Mass of the Resurrection," he said.

"Easter's always such a special time for all the musicians in the church," he said. "After we've been doing the Lent music for 40 days, which is kind of sad, then we get to come in with the Alleluias and the big, happy chords. It's a time of year that's especially fun to play music in the church.

"If I was going to write something I was going to be playing, I thought why not try to emulate that style and try to send the message of the joyfulness of the Resurrection?"

Matt Riedl

https://www.catholicherald.com/News/Local_News/Local_teen_writes_original_Mass_music/

Nutcracker Not-So-Sweet

During a recent eighth-grade trip to Chicago, chaperones and students of Notre Dame Academy in Toledo walked out of a performance of *The Nutcracker* after learning that lead characters would be portrayed in a gay marriage. This was a courageous and bold move—a correct application of Pope Francis's well-publicized encouragement of young people "to make a mess" and his guidance in *Amoris Laetitia* that "there are absolutely no grounds for considering homosexual unions to be in any way similar or even remotely analogous to God's plan for marriage and family."

When activists take a traditional and beloved part of a Christmas celebration and attempt to co-opt it into a radical agenda which subverts the very nature of the family, a Catholic school is spot-on in saying, "not on my dime, and not on my time." The chaperones—led by the academy's dean—rightly used it as a teachable moment.

In fact, when heading up the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Cardinal Ratzinger (later Pope Benedict XVI) called upon Catholics to conscientiously object to attacks on the family. As he wrote in his *Considerations Regarding Proposals to Give Legal Recognition to Unions Between Homosexual Persons*, "The denial of the social and legal status of marriage to forms of cohabitation that are not and cannot be marital is not opposed to justice; on the contrary, justice requires it."

That said, good for this group in taking a stand for social justice in the face of aggression and at great personal cost. Unfortunately, the story does not end here.

The school began to get complaints about the situation, and the president of the school declared it was all a bad mistake, posting on Facebook:

To clarify what happened, the decision was made for the NDA eighth-graders to leave a performance of *The Nutcracker* before it began because upon arrival they discovered that the producer had chosen to cast two men as the main character's parents. However, the spirit of inclusion statement adopted by the NDA Board of Trustees in 2014 affirms that we in the Notre Dame Academy community welcome all into our gospel community including but not limited to people of all colors, religions, ethnicities, sexual orientations, gender expression, abilities, economic classes and nationalities. We consider the decision to not attend the performance a mistake and sincerely apologize to anyone we offended. The action does not reflect NDA's true values. Rest assured we will redouble our efforts to live up to our inclusion statement.

Sometimes we teach our children as much from our mistakes as from our successes. We view this as a chance to teach our students the value of taking ownership of one's mistakes and to reaffirm that our community is committed to inclusion.

If only the school president could learn from her own mistake in calling this a mistake, there might still be a happy ending. Notre Dame Academy should be committed, first and foremost, to its students' formation and its mission as a Catholic school.

According to the encyclical *Divini Illius Magistri*, the primary mission of a Catholic school is "securing the Supreme Good, that is, God, for the souls of those who are being

educated, and the maximum of well-being possible here below for human society" (#8). Leading the children in our care to God requires that they encounter the fullness of His truth and that we not foster situations in which they might be led astray in fundamental matters of basic human nature and morality. Also, service to the common good requires that we fight injustice and confront head-on societal ills and misconceptions about the nature of man and our duties to God and to each other. The scandal caused by seeming to accept and support same-sex unions works against this primary mission.

This production of *The Nutcracker* was clearly seeking to normalize sinful behavior. Without discriminating against anyone, a Catholic school should not willingly be a party to scandal.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* describes scandal as "an attitude or behavior which leads another to do evil. The person who gives scandal becomes his neighbor's tempter. He damages virtue and integrity; he may even draw his brother into spiritual death. Scandal is a grave offense if by deed or omission another is deliberately led into a grave offense" (#2284).

In this case, the performance was a blatant attempt to portray what the Church teaches as objectively disordered and sinful as a positive good to be pursued. This situation which the school did not seek out—it was thrust upon it—demanded a response.

Had the school decided not to attend the performance because chaperones had heard there was a gay performer on stage, it would have been inappropriate. However, what happened here was a reaction to a very public scandal.

The school has an obligation to teach its students in word and witness of the holiness of natural marriage in the face of all that would destroy it. The Church has consistently taught that marriage and the family are ordered to the good of a husband and wife and to the procreation and education of children, and that "a man and a woman united in marriage, together with their children, form a family" (*Catechism,* #2202). The Vatican has stated clearly, Marriage is holy, while homosexual acts go against the natural moral law. Homosexual acts "close the sexual act to the gift of life. They do not proceed from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity. Under no circumstances can they be approved" (Considerations, #4).

Of course, it is well known that the Church is speaking here about the morality of specific acts and not the inherent dignity of persons, which must always be respected. In this light it is possible for a Catholic school to have a reasonable "inclusion" policy which affirms this fact and welcomes all who are open to (or at least will not actively work against) a Catholic school's promotion of the human person as understood through the lenses of reason, Scripture, and tradition. The danger, of course, is that any public statement like Notre Dame Academy's "inclusion statement" can be wrongly applied according to the demands of gender ideology instead of authentic Catholic teaching

The Catholic school shows true love by teaching students the truth about morality and marriage, while correcting and (if necessary) dismissing employees who object to Catholic teaching. It is all too tempting and easy to give in to false compassion and the adulation of modern society rather than engage in the hard and sometimes uncomfortable work of professing truth. The

Vatican's *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons* puts it this way: departure from the Church's teaching, or silence about it, in an effort to provide pastoral care is neither caring nor pastoral. Only what is true can ultimately be pastoral. The neglect of the Church's position prevents homosexual men and women from receiving the care they need and deserve (#15).

This loving message must be conveyed with regard for pastoral care. Regrettably, the Notre Dame Academy's leader has failed to do this—perhaps out of a false sense of tolerance or perhaps out of fear. It is encouraging that, initially, some school members made the correct decision not to actively support the radical agenda thrust upon them by participating in a stunt designed to advance its purposes. For this, the modern culture says, the school must be punished. In reality, the Academy's president undermined its mission and failed its students by caving in rather than standing up to the cultural bullies.

These bullies advance a narrow sense of inclusion which will not ultimately tolerate the Catholic understanding of the human person. Catholic schools can no longer do the right thing and expect to be left alone. Let us pray that they are up to the coming challenges.

Daniel Guernsey

https://www.crisismagazine.com/2020/nutcracker-not-so-sweet

Former NFL Star Founds Catholic High School in Minnesota

Unity HS will emphasize virtues as much as academics.

Pope St. John Paul II had a "rich philosophy of the dignity of the human person," and St. Teresa of Kolkata "took that theology and put it into practice," said a man who is co-founding a Catholic high school where both attributes will be the guiding principles in the education of young people.

"In my mind, I see them as both the hands and the heart at work together," said Tom Bengston, co-founder of Unity High School in Burnsville, Minnesota.

Bengston and Matt Birk, a retired football player who played with the Minnesota Vikings and Baltimore Ravens, are planning to open the school's doors this in the fall of 2020.

What motivated Birk and Bengston, who owns a small publishing company, was their view that American education places an unhealthy emphasis on testing, to the detriment of forming virtuous young men and women.

"As the U.S. keeps falling on the global list of test scores, we just keep focusing more and more on the testing," Birk told Catholic News Agency. "Character has been pushed out of mainstream education because it is all about the test now," he added.

Birk added that while not every student will go on to college, every young person can be formed for success. "If we are only doing it to show how well we can take a test, what's the point?" he commented. "If you go to an Ivy League school, is that a guarantee to a great life? No, no it's not. I would say the most important thing to me … is that they would have a firm foundation in their Catholic faith, that would be number one, and then, number two, I would say to be equipped with some skills to be able to help them with whatever path they choose."

Birk said the school will "be vigorously Catholic," including opportunities for students to engage with an instructor who can foster "interior life and their personal relationship with Jesus."
Located at Mary, Mother of the Church Parish in Burnsville, the school will emphasize both academic and practical skills, and thus its two patron saints: John Paul II and Mother Teresa.

"John Paul II had all this rich philosophy of the dignity of the human person, which we will be teaching at Unity High School, including Theology of the Body," Bengtson said. "Then you got someone like Mother Teresa who took that theology and put it into practice—reached out to the poorest of the poor and saw dignity in folks who were in extremely dire circumstances."

"In my mind," he said, "I see them as both the hands and the heart at work together."

John Burger

https://aleteia.org/2020/01/04/former-nfl-star-founds-catholic-high-school-in-minnesota

Mission Experience Brings All Hallows Students 'Closer to Christ'

During the week before Christmas, 25 dedicated young adults from around the world ventured into a high school mission project in the Bronx.

They are eager and faithful members of the Emmanuel School of Mission, which is based in France; ESM coordinated the school visit with the U.S. chapter, ESM-NYC.

The mission week at All Hallows included a Dec. 19 morning Mass celebrated by Cardinal Dolan at the boys' high school on East 164th Street in the Bronx. The group also plans to meet with All Hallows students at other points during the school year.

"It went really well, it was a great Mass. Cardinal Dolan is a great individual. He really connected with the students," Bernie Ramirez, All Hallows assistant director of admissions and advancement, told Catholic New York.

The entire student body, more than 500 boys, attended the Mass, as did Ed Walsh, the chairman of the board at All Hallows, and alumni and benefactors.

The Emmanuel Community is a fraternity of the Church, established in France in the 1970s. It later started the ESM missionary formation program for young adults, typically 18 to 30 years old, using New Evangelization formation.

Emmanuel School of Mission-NYC began in 2017 and became incorporated in 2019. Six missionaries served in the first school year, 10 the second year, and now 25 this year. It is headquartered next to Immaculate Conception Church on East 150th Street in a building that once served as a convent.

The ESM-NYC program includes a nine-month immersion experience, from Oct. 1 to July 1, in which young adults share life with other missionaries from several countries. They participate in daily prayer, Mass and Eucharistic adoration. There are established ESM locations in the United States, Brazil, France, Italy, Germany, the Philippines and Cameroon in Central Africa.

The program includes classes in theology, anthropology, culture and evangelization; outreach to the homeless, street evangelization and parish mission; and a pilgrimage to Rome.

The 25 young adults participating in the Bronx this school year are from France, Ireland, Belgium, Germany, Australia, Mexico and the United States. Six are from the United States, including one each from Michigan, Missouri, Ohio and Minnesota, and two from California. Community outreach in the Bronx is often done with Missionaries of Charity sisters who serve there.

"They are here to grow deeper in their relationship with Christ, in their love for Christ," said Debby Kruszewski, who runs back-end operations for ESM-NYC. "And they help share that with the rest of the world.

"We have a (school) year commitment with All Hallows—to help enlighten the students, to help bring them closer to Christ. We plan to make our relationship with All Hallows a long-lasting one."

Ms. Kruszewski said that in the first two seasons, ESM-NYC focused on holding missions in parishes. This is the first season that coordinators are working with a school.

She noted, “We have the support from the archdiocese with welcoming arms from Cardinal Dolan. We are blessed with his support.”

Veronika Walerowicz, 20, from Mannheim, Germany, is one of the young adults participating in the missionary formation program in the Bronx. She said faculty members at All Hallows “are amazing, and the students are attentive and respectful…We did service projects for the homeless and for women in homeless shelters, with the sisters of the Missionaries of Charity.”

Susan Natale, principal at All Hallows High School, said, “This was a very powerful week. There was formation and they gave testimonials. I can see our staff really embracing them as part of our family.”

Ms. Kruszewski said if any of the All Hallows students would like to participate in the ESM program in the future, “that would be great.”

Joshua Figueroa, 17, an All Hallows senior and student council ambassador, said he would certainly consider doing so after college and before entering the work force. “I believe I’ve become a better follower of God because of them,” Joshua said of the ESM missionaries.

Joshua expressed appreciation for the young adult missionaries, and for the program coordinators including Father Charles Rochas, ESM executive director, who is from France, and Father Paul Glennon, ESM chaplain, who is from Ireland. The two priests concelebrated the Mass offered by Cardinal Dolan.

In his homily, the cardinal spoke about the significance of maintaining a strong faith in the Lord during times of darkness. He told the ESM young adult missionaries, “You are an inspiration and light to the world.”

Armando Machado

http://cny.org/stories/mission-experience-brings-all-hallows-students-closer-to-christ,20362?

Bishop Praises Congressional Reauthorization Of Scholarship Program

The chairman of the U.S. bishops' Catholic Education Committee applauded the recent decision by Congress to reauthorize scholarship legislation that includes a federal education voucher for nearly 2,000 students in Washington, D.C.

"I am grateful to the United States Congress for reauthorizing the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program," said Bishop Michael C. Barber of Oakland, Calif. The Scholarships for Opportunity and Results (SOAR) Act, which includes the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program, was reauthorized for four years Dec. 19.

The bishop said the Washington, D.C. voucher program, which is the only program of its kind authorized by the U.S. Congress, reinforces the idea long promoted by the Catholic Church that "parents have the right and responsibility to serve as the primary educators of their children."

Several Catholic schools participate in this scholarship program, which provides tuition scholarships to low-income children in Washington, D.C. at participating private schools.

The Archdiocese of Washington has supported the program's reauthorization and the D.C. Catholic Conference and collaborating organizations mobilized a grassroots campaign to support it.

The D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program was signed into law in 2003 as part of an initiative to provide new federal funding to public schools and charter schools in Washington, D.C. and give scholarships to students for families who wanted to send their children to a private school.

Since the program started, nearly 10,000 students have been awarded scholarships. The average income for families with children enrolled in the program is $24,000 per year. The high school graduation rate of participating students is 98 percent, and 86 percent of those enroll in a two- or four-year college or university.

There are 29 voucher programs in 18 states. School vouchers were declared constitutional by the Supreme Court in 2002, but the court will look again at a school voucher program in 2020, examining a program in Montana that has blocked religious schools from participating.

CNS

http://cny.org/stories/bishop-praises-congressional-reauthorization-of-scholarship-program,20371?

New York Governor Announces $45 Million Marked for Security at Religious Schools

During a solidarity march with the Jewish community of New York, which suffered numerous attacks during the week of Hanukkah last month, New York's Governor Andrew Cuomo announced that the state is spending $45 million this year on increased security for religious institutions and schools.

Cuomo made the announcement on Sunday during a speech before walking across the Brooklyn Bridge with tens of thousands of fellow march participants.

Anti-Semitic attacks took place in New York every day of the week of Hannukah last month, including a stabbing during a celebration at a rabbi's home that wounded five people. The money for increased security at religious sites was earmarked last April as part of the state's budget, due to the advocacy of multiple Jewish organizations as well as the New York State Catholic Conference, a spokesman for the conference told CNA.

While the earmarked security funds predated the recent Hannukah attacks, the allocation came after a year of increased violence against Jewish people throughout the United States, including the murder of 11 Jewish worshippers who were shot and killed by a white supremacist at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh on October 27, 2018.

According to the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), the synagogue shooting was the deadliest attack on Jews in the history of the U.S. The year of 2018 was the third-highest year for anti-semitic incidents in the past four decades, and had a 99% increase in antisemitic incidents compared to 2015, according to the ADL.

Dennis Poust, director of communications for the New York State Catholic Conference, told CNA that Catholic and other religious schools and institutions can apply for the funds if they can demonstrate a security need.

Several Catholic schools in the state have already used the money to add security measures such as video surveillance and better-fortified entrances, Poust noted.

"We're grateful that the governor and legislature recognize this need, particularly during this period of increased violence and hatred aimed at religious communities. We know that they take student safety seriously, and we're working with our allies in the Jewish community to increase funding, given the current climate in New York."

There is also a separate set of $15 million in state funds set aside for health, safety and security needs, which is apportioned proportionately to all independent and religious schools, instead of through an application process, Poust noted.

Poust said he is unaware of any current threats against Catholic schools or institutions in the state of New York, but noted that two Catholic churches in the Diocese of Brooklyn were vandalized last year.

St. Gerard Majella in Queens, New York was vandalized twice in September 2019, resulting in roughly $10,000 in damages to parish signs, plants, rosary stations and the sprinkler system.

In November 2019, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel in Williamsburg was vandalized by a man who pulled plants from the parish garden and threw them at the rectory, and knocked over a statue of St. Jude, which he left in the middle of the street. The man was arrested and charged with a hate crime, according to a report from the diocese.

Adriana Rodriguez, communications director for the Brooklyn diocese, told CNA that in both cases of vandalism, surveillance video was key in notifying the police about the incidents and in the arrest of the man in November. She added that she is unaware of any current threats against Catholic schools or institutions in the diocese.

According to the Wall Street Journal, religious leaders in the area of Monsey, the New York suburb where the Hanukkah stabbing occurred, appealed last week for even more security funding in order to protect yeshivas, Jewish educational institutions attended by some 30,000 students in the area.

Mary Farrow

https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/new-york-governor-announces-45-million-marked-for-security-at-religious-schools-86051

Pro-Life Teen Nicholas Sandmann Wins Settlement from CNN for Smearing Him

Covington Catholic high school student Nicholas Sandmann has received an undisclosed settlement from CNN after the pro-abortion media outlet smeared him and a group of pro-life teens attending the March for Life.

The smears against the Covington Catholic High School students began after a heavily edited video surfaced of them face to face with liberal active Nathan Phillips after the March for Life in January. Longer footage of the incident later disproved many of the claims against the pro-life Kentucky students. However, the students and their families received death threats because of the accusations, and their school was forced to close several days because of security concerns.

Now, CNN has settled the lawsuit Sandmann filed against it. The amount of the settlement with CNN was not made public at a hearing in Covington, Kentucky but it sought $75 million for harm to Sandmann's reputation and $200 million in punitive damages.

"The CNN accusations are totally and unequivocally false and CNN would have known them to be untrue had it undertaken any reasonable efforts to verify their accuracy before publication of its false and defamatory accusations," the suit read.

"CNN was probably more vicious in its direct attacks on Nicholas than The Washington Post. And CNN goes into millions of individuals' homes," Lin Wood, one of Sandmann's attorneys, told Fox News's Mark Levin last year.

The lawsuit came after an independent investigation confirmed that a group of Covington Catholic teens told the truth about their now-viral confrontation with a Native American man in January in Washington, D.C. The report by Greater Cincinnati Investigation, Inc. states that the pro-life teens did not initiate the confrontation or use any racial slurs against Native American Nathan Phillips or the Black Hebrew Israelites group.

"We found no evidence of offensive or racist statements by students to Mr. Phillips or members of his group," the report states. "We found no evidence that the students performed a 'Build the Wall' chant."

Lawyer L. Lin Wood said Phillips told "lies and false accusations" about Sandmann and other students after the Jan. 18 incident.

Phillips did not participate in the independent investigation. According to Townhall, he lied about the students chanting "Build the wall!" and his Vietnam service.

"We have attempted to reach out to Mr. Phillips by phone and by e-mail, informing him that we desired to interview him in person and that we were prepared to meet him in Michigan or any location he might prefer," the investigators wrote. "We also sent Mr. Phillips' daughter an e-mail as they both appear to be involved in the Native Youth Alliance and have shared their e-mail addresses after the event to thank everyone for reaching out and supporting them."

They said Phillips never responded.

"Mr. Phillip's public interviews contain some inconsistencies, and we have not been able to resolve them or verify his comments due to our inability to contact him," the investigators continued.

They said it was the Black Hebrew Israelite group that yelled racial slurs against the boys as well as Native Americans.

"We see no evidence that students responded with any offensive or racist statements of their own," the investigators noted. "Some students stated that one of the chaperons reminded the students that, if they engaged in a verbal exchange with the Black Israelites, they would receive detention when returning to school."

Some abortion activists also accused the pro-life students of making an offensive rape comment, but the investigators said the individual who made the statement on one of the videos was not a student at Covington Catholic.

The investigators also noted that Sandmann's public statements appear to be accurate base on their other findings.

The student's legal team said they are in the process of sending letters demanding that the entities retract their statements against the students. A list of the 52 entities can be found here.

"There was a rush by the media to believe what it wanted to believe versus what actually happened," lawyer Todd McMurty, co-counsel for Sandmann, said previously.

For example, McMurtry told The Cincinnati Enquirer that Sandmann was accused of getting into the face of Phillips, but the full footage of the incident disproved this claim.

Despite the new evidence, left-wing activist Kathy Griffin and others have been adamant in their criticism of the teens and the teens only. There has been little condemnation of the Black Hebrew Israelite adults who shouted profanities and racial slurs at the teens and Native Americas, or of the Native American man who claimed the students got in his face when video evidence indicates that he approached them, according to Reason.

In a statement, Sandmann said he was confused by the whole incident and he smiled only to let the other protesters know that he would not be intimidated.

"I am a faithful Christian and practicing Catholic, and I always try to live up to the ideals my faith teaches me – to remain respectful of others, and to take no action that would lead to conflict or violence," he said.

Steven Ertelt

https://www.lifenews.com/2020/01/07/pro-life-teen-nicholas-sandmann-wins-settlement-from-cnn-for-smearing-him/

Particles of Faith Fills a Gap in Typical Catholic High School Curriculums

I can distinctly remember the day I realized that my belief in Scripture and my belief in science might be in conflict. I was eleven or twelve, and one day it occurred to me—with something of a shock—that I believed in both the Genesis account of Adam and Eve's creation, and in the modern scientific account of the formation of the universe. Somehow I had held both accounts in my mind for years without wondering if they could be true at the same time.

Fortunately, this revelation did not cause a crisis of faith. But several more years would pass before I received any formal guidance on questions of faith and science. In college, I was blessed to have several professors who loved both the beauty of science and the tradition of the Church, and who helped me navigate these debates. Nevertheless, I wish I had had a course in high school that taught the position of the Church on topics such as the Big Bang theory, evolution, and the origin of the human soul, among other issues.

Particles of Faith is one author's attempt to bring the proper integration of faith and science to high school students. Stacy A. Trasancos is a trained research chemist who converted to Catholicism as an adult. In her introduction, she explains how her first steps towards God actually came through science: her research on photosynthesis led her to wonder who could have designed plants to be more energy-efficient than any artificial solar panel. For Trasancos, science did not allow her to dismiss God from her understanding of reality. Quite the opposite: she came to realize that without a sound theology and philosophy, the pursuit of the physical sciences was an exercise in futility. After her conversion, Trasancos went on to pursue a master's degree in theology. She wrote her thesis on the work of Fr. Stanley L. Jaki, a physicist and theologian who insisted that Christianity and science are not at war, but are naturally complementary—because truth cannot contradict truth. Trasancos writes *Particles of Faith* in order to bring Fr. Jaki's integrated vision to a new generation of students.

Trasancos divides her book into three main units. In the first unit, she addresses the false dichotomy of faith and science. Believers sometimes view the discoveries of modern science as a threat to Church teaching about the existence of God and the dignity of humanity. Likewise, non-believers often try to use science to "disprove" the truth of Christianity. But as Trasancos explains, this apparent conflict isn't real. In truth, science and faith are different ways of knowing that illuminate different levels of reality.

Trasancos is careful to emphasize that Catholics always need to evaluate new scientific discoveries in the light of Church teaching. Certain fundamental dogmas cannot change, while other theological teachings have developed over time as we have learned more about our physical universe. Trasancos urges students to become familiar with the teachings of the Magisterium and to rely only on legitimate sources when studying Church doctrine.

With this anchor of faith firmly established, Trasancos then explains how students should navigate scientific questions. As a research scientist herself, she fully appreciates the painstaking work it takes to discover the physical universe. She encourages her readers to "respect the real scientists and scientific sources. …[I]f you have not conducted experiments, wrestled with the instrumentation, agonized over the

data, discerned the analysis, and been ready to place your reputation behind the reporting of conclusions, it is hard to understand what it takes to add new knowledge to scientific disciplines." It is refreshing to encounter an author who insists so strongly on respect for Church teaching and legitimate science alike.

In the first unit, Trasancos also describes the "system of wills"—the integration of God's law, the physical laws of nature, and the free will of living creatures. Here, relying on the arguments of Thomas Aquinas, she addresses questions such as how rational beings can act freely in a world that is governed by strict physical laws, and how miracles can occur. Her argument is a wonderful integration of Thomistic philosophy with contemporary science. However, her writing may be difficult to follow for students who are not already familiar with classical Aristotelian terms such as "rationality," "intellect," and "mover." Depending on the classroom in which this book is being used, this section might have to be supplemented by a more detailed explanation of the philosophy.

For the remainder of the book, Trasancos shows how the integrated approach to faith and science can be applied to particular questions about physical reality. In Unit Two, she focuses on inanimate matter—the origin of the universe, the structure of atoms, and quantum mechanics—while in Unit Three, she addresses biological questions—the theory of evolution, the existence an individual Adam and Eve, and the beginning of human life in the womb. Although the number of questions she considers is fairly limited, she manages to touch on all the major faith-and-science debates. Also, her method of argument provides a good example for students who may want to explore other scientific questions.

However, these two sections also showcase the weaknesses of the book. When writing about specific scientific disciplines, Trasancos sometimes goes into more detail than is necessary or helpful. For example, in her review of atomic structure, she gives an extensive list of the subatomic particles that scientists have discovered in recent decades.

Although I was excited to read this section—particle physics intrigues me, though I've never studied it formally—I found myself lost as she sped through explanations of fermions, bosons, hadrons, and quarks. Although the text includes sidebars with definitions of the new terms, most of these definitions use scientific language that only a physicist would understand, so they do little to clarify the section. Trasancos does not expect students to memorize the details here—she only wants to showcase the wondrous complexity of creation—but her writing will likely confuse anyone who is not already familiar with subatomic physics. In a classroom setting, this part of the book would have to be supplemented with a thorough review of atomic structure, in order to appreciate the beauty that the author is trying to show.

On the other hand, Trasancos does a commendable job of approaching faith-and-science questions that do not yet have a firm answer. For instance, she takes up the ongoing debate of how the doctrine of Original Sin fits with our current scientific understanding of the origin of the human race. To summarize the debate: the Church's traditional understanding of Original Sin seems to require the historical existence of an individual Adam and Eve who were the source of the entire human race. Yet the most advanced research on evolution and

biological populations seems to indicate that there has never been a species that has arisen from only two individuals. Rather than dismissing either the Church teaching or the scientific evidence, Trasancos encourages students to remain committed to discerning the truth in both disciplines. She urges her readers to remain faithful to the Church, to continue gathering scientific data, and to keep looking for ways to harmonize faith and science, even if those ways are not immediately obvious. This mature, balanced response to an ongoing question is a refreshing alternative to both the theologically unsound arguments of secular science and the scientifically incoherent explanations of Christian creationists.

Particles of Faith fills a gap in the typical Catholic high school curriculum: a straightforward explanation of how science and faith are not at odds, but are in fact beautifully integrated. The author, a trained scientist and a devout Catholic, presents her arguments with a compelling personal conviction. The only weakness of the book is that some sections do not provide enough information on complex topics, while other chapters give more detail than is helpful. This book is best suited for students who already have a basic knowledge of atomic structure, chemistry, biology, and some familiarity with Thomistic philosophy and theology.

What I most appreciated about Stacy Trasancos' book was her mature and confident approach to a controversial area of study. As one of my science professors in college told me once, Catholics need not be afraid of any scientific truth—because God made the whole universe, after all. I believe Trasancos would agree. Catholic students of science can be fearless in their research, knowing that it cannot contradict the ultimate truths of the faith. The physical universe can only give glory to God.

Mary Woods

https://www.catholicworldreport.com/2020/01/09/particles-of-faith-fills-a-gap-in-typical-catholic-high-school-curriculums/

This Nun Couldn't Wait to Bring Jesus to Impoverished Kids: Meet Australia's Sister Mary Rosina

She felt her vocation to religious life from a very young age.

"Right from the time she could think for herself, she wanted to be a nun," says Evelyn McNally, Sister Mary Rosina's sister.

Constance Gladman was born in Koroit, Victoria, a small rural town in southwestern Australia. The date was December 23, 1922, and Constance would be the first of seven children born to her parents, Victor and Grace Gladman. Connie (as she was called) soon felt a calling to religious life.

Connie attended school in Warrnambool in Victoria Province and from there went on to Teacher's College in Melbourne. She wanted to go into the convent but her dad would not let her. He felt that his oldest daughter needed to be exposed to the world as it was before making such a decision. Heeding her dad's wishes, upon graduating, Connie taught in regular schools, but her desire to teach the poor and impoverished never left her.

When she was in her mid-20s, her father, seeing how his daughter had never lost her desire to become a teaching nun, relented and gave her his blessing. Connie then joined the Congregation of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. Founded in 1874 by Servant of God, Jules Chevalier, the order's primary focus is on missionary work.

Connie took the religious name of Sister Mary Rosina, and, from that point on, she dedicated her life to the missions. She was sent to Papua New Guinea to teach.

Larry Peterson

Sister Mary Rosina was initially stationed at the order's convent in Rabaul. The sisters there remembered how she could not wait to get to the outposts and begin working with the children. Soon she was sent to the Vunapope Mission near Rabaul, and then she was sent to Turuk.

Sister Mary became highly respected and was elevated to the post of Teacher's Supervisor. The government held her in high regard and, needing qualified people to help train local teachers, she agreed to assist them. Training others to teach was something she came to truly love.

On November 30, 1964, after working for 15 years as a missionary teacher in New Britain (part of New Guinea), Sister Mary Rosina was working with a novice teacher showing her how to grade papers. The children in the class were working on an assignment. A mentally ill man quietly moved up behind Sister wielding a machete, and slammed it into the back of her neck. Two quick blows severed her spinal cord and she slumped over dead. The murderer ran away.
The children ran screaming from the room. Sister Mary's still body lay there, her pencil still in her hand. She was 41 years old.

She has been declared a Servant of God, and her cause is now before the Congregation for the Causes for Saints.

We ask the Servant of God, Sister Mary Rosina, to pray for us.

https://aleteia.org/2020/01/10/this-nun-couldnt-wait-to-bring-jesus-to-impoverished-kids-meet-australias-sister-mary-rosina

College When?

It is a major weakness of our current educational system that most of our advanced education, especially in the humanities, comes when students are least able to learn from it: during those dark years we call adolescence.

Many people look back upon their college years and think: "If I only had the maturity then that I have now! I could have gotten so much more out of college." Many of America's students report feeling they were only really ready to begin their college education when they had finally finished the four years when they were supposed to be getting that education.

In his book *The First Year Out: Understanding American Teens After High School*, sociologist Timothy Clydesdale reports that, although many colleges and universities claim they get students to reflect on the "big questions of life," most students are too busy with what Clydesdale calls the Daily Life Management Game to consider these questions seriously.

Clydesdale pictures America's college students, especially during their first year, as seated at a "wobbly table." Two pedestals support this table: one which represents the new economic realities of global America, and the other which represents the popular culture of mainstream American. The table is "wobbly" for two reasons: partly because the moral culture pedestal is starting to crack and partly because the new economic realities pedestal has an internal hydraulic lift that raises or lowers its end of the table erratically.

There are two items on this metaphorical "table": one is what Clydesdale calls the "identity lockbox" into which college students place their "religious, political, racial, gender, and class identities for safekeeping." The other item "is a complex but engaging board game known as daily life management," consisting of a myriad of different pieces and complicated rules involving relationships with peers, family, and various authority figures; money to be earned, managed, and spent; activities to choose and navigate; re-fueling needs, and, at some point much lower down on the list, classes to get through.

When professors (such as myself) ask students to reflect on the "fundamental questions" of life, the most common response is to quickly shove those questions into their identity lock-box for safekeeping, sensing that any serious consideration of those questions might tip over their already wobbly table.

Some parents might consider this refusal a good thing – "Don't get side-tracked; your purpose is to graduate!" – except the common result is students who are sleep-walking through college with no sense of purpose or meaning, getting little or nothing out of an extravagantly expensive four years.

Make no mistake: I love my students. They enchant me. Being allowed to teach them is one of the greatest joys and privileges of my life. But do I believe they are getting the education they need and deserve? I fear not.

What do they need? Academically, they need to be able to read analytically and write clear literate prose. They need to be able to recognize an argument and formulate one of their own. They need to be able to analyze and apply ideas from one source to a problem in another, think logically, and do

basic mathematics. These are all valuable, but two other things are actually more important.

The first is that a student must "have the lights on." They have to care. If education is seen as something they "get through" to get a largely meaningless credential – their "entry slip" to enter the corporate rat race rather than as a place to develop needed skills and wisdom – then they cannot and will not get an education.

The second thing a prospective student needs is maturity. Another way of putting this would be to say, they need to grow up: become dependable adults who take responsibility for themselves and for the common good of the community of which they are members.

How does that happen? One answer is they need to develop the virtues: wisdom, justice, temperance, and courage. How can they develop these virtues they so desperately need?

Answer: Adolescents need to spend time with adults if they are ever going to learn to be adult. They need the experience of working with and for other people. They need to work within a group in which their well-being depends upon others doing their jobs well and in which the well-being of others depends upon them doing their jobs well. They need to mature by training in a craft in which excellence is demanded and expected.

Young adults need to deal with the messiness of the real, material world and with people who are very different from themselves. Instead of going right into management, right to being the "boss," or right to the abstractions of the office and engagement with technology such as spreadsheets, they need to see the difference between "virtual reality" and concrete stuff or real persons.

We have built up a culture of "sophomoric" managers ("wise fools": fools who take themselves to be wise) who think that managing a business is like moving numbers around on a spreadsheet or playing with on-line simulations. Reality confounds them when it should amaze, delight, and challenge them.

College is best when populated by adults. Twenty-five years or older would probably be good. People who have served their country or with experience at a serious job making something concrete would also be good. Financial aid to groups other than teenagers coming right out of high school would be essential, as would basic affordability so these people can start families.

The "college experience" as it has become since the 1960s and 1970s is "unsustainable," to use a popular piece of contemporary jargon. Worse yet, it is often unhealthy. Depending on where you send them, it is like paying extravagant amounts of money to a group of serially convicted child molesters to raise your children during one of the most critical stages of their development.
If you love them, don't do that. Make sure they're ready and then choose wisely.

Randall Smith

https://www.thecatholicthing.org/2020/01/11/college-when

Rockville Centre Diocese Looking to Marianist Brothers For Plan to 'Revitalize' Elementary Schools

For years, the Marianist Brothers have run Long Island's successful Chaminade High School, while at the same time turning another high school and an elementary school on the verge of closing into thriving institutions.

Now the brothers are going to try to help rescue the entire elementary school system for the Diocese of Rockville Centre.

The diocese announced Thursday evening it is recruiting the brothers to "revitalize" one of the largest school systems on Long Island, which has seen extensive declines in enrollment and repeated school closings.

The brothers will conduct an in-depth study of the schools, and then come up with a plan to revitalize them, the diocese said.

The Marianists have two centuries of Catholic educational commitment and expertise," Bishop John Barres said, adding that the brothers have "a reputation for academic excellence."

He called the situation in the schools "critical." In the last two decades, the number of students has plummeted by more than half: from 25,414 in 1999 to 11,533 today, according to the diocese. The number of schools has dropped from 53 to 39, with the latest closing announced just this week.

The "Morning Star Initiative" does not affect the nine Catholic high schools on Long Island, which are doing relatively well, though the diocese closed one of the three high schools it directly runs in 2018.

The effort will be headed by Brother Thomas Cleary, the president of Chaminade. He will be assisted by other members of the religious order. The diocese is also hiring Alvarez & Marsal, a New York City-based global management consulting firm known for transforming educational and other organizations.

The comprehensive yearlong review will culminate with "an action plan to restore a robust Catholic culture, academic excellence and fiscally sustainable schools," the diocese said.
Cleary will continue as president of all-boys Chaminade during the review and implementation.

Long considered by many parents the "gold standard" for Catholic education on Long Island, the Marianist order's central mission has remained education even while many other orders branched into different works following the 1960s Vatican II reforms. They have run Chaminade in Mineola since 1930.

The diocese said it does not plan to close or consolidate any schools for the coming 2020-21 school year. "This is definitely not a regionalization plan. It's the furthest thing from that," Cleary said in an interview. The plan is "inevitably going to bring changes to our Catholic school system," though the precise nature of those changes is yet to be seen.

"It's going to be really important to recognize that each school has their own unique local identity," Cleary said. "We want every school to know that our goal is to revitalize all the Catholic schools."

This week, the diocese announced the latest closing, saying the K-8 Our Lady of Mercy

in Hicksville would shut down in June because of declining enrollment and tuition revenue that forced the local parish and the diocese to subsidize it with some $3 million since 2013.

Church officials attribute the yearslong drop in enrollment across the diocese partly to the difficulty of parents paying tuition on top of local taxes, plus in recent years a decline in the number of school-age children on Long Island.

“We owe it to our parents, families, teachers, parishes, alumni and communities to provide a robust, evangelizing Catholic education for Long Island children," Barres said.

The review will include on-site visits from the team, who will seek feedback and ideas from students, parents, teachers, administrators, priests, parish leaders, alumni and community supporters, the diocese said.

The overhaul will also include strengthening the diocese’s Tomorrow’s Hope Foundation, which has provided millions of dollars in scholarship funds to help students attend Catholic schools on Long Island.

At least one Catholic educator said he thought bringing in the Marianists was a good idea.

“Certainly the Marianists love Catholic education,” said Brother David Migliorino, principal of St. Anthony’s High School in South Huntington, which is run by the Franciscan Brothers. “I think they know what they are doing. I am sure they would work very hard to ensure that every Catholic school … would thrive.”

Bart Jones

The Marianists have a strong track record on Long Island.
When the diocese asked them to take over the K-8 St. Martin de Porres School in Uniondale in 2004, it was about to close. Within eight years, enrollment shot up from 120 to 440.

Kellenberg Memorial High School, a coed school in Uniondale, also was near closing when the brothers came in during the 1980s. By 2012, as they marked a quarter-century at the school, Kellenberg was thriving, with enrollment growing from 1,400 to 2,550. The campus also includes a middle school.

For its part, Chaminade’s graduate list reads like a “who’s who” of notable Long Islanders, including: Rep. Thomas Suozzi (Class of 1980); Alfonse D'Amato, former U.S. senator (1955); Bill O'Reilly, talk show host (1967); Lou Gerstner, former chairman and chief executive of IBM (1959); and Jeffrey Campbell, former chief executive of Burger King (1961).

The Marianist schools have become notable for their refusal to latch on to the latest educational trends, and a proclivity to take against-the-grain actions.

In 2005, the brothers gained national attention when they banned proms at their two high schools because they thought they had become ostentatious displays of wasteful spending and wanton behavior.

The schools also have another notable feature: pet dogs roam the hallways and even classrooms to help create a more friendly, family-oriented environment. Cleary said, laughing, he would not rule out introducing dogs into the diocesan schools if that would help revitalize them.

https://www.newsday.com/long-island/education/rockville-centre-diocese-school-system-1.40446269

School Threatens Suspension for Student's 'Virginity Rocks' Sweatshirt

School administrators in Wentzville, Missouri, threatened to suspend a seventh grade student if he returned to school wearing a sweatshirt printed with the slogan "Virginity Rocks."

The student, 13-year-old Londyn Piglowski, received the sweatshirt as a birthday gift from a classmate.

Local news station KMOV4 reported Thursday that Piglowski was pulled out of social studies class and taken to the principal's office after wearing the shirt to school. The principal instructed him to either remove the shirt or turn it inside out.

"He said it was a little bit borderline for the school and he told me to take it off or flip it inside or else they would have to take action," said Piglowski to KMOV4.

"I didn't think this was bad so whenever they told me to take it off I was like, 'why am I taking this off because it's a positive message?'"

Piglowski removed the shirt, and his parents say the Wentzville School District threatened to suspend him from class if he showed up to school wearing the shirt again. He says his friend, who owns the same shirt, did not get in trouble when he wore it to school.

His parents have said their son's treatment for wearing a shirt that advocated virginity was inconsistent with other school policies.

They teach sex ed," said Todd Piglowski, Londyn's father. "How can you teach it but then say hey let's not have it on a sweatshirt?"

The Wentzville School District has a dress code which prohibits clothing which advocates "immoral, sexual, or violent behavior."

The school defended the decision to make Piglowski change clothing. In a statement, the school said that the shirt was "potentially disruptive to the educational environment."

"We routinely have conversations with students around attire that may be inappropriate and by and large, our students and families work with our staff to address any concerns," said the statement.

Piglowski is not the first student who has been reprimanded over wearing a pro-virginity shirt.
"Virginity rocks" shirts have been sold for over a decade by various Christian organizations to promote responsible sexual activity.

In 2008, students at Albemarle High School in Virginia reported that they were told by officials to stop wearing the shirts. The students were wearing them in an attempt to promote abstinence. The school district denied that the students were ever told what to wear.

Six years later, a student at Ramay Junior High School in Fayetteville, Arkansas was asked to change out of her "virginity rocks" shirt. The student, Chloe Rubiano, an eighth grader, said it was one of her favorite shirts, and that she had bought it at a Christian festival.

In Rubiano's case, the school vice principal said that while she agreed with the message on the shirt, she did not think it was

appropriate for school as “it opens up too many doors for conversations.”

Piglowski’s shirt came via the website of YouTube personality Danny Duncan, who sells clothing items with the slogan on them. Duncan, who makes skateboard and prank videos, started selling the apparel in 2018, and has said he designed the shirts to be tongue-in-cheek, but also with a positive message.

Since Duncan, who has nearly 3.5 million subscribers, began selling merchandise with the phrase to a more secular audience, increasing numbers of students have reported punishments.

In 2018, a 17-year-old at Roseburg High School in Oregon was forced to go home and change after he came to school wearing a Virginity Rocks shirt from Duncan’s apparel line. He went home and changed into another Duncan shirt–one that made a sexual innuendo. That shirt was allowed to be worn.

The district superintendent defended the decision to prohibit the Virginity Rocks shirt, saying that the school “would have made the same decision if the student had been wearing a T-shirt that said sex rocks or smoke more pot.”

In October 2019, a student at Chetek-Weyerhaeuser High School in Chetek, Wisconsin, was suspended for a day after he came to school wearing one of Duncan’s virginity rocks sweatshirts.

he student, sophomore Thorn Willsui, was suspended after he refused to take off the sweatshirt or turn it inside out.

CNA

https://www.catholicworldreport.com/2020/01/16/school-threatens-suspension-for-students-virginity-rocks-sweatshirt/

Californian Families Talk Progressive But Look Traditional, Study Finds

A new study says that while most Californians support the redefinition of marriage and the family, they choose intact marriages and traditional families.

"People with the most amount of choice and privilege, when they have a choice, they choose things like these traditional structures which are most pleasant to live in," said Catherine Pakaluk, assistant professor of social research and economic thought at the Catholic University of America, in an interview on Wednesday with *CNA*.

The new report by the Institute for Family Studies (IFS), "State of Contradiction: Progressive family culture, traditional family structure in California," focuses on a survey of Californians about marriage and children.

Authored by Wendy Wang, director of research at IFS, and W. Bradford Wilcox, a senior fellow at IFS, the report "reveals a paradox at the heart of California's success." While Californians mostly supported "family diversity," or non-traditional families, they also reported higher-than-average intact marriages and families where children live with their biological parents—"traditional" families.

"On the one hand, the Golden State, especially through Hollywood and Silicon Valley, has been a global messenger of expressive individualism, personal fulfillment, and tolerance—values associated with progressivism," Wang and Wilcox wrote.

"On the other hand, the families that actually live in the Golden State tend to be traditional."

For the study, IFS analyzed data from its California Family Survey conducted by the polling company YouGov between Sept. 6 and Oct. 11, 2019, of 2,000 adults in California ages 18 to 50.

According to Census data, around two-thirds—67%—of marriages in the state are intact, more than the U.S. average of 63%, the report found. Meanwhile, 65% of children ages 0-17 live with their married biological parents, greater than the national average of 62%.

A possible major contributor to the marriage numbers in the state, IFS said, is the state's high immigrant population. In the state, 75% of foreign-born parents have children in intact marriages, compared to 62% of native-born Californians.

As Wang and Wilcox noted, "California is home to the largest immigrant population in the United States" while "immigrant families are more likely than native-born families to be intact."

Pakaluk said the impact that immigrant families have on American culture is significant–but is not certain to last forever. Immigrants may gravitate towards societal trends of non-traditional families over time, and the influx of immigrants into the U.S. is not a certainty in the long-term.

"The extent to which American culture has been buoyed up by immigrants with very healthy and traditional family patterns, as these immigrant streams start to become smaller–because they will over time," Pakaluk said, "it's an open question whether or not we can continue to count on these essentially good cultural contributions from

Hispanics and Asians who have these strong traditional family structures."

Almost half (46%) of California households are Hispanic, and 15% of them Asian, compared with just 22% and 7% respectively for the U.S. average.

And the Asian Californian population—higher than the national average—maintained traditional families while being accepting of the redefinition of marriage and the family. Three-quarters of Asian Californians said it was important for them to get married before having children, compared to just 62% of whites, 66% of blacks, and 59% of Hispanics.

Meanwhile, this population was as likely or even more likely as other demographics to accept family diversity, with 79% of Asians affirming it, compared to 82% of whites, 73% of blacks, and only 67% of Hispanics.

A higher percentage of college-educated adults are likely to approve of "family diversity," or non-traditional families, while themselves living in or desiring a traditional family structure where children live with their biological mother and father who are married to each other.

However, the authors said, "the education level of California parents does not appear to explain California's higher level of stable families," as "among parents with children, California does not have a higher share of college-educated residents than the nation as a whole."

Among the study's respondents, 85% of those with a college or graduate degree in California said that family diversity is a good thing. Meanwhile, almost 70% of this population also answered "It's very important for me, personally, to be married before having my children."

And, in practice, 80% of college-educated California parents "are in intact marriages." Meanwhile, just 60% of parents without a college degree are in intact marriages.

CNA

https://www.catholicworldreport.com/2020/01/15/californian-families-talk-progressive-but-look-traditional-study-finds/

Montessori-Style Education Comes to North Dakota Catholic School

Leaders at St. Joseph School in Mandan hope that starting a Montessori program to offer a more hands-on approach to education will boost student enrollment, just as it did for Christ the King School across town.

"For decades, we just haven't really seen an influx in our school," said Father Josh Waltz of St. Joseph Catholic Church, which is connected with the school.

The school started a Montessori program last fall for its youngest children, ages 3-6, and it plans to expand the effort to cover all grades next school year. It also will add an "adolescent" program covering traditional junior high grades seven through nine, *The Bismarck Tribune* reported.

Christ the King began offering a Montessori-based education about four years ago amid a dwindling number of students, and school officials told the *Tribune* last year that the program is so popular that they now have a waiting list with 100 names on it.

Through Montessori, teachers serve as "guides" to students, who have more autonomy than in a traditional classroom setting to determine what and how they study. Much of it is hands-on.

Waltz said he visited what's known as the "Children's House" at Christ the King several years ago to observe the school's youngest children in a Montessori setting.

"I was so captivated by this environment in which the children were learning," he said. "I am 100 percent sold that it is the way to educate a child."

He was struck, in particular, by the life skills the kids learned as they went about their academics.

For example, at one point, the students were using a chain of beads to learn how to count. One boy took the chain and hid it. He eventually fessed up to what he'd done when the other children realized it was missing and asked who had it last.

"He said, 'I thought it would be funny,'" Waltz recalled. "They were like, 'It's not funny, where's the bead chain?' And he went and showed them where he hid it, and they hung it back up."

It was a lesson in discipline that didn't require any intervention from a teacher.

Students at St. Joseph will be grouped not just with others in their grade but with classmates in surrounding grades. That's done intentionally as a way for younger students to learn from older ones, and for older students to take the younger ones under their wings.

Students will spend larger blocks of time focused on single subjects during the school day, rather than hit each subject every day. Within the course of a week, they'll have spent time on every subject.

"That's how they master something," St. Joseph Principal David Fleischacker said. "They need that time."

Focusing on subjects over longer blocks of time helps students become serious problem solvers when they get older because "they get how the perseverance leads somewhere," he said.

St. Joseph and Christ the King are sometimes viewed as rivals, but leaders at both schools see the Montessori approach as a partnership, Waltz said.

For example, neither Catholic school in Mandan teaches junior high-age students, but St. Joseph plans to offer Montessori instruction for grades seven through nine, with the idea that sixth-graders from either school could filter into that program and later move on to St. Mary's Central High School in Bismarck. Many students who start out in Catholic school in Mandan switch to public school after they finish sixth grade, according to St. Joseph officials.

St. Joseph is accepting registrations now for the upcoming school year, and its teachers are undergoing training in Montessori to gear up for the fall. The Montessori approach to education was developed by Maria Montessori, an Italian educator, in the early 1900s. It is used throughout the world.

Angela Flores, the school's daycare director, is in her eighth week of an 18-month program that combines online instruction and practical in-class experience to work with the school's youngest students in Children's House.

During a recent tour of a room, she pointed out numerous stations set up for the kids - places where they can pull out maps to learn geography, practice using zippers and belt buckles, and use bins set up with soap and water.

"They wash their own dishes," she said, as a young boy took hold of a scrub brush to clean his lunch tray.

The room's head guide, Alex Nearing, said she tries to cater to individual students' interests. She noticed that some children liked to take apart things they shouldn't, so she now has stations designed for them to use keys and locks, as well as screws and fasteners.

The biggest change from a traditional classroom setting, she has noticed, has to do with the development of her young students' personalities.

"They're at their fullest," she said.

Amy R. Sisk

https://cruxnow.com/church-in-the-usa/2020/01/montessori-style-education-comes-to-north-dakota-catholic-school/

New Rugby Club in Argentina Helps Kids with Learning Disabilities

In 1982, Argentina's national rugby team went on a tour of South Africa and accomplished what at the time was unbelievable: They beat the Springboks on their home turf.

As memorable as that victory was at the time, it left an imprint on thousands that goes beyond temporary glory: It led to the discovery that faith and sports can coexist and be used for the greater good.

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After participating in the retreat, the men and women who take part are invited to meet regularly to support one another in their faith. Last year, during a meeting with a group who went through the retreat in 2018, Pozzo and others decided that the time had come to put their faith in action beyond the margins of their own "square foot," as they refer to their families and work.

They set a high bar: Creating a rugby team for children with intellectual disabilities.

"We saw that there was a team for people with physical disabilities, there's rugby in prisons, in slums and there's even a group that, after participating in a retreat, decided to help patients of a local pediatric oncology ward take part in this great sport," he told Crux earlier this month. "But there was nothing for people with downs syndrome, autism or other learning disabilities."

They talked about it, prayed about it, and on Sept. 21, 2019, after organizing a retreat for rugby coaches, the first encounter of San Agustin took place. That first day, some 35 people - the youngest being 5, the oldest 37 - began to experience the rugby passion that has marked much of Pozzo's life. By the time they interrupted their training due to Rosario's scorching South American summer, there were 70 regulars, plus some 15 or 20 kids who attended sporadically.

Asked about the team's eponymous namesake, Pozzo said that St. Augustine is the patron saint of the movement at a national level, but also a reminder that "no matter how much of a sinner you are, God is always calling you to holiness."

When they resume their activities in mid-February, the group will continue to meet every Friday in Rosario's city sports center, though some of the kids are already texting the team to ask about the next encounter.

"Sometimes, life throws you a curve, and you can't avoid wondering 'where is God in

all this?'" Pozzo said. "Well, for all of us, it's very easy to find him every Friday, to see the Holy Spirit at work. It might sound clichéd, but it's true, when you give a grain of sand, you sometimes get a mountain back. That's how we feel."

The anecdotes - and challenges - he has collected in the 12 meetings the new rugby club has had so far could fill books. These include seeing a mother in tears during one of the first encounters. Worried that they had somehow hurt her child, Pozzo went to her and asked what was wrong.

"That kid who is laughing, he's my son," she told Pozzo, pointing towards one of the players. "He's nine years old, has autism, and I never see him smile."

Things such as this serve as motivators for the people behind San Agustin, who are constantly challenging themselves to make the experience better for the players. And they encourage them to dream big: There's something called "mixed-ability rugby," with national and international tournaments, in which players who have intellectual disabilities join others who don't. San Agustin is hoping to participate in the national tournament in late 2020, and see the sky as the limit.

Of the coaching team, a majority has participated in the Christian Movement for Rugby People, but this is not the case for everyone. According to Pozzo, "God has his time, and I'm convinced, from personal experience, that eventually those who have to live the experience will do so and it will be at the right time for them to maximize this faith encounter."

In Argentina, rugby is often seen as a sport for the elites, something Pozzo acknowledges is true, in the sense that "we are all if not financially comfortable, socially so."

When it comes to San Agustin, this has been beneficial because in the group there's always someone who knows the person they need to reach - from the head of the city's largest health provider, who had medical professionals on hand during training sessions, to collecting money for buying rugby balls and other equipment.

Yet disabilities know no social class, so they have children from all backgrounds coming on Fridays to play: "There's the mother who has to spend two hours in a bus to bring her child, to those who can afford to live in the city's most exclusive gated community. And all of them found the same thing: A sense of belonging."

Though not mandatory for either the coaches or the players, every training session begins with a prayer led by a priest who's the spiritual father of the community the movement has in Rosario, and more often than not, the children who arrive in time join them in praying the Our Father, a Hail Mary and receive the priestly blessing.

"If we had tried to do this alone, it wouldn't have worked," Pozzo said, with an excitement that is hard to hide. "We are convinced that our faith is the engine that makes all of it possible."

Inés San Martín

https://cruxnow.com/church-in-the-americas/2020/01/new-rugby-club-in-argentina-helps-kids-with-learning-disabilities/

The Con Job behind Rising High School Graduation Rates

Mayor Bill de Blasio and Schools Chancellor Richard Carranza crowed about the city's "record high" high-school graduation rates last week, skipping over as usual the fact that it's the result of a lower bar — not better schools.

For the record, the rate is up nearly 9 percentage points since de Blasio took office — but city students' showing on the national "gold standard" test for educational achievement, the National Assessment of Educational Progress, is basically flat.

The real change: The state Board of Regents has made it easier to earn a diploma by creating more "pathways" to graduation — as well as by making it easier to pass state tests, including the Regents exams.

For the record, the Regents' minions at the State Education Department deny this: "We cannot know whether a student would have been successful in the traditional pathway to a diploma," an SED flack told The Post. And: The new routes to diplomas "keep students in school by allowing them to pursue a path that interests them."

Those claims would stand up better if New York was seeing gains on the NAEP. It's not.

For the city, and probably other school districts across the state, another factor is cheating by school administrators. De Blasio's system can't seem to go a year without some new grade-fixing or bogus "credit recovery" scandal surfacing in The Post, thanks mostly to outraged teachers.

What New York needs isn't simply rising graduation rates, but rising numbers of seniors actually ready to go to college or start a career. Any "success" short of that is just a marketing ploy.

NY Post Editorial Board

https://nypost.com/2020/01/20/the-con-job-behind-rising-high-school-graduation-rates/

Hear Christopher Tolkien, Son of J.R.R. Tolkien, Reading His Father's Works

He also drew the original maps for 'The Lord of the Rings'!

Fantasy writer J.R.R. Tolkien, best known for *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, has very few published works that explicitly reference his Catholic faith. However, the author famously said, "*The Lord of the Rings* is of course a fundamentally religious and Catholic work; unconsciously so at first, but consciously in the revision." But whereas the presence of Catholic Christianity in his published stories was primarily subtle, underneath the surface, it nevertheless acted as a clear foundation.

Long before John Ronald Reuel Tolkien (1892-1973) published his *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, he was honing his craft as a storyteller with his four children. Of all of them, probably Christopher John Reuel Tolkien, who just passed away January 16 at the age of 95, was particularly involved with his father's work: he edited most of his posthumous works, and drew the original maps for *The Lord of the Ring*s.

In the video below, shared by OpenCulture in this article, Christopher Tolkien reads the end of *The Return of the King*. You can visit OpenCulture's blog post for more of these touching tracks!

Daniel Esparza

https://aleteia.org/2020/01/21/hear-christopher-tolkien-son-of-j-r-r-tolkien-reading-his-fathers-works

SCOTUS to Hear Challenge to Anti-Catholic School Funding Laws

The immediate issue in the case of Espinoza v. Montana concerns Montana's Blaine Amendment and the state funding, directly or indirectly, of private schools, including religious schools.

In oral arguments tomorrow in the case of Espinoza v. Montana, the US Supreme Court will hear a direct challenge to the constitutionality of the latter-19th century's notoriously anti-Catholic—nowadays anti-religion—"Blaine Amendment," of which 38 states still have some version. The immediate issue concerns Montana's Blaine Amendment and the state funding, directly or indirectly, of private schools, including religious schools.

In 2015, the Montana state legislature enacted a tax credit whose purpose was "provide parental and student choice in education with private contributions through tax replacement programs." The programs allow individual taxpayers a state tax credit up to $150 for donations to non-profit Student Scholarship Organizations, which then provide scholarships to students attending private, including religious, schools. Thus, the program was deliberately fashioned to have two levels of choice—low-income parents' choice of private schools and then the choice by non-profit scholarship organizations to provide scholarships to the children of those parents. The purpose was to emphasize private, parental choices over the acts and more general intentions of government.

The legislation also stated that the program had to be administered in compliance with the language in the Montana state constitution, which prohibits state and local programs from making "any direct or indirect appropriation or payment to aid any church [or] school . . . controlled in whole or in part by any church, sect, or denomination" (emphasis added). Although the legislation did not include the word "Blaine," this state constitutional language is Montana's version of that amendment. The Montana Department of Revenue took it upon itself to decide that the program was in violation of the state constitution.

That decision has been challenged by three mothers whose children attend a private Christian school and who contend that they have been denied the benefit of the program because of their religion. They allege federal constitutional violations of the Free Exercise and Establishment Clauses and of the Equal Protection Clause.

Completely avoiding the word "Blaine," the Montana Supreme Court overturned the whole new statute, that is, pertaining to secular-private schools as well as religious schools. Thus, in stating that different purposes of the statute could not stand alone, that court attempted to eliminate an argument that one class of potential recipients, religious parents, had been singled out and discriminated against. With the program no longer in existence, the court maintained that there was no longer a harmed victim who had standing.

Nevertheless, the Montana Supreme Court of necessity had to go forward with a defense of the "no aid" language of Montana's constitution. It ruled that the now-overturned program had had the purpose of "indirectly" funding religious schools, which was forbidden by the "no aid" language of the state constitution. In reaching that conclusion, the Montana high court said that the language of the state constitution controlled and was sufficient to

resolve the case. Saying that "we need not address federal precedent," the court engaged in almost no analysis of the federal Constitution and relevant Free Exercise and Establishment cases. The court held that "a state's constitutional prohibition against aid to sectarian schools may be broader and stronger than the First Amendment's prohibition against the establishment of religion" and explicitly said that it was "not necessary to consider" Establishment Clause cases. The court did not even mention the Trinity case (below) at all or speak of a Blaine amendment.

Blaine amendments and constitutional choice in education

Originally placed in the state constitution in 1889, Montana's Blaine Amendment was reinforced by a state constitutional convention in 1972. The state supreme court made much of that reinforcement, but, as already said, did not use the word "Blaine." In the late 19th century, as part of a pervasive national reaction to Catholic immigration, Congressman James G. Blaine of Maine, with the support of President Ulysses S. Grant, proposed a federal constitutional amendment requiring the states to "establish and forever maintain free public schools" and preventing the use of public funds "directly or indirectly" from going to "any religious sect of denomination."

The word "Catholic" was not in the text of the amendment, and the amendment further prohibited the teaching of not only "religious" tenets but also "atheistic or pagan" tenets in public schools. The amendment passed in the House but failed in the Senate, whereupon 40 states then amended their state constitutions with some version of the amendment. Today, some 38 states still have their own versions.

Two federal precedents controlling Espinoza

The Montana case involves a choice between two precedents. The issue in the Free Exercise case of Locke v. Davey (2004) was a Washington state college-scholarship program for achieving-but-poor students that could be used at public, private, or religious colleges but could not be used by any individual student studying theology. In a 7-2 decision authored by Chief Judge Rehnquist, the Court upheld the program and said that the state had "merely chosen not to fund a distinct category of instruction" which did not imply a larger "animus towards religion." There is an American tradition of not using public funds "to support the ministry" Rehnquist said, which was part of the original—not 19th century—American consensus about prohibiting the establishment of religion. It is not based on hostility to religion. And the court specifically held that the specific Washington scholarship program was not linked to that state's Blaine amendment.

In Trinity Lutheran Church v. Comer (2017), a Free Exercise case decided by a 7-2 margin with only Justices Ginsburg and Sotomayor in dissent, a Missouri church submitted an application to a state public-maintenance program for the repaving of its playground. The state turned the church down on the basis of its own version of the Blaine amendment. But the majority opinion by Chief Justice Roberts avoided the state constitutional question and focused solely on the policy decision of the state office that disapproved the grant to the church. "Blaine" was never mentioned in the decision. The Supreme Court held that Missouri could not require a church "to renounce its religious character in order to participate in an otherwise generally

available public benefit program for which it is fully qualified." Roberts distinguished Locke by stating that Trinity Lutheran had been denied Free Exercise of Religion because it was a church, but the denial of theology coverage in Locke only concerned an activity, that is, of what complainant Davey had "proposed to do."

The three suing plaintiff parents in Espinoza, two of whom are single moms, are of modest financial means; their children attend the same Christian school. They make the specific argument in the Supreme Court that Montana's Blaine Amendment, part of its constitution, is itself unconstitutional and that Trinity's Free Exercise conclusion controls. The Montana Supreme Court decision, they argue, has endorsed discrimination on the basis of "religious belief," a violation of the Free Exercise Clause. And by allowing scholarship money to go to secular private schools, but not religious schools, the Montana constitution violates the federal Equal Protection Clause as well.

In opposition and characterizing the Montana Supreme Court decision as one in agreement with the United States Supreme Court that a state may support non-religious education while declining to support religious education, Montana argues to the Court that Locke should predominate over Trinity and says that the Montana high court has solved the problem by eliminating the possibility of disparate treatment of religious schools. Thus, there is no longer a case or controversy. Montana points out that 37 states currently have Blaine amendments. Concerning the state constitution, the state argues that federalism and "state sovereignty" allow it to bar taxpayer support of religious institutions, about which the Free exercise and Establishment Clauses "say nothing." And: "Unlike playground resurfacing [in Locke], such funding for religious education lies at the core of constitutional no-aid principles."

The development of constitutional "private choice" in education

Three contemporary decisions of the Supreme Court demonstrate that the constitutional "wall of separation" between church and state is not as "high and impregnable" (Everson 1947) as previously thought—at least with respect to state legislation having to do with education. In Mueller v. Allen (1983), the Supreme Court, in a 5-4 vote, upheld a new Minnesota statute allowing a state-tax deduction for tuition, books, and transportation to parents whose children attended private, including religious, schools. Writing for the slim majority, Chief Justice Rehnquist said that the statute had the secular purpose of ensuring "an educated populace," and did not "excessively entangle" the state in religion because a section of the law itself already excluded the providing of books having to do with religious doctrine and worship to private schools. The deduction was available to "all parents," religious or not, and did not violate the Establishment Clause. Blaine was not an issue in the case. In handing down this decision, the Court overturned its prior decision in Committee for Public Education & Religious Liberty v Nyquist (1973) ten years earlier, in which it had ruled unconstitutional a New York law providing tuition reimbursement and tax relief for low-income parents of children attending primarily Catholic schools.

In Mitchell v. Helms (2000), the Court held by a 6-3 vote that the Establishment Clause had not been violated by Louisiana's application of a federal-state education funding program for books, computers, and

other educational materials to religious as well as other private schools. Writing for the Court, Justice Thomas pointed out that the language of the federal enabling statute had itself explicitly required that the program must be conducted in a way that was "secular, neutral, and non-ideological." The program was based on parents' "private choices" of religious schools, Thomas held, not a government intention to promote or establish religion. It was neutral as to any religious "indoctrination" because the choice of attendance at eligible schools is by any parent, regardless of belief. And was provided to all parents:

if the government, seeking to further some legitimate secular purpose, offers aid on the same terms, without regard to religion, to all who adequately further that purpose…then it is fair to say that any aid going to a religious recipient only has the effect of furthering that secular purpose.
Thomas reviewed the history of Blaine amendments and said that they had been "born of bigotry."

Finally and most pertinently, in Zelman v. Simmons-Harris (2002), the Court, by a 5-4 vote, decided that an Ohio educational voucher program did not violate the Establishment Clause. The main purpose of the program was to give educational choice to low-income parents, and eligibility was determined by financial need. In speaking for the Court, Chief Justice Rehnquist, incorporating Mueller, permanently changed the constitutional language in the long line of education cases, only some of which have been discussed herein, from "government aid to religion" to public statutory decisions to endorse "true private choice in education":

Thomas R. Ascik

the Ohio program is entirely neutral with respect to religion. It provides benefits directly to a wide spectrum of individuals, defined only by financial need and residence in a particular school district. It permits such individuals to exercise genuine choice among options public and private, secular and religious. The program is therefore a program of true private choice.

This was not a Blaine case.

So, we shall find out in Espinoza not only whether the Supreme Court will rule in favor of a constitutional "private choice" based on neutral, non-discrimination principles as in Trinity and Zelman, but also how it will deal with the only full-scale attack on state Blaine amendments that it has ever had the occasion to consider.

In Espinoza, the United States Justice Department has filed a vigorous brief harshly criticizing both the origin and continuing viability of Blaine amendments and in support of the three plaintiff moms and their free exercise of religion. This continues a pattern of the Trump Justice Department. In American Legion v. American Humanist (2019), the "peace cross" case, the Department argued against the allegation that the commemorative cross on public land violated the Establishment Clause. In Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado (2018), the Department supported the Free Exercise rights of the baker. National Institute v. Becerra (2018), the case in which California required the content of speech by pregnancy-counseling centers, was decided based on freedom of speech, but the center had also alleged a Free Exercise violation. The Department supported the centers in their free speech argument.

https://www.catholicworldreport.com/2020/01/21/scotus-to-hear-challenge-to-anti-catholic-school-funding-laws/

A New Paradigm for a Liberal Arts Education?

A friend once suggested that most contemporary students are so far removed from Nature that they would have to be reintroduced to it before they could even begin to understand the classic teaching about the natural law and the virtues.

As some readers may know, Wyoming Catholic College's way of dealing with this challenge is to require horseback riding. Riding a horse is not a "virtual skill" that you can "fudge." Horses have their own minds, and riding them takes both skill and sensitivity to the needs and dispositions of that horse on that day. Riding a horse is not like moving numbers around on a spreadsheet, making it just the sort of thing students should learn to do.

Now, perhaps not everyone can or should learn to ride a horse, if for no other reason than we wouldn't want to torture our poor horses with many incompetent riders. Horses also require a lot of care and space to run around in, and not every college has the resources. But how about learning other skills in which excellence requires ingenuity and attention to the realities of the world, not merely the desires of the will?

Here's my radical proposal. Every student should learn a skill with a master craftsman. It could be such skills as plumber, electrician, bricklayer, farmer, auto mechanic, carpenter, furniture maker, or any number of others. The primary goal would be to introduce the students to a practice requiring discipline and excellence, where the results are concrete and obvious. If you don't wire the light correctly, it won't go on. If you don't lay the bricks properly, the wall falls down. If you don't plumb the pipes properly, they leak. There is little room for "creative individualism" and "self-centered willfulness" when one is being apprenticed to such crafts. If you don't do it "right," it fails.

And it becomes clear to everyone pretty quickly why the master is considered a "master," and why I, the newbie, am not. This, as I said, would be the primary goal. You learn skills so you understand what standards of excellence are and so you can reason from the development of excellence in a skill to the development of the virtues.

It's an absurd proposal, of course. One of those "pie-in-the-sky" things that college professors come up with in their spare time.

But is it so absurd? It's not as though it would be impossible to do. We hire electricians and plumbers around the university all the time. Is hiring a master electrician or plumber who can teach really any more difficult than hiring a first-rate scholar of American history who can teach?

And consider what we could say to parents. We will train your son or daughter in the best traditions of the liberal arts. Are you worried they might not get a decent job and be able to support themselves? (This is a common-enough fear.) Well, guess what? Even if all else fails, they can always make money as a plumber, electrician, auto mechanic, or a tailor. They always have something to fall back on.

And let's be serious, a good plumber or electrician makes more money than most of these kids will make working in some boring office job. And if they go to graduate school, they have a skill they can use to do part-time work that will actually pay the bills.

Their knowledge of history and organic chemistry may fade, and the scholarship on Shakespeare and Freud will certainly change, but evidence suggests that, much like the skill of riding a bike, they will never lose the skill of wiring a switch or building a chair. And although the technology may change, with a little time and training, they'll get the hang of it again.

So given the obvious practicality of this proposal and the potential increase in college admissions, why is it not likely to garner much interest? The problem is that it requires a paradigm shift in our view of college education. According to our current way of thinking, developed over the last eighty years or so, college is for white-collar workers. Plumbers don't go to college – not to learn plumbing, at any rate. They are blue-collar, i.e., "working class."

Let me make clear that this is now, as it always has been, utterly bogus from the Christian perspective. The ancient Greeks may have looked down their noses at manual labor, but Christians cannot. Christ worked as a carpenter for most of His life. The Benedictines, Franciscans, and Dominicans who founded Christian education and the first universities all worked. They were not Oxbridge aristocrats.

Besides, plumbers deserve a liberal arts education as much as anyone else. I have had some of my best discussions about faith and philosophy with plumbers, electricians, and various other people who have come to fix things in my house. These are interesting people. Try discussing the problem of evil with a female police officer who has been shot at by drug dealers. She has an interesting perspective not present in the standard undergraduate.

And to be honest, most office jobs don't require a college-level education any more than plumbing does. In fact, I resent the notion that workers can't advance unless they have "finished college." Who made colleges the gateway to business advancement? That's not our task or our goal. It is, admittedly, what we tell people to keep ourselves in clover, but at some point, people are going to get wise to us.

You don't need a college education to get a job or to advance to the highest position of leadership in a company. You should want a liberal arts education because it expands your mind and soul. If that helps you make more money, well then, God bless you.

As long you're donating some of it to your poor, struggling professors back at your alma mater. Okay?

Randall Smith

https://www.thecatholicthing.org/2020/01/22/a-new-paradigm-for-a-liberal-arts-education

Relationships and Sex Education: An Alternative View

Louise Kirk highlights important developments in education policy

There has been a lot of concern about the new Regulations for Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) which come into force in September 2020. Judith Nemeth, Director of the Values Foundation for Faith and Families in Education (TVF)1, has paid several visits to the Department for Education (DfE) and says that there is now a new team dealing with the subject "who are more friendly to the faith perspective" than the old one. Exactly what will be enforced by Ofsted we have yet to discover (the DfE's Statutory Guidance on topics to be studied already goes further than the letter of the Law, which actually states that the education must have regard to the age and religious background of the pupils). What is clear is that we need schools, churches and parents who are prepared to stand up for the considerable rights left us within the law or we will be pushed over by the likes of Stonewall just for not daring.

A true Catholic approach

The task of creating a true Catholic RSE programme is massive. We aren't just talking about getting the best out of new regulations. We are talking about reversing decades of damage in which Catholic schools have been led by the secular agenda instead of vice versa. Promotion of the LGBT agenda is one thing, but it is still small fry compared to the big problem, that of ordinary young people who should be setting up the married families of the future but who are failing to do so in large numbers. We are talking about the backbone of Britain becoming crumbly.

Right back in the 1980s Christine Vollmer, creator of the Alive to the World programme of which I am UK Co-ordinator, set up a prolife organisation among the poorest of the poor in the shanty towns of Caracas. She was puzzling over how one could prevent the lovely young girls from becoming teenage unmarried mothers. And then she noticed something. These girls had every bit as much desire for romance and marriage and family life as richer children, and the boys just as much yearning for heroism. What both sexes lacked were the values and direction to take them to their goals – their own families were chaotic, and the Christian moral framework had largely broken down round them. Interestingly, a report by the Centre for Social Justice published last year showed similar findings in this country. Some 78% of 14-17 year-olds thought finding a lasting adult relationship not only important, but more important than a career. A similar number (8 out of 10) wanted to get married at some point. And yet a few years later, as Sir Paul Coleridge of the Marriage Foundation has pointed out, this desire for marriage has a way of dwindling.

Values and strength of character

Here surely is our overall goal for RSE: not just teaching children to abstain from sex for a time but giving them the values and strength of character to remain chaste in preparation for a lasting marriage. Eligible young men and women are ones who are generous and self-controlled in spirit, who work hard and make use of their talents, present themselves well and get on with others, and, in general, are givers to the community and fun to be around. You will notice that those most eligible to found future families are also desirable in the workplace and in any other vocation they

may have: as a priest, or nun, or single person. They are the good citizens that any country should prize.

Reform

How do we achieve this education?

I would suggest by hijacking school sex education with a specific target in mind: destroying the hold of contraception. Most revolutions rest on ideas. The sexual revolution is unusual in that its ideology depends on a material instrument. Remove it, and all sorts of things start to fall back into place. Imagine a world without contraception. Girls would no longer agree to easy sex with boys, recovering their roles as the natural door-keepers of intimacy. Boys would be encouraged to ask their girlfriends to marry them, much earlier than at present. Both would recover their sense of modesty, and the natural interplay between boy and girl, man and woman, which is at the heart of romance and true love. When Sir Paul Coleridge gave the Lords & Commons Family & Child Protection Group a presentation on his ideas for marriage reform, he showed us that divorce and family breakdown followed on historically from introduction of the Pill. He also told us that, from the 1600s until the end of the 1970s, unmarried co-habitation never accounted for more than 5% of couples in any strata of society. Now 87% of higher earners (over £43,000) still marry but only 24% of low earners (under £16,000). Given the benefits of marriage, economically as well as against every other marker, this is widening inequalities in a disastrous way.

Natural Fertility

We are able to contemplate such action because of massive strides in understanding natural fertility. Fertility Awareness-Based Methods (FABM) of spacing births follow ecological trends and are now as effective as the Pill at avoiding pregnancy. What is more, teaching children to understand their own fertility promotes chastity and self-respect and prepares young people for fulfilling sexual lives in lasting marriages. Everybody likes to learn about themselves, and the truths of the human body, the psyche, and the differences between men and women, are fascinating. They are also relevant to teenagers in the here and now. Opening these to young people makes sense of our Judaeo-Christian morality and of St John Paul's Theology of the Body.

Outreach

Science can thus be shown to support the Catholic Church's teaching on the inviolability of the sexual act, and it's not only Catholics who are saying this. If you go to a World Congress of Families you will find delegates from every faith, mostly Christian, coming in behind similar pastoral policies and thanking the Catholic Church for giving a lead. Modern methods of natural fertility management not only give couples a reliable tool to help them plan or avoid conception. They have also been found to heal and preserve happy marriages: the divorce rate is something like 5%. It's a glorious irony that NFP has done what the Pill was touted to do: promote fulfilling sexual lives.

The vehicle created by sex education gives us an outreach into every home in the land. Taking it over and replacing contraception with teaching natural fertility is of course fraught with difficulty. At the time of Humanae Vitae the controversy revolved around one form of family planning over another. Now we would be taking on the commercial interests bound up in the contraceptive industry, together with

the ways of life to which it has given rise: the various LGBT varieties and also having women give priority to careers over having children. Earlier this year the New York Times carried a fullpage ad in which 180 US companies claimed that access to abortion is necessary to keep their workforce functioning.

Truth

So is such a scheme possible? Not only is it possible. Eventually it will happen regardless of what we do or don't do, because no society lives forever according to a lie. We can also believe with Cardinal Trujillo, the formidable President of the Pontifical Council for the Family in St John Paul's time, that learning the truth of our human sexual biology has its own resonance and ability to convert. If we allow ourselves to be God's instruments, he will lead the enterprise which will no doubt take decades to accomplish. There are already factors pointing in our favour. For a start, the Pill is fifty years old, its drawbacks are increasingly aired and its ethos is out of kilter with today's environmental sensibilities. What's more, despite the money thrown at new solutions, none have been found. The human body and psyche were not designed for contraception, and the search for "the perfect method" will only ever be filled with mirages. Contraception would still be taught, of course – it has to be – but truthful facts would reveal it as a blunt instrument past its sell-by date.

Open children's eyes

Overturning the Sex Education Forum's goals would do more than this. Where present sex education is based around things to be avoided: premature pregnancies, STIs, sex abuse, lack of consent, which is a depressing way of teaching relying on fear for its motivation, fertility appreciation opens children's eyes to the wonder of their being, which in turn leads them to respect childbirth, themselves and other people.

Present methods

Where present methods attempt to make boys out of girls, supposedly giving them the ability to "enjoy their sexuality" and prepare for a career without the encumbrance of motherhood, true sexuality prepares girls for both aspects of their personality: homemaking and career. It also teaches boys their essential role as providers and protectors of their future families.

Where present methods treat all children as potentially promiscuous, true education balances the needs of innocent late-developers with those of the precocious and vulnerable, teaching both the virtue of purity, which can be described as being actively loving in every relationship, in the manner appropriate to that relationship.

Where present methods preach self-esteem and fulfilment as a goal, turning children in on themselves, true teaching shows that God gifts each person individually for a specific vocation which it is theirs to seek and pray for. It prepares them for sacrificial love.

Where present sex education targets getting through adolescence without mishap, true sex education gives young people a sure foundation for the rest of their lives.

Parents

There is another big difference, which is why I have left it till last. From the very beginning sex educationalists ousted parents from their necessary roles as prime educators. What I would propose is a close collaboration between parents, schools and

also parishes, accompanied by outreach to the medical profession. The medical profession got us into this mess, and we will need the help of good doctors, nurses and fertility consultants to bring us out. We will also need hard work and intense prayer. This is principally a spiritual battle and it will take a united effort to win.

Louise Kirk

https://www.faith.org.uk/article/relationships-and-sex-education-an-alternative-view

There Are Habits That Can Help Parents Pass Down Faith, Researcher Says

[Original Editor's Note: Christian Smith is the William R. Kenan, Jr. Professor of Sociology at the University of Notre Dame and the Director of the Global Religion Research Initiative (GRRI). He is the author of Religious Parenting: Transmitting Faith and Values in Contemporary America, which came out in December. He spoke to Charles Camosy about the new book.]

Camosy: As a father of four children with a wide range of ages (college to 19 months), I'm always thinking about different ways to pass on the Catholic faith to my children. Your work, even before this new book came out, has been important for me in thinking through this challenge. But can you say a bit more about your personal story and how it led to you investing so much time producing absolutely essential research on adolescent spirituality?

Smith: I was born into a non-religious family, the youngest of three boys, but my parents both became Christians when I was a baby, so I was raised in a moderate evangelical Presbyterian church. The church had a superb youth minister and youth group when I was a teenager. Christian faith stuck with me, although I spent much of my life questioning and exploring what genuinely faithful Christian life and church ought to look like in this day and age.

Much later in life, when I had my own kids, I paid a lot more attention to how our culture and society treats children. There seemed to me to be a lot of bad faith and hypocrisy in the ways we actually lived about how important children and teenagers and their needs were in the way we structured our lives and institutions. At a certain point, I was finishing up a major research project and thinking about what I wanted to study next. I realized that sociologists of religion back then paid very little attention to children and teenagers, more normally studying adults and institutions. I also realized after a little digging that sociologists of adolescence paid very little attention to religion in their lives, focusing instead mostly on things like schools, the media, peers, and so on.

So, there was a huge black hole of knowledge about the religious and spiritual lives of children and teenagers. It seemed like a black hole worth jumping into, to understand not only that important subject itself but also to use it as a unique window to understand what is going on in our larger culture and society more broadly.

Probably the most famous term you've coined, at least in my world, is "Moralistic Therapeutic Deism." I'm sure you get asked about it a lot, but could you summarize what it is for our Crux audience and also why it is so problematic when it comes to passing on the faith?

Sure. We call this MTD for short. MTD is what I realized, after interviewing hundreds of American teenagers about their religious and spiritual lives, is the actual, functional, tacit religion of the vast majority of American youth (and often young adults and even parents). It can be summarized as belief in five "doctrines":

1. A God exists who created and ordered the world and watches over human life on earth.

2. God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most world religions.

3. The central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about oneself.

4. God does not need to be particularly involved in one's life except when God is needed to resolve a problem.

5. Good people go to heaven when they die.

From a Catholic point of view, there is obviously no Jesus here, no Gospel here, no transformation here. It is all about behaving well and feeling happy under the watch of a deistic god. So, I'm saying, most American teenagers are not actually substantively Catholic or Protestant or Jewish or whatever else formally they associate with - they are de facto Moralistic, Therapeutic Deists. And yet almost nobody realizes the differences or their implications.

Let's get into your new book, *Religious Parenting: Transmitting Faith and Values in Contemporary America*, just out last month. Can you say something about your research methods and what kinds of people you spoke with for this project?

This book is based on 235 in-depth, in-person interviews that a team of researchers and I conducted with religious parents in the U.S. in different parts of the country.

These were parents who had some ties to a religious church, temple, synagogue, or mosque, although those ties might have been strong or weak. We sampled parents who are white Catholic, black Catholic, black Protestant, white evangelical Protestant, white mainline Protestant, Mormon, Jewish, Buddhist, Muslim, and Hindu. So, we are talking about parents from a wide range of religious traditions but also different socioeconomic backgrounds, races and ethnicities, regional locations, and immigration experiences. We also interviewed 20 non-religious parents for an informal comparison.

From all of these we wanted to know how they approached the task of passing on their religion to their children, why and how much they cared about that, and how they attempted to socialize their children religiously.

What are some things your research has shown tend not to work for parents who want to pass on the faith to their children?

There is a lot that does not work. Being either too passive or too authoritarian doesn't work - parents need to be proactive but not overbearing. Only modeling religious faith and practice for children without also recurrently talking with them about why as a parent one believes and practices one's faith does not work - children need to hear parents talking about it, not just living it. Expecting church to do the primary work of religious socialization does not work - parents need to be the leaders here.

Obviously, hypocrisy and double-talking and legalism does not work. It also does not work for parents to employ other positive non-family influences - such as Catholic schooling, service and mission trips, or religious summer camps - when those are not backed up and reinforced by the core influence of family-based religious formation. Without the key shaping by parents, those other valuable influences make little difference.

Well, that's sobering but important food for thought. Let's end on a hopeful note: What are some things your research has shown tend to work?

Nothing is guaranteed, of course. The challenges are immense. But what seems to have the greatest positive influence is not rocket science either, although it does require real intentionality and effort on the part of parents.

First, parents have got to really want to pass on their religious faith and practice to their children. That has to be a priority in their lives. Parents have to walk the talk, modeling in their own lives what they wish their children to embrace.

Absolutely essential, in addition however, parents need to talk with their children about religion, not just once a week but regularly, during the week. Talking or not talking with children about religious matters during the week is one of the most powerful mechanisms for the success or failure of religious transmission to children. When parents never or rarely talk about their religion in personal terms, that sends a strong message to their kids that it's really not that important.

Also, parents practicing what is called an involved and demanding "authoritative" parenting style (as opposed to authoritarian, permissive, or uninvolved style) makes a real difference - meaning, parents need both to maintain and enforce high standards and expectations for their children while simultaneously expressing a lot of open warmth and connection to their children and confidently giving them enough space to work out their own views and values. In the usually minority of cases when American parents successfully pass on their religion to their emerging adult children, those are the kinds of influences that appear to be operating.

Charles C. Camosy

https://cruxnow.com/interviews/2020/01/there-are-habits-that-can-help-parents-pass-down-faith-researcher-says/

Romero Academy: A New Seton Initiative in Ohio

Seton Education Partners is taking a new step in its work to revitalize urban Catholic education in America with the launch of Romero Academy at Resurrection, an independent Catholic academy model in the Price Hill neighborhood of Cincinnati, Ohio.

Seton will operate Romero Academy at Resurrection in partnership with the Archdiocese of Cincinnati and the Catholic Inner-City School Education Fund (CISE). Starting in August 2020, the school will transition from the existing Resurrection of Our Lord to a new academic and governance model.

Romero Academy will incorporate elements of the Brilla schools, Seton's successful public charter school network in the Bronx, with an explicit focus on character formation, as well as curriculum from El Camino, Seton's extended-day Catholic faith formation program. Four Seton Teaching Fellows will be placed at Romero, and Seton will also borrow from the successes of its Catholic Blended Learning Network by incorporating robust blended learning that pairs teacher led, small-group, data-driven instruction with personalized learning on a computer.

"We share with Brilla a focus on the four cardinal virtues, but the unique and special opportunity that we have [with Romero Academy] is that we can also focus on faith throughout the school day," says Tom Loughead, founding school leader of Romero Academy. "That is the big distinction: We are sharing the beauty of the Catholic faith during the school day, using a lot of the lessons learned and the curriculum that has been developed by El Camino."

Loughead, a Cincinnati native, most recently served as the regional manager for Seton's Blended Learning Network. He began his career in education as a Teach for America corps member at Indianapolis Metropolitan High School and later taught in Cincinnati Public Schools, during which time he served as a content team leader for early career teachers in Teach for America's Southwest Ohio region.

Romero Academy will operate within the Archdiocese of Cincinnati with the blessing of the Archbishop Dennis M. Schnurr, under a new independent governance model through which a board of experts will oversee decisions related to the school's finances, operations, academics, and instruction.

"Catholic education needs new management structures if the sector is going to catch up to its high-performing public school peers in offering an academically excellent option for the poor," says Jeff Kerscher, the Founding Executive Director of Romero Academy who negotiated the partnership with the Archdiocese. "The key question, however, is how to transition from a parish-based model to an agile, independently managed model that achieves the benefits of scale in a sustainable way while also honoring the teaching authority of the Church. The Romero Academy model offers a solution by combining the lessons of our four major initiatives (Brilla Public Charter Schools, El Camino Faith Formation, Seton Teaching Fellows, and Seton Blended Learning)."

Romero Academy at Resurrection aims for students to exceed the district average on the state English language arts and math proficiency tests, with significantly more

students surpassing like-performing peers in terms of growth rate, says Loughead.

The transition includes renovations to the current school building, and Seton has raised $1.1 million to support that physical transformation. A major goal, says Loughead, is to make the transition as smooth as possible for current school families.

“It is our intent and true desire to serve all of the families that are currently enrolled at Resurrection,” he says.

Educating the Whole Child

Loughead has already started to build a strong team, including Katie Robben as operations manager and John Lane, who currently works with the Seton Teaching Fellows and El Camino, as assistant principal.

“I am just so excited and thrilled to have [Robben and Lane] on board already, and I’m really looking forward to finding mission-aligned, talented teachers to do this work alongside us,” Loughead says.

Most of all, he’s looking forward to the impact Romero Academy can have on the children and families of the Price Hill neighborhood.

“I think the great promise of a Catholic school is that we are uniquely positioned to make the buzzwords of ‘whole-child education’ actually come to life,” says Loughead. “We can have really candid and meaningful conversations about character and right and wrong, and most importantly, about God. We can help support each child’s personal relationship with Christ, and we can talk about God’s love for all of us. I think those are the conversations that matter more than anything. Of course, I'm deeply concerned with what students know and what they're able to do in the academic context, but I am more concerned with the type of person they are becoming. I don't think you can address the question of ‘what sort of person are you?’ earnestly outside of the context of faith."

The inspiration and namesake of the new model, St. Oscar Romero, reflects that focus. “[Romero was] a modern-day martyr, someone who really exemplified and stood up for the virtues that we want to impart to the children that we are serving: a true dedication to justice, a true dedication to service, and undying hope. He tells us not to aspire to have more, but to ‘be more.’ That message - Be More - is one we will pass along to our students as we prepare them for success at the city's most selective high schools and beyond.”

Tom Loughead

https://www.setonpartners.org/news/more-stories/romero-academy-a-new-seton-initiative-in-ohio/

Morgan Wootten: The Hidden Fuel of a Legendary Coach

It was a magical noisemaker, a shoebox of a high school gymnasium buried in a quiet working-class Maryland neighborhood. Bruce Springsteen cut double-albums off towns like Hyattsville. Old, sturdy brick homes hemmed the DeMatha Catholic gymnasium, wrapping blue-collar solidity and warmth around it like a protective mother bear. Residents in those homes, for decades, were awakened by a loud chant that ricocheted off hardwood, onto the gym's dull yellow-painted walls, up into its ceiling tiles, and out into the cold winter night.

Woo … Woo … Woo.

It will never be heard again. Morgan Wootten, 88, died Tuesday night, surrounded in prayer by Kathy, his wife of 55 years, and his large family. Some believe Mr. Wootten to be the greatest basketball coach who ever lived.

Hundreds of articles today and tens of thousands of typed words will attempt to capture the essence of Mr. Wootten, who coached some of the greatest prep basketball teams in American history. ESPN, Sports Illustrated, The Washington Post and countless online journals will rightfully herald his national titles, Naismith Hall of Fame induction and staggering overall record of 1,274-192 — but I imagine not a single story, not one, will capture what actually was his essence.

A great sadness for me, as an old journalist, is that reporters often tell stories while suffocating them —like filing a piece on the Ford's Theatre play, but omitting Wilkes Booth.

Today's *Washington Post* piece won't mention that Morgan Wootten credited the Body and Blood of Christ, poured into his soul as a daily communicant, as being the force that fueled him as a husband, father, teacher, and basketball coach.

UCLA basketball legend John Wooden called Wootten the greatest basketball coach on any level. "I stand in awe of him," Wooden said. Coach Wootten, though, would tell Wooden, or anyone else for that matter, that he'd be eternally on the losing side of the ledger were it not for the structuring his Catholic faith provided. He committed himself to prayer with Kathy — who he prayed alongside each night of his life from the same spot in his den. He had fidelity to the pursuit of virtue. He was forever pushing money to the disenfranchised, friends down on their luck, and to the vulnerable folks at SOME (So Others Might Eat). He kept holy priests as close friends.

"God, family, school, and then basketball," was how he put it during his 46 years as coach at DeMatha. But if you cornered him, he'd elucidate on the "God" part of his famous quote; he'd speak of his love for the Eucharist, his devotion to the Blessed Mother and of his desire to be fed at daily Mass, where he and Kathy wore out the same left-side pew at St. Mark's in Adelphi, Md.

Three years ago I invited Mr. Wootten and Kathy to a Day of Reflection that honored his old friend and my uncle, the deceased Msgr. Thomas Wells. The humid morning started with a long Eucharistic procession, and I noticed for the first time that Mr. Wootten was using a walker. I suggested driving him to the finishing point.

"Mr. Wells," he said, smiling, in that way of his. "Thank you, but I'd rather take a walk with my wife on this beautiful morning." Here was this titan, a man who'd won 33 Washington Catholic Athletic Conference championships and coached more than a dozen NBA players, who appeared enfeebled within the healthy-bodied gathering. But he left my side and moved to be with Kathy, where together they walked into the midst of the few hundred others who began the procession to adore the Eucharistic Face of Christ. I remember Mr. Wootten being red-faced, shaky and sweaty 15 minutes later. But he smiled that smile as he looked my way.

In the mid-'80s, I joined hundreds of others who braved icy back roads to pile into the overcrowded gym where — elbow to elbow, shoulder to shoulder — we became one in our letterman's jackets, doing our part to help push the Stags to another win. It was a raucous room. Popcorn flew into the hair of college coaches Dean Smith, Bobby Knight and Mike Krzyzewski. But, man, when your arm was wrapped tightly around your Seton girlfriend in a tight game, you weren't thinking about tomorrow's Algebra test. And when Danny Ferry or Carlton Valentine or Benny Bolton blocked a shot that careened into the bleachers, it was as if high school basketball was designed for such moments and it would have been OK if time had stopped right then and there.

It wouldn't have happened without Morgan Wootten.

He was the only coach ever to beat Lew Alcindor's (Kareem Abdul-Jabbar) Power Memorial basketball team, breaking its 71-game win streak. Although he was named the No. 1 Prep Coach of the 20th Century by the Naismith Foundation, Mr. Wootten maintained his humility.

"I remember I had just finished refereeing a really hard-fought semifinal playoff that ended up being a one-point loss for DeMatha," said former high school referee Jim Kuzma. "And what does Morgan do on his walk back to address his team — he knocks on the ref's locker room, steps in and tells us, 'Men, I just want to thank you for doing a great job tonight'."

He was my freshman World History teacher. He eschewed his desk up front and taught from the window-side of the classroom. By a quirk of seating arrangements, he stood right beside my desk while instructing his class. Throughout that year, before class began, we shared off-the-cuff conversations about life, sports, basketball, Ledo Pizza, and my uncle. In a strange way, it seemed I was establishing a friendship with a legend.

It was this small friendship, perhaps, that led to an unforgettable event that unfolded during my miserable freshman year. It was a grace extended, in a fashion I believe, that colossal Catholic wit and genius G.K. Chesterton would have understood and nodded in approval.

During freshman basketball tryouts, I grotesquely dislocated my knee. A few weeks prior to the injury, Mr. Wootten gave his time-honored, famous assignment to his class: each student was given a topic — the Revolutionary War, Andersonville prison, the Enlightenment, etc. He allowed more than a semester for our class to prepare our 45-minute oral presentation, to be given in front of the class. He warned against procrastination; the assignment would carry the burden of our second-semester grade.

Because my last name began with a "W", I didn't have to present until late May — so I procrastinated like St. Augustine with his sanctity. One-by-one, as the months

unfolded, I watched in discomfort as procrastinators — Asero, Balthrop, Chesley — underwent carpet-bombings of Mr. Wootten's post-presentation questioning. Procrastinators squirmed in their seats, especially when Mr. Wootten announced aloud the grade. "Chesley — 58."

Even still, I persisted in my procrastination. Months after a failed knee surgery and another knee dislocation during baseball tryouts, I put my right hand through a window and badly severed blood vessels in my wrist. Major surgery reattached vessels, but I would be in a cast throughout the summer. This wasn't good – not just because it extended my injurious year, but because I couldn't write my 12-page history report or sketch out my AVs (an assortment of poster boards) for my History assignment: the Space Age. Poor mom helped me as I dictated my failure of a report. I had only one poster board with a couple of planets and stars pasted on. Eventual class Salutatorian Tim Young's posters took up two chalkboards.

I finished my oral presentation in a sweat. It was disgraceful. Then I braced myself for Mr. Wootten's interrogation. But a miracle unfolded in plain sight, a pinhole of light during the most painful year of my life. Mr. Wootten asked just two questions, something about the location of the nearest planet to Earth and of the first astronaut to walk on the moon. Woody from Cheers would have gotten both.

"Wells — 99." It was the highest grade he gave.

As I returned to my desk, flabbergasted (along with my wide-eyed classmates), Mr. Wootten, at his usual station by my desk, looked me in the eye.

He then very quickly smiled; it was like a grimace that said: You, Mr. Wells, have endured a miserable first year of high school. And you were miserable today — but son, fate just smiled on you.

Kevin Wells

https://catholicexchange.com/morgan-wootten-the-hidden-fuel-of-a-legendary-coach

Catholic Schools Week: It's All About Getting People to Heaven

Who are the Catholic educators who will embrace orthodoxy and serve with truth-oriented compassion in that noble task of guiding their students heavenward?

As a longtime Catholic teacher and writer of resources for Catholic schools, I always get excited around this time of year because of the annual celebration of the National Catholic Educational Association's Catholic Schools Week, which runs Jan. 26 to Feb. 1 this year.

It's a good week to look to the example (and implore the intercession) of saints who were important to Catholic education, in order to support the mission of Catholic schools in forming our students as current disciples and future saints themselves.

Exemplary figures such as Saint John Bosco, Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini, Blessed Basile Moreau, Saint John Neumann, newly-canonized (as of October) Saint John Henry Newman, Saint Jean-Baptiste de la Salle, Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton, and many other saints fashioned their lives according to the Lord's will. In doing so, they facilitated the development of a Catholic educational framework that is geared toward serving the Kingdom of God.

What they may not have foreseen was a 21st-century circumstance in which most Catholic schools are staffed by members of the laity, and therefore in need of even more intentional missionary discipleship, so that faculty, staff and administrators can give what they have when it comes to their own proper preparation to serve their students.

Almost 55 years ago, the Oct. 28, 1965, document Gravissimum Educationis, the declaration on Christian education from the Second Vatican Council, affirmed that the Catholic school functions "to order the whole of human culture to the news of salvation so that the knowledge the students gradually acquire of the world, life, and man is illumined by faith." And going on 31 years ago, Pope Saint John Paul II offered the following in his April 16, 1979, address to the NCEA during an apostolic visit to the United States:

But no Catholic school can be effective without dedicated Catholic teachers, convinced of the great ideal of Catholic education. The Church needs men and women who are intent on teaching by word and example – intent on helping to permeate the whole educational milieu with the spirit of Christ. This is a great vocation, and the Lord himself will reward all who serve in it as educators in the cause of the word of God. In order that the Catholic school and the Catholic teachers may truly make their irreplaceable contribution to the Church and to the world, the goal of Catholic education itself must be crystal clear. (Message to the National Catholic Educational Association of the United States, April 16, 1979).

This was six months to the day before the publication of John Paul II's apostolic exhortation of Oct. 16, 1979, Catechesi Tradendae: On Catechesis in Our Time. It is no coincidence that this saintly pope lauded his similarly saintly precursor's devotion to faithful Catholic education, in declaring for instance that "my venerated predecessor Paul VI served the Church's catechesis in a particularly exemplary fashion" (Catechesi Tradendae, 2).

The 21st century world and the often aggressively unrelenting inroads of secularism will continue to pose numerous

challenges to the role that Catholic education ought to play in leading students to the Good News of Jesus Christ. Especially in the areas of sexual morality, the dignity of all human life from the moment of conception until natural death, and the allure of materialism, Catholic schools do well to present an alternative message to the world's specious ideologies. In an information-rich but wisdom-poor age rife with steadily maddening confusion, in which entertainment has replaced reflection, the advancement of orthodoxy (the proper reading of doctrine and dogma) is perhaps more critical than ever before.

Catholic schools must redouble their efforts to proclaim that which is true, good and holy, in their approaches to both everyday and pandemic dilemmas. Otherwise, they will not be able to present a substantial, let alone rhetorically convincing, distinction when compared with any other educational institution; rather, they will end up simply being private institutions wherein the Catholic faith constitutes fodder for ridicule and disregard, to say nothing of the decentralization of the sacramental life within the community.

Catholic schools that thrive on furthering Saint John Paul II's "Theology of the Body" will endure, as will those institutions that otherwise stand in the breach against increasingly popular notions of the human person that defy objective principles of reality. As one example of a pastoral approach imbued with clarity with charity, I recommend the Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education's 2019 document "Male and Female He Created Them": Towards a Path of Dialogue on the Question of Gender Theory in Education, which was welcomed by Bishop Michael Barber, the chairman of the USCCB's Committee for Catholic Education, in his statement of June 11, 2019.

Every era in the last 2,000 years has been a saint-making time in its own way, and as we find ourselves amid the conclusion of two decades of the 21st century, our times really are no different in that respect. Who are the Catholic educators who will embrace orthodoxy and serve with charity in that noble task of guiding their students heavenward?

This courageous commitment will come with manifestations of exclusion and even reprisals for patiently and steadfastly standing up for the Gospel. Every single one of the saints mentioned within this piece faced friction and setbacks in some manner or another when they strived to promote faithful Catholic education.

Let us conclude with this sobering yet ardently inspirational passage from Saint John Paul II during the 1998 ad limina visit of some American bishops to the Vatican:

The greatest challenge to Catholic education in the United States today, and the greatest contribution that authentically Catholic education can make to American culture, is to restore to that culture the conviction that human beings can grasp the truth of things, and in grasping that truth can know their duties to God, to themselves and their neighbors. In meeting that challenge, the Catholic educator will hear an echo of Christ's words: 'If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free' (John 8:32). The contemporary world urgently needs the service of educational institutions which uphold and teach that truth is 'that fundamental value without which freedom, justice and human dignity are extinguished'" (Veritatis Splendor, 4) (Address of the Holy Father Pope John Paul II to the Bishops of the Ecclesiastical Regions of Chicago, Indianapolis, and

Milwaukee (USA), on Their "Ad Limina" Visit of May 30, 1998, 3).

In addition to the readings that I have recommended here for both prayerful and practical encouragement, I likewise recommend the piece "Ten Patron Saints for Catholic Classrooms" by Barb Szyszkiewicz at Today's Catholic Teacher, as well as Leila Miller and Trent Horn's book Made This Way: How to Prepare Kids to Face Today's Tough Moral Questions (Catholic Answers Press, 2018).

Justin McClain

https://www.ncregister.com/blog/mcclain/orthodoxy-holiness-and-the-eternity-oriented-mission-of-catholic-education

Why Study Latin?

Ave Maria, Gloria in excelsis, Agnus Dei, Dominus Vobiscum, Sanctus, Tantum Ergo. These are just some of the Latin phrases that Catholics may recognize. Although it's common to speak of Latin as a "dead" language, it remains alive within the Church, her sacred language of prayer, study, and unity. Pope Benedict XVI asked Catholics to learn the basic prayers of the Mass and the rosary to be able to pray together throughout the world. This common language roots the Latin rite of the Church in a common identity and heritage. A sacred language also points to the transcendent mystery and reverence of the Mass, moving beyond the ordinary language of one's daily routine.

Not only has Latin served as the language of the Church since the third century, it also has provided the key language of education and learning. The great Cicero translated many works of Greek philosophy into the language of the Romans and himself became the chief model of polished writing. After the fall of the Empire, Roman Christians, particularly Boethius and Cassiodorus, sought to continue the study of the Latin language, writing textbooks of grammar and forming libraries to pass on ancient literature. The monasteries became centers of Latin grammar, using the writings of Virgil to provide a literary standard to study the Bible and for the Church's liturgy, teaching, and legal tradition. Latin became the lingua franca of the Middle Ages and the language of the universities. Even modern writers have found within the ancient tongue their training ground of elegant expression and a literary tradition to guide their own work.

The reliance on Latin suddenly ceased, not only with the introduction of the vernacular in the Church's liturgy but also with the decline of liberal education. Recognizing this decline, even in the very year the Second Vatican Council commenced, Pope St. John XXIII pointed to the sacred role of Latin in the Church and its important role in preserving her tradition and promoting unity throughout the world. In his letter, *Veterum Sapientia*, "On the Promotion of the Study of Latin," he also proclaimed Latin's crucial role in education: "There can be no doubt as to the formative and educational value either of the language of the Romans or of great literature generally. It is a most effective training for the pliant minds of youth. It exercises, matures and perfects the principal faculties of mind and spirit. It sharpens the wits and gives keenness of judgment. It helps the young mind to grasp things accurately and develop a true sense of values. It is also a means for teaching highly intelligent thought and speech."

Somewhat more recently, a plea for Latin's return to education within the United States has appeared in Tracy Lee Simmons' Climbing Parnassus: A New Apologia for Greek and Latin (ISI Books, 2002). Simmons rightly notes the deep influence of classical learning on the nation's founders and its guiding presence within our oldest universities and even one room schoolhouses. After expressing the foundational and all-important role of words in education, he notes "the inseparable link between words and thinking" (160). Not just any words, as "good language makes for good thinking," and not just any language, for Greek and Latin "helped, through their rigor and beauty, to form intellects, to develop minds" (ibid). Engaging in the rigors of ancient grammar teaches language itself, in a much more complete way than

found in modern languages. Its complexity and precision leads to discipline within the mind itself, learning the craft of words and the logical thinking needed to form them clearly and cogently.

Some educators recommend Latin for its usefulness in mastering the English language. There is truth to this claim, with a majority of English words deriving from Latin and its derivative languages. More deeply, however, with ancient language, one enters the beauty and power of the masterpieces of the past, not simply reading them quickly in translation, but sitting at their feet and laboring to learn directly from the words of the masters. "Greek and Latin carry in the wake an entire world of thought and feeling" (164). Looking at the great deeds of the past, within our own country and the entirety of our civilization, it is necessary to reconnect to the sources of life that inspired and animated their achievements. In looking to the greats, Simmons advocates, "Don't merely read about them; read what they read – as they read it" (210).

Many of our Catholic schools offer Latin, and its study opens up for their students a breadth of tradition, thought, and beauty. The language of saints and scholars can inspire our students to read deeply, think rightly, communicate clearly, and to enter more deeply into the mystery of our faith.

Jared Staudt

https://denvercatholic.org/why-study-latin/

Nick Sandmann Inspires Everyone With Pictures of Himself Back at the March for Life

Fresh from his first victory over a liberal media outlet for smearing his reputation over last year's March for Life, Nick Sandmann has returned. The pro-life high school student posted pictures on his twitter account on Friday showing his return to the March for Life after media outlets and abortion advocates grossly and falsely claimed he and other pro-life students incited violence at last year's event.

"I will never pass on an opportunity to March for Life!" Sandmann exclaimed in a Twitter post that went viral and has over 47,000 likes.

Sandmann also posted recently about his return trip to the spot of last year's incident, where liberal activist Nathan Phillips banged a drum and eventually lied about Nick and his friends. Sandmann said he would never back down or be bullied.

Recently, CNN settled with pro-life teen Nick Sandmann for smearing his name. Sandmann has received an undisclosed settlement from CNN after the pro-abortion media outlet smeared him and a group of pro-life teens attending the March for Life.

The smears against the Covington Catholic High School students began after a heavily edited video surfaced of them face to face with liberal active Nathan Phillips after the March for Life in January. Longer footage of the incident later disproved many of the claims against the pro-life Kentucky students. However, the students and their families received death threats because of the accusations, and their school was forced to close several days because of security concerns.

Now, CNN has settled the lawsuit Sandmann filed against it. The amount of the settlement with CNN was not made public at a hearing in Covington, Kentucky but it sought $75 million for harm to Sandmann's reputation and $200 million in punitive damages.

"The CNN accusations are totally and unequivocally false and CNN would have known them to be untrue had it undertaken any reasonable efforts to verify their accuracy before publication of its false and defamatory accusations," the suit read.

"CNN was probably more vicious in its direct attacks on Nicholas than *The Washington Post*. And CNN goes into millions of individuals' homes," Lin Wood, one of Sandmann's attorneys, told Fox News's Mark Levin last year.

The lawsuit came after an independent investigation confirmed that a group of Covington Catholic teens told the truth about their now-viral confrontation with a Native American man in January in Washington, D.C. The report by Greater Cincinnati Investigation, Inc. states that the pro-life teens did not initiate the confrontation or use any racial slurs against Native American Nathan Phillips or the Black Hebrew Israelites group.

"We found no evidence of offensive or racist statements by students to Mr. Phillips or members of his group," the report states. "We found no evidence that the students performed a 'Build the Wall' chant." Lawyer L. Lin Wood said Phillips told "lies and false accusations" about Sandmann and other students after the Jan. 18 incident.

Phillips did not participate in the independent investigation. According to Townhall, he lied about the students chanting "Build the wall!" and his Vietnam service.

"We have attempted to reach out to Mr. Phillips by phone and by e-mail, informing him that we desired to interview him in person and that we were prepared to meet him in Michigan or any location he might prefer," the investigators wrote. "We also sent Mr. Phillips' daughter an e-mail as they both appear to be involved in the Native Youth Alliance and have shared their e-mail addresses after the event to thank everyone for reaching out and supporting them."

They said Phillips never responded.

"Mr. Phillip's public interviews contain some inconsistencies, and we have not been able to resolve them or verify his comments due to our inability to contact him," the investigators continued.

They said it was the Black Hebrew Israelite group that yelled racial slurs against the boys as well as Native Americans.

"We see no evidence that students responded with any offensive or racist statements of their own," the investigators noted. "Some students stated that one of the chaperons reminded the students that, if they engaged in a verbal exchange with the Black Israelites, they would receive detention when returning to school."

Some abortion activists also accused the pro-life students of making an offensive rape comment, but the investigators said the individual who made the statement on one of the videos was not a student at Covington Catholic.

The investigators also noted that Sandmann's public statements appear to be accurate base on their other findings.

The student's legal team said they are in the process of sending letters demanding that the entities retract their statements against the students. A list of the 52 entities can be found here.

"There was a rush by the media to believe what it wanted to believe versus what actually happened," lawyer Todd McMurty, co-counsel for Sandmann, said previously.

For example, McMurtry told The Cincinnati Enquirer that Sandmann was accused of getting into the face of Phillips, but the full footage of the incident disproved this claim.

Despite the new evidence, left-wing activist Kathy Griffin and others have been adamant in their criticism of the teens and the teens only. There has been little condemnation of the Black Hebrew Israelite adults who shouted profanities and racial slurs at the teens and Native Americas, or of the Native American man who claimed the students got in his face when video evidence indicates that he approached them, according to Reason.

In a statement, Sandmann said he was confused by the whole incident and he smiled only to let the other protesters know that he would not be intimidated.

"I am a faithful Christian and practicing Catholic, and I always try to live up to the ideals my faith teaches me – to remain respectful of others, and to take no action that would lead to conflict or violence," he said.

Steven Ertelt

https://www.lifenews.com/2020/01/27/nick-sandmann-inspires-everyone-with-pictures-of-himself-back-at-the-march-for-life/

St. Francis de Sales' Guide to Using Social Media

Remember these simple principles when scrolling through your social media feed.

Social media, while a great tool in connecting us with people around the world, can also lead us down a dark path of gossip, slander and a judgmental mindset. Our emotions can easily be "let loose," and the anonymity of the Internet can shield us from the natural repercussions of uncharitable words.

St. Francis de Sales, while he lived in the 16th century, wrote a profound spiritual work entitled *Introduction to the Devout Life* that contains a wealth of wisdom that can still be applied today, in the 21st century.

For example, he writes, "Do not pronounce a man to be a drunkard although you may have seen him drunk, or an adulterer, because you know he has sinned; a single act does not stamp him for ever … Noah was drunk once, and Lot, moreover, was guilty of incest, yet neither man could be spoken of as habitually given to such sins; neither would you call Saint Paul a man of blood or a blasphemer, because he had blasphemed and shed blood before he became a Christian … what assurance have we that he who yesterday was a sinner is the same today?"

The temptation of social media is to see a news story or a friend's post and immediately jump to conclusions, forming a negative view of that person with a single post. We all make mistakes and sometimes what we post will paint a negative picture of who we are. However, we can't be make a judgment based on what we see on social media.

In fact, St. Francis would go so far as to try and make an excuse for the person, seeing them in the best possible light.

When you hear evil of any one, cast any doubt you fairly can upon the accusation; or if that is impossible, make any available excuse for the culprit; and where even that may not be, be yet pitiful and compassionate, and remind those with whom you are speaking that such as stand upright do so solely through God's Grace. Do your best kindly to check the scandal-bearer, and if you know anything favorable to the person criticized, take pains to mention it.

It does us no good to point the finger at someone else, when we have made no effort to correct the faults in our own lives. We cannot see into the heart of another person, but we can see inside our own heart.

In our posts and comments on social media, St. Francis de Sales has some more specific suggestions.

Let your words be kindly, frank, sincere, straightforward, simple and true; avoid all artifice, duplicity and pretense, remembering that, although it is not always well to publish abroad everything that may be true, yet it is never allowable to oppose the truth. Make it your rule never knowingly to say what is not strictly true, either accusing or excusing, always remembering that God is the God of Truth.

Furthermore, he suggests, "when it is necessary to contradict anybody, or to assert one's own opinion, it should be done gently and considerately, without irritation or

vehemence. Indeed, we gain nothing by sharpness or petulance."

Last of all, we should stress the quality of our online conversations, rather than quantity.

The silence, so much commended by wise men of old, does not refer so much to a literal use of few words, as to not using many useless words. On this score, we must look less to the quantity than the quality, and, as it seems to me, our aim should be to avoid both extremes.

As you embark on using social media, keep these guidelines in mind and you will do well to bring the light of Christ to others.

Philip Kosloski

https://aleteia.org/2020/01/24/st-francis-de-sales-guide-to-using-social-media

Say a Prayer before Logging on to the Internet

Infinite Creator,
Who, from the treasures of Your wisdom,
have established three hierarchies of angels,
have arrayed them in marvelous order
above the highest heavens,
and have marshaled the regions
of the universe with such artful skill,

You are proclaimed
the true font of light and wisdom,
pour forth a ray of Your brightness
into the darkened places of my mind;
disperse from my soul
the twofold darkness
into which I was born:
sin and ignorance.

You make eloquent the tongues of infants.
refine my speech
and pour forth upon my lips
The goodness of Your blessing.

Grant to me
keenness of mind,
capacity to remember,
skill in learning,
subtlety to interpret,
and eloquence in speech.

May You
guide the beginning of my work,
direct its progress,
and bring it to completion.
You Who are true God and true Man,
who live and reign, world without end.
Amen.

Prayer attributed to St. Thomas Aquinas

https://aleteia.org/daily_catholic/say-a-prayer-before-logging-on-to-the-internet

The Spiritual Goal of Catholic Education

Education should involve not just the memorization of facts, but the inculcation of virtue.

For nearly 200 years, education in the Western world has been focused almost entirely on the memorization of facts or the success of the student on standardized tests. This is not always the case, but a large portion of schools have been historically more concerned about grades than anything else.

While it certainly is important to be well educated and have an ability to recall facts about particular subjects, Catholic education should stand out for its insistence on the importance of a virtuous life, not just a life full of "head knowledge."

St. John Paul II emphasized this spiritual goal of education in an address he gave to a group of bishops from the United States.

Catholic education aims not only to communicate facts but also to transmit a coherent, comprehensive vision of life, in the conviction that the truths contained in that vision liberate students in the most profound meaning of human freedom…"In the Catholic school there is no separation between time for learning and time for formation, between acquiring notions and growing in wisdom. The various school subjects do not present only knowledge to be attained but also values to be acquired and truths to be discovered."

Facts are important and have their place, but should not be emphasized over the practice of the moral life.

In the book *The Curriculum of the Catholic Elementary School* (published in 1919), George Johnson comments on this necessary element of education.

The school must aid the child in developing proper attitudes. It is vain, for example, to teach the child many things about the duties of a citizen, unless the child is at the same time brought to feel the necessity of maintaining the ideals of good citizenship. A child may be able to pass a very creditable examination on the nature of Christian virtue, but unless he comes to feel in his own inmost soul the value of Christian virtue, his knowledge will prove empty indeed.

Tests certainly have their place and should be used, but is that how we will be judged in the end? Will God be concerned about our knowledge of the Catholic faith? Or will he look to our actions?

The spiritual goal of education should always be kept in mind and serve as an underlying principle when educating young people.

Philip Kosloski

https://aleteia.org/2020/01/28/the-spiritual-goal-of-catholic-education

What the Catholic Church Did during the Holocaust Is Subject of UN Panel

Pope Pius XII's actions to help persecuted Jews speak far louder than his alleged "silence," experts say.

"Never again!" has become an everlasting cry in response to the mass killing of Jews in Europe during the Second World War, and remembrance has become a perennial action to honor the victims of the Holocaust.

But whether the Catholic Church did enough to fight this injustice, and whether Pope Pius XII remained silent in the face of the Nazi atrocities, have also become perennial questions.

A panel of historians and other experts tackled some of those questions at a United Nations event marking the 75th anniversary of the liberation of the death camp at Auschwitz on Monday. The three-hour discussion, "Remembering the Holocaust: The Documented Efforts of the Holy See and the Catholic Church to Save Lives," came at the beginning of a year when the world will mark the 75th anniversary of the end of the Second World War and the establishment of the U.N. itself. And on March 2, the Vatican will make all archival materials pertaining to Pius' pontificate (1939-1958) accessible to scholars.

Johan Ickx, director of historical archives in the Holy See's Section for Relations with States, gave an overview of what will be available to scholars beginning March 2, including the Apostolic Archive, previously known as the Secret Archives; archives of the nunciatures during the Second World War; documentation of various dicasteries; papers related to rescuing people; and archives of the Propaganda Fide dicastery, which include papers of the missions around the world, such as those in war zones.

Ickx said that the archives of the Holy See's Section for Relations with States, for which he is responsible, have been undergoing a process of digitization for the past eight years.

Questions about Pius XII's alleged silence—and even cooperation with Hitler's goals—began when a German playwright published a stage piece in 1963 called *The Deputy*. Ronald Rychlak, author of Hitler, the War and the Pope and Disinformation, explained that after WWII, the atheistic Soviet government "found itself with dominion over deeply Christian nations in Central and Eastern Europe. In order to advance their communist doctrines, Soviet leaders would have to undermine the Church. The best way, of course, would be to associate it with the Nazis. On June 3, 1945, Radio Moscow announced that Pius XII had been Hitler's Pope and suggested that he had been an ally of the Nazis during World War II."

Europeans, however, knew Pius for his humanitarian response to the sufferings of the war, and wouldn't buy the Soviet argument. "The Soviets would have to find another way, and that came when a play came out after his death," Rychlak said.

Prior to *The Deputy*'s debut, there was a general consensus, even among Jewish leaders, that Pius had acted honorably during the war. Gary Krupp, founder of the Pave the Way Foundation, which cosponsored the event with the Holy See Mission to the United Nations, said that an internet search of newspapers from 1939-1958, revealed that "the most prominent

Jewish personalities of the era praised the actions of the Church, and specifically Pope Pius XII. Golda Meir, Albert Einstein, all the major Jewish organizations, the chief rabbis of Rome, of Egypt, of Palestine, of Romania, of Denmark and many more showered the Catholic Church with unreserved praise."

Pius' documented actions, outlined by panelists, contradict the picture painted by The Deputy and books such as John Cornwell's *Hitler's Pope*. Ickx, for example, said that during the Nazi raid on Rome on October 16, 1943, Pius "was not looking from his window doing nothing." His interventions resulted in the halt of deportations to Auschwitz, although not before 1,030 Jews were already deported.

"Written testimonies confirm it was on the order of the pope to give shelter to the Jews" in 235 convents and monasteries in Rome, Ickx said. "Altogether, Pius can be credited with the rescue of two thirds of the Jews who were present in the city at the end of the war."

Perhaps nothing was more dramatic, however, than Pius's involvement in plots to get rid of Hitler, according to the research of Mark Riebling. Riebling's book, Church of Spies, in fact tells such a dramatic story that it is being made into a movie.

That story begins in October 1939, when Pius was approached by dissident officers in the German military.

"They worried that if Hitler won the war, the Nazis would destroy the aristocracy and Christianity and many other things that conservative Germans held dear," Riebling told the New York UN audience. "These dissident Germans wanted to eliminate Hitler and do a peace deal with the Western allies. These conscientious Germans wanted Pius XII to be their secret foreign agent, partly because of his public impartiality and partly because of his reputation for discretion. These plotters considered Pius the one trusted power among powers no one could trust. Somewhat to the amazement of the German resistance, Pius XII was all in."

Pius at first was a conduit between the British government and the German resistance," Riebling explained. "Gradually, the Holy Father's role expanded to where he was not just a mediator but an active plotter. … By the war's end Pius had participated in three plots to remove Hitler. In all three, he had midnight meetings in the papal apartments with British diplomats, trying to bring up a coup in Berlin."

All three of the plots failed, however.

Riebling contested the depiction of a "silent" pope in the face of the Holocaust.

"I personally would not call it a silence so much as being careful with words," he said. "The pope denounced the murder of anyone on the basis of race, especially in his 1942 Christmas address. At the same time, Pius tried to avoid criticizing Hitler or the Nazis by name. Documents in the Roosevelt library show the German resistance asking Pius not to decry Nazism from the mountaintop, fearing that such criticism would cause a crackdown on resistance elements. [The German plotters' emissary to the pope, Josef] Mueller said that his 'anti-Nazi organization in Germany had always been very insistent that the pope should refrain from making any public statement singling out the Nazis since, if the pope had been specific, Germans would have accused him of yielding to the promptings of foreign powers and this

would have made the German Catholics even more suspected than they were and would have greatly restricted their freedom of action in their work of resistance to the Nazis.' Dr. Mueler said the pope had followed this advice throughout the war."

Introducing the panel discussion, the new Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations, Archbishop Gabriele Caccia, commented, "The Holocaust was a time when the world lived in darkness, but there were points of light, represented by good people who tried to help those in trouble." An event such as this panel discussion, he said, helps us understand that "if we are not indifferent to the suffering, to the injustices, to the wounds of the world, we can make a difference."

John Burger

https://aleteia.org/2020/01/29/what-the-catholic-church-did-during-the-holocaust-is-subject-of-un-panel

5 Keys to a Good Education According to St. John Bosco

Also known as Don (Father) Bosco, this extraordinary educator is as relevant today as ever.

On January 31, we celebrate St. John Bosco. An extraordinary educator, this Italian priest founded the Salesian Order and created an educational system that has lost nothing of its pertinence today.

John Bosco was born in the vicinity of Turin in 1815. He lost his father at the age of two and was lovingly raised by his mother. In order to continue his education, he had practiced numerous small trades. Having become a priest, he developed a network for young apprentices arriving from the countryside and proposed training for the unemployed in the streets of Turin. Later, he opened a series of boarding schools (where he received the future St. Dominic Savio). The Salesian Society was inaugurated in 1854 to continue his work. At his death in 1888, Don Bosco's work spread beyond the borders of Italy. Still today, his teaching method remains relevant and can be helpful to parents and educators.

Here are five key elements to retain from this teaching method.

1. TRANSFORM CHILDREN INTO "HONEST CITIZENS AND GOOD CHRISTIANS"

Don Bosco's teaching method includes all aspects that make up a person – intellect, technology, sports, expression, affection, and religion. Don Bosco wished "to create honest citizens and good Christians."

2. BOOST SELF-CONFIDENCE AND TRUST IN OTHERS

An education on how to be successful includes: teaching children how to be confident, highlighting success and in case of failure, encouraging the ability to overcome it. The goal is to provide self-confidence and trust in others: "There is no confidence without affection, without confidence, there is no education," affirmed John Bosco.

3. LET CHILDREN KNOW THEY ARE LOVED

It is an education of love that accepts young people as they are, and desires that they thrive and manifests true affection.

4. NEVER FORGET FUN AND GAMES

Among many other things, games develop the sense of reality, respect for rules, and socialization. "Let us provide ample liberty to jump, run and cry with joy. Gym, music, drama, excursions improve both physical and mental health," said Don Bosco.

5. AND ABOVE ALL TEACH ABOUT GRACE

One must encourage children to live in grace as a path to saintliness. A good education is first of all a fruit of God's love.

Marie-Christine Lafon

https://aleteia.org/cp1/2020/01/29/5-keys-to-a-good-education-according-to-st-john-bosco

Choosing a Catholic School Begins with Mission

What does an authentic Catholic education look like?

With Catholic Schools Week upon us (Jan. 28-Feb. 3), families are invited to recommit to Catholic education and register their children for the upcoming school year. Others who are exploring Catholic schools may benefit from a new Parents Guide to understanding the nature and benefits of a faithful, excellent Catholic education.

The higher graduation rates and college acceptance rates of students in Catholic schools are well-documented — but as impressive as these statistics are, they are of secondary importance. The real value of Catholic schools is not what they prepare students to do (go to college, earn high paying wages) but what they prepare them to be — a leaven to society and saints!

Because of this higher and broader horizon, parents should look not only at test scores and college admission rates but also at the strength and wholesomeness of the school's Catholic culture and how explicitly it accomplishes its Catholic mission.

How is a parent to begin this daunting task? The Cardinal Newman Society has articulated the Church's expectations as Principles of Catholic Identity in Education, and it has issued a Parents Guide to help families gauge the particular strengths and weaknesses of a Catholic school in key areas: curriculum, community, leadership, faculty and student outcomes. These are some highlights:

Curriculum

The curriculum should advance the mission of Catholic education, with abundant evidence that the faith informs all academic disciplines.

Is there evidence that the Catechism of the Catholic Church and Scripture are frequently referenced? Are textbooks supplemented with resources to help ground them in the Catholic faith and reflect a Catholic worldview?

Are students exposed to the best of Western civilization and culture, and do they understand the harmony which exists between faith and reason, especially in the study of the sciences?

Do literature selections assist the genuine development of the human person by using examples of virtue and vice, which allow students the opportunity to enter into the lives of others so as to learn examples of nobility and courage?

Does the social studies curriculum help students understand and commit to the common good, the needs of the poor, human rights and human dignity?

If human sexuality classes are taught, are they fully transparent, in line with Church teaching and respectful of parents as the primary educators?

Community

In Catholic education, parents are partners with the school. They participate in school liturgies and academic and extra-curricular events.

The school climate reproduces the warm and intimate atmosphere of family life, which is

not only nurturing but genuinely positive and supportive.

Is an evangelical spirit of freedom and charity evident within the school? Are students challenged to strive for excellence in both human and Christian formation? Are virtues such as magnanimity, honor and modesty taught and evident? Are there opportunities and requirements for service?

Catholic education is in full communion with the Catholic Church and helps grow the Church. Are there activities, clubs and events that invite a deeper understanding of the Catholic teachings and traditions? Does the school display a concern for the life and problems of the Church, both local and universal? Are Catholic students helped to become active members of their parish communities? Is prayer a norm, and are Masses and Reconciliation frequent and reverent?

Leadership

Opportunities for students to encounter the living God in a Catholic school depend heavily on a faith-filled leader who sets the tone and brings the community together under a common vision and mission.

Do leaders accept and promote the teachings of the Church and moral demands of the Gospel?

Do they actively participate in the liturgical and sacramental life of the school and provide an example to others who find in them nourishment for Christian living? Do they see their position as a vocation rather than a profession and attempt to fully integrate their faith life with their daily decision-making?

Faculty

Because a school depends chiefly on teachers to achieve its purpose, parents should give careful attention to the teachers and their effectiveness at imitating Christ, the true teacher, not only in their work but in the entirety of their lives and actions.

Are the faculty exemplary apostolic witnesses to the Catholic faith, and do they live their lives according to the teachings of the Church? Are they present at school Masses and other religious activities, and are they active in their parishes and local communities? Are they alert for opportunities to integrate culture and academic content with faith to create a synthesis of faith and life for their students?

Student Outcomes

Catholic education provides for the integral formation of students in body, mind and spirit. Students, once individually formed, can advance the Christian formation of the world and ultimately take their place in the eternal Kingdom.

With this dual outcome of securing both the common and individual good, parents can ask: In what ways are graduates using their formation to aid society as a whole, to assist in the building up of impoverished communities, helping the poor or in other ways facilitating the efforts of the universal Church?

Guiding Models of Catholic Education

It may seem daunting for parents to assess these areas on their own when selecting a Catholic school. Fortunately, some schools have proactively taken up the challenge of answering such questions related to strong Catholic identity by seeking recognition from the National Catholic Honor Roll.

The Honor Roll schools complete an extensive battery of questions after spending many hours of reflection on how effectively they are fulfilling the Church's expectations for Catholic education. Parents may want to spend some time on these schools' websites to get a sense of what a strong Catholic school looks like and compare them to their local schools.

The Church grows when parents and schools find and support each other in the quest for excellence in Catholic education, which starts and ends with Christ and is sustained by truth and by love.

During this Catholic Schools Week, all are encouraged to renew their commitment to authentic Catholic education wherever it is found.

Denise Donohue and Dan Guernsey

https://www.ncregister.com/blog/guest-blogger/choosing-a-catholic-school-begins-with-mission

Supreme Court Hears Case on Tax Credits for Religiously-Affiliated Schools

The state of Montana had issued a regulation prohibiting its citizens from using the credits at sectarian schools.

Kendra Espinoza is a single mother who transferred her two daughters out of public school after her youngest struggled in class and her oldest was repeatedly bullied. She put them in Stillwater Christian School, a nondenominational school in Kalispell, Montana, largely because "the school teaches the same Christian values" she teaches at home, she said.

But, according to the Institute for Justice, a Virginia-based law firm, Espinoza struggles to pay tuition, in spite of working at two jobs–as an office assistant by day and a janitor at night. She has had to supplement her income by raffling off donated quilts and holding yard sales. Her daughters have chipped in by taking odd jobs.

Espinoza was counting on help from a tax-credit scholarship program that the Montana Legislature enacted in 2015. The purpose of the program "is to provide parental and student choice in education" for K to 12 students. It does so by providing a modest tax credit—up to $150 annually—to individuals and businesses who donate to private, nonprofit scholarship organizations. Those organizations then use the donations to give scholarships to families who wish to send their children to a private school. Recipients can use the scholarships at any qualified school.

Unfortunately, the Montana Department of Revenue enacted an administrative rule that prohibited scholarship recipients from using their scholarships at religious schools. The Montana Supreme Court upheld the rule and then went on to invalidate the whole program, saying that because families may choose to use the scholarships at religious schools, the program aided religious institutions, making the program unconstitutional under the Montana Constitution. Part of the reasoning was that by providing the $150 tax credit to donors of the program, the legislature indirectly paid tuition at private, religiously-affiliated schools and thus aided religious schools.

Without the scholarships, Espinoza and other low-income parents may have to pull their children out of the private schools they find are better for their kids. But last month, Espinoza and her daughters got a real-life lesson in the American system of government when they attended the United States Supreme Court's hearing of her case, *Espinoza v. Montana Department of Revenue*. As framed by the Institute for Justice, the case asks whether it violates the Religion Clauses or Equal Protection Clause of the United States Constitution to invalidate a generally available and religiously neutral student-aid program simply because the program affords students the choice of attending religious schools.

In overturning the scholarship program, Montana's Supreme Court cited Article X, Section 6 of the Montana Constitution, which prohibits "direct or indirect appropriation or payment from any public fund or monies … for any sectarian purpose or to aid any church, school, academy, seminary, college university, or other literary or scientific institution, controlled in whole or in part by any church, sect, or denomination." Article X, Section 6 is a 1972 update of Montana's so-called Baby Blaine Amendment, one of 29 such

state constitution amendments that prohibited the allocation of public funds to sectarian schools and other institutions. The Blaine Amendments came about at a time of severe anti-Catholic animus in the late 19th century.

"State Blaine amendments, born and nurtured in anti-Catholic bigotry, … invidiously exclude religious institutions and religion-exercising individuals from generally available public benefits," said the Catholic Association Foundation, a Montana lay organization dedicated to being a faithful voice for Catholics in the public square, in a friend-of-the-court brief filed in *Espinoza v. Montana*. "The bigotry accompanying the passage of state Blaine amendments is probative of unconstitutional animus in violation of the Equal Protection Clause and should be carefully considered by this Court. Such anti-Catholic sentiment has now morphed into a generalized anti-religious bias in favor of 'secular' education."

President Trump, in his State of the Union address Tuesday evening, called on Congress to pass the Education Freedom Scholarships and Opportunities Act, which would amend the Internal Revenue Code to establish tax credits to encourage individual and corporate taxpayers to contribute to scholarships for elementary and secondary students through eligible scholarship-granting organizations. Low income families would be prioritized to receive funding, to send their kids to the school of their choice.

"No parent should be forced to send their child to a failing government school" Trump said in support of the bill, introduced in the House last February. "For too long, countless American children have been trapped in failing government schools. To rescue these students, 18 states have created school choice in the form of Opportunity Scholarships. The programs are so popular that tens of thousands of students remain on a waiting list."

It does not appear likely that the Democrat-majority House will pass such a bill, however, and some observers think that there is more likelihood that the Supreme Court will issue a school-choice-friendly decision in Espinoza. If it does—and a ruling is expected by June—it would be a "virtual earthquake" in the public education system, said Randi Weingarten, the president of the American Federation of Teachers. She told the New York Times that it would send money "cascading away" from public schools.The newspaper added that about 18 states offer tax-credit scholarship programs.

The Catholic Association Foundation brief supported Espinoza and other parents in their plight for school choice.

"Parents, as the primary educators of their children, should not be limited in the choice of schools for their children and many parents prefer religiously-affiliated schools," the brief argued. "Barring parents who choose religious schools for their children from state-sponsored scholarship funds subjects these parents to disfavored treatment in violation of the Constitution."

John Burger

https://aleteia.org/2020/02/05/supreme-court-to-hear-case-on-tax-credits-for-religiously-affiliated-schools

14-Year-Old Catholic Student Is a Prodigious Composer

This kid could be writing music through most of the 21st century.

Julian Raheb is only 14 years old, but he already has a body of work in the field of music composition that rivals most college graduates. By the age of 12, he had written more than 20 original pieces of classically styled music and now, just two years later, he has debuted no less than six of them with the Regina Opera Company.

Recently, Julian debuted his latest composition, called "Almighty Blizzard," in a performance with the esteemed opera company at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Academy, in Brooklyn. The music was said to imitate the erratic movements of a winter storm.

Raheb has been exhibiting his prodigious piano skills since he was 10 yearsnold, but he says he finds the most fulfillment in showing off his original works. In an interview with NETNY, Julian told Emily Drooby:

"It feels great to express myself through music and creating my own style that nobody else has done."

The child prodigy was discovered by Francine Garber, chairwoman of the Regina Opera company. She told Brooklyn Paper that she was blown away by the maturity of the Catholic student's music, when he was just 12. She explained that she played the Regina orchestra recordings of Julian's pieces without telling them how young he was and, once they found out, there was a general consensus that they needed to work with Raheb.

Of his original pieces, Julian says he has been most influenced by the works of Chopin and Bach, the prolific hymnist. While he has not yet written any hymns, with his Catholic background and his appreciation for Bach, we expect to see him try his hand at the style in the years to come.

Thanks to his youth, Julian could very well be an active composer for the majority of this century. We can't wait to hear his development as he enters college and delves into the deepest, most experimental aspects of music composition.

J-P Mauro

https://aleteia.org/2020/02/05/14-year-old-catholic-student-is-a-prodigious-composer

Bishops Applaud School Choice As Pence Visits Catholic School

The U.S. bishops' conference praised a Trump administration plan to expand school choice Wednesday, as Vice President Mike Pence paid a visit to a Catholic school in inner-city Philadelphia.

In a statement released Feb. 5, USCCB education committee chair Bishop Michael C. Barber, SJ, of the Diocese of Oakland, and Bishop Michael J. Fitzgerald, auxiliary bishop of Philadelphia, praised President Donald Trump, Pence, and Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos for their commitment to school choice, and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for its expansive scholarship tax credit programs.

"The right of parents to exercise freedom of choice in education is firmly rooted in the teachings of our Catholic faith," said the bishops in the statement. In the USCCB document "Renewing our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium," published in 2005, the bishops explained that it was the entire Catholic community's job to advocate for school choice programs, including personal and corporate tax credits.

"We applaud the goals of Education Freedom Scholarships and hope to one day see the opportunity for all families to have the freedom to select a school according to their conscience," said the bishops.

Pence and DeVos visited St. Francis de Sales School in West Philadelphia on Wednesday, hours after President Trump spoke in favor of school choice during his State of the Union address on Tuesday.

During the speech, Trump informed Janiyah Davis, a fourth-grader who attends a low-performing public school in Philadelphia, that she would be receiving a scholarship to attend a different school. Davis and her mother attended the speech as guests of the president.

"Janiyah, I have some good news for you — because I am pleased to inform you that your long wait is over," said Trump to Davis. "I can proudly announce tonight that an Opportunity Scholarship has become available, it is going to you, and you will soon be heading to the school of your choice."

DeVos will be personally funding the scholarship awarded to Davis.

During Pence's visit to St. Francis de Sales, he praised Pennsylvania for "leading the way" on school choice. The vice president said school choice is "not a partisan issue," although those who are in favor of charter schools or scholarships often face opposition. He echoed Trump's State of the Union, saying that "No parent should be forced to send their child to a failing government school."

DeVos also spoke at the event.

"Pennsylvania families want more education freedom," Devos told the crowd at St. Francis. She said that the type of school a child attends, whether it be charter, public, or private, should not matter, and instead people should "focus on what truly matters: students and their learning."
St. Francis de Sales is run by the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (I.H.M.). Six IHM sisters work at the school.

Sister Mary McNulty, IHM, is the principal of the school. She told the Philadelphia Inquirer that nearly nine out of 10–87%–of

students enrolled at the school receive a scholarship. The tuition at St. Francis de Sales school is $5,200 per year, or $4,000 per child per year for families who send multiple children to the school.

McNulty told the Inquirer that the scholarship programs “mean everything to me,” and that she “gladly hosted” Pence and DeVos. She hopes the scholarship program would be expanded to a federal program.

“If this would go to the federal level, we could help so many more families,” she said.

CNA

https://www.catholicworldreport.com/2020/02/06/bishops-applaud-school-choice-as-pence-visits-catholic-school/

Spain Found Its Voice. Will We?

Over in Spain, the Vox ("Voice") party is standing up for parents' rights in education. Vox is promoting a policy that allows parents to opt their children out of "talks, workshops or activities with an ideological or moral leaning against their leanings."

Not surprisingly, the policy in defense of parental rights has sparked a firestorm from pro-LGBT advocates in Spain. And also not surprisingly, the rhetoric around the issue has slipped into Orwellian double-think, where it is difficult to keep track of what is actually going on.

To listen to the protests of pro-LGBT advocates, Vox's attempt to uphold the parental right to choose what sexual content their children are exposed to at school is tantamount to fascism. Eight education leaders from the Spanish Socialist Party accused Vox of trying to impose "blind and uncritical authoritarianism." The Spanish education minister asserted that children are not the property of parents, implying that while the state has the right to teach children whatever it wants, parents do not.

In lobbing accusations of authoritarianism and fascism at Vox, these LGBT advocates miss—or disguise—the truth. Vox isn't authoritarian: their opponents are.

This is a crucial element to the discussion about parents' rights: when the state starts mandating moral education for children that goes against parents' beliefs, it has started down the road towards totalitarianism. The language of the debate in Spain is telling—whereas Vox is advocating for parents to have the right to choose what content their children are exposed to, pro-LGBT ministers and advocates are pushing to eliminate that choice. They accuse Vox of hate and homophobia simply for saying that parents might have a variety of views on issues of sex and gender.

American parents would do well to sit up and take notice of this clash, because this fight is coming to our shores—and fast. State governments across America seem to think that they and not the family have the right to facilitate children's moral education. Even now, children in many American public schools are regularly exposed to graphic, progressive sex ed curricula that directly undercut Catholic and Christian teachings about sex and gender. These curricula often include graphic descriptions of sexual acts, photographs of symptoms of sexually transmitted diseases, and lesson plans affirming same-sex attraction, sexual experimentation, and transgenderism.

It is especially important for Catholic parents to be aware of what is going on, because the Church is crystal clear in teaching that parents—not the state—bear responsibility for the moral education of their children. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* says,

The political community has a duty to honor the family, to assist it, and to ensure especially: the freedom to establish a family, have children, and bring them up in keeping with the family's own moral and religious convictions… the freedom to profess one's faith, to hand it on, and raise one's children in it.
The family is truly the basic unit of society, and it is within the family that children begin to learn about morality, truth, and justice.

But this truth about the family's role in moral education is in danger of being totally

overwhelmed by government intervention. More and more states are moving in an authoritarian direction of mandating curriculum content. Last year, my home state of Colorado passed a law requiring that all public schools, including charter schools, that teach sex ed adopt a state-wide curriculum in which teachers are required to teach that any sexual activity is fine as long as everybody involved has consented—never mind that this is being taught in elementary school classrooms starting in fourth grade when children are usually around nine or ten years old. This year, parents in Washington State are protesting an even more extreme bill that would require all public schools to teach state-mandated sex education containing similar progressive content… starting in kindergarten.

Beyond state-level sex-ed curricula, public schools have begun hosting drag queens as guest speakers in elementary schools. An organization called Drag Queen Story Hour sends drag queens to classrooms to spread transgender indoctrination, reading stories like *Jacob's New Dress* and *Red: A Crayon's Journey*, in which a crayon "mislabeled" as red learns to identify as his true color of blue.

Now, in most states, parents still have the option of whether to have their children participate in sex education, including indoctrination events like Drag Queen Story Hour. This requires them, however, to be aware of what is going on in the classroom—and information from schools is not always forthcoming. Many parents only find out when their children come home with disturbing new ideas and questions. In August 2017, a teacher at a school in California staged an event "reintroducing" a gender-confused five-year-old boy to his classmates as a girl. The event was complete with a midday change of clothing from pants to a dress and a classroom reading of two books affirming transgender behavior. Parents had no idea this was going to happen and were shocked when their five-year-olds came home from school, some of them terrified that they might spontaneously switch sexes if they weren't careful.

The alleged parental option—unless there is a substantial increase in communication from schools—simply does not give parents enough say in their children's moral education. And it does not take much imagination to picture the ability to opt-out going away entirely. Just last month, California rejected a bill to switch the state's sex education from an "opt-out" system to an "opt-in" system, which would have given parents much more say in what content their children are exposed to. Right now, only four states have opt-in systems, which means that thirty-five, plus the District of Columbia, have opt-out ones. Complicating the situation is that eighteen states do not require sex ed material to be made available to parents—meaning that parents may encounter problems in trying to find out what their children will be taught.

In other words, states are making it difficult for parents to be even minimally involved in their children's moral education. And things will probably get worse rather than better. As the situation in Spain shows, it is only a small step from saying that the state has a responsibility to ensure that all public school curricula include this content to saying that the state has a responsibility to expose all children to it regardless of their parents' moral convictions.

Jane Clark Scharl

https://www.crisismagazine.com/2020/spain-found-its-voice-will-we

Celebrate the Students Who Marched for Life

They marched for life—and for that, they deserve to be celebrated.

Again this January, huge numbers of young people from around the country showed up in Washington, D.C., to demand an end to abortion. Many were from faithful Catholic schools and colleges that bused students to the annual March for Life.

Seeing all those schools and colleges represented made me very proud of our Catholic educators and their continued renewal of Catholic identity. And so, how perfect was it that we celebrated National Catholic Schools Week (Jan. 26-Feb. 1) just following the March?

The two events should remind us: when Catholic education is done well, it prepares its students to be ethical leaders and to transform the culture. And nothing could be more important than defending the weakest among us, the innocent baby in the womb.

Two pro-life leaders with Students for Life of America, one of the most dynamic pro-life organizations, say that their Catholic education prepared them for the work they do today.
Katie Portka credits her faithful Catholic education at Benedictine College in Atchison, Kansas, with strengthening her pro-life convictions. Portka learned about Benedictine through The Newman Guide, and then, while a senior in high school, saw the College's students carrying the banner at the head of the March for Life.

"I loved how energetic they were — this huge group of young adults who were so full of life and passionate," says Portka. She had been involved in pro-life efforts with her family, but she didn't often see large groups of young people standing for life as a high school student. Shortly after the March for Life, Portka signed her acceptance letter to attend Benedictine.

On campus, Portka immediately got involved in the large Respect Life Ravens Group. "The school at large was a very pro-life campus," she says, "in the dorms, in classes, and in the faculty."

Benedictine "really did embody the Church's teaching on life and the dignity and sanctity of life," says Portka. "In college was when I realized why I was pro-life and why I wanted to be pro-life."

Stephanie Stone works for Students for Life of America as regional coordinator in Maryland, Washington, D.C., and Virginia. She credits her faithful Catholic education with helping her discover that pro-life work was part of her "mission."

As a high school student, Stone visited The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., and "fell in love with how proudly the school wore its Catholic identity."

"Catholic University helped me to dive deeper into my faith and experience how faith is applied to the world around us," says Stone. "It also gave me a number of opportunities to become more active in the pro-life movement, eventually leading me to understand that pro-life work was my mission."

On campus, Stone served as president of the Cardinals for Life club and was instrumental in organizing the first Pep Rally for Life for students ahead of the March for Life. Stone

also found that studying in Washington, D.C., was a great place to learn about politics and grow in her pro-life beliefs.

"In my experience, having a Catholic education really solidified my understanding of the value of the human person," explains Stone. "It helped me form a deep respect and radical love for all of God's people, which is what ultimately encourages me to do this work."

Whether at the elementary, secondary or higher education level, the fruits of Catholic education can be seen in the witness of its graduates. Many alumni of faithful Catholic schools and colleges are doing important work in rebuilding a culture of life in our country.

Hopefully, last week's celebration of Catholic Schools was a reminder to Catholic educators everywhere to redouble their focus on the most important things that distinguish Catholic education from a secular program. Students should be prepared to follow God's will for their lives and impact the world.

Patrick Reilly

https://www.ncregister.com/blog/reilly/celebrate-the-students-who-marched-for-life

Signs of Hope

The church in Egypt rises again, reaching out to those on the margins
text by Magdy Samaan with photographs by Roger Anis

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

https://cnewa.org/magazine/signs-of-hope-33968

Baltimore Archbishop Says
Mother Lange's Sainthood Cause Moving Forward

Vatican officials are moving ahead with the cause for sainthood for Mother Mary Elizabeth Lange, Baltimore Archbishop William E. Lori announced recently.

If canonized, Mother Lange, the founder of the Oblate Sisters of Providence, would become the first black American saint. Mother Lange immigrated to Baltimore in the early 19th century and opened a school for black children in her small home in Baltimore's Fells Point section.

Eventually, Mother Lange founded the Oblate Sisters — the first religious order for women of African descent in the U.S. — and would operate what would later become St. Frances Academy. Mother Lange and the Oblate sisters provided Catholic education to black children in Baltimore despite the prevailing racism of the time.

Archbishop Lori was in Rome with fellow bishops from Region IV — the District of Columbia, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, U.S. Virgin Islands, West Virginia and the Archdiocese for the Military Services — for the "ad limina" visit. During their time in Rome, the bishops present detailed reports on their dioceses to Pope Francis and other Vatican officials.

While meeting with Vatican officials, Archbishop Lori received an update on Mother Mary Lange's cause for sainthood, which began in 1991.

"I'm happy to say her cause is moving along," Archbishop Lori said. "The position paper on her life of heroic virtue is nearly complete, and I think we should be all praying very hard that Mother Mary Lange's cause will advance and that one day she will be canonized a saint."

Xaverian Brother Reginald Cruz recently completed writing his official position paper, or "positio," on her life and holiness. Once published, the Congregation for Saints' Causes will evaluate the document, and if approved, the "positio" will be forwarded to the pope, who could grant Mother Lange the title of "Venerable," declaring her heroic virtues.

After the approval of the "positio," church scholars will then have to document two confirmed miracles attributed to her intercession. In general, one such miracle is needed for beatification, and a second miracle is needed for canonization.

Archbishop Lori called Mother Lange "a person who was in every way a pioneer" who "stood head and shoulders above the racism of her era."

The Archdiocese of Baltimore plans to open a new school named for Mother Lange in September 2021. The school — the first new Catholic K-8 school in the city in 60 years — will serve about 500 students from across Baltimore.

Swift is the social media coordinator for the *Catholic Review* and the Archdiocese of Baltimore. *The Revie*w is the news outlet of the archdiocese.

Tim Swift

https://www.catholicherald.com/News/Local_News/Baltimore_archbishop_says_Mother_Lange_s_sainthood_cause_moving_forward/

Bishop Paprocki Provides Pastoral Guide on Gender Identity

Bishop Thomas Paprocki of Springfield in Illinois issued a pastoral guide last month regarding diocesan policies on gender identity, expounding on existing policy that schools and other diocesan institutions will recognize students and adults by the biological sex with which they were born.

In the guide, Paprocki noted the need to approach the issue with compassion and sensitivity, while also adhering to Church teaching and the truth.

"Gender dysphoria is a real psychological condition, in which a biological male or female believes he or she is the opposite gender," Paprocki noted.

"It is of paramount importance to handle such situations with gentle and compassionate pastoral skill and concern. All forms of discrimination and harsh treatment must be strongly resisted and corrected," he said.

Families face great difficulties when they have a child experiencing gender dysphoria, Paprocki said, and he encouraged parents to help their child through their confusion without reinforcing the confusion and making their child think their problem will be "solved" with surgical or hormonal interventions.

"Such treatments, especially for children, are invasive and disruptive physically, chemically, psychologically, emotionally, and spiritually," Paprocki said. "Fueling the confusion that families face in these circumstances is not merciful. For the sake of the family and the loved one, it is imperative to be clear on the reality of human biology as a gift from God that we cannot change."

The bishop also noted that Pope Francis has expressed concerns with transgender ideology. In an April 2015 general audience, Pope Francis said: "the so-called gender theory is not an expression of frustration and resignation, which seeks to cancel out sexual difference because it no longer knows how to confront it. Yes, we risk taking a step backwards. The removal of difference, in fact, creates a problem, not a solution."

Paprocki said that "The Holy Father's concerns are grounded in the Church teaching, that our identities as male and female are part of God's good design in Creation, that our bodies and sexual identities are gifts from God, and that we should accept and care for our bodies as they were created."

According to diocesan policy, students and adult employees or volunteers in all diocesan agencies and activities will be referred to by pronouns that correspond with their biological sex, and will be expected to use bathrooms and other facilities according to biological sex. All diocesan records will also record the person's biological sex.

The policy notes that it encourages counseling with a counselor who has a Christian anthropology and adheres to Catholic teaching. It adds that "the Church recognizes that appropriate medical care may be necessary in rare cases of true genetic or physical anomalies, such as hermaphroditism or intersex."

"A person cannot change his or her gender. A person should accept and seek to live in conformity with his or her sexual identity as determined at birth," Paprocki said.

According to a Catholic understanding of the human person, people are a union of body and soul, and that body is "created male or female," Paprocki said, which is a "constitutive aspect of the human person."

The Church considers any medical interventions that remove or destroy healthy reproductive organs as "a type of mutilation and intrinsically evil. Procedures, surgeries, and therapies designed to assist a person in 'transitioning' his or her gender are morally prohibited," he noted.

Just as anorexia is a condition in which one's perception is separated from reality, Paprocki noted, gender dysphoria is a similar separation of perception and reality, and those with the condition should be helped to accept reality rather than their false perception of it.

"None the less, the presentation of this truth must be made with love, compassion, and patience. As the policy itself states, our schools, parishes and other institutions embrace with compassion those families and individuals with gender dysphoria and patiently supports them in their journey," he said.

"However, it must be clear that our schools and Church institutions (including sacramental records and school records) will refer to such persons with the gender pronouns, along with bathroom and locker room use and sports activities that acknowledge their God-given biology."

"Some families may not be willing to agree with this approach, and we need to respect their freedom; but they must likewise respect the Church's duty to adhere to revealed truth if they are to participate actively and fully in our faith community, especially our Catholic schools," he added.

One group that has expressed disagreement with and dismay at the policy is DignityUSA, an advocacy group "Celebrating the wholeness and holiness of LGBTQI Catholics."

In a statement, Marianne Duddy-Burke, Executive Director of DignityUSA, said Paprocki's pastoral guide is "perilous to the physical and mental health of transgender and nonbinary people" because it displays "a dangerous and willful ignorance of current medical and mental health standards."

In his guide, Paprocki noted that it was not sufficient as a whole response to the growing transgender movement and the threats that it poses, but that it was "a foundation of clarity and certainty regarding Church teaching regarding human biology, sexuality, and morality."

He urged pastors and school leaders to come to the Vicar for Priests and the Vicar General or the Superintendent of Schools for further guidance on particular situations involving gender dysphoria and gender identity.

CNA

https://www.catholicworldreport.com/2020/02/10/bishop-paprocki-provides-pastoral-guide-on-gender-identity/

Intersection of Faith and Science Focus of Program Aimed at High School Students

[Editor's Note: Chris Baglow is Director of the Science & Religion Initiative of the McGrath Institute for Church Life and Professor of the Practice of Theology in the Department of Theology at the University of Notre Dame. His leadership of the Science & Religion Initiative involves the creation and direction of programs that assist Catholic leaders in bringing the Catholic faith and modern science into dialogue for the sake of the New Evangelization. He spoke to Charles Camosy.]

Camosy: As someone who has done a range of teaching myself - high school, undergraduate, graduate - I'm not at all surprised that someone like you-who has an ever wider range of teaching experience-has effectively brought the complex topic of science and religion to a wide range of audiences. Can you say a bit about your experiences in this regard?

Baglow: It is hard for me not to marvel at how profoundly the decision to undertake work in this field altered the direction of my life and academic career, and quite unexpectedly so. It began in September 2005 while I was a Hurricane Katrina refugee, hunkering down with my family in an extra room at a rectory in Bunkie, a tiny town in the middle of central Louisiana. Just as I was wondering whether or not the college where I was teaching would ever open again, I received an unexpected phone call from Father Bry Shields, the president of McGill-Toolen Catholic High School in Mobile, Alabama, someone whom I had never met nor spoken with before. He asked if I would be interested in creating a curriculum for the upper grades on the relationship between the Catholic Faith and modern science as a companion to the new science curriculum and science center they were building. Given my somewhat desperate circumstances, I told him I'd take a shot at it, although I had no specific training in the field nor even much of an idea of where to begin.

It took two years to complete the curriculum, and two and half more before it was published as a semester-long elective course on the Catholic Faith and modern science. But the process of creating the text gave me an aerial view of another tragedy happening at almost exactly the same time that my beloved city, New Orleans, was ravaged by Katrina: The tidal wave of atheist propagandists absurdly claiming that science, in the words of the late particle physicist Victor Stenger, "shows that God does not exist."

I began writing the first edition in October, 2005, and completed the draft in May, 2007. At exactly the same time, the writings of the so-called "New Atheists" were popping up on bestseller lists. Sam Harris produced *The End of Faith* in 2005 and *Letter to a Christian Nation* in 2006; also in 2006, Richard Dawkins produced *The God Delusion*. Finally, in 2007 Christopher Hitchens would produce *God is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything*. All four are among the top-selling books promoting atheism in publishing history, and all were produced within that two-year window. At the time I had no idea of how lasting the damage would be from either storm. New Orleans has recovered quite well, but the cultural and intellectual damage from the other remains.

I noticed that you directed the Templeton-funded Steno Learning

Program in Faith and Science for Catholic Secondary Educators, a week-long seminar experience for Catholic science and religion teachers. What were some of the main ideas you wanted these teachers to wrestle with?

The SLP was also a desperate moment, of a sort. Once the curriculum was created, we quickly discovered that the faculty was struggling to adopt it. They were largely enthusiastic, but they lacked confidence. The science teachers had no training in theology or philosophy, and the theology teachers had little background in science. So we conceived of a week-long seminar program in which participating science and religion teachers would read great books and articles on the relationship between faith and science, and then come together for a week with expert moderators to discuss them and to brainstorm about how to integrate faith and science in their classrooms. We named it after Blessed Nicholas Steno (1638-1686), the Danish anatomist and geologist who founded the science of stratigraphy and fossil study before converting to Catholicism and becoming a priest and missionary bishop in Germany where he was renowned for his charity, truly a great scientist and a saint. The team was excellent: particle physicist Stephen Barr, theologian Cory Hayes, and evolutionary psychologist Matt Rossano, who have continued their contributions in the programs here at Notre Dame.

The topics ran the gamut: Faith, natural philosophy and science in the classical Catholic tradition (especially in Augustine and Aquinas), in contemporary magisterial teaching and Catholic theology (for this we read a number of St. John Paul II's remarkable discourses, especially his 1988 Letter to Father George Coyne, Director of the Vatican Observatory, considered by many to be the magna carta of faith-science dialogue), physics and creation, evolutionary biology and the theology of human origins. We read Joseph Ratzinger's little masterpiece *In the Beginning* on the creation accounts; we even read some science fiction (C.S. Lewis's *Perelandra*).

I knew we had hit on something when one religion teacher pulled me aside to say that up until the seminar, he had never been able to see evolution as anything but inimical to faith, but after it was excited to collaborate with the science department on helping his students see their harmony. Thanks to the Templeton Foundation, we were able to follow the 2011 event with two more in 2012 and 2013, and to open the program to schools from all over the U.S. In 2014, the McGrath Institute for Church Life of the University of Notre Dame took up the mantle and began their own week-long seminar, which ultimately became the Initiative that I direct.

The second edition of your impressive textbook *Faith, Science, and Reason: Theology on the Cutting Edge* is now out. I guess that means the first edition met an important need! What do you think is most of interest in this new edition?

Considering that the research for the first edition represents very first sustained research I had ever undertaken on the topic, there were many things that I felt should have been included or at least given more attention. There were issues I had not covered the first time around, such as the problem of evil, science and spirituality, and the historicalness roots of the warfare model of science and faith.

Plus, years of research and teaching had deepened my understanding of the Galileo Affair, of the biblical creation accounts, of

the witness of the Catholic intellectual tradition to important principles such as the integrity of nature. I wanted to give more attention to the incredible advances in the sciences of human origins that had occurred since the first edition was published. It was a chance to draw on years of teaching and lecturing to a wide variety of audiences and to more directly address the questions they most often ask, such as questions about Adam and Eve, original sin and death. As a result, the new edition is about 60 percent new material; even chapters that were included in the first edition have been largely rewritten.

Most importantly, I had so much more that I wanted to say about the Christian doctrine of creation. In the fifteen years since I began my work, no one had ever asked me what it means for a Christian to call God "the Creator." Both skeptics and believers all-too-often assume that the doctrine of creation is half about infinite power, half about some kind of occult engineering. This is why too many believers get excited about God of the Gaps arguments like Intelligent Design Theory, making God a "how" explanation for natural phenomena that they think science can't explain. They conceive of God as part magician, part mechanic, and part micromanager of complex processes.

The idea that a better analogy for God would be a playwright or a poet, and that love is the driving force behind the universe, both in terms of its reason for being as well as its meaning, never enters their minds. This means that very often even believers have two ideas about God in their minds, the God they encounter in Jesus Christ and the God who creates the universe as a kind of feat, a display of brute power.

To truly understand the Christian doctrine of creation is to come to see that, just as God causes us to come to life in Christ through mercy, causing goodness in us precisely where we have carved holes of nothingness into our lives through sin, that the doctrine of creation out of nothing means that every moment is an overwhelming display of the same kind of love. Creation itself is an act of mercy, of God causing goodness where it has no claim, where it is absent. So the freedom that we find in the natural development of the universe, for instance in the evolution of life and its diverse forms, is something we should expect if we see it in the light of the Christian doctrine of creation once we better understand it.

You now direct the Science and Religion Initiative at Notre Dame's McGrath Institute for Church Life. Can you tell us a bit about its mission and goals?

The mission of the Science and Religion Initiative is best captured by the title of our current grant from the Templeton Foundation: "Integrating Faith and Science at Catholic High Schools Nationwide." SRI equips educators to be competent and effective communicators of the complementarity of faith and reason, science and religion, and to enhance their teaching by bringing the two disciplines into dialogue in effective ways, drawing on the knowledge and expertise they gain through our programming. The 2014 seminar I mentioned earlier has grown into 3 annual summer seminars, featuring renowned scientists, philosophers and theologians: Foundations Notre Dame, Foundations New Orleans, and Capstone, our advanced seminar for teachers and schools administrators.

Additionally, SRI brings professional development programs, called "Institute Days," to schools which allows whole faculties, neighboring Catholic schools,

feeder schools, and diocesan and parish personnel to participate. Recognizing that Catholic education should be an integration of all of human knowledge in the light of the Gospel, we now offer presentations that include the other disciplines: history, fine arts, and literature, not to mention specific science subjects such as physics, chemistry and biology. Next week, on February 13, we will be with over 200 educators at Holy Family High School in Broomfield, Colorado for "Science and Faith: The Myth of Conflict"; and again at Bishop Guertin High School in Nashua, New Hampshire for an identical event on March 6.

As a theologian who focuses in bioethics, I'm also often working at the intersection of faith and science. At times I'm dismayed with what I find. But my students, who with just a bit of education can see the problems with the views they've often absorbed from the broader culture (or, sadly, even been taught by a misguided teacher), give me hope that we can get this thing turned around. Do you share in that hope?

Charles C. Camosy

I absolutely do share it, and for the same reason! My students here at Notre Dame, but also the many participants in our programs, are quite open to seeing the harmony between faith and science. They desire a "relational unity" between science and faith, between how and why explanations, and when offered them, they are grateful and even enthusiastic.

St. John Paul II once said that science and religion "can each draw the other into a wider world, where both may flourish." This confidence and openness is in such stark contrast to the stark, artificial binaries that our culture offers. I'll give him the final word, one which should challenge us all to do our part: "Christians will inevitably assimilate the prevailing ideas about the world, and today these are deeply shaped by science. The only question is whether they will do this critically or unreflectively, with depth and nuance or with a shallowness that debases the Gospel and leaves us ashamed before history.

https://cruxnow.com/interviews/2020/02/intersection-of-faith-and-science-focus-of-program-aimed-at-high-school-students/

Wisconsin School District Abandons 'A-F' Grading Scale to Prevent Stress

A school district in Madison, Wisconsin, has made the controversial decision to abandon the common "A to F" grading system based in favor of a system that is "kinder" to students. Now, top students will be graded as "exceeding" while failing students will be "emerging."

According to a report by the College Fix, the Madison Metropolitan School District has announced that they are doing away with the traditional "A-F" grading system in favor of a new system that is gentle on students.

The report, which was written by Christian Schneider, a parent in the school district, claims that the district has introduced four new categories to replace the traditional grading scale. Schneider noticed that his second-grade daughter's report card featured words like "exceeding" and "emerging" instead of letter grades.

"Exceeding" – Student consistently exceeds grade-level expectations for the end of the year.

"Meeting" – Student consistently meets grade-level expectations for the end of the year.

"Developing" – Student is developing understanding and is approaching grade-level expectations for the end of the year.

"Emerging" – Student begins to show initial understanding of grade-level expectations for the end of the year.

Schneider points out that the new grading system doesn't apply directly to a student's performance in each subject. Instead, students are graded on their ability to work in groups and tell stories.

The two scales don't match up largely because the new grades assigned don't address a specific class or subject – they deal mostly with behavior. The "Exceeding-Emerging" scale applies to 40 different classifications. Instead of being graded on "math" or "science," my daughter is being graded on "Tells a story or describes an experience," "cooperates with partners and in groups," and "understands and identifies stages in the life cycle of insects."

Breitbart News reported in January 2019 that a guest speaker at American University told faculty members that it was racist to judge the quality of a student's writing when grading a paper. The guest speaker, a professor in the University of Washington system, argued that traditional grading practices perpetuate "white supremacy."

Tom Ciccotta

https://www.breitbart.com/tech/2020/02/12/wisconsin-school-district-abandons-a-f-grading-scale-to-prevent-stress/

Just Say 'No'

In 2018, the Maryland legislature passed a bill requiring that sex education classes—those taught to thirteen-year-olds—include lessons on the meaning of consent. The results have been unsurprising. A January article in the *Washington Post* reports on seventh graders at Hallie Wells Middle School "huddled around a table in their second-period health class," debating a scenario about consent. The scenario involves a boy and girl, presumably also thirteen-year-olds, doing Spanish homework in the library. The boy starts kissing the girl. She likes the boy, but is concerned about being caught. "So be quiet," the boy responds. Has the girl given consent? "The students at this suburban Maryland middle school were stumped," *WaPo* observes. Well, go figure.

A faithful Catholic can appreciate that the provided consent scenario involves members of the opposite sex—as opposed to the same sex, or one being transgender, or both being transgender, or one being non-binary, etc. But that's about all there is to praise with this latest addition to sexual education for minors in the 21st century. In Montgomery County, the Post tells us, class discussions on consent can begin as early as fifth grade, "before they become sexually active." My knowledge on the matter is somewhat dated, but this is lamentably true. In 1996, when I was a seventh-grader at my suburban Virginia middle school, several of my classmates were already sexually active.

It's not that kids don't need to know about boundaries when it comes to their bodies and romantic relationships. They most certainly do. Yet it's more than a little ironic that adults in our hyper-sexualized culture would deign to teach consent as it relates to sex. They can't even agree among themselves about its definition and parameters.

One school of thought, which enjoys legislative approbation from states like California and New York, promotes the "affirmative consent standard." This precept requires sexual partners to obtain explicit consent before proceeding, rather than assuming consent is given unless the other person explicitly communicates, "No." Detractors have mocked affirmative consent for making the emotionally charged, enigmatic realm of sex into a tightly-scripted, sterile affair (no pun intended). Others argue that the presence of alcohol eliminates agency. Some would retort that it's often alcohol—"liquid courage"—that stimulates this part of the human person, especially when anxiety, self-doubt, and bashfulness are in the mix.

What constitutes consent? Despite much sociological and psychological inquiry, the question remains deeply amorphous. This is especially the case when so many sexual encounters occur outside the confines of committed relationships like marriage. What a single person agrees to in the heat of the moment, when lonely and looking for comfort after a long week, might be regretted either during the act, shortly thereafter, or the next morning (à la the "walk of shame"). Does one give consent once, or consistently throughout a sexual encounter? Moreover, our society's bizarre fascination with sexuality of the type found in the repulsive *Fifty Shades of Grey*—involving a girl whose sexual partner asks her to sign a non-disclosure agreement—has only further aggravated and confused Americans about sex and consent.

And yet public schools are trying to teach consent to fifth-graders. One of the paragraph headers of the *Washington Post* article is "A Gray Area." No kidding. As kids mature, they begin to recognize the many ambiguities of life: authors can be interpreted in different, sometimes contradictory ways; sometimes determining the "right thing to do" is not clear-cut; and sometimes people's problems are difficult, if not impossible, to fix.

These are confusing, difficult lessons to learn. They often require full development of the frontal lobe, which takes place in one's early twenties. If kids get confused by the ambiguities of Steinbeck or Orwell, is there much hope for clarity when it comes to sexual consent?

For that matter, why are schools even in the business of having an official curriculum regarding consent? Are parents not providing any guidance to children in this matter? In this sad day and age, when there are so many cases of sexual abuse of minors, what parents are not hyper-vigilant in teaching their children about appropriate and inappropriate touching as well as how to say no? An old friend of mine who was once my Protestant seminary professor, Justin Holcomb, published a book with his wife entitled *God Made All of Me: A Book to Help Children Protect Their Bodies*. Every parent should have this book or one like it, in order to help children understand their bodies and what to do when they receive unwanted touching by other people.

If parents are failing, however, in their mission to educate their children regarding how to protect themselves, this must become yet one more ridiculous obligation placed upon public educators. The problem is that the public school curriculum presumes that kids, apparently as early as fifth grade, will be engaging in sexual acts. And by presuming this, it implicitly encourages it—if not then, then not much later. "If you and your fellow thirteen-year-old boyfriend agree to have sex, as long as it's consensual, go for it," we might imagine such teachers declaring. This is madness.

For all the mockery of "virginity pledges," they at least aimed for and encouraged chastity. Such programs, whatever their flaws or silliness, teach children, rightly, to understand that sex is a gift from God, and that it is properly intended not simply for personal pleasure but for the good of the other, the creation of new life, and the glory of God.

As it is, we've simply raised the white flag to porn culture. This capitulation certainly hasn't been working for many adults—such as the millions of American addicted to porn, which in its frequently violent portrayals of sex engenders precisely a "greyer" conception of consent. Nor has it been working for those who suffer sexual assault or abuse from those who are confused about consent, seem to think they can persuade their victims into consent, or frankly don't care one way or the other.

Yes, kids need to understand consent—that is, how to say no. But not because they should be trying to navigate the ambiguous areas of sexual practice that even adults are struggling to understand and articulate. Rather, it should be No to adults touching them inappropriate or unwanted ways; No to other kids whose overtures complicate an already confusing time in adolescent development; No to a broader secular culture that elevates consent, rather than chastity and self-gift, as the gold standard for sexual behavior.

Kids should be warned about the damages wrought by all manner of deviant sexual behavior, including pre-marital sex.

Unfortunately, for many of the young educated in the public school system, they won't know until too late.

Casey Chalk

https://www.crisismagazine.com/2020/just-say-no

Lord of the Rings Star Says the World Owes Christianity 'The Greatest Debt of Thanks'

The Lord of the Rings star John Rhys-Davies, a self-described “rationalist” and “skeptic,” says the world owes Christianity “the greatest debt of thanks” for making the world a better place.

Rhys-Davies made the declaration on the red carpet at the 28th annual Movieguide Awards, held late last month at the historic Avalon Theater in Hollywood. The awards show celebrates faith and family content in movies and television. The actor’s voice was featured as Evangelist in the animated film “Pilgrims Progress,” which was honored at the gala.

"I count myself a rationalist and a skeptic, and I find myself constantly defending Christians and Christianity,” Rhys-Davies said in an interview with The Christian Post. “I find that wonderful because we seem to forget that Christian civilization has made the world a better place than it ever was. One of the great glories was the abolition of slavery, for instance. And there is still slavery and that makes me very mad.”

The Welsh actor, who played Gimli in *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, also has a starring role in the upcoming faith-based film, *I Am Patrick*, which releases for St. Patrick’s Day. Fathom Events is set to screen the inspirational docudrama nationwide on March 17 and 18. It examines the life of the fifth-century missionary saint who is often called the Apostle of Ireland.

The movie garnered positive feedback from Lisa M. Hendey, author of *The Secret of the Shamrock*, who said the feature-length film is “faithfully rooted in his own writings and historically accurate storytelling.”

“St. Patrick overcame his own failings and experienced a challenging yet profound conversion and then devoted his life to share the Gospel with zeal, joy and love,” Hendey said. “This film tells his story with truth, candor and beauty.”

Sister Helena Raphael Burns, a movie reviewer for *Life Teen & The Catholic Channel* on Sirius XM, noted the remarkable transformation of St Patrick.

“The strong takeaway is the almost unbelievable hardships Patrick endured, as well as his transformation from a nominal Christian to a close friend of God during his times of extreme privation,” she wrote. “There is much for us to imitate regarding his profound prayer life and zeal for souls!”

During his red-carpet appearance, Rhys-Davies cited the early history of Christianity in bringing forth the ideology of democracy.

“All the things that we value, the right of free speech, the right of the individual conscience, these evolved in first and second century Roman Christendom, where the individual Christian said, 'I have a right to believe what I believe and not what the Emperor tells me.' From that our whole idea of democracy and the equality that we have has developed,” the actor said.

"We owe Christianity the greatest debt of thanks that a generation can ever have, and to slight it and to dismiss it as being irrelevant is the detritus of rather ill-read minds, I think.”

The Hallmark Channel will broadcast the award show on Feb. 24.

Lori Arnold

https://www.christianheadlines.com/contributors/lori-arnold/lord-of-the-rings-star-says-the-world-owes-christianity-the-greatest-debt-of-thanks.html

Gov Vows End, Not Just Rebranding, of Common Core

Florida's governor is being praised for ending the state's Common Core as promised and an education watchdog says it appears to be the real deal.

The Tampa Bay Times reports Gov. Ron DeSantis promised Floridians last year he would address Common Core and issued an executive order that drops Common Core goals in two subjects, language arts and math.

"It appears," says Neal McCluskey of the Cato Institute, "that the governor is trying to come up with something that is substantially different from the Common Core."

DeSantis, who narrowly won election in 2019, has introduced Benchmarks for Excellent Student Thinking (B.E.S.T.) for K-12 public school students. He also ordered a review of academic standards that is now complete, Breitbart News reported in a January story.

According to Breitbart, former governor Jeb Bush supported Common Core for the state's public education system. The state "rebranded" the controversial benchmarks as the "Florida Standards" but it was really Common Core under another name, the story says.

DeSantis, however, has said he intends to "remove all vestiges" of Common Core and "return to the basics of reading, writing, and arithmetic."

A major change to the new public education curriculum is emphasis on civics, including studying America's founding documents and a civics exam for Florida's high school students.

According to McCluskey, it would not be surprising to see "overlap" between Common Core and the new education standards because some of the basics are covered under both.

Bob Kellogg

https://onenewsnow.com/education/2020/02/14/gov-vows-end-not-just-rebranding-of-common-core

Two Reasons for Fewer Vocations

We pray for vocations quite frequently. We should never despair. There are legions of wonderful men entering the priesthood. But there are many reasons for fewer vocations in years past. The decline began long before the sex abuse scandal that first convulsed Boston in 2002.

There are certainly more than two reasons. Causes are complex, at times self-inflicted, and perhaps outnumber the stars in the sky. Despite increasing numbers in the Catholic Church world-wide (1.2 billion) there are far fewer priests, nuns, religious than historic averages in the mid-twentieth Century.

The goal is not necessarily to revert to historic averages of the past. It is wise and healthy for the faithful to be discerning when considering a possible vocation. (Exploring discernment itself is to be encouraged!) It is wise for seminaries to be more judicious; formation within seminaries is among the current difficulties.

Myriad causes can be distilled into one: Lost Catholic Identity in our increasingly secularized world. Such secularization has crept its way, in varying degrees, into two critical areas:

1. Celebration of the Sacred Liturgy
2. Catholic Schools and Faith Formation of children and adults

This is not a judgment, but a mindfulness to be proud of our Catholic Faith. Catholics are often left on the defensive these days—clergy and religious especially. Furthermore, they are overworked. Young diocesan priests are pushed into being pastors much sooner than in the past — sometimes after merely three years of being a Parochial Vicar. They must be all things to all people from economist to human recourses manager to saving our souls. Just a day at the office!

Regarding the Mass, I have frequently written about the transformative power of singing the Mass instead of singing favorite songs at Mass—however beloved. Singing the scriptures, and singing sound Roman Catholic theology is our responsibility, not just another option.

Sadly, many celebrations of the Sacred Liturgy fall short of embracing our traditional music that is replete with rich theology and scripture. Many new pieces possess the same qualities, but far too many do not.

Such decisions on the content of sacred music have been outsourced to publishers who may have economic realities to consider. These worldly considerations may come above souls, above liturgical documents, and above sacred beauty.

Other publishers handle this responsibility quite admirably and seriously and have been of great service to the Church, e.g.: CanticaNOVA Publications, World Library Publications (now a division of G.I.A.), Illuminare Publications, Corpus Christi Watershed, St. Michael Hymnal, Adoremus Hymnal, etc. They are not making much money—if any! These adhere to standards of Roman Catholic theology regardless of musical style or commercial demands. (Full disclosure: I am published with WLP, CanticaNOVA, and Corpus Christi Watershed. I know the editors quite well, their ethos, and production!)

The marketing and commercialization of sacred music has had vastly mixed results,

some positive, but some deleterious. Because it is published does not mean it contains solid theology or even correct theology. Because it is popular does not make it suitable for the sacred liturgy. Because it is allowable, popular, or in print does not mean it is inspiring, elevating, or edifying. It can be. Publication is not the determining factor.

While every generation has published its fair share of sub-par music—of every style—the post-Vatican II commercialization of sacred music correlates with an increasingly secularized society. It is in this society that we need our Roman Catholic Faith more than ever.

Has the marketing and commercialization of sacred music contributed to fewer vocations? It is silly to think it is the sole cause or a direct one. But it is a telltale sign in a larger picture: that that Mass looks, sounds, (and smells) more like the secular world than one that elevates our hearts and minds to higher realms of the ineffable mystery of God. If we offer the world a similar — or subpar — experience of secular society and entertainment, then why bother attending Mass?

What is there to offer if just a foggy mirror image of ourselves? We should be focused on Christ, not ourselves. Such self-focus is perhaps a large contributor toward fewer vocations.

Furthermore, all of this impacts not only priestly and religious vocations but also our responsibilities and vocations as parents. It impacts family life, our work, and how we live out our lives as Christians: Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi, Lex Vivendi — the law of prayer is the law of belief, and from this flows the law of how Christians must live our lives!

Regarding education in our Catholic schools, an answer to declining enrollment is not to take a cue from the outside secular world, but to embrace ever more tightly our Catholic Faith, our Catholic traditions, Catholic theology, and the Seven Themes of Catholic Social Teaching. We must reinforce and teach all of these things at all levels of education from Pre-K to high school (and beyond! We never stop learning until we die.) Just as in other circular methods of pedagogy that reinforce the essentials at every level, so too must our Catholic education fortify the tenets of our faith at every age.

Thomas Carroll, Superintendent of Schools for the Archdiocese of Boston implores that Catholic Schools embrace their Catholicism as their greatest strength. He writes in the Boston Pilot:

Some Catholic school leaders wrongly believe that they should de-emphasize faith as they seek to market their schools in a broadly secular society. This is a mistake. Given competition from free district schools and free charter schools, a Catholic school will not prevail by positioning itself as a tuition-charging secular (non-religious) school. Our schools can “go further with faith.” What Catholic schools offer is something more transcendent than any secular school can ever offer. This is our strength, not a weakness.

Such can also be said of the celebration of our greatest prayer, the Mass.

I am not a priest or religious, but a dad. I recognize this is my highest vocation and not that of a musician. But our children’s religious environment must be something they are familiar with every day of their lives. It is something they will be proud of only if we are too. They will love their faith

as they grow only if we show love for our faith too.

We take care with the Sacred Liturgy and with religious education not because of requirement, but because of love. We love God. We love our Catholic Faith. We love our children.

God has blessed us greatly. God has given us all that we have. Perhaps, greater attention to these matters may inspire more vocations. But also, it will transform all of us be better Christians—to fulfill Jesus' New Commandment, His Mandatum Novum—to "love one another as I have loved you."

Richard J. Clark

https://www.ccwatershed.org/2020/01/31/two-reasons-fewer-vocations/

A Catholic Style Guide

A colleague at the Catholic high school where I teach approached me recently with a question. Girls at our school, he said, often dress immodestly. What could he do? He had studied Church documents and read lay publications that deplored the modern degeneration of women's fashions. Some of these documents cite evidence of a Masonic campaign to undermine Christianity by corrupting women. Others quote statements from popes and bishops who spoke against pants, short sleeves, and low-cut necklines for women. I too had come across some of these documents. While I sympathized with the general concerns they raised, I saw little use for them among my students. Dress codes only go so far. Most of them chastise the girls for immodesty. Occasionally, someone reminds the boys to tidy up their collars and sleeves. In the long run, however, restrictive rules do not help anybody dress well. Students rebel or simply wear whatever seems most comfortable. The reason, I believe, is that the majority of teenagers—and adults—never learn how to achieve a stylish appearance and seldom consider why it matters that they look their best.

Concern with the relationship between clothing and morality is as old as original sin. After Adam and Eve had eaten the forbidden fruit, God taught them to clothe their bodies as he sent them into exile. From then on, fashions regularly challenged morality. In the Middle Ages, St. Thomas Aquinas found it necessary to distinguish between legitimate and improper uses of cosmetics for women. During the Renaissance, fashionable men paraded in tight hose and short breeches. Actresses in restoration theatre in England titillated audiences by appearing on the stage in male disguise.

In the 1700s, men and women wore heels, wigs, and makeup. That century also encouraged plunging necklines for women, while, later, the Victorian period corseted women in ways that unnaturally emphasized the sexual characteristics of their bodies. The link between fashion and behavior surfaces in many works of literature. In Little Women, Meg feels embarrassed at the cut of a dress her friends persuade her to wear to a party. A passage in War and Peace describes the novel's heroine, Natasha, at the opera where she looks bemused "at the rows of pomaded heads in the stalls and then at the rows of seminude women in the boxes, especially at Hélène in the next box who—apparently quite unclothed—sat with a quiet tranquil smile not taking her eyes off the stage." Significantly, it is after that evening at the opera that Natasha consents to elope with the dashing (and married) Anatole.

So, the connection between fashion and morality is by no means a modern problem. Two things, however, seem unique to our iteration of the issue. First is the abandonment of aesthetic principles in fashion. Many of us want to look good, but do not know how to do it. Second is the confusion of gender identities. Women freely don male attire, while men turn to traditionally feminine methods of cultivating personal appearance.

The first aspect of the current cultural fashion crisis is the loss of the sense of beauty. Beauty in personal appearance seems less important to us than individual taste or functionality. The Victorian corset, after all, worked by creating precise ratios between bust, waist, and hips. Floor-length skirts offset risky décolletages in earlier periods. Today, most men and women do

not realize how adjustments of color, line, and proportion can improve or undermine their appearance. For instance, patterns add bulk, but solid, dark hues make surfaces look smaller. This simple insight can help us to decide how to make suitable use of patterns or solid colors in clothing. Likewise, specific color palettes match different skin tones, just as length can be used to attract or distract the eye. Thus, long hemlines draw the eye downward (not always a good thing for someone of petite height), while shorts and miniskirts create the opposite (and often problematic) effect.

My students are surprised when I tell them that fashion, like math or grammar, has its own rules derived from optics and geometry. In this respect, fashion design is no different from any other craft where the application of correct principles produces consistently satisfying results. Principles of aesthetically pleasing dress can be taught.

Specifics will differ according to climate, tradition, or circumstance. Age, girth, and occupation will always influence individual wardrobes. Nevertheless, awareness of basic principles that help to attain neatness and coordination of one's attire not only delivers an aesthetically appealing look, but also saves time and money as we no longer buy unflattering clothes. In a world where supposedly anything goes, order in one's appearance offers a powerful witness to the existence of beauty.

The second and more troubling aspect of modern fashions is gender confusion. In the past, visible distinctions between male and female dress helped to define sexual identities and social roles. The Renaissance nobleman's dress showed off his virility even as it conflated masculinity with aggressive, predatory attitudes. The absurdly small waist of the Victorian corset shaped an image of weakness oddly paired with sexual availability signaled through the artificial exaggeration of the bust and hips.

If those fashions may have disseminated rigid stereotypes, modern dress suggests uncertainty about gender roles and gender itself. The widespread adoption of male clothing by women coincided with the rise of the women's movements of the 1960s, which rejected traditional male and female social roles, taught women to claim independence from domestic duties, and urged them to compete with men for jobs, salaries, and prestige on the professional arena. Today, when the sight of women in pant suits has become commonplace, we may wonder at the popularity of typically feminine practices among men who frequent waxing salons, get facials, and wear makeup.

Indeed, such erasing of sexual differences between men and women is perhaps more egregious than the oversexualization of the human body and behavior through fashion. By blurring distinctions between the sexes, we achieve the opposite effect: instead of highlighting male and female sexual characteristics and prescribing male and female roles in relationships, we pretend that sex expresses only a personal choice. As radical gender ideology would have it, femininity and masculinity are no more than opposite poles of the fluid continuum of gender identities. Gender becomes a decision or a provisional experiment. Formerly a defining feature of our identity as men and women, sex, linguistically, now refers to mere physical characteristics and preferences that can be modified at will.

Clothing is a powerful signifier of sexual identity. Fashion matters as an external marker of our femininity or masculinity. Whether that means that women must never

wear pants is debatable, I think. Such particular questions are best settled by applying those simple principles of design that can tell us what styles, lengths, and colors work for different individuals. More important is that men and women dress in ways that uphold their sexual identity.

This does not have to imply that we perpetuate stereotypes. Rather, it communicates our refusal to treat sexuality as a shifting, provisional concept independent of the actual structure of our bodies. Clothes that assert our masculinity or femininity counteract an ideology that severs the relationship between our bodies and ourselves. Ultimately, dressing well and dressing in accordance with our God-given nature are connected. They refer us to objective sources of beauty and natural order.

Justyna Braun

https://www.crisismagazine.com/2020/a-catholic-style-guide

After LGBT Teachers Resign, Seattle Archbishop Says Teachers Must Be Gospel Witnesses

After students at a Catholic high school in Washington state staged protests in support of two teachers who resigned their posts in order to civilly marry their same-sex partners, the Archbishop of Seattle said that teachers in Catholic schools must live Catholic doctrine.

“Pastors and church leaders need to be clear about the church’s teaching, while at the same time refraining from making judgments, taking into consideration the complexity of people’s lived situations. We are always called to compassion as we journey with our people. The end goal of walking together in faith is to help people embrace the fullness of the Gospel message and integrate the faith more deeply into their lives,” Archbishop Paul Etienne of Seattle said in a statement Feb. 19.

“Those who teach in our schools are required to uphold our teaching in the classroom and to model it in their personal lives. We recognize and support the right of each individual to make choices. We also understand that some choices have particular consequences for those who represent the church in an official capacity,” the archbishop added.

The statement came after Michelle Beattie and Paul Danforth of Kennedy Catholic High School in Burien, Washington voluntarily resigned last week, according to school officials, although the teachers later retained an attorney. They have not opened legal action against the school, and have not yet spoken out publicly, but their attorney has said the teachers expected the Archdiocese of Seattle to terminate the employment.

A statement from the school last week praised the teachers as "highly capable, gifted and qualified teachers who have served our community with dedication and humility. Their loss will be felt deeply by their students and the entire community. We are thankful to Paul and Michelle for their years of service."

Some students at the high school staged a sit-in and a walkout on Feb. 18 in support of the teachers. Students, as well as parents and alumni of the school, also staged a protest outside the diocesan chancery in Seattle.

Michael Prato, president of Kennedy Catholic, said in a statement that the two teachers approached him in November 2019 to share their desire to civilly marry their same-sex partners.

The teachers had voluntarily signed a covenant agreement to “live and model the Catholic faith in accord with Church teaching,” Prato said. In light of the agreement they signed, both chose to resign, he said.

“I hired these teachers and I care about them very much. I still do,” Prato said.

“I wanted to make sure they felt supported, and so we discussed several options including the possibility of finishing out the school year.”

He said he gave the teachers the option to select the date they wanted to resign, and they indicated they wished to resign prior to the winter break in February. He said they also worked out a transition plan and financial package for the teachers.

In the United States, various Catholic schools and dioceses have faced lawsuits from employees who have been fired after contracting civil same-sex marriages in violation of the diocesan or school policy.

The Catholic Church teaches that while homosexual inclinations are not sinful, homosexual acts "are contrary to the natural law…under no circumstances can they be approved."

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* goes on to say that people with "deep-seated homosexual tendencies" should be "accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided."

However, in 2003, the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith said that "in those situations where homosexual unions have been legally recognized or have been given the legal status and rights belonging to marriage, clear and emphatic opposition is a duty."

"One must refrain from any kind of formal cooperation in the enactment or application of such gravely unjust laws and, as far as possible, from material cooperation on the level of their application. In this area, everyone can exercise the right to conscientious objection," the CDF added.

CNA Daily News

https://www.catholicworldreport.com/2020/02/21/after-lgbt-teachers-resign-seattle-archbishop-says-teachers-must-be-gospel-witnesses/

Catholic High School Runs Eye-Opening Vaping Experiments

The scientific demonstration, developed by Cornell, is meant to educate kids on the real dangers of vaping.

Despite data that has shown vaping to be more dangerous than originally thought, the drug pitched as an alternative to smoking is more popular than ever. Where strip-mall smoke shops closed in great numbers, vaping stores have risen in their places and their presence at what feels like every other street corner has served to normalize the habit to the younger generation.

Kids seem to be all too eager to try the addictive substance. A study from the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) suggests that a full quarter (25%) of American high school students have tried vape or are active vapers. In a similar study, NIDA also found that 7 in 10 children are exposed to advertisements for vaping. With the younger generation exposed to these smokeless cigarettes at every turn, it seems prudent to begin educating them on the dangers of such habits.

That's just what the teachers at Bishop Loughlin Memorial High School, in Brooklyn, thought and they have now begun to teach the real effects that vaping can have on the body, in scientific terms.

The lesson utilizes scientific equipment to run an experiment, which was developed by Cornell University. NetNY's Emily Drooby reports that students are given tetrahymena, a substance which mimics a living cell, and then they introduce it to e-cigarette vapor.

Students observe the reaction through microscopes, which show the effect vaping has on the cellular level.

One student, Robert Simpson, described what he saw:

"When we put the e-cig juice in, all the tetra stopped swimming. The black particles also represent metal that would be bad in my lungs. So it shows how it's bad for us."

His teacher clarified that the effect of the vaping particles on the "living" cells is much harsher than just some sluggishness:

"The tetra actually die off. They slow down, their speeds decrease."

The results of the experiment have the children of the Clinton Hill school thinking twice about their use of e-cigarettes, which was exactly the response that teachers had hoped for. Brother Dennis Cronin, President of Bishop Loughlin Memorial High, noted that the program was found to be beneficial and suggested that they will continue to conduct the experiments with students:

"The steps to correct it with young people is to diminish its attractiveness to use. That's why I think this program is very important."

Bishop Loughlin Memorial High School is one of the first secondary schools to put the Cornell program into effect, but with the success they have enjoyed, it may soon come to a school near you.

J-P Mauro

https://aleteia.org/2020/03/02/catholic-high-school-runs-eye-opening-vaping-experiments

Minnesota Bishops Issue Guidelines on Transgenderism in Catholic Schools

The Catholic bishops of Minnesota have published guidelines regarding gender identity and Catholic schools, emphasizing the Catholic mission of schools and the Church's doctrinal teaching on sexuality and identity.

"The Catholic school is committed to providing a safe environment that allows students to flourish academically, physically, and spiritually. Catholic schools are obliged to provide an education and resources consistent with Catholic teaching," the guidelines state.

Catholic education has as its foundation "the God-given irrevocable dignity of every human person."

The guidelines use the term "sexual identity" in a way that is synonymous with "biological sex," and they state that Catholic school students will be referred to by names and pronouns that reflect their sexual identity.

Students will also be allowed to use only those facilities (such as bathrooms or locker rooms) and participate in single-sex sports and activities that align with their sexual identity, rather than with their chosen gender identity.

Referencing the book of Genesis, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, and Pope Francis, that document then states that God created each person "in His own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them" and that "God uses the body to reveal to each person his or her sexual identity as male or female."

"A person's embrace of his or her God-given sexual identity is an essential part of living a fulfilled relationship with God, with oneself, and with each other," the document states.

"The physical, moral, and spiritual differences between men and women are equal and complementary. The flourishing of family life and society depend in part on how this complementarity and equality are lived out," it adds.

The guidelines were presented Feb. 20-21 during a seminar for priests and Catholic educators in the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis.

The document explains that schools will be responsible for communicating their particular policies regarding sexual identity "to each student in a way that is respectful of and consistent with each student's God-given sexual identity and biological sex."

The Minnesota document comes one month after Bishop Thomas Paprocki issued pastoral guidelines on the issue of gender identity for the Diocese of Springfield, Illinois.

The guidelines are similar to the pastoral recommendations made by Paprocki, who noted that "the presentation of this truth must be made with love," while the diocese must also communicate clear policies that reflect the faith of the Catholic Church.

While guidelines have now been issued for several dioceses, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has thus far remained quiet on the issue.

"Gender identity is an issue that the education committee has begun discussing, but at this time, there isn't anything to

release," Chieko Noguchi, director of public affairs for the U.S. bishop's conference, told CNA in response to questions about whether the national bishops' conference plans to issue nationwide guidelines.

Noguchi added that because the bishops' committee meetings are private, she could not comment on whether the bishop have already begun working on a document on transgenderism.

According to The Catholic Spirit, Minnesota bishops and the state Catholic conference began working on statewide guidelines in 2015, when Pope Francis began addressing the issue of gender identity in his encyclicals and exhortations.

The state's bishops officially adopted the guidelines in June 2019, the same month that the Vatican's Congregation for Catholic Education released a document entitled "Male and Female He Created Them," which denounced so-called gender theory and affirmed the principles of human dignity, difference, and complementarity.

"The denial of this (male-female) duality not only erases the vision of human beings as the fruit of an act of creation but creates the idea of the human person as a sort of abstraction who 'chooses for himself what his nature is to be,'" the Vatican document stated.

CNA asked the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis why the guidelines were publicly released 8 months after they were adopted, but has not received comment as of press time.

Auxiliary Bishop Andrew Cozzens of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis said at the introduction of Minnesota's guidelines in February that he has had personal conversations with family members of those who identify as transgender, and that he knows the issue can be painful for those involved, *The Catholic Spirit* reported.

"A lot of times, when we're in pain, we look for quick answers for that pain, and the culture wants to provide quick answers for that pain, but we know that the quick answer for that pain doesn't ultimately bring healing," Cozzens said.

"One of the things we have to do in our pastoral care is be willing to stand with people in their pain, and walk with them with an eye toward the greater good."

According to *The Catholic Spirit*, Cozzens, who serves as the archdiocese's vicar for Catholic education, said he and the state's other bishops wanted to provide "practical clarity" on this issue to the parents who send their children to Catholic school and expect that they will be taught the truth according to the Catholic faith.

"(A)nd we knew that we had to do this in a way that's calling people to a higher standard of these truths than our culture currently is, to help people get beyond the ideology and to the truth of who they are."

Mary Farrow

https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/minnesota-bishops-issue-guidelines-on-transgenderism-in-catholic-schools-86890

Catholic School Athletics Must Be Truthful

In a culture that's increasingly relativistic, Catholic athletics must go against the tide.

Gender ideology has created huge inequities in the world of sports, with men competing on women's teams and sometimes taking top honors away from outstanding female athletes.

Add to this many other controversies in sports, including players refusing to respect the national anthem, cheating and betting scandals, sexual abuse and harassment, and more.

Catholics are forced to ask some important questions: Is there a Catholic approach to athletics, especially in Catholic schools and colleges? Should we simply embrace the norms of secular schools and athletic associations in order to have opportunities to compete against them?

The Church has not shied away from these questions, but rather has been outspoken about the role of sports. Pope St. John Paul II especially focused on athletics in many homilies, messages and speeches.

"Sport… is an activity that involves more than the movement of the body; it demands the use of intelligence and the disciplining of the will," he told athletes in 1987.

"It reveals, in other words, the wonderful structure of the human person created by God as spiritual being, a unity of body and spirit," he said.

What a wonderful message! But sadly today, "body" and "spirit" are being divided in sport because of gender ideology.

Some girls have had enough of it, and Alliance Defending Freedom is representing them in a lawsuit against a Connecticut athletic conference that allows biological boys to defeat biological girls in high school track competitions. Catholic schools and colleges, too, should stand their ground and uphold truth.

"Given the incompatibility of gender ideology and a Catholic worldview, Catholic educational institutions cannot simply look the other way or surrender their vision of man and reality. Too much is at stake," writes Dr. Dan Guernsey, senior fellow of The Cardinal Newman Society, in a draft set of standards for Catholic school and college athletics.

The standards are being circulated among experts in Catholic education, sports and theology to find common ground and help educators avoid the errors of their secular counterparts.

Athletics can be important to student development, explains Guernsey. "It can affect their understanding of themselves and their relationship with God in profound ways."

According to the Vatican, the mission of Catholic education is about the "integral formation of the human person." Athletics can support this mission by helping students "develop virtue and harmonize mind, body and will," Guernsey writes.

But respecting the sex of athletes, he argues, is necessary to ensure player safety, fair play and social justice. It's crucial for Catholic schools and colleges to develop clear position statements and policies to ensure

that “athletics is not coopted to work against the mission of Catholic education.”

Ultimately, sports at Catholic schools and colleges should bear witness to the Truth.

And in a culture that’s increasingly relativistic, Catholic athletics must go against the tide.

Patrick Reilly

https://www.ncregister.com/blog/reilly/catholic-school-athletics-must-be-truthful

Maria Montessori Recognized by Time as Ine of 100 Women of the Year

Italian pioneer of education was born 150 years ago this year.

One of the 100 Women of the Year that *Time* magazine featured in a recent spread commemorating the centennial of women's suffrage in the United States is Maria Montessori. But perhaps more important than the fact that her face appeared on a newly-designed Time cover, Montessori's name is spread across schools around the world.

For fans of Montessori's unique teaching method, 2020 is also a big year: August 31 marks the 150th anniversary of the Italian educational pioneer's birth.

"Today Montessori education is present in more than 25,000 schools across the world and in more than 140 countries," says the Association Montessori Internationale, the organization set up by Maria Montessori in 1929 to continue her work.

If her method has helped millions of children excel in life, it was she who set the standard with her own life. Born in Chiaravalle, Italy, she attended a technical school in the hopes of becoming an engineer — at that time a very unusual career path for a woman. But her plans shifted, and she went into medicine instead. Initially, Montessori was refused entry by the head of the school, but apparently Pope Leo XIII interceded on her behalf. In 1896, she became one of the first Italian women to obtain a medical degree.

She joined a research program at the Psychiatric Clinic of the University of Rome, working with mentally ill children. Through her in-depth research, observation and analysis, Montessori developed a pedagogical approach that resulted in incredible outcomes for these children. At just 28, she addressed medical and pedagogical congresses, advocating for greater support for children with such difficulties and putting forward the controversial notion of education for social reform.

But she discovered that her techniques were applicable for use with all children, not just the mentally impaired. She established her first "Casa dei Bambini" (children's house) in Rome in 1907 and delivered her first training course in 1909. The success of the Montessori method spread throughout the world and Montessori traveled and lectured extensively on her unique child-centered approach, establishing schools and a loyal following of educators and researchers.

In 1942, she explained how the first Casa dei Bambini came about. She had been asked to oversee a group of children in a poor and crime- and disease-infested section of Rome that was being rehabilitated. The authorities expected her merely to supervise the children while their parents worked, but she determined to see that they get an education.

She noted that the school was founded on the feast of the Nativity, January 6, 1907. "Throughout Italy the 6th of January is looked upon as the day of feast for the children. It was on this day that the three Kings arrived before the Child Christ and offered him their gifts.," she said. "I had been asked to make a speech for the occasion. Earlier that day, … I had read the lesson in my Mass book. When I made my speech I read it as an omen for the work to follow."

"Arise, be enlightened, O Jerusalem; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee, For behold darkness shall cover the earth, and a mist the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall walk in thy light, and kings in the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thy eyes round about, and see; all these are gathered together, they are come to thee: thy sons shall come from afar, and thy daughters shall rise up at thy side. Then shalt thou see, and abound and thy heart shall wonder and be enlarged, when the multitude of the sea shall be converted to thee, the strength of the Gentiles shall come to thee.

The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Madian and Epha; all they from Saba shall come, bringing gold and frankincense, and showing forth praise to the Lord."

"I don't know what came over me but I had a vision and, inspired by it, I was enflamed and said that this work we were undertaking would prove to be very important and that some day people would come from all parts to see it," she said.

An online biography says she put many different activities and other materials into the children's environment but kept only those that engaged them. "What Montessori came to realize was that children who were placed in an environment where activities were designed to support their natural development had the power to educate themselves. She was later to refer to this as auto-education," the biography says.

As Calah Alexander described it in a 2017 article on this website, Montessori education is predicated upon the fundamental understanding that children are not empty vessels to be filled, but creatures of God who need guidance and care. As Montessori put it, "We must not just see the child, but God in him. We must respect the laws of creation in him."

Montessori referred to education as a "help for the formation of man."

"I believe that this critical time urgently requires individuals whose personalities will be morally strong and well-balanced," she said in a 1936 interview in the Netherlands. "It is necessary to protect 'the man' within the child."

Her books include *La Vita in Cristo* (Rome) and *The Mass Explained to Children* (London).

She died in 1952 in the Netherlands and is buried at the local Catholic cemetery. In the following decade, two of her disciples, Sofia Cavalletti and Gianna Gobbi, developed a specific catechetical program for children based on Montessori's work and writings, called *The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd.*

John Burger

https://aleteia.org/2020/03/09/maria-montessori-recognized-by-time-as-one-of-100-women-of-the-year