

# OUR CATHOLIC MISSION

TRUTH AND FIDELITY IN CATHOLIC EDUCATION

SUMMER 2024

## EUCCHARISTIC EDUCATION

- What Is Eucharistic Education? Why Do We Need It?
- Eucharist, The Heart of Catholic Education
- Forming Hearts and Minds of Students for Worship

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# SUMMER 2024 ISSUE

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Dear friend of Catholic education,

Did you see the recent documentary, *Jesus Thirsts*? It had a brief run in theaters.

The film was a beautiful testimony to the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, but I left the theater aggravated because some of the featured experts suggested that devotional activities and Eucharistic congresses are what's needed to achieve a Eucharistic Revival in America.

I simply don't agree. Only the renewal of faithful Catholic education can lay a firm foundation for a New Evangelization of our Church and culture.

Don't get me wrong—big events can be truly valuable. This month, Catholics descend upon Indianapolis for the National Eucharistic Congress, and every year FOCUS inspires thousands with its SEEK conference. Many will be inspired to go home and increase in reverence for Christ.

But that's when the real work of prayer and formation begins... hopefully, by God's grace. The Church has long recognized Catholic education as the key means of evangelization because it forms the whole person intellectually, morally, and socially. It cultivates religious customs and virtuous habits, which require time and steady guidance.

A true, lasting Eucharistic Revival begins in the home, the school, and the parish. Any Catholic who is more excited about a national congress than next Sunday's Mass is not yet convicted of the Real Presence and the life of faith, where true joy is found.

On the other hand, a well-formed student or graduate of Catholic education will rejoice and find opportunities for growth and genuine worship in communal and other devotional activities. And then, filled with love for Christ, we will again see the likes of Father Peyton's Rosary rallies and the 1976 Eucharistic Congress in Philadelphia with 1.5 million Catholics.

For our part, The Cardinal Newman Society will stay focused on Eucharistic Education. Please be sure to read this issue's articles by The Cardinal Newman Society's three Eucharistic Education fellows for 2023-24. I am so inspired by their work! I think it shows the great importance of what The Cardinal Newman Society and our many partners are doing to promote and defend faithful Catholic education.

If you agree in the value of this work, I hope you will consider praying for us and making a donation, however large. Together let's build up Eucharistic Education, by God's grace!

Thank you, and may God bless you!

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Patrick Reilly  
President and Founder  
The Cardinal Newman Society



SCAN TO DONATE

# What is “Eucharistic Why

**T**he need is acute. Christ our Lord’s greatest gift to His Church—the gift of Himself in the Holy Eucharist—is being neglected by far too many Catholics. The pews are emptying, vocations are plummeting, and the Church is graying because those not attending Mass on Sundays do not realize what they are missing. The King of Kings yearns to enter under their roofs, but He finds closed doors. “We are too busy,” they mutter, as they shuffle from soccer practice to scouts. “We have access to everything on our phones. What need is there for church?”

The time has come to address this crisis of faith head-on. One entity in the Church is specially equipped for this challenge—the Catholic school on the primary, secondary, and university levels. The Catholic school can inspire Catholics to love the Blessed Sacrament through Eucharistic education.

What is “Eucharistic education”? It is more than teaching about the Eucharist, though such teaching is certainly included. Eucharistic education places the Eucharist at the center of a school’s

life—its academic curriculum, its formational programming, and, to the extent possible, its extracurricular activities. All of these elements receive their shape from the Eucharist and are ordered to leading students to a deeper love for it. In other words, the Eucharist is the summit and source of a school’s life.

The first step toward a Eucharistic education is explicitly including the Eucharist in every area of a Catholic school. It should be stated in a school’s mission statement: the school exists to develop its students’ personal relationships with Jesus Christ, who is fully present to them in the Eucharist. It should be included, in varying degrees, in both the titles and the content of religion classes at all grade levels. It should feature prominently in religious events in addition to Mass: visits to the chapel, Eucharistic adoration, an annual Eucharistic procession. It should be showcased in artwork and other decorations spread throughout the school building.

When the Eucharist is incorporated into the mission statement, into course titles, and into school décor, administrators, teachers, and campus ministers receive

# Education”? Do We Need It?

by David G. Bonagura, Jr.

“ EUCHARISTIC EDUCATION PLACES THE EUCHARIST AT THE CENTER OF A SCHOOL’S LIFE...IT PERMEATES ALL CURRICULA, NOT MERELY RELIGIOUS COURSES. ”

support and motivation to make these stated goals a reality in their classrooms and programming. Once it is clear that every person in the school is scaling the same summit and receiving power from the same source, the day-to-day work of Eucharistic education becomes easier and more exciting.

In the academic realm, religion courses take the lead in providing a Eucharistic education. Regardless of grade level, religion courses typically are divided by theme: God and creation, Jesus Christ, the Church, Sacred Scripture, the sacraments, and morality. In a Eucharistic education, the Eucharist

is taught in every course, not just the courses on sacraments including the Mass. The essence of what the Eucharist is, in varying depths depending on the grade level, is repeated every year. In addition, the different course themes allow for different accents on the Eucharist: Scripture courses examine both the Old Testament types of the Eucharist and its New

Testament description; morality courses underscore how we live the Eucharist as the sacrament of charity; courses in ecclesiology and Church history highlight how the Church, like the Eucharist itself, is the Body of Christ and how, in the words of St. John Paul II, “the Eucharist builds the Church and the Church makes the Eucharist.”

Religion class lessons are essential, but they are only as strong as the religious programming that makes these lessons become flesh before students’ eyes. That is, religion classes and the celebration of the sacraments are mutually enriching, and the success of one depends on the

success of the other. Every effort must be made, then, to ensure that Masses, celebrations of the sacraments, and other religious events, such as holy hours and retreats, treat the Eucharist with the utmost devotion and reverence.

This requires some soul searching on the part of administrators and campus ministers, as the tendency in today's Catholic schools is to involve multiple students in administering these religious events. The intentions in assigning liturgical roles to students are noble, but the reality of doing so is that the solemnity and the unique character of the Eucharist diminishes if students see their peers handling the Eucharist and taking over roles in the Mass that belong to adults. In particular, students serving as extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion should be avoided: in the minds of students, if a peer can touch something, then that something is not special. To that end, schools can help foster deeper devotion to the Eucharist by encouraging students to receive Holy Communion on their tongues. Students know that they cannot touch precious objects, be they in the home or in a museum. If they are instructed similarly on the Eucharist, they will learn how special the Eucharist is without using books or memorizing definitions.

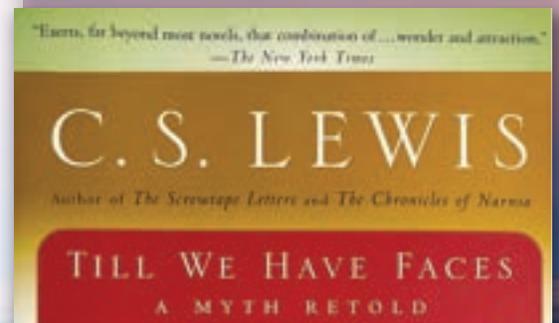
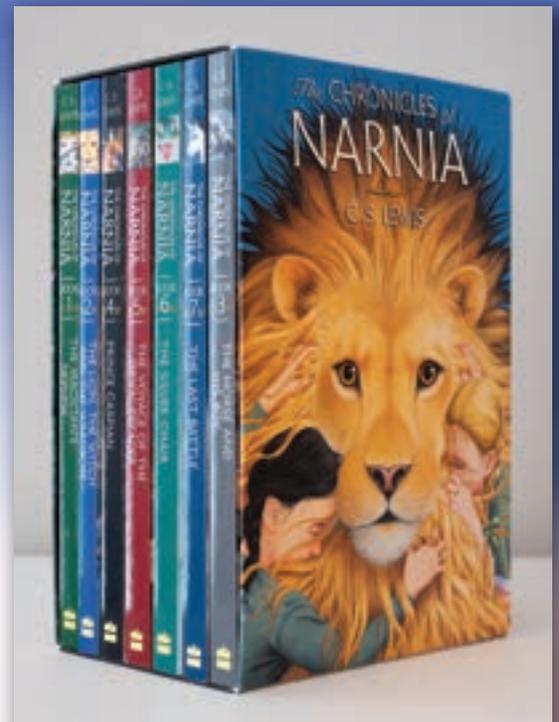
A key feature of Eucharistic education is that it permeates all curricula, not merely the religion courses. Art, music, Latin, literature, history, and science courses can all include lessons on the Eucharist that, in varying ways, present the Eucharist as the heart of Christian life. These lessons are not catechetical; such instruction occurs in religion course. Rather, these lessons engage students' hearts and imaginations, which

are essential components within a person's faith life.

In art classes of varying grade levels, students can learn creative ways to depict the fact that the Eucharist is Jesus Christ. They can also study paintings that do the same. In music classes, students can learn the great Eucharistic hymns in English and in Latin. For students studying the Latin language, these hymns take on much more meaning, as they can both reiterate and learn anew grammatical features and vocabulary. In addition to the standard prayers (Pater Noster, Ave Maria), students can begin class with the Eucharistic prayers (Adoro Te Devote, Tantum Ergo) that they can recite, sing, and memorize.

There are not many stories or literary works that include the Eucharist as a major plot element, but incorporating the few that do into the curriculum will allow students to see in an imaginative way how essential the Eucharist is to our lives. Middle school students can read the *Chronicles of Narnia* with its theme of sacrifice. High school and college students have two short story options: "A Hint of an Explanation," by Graham Greene, and "Benediction," by F. Scott Fitzgerald, and the C.S. Lewis novel *Till We Have Faces*.

History courses offer many opportunities for teachers to add events that most certainly will not be included in the average textbooks but fit perfectly into the traditional chronologically divided periods. For example, when studying Roman history, students can read the letter from Pliny to Emperor Trajan, written in 110 AD, inquiring



what the former should do with the Christians in his territory; Pliny briefly describes the celebration of Eucharist at that time. Medieval history can include the first Eucharistic heresy of Berengarius of Tours and the establishment of the feast of Corpus Christi. Courses on the Protestant Reformation can contrast Luther's heretical theology of the Eucharist with that of Catholic theology. American colonial history can include the French Jesuits of New York and the Mohawks' attack on St. Isaac Jogues which was motivated by their belief that the saint's implements for Mass were instruments of black magic.

Science class seems the most unlikely of places to discuss the Eucharist, but, in a secular age, it provides the perfect forum for studying the Eucharistic miracles that have taken place over the centuries, particularly the ones of the twenty-first century that occurred in Poland, India, and Mexico, and that have been studied with the latest scientific instruments. The segue for presenting the

miracles could be the study of blood types or of muscle composition. The Eucharistic miracles offer so much to today's students. First, they offer scientific support for their faith in the word of Jesus Christ that the Eucharist is really His body and blood. Second, they help overcome the popular notion that faith contradicts science. Third, their wondrous nature helps capture not only students' intellects, but their imaginations as well. As students speculate how it is possible that these miracles came about, they are forced to consider God's power over creation, a power that can transform ordinary bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

Amidst the variety of academic disciplines and other activities in a school, it can be difficult to unite them all with a single theme. Eucharistic education provides that unity by directing, like a skilled concert master, all of a school's elements in a harmonious orchestra in which students, teachers, and parents all know the tune. The tune is union with Jesus Christ, who is truly present in the Eucharist. As students study the Eucharist, they study Jesus. As they spend more time with the Eucharist and fall in love with it, they fall in love with Jesus. In helping students grow in this love, the Catholic school has fulfilled its mission. Eucharistic education will lead students to the Bread of Life. **OCM**

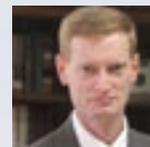


This Eucharistic miracle captured on October 21, 2006 in Guadalajara, Mexico depicts fresh blood determined to be type AB upon scientific analysis. This event was determined to defy any natural explanation.

AUTHOR: CATEDRALES E IGLESIAS/CATHEDRALS AND CHURCHES. ATTRIBUTION PARTIES INCLUDE MARY MOTHER OF THE CHURCH PARISH & THE ARCHDIOCESE OF GUADALAJARA LOCATED IN GUADALAJARA, MEXICO. LINK TO LICENSE: [WWW.CREATIVECOMMONS.ORG/LICENSES/BY/2.0](http://WWW.CREATIVECOMMONS.ORG/LICENSES/BY/2.0). © ALBUM 3138. NO CHANGES WERE MADE. LINK TO THE PHOTO: [HTTP://WWW.FLICKR.COM/PHOTOS/ELTB](http://WWW.FLICKR.COM/PHOTOS/ELTB)

**DAVID G. BONAGURA, JR.**

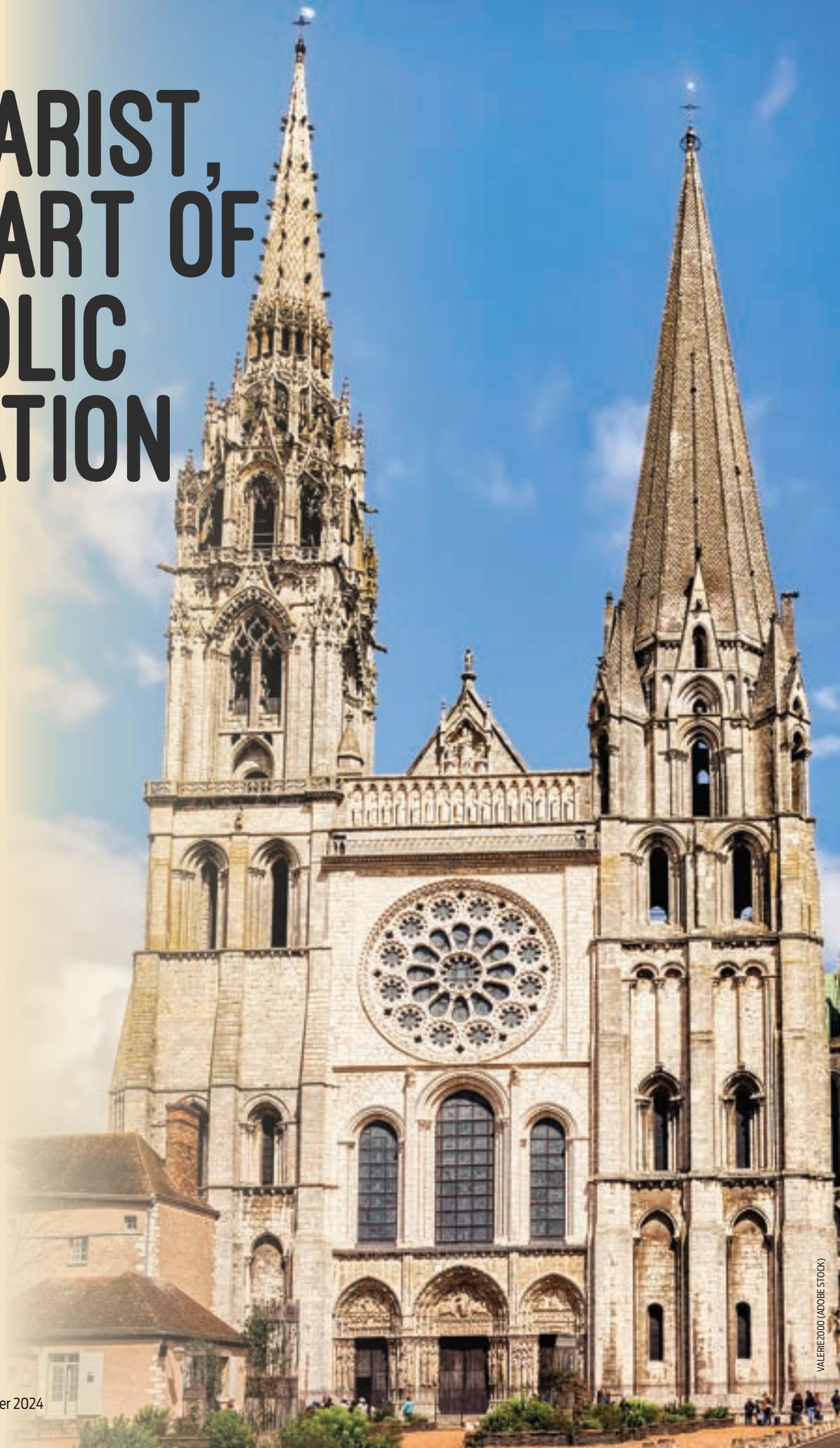
is the 2023-2024 Cardinal Newman Society Fellow for Eucharistic Education. He is an adjunct professor at St. Joseph's Seminary and Catholic Distance University. He is the author



of *Steadfast in Faith: Catholicism and the Challenges of Secularism and Staying with the Catholic Church: Trusting God's Plan of Salvation*, and the translator of *Jerome's Tears: Letters to Friends in Mourning*.

# EUCHARIST, THE HEART OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION

by Randall Smith



“The sacred liturgy does not exhaust the entire activity of the Church.... Nevertheless, the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time, it is the font from which all her power flows” (The

Second Vatican Council’s Dogmatic Constitution on the Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 9-10).

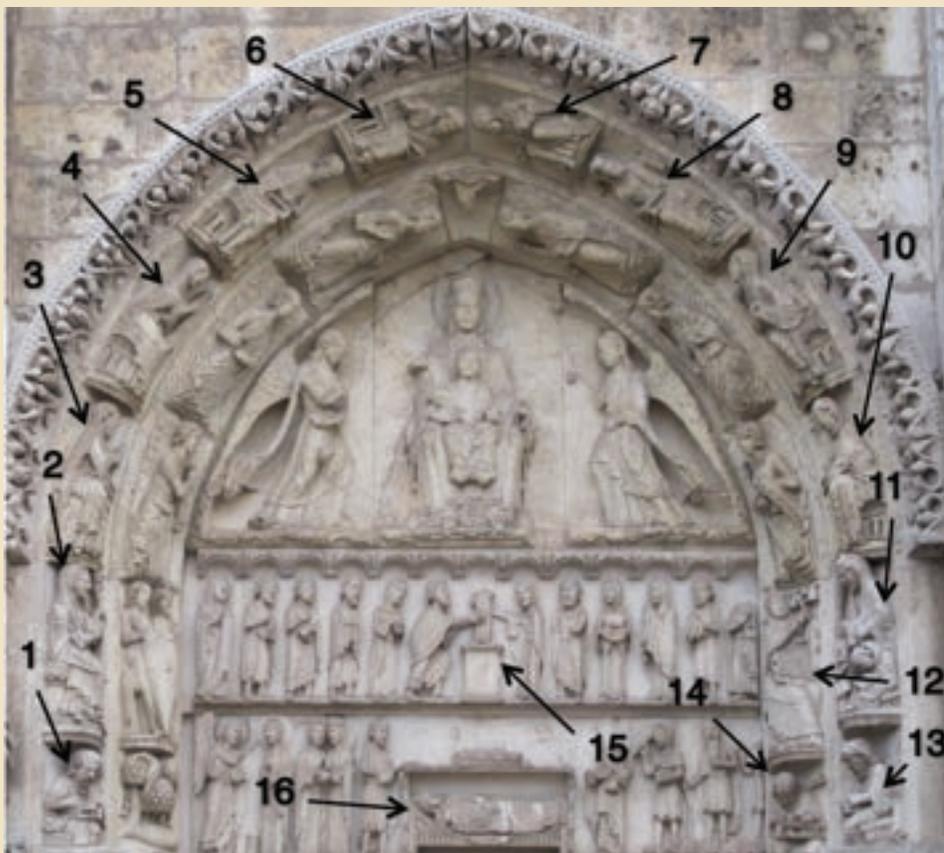
We begin with an image. One of the most profound visual statements of the Catholic educational ideal — namely, the integration of the various disciplines of

human wisdom in the light of the divine Wisdom incarnate — is portrayed in the tympanum over the right door to the main entrance of the Cathedral of Our Lady in the city of Chartres, France.

Chartres was the sight of a tremendous intellectual renaissance in the twelfth century, which witnessed not only the construction of this magnificent cathedral, but also the founding of a remarkable academic institution, the Cathedral school. This was an institution that brought together in one place for the purposes of research and teaching many of the best and wisest scholars of the day, an institution that would serve as a model for the creation and development of that amazing medieval invention, the *university*.

For the great scholars and visionaries at Chartres, their challenge was to create an educational framework in which the disciplines of human wisdom might be married to the revelation of divine Wisdom in the person of Jesus Christ. Indeed, this portal sculpture is an artistic expression of precisely that intellectual vision.

If you do an online search for an image of “the seven liberal arts and the western portal at Chartres,” you will find several good photographs of the tympanum, some of which have the characters labeled. In the middle, you will see the famous *Sedes Sapientiae*, or holy “Seat of Wisdom.” Surrounding it in the archivolts are personifications of the seven liberal arts: on the bottom right, gram-



- |              |                |              |                  |
|--------------|----------------|--------------|------------------|
| 1. Aristotle | 5. Euclid      | 9. Astronomy | 13. Priscian     |
| 2. Dialectic | 6. Geometry    | 10. Ptolemy  | 14. Pythagoras   |
| 3. Cicero    | 7. Mathematics | 11. Grammar  | 15. Presentation |
| 4. Rhetoric  | 8. Boethius    | 12. Music    | 16. Incarnation  |



VALERIE ZOO (ADOBESTOCK)

mar, who is teaching two boys to write; moving then to the bottom left, we find dialectic, in whose right hand is a flower and in whose left hand is the head of a barking dog; proceeding around clockwise, we find rhetoric, who is pictured proclaiming a speech; geometry, who is shown writing figures on a tablet; arithmetic, whose attributes have been effaced over the centuries, so no one is sure what she is doing; astronomy, who is gazing up at the sky; and finally, moving to the inner archivolt, music, who is playing two instruments: the twelve-stringed harp and some bells. Underneath each of the arts is a representation of the thinker classically associated with that discipline: Priscian for grammar, Aristotle for dialectic, Cicero for rhetoric, Euclid for geometry, Boethius for arithmetic, Ptolemy for astronomy, and most likely Pythagoras for music, about whom Cassiodorus had related the story that he had “invented the principles of this discipline from the sound of bells and the percussive extension of chords.”

the Seat of Wisdom is pictured at the center as both the source and summit of all human wisdom. Mary sits at the center of the arts as a paradigm — as the “Seat of Wisdom” — because she is a model of one who obediently responded to God’s word, thus giving birth (in her case, quite literally) to God’s Wisdom Incarnate.

This point is emphasized in the two friezes below, both of which illustrate the events of the Christ’s birth. In the bottom frieze (reading from left to right), we see the Annunciation, the Visitation, and in the middle, the birth of Christ, with the angel leading the shepherds in from the right, sheep in tow. In the top frieze, we see Mary and Joseph presenting Jesus at the altar in the Temple. If you look closely, you’ll see that, unfortunately, likely due to violence done to the cathedral during the French Revolution, Christ is missing His head.

I am sometimes asked: “Doesn’t Jesus look sort of a like a loaf of bread?”

in the Eucharistic imagery scenes from Christ’s birth. This theological and historical context helps explain why the artist pictures the child Jesus on top of an altar rather than in Mary’s arms or in a manger.

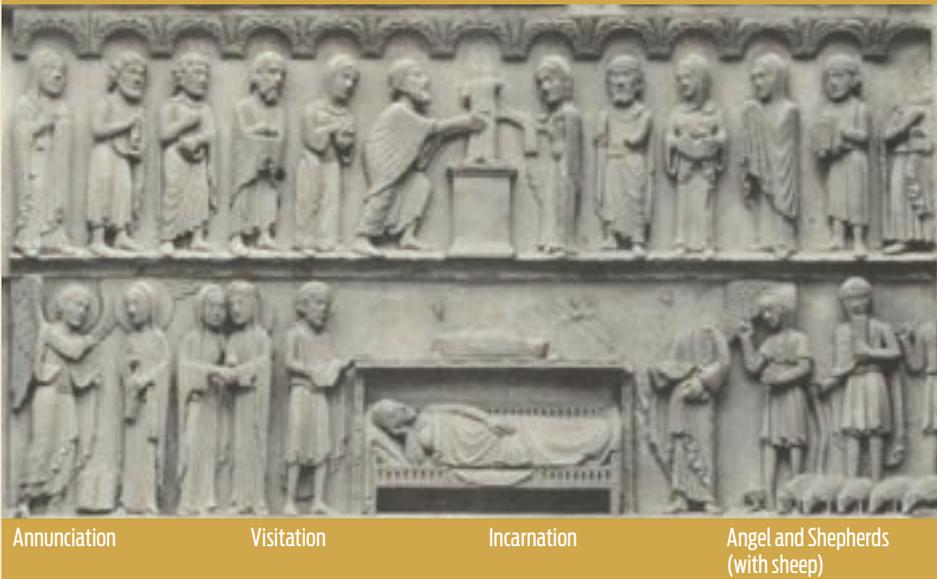
Let me stress that such details are not merely artistic trivia. Lying behind this entire set of images is a very conscious theology of Incarnation and sacramentality. If God has created the world and reveals Himself to us through His creation, then we have the possibility (as St. Paul tells us) of coming to know the invisible attributes of God through the visible things of creation. As in the visible, earthly elements of the Eucharist, we are meant to see the real presence of Christ, the Word made flesh, so also, in the visible, earthly elements of creation, we are meant to see the presence of God’s creative Word and Wisdom.

It would be a similar theology of Incarnation, moreover, that would allow the word and wisdom of God to become incarnate in actual, human language and thus, by extension, present and embodied on a written page such as the Scriptures.

Thus, as the scholars at Chartres understood, we must learn to read both the Book of Nature and the Book of Scripture, for they are not mutually exclusive. Rather, on this view, they will ultimately illumine each other because they both have the one God as their Author. Indeed, on the classical Christian understanding of the seven liberal arts, the trivium (or “threefold way”), which includes grammar, rhetoric, and logic, are precisely the disciplines that teach us how to read and understand the Book of Scripture; while the quadrivium (the “fourfold way”), the arts of geometry, mathematics, astronomy, and music, are those that guide us in our understanding of the Book of Nature. The portal image makes clear, however that this reading — whether of one book or the other (and notice that each of the classical thinkers associated with the arts is pictured writing in a book, which is the classic medieval pose for the four Gospel writers: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) — must always be done in the light of the divine Wisdom incarnate.

Note how, in this vision of an authentically Catholic education, all the dis-

## The Presentation



Here at Chartres, we see in concrete, visible form the artistic record of an attempt to integrate human wisdom, as exemplified by its instruments — namely, the seven liberal arts — with Wisdom incarnate in the person of Jesus Christ. The visual movement of the image, moreover, goes in both directions. The arts and disciplines of human wisdom are seen as a preparation for an increased understanding of faith: they surround and support the image of Wisdom Incarnate in the center. By the same token,

The answer is, yes, and it’s not just because He’s missing his head. Scholars tell us that these images were carved in response to a Eucharistic controversy raging at the time, in which certain groups were emphasizing the presence of the Risen Christ of heaven in the Eucharist, perhaps to the detriment of an understanding of the Eucharist which might include the living Christ who lived and walked the earth. Here at Chartres, we see an attempt to correct that potential misunderstanding by including with-

ciplines are present and effectively integrated. This aspiration to unity and integration of all the disciplines is one that has continued to inspire the best Catholic educational institutions in the centuries since. It was the vision that inspired the nineteenth century theologian and saint, John Henry Cardinal Newman, to write his important and influential book, *The Idea of a University*, although it was a vision he had nurtured for years. In one of his earlier sermons, for example, he wrote:

Here, then, I conceive, is the object of ... setting up universities; it is to reunite things which were in the beginning joined together by God and have been put asunder by man.... It will not satisfy me, what satisfies too many, to have two independent systems, intellectual and religious, going at once side by side, by a sort of division of labor, and only accidentally brought together. It will not satisfy me, if religion is here and science there, and young men converse with science all day and lodge with religion in the evening.... I wish the intellect to range with the utmost freedom, and religion to enjoy an equal freedom, but what I am stipulating is, that they should be found in one and the same place and exemplified in the same persons (Cardinal Newman, in Sermon I of *Sermons on Various Occasions*).

What is especially poignant in this passage is the marriage imagery: the notion that in setting up universities, our goal should be “to reunite things which were in the beginning joined together by God and have been put asunder by man.” The rule in contemporary universities, however, is to allow our students to fall into (indeed, we often *insist* that they fall into) one or another of the disciplines, to the detriment of — perhaps even the exclusion of — the others. It is perhaps not inaccurate to say of the faculty and staff of the modern university that they are like the orphaned children of a sad divorce: a divorce not only between human wisdom and divine Wisdom, but also between and within the disciplines themselves. The job of a Christian university, then, is to do what secular culture cannot: unite what has been put asunder by man.

Bridging these divides, uniting what has been put asunder, and integrating what



John Paul The Great Catholic University holds a Eucharistic procession with students through the streets of Escondido, CA.

should be seen as a whole, was the challenge set forth by Pope John Paul II in his encyclical *Ex corde Ecclesiae*. Allow me, if I may, to quote the passage I have in mind in full.

The integration of knowledge is a process, one which will always remain incomplete; moreover, the explosion of knowledge in recent decades, together with the rigid compartmentalization of knowledge within individual academic disciplines, makes the task increasingly difficult. But a University, and especially a Catholic University, “has to be a ‘living union’ of individual organisms dedicated to the search for truth ... It is necessary to work towards a higher synthesis of knowledge, in which alone lies the possibility of satisfying that thirst for truth which is profoundly inscribed on the heart of the human person.” 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 center of creation and of human history (*Ex corde Ecclesiae* 35).

Bridging these divides — bridging especially the significant division between what author C. P. Snow once called “the

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two cultures”: the natural sciences, on the one hand, and the humanities, on the other — is necessary not only for the health of the secular academy, but it is *an absolute requirement*, as Newman and Pope John Paul II have made clear, for a truly *Catholic* education. Only if we help our students bridge this divide will we have helped them achieve the kind of unified and integrated human wisdom — both of themselves and of the world — that could serve as the proper handmaiden of the Divine Wisdom Incarnate. **OCM**

**RANDALL SMITH** is the 2023-2024 Cardinal Newman Society Fellow for Eucharistic Liturgy. He is a Professor of Theology at the University of St. Thomas, Houston, and is the author of four books, including *How to Read a Sermon by Thomas Aquinas: A Beginner's Guide* (Emmaus); *Aquinas, Bonaventure, and the Scholastic Culture of Medieval Paris* (Cambridge); and *From Here to Eternity: Reflections on Death, Immortality, and the Resurrection of the Body* (Emmaus). His next book — the only book-length commentary in English on Bonaventure's *Journey of the Mind into God* — will be available from Cambridge University Press in the fall of 2024.



# FORMING HEARTS AND MINDS OF STUDENTS FOR WORSHIP

by Father Jonathan Duncan

To understand the place of the Eucharist in Catholic education, we must first understand worship. Here are four elements of worship that Catholic educators should contemplate: worth, training, method, and culmination.



PHOTO PROVIDED COURTESY OF MAX STUDIOS - UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS (HOUSTON)

Eucharistic procession at the University of St. Thomas (Houston)

## Worship requires worth

Each morning, Catholics and Jews greet the new day with the words of the 95th Psalm of David:

Come, let us sing to the Lord. Shout for joy to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before Him with praise and Thanksgiving...O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!

Psalm 95 forms an integral part of Jewish morning prayers and, as Catholics, we received this inheritance and incorporated it into Lauds (Morning Prayer) of the Roman Rite Liturgy of the Hours. With our Jewish brothers and sisters, we share a fundamental conviction that the first impulse of the day should be worship.

The very word *worship* reveals the nature of the act. Worship at its most fundamental is to recognize something as having ultimate *worth*. Another way to put it is to say: to worship is to “make a big deal” of something. In worshipping we acknowledge that we have found something so precious and full of worth that we have to name it. The American novelist David Foster Wallace famously remarked to a group of 2005 graduates of Kenyon College that worship is in no way optional:

This, I submit, is the freedom of a real education, of learning how to be well-adjusted. You get to consciously decide what has meaning and what doesn't. You get to decide what to worship. Because here's something else that's weird but true: in the day-to-day trenches of adult life, there is actually no such thing as atheism. There is no such thing as not worshipping. Everybody worships. The only choice we get is what to worship.

“THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS NOT WORSHIPPING. EVERYBODY WORSHIPS. THE ONLY CHOICE WE GET IS WHAT TO WORSHIP.”

The task of all education, then, is the task of proposing to students what ought to be worshipped, what is worthy. To propose *divine* worship to students, the highest calling of Catholic education, is to invite them to behold the eternal significance and beauty of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Unfortunately, the worth of this Lord Jesus is not self-evident to students inhabiting a world saturated with Tik-Tok stars, influencers, and billionaire entrepreneurs. Despite its challenges, it is the joyful obligation of each generation committed to Catholic education to unmask all that is truly worthless and to propose anew the One who is worthy of ultimate value and supreme worship.

## Worship requires training

While worship is the most natural thing in the world to us, it can also seem thoroughly alien. To focus on another... to forget myself for a moment... to not ask, “How long will this take?” or “How much will this cost?” or “What will I get out of it?”... to restrain these impulses will very often feel completely unnatural. The truth, though, is that each of our students was made for this worship and made to find all their joy and fulfillment in discovering *this Worth*. Yet, just because we were made for worship doesn't mean learning to worship will be easy. We were made to speak, to walk, and to use our hands, and when these are learned they bring untold joy and fulfillment but learning to do each of these required awkward beginnings and hours of frustrating practice. After those hours, we found ourselves capable not simply of speaking and walking but even of singing and running. Worship, like all these others, while ordained to us, is not automatic to us. Training and practice are necessary to cultivate a real habit of worship. It must be explained, prepared for, done, reflected upon, and done all over again. It cannot simply be taught; it must be caught.

As Catholic schools seek to prepare the ground for Eucharistic revival, we must prepare the hearts and minds of students for worship. Taking time at the beginning of a new school year to explain our rites, practice our responses, and rehearse our music are all seemingly mundane but essential steps in helping us move from merely standing to running in worship. The Church, in her wisdom, has given

“TRAINING AND PRACTICE ARE NECESSARY TO CULTIVATE A REAL HABIT OF WORSHIP”

us liturgies and devotions to be used over and over and over again, so that the music and prayers and responses can be practiced and properly learned, moving from our lips to deep down in our innermost being. In this way, we are slowly being trained, so that one day when we have a moment when we don't know how or what to pray, words will be given.



## Worship requires a method

To train ourselves to acknowledge ultimate worth requires some kind of method. Since man first sought to draw closer to this Power behind all things, what one scholar called the *mysterium tremendens et fascinans*, the method has been sacrifice. While sacrifice has certainly looked different through the ages, the essential quality remains the same: to sacrifice is to *waste* something on your God. At the height of Israel's sacrificial economy, one Passover might see the blood of 250,000 lambs shed. Whether the ancient sacrificial offering was flesh, grain, or oil, the essential meaning of the gift was the same. These things I am offering are precious to me, yet this rare and precious thing is not worth more to me than my God. He is source of all that I have, so He is more precious. He is worth more.

“...TO SACRIFICE IS TO  
WASTE SOMETHING  
ON YOUR GOD.”

Now, these things are easily accessible to us. They are not fitting sacrifices, because they are too easy. For sacrificial worship to have its proper place in our schools, other sacrifices must be made. For school leadership, it will be the sacrifice of time, something which is so precious, because we have such a limited amount of it. To propose worship to students is to ask Catholic schools to sacrifice time and resources. It is to carve out time from instruction, from organizations, from sports, and from all the other demands of a school day and to “waste it” on Our Lord. It is to “waste” resources (that's the polite word for money) on music and art and a space that is fitting for a God of goodness, truth, and beauty. If our school liturgies require no waste, then we must ask to what degree they are training for worship.

Putting the blade to instructional time and every other urgent need in a school schedule is no easy ask for Catholic school leadership. What is asked of our



students in this sacrificial worship is to offer up something that will seem to many of them even more precious: their sense of dignity, their sense of “not caring,” of aloof “coolness” and social status. For so many of our students, these are precious offerings, but these too must be invited to be placed on the altar. None of these sacrifices will be easy, and if they were, they would not be worthy of divine worship, but by the gift of sheer divine grace, schools and students can be trained.

## Worship requires culmination

It should be obvious to all concerned that the habit of worship we've described, in all its beauty and profundity, is incredibly difficult. Not just for the obvious reasons we have spoken of, that training is required and that we are easily distracted and easily turned back in on ourselves. More tragically, though, these lips that speak God's praises also soon take up gossip and slander. The hearts that we lift up to the Trinity in adoration are often deceitful. And it is for these reasons that the culmination of our worship is nothing we offer. The climax



“...WORSHIP IS NOT SIMPLY OUR DUTY, IT IS OUR DESTINY.”



Benedictine College is an official stop along the western route of the associated National Eucharistic Pilgrimage. Known as the St. Junipero Serra Route, the western leg of the pilgrimage began in San Francisco and arrived in Atchison, Kansas, on June 25, 2024.

of our school worship cannot simply be preaching, no matter how engaging, or singing, no matter how robust, or prayer, no matter how earnest. These are our acts of devotion, but the crown of Christian worship, the end of Christian worship is not our offering, but *His*: the Eucharist. Our worship finds its source and summit in the Mass because there, and only there, is found the perfect act of worship and obedience to the Father.

For centuries the children of Israel called themselves to worship, longing for the day when a perfect temple, with holy priests, would offer perfect praise to

the Father. Now, in our Eucharistic worship, we encounter the one who in His death declared the worth and beauty of the Heavenly Father. In the eternal Son's offering of Himself, He gathers up our scattered voices, imperfect singing, and distracted praying, and, united with Him, makes of our worship something glorious and truly worthy.

The journey towards this culmination of our worship is no small labor. We take up this adventure of worship with all the sacrifice and training required, not simply because it is “right and just,” though to be sure it is. We propose right worship to our

students because worship is not simply our duty, it is our destiny. It is the future for which every student in our schools was made. One day, when this veil of tears is lifted and we know Him, even as we are fully known, sacraments will cease, but worship, the Revelation of St. John promises, will not. One day it is all we will do, and of it, we will never tire. **OCM**

**FATHER JONATHAN DUNCAN** is the 2023-2024 Cardinal Newman Society Fellow for Eucharistic Devotion. He is Chaplain for St. Joseph's Catholic School and Furman University Campus Ministry. He is also the Director of Spiritual Health for Bon Secours St. Francis Health System.



# HOW THE EUCHARIST CAN SAVE CIVILIZATION

A Q&A with Dr. Jared Staudt BY JOSEPH REILLY



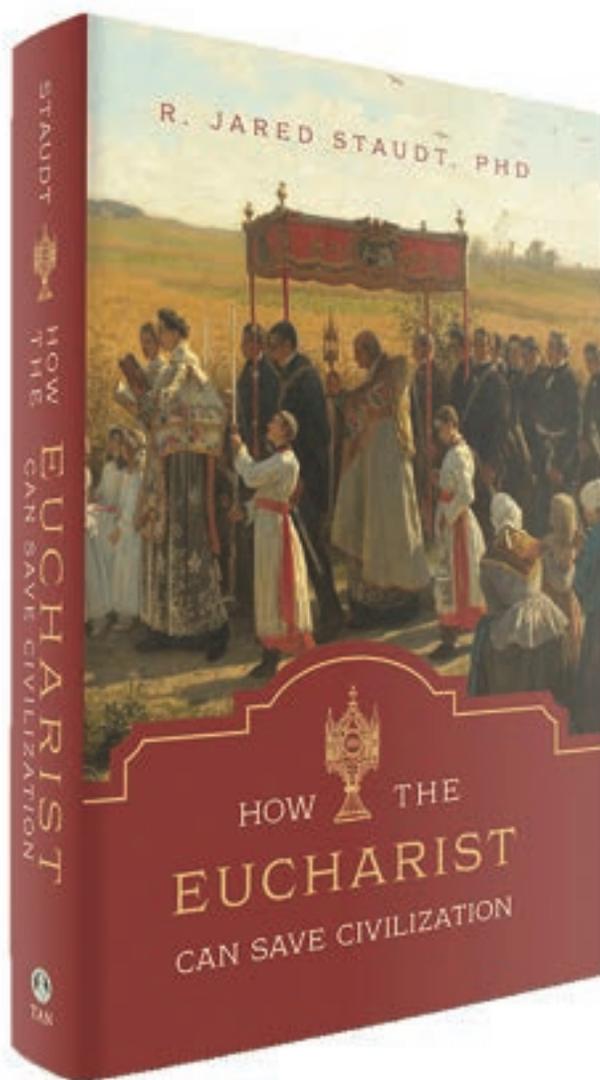
Joseph Reilly is a recent graduate of Ave Maria University and an intern for The Cardinal Newman Society. He recently interviewed Dr. Jared Staudt about the Eucharist's influence on the future of civilization and culture, specifically, what that means for Catholic education.

**Q:** Your book, *How the Eucharist Can Save Civilization* (TAN Books, 2023), argues that the Eucharist is central to Western civilization and its renewal. America seems to be sliding quickly. How would your recommendations save us?

**A:** Jesus is the one who will save us, but the way in which he saves us is by entering into our lives. Too often we think that for God to save civilization, it would require a *Deus ex machina* solution of swooping in to solve our problems for us. In reality, He gives us everything that we need to solve these problems if we rely on His grace within us. Saving us is His plan for saving civilization.

What does America need most right now? It is not a pious sentiment to recognize that we need God more than anything else, and God makes himself present to us most fully and directly through the Eucharist. Even if America is not going immediately to embrace the Lord's presence there, we must be the ambassadors of this presence, acting as his tabernacle within the world. We must extend our Lord's presence into everything we do and bring him into our encounters with others. We can also make prayers of reparation for the sins of the country before the Blessed Sacrament and pray for greater openness to the Lord's presence hidden there.

**Q:** Education forms young people, and well-formed graduates should influence civilization and culture. Catholic education aims "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" (*Gravissimum Educationis*, 8). How can the Eucharist help form students to be vessels for change after completing their education?



**A:** We often jump right into the practical results of education, but, first and foremost, education is about becoming the people God intends us to be. This entails coming to know God so that we can understand our identity and vocation in him. Education is necessary because we need formation to realize our true potential as human beings and as disciples. Where can we find the real source of transformation and life if not in the Eucharist?

If you want to learn the truth, you will find it in him. If you want happiness, he is the one who can offer it. Jesus is the Word of God, the Truth of all things, and Goodness itself. It is not enough to learn about him. He must be encountered, even entering within us to teach us through his divine presence there. He changes us from the inside out and makes us ready for our mission in the world. In receiving communion, we become one with Jesus, members of his body. This unity draws us into his mission, as he acts through us in the world, continuing to offer himself as a gift to others through us.

**Q:** Your website, [BuildingCatholicCulture.com](http://BuildingCatholicCulture.com), recommends two ways of renewing faithful Catholic education. The first is to ensure “a distinctively Catholic environment or culture.” What role should the Eucharist have in building the culture of Catholic education?

**A:** The Eucharist is what makes us Catholic, as the place where we encounter the Son of God in the flesh. This is true also for the school. The Blessed Sacrament anchors the culture of the entire school, making it a place where God dwells and where all things are ordered to the glory of God. Faith must become a way of life and the Eucharist ensures that the life of the school is centered on the highest things. What we prioritize can be seen in how we spend our time. When schools increase the frequency of Mass, it’s common to hear teachers and parents complain about lost instructional time. We will never regret investing time in the Lord, however, as he will make all that we do fruitful. Going to Mass will make a greater impact on our students than anything else we can do.

Your second recommendation is that the “curriculum must flow from and lead to a Catholic worldview,” which goes beyond theology to history, politics, science, literature, and more. What is the Eucharist’s role in a Catholic curriculum and in forming a Catholic worldview?

The whole benefit of coming to a Catholic school should be a complete formation grounded in the faith. No other school can truly form the whole person—body, mind, and soul. Catholic education, as a whole, should be sacramental in that everything we learn reflects the fullness of truth. The entire universe, including human beings made in the image of God, should be seen as an icon reflecting the truth, goodness, and beauty of God. The Eucharist makes it sacramental in a more complete sense, truly forming soul and body at once. The Creator comes into us to remake us. The Word by whom all was created enlightens us with his presence within us. In the Blessed Sacrament, we come to the source of all truth and the true fulfillment of every genuine desire.

Education could be seen as a search. Any school can embark upon that journey, searching for answers that can guide our lives. Only at the Catholic school does the one who sparked this whole adventure come to us to walk alongside of us, guiding us from within. He is the one who will teach us most fully what it means to be a human being and enable us to reach our ultimate destination in communion with the Father.

**Q:** What negative effects come about when the Eucharist is absent from education?

**A:** It’s amazing how controversial going to Mass can be. It’s hard for me to fathom how Catholic school students can come to a parish every day, or a campus with a chapel, and only visit Jesus once a month or even just once a week. Can you imagine attending an art school with a gallery of the greatest masterpieces on campus, but students remain in the classroom and only make an occasional visit to experience what they are studying? It wouldn’t make any sense. A Catholic school without the regular celebration of the Mass misses the center of its education and formation. Jesus can do all we seek to accomplish more quickly and easily. He makes our instruction proceed more clearly, enabling our studies to reach their end. He is the source of virtue and the discipline we need to grow as human beings. The Mass is not an add-on but the realization of our educational goals. We will limp along without a strong devotion to the Eucharist and a commitment to attending Mass.

**OCM**

**JOSEPH REILLY**  
Intern for The Cardinal  
Newman Society



## MORE ABOUT DR. JARED STAUDT:

Dr. Staudt is a 2024-2025 Cardinal Newman Society Eucharistic Education Fellow. He has taught at the Augustine Institute and the University of Mary, served as Associate Superintendent for the Archdiocese of Denver, and co-founded two Catholic high schools. Currently, he serves as Director of Content for Exodus 90 and as an instructor for the Lay Division of St. John Vianney Seminary, Denver, Colorado. He

edited *Renewing Catholic Schools: How to Regain a Catholic Vision in a Secular Age* (Institute for Catholic Liberal Education, 2020), is the author of *How the Eucharist Can Save Civilization* (TAN, 2023), and is the author of the forthcoming book *Words Made Flesh: The Sacramental Mission of Catholic Education* (Catholic Education Press, 2024).

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If you have any questions, contact Bob Laird at 703-367-0333 x103 or [blaird@cardinalnewmansociety.org](mailto:blaird@cardinalnewmansociety.org)



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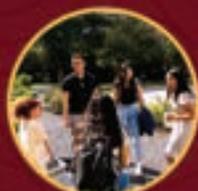
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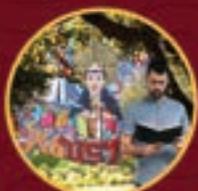
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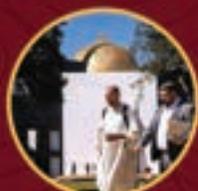
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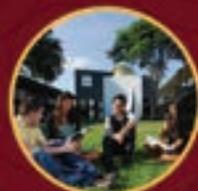
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