

OUR CATHOLIC MISSION

TRUTH AND FIDELITY IN CATHOLIC EDUCATION

SPRING 2024

TEACHER WITNESS

- 
- Teacher Witness Inspires Conversion
 - When Teacher Witness Goes Wrong
 - Achieving Teacher Witness in a Virtual World



2024 NEWMAN GUIDE COLLEGE LEADERS SUMMIT
OUR SHARED MISSION

UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS • HOUSTON
JUNE 12-14, 2024



REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN

for the first-ever Newman Guide College Leaders Summit held at
the University of St. Thomas (Houston) on June 12-14, 2024!

Trustees, presidents, vice presidents, deans, and other key leaders of Newman Guide Recommended institutions are invited to participate. The theme for the 2024 Summit is "Our Shared Mission," reflecting Houston's storied reputation as the home of the United States space program.

Most importantly, the theme highlights the Summit's key purposes:

1. Refuel college leaders for the evangelical mission of Catholic education
2. Launch a new phase in the renewal of Catholic higher education



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Dear friend of Catholic education,

It's often said, "Good teachers love their students." Students will often seek the affection of their teachers, and I've seen many teachers and professors yearn for the affection of their students.

But affection cannot replace the true love of a Catholic educator. A relationship built on mere affection can even distort a student's formation. In Catholic education, everything is rooted in the truth of the human person and ordered to the higher things of God. This is the basis for a teacher's love—not personal fondness, admiration, or even merit.

Consider another saying: "Children need parents, not friends"—and the same could be said for teachers. Of course, adults can and should be friendly with young people, accompanying them on the path to maturity. But the Christian adult always chooses the true good of the human person before catering to youthful desires that may be selfish and harmful.

"Whoever has my commandments and observes them is the one who loves Me," Jesus said. And St. John Henry Newman used to pray for himself and his students, "May I engage in them, remembering that I am a minister of Christ... remembering the worth of souls and that I shall have to answer for the opportunities given me of benefitting those who are under my care."

Here's the rub: witnessing to God's truth, goodness, and beauty is not easy. Catholic education, done rightly, is not easy. That's why The Cardinal Newman Society's work is so important and valuable. We focus attention on faithful standards and best practices in Catholic education, and we help educators lead students to full communion with God through Jesus Christ.

We also help those educators protect against legal threats and false ideologies. And we help families find schools and colleges that faithfully witness to Catholic teaching, practice, and morality.

Please pray for The Cardinal Newman Society and invite Catholic educators and clergy to subscribe (free of charge) to *Our Catholic Mission* at <https://cardinalnewmansociety.org/ocm-subscribe/>

And if you can donate even a small amount to support our important work in 2024, **please send a tax-deductible gift today in the enclosed envelope or by using the QR code below.** We need your help to bring renewal to Catholic education, the Church, and our culture.

Thank you, and may God bless you!

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Patrick Reilly
President and Founder
The Cardinal Newman Society

“I SHALL HAVE TO ANSWER FOR THE OPPORTUNITIES GIVEN ME OF BENEFITTING THOSE WHO ARE UNDER MY CARE.”



SCAN TO DONATE



THE CHURCH ON

The Catholic Church describes the teaching ministry as answering a call to a “vocation” rather than a “profession.”

That vocation, say multiple Vatican documents, demands witness to the Faith in both word and deed.

“Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses,” observes Pope Paul VI in his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975).

Such witness to the Faith is necessary, first of all, because the teacher serves a Catholic apostolate founded upon the truth of Church teaching. Every employee of a Catholic school, college, hospital, parish, or other entity should uphold moral expectations as a representative of the Church. This avoids scandal and serves the purposes of a Catholic institution.

But in the Catholic home, school, and college, there is an added demand for faithful witness by anyone in a teaching ministry—including classroom

teachers, parents, coaches, counselors, school leaders, etc.—because of the particular vocation of teaching and the evangelistic mission of Catholic education. Modeling holiness and conviction has a powerful effect on a student’s learning and formation. This is true of any teacher of any discipline, not only religion class.

The Church’s newest education document, *The Identity of the Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue* (2022), declares the Catholic school teacher’s “canonical” role and function. The teacher holds “an ecclesiastical munus and office” in reference to Canon 145 of the *Code of Canon Law*. “Munus” is Latin for duty, office, or function. Canon 145 states, “An ecclesiastical office is any function constituted in a stable manner by divine or ecclesiastical ordinance to be exercised for a spiritual purpose.” Canon 149 adds that a Catholic holding such an office must be in “communion with the Church” and “endowed with those qualities which are required for that office.” Catholic educators, in particular, must demonstrate “outstanding and correct doctrine and integrity of life” (Canon 803).

The Vatican II constitution *Gravissimum Educationis* says Catholic school teachers require “special qualities of mind and heart” who “by their life as much as by their instruction bear witness to Christ, the unique Teacher.” In *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith* (1982), the Church tells us that teachers should possess “affection, tact, understanding, serenity of spirit, a balanced judgment, patience in listening to others... prudence in the way they respond... [and a] clear vision of the Christian milieu and live in accord with it.” It goes on to state that a teacher’s conduct is always much more important than speech... The more completely an educator can give concrete witness to the model of the ideal person [Christ] that is being presented to the students, the more this ideal will be believed and imitated... Students should see in their teachers the Christian attitude and behavior that is often so conspicuously absent from the secular atmosphere in which they live.

A personal, faithful witness helps the teacher evangelize students and, by extension, their families. It is their witness animated by the efficacious grace of



TEACHER WITNESS

BY DENISE DONOHUE

God that brings Christ to others and generates a spiritually rich and thriving scholastic community. One way of transmitting the doctrines and practices of the Church is by immersing the student in a spiritually rich environment where honest inquiry and religious understanding are cultivated.

Catholic education fulfills its evangelistic mission through the “lives of people, past and present, who bear witness to the Word” (*The Catholic School*, 1977). Through their “witness and behavior,” teachers “aim to make man more man.” Teachers, as witnesses, are called to participate in the sacramental and liturgical life of the school and, by doing so, give students concrete examples of Christian living (*Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith*, 1982).

For Catholic education to be most effective, Christ must be the central organizing principle. Students should frequently read and listen to Sacred Scripture and participate in the Church’s

“ EVERY EMPLOYEE OF A CATHOLIC SCHOOL, COLLEGE, HOSPITAL, PARISH, OR OTHER ENTITY SHOULD UPHOLD MORAL EXPECTATIONS AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE CHURCH. ”

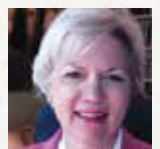
sacramental life. Students and teachers should not be strangers to prayer and the witness of people who know, live, and have a deep relationship with the Lord. Teachers are so essential to Catholic education that *Gravissimum Educationis* emphatically states it “depends upon them almost entirely for the accomplishment of its goals and programs”—the formation of students as disciples of Christ for this life and the next.

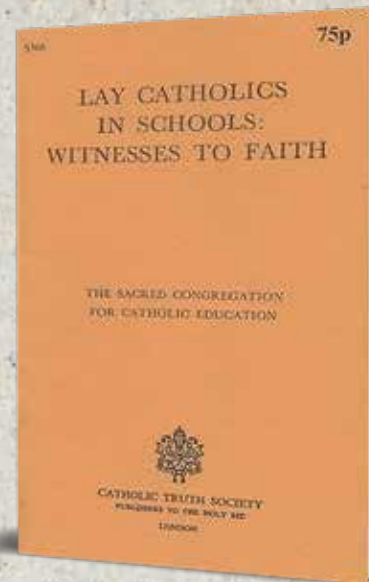
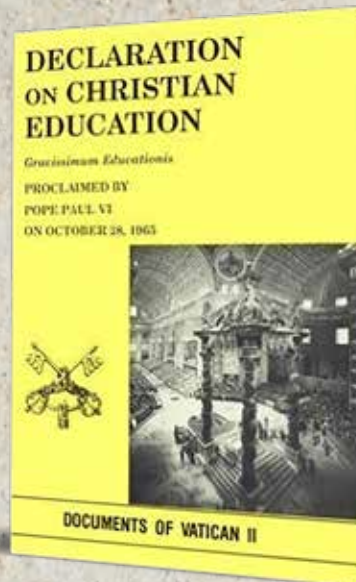
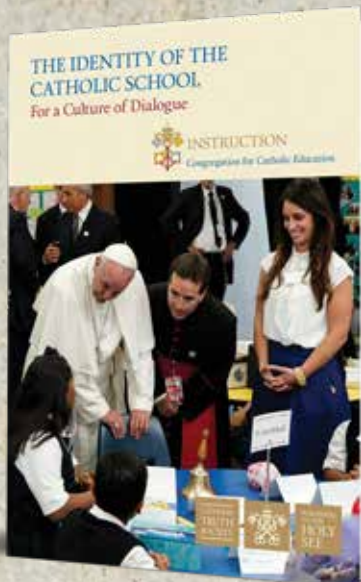
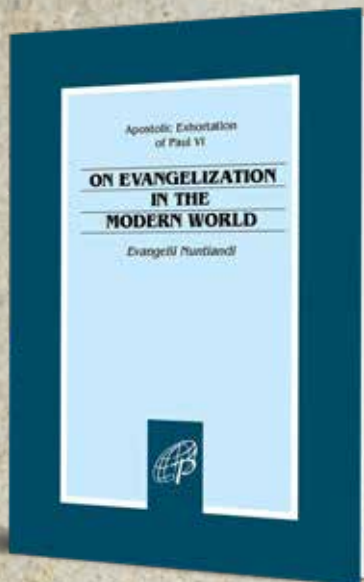
The Church also states that Catholic school teachers “must be profoundly convinced that they share in the sancti-

fying, and... educational mission of the Church” (*Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith*) and that “they cannot regard themselves as cut off from the ecclesial complex” (*Consecrated Persons and Their Mission in Schools*, 2002). Hypocrisy is quickly identified, and Christian integrity becomes an inspiration to students who, once presented with the traditions of the Church, may nevertheless call into question and test these traditions before making them their own.

The Church needs faith-filled teachers, who, through their conviction and pursuit of the truth, make the Catholic faith “visible, tangible and conscious” (*The Identity of the Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue*, 2022) in order to counter the effects of secularization that can infiltrate even our best Catholic schools. **OCM**

DENISE DONOHUE, ED.D.
is vice president for educator resources
at The Cardinal Newman Society.
ddonohue@cardinalnewmansociety.org





THE CHURCH ON

Code of Canon Law (1983)

Can. 803 §2. The instruction and education in a Catholic school must be grounded in the principles of Catholic doctrine; teachers are to be outstanding in correct doctrine and integrity of life.

Can. 810 §1. The authority competent according to the statutes has the duty to make provision so that teachers are appointed in Catholic universities who besides their scientific and pedagogical qualifications are outstanding in integrity of doctrine and probity of life and that they are removed from their function when they lack these requirements...

Pope Paul VI, *Gravissimum Educationis* (1965)

8. ...But let teachers recognize that the Catholic school depends upon them almost entirely for the accomplishment of its goals and programs... 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.

Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975)

41. ...'Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers,

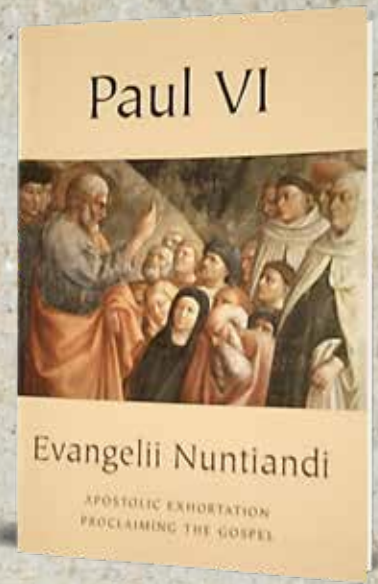
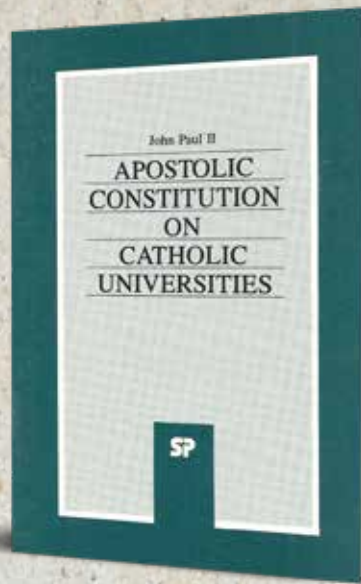
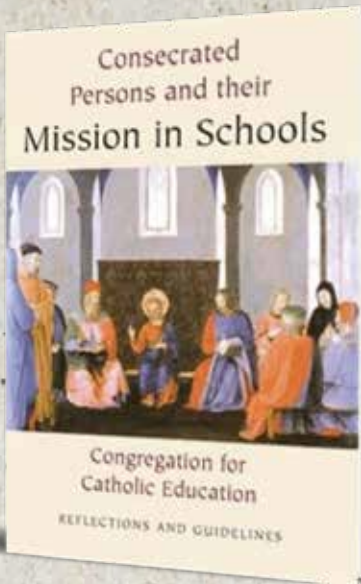
and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses' (Pope Paul VI, *Address to the Members of the Consilium de Laicis*, 1974). St. Peter expressed this well when he held up the example of a reverent and chaste life that wins over even without a word those who refuse to obey the word. It is therefore primarily by her conduct and by her life that the Church will evangelize the world, in other words, by her living witness of fidelity to the Lord Jesus—the witness of poverty and detachment, of freedom in the face of the powers of this world, in short, the witness of sanctity.

Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School* (1977)

78. By their witness and their behavior, 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.

Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *Lay Catholic in Schools: Witnesses to the Faith* (1982)

32. Conduct is always much more important than speech; this fact becomes especially important in the formation period of students. The more completely an educator can give concrete witness to the model of the ideal person that is being presented to the students, the more this ideal will be believed and imitated. For it will then be seen as something reasonable and worthy of being lived, something concrete and realizable. It is in this context that the faith witness of the lay teacher becomes especially important. Students should see in their teachers the Christian attitude and behavior that is often so conspicuously absent from the secular atmosphere in which they live. Without this witness, living in such an atmosphere, they may begin to regard Christian behavior as an impossible ideal. It must never be forgotten that in the crises 'which have their greatest effect on the younger generations,' the most important element in the educational endeavor is 'always the individual person: the person, and the moral dignity of that person which is the result of his or her principles, and the conformity of actions with those principles' (Pope St. John Paul II, *Discourse to UNESCO*, 1980).



TEACHER WITNESS

Congregation for Catholic Education, *Ex corde Ecclesiae* (1990)

22. ...Christians among [Catholic university] teachers are called to be witnesses and educators of authentic Christian life, which evidences attained integration between faith and life, and between professional competence and Christian wisdom. All teachers are to be inspired by academic ideals and by the principles of an authentically human life.

U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, *National Directory for Catechesis* (2005)

p. 231, 233: The distinctive Catholic identity and mission of the Catholic school also depend on the efforts and example of the whole faculty... All teachers in Catholic schools share in the catechetical ministry... as much as possible, all teachers in a Catholic school should be practicing Catholics.

U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium* (2005)

Catholic school personnel should be grounded in a faith-based Catholic culture, have strong bonds to Christ and the Church, and be witnesses to the faith in both their words and actions.

The formation of personnel will allow the Gospel message and the living presence of Jesus to permeate the entire life of the school community and thus be faithful to the school's evangelizing mission.

Congregation for Catholic Education, *Educating Together in Catholic Schools: A Shared Mission Between Consecrated Persons and the Lay Faithful* (2007)

15. ...This mission demands, from all the members of the educational community, the awareness that educators, as persons and as a community, have an unavoidable responsibility to create an original Christian style. They are required to be witnesses of Jesus Christ and to demonstrate Christian life as bearing light and meaning for everyone. Just as a consecrated person is called to testify his or her specific vocation to a life of communion in love so as to be in the scholastic community a sign, a memorial and a prophecy of the values of the Gospel, so too a lay educator is required to exercise 'a specific mission within the Church by living, in faith, a secular vocation in the communitarian structure of the school' (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith*, 1982).

38. ...teachers, just like every person who lives and works in a scholastic environment, educate, or they can also dis-educate, with their verbal and non-verbal behavior. 'The central figure in the work of educating, and especially in education in the faith, which is the summit of the person's formation and is his or her most appropriate horizon, is specifically the form of witness' (Pope Benedict XVI, *Address to Rome's Ecclesial Diocesan Convention on the Family and Christian Community*, 2005). 'More than ever this demands that witness, nourished by prayer, be the all-encompassing milieu of every Catholic school. Teachers, as witnesses, account for the hope that nourishes their own lives (cf. 1 Pt 3:15) by living the truth they propose to their pupils, always in reference to the one they have encountered and whose dependable goodness they have sampled with joy' (Pope Benedict XVI, *Speech to the Bishops of Ontario, Canada*, 2006).

Congregation for Catholic Education, *Educating Today and Tomorrow: A Renewing Passion* (2014)

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!

Teacher Witness Inspires Conversion

by Kelly Salomon

Holy Rosary Academy in Anchorage, Alaska, is recognized in *The Newman Guide* for its faithful Catholic education from Pre-K through 12th grade. All teachers make a Profession of Faith to the Catholic Church upon hiring. And the fruits are many: in the last year alone, five students came into full communion with the Catholic Church.

While there are many elements of a strong Catholic education, students at Holy Rosary Academy have clearly benefited from the faithful witness of their teachers. Below are the personal testimonies of Anabelle Pearson, a 10th-grade student who plans to enter the Catholic Church, and two high school teachers at the Academy: Dr. Laura Walters and Kevin Quain.

Anabelle Pearson



Anabelle Pearson

I had been an atheist for my entire childhood leading up to my years at Holy Rosary Academy...

Many wonderful people took part in my conversion; however, it was Dr. Walters and Mr. Quain, my Church history and medieval seminar teachers, respectively, who guided and strengthened me in faith. In these two classes specifically, I was able to reflect on my past as we studied the history of the Church and the lives of many saints and sinners.

I look up to Dr. Walters as a role model; she is incredibly talented in numerous skills, languages, and academics. Dr. Walters has accomplished a plethora of

extraordinary things in all areas from science to art, yet she is the humblest person I've ever met. Most importantly, despite all that she has achieved and still strives for in her free time, Dr. Walters dedicates her time to come and teach us teenagers. Dr. Walters cares deeply about her students and guides us toward spiritual and academic success. Dr. Walters has never judged me for asking any questions about Catholicism and the Church, and her responses are always helpful. Her teachings in history allow me to have a firm foundation in Church knowledge, which has proved useful in many situations, including medieval seminar class.

“HE...HAS HELPED ME SEE THAT BELIEVING IN GOD IS NOT A CRUTCH TO GET THROUGH LIFE, RATHER, GOD IS THE REASON I HAVE LIFE.”

Mr. Quain, my medieval seminar teacher, has greatly contributed to solidifying me in my faith. Mr. Quain is humorous and uplifting and can always brighten the day. In the seminar, he helps our class reflect on our lives as we analyze books containing stories of growth in character and faith such as *The Confessions of St. Augustine*. He is an excellent role model in Catholicism and has helped me see that believing in God is not a crutch to get through life, rather, God is the reason I have life.

Faith is a path with many twists, turns, and bumps, and rarely is it easy. This spring, Holy Rosary is organizing a trip to Assisi and Rome for Holy Week. We will be walking the pilgrimage that St. Francis completed to ask the Pope to start his order of Franciscans. In years to come, I hope to be baptized and confirmed into the Catholic Church.

Dr. Laura Walters

I view my vocation of teaching as something definitely from God.

I am a naturally shy person, and while I was completing my Ph.D., I always thought that I would spend my professional life with paintings, drawings, and manuscripts in quiet corners of archives and museums. However, when I began teaching at the University of St. Andrews [in Scotland], I ended up loving it, and when I began teaching at Holy Rosary Academy, I felt very clearly that this was something more than my will.

Teaching is a great privilege: to be able to help form students, especially in those crucial upper school years when they are becoming adults. I see my vocation of teaching as a way for me to serve others through love and charity, and thus to serve God.

The ideas of service and charity are incorporated into all I do. I always try to help students understand concepts (whether they're in Calculus, Biology, Church, History, Art, etc.) to truly teach them and help them learn how to think, rather than what to think. I approach each student as having such great value, as he or she is made in the image and likeness of God, and is a unique and beautiful person.

“ I SEE MY VOCATION OF TEACHING AS A WAY FOR ME TO SERVE OTHERS THROUGH LOVE AND CHARITY, AND THUS TO SERVE GOD. ”

Students are always learning (and so are teachers!), and I try to remind them of this, and that it's okay to make a mistake, it's okay to have questions on things, and that it's how we respond to that which matters... We strive to find the truth and

the heart of a matter together, students and teachers, which is a beautiful model for them to follow as they graduate and leave our halls.

Kevin Quain

I strive to give my students an example of strong character both in the classroom and on the court as a middle school basketball coach. Fundamental traits of a strong character are self-discipline and perseverance. These two traits should guide students in every aspect of their lives, whether in faith, academics, sports, etc. Embodying these traits and encour-



Kevin Quain

aging students are the best ways to help them build strong character and an indomitable spirit.

The beauty of Catholicism includes the belief that God created all things, and that creation will help us to know and love Him more. With this perspective, everything in the classroom is more meaningful and tangible because all the subjects, when integrated with our final end in mind, lead us closer to God. **OCM**

KELLY SALOMON

is vice president of Newman Guide programs at The Cardinal Newman Society.

ksalomon@cardinalnewmansociety.org



When Teacher Witness Goes Wrong

by Patrick Reilly

The Catholic University of America recently taught students a tough but valuable lesson about witness and responsibility. It's a lesson the students—as well as the faculty—are unlikely to forget.

On January 30, university president Dr. Peter Kilpatrick announced the firing of a psychology lecturer following a scandalous incident in her classroom. The lecturer, teaching a course titled “Lifespan Development,” had invited an “abortion doula” to speak to the students. An abortion doula is someone who accompanies women as they undergo abortions. Reports claim that the guest not only advocated abortion but also celebrated “child-birth” by “trans” men.

Critics later accused the university of violating academic freedom by firing the lecturer, and no doubt some students and faculty members agree. But by acting swiftly and decisively—and by publicly explaining the necessity of upholding the university's mission—the Catholic University of America set an important example for Catholic educators.

“In our rigorous pursuit of truth and justice, we engage at times with arguments or ideologies contrary to reason or to the Gospel,” Dr. Kilpatrick acknowledged in a letter to students. “But we do so fully confident in the clarity given by the combined lights of reason and faith, and we commit to never advocate for sin or to give moral equivalence to error.”

It was an excellent letter. When leaders so clearly articulate the mission of Catholic education and moral expectations for faculty members, consequences for bad behavior and false teaching no longer appear harsh. Instead, it is out of concern for truth and the formation of students that Catholic education leaders must discipline and sometimes even remove teachers when they lead students astray. False witness is contrary to the truth that is foundational to Catholic education.

“Our studies aim at producing wisdom, which includes excellence in living and sharing the truth with others,” explained Dr. Kilpatrick. “May our common study help us to understand life, to love goodness, and to promote and protect the dignity of the human person.”

Responding with heroism

In a culture increasingly hostile to Catholic morality, Catholic schools and colleges are likely to face more conflicts with employees who resist moral expectations. But if teachers uphold the faith, their witness can be all the more influential with students—lights in the darkness. And if leaders remain steadfast in the truth when conflicts arise, their heroic witness can be a valuable education for students and the broader public.

Consider the case of Our Lady of Guadalupe School in Hermosa Beach, Calif. In 2012, the school announced that teachers must obtain catechist certification to ensure the integration of Catholic teaching across all disciplines. One non-Catholic teacher, whose duties included teaching all subjects including religion, failed to get the certification and was fired.

The school's courageous act of dismissing the teacher, rather than compromising its mission and thereby harming its students, led to a lawsuit claiming age discrimination. On the face of it, this seemed exactly the outcome that school leaders want to avoid to protect their schools. But the lawsuit eventually led to the landmark U.S. Supreme Court ruling in 2020, upholding the ministerial exception and protecting the right of Catholic schools to choose teachers according to religious criteria without court interference.

Sadly, Gordon College lost the opportunity to obtain a similar landmark ruling for Christian higher education. The Evangelical Christian college faced a hostile Massachusetts court, when a fired sociology professor claimed that she had been unfairly denied tenure because of her public attacks on the college's Christian views of sexuality and



Our Lady of Guadalupe School

Morrissey-Berru



Becket Role: Counsel

SCOREBOARD

Decision: Won

Deciding Court: U.S. Supreme Court

CASE SNAPSHOT

Our Lady of Guadalupe School is committed to providing a faith-based education rooted in the Catholic tradition. In 2015 when Ms. Morrissey-Berru, a teacher responsible with leading students in daily prayer and preparing them for mass, began to exhibit poor performance, the school chose not to renew her contract. The teacher sued in federal district court, which agreed with the Supreme Court *Hosanna-Tabor* decision that church schools like Our Lady of Guadalupe have the right to select their teachers—a concept known as the ministerial exception. On appeal, the Ninth Circuit reversed in a surprising decision, admitting that though Ms. Morrissey-Berru had many religious duties, they were not religious enough to warrant First Amendment protections.



marriage. Gordon’s leaders asked the U.S. Supreme Court to prevent the case from proceeding under the ministerial exception, but when the Court declined, Gordon settled the case.

It would be unfair to judge Gordon College’s choice to settle, but standing firm for religious freedom and insisting on the moral witness of all employees is a necessary line in the sand—even if it causes some degree of martyrdom. The ultimate goal of Catholic education is evangelization, bringing students to God by reason and faith. While avoiding lawsuits may keep a school or college going for the short term, defending appropriate personnel policies is necessary to protecting Catholic education for the long term and shows students a powerful witness to fidelity.

In the amicus brief joined by The Cardinal Newman Society, urging the Supreme Court to take up the Gordon case, we attested:

“Faculty are the life-blood of every college and university, without which teaching and scholarship cannot occur. For faithful Catholic and protestant institutions, teaching and scholarship is not an end in itself. Without recognizing the ‘Word’ through whom ‘all things were made’ (John 1: 1-3), teaching and scholarship on any subject is incomplete.”

Leading dioceses

Today many dioceses across the U.S. are instituting personnel guidelines and morality clauses in employee contracts, so that the Church’s expectations are clear to employees. These also help to invite educators to more faithful witness inside and outside the classroom. Still, some employees are unwilling to abide by them.

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis has made a significant effort to strengthen the Catholic mission of its schools, only to face four separate cases of employees entering into civil same-sex marriages. Two dismissed counselors at Roncalli High School filed lawsuits claiming discrimination, as did a teacher at Cathedral

Catholic High School. After a difficult legal fight, the archdiocese triumphed in all three cases.

In the Diocese of Charlotte, a substitute teacher’s contract was not renewed after he declared a same-sex marriage and publicly opposed Church teaching. The ACLU is helping the teacher pursue a lawsuit against Charlotte Catholic High School and the diocese, and a ruling is pending in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit.

These dioceses know that teacher witness is at the heart of Catholic education. In *Ex corde Ecclesiae*, St. John Paul II declared, “If need be, a Catholic university must have the courage to speak uncomfortable truths which do not please public opinion, but which are necessary to safeguard the authentic good of society.” This is true of all Catholic education, which “speaks” as much by the witness of its employees as by classroom instruction. Speaking, however, sometimes requires courage to uphold the truth for the good of the students and all who listen.

“ THIS IS TRUE OF ALL CATHOLIC EDUCATION, WHICH “SPEAKS” AS MUCH BY THE WITNESS OF ITS EMPLOYEES AS BY CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION. ”

PATRICK REILLY
is president and founder of
The Cardinal Newman Society.



Achieving Teacher Witness in a Virtual World

by Ann Brodeur, PhD



In one of her last letters, written to a former student, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton did what all teachers are called to do: she pointed to the Truth in love.

“God bless you, my loved child,” she wrote. “Remember Mother’s first and last lesson to you: seek God in all things... If you do this, you will live in his presence and will preserve the graces of your first communion.”

As a teacher, Mother Seton kept a large correspondence that demonstrated a wide capacity for friendship with others and friendship with the Truth, an affectionate relationality that extended to students, parents, and former students. Letter by letter, she continued to encourage, exhort, form, and instruct them far and wide, even though they were no longer together. Mother Seton understood that it is by way of the heart that a teacher reaches a student’s mind, and that all good teaching, whether in person, by letter, or online, is always first personal and relational.

Thus, it is the personal influence of the teacher, rooted in their intellectual, moral, and spiritual excellence, that can move students to desire to know, love, and serve Truth, Who is a Person. Saintly teachers, from Augustine to John Henry Newman to Elizabeth Ann Seton, have provided the teaching, example, and inspiration as to how teachers today can draw students into deeper friendship with the Truth.

Each educational mode or setting, whether a traditional school setting or a nontraditional one such as a home school, a continuing education program, a night school, or an online program, faces challenges in wit-

nessing to the transformative power of Truth. Some of these challenges are shared by all teachers regardless of setting, but some are specific to the nature of the particular mode or setting. St. Augustine noted the challenge of teaching night classes on doctrine to tired adults at the end of a long working day; Newman noted the opportunities and challenges in offering continuing education classes at his proposed university.

Nonetheless, the substance of good teaching remains the same,



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j.patrick.kearns@morganstanley.com
NMLS # 1383203

Sean P. Kearns, CIMA®
Family Wealth Advisor
Vice President | Financial Advisor
sean.kearns@morganstanley.com
CA Insurance Lic. #OM62122
NMLS # 1369295

Luc Sebrechts
Alternative Investments Director
Associate Vice President | Financial Advisor
luc.sebrechts@morganstanley.com
NMLS # 1739958

Michael J. McShea
Financial Planning Associate
Financial Advisor
michaelmcshea@morganstanley.com
NMLS #24-32105

even as the accidents of mode or setting change. What is true about good teaching in a traditional setting is also true about good teaching in a nontraditional setting. Non-exhaustively:

- A good teacher witnesses to the Truth through relationship, or what Newman called “catching force” of personal influence.
- A good teacher doesn’t simply communicate information, they are engaged in the formation of students’ vision of reality by revealing an aspect of the Truth through a particular discipline or text.
- A good teacher fosters growth in wisdom, or the ability to see the relations between things in order to grasp the whole of reality, and a desire to conform oneself to that reality.
- A good teacher inspires students to love and delight in the Truth through their own obvious affection for it.

In order to *do* all these things, a teacher must first be all these things.

For those teaching in an online or non-traditional setting, the challenge is to first be all of these things that Seton, Augustine, and Newman exhort, and then to communicate it in a virtual mode. This means that teachers must be highly intentional about things that might naturally occur in a traditional classroom. I suggest seven basic habits of intentional (online) teaching:

- 1. Smile.** In videos or synchronous meetings, the teacher should convey visually their *gaudium in veritate* (joy in the Truth), the truth about the goodness of existence, and the goodness of knowledge pursued together. St. Augustine called this disposition *hilaritas*, or cheerfulness. What we do as teachers comes from the heart of the Church, and there is deep joy in that!
- 2. Growth in intellectual friendship.** A classroom, whether physical or online, is a place where intellectual friendship in pursuit of the true, good, and beautiful ought to be fostered. For appropriate friendships to flourish, teachers need to provide a space for students to share who they are—their interests and questions—

and to be received by the teacher and their classmates. At the beginning of the semester, ask students to record a video introducing themselves. Touch back on those interests frequently throughout the semester. Just as in a seminar, encourage students to ask questions of one another and to respond directly rather than to or through the teacher.

3. Growth in friendship with the truth. Teachers should share and model evident love for the Truth as it is expressed in each discipline. Demonstrate to students how a particular course helps them understand the whole of reality by making connections with other disciplines and courses. This places a special responsibility on the teacher to know what is being taught in other courses. Get to know the other faculty and their interests and refer to them in class. Students want to be welcomed into a community of scholars who are friends in the Truth, and to do that, teachers must be friends with their colleagues.

“...ALL GOOD TEACHING, WHETHER IN PERSON, BY LETTER, OR ONLINE, IS ALWAYS FIRST PERSONAL AND RELATIONAL.”

4. Be present, be responsive. Whenever possible, encourage synchronous meetings. Make time for office hours, open discussion in class, and calling out the good seen in a student intervention or in a discussion board. This communicates to students that their teacher is taking them and their work seriously and that they aren’t communicating into a void. Don’t be afraid to redirect a discussion, but do so cheerfully and with generosity of spirit.

5. Encourage students to grow in wisdom. Ask them to make connections to other disciplines in order to help them “see the whole.” In

discussion or assignments, ask students to make connections and/or integrate what they’ve learned in one course with what they’ve learned in other courses and with their experience in real life. Help them see that what they are learning matters for how they see themselves, the world, God, and others, and that it matters for how they live and for their sense of purpose.

6. Encouraging students in virtue. Help them understand why timeliness, courtesy, and treating others with respect, honesty, and integrity matter not only in class but for relationships outside of class. Help them understand that education isn’t just about *information* but is ultimately a *formation* in becoming more human.

7. Prayer for and with students. Open and close synchronous meetings with a short prayer like St. Thomas Aquinas’s *Prayer Before Study* or *Prayer for Wisdom*. Place this prayer in a prominent place in the online “classroom” and on the course syllabus. Let students know that their teacher is praying for them and for their needs. Pray that the human and intellectual formation provided by Catholic education leads to an inner transformation of vision so that students can understand Who and what they are made for.

Mother Seton, St. John Henry Newman, and St. Augustine are three shining examples among a vast number of spiritual and educational witnesses who have repeatedly taught through the ages that it is through the cheerful, generous, and friendly heart of the teacher that students are drawn into friendship with Christ, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Faithful witness can be accomplished in a nontraditional and virtual setting through thoughtful and intentional teaching practices that reinforce the personal and relational dimensions of education. In this way, teachers in any setting can witness to the catching force of the Truth.

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ANN BRODEUR, PHD
is director of liberal arts education,
Catholic Distance University



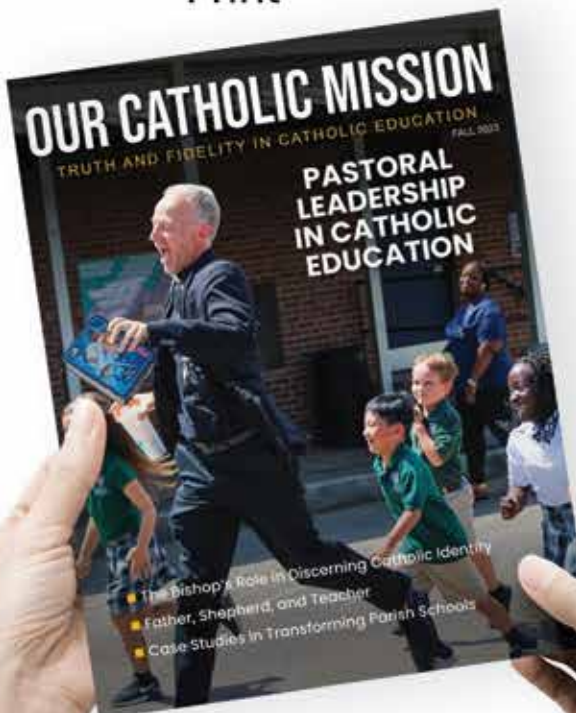
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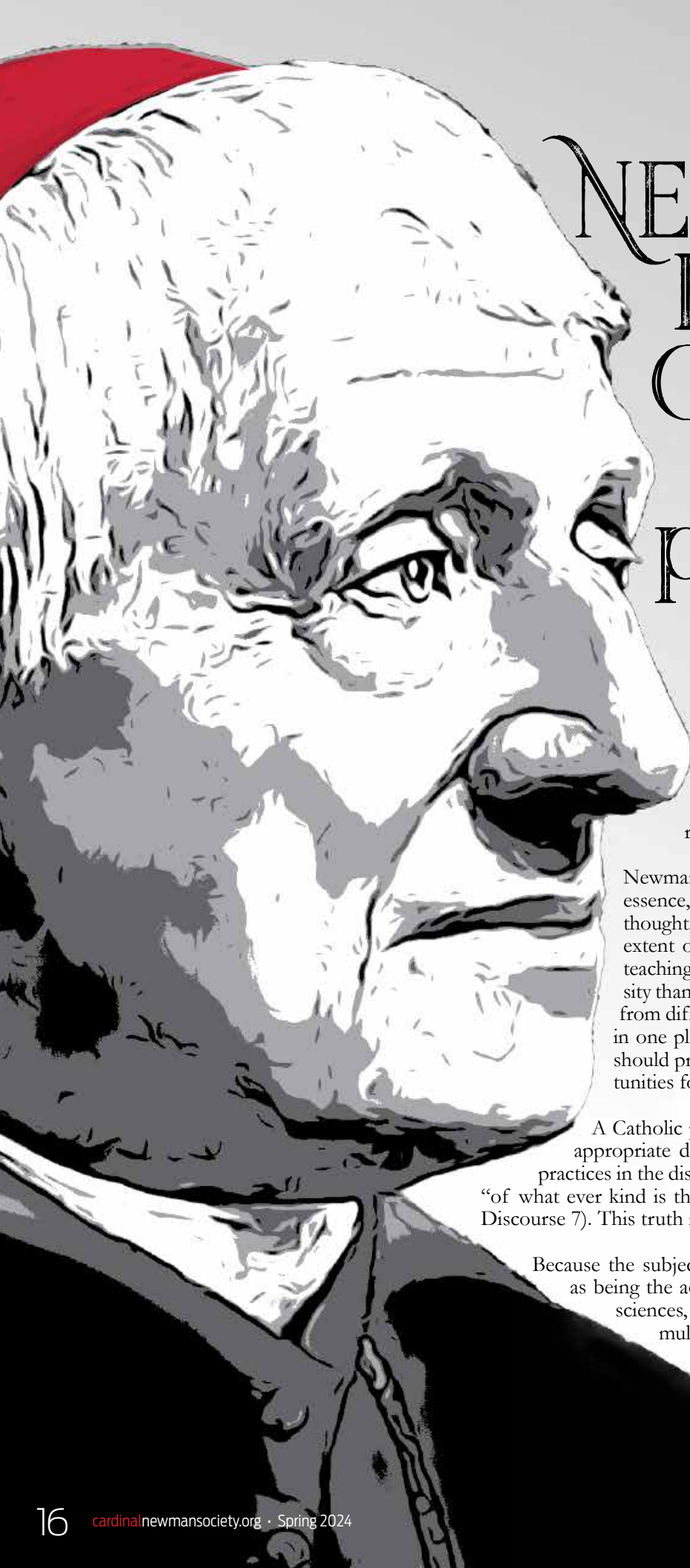


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Promoting and Defending Faithful Catholic Education



NEWMAN'S IDEA OF A CATHOLIC COLLEGE PROFESSOR

BY DAN GUERNSEY, EDD

Amid St. John Henry Newman's thoughts about Catholic higher education—the unity of truth, the complementarity of academic subjects, and the formation of students unified in mind, body, and spirit in an intentional academic and spiritual community—we can also find, albeit more subtly, his vision for the role of the college educator.

Newman starts from the premise that a university is, “in its essence, a place for the communication and circulation of thought, by means of personal intercourse, through a wide extent of country” (*University Sketches*, Ch. 2). For Newman, teaching and personal interaction are more central to a university than research, and it is important that students and teachers from different places and in different disciplines come together in one place to interact. Newman believes Catholic professors should prioritize student learning and take advantage of opportunities for interacting with students and other professors.

A Catholic professor's teaching should be clear, fair, accurate, of appropriate depth and breadth, and conducted according to best practices in the discipline, but it is also to be anchored in the truth which “of what ever kind is the proper object of the intellect” (*Idea of a University*, Discourse 7). This truth is unified in God, Newman says:

Because the subject-matter of knowledge is intimately united in itself, as being the acts and the work of the Creator. Hence it is that the sciences, into which our knowledge may be said to be cast, have multiplied bearings one on another, and an internal sympathy, and admit, or rather demand, comparison and adjustment. (*Idea of a University*, Discourse 5)

For a Catholic professor, this especially means there will be extensive communication with the truths of

theology and its intersection with one's teaching and research. St. Pope John Paul II, himself an experienced professor, guides Catholic scholars similarly:

Aided by the specific contributions of philosophy and theology, university scholars will be engaged in a constant effort to determine the relative place and meaning of each of the various disciplines within the context of a vision of the human person and the world that is enlightened by the Gospel, and therefore by a faith in Christ, the Logos, as the centre of creation and of human history. (*Ex corde Ecclesiae*, 16)

The Catholic professor teaches in harmony with all truth, especially theological truth available through faith and reason, as one called to "personal fidelity to the Church with all that this implies." The professor assists in maintaining the broader "institutional fidelity of the University to the Christian message [which] includes a recognition of and adherence to the teaching authority of the Church in matters of faith and morals" (*Ex corde Ecclesiae*, 27). This point is further spelled out in Article 4.3,

In ways appropriate to the different academic disciplines, all Catholic teachers are to be faithful to, and all other teachers are to respect, Catholic doctrine and morals in their research and teaching.

“FOR NEWMAN, TEACHING AND PERSONAL INTERACTION ARE MORE CENTRAL TO A UNIVERSITY THAN RESEARCH”

Pope Benedict XVI, likewise an accomplished university professor, heads off any misguided objection to this view under the guise of academic freedom, by reminding Catholic educators that "appeal to the principle of academic freedom in order to justify positions that contradict the faith and the teaching of the Church would obstruct or even betray the university's identity and mission" (*Meeting With Catholic Educators*, 2008).

Heart Speaks to Heart

Returning to Newman, he attests to the critical role of complete student formation and the personal intercourse provided by educators. Newman is adamant that students should not just be left to themselves in college to make their own way academically, morally, socially, and spiritually, but need a strong academic and faith-based community in which to thrive. This means living as a free, integrated, and unified person:

I wish the intellect to range with the utmost freedom, and religion to enjoy an equal freedom; but what I am stipulating for is, that they should be found in one and the same place and exemplified in the same persons... I wish the same spots and the same individuals to be at once oracles of philosophy and shrines of devotion. (*Intellect, the Instrument of Religious Training*, 1856)

This goal for students' unity of reason and faith also needs to be modeled in the unified intellects, morals, and faith of the teachers encountered by the students through personal intercourse and witness. Newman wants students surround-

IT STARTS WITH YOU!

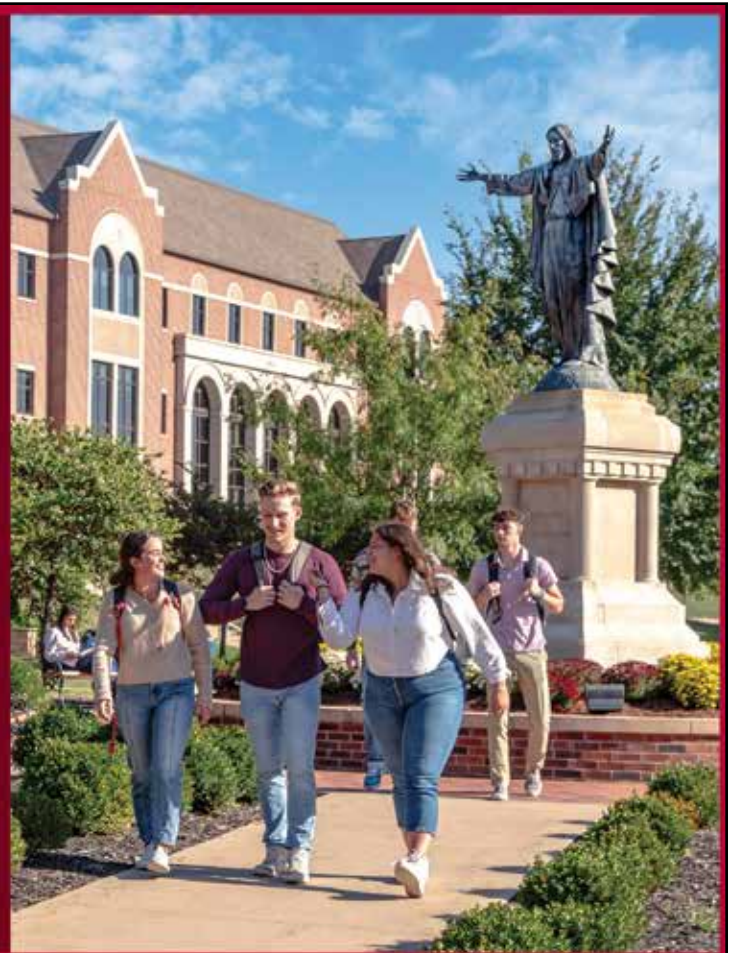
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ed by models of the intellectual and spiritual life, who befriend and mentor them. The means of a complete education happens in relationship and a life and energy springing from a community of persons and through personal witness.

St. John Paul II picks up this theme when he writes of Catholic university professors,

Christians among the teachers are called to be witnesses and educators of authentic Christian life, which evidences attained integration between faith and life, and between professional competence and Christian wisdom. (*Ex corde Ecclesiae*, 22)

This theme is further carried by Pope Benedict XVI, who exhorts Catholic professors that they,

have the duty and privilege to ensure that students receive instruction in Catholic doctrine and practice. This requires that public witness to the way of Christ, as found in the Gospel and upheld by the Church's Magisterium, shapes all aspects of an institution's life, both inside and outside the classroom. (*Meeting with Catholic Educators*, 2008)

Newman is fully cognizant of the im-

portance of consistency between formation in and out of the classroom. While Newman does not intend Catholic universities to be seminaries with strict timetables and compulsory spiritual obligations, he desires to create student communities where academic and spiritual norms are so natural and maintained by healthy tradition and lived example that students grow with more ease in academic and moral virtue. He states,

This university intends (as far as the time of a student's residence allows) *to form his character*, religious, moral, and social—i.e. to make him a Christian and a gentleman. Towards making him both, it is a great step to make him a scholar and a man of literary taste or rather, while making him such, right feelings and principles may be instilled into him. (Newman's Memorandum Book BOA, A6.15 quoted in Paul Shrimpton's *The Making of Men*, p.23)

Newman's own example as founding rector of a university found him intimately involved in the students' lives, health, and spiritual well-being. It shows he well understood the impact of personal force, companionship, and friendship on human growth and development. Aloofness and detachment by those working within a university are antithetical to his vision.

Historian Paul Shrimpton observes that Newman was ahead of his time in this matter, and he led developments in student-academic relationships of care and camaraderie that would later become a hallmark of a reformed Oxford system.

In colleges and universities aspiring to Cardinal Newman's vision today, you will often find a rich and structured liberal arts academic core, faithful required theology courses and other courses integrated with faithful theology, and a vibrant campus life rich in faith and social interaction. The professors in these institutions have accepted a unique calling to serve and participate in these ends. They understand that the vocation of a Catholic professor is both challenging and spiritually rewarding. They strive to put into practice what Pope Benedict calls "intellectual charity": the guiding of youth as a mentor and witness towards the deep satisfaction of exercising freedom in relation to truth. In so doing, they continue the long history and inspiration animating Catholic education, especially as championed by St. John Henry Newman. **OCM**

DAN GUERNSEY, ED.D.
is a senior fellow at The Cardinal Newman Society and program director for Ave Maria University's Master in Catholic Educational Leadership.
dguernsey@cardinalnewmansociety.org





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