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TRUTH AND FIDELITY IN CATHOLIC EDUCATION

SPRING 2026



RENEWING AMERICA THROUGH CATHOLIC EDUCATION

- Catholic Education: Now More Than Ever
- Preparing Students to Serve Their Country
- Toward A More Perfect Union

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Dear friend of faithful Catholic education,

Happy 250th! America's anniversary is an opportunity for students and educators to recall the heroic sacrifice of our Catholic missionaries and pioneers—too often maligned by society and absent from history textbooks. Young Catholics need to know the inspiring history of their forebears.

Catholics also need to know the history of Catholic education. Its rise was miraculous, and it was built by many holy saints.

St. John Neumann (often confused with our own patron and Doctor of the Church, St. John Henry Newman of England) established 200 parochial schools in 19th-century Philadelphia. Despite the toil that caused his early death at age 48, he declared, "I have never regretted having dedicated myself to the mission in America."

We, too, face an uphill battle in our work to renew Catholic education—which is the key to forming faithful citizens and renewing America.

This year, Catholic school enrollment dropped again, continuing its long decline of more than 70% since 1965. Of the students who remain, a growing portion (now 22%) are non-Catholic.

Meanwhile, many small Catholic colleges are dying, while most large Catholic universities undermine the Church's teaching.

Still, today there's great hope for the Church in America!

We're seeing a "second spring" of faithful Catholic education in many dioceses and in lay-run schools, colleges, and homeschools—a Newman Guide movement that God has richly blessed.

I ask all Catholics to pray, through the intercession of our patron, Saint John Henry Cardinal Newman, for the success of Newman Guide education in America and elsewhere.

As you pray, take to heart the wisdom of another great pioneer of Catholic schools, Archbishop John Hughes of New York: "In our age, the question of education is the question of the Church."

It's as true in our age, as it has always been.

The renewal of Catholic education is vital to the renewal of American values, as you will read in the pages that follow.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Patrick Reilly
President and Founder
The Cardinal Newman Society

“IN OUR AGE, THE
QUESTION OF
EDUCATION IS
THE QUESTION
OF THE CHURCH.”



SCAN TO DONATE

CATHOLIC EDUCATION:

NOW MORE THAN EVER

by Kevin Roberts

You don't have to be Catholic to know that American culture is in bad shape. Most modern art is ugly. Most popular entertainment is soulless and brainless. And thanks to Big Tech, it's addictive, too.

Students' attention spans are so screen-scrambled that they can't read books. Our public schools seem best understood as a trillion-dollar conspiracy to make our children fragile, passive, ignorant, and depressed. (Is it any wonder young Americans are suffering a mental health crisis while retreating from dating, marriage, and children?)

All this brokenness is overseen by a predatory corporate elite trying to monetize it and a derelict political elite trying to deflect blame for it. And Artificial Intelligence is about to make each of the above pathologies worse. Every day, every lie modernity tells about the human person becomes harder to detect and refute.

That's the bad news. The good news is, we already have a solution: Catholic education. In particular, the authentically Catholic education of America's Newman Guide Recommended schools and colleges.

What America needs

The institutions recommended by The Cardinal Newman Society understand that education is formation. Their mission is not just sharpening minds but enlarging hearts, strengthening souls, and igniting moral imaginations. The Cardinal Newman Society is half right when they say, „No secular education is a complete education.” It's nearer the mark to say that no secular education is even possible.

The fact is, all education is values education. The only question is: *which values?* Decades of experience have taught us that secular institutions are neither neutral nor relativistic on this score. They are intolerant and doctrinaire.

At public, private, and even many Catholic universities today, students are steeped in the values of moralistic therapeutic deism, with some intersectional cultural Marxism mixed in. At these secular colleges, students learn to despise America, the West, free enterprise, the Constitution, human nature, science, and Church teaching. And with ubiquitous grade inflation and AI-enabled cheating today, that is all many students really learn.

The case for secular education is that it gives students practical skills to succeed in the real world, without wasting their time on the supposedly impractical arts, letters, and humanities.

But to be freed from the *liberal* arts is to be... unfree.

After all, those so-called hard skills — critical thinking, analytical reasoning, problem solving — are all rooted in the philosophy, theology, and literature “practical” education eschews.

Today, secular education is failing even on its own terms. Procedural, mechanical, technical proficiencies are precisely

the ones that AI is already automating. The most marketable “skills” in the coming era are going to be things like moral judgment, interpersonal empathy, and cultural literacy.

This is precisely the knowledge taught by classical, liberal, Catholic education. Newman Guide schools and colleges all maintain traditional core curricula that expose all their students, regardless of major, to the best that man has thought and said. Their authentic Catholic education teaches students to discern the good, the beautiful, and the true from the merely efficient. They show students how to make a logical argument — and how to detect an illogical one. They know that faith and reason strengthen each other, as steel sharpens steel.

By grounding curricula in the humanities, Newman Guide schools and colleges give their digital-age students a better sense of what it means to be human. The Newman Guide college I used to lead, Wyoming Catholic College, puts this insight at the center of its core curriculum, which famously features a technology-free outdoor leadership and wilderness program. And the classical school I founded, John Paul the Great Catholic Academy in Lafayette, La., forms younger boys and girls in faith and reason.

The U.S. economy will soon have all the systemic, analytical power it needs to

thrive at the touch of a button. What will be harder to find is men and women who know how to use it while applying a deep understanding of sin and virtue and humility and happiness.

A new generation of leaders

Nowhere is this need more obvious than in our national politics. So many of the challenges America faces today are the result of leadership failures — specifically, our self-styled practical elites’ failure to grapple with human nature.

They judge policy by their own good intentions rather than the toxic incentives they write into the law. To technocratic elites, society is a machine and governance just a matter of tightening the right screws and oiling the right hinges. They don’t understand why treating people like *things* isn’t working.

“NEWMAN GUIDE ALUMNI...ARE WORKING TO PUT THE VALUES AT THE CENTER OF THEIR EDUCATION INTO THE CENTER OF OUR NATIONAL LIFE.”

Newman Guide colleges are some of the only schools I know of where students learn not only how to *avoid* such mistakes, but how to fix them. Their alumni are already proving it.

Brian Burch (University of Dallas ’97) created CatholicVote while still in his 20s and spent two decades building it into the largest network of authentically Catholic public advocacy in the country. Now serving as U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See, Burch will before long return to the United States one of the most politically experienced and influential Catholics of his generation, with a future even brighter than his successes to date.

Terry Schilling (Franciscan University ’09) was the first conservative activist to grasp the threat of transgenderism when it was still a gathering storm on the horizon. His organization, the American Principles Project, saw what the Left had planned and how to fight back. As early as 2015, Schilling collected data, informed and mobilized voters, and helped Americans see how hostile the other side was becoming to family, children, and biological truth.



Terry Schilling

Burch and Schilling are part of a new generation of leaders more interested in family and community flourishing than tax rates. Theirs is a conservatism of solidarity, subsidiarity, and human dignity. They — and many other young Newman Guide alumni in Washington and across the country — are working to put the values at the center of their education into the center of our national life.

They know — *they learned* — that to build a healthier culture, we need a more human politics. And it all starts with a faithful Catholic education. **OCM**

KEVIN ROBERTS is president of The Heritage Foundation, which formulates and promotes public policies based on traditional principles. He founded and led John Paul the Great Academy, a co-ed, K-12 Catholic liberal arts school in Lafayette, La., for seven years, and he was president of Wyoming Catholic College, a Newman Guide Recommended institution, from 2013-2016.



PREPARING STUDENTS TO SERVE THEIR COUNTRY

by Bob Laird

After being part of The Cardinal Newman Society family for many years, I am amazed at how my education at the United States Military Academy, known as West Point, parallels a Newman Guide education.

Both require the search for and commitment to the truth, service before self, moral formation, courage when it is unpopular, and loyalty to what is right. In the military, each decision, each order, each command in the heat of battle or as a Pentagon staff member must be truthful. Truth is the hallmark of a Newman Guide college education, just as it is an essential requirement for military service, with one major difference: Catholic education has the truth of divine revelation and the “certainty of already knowing the fount of all truth” (St. John Paul II).

The motto of the U.S. Military Academy is “Duty, Honor, Country,” which reflects the fundamental ideals instilled in each future officer. General Douglas MacArthur etched these words in time in a 1962 address to the Corps of Cadets:

“Those three hallowed words reverently dictate what you ought to be, what you can be, what you will be. They are your rallying point to build courage when courage seems to fail, to regain faith when there seems to be little cause for faith, to create hope when hope becomes forlorn.”

Courage, faith, and hope are instilled in each graduate with the principle of doing what one ought to do in each situation. The Cadet Honor Code requires knowing the truth and telling the truth at all times, in all circumstances, even when it is not popular: “A cadet will not lie, cheat, or steal, or tolerate those who do.” This is the basis of character

formation. It establishes a basis of trust and is essential for forming leaders.

Newman Guide Recommended schools and colleges provide the same character formation. Military service after high school or college graduation offers a great means for well-educated graduates to thrive and continue to pursue their



careers while not fluttering in the wind of relativism. They base their lives and their careers on an understanding of the truth.

A solid formation

After I retired from the Army and became the Director of Family Life in the Diocese of Arlington, Va., a recruiter from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) approached me one day to tell me how he loved recruiting graduates from Newman Guide Recommended colleges. He said they have a moral foundation,

ITS TO TRY



they are truthful, and they know how to seek knowledge.

In the military and in agencies like the CIA, the search for truth is essential, but equally essential is the certitude of knowing truth once it is discovered or revealed. According to our patron, St. John Henry Cardinal Newman,

...truth cannot change; what is once truth is always truth; and the human mind is made for truth, and so rests in truth, and it cannot rest in falsehood. When then it once becomes possessed of a truth, what is to dispossess it? but this

is to be certain; therefore once certitude, always certitude.

Certitude and confidence in one's ability to arrive at certitude is a required military tenet. When attacking an enemy target, especially in a populated area, the soldier must be assured of the exact position of the target. A lack of reason, skill, or confidence can result in civilian or friendly force casualties.

One of The Cardinal Newman Society's recent student interns, Chuck Koach from Christendom College, cited one

of his professors in an article he wrote for Crisis Magazine: "The world can train you in skills. What it can't train is virtue. That's up to you... Employers are starving for people who are grounded: people who aren't swept away by every trend or talking point. Christendom forms people like that."

The military, too, needs grounded individuals. While a company commander training young recruits how to fire a rifle, I recognized that those soldiers from Eastern Kentucky and Tennessee who had hunted since they were old enough

to pick up a rifle were my best shots. They required little training. They instinctively knew how to engage a target at a long range. It was in their blood.

The same is true for forming dependable moral Catholic leaders. Those grounded in their Catholic faith and steeped in the truth are well-prepared for any profession and uniquely able to serve their country with distinction.

Guided by truth

Several Newman Guide Recommended colleges host Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) programs at their schools. The Catholic University of America, for instance, has a robust ROTC program training officers for the Army, Navy, and Air Force. Students also lead a club called Homefront, which promotes “faith, service, and charity” to support military members and families.

Benedictine College, Belmont Abbey College, University of Dallas, and University of St. Thomas (Houston) all have both Army and Air Force ROTC programs, some of them sponsored jointly with other nearby colleges. Franciscan University of Steubenville has an Air Force ROTC program.

Dean John Czarnetzky of Ave Maria School of Law is a former U.S. Army intelligence analyst. His law school actively recruits U.S. veterans and has a strong affinity for the military. He said it is “fitting and proper such an institution be governed by law, executed by the finest possible lawyers.” Ave Maria’s devotion to truth makes it especially appropriate for military attorneys’ legal education.

“How can an attorney be properly formed to understand and work with the law, if they do not understand the truth about the human person and about God?” Czarnetzky asked, adding, “We at AMSL are not confused about the truth,



and we are not ashamed to teach law in light of it.”

John Dejak is director of the Secretariat of Catholic Education at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. A graduate of Ave Maria School of Law and a former Army JAG Corps lawyer, he said his Ave Maria studies “prepared me for an understanding of not only how human beings operate but also the prudence with which law and order ought to be enacted for the flourishing of the individual and community.”

After graduation, service in the military can provide Catholics a continuing formation in virtue and service to one’s country, together with a Catholic sacramental and prayer life.

Dr. Timothy Collins, president of Walsh University, is a graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy and a former Air Force fighter pilot. He refers to his military service as a time of character building.

“My military service has shaped my personality and habits that support my resilience and leadership,” Collins said. The experience was “so important to building camaraderie [and] a sense of purpose in a life that is meant to serve others.”

“My faith and military service experience are central to my identity,” he said. They

have “shaped how I think about who I am, what I value, and how to properly interpret duty, suffering, and purpose in the context of living right.”

After his military service, Dejak served in several teaching and administrative roles at Catholic schools. He was dean at St. Agnes School in St. Paul, Minn., and headmaster at Holy Spirit Academy in Monticello, Minn., both Newman Guide Recommended schools. He compared serving in the military and being a Catholic school leader: “One of the great things about serving

in the military is the sense of mission; the same could be said about being an administrator in a Catholic school.”

This focus on mission includes a commitment to self-sacrifice. “The mission to serve Christ and His Church and form young people to do the same is bigger than any individual, and sometimes personal preferences must give way to that which accomplishes the mission best,” Dejak said.

Sadly, fewer young adults today are ready for a life of self-sacrifice and service to mission. While seeking the truth and knowing the truth with certitude are critical and essential elements of human development, too many schools and colleges today are confused by woke ideology, including many Catholic educational institutions.

This is why the Newman Guide Recommended schools and colleges stand out: they teach faith, reason, and virtue, faithful to the teachings of Christ through the Catholic Church. Their graduates embrace duty, honor, and country, all centered in Truth Himself. **OCM**

BOB LAIRD graduated from West Point and served in the Army for 22 years, achieving the rank of Colonel. He currently serves as the Senior Counselor to the President at the Cardinal Newman Society.



DR. TIMOTHY COLLINS

President, Walsh University

Graduate of U.S. Air Force Academy and former Air Force fighter pilot

“The service academy places a premium on ethics training and development because of the nature of that educational experience: preparing men and women as commissioned officers who will lead others in high-pressure experiences that demand choices that are representative of America’s values, exercise lethal authority, and manage high-risk technologies. They must be able to choose the right course of action when the situation is ambiguous, the stakes are high, and when no one else is advising or even watching.”

“College graduates of yesterday are today’s leaders in every aspect of American life. College graduates today will be tomorrow’s leaders. They must be ready to lead others through difficult situations for the right reasons.”

“For many veterans, this intersection of faith and service is core to how we think and act. Our belief in God and the military culture reinforce ideas of sacrifice, service, and calling. Some may see this as a paradox — faith calls us to respect the dignity to every human

person, and our military service involves the use of force against humans. Charity calls for nonviolence; yet, justice requires armed defense. This is not theoretical for me... it shapes my approach, with my faith remaining the higher loyalty even when the exercise of force is necessary.”



JOHN DEJAK, J.D.

Director, Secretariat of Catholic Education, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

Graduate of Ave Maria School of Law and former Army lawyer

“In giving a legal opinion, one must be honest as to the intent of the law and in one’s assessment whether the commander’s desire fits the bill. This led to some uncomfortable conversations and the need for both patience and a calm demeanor to tell a superior that he is in the wrong and could likely violate federal law.”

“...there was the need for prudence in the application of the law to the facts. In addition to this, there was the need to communicate clearly, firmly, and courageously to one’s superiors. While my issues were not in the same league, I couldn’t help but think of Thomas More and the integrity with which he offered Henry VIII both legal and moral counsel.”

“...prior to all of these lessons that the military taught me is the necessity of prayer, reception of the sacraments, and staying close to Our Lord and Our

Lady. Certainly, that was something taught to me by my parents and by my own intellectual formation in Catholic schools.”



DEAN JOHN CZARNETZKY

Dean of Ave Maria School of Law

Former U.S. Army intelligence analyst

“Without my military experience, none of my professional and most of my personal achievements would not have happened. At graduation, I was a mediocre chemistry major at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) with no interest in pursuing science... I felt that rather than waste time knocking around with no direction, I would try to repay at least a part of the debt I owed America. Nobody in my family had served since we immigrated here, on either side.”

“I apply lessons I learned in the Army every day: discipline, getting up and hitting the ground running, being mission-oriented, dealing with and trying to understand many types of people. Most of all, I would say it’s the basic leadership training I received. Complete

the mission regardless of obstacles or cost. Lead by example and inspire people by your actions. Be prudent but decisive,

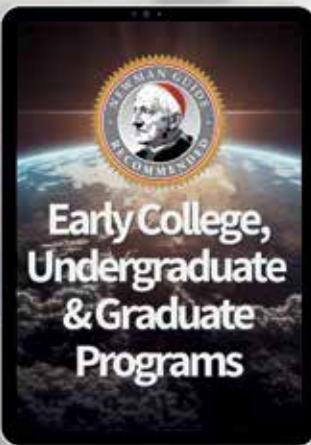
seize the initiative whenever possible. Be bold on fundamental principles and fight for them. Always keep your word.”







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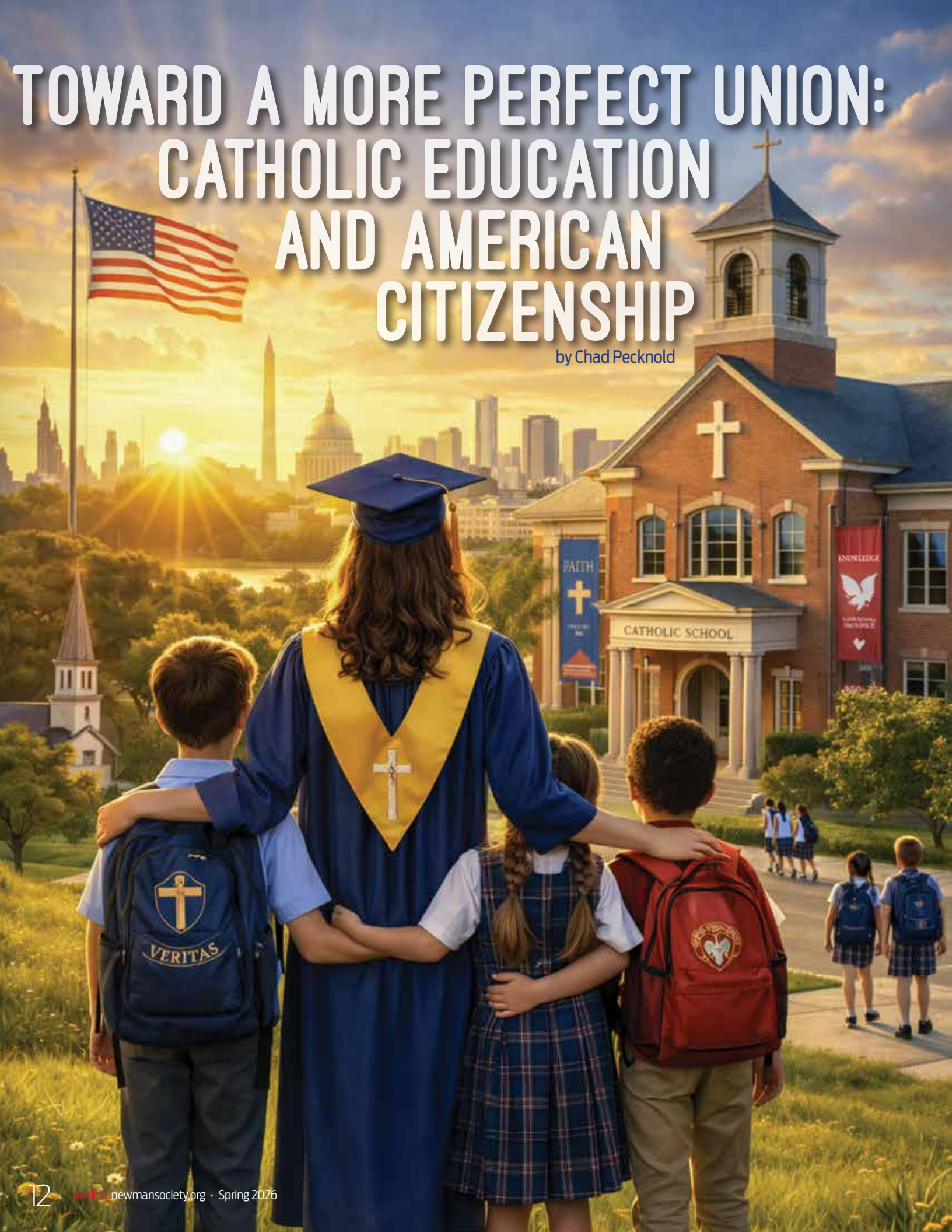
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TOWARD A MORE PERFECT UNION: CATHOLIC EDUCATION AND AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP

by Chad Pecknold



Pope Leo XIII, in his 1887 letter approving The Catholic University of America, predicted that Catholic colleges would “give to the Republic her best citizens.” They would produce a certain kind of citizen formed in faith, virtue, and wisdom. Such a rigorous Catholic education would not only serve the Church by producing faithful Catholics, but it would also produce citizens with moral character and religious depth who could lead the Nation.

Almost 140 years later, how does Leo’s prediction hold up? Have our Catholic colleges produced this kind of Catholic and this kind of citizen?

Forming the best Americans

In defense of Leo, there are objective metrics which answer the question in the affirmative. Graduates of Catholic colleges are 20% more likely to volunteer for charitable activities than their secular peers; they are 17% “happier” in terms of mental health; and they are more than 10% more likely to vote. Catholics educated at Catholic colleges also tend to make more money, own more homes, and tend to have more stable and slightly bigger families. As Pope St. John Paul II famously taught, “as the family goes, so goes the nation.” So if we make the strongest families, perhaps that’s the best metric of all that Leo was right: Catholic colleges give the Republic her best citizens.

Intuitively, however, we know this question is not so easily answered by these material metrics. Most of the nearly 200 Catholic colleges in America have drifted so far away from the Leonine vision that it can seem like the main thing they produce are liberal citizens who leave their faith behind. The Land O’Lakes watershed event of 1969 marked a turning point for many of our largest Catholic schools, which joined Fr. Theodore Hesburgh in declaring “independence” from the Church. Strangely, this departure from the Leonine vision was defended on almost Leonine terms, but with the faulty presupposition that America’s best citizens must have greater fealty to an ascendent post-war Liberalism than to either the Church or the Nation. Our largest Catholic universities chased their secular betters, thinking they could win at their game. They became more adept at teaching the pseudo-religion of DEI

than they did at teaching students to sing the *Agnus Dei*.

We can now see why the work of The Cardinal Newman Society matters so much today. We could ask the question anew: Have our Newman Guide Recommended Catholic colleges produced America’s best citizens? Here it is much easier to simply say, Yes! While Liberal Catholic higher education has only ever reliably produced fewer faithful Catholics while graduating citizens who believe more in the “warmth of collectivism” than in the providential gift of our homeland, Newman Guide schools do give America her best citizens.

“OUR LARGEST CATHOLIC UNIVERSITIES...BECAME MORE ADEPT AT TEACHING THE PSEUDO-RELIGION OF DEI THAN THEY DID AT TEACHING STUDENTS TO SING THE *AGNUS DEI*”



As the liberal order collapses — something which we can see happening all around the world — it will only become more evident that colleges which have a more classical, traditional, and Catholic approach to Catholic social teaching are the way forward for forming faithful citizens. After all, they teach what Pope Leo XIII had in mind for our students' learning, namely that the distinctively American common good flows from God. Our Newman Guide colleges are far more likely to warn against what Pope Leo called "indifferentism" to the one true faith and instead argue that Christianity is as necessary to western civilization as grace is to nature.

A return to Leonine Christianity

In his recent book, *His Reign Shall Have No End: Catholic Social Teaching for the Lionhearted* (2025), Peter Kwasniewski offers a refreshing alternative to the standard liberal Catholic approaches we see on campus. He puts Catholic social teaching back onto its proper footing. Instead of either an individualistic or collectivist approach, he understands that the Catholic mission is just as much about nations becoming disciples of Jesus Christ as it is about families and souls being transformed. He helps to see that Catholics have a completely integrated vision of Christianity as essential to the soul of public life — and we shouldn't leave that vision behind in order to fit in. Our families, our schools, our economy, our civic rituals and laws all need to be brought into contact with Christ the King. This is no longer simply the claim of Catholic traditionalists but has gone mainstream. I am now as likely to hear the words "Christ is King" on X, or in the White House, or from my Zoomer students. How ironic that Protestants are now more likely than Liberal Catholics to proclaim "Christ is King."

Perhaps our time has come — or rather, perhaps we can say that Leonine Christianity is back. "Christ is King" is exactly what Pope Leo XIII expected students at The Catholic University of America would learn when he approved her founding in 1887.

It's also what he expects of us today: Catholics who learn to say with their chest that Christ is King will give America her best citizens, her best families, her best businesses, her best vision of law, her best vision of civilization. Anything less falls short of the Leonine vision. Does it matter that there are too few of us?

Consider the fact that, while America understood itself as "Christian" in the 19th century, only a small minority of Americans were Catholic. Leo was not deterred in the least by the fact that Catholics represented only a small percentage of the population. Indeed, he seemed to have the deepest confidence that we would become America's ruling elites!



In his 1895 letter, *Longinqua Oceani* (1895), Pope Leo XIII especially praised the bustling vitality of Catholicism in the New World, and he reiterated his confidence that Catholics would not only help make America great but would also lead America in her search for "a more perfect union."

Even today, can we not count Catholics among the most principled jurists on our Supreme Court? Though Catholics may be a much greater percentage of the population today, it remains true that faithful, orthodox Catholics are a much smaller number. Yet despite our small number, we can now hear a Catholic Secretary of State proclaim the Nicene Creed at public events, and our Vice President can advocate for Christian faith being central to the American way of life. These are not insignificant

“CATHOLICS WHO
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GIVE AMERICA HER
BEST CITIZENS.”

developments that favor Leonine confidence. We can lay claim to being “the creative minority” who not only preserve the American way of life but also purify it and perfect it by way of Christ the King.

Toward a bright future

In conclusion, there is one more 19th century prediction that I think should give us confidence that now is the time for a revival of traditional Catholic social teaching in our Catholic colleges:

In his 1830 work *Democracy in America*, Alexis de Tocqueville observed that Catholicism had tremendous vitality, despite small numbers. He marveled at how strong Catholicism was — almost unaffected by what he called “the democratic religious fervor.” The Catholics were not “tossed about” on the waves of change but were rooted in the perennial Christian order of things.

As a result, Tocqueville predicted that, given enough time, Protestants would eventually cease to exist in America — eventually becoming either Catholic or pantheistic liberals. Now this prediction has not yet become true, but it looks more plausible than ever before. Mainline Protestantism has died — much of it has been emptied out into the pantheistic arms of gay race communism — but also many Protestants are either becoming Catholic or are much more willing to lock arms with Catholics in a fight to save our country. The fact that Protestants and Catholics can lock arms under “Christ the King” suggests that, eventually, Tocqueville’s prediction will come true as well.

If I’m right about the predictions of both Leo and Tocqueville, I suspect that, in the long run, the only Catholic colleges left will be ones that belong on the Newman Guide list. They’ll be the ones with the Leonine vision, and they’ll give America the citizens she needs to form “a more perfect union.”

OCM

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MARCH FOR LIFE



FORMING AMERICA'S PRO-LIFE LEADERS

by Katie E. Traver, Director of Development, March for Life

I never envisioned myself working in the pro-life movement or in the non-profit sector at all. It was not something I opposed; it simply was not part of the future I had imagined. Like many young students, I entered college with very specific ambitions.

Yet today, as Director of Development at the March for Life, I can see clearly that my professional path was shaped in large part not by my own plans but by my formation at a Newman Guide Recommended institution.

As a high school senior, I attended a promotional event for Ave Maria University where it was jokingly noted that the university ranked “first” among the Newman Guide colleges — because the list was alphabetical, and “Ave” begins with an “A.” At the time, I did not fully understand what The Newman Guide was, nor why inclusion in it mattered. It seemed like a lighthearted marketing line for Catholic parents wanting their kids to go to a “good school” more than a meaningful distinction.

The Newman Guide difference

During my undergraduate years, I planned to pursue a career in musical theater. I intended to move to New York City, audition professionally, and build a life in the performing arts. I had already started on this path in school as I toured professionally in Southwest Florida with an opera company, helped direct the university drama club, performed at school fundraising events, and dutifully devoted myself to the study of music. However, the onset of COVID-19 dramatically disrupted the performance industry, along with the rest of the world.

As I approached graduation in 2021, it became evident that an already unpredictable field had become extraordinarily unstable. Theaters were being closed throughout the world, and auditions were either invitation-only or altogether canceled. The path I had carefully constructed no longer seemed viable. In the midst of all of this, I had also gotten engaged to a medical student who was on a physician track far from any performance hub.

What initially appeared to be a professional setback ultimately became an unexpected redirection towards a far more fruitful career.

Thanks to my Newman Guide college, I was taught not only how to think critically but also how to think within a coherent understanding of truth. Faith was not treated as an isolated subject, but as something integrated closely with reason. The education I received prepared me not merely for employment but for meaningful work ordered toward service and the pursuit of truth.

After graduation and after marrying my wonderful husband, I began exploring opportunities within the nonprofit sector. I was drawn to mission-driven work, even though it had not been my original plan. After a few years in the field, I joined March for Life in its Development Department. I advanced quickly from coordinator to director, assuming leadership responsibilities that required strategic thinking, disciplined execution, relational stewardship, and a deep conviction regarding the dignity of every human life.

The habits cultivated during my undergraduate formation at my Newman Guide College proved indispensable, and it is this intentional formation that the pro-life movement needs more than ever.

What the pro-life movement needs

My experience is not unique. Institutions of higher education do far more than transmit academic content; they shape worldview. Universities inevitably form students intellectually, culturally, and morally. They influence not only what students believe but also how they approach fundamental questions.

In many academic settings today, students are formed in frameworks that detach autonomy from truth and redefine dignity according to personal preference. When this happens, abortion is often presented as an unquestionable social good rather than the profound moral tragedy it truly is. Ideas have consequences, and the ideas cultivated in classrooms shape

the culture students eventually build in our world

It is for this very reason that The Newman Guide plays a particularly important role in education today. Schools recognized by The Newman Guide commit to both academic excellence and faithful Catholic identity. They emphasize the integration of faith and reason and prioritize the holistic formation of the student — intellectually, spiritually, and morally. Education, in this context, is not reduced to career preparation or ideological activism. It is ordered toward the formation of the whole person.

This kind of formation is the key to ending abortion.

Over the past several decades, the pro-life movement has matured from a largely grassroots effort into a multifaceted professional field. Today, there are established career paths for attorneys, physicians, scholars, communications professionals, nonprofit leaders, and policymakers. The sustainability and effectiveness of this work depend upon well-formed individuals capable of intellectual engagement, ethical clarity, and strategic leadership.

Cultural change is not accomplished by passion alone. It requires men and women who can enter boardrooms, courtrooms, clinics, classrooms, and media platforms with confidence, clarity, and charity. Formation in faith and reason equips leaders to do precisely that.

If the pro-life movement is to continue growing in influence and effectiveness, attention must be given not only to advocacy, policy, and elections but also to education. Institutions that form students in truth, virtue, and service are quietly cultivating the next generation of leaders. In that sense, the work of Newman Guide Recommended institutions extends far beyond the classroom. It contributes directly to the cultural and moral renewal necessary to uphold the dignity of human life in our society.

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KATIE E. TRAVER
is the Director of Development
at March for Life.



NEWMAN GUIDE GRADUATES RENEWING AMERICAN CULTURE

by Kelly Salomon

The Newman Guide encourages families to embrace strong Catholic formation in schools, homeschool programs, colleges, and graduate programs. In turn, Newman Guide Recommended education prepares students to witness to the Catholic faith in all walks of life.

Not only is The Newman Guide reforming Catholic education, but it is also renewing our culture and American values. Here are just a few examples:



Leading the way

In just the last three years, these graduates from Newman Guide Recommended institutions were named to key leadership positions:

Katie (Brown) Xavios is national director of American Life League, fighting for Catholic pro-life principles. She is a graduate of Belmont Abbey College, where she was awarded the St. Thomas More Scholarship for Public Moral Courage.



Brian Burch is U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See. The graduate of the University of Dallas is a former co-founder and president of CatholicVote, the leading Catholic voice in American politics.



Mark Rohlena is president of the Napa Institute and the Napa Legal Institute. A graduate and former executive vice president of Christendom College, Rohlena now works to evangelize the culture and fight for religious freedom.



This fall, Dr. Matthew Walz will become president of The Thomas More College of Liberal Arts in Merrimack, N.H. The graduate of Christendom College and The Catholic University of America has taught at CUA, Thomas More, Thomas Aquinas College, and University of Dallas.



Reporting truth

Jack Figge credits Benedictine College, which is Newman Guide Recommended, with launching his career and teaching him the most important things in life.

Figge is pursuing his MBA at Benedictine after graduating last year with degrees in political science and theology. He is a graduate assistant for the College's Media and Communications Department.

Figge is also a Catholic journalist from St. Louis, Mo. He has written for *National Catholic Register*, *OSV News*, *The Pillar*, *The Washington Examiner*, and multiple diocesan papers. His work has taken him across the country and world to cover stories in places like Israel, Italy, and Portugal. Now Figge is applying to seminary for the Archdiocese of St. Louis and hopes to enroll next year.

"Benedictine College has taught me what it means to be human and to live a full life," he said. And it helped his career: "teachers helped me connect with leaders in Catholic media" and "provide ideas for stories or be available for interviews."



Athletic evangelization

Clay Dimick chose Belmont Abbey College to compete on the NCAA Division II soccer team but found much more.

"While attending the Abbey, I saw what true Catholicism looked like on a daily basis," he said, and he converted, met his wife Catherine (also a convert), and became father to three sons. "Finding my true identity in Jesus has been a decision that has changed and shaped me into the man I am today."

He's in his eighth season as a standout defender with USL League One Charlotte Independence professional soccer team, serves as captain, and ranks second in the team's history for his consistency: 168 games in seven seasons. He competed in every minute of every game during the last two seasons.

Off the field, Dimick recently participated in the "Cleats for a Cause" initiative, wearing cleats to raise awareness for MiraVia, a pro-life home for pregnant college students on the Belmont Abbey campus.

"I could not be more thankful and proud to be an Abbey alumnus," he said. "To God be the Glory!"



Sharing God's beauty

"As a wife, a mother, and an artist, I still pull from the deep formation I gained in my college years," said Danielle Six, a Christendom College graduate. "I am forever grateful for the gift that Christendom has been to my life."

She began photographing friends during college, and now she photographs still life compositions from the studio in her home,

while her children nap or play. Danielle's work has been published with National Geographic YourShot, National Geographic Photo of the Day, and Smithsonian Magazine Photo of the Day.

Previously, she shared beauty with children for 10 years as a teacher at a Catholic Montessori school—a job she discovered through Christendom's alumni network. But when it was time to leave and "enter my vocation of marriage and navigate the early stages of motherhood," her fellow graduates supported her through the transition.

"As a mother to three young girls, I am constantly harkening back to the spiritual and philosophical education I received at Christendom," Six said.

"Christendom really gave me more than just education for a job," she added. "It also gave me the wisdom I needed for a lifelong vocation."



Forming the next generation

"All my family members who attended Newman Guide Recommended colleges agree that the friendships and formation we received at these institutions have been invaluable," said Jacinta King, who attended Ave Maria University.

Now she serves as a third-grade teacher at Newman Guide Recommended St. Rita School in Alexandria, Va., a PK-8th grade school.

"Teaching is an opportunity to give back when I have been given so much," King said. "It demands a great deal of dedication, but every sacrifice goes toward the most valuable thing—the formation and eternal salvation of the children."



Building Christian culture

Dr. Peter Howard, a graduate of Franciscan University of Steubenville and the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas, is founder and president of the Fulton Sheen Institute. He helps Catholics confront the problems of our times by drawing upon the wisdom of Venerable Fulton

Sheen, who will soon be beatified.

“Academically, my introduction to St. Thomas Aquinas became foundational in forming me in areas I didn’t realize I needed formation,” explained Dr. Howard. He was also inspired by a “Lives of the Saints” class at Franciscan University taught by the late Dr. John Carrigg.

“Fulton Sheen’s mission, expressed in his own words, was to understand what the modern world is thinking and respond to its errors using the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas,” he said.

Cultural immersion

Christendom College graduate Brad Torline set out to help others experience the beauty of the Catholic faith by embracing the College’s motto, “Breathe Catholic.” “If you want to believe more deeply or strengthen your faith, the best way is to be immersed in Catholic art, thought, and culture,” he said.



Torline is executive director of the Angelico Project, which seeks to “transform culture through beauty” in the northern Kentucky and Cincinnati area. Recent events include exploring sacred art, a candlelight Mass, and a pub night. The Project sponsors several guilds including a writers group, music group, and theatre group.

“It was directly through my studies at Christendom—especially my time studying in Rome—that I became convinced that the Church needs this kind of evangelization,” explained Torline.

At the Newman Guide Recommended college, “everything was meant to be an immersion experience in the Faith—from the way we studied (every subject was taught from the heart of the Faith), to the way we celebrated and socialized (many campus events were structured around the liturgical seasons and feasts), to the way our days were ordered.”

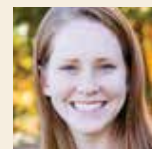
That experience “strengthened my own faith and gave me the confidence and ability to speak about it in a compelling way,” Torline said.

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KELLY SALOMON

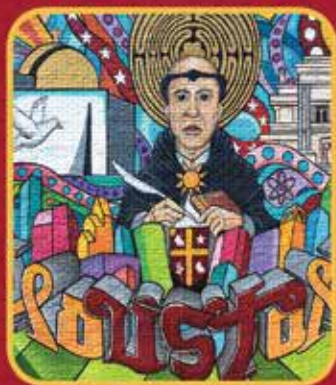
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A FOUNDATION FOR RESPONSIBLE JOURNALISM: Q&A WITH JEREMIAH POFF, WASHINGTON POST

OCM: Where did you go to college, and why did you choose that institution? What influenced you?

POFF: I went to Franciscan University of Steubenville, a place I chose for several reasons. I wanted to attend a faithfully Catholic university, which immediately narrowed my list to schools in The Newman Guide. I also knew I wanted to study communication arts, which narrowed the list even further.

But ultimately, I made the decision to attend Franciscan after visiting campus. Once I saw the school for what it was —

a place alive with the Catholic faith and with excellent academic offerings — I had no reason to visit any other school. I knew where God was directing me to attend.

OCM: What lessons did Franciscan University impart that helped prepare you for the work you are doing?

POFF: I think it's hard to distill that question into a concise answer, because there is so much. The more I think about the ways that Franciscan helped form me as a person and as a professional, the more it has made me appreciate the education I received there.

On a baseline professional level, Franciscan's communications program taught me how to be a journalist and, in that way, prepared me for the work I am doing now.

But on a more personal level, the University's core curriculum, which is steeped in theology and philosophy, helped build in me the critical thinking skills and ethics that help inform my work and how I do it. It is one thing to ask someone what happened and then just write that story. It is another to try to tell the story in a way that sees the broader implications of what happened and how it will influence society, government, and culture mov-

ing forward, and why, as Catholics, we should care about that.

One more thing I will add is that Franciscan, more than anything else, taught me the importance of maintaining a community around myself that is guided by the same moral principles as I am. Working in the news, with all of its twists and turns, can at times be a spiritual drain. Having a strong support group of fellow Catholics who see the world as I do to fall back on has made navigating the world of media and the news far more palatable.

OCM: Having served as an education reporter, what contrasts did you notice from what you covered versus what you experienced?

POFF: Ha! Answering this question could take a book. Where to begin? It was a bit strange at times for me to cover that beat, because so much of what I covered was so far removed from my own college experience that at times it was difficult to wrap my head around what was happening.

A few years ago at Georgetown Law School, a group of law students staged a sit-in to demand the firing of a newly hired conservative professor, and at one point the disruptors demanded that Georgetown provide them with a space to cry and provide catered food. As I was covering the story, I couldn't help but mentally note that such a level of adolescent behavior from adults would have never happened among the undergraduates at Franciscan, let alone the graduate students.

I think we often focus so much on how universities are institutionally biased toward the Left that we forget that, in many cases, students can be the primary drivers of radical and uncivil behavior

and make for a hostile campus environment, far more than any professor or administrator can. That incident (among others) was a good reminder for me of how good I had it at Franciscan.

OCM: Having now worked at both *The Washington Post* (albeit for a short time) and *The Washington Examiner*, what lessons have you learned that could help guide future Newman Guide graduates?

POFF: These may sound cliché and a bit nebulous, but each year in my career I find more reasons as to why they matter so much. The first is never to pass up the opportunity to build a relationship with someone, as you never know where they might end up and where you might end up. A significant part of my career success and growth has been because of the relationships I've built and maintained over the years.



The other is to have humility. In the media, it's pretty easy to build up an ego, because everyone in the business is

doing cool and exciting things for organizations and companies that have significant influence and are at the forefront of national discourse, and approaching that work with humility goes a long way toward guiding you towards success.

OCM: Can you describe a time when your formation gave you a distinct advantage in overcoming a challenge or addressing an ethical dilemma?

POFF: I can speak to this more broadly. In general, I think the mindset that I have in my work — being informed by the moral teachings of the Catholic faith — has helped me in particular to be

proactive so that I avoid having a situation where I might have a serious ethical dilemma. Ultimately, as a journalist, you are working to share the truth with your readers and viewers, and I think being Catholic with the formation I have been blessed with goes hand in hand with that work, as it grounds that responsibility and work in an eternal, moral context.

OCM: The media landscape is changing dramatically. Would you say we need more faithful Catholics employed in this field? If so, why?

POFF: I think we need faithful Catholics in all fields. But in the media specifically, I think faithful Catholics are especially needed, because the industry is awash with people who have little in the way of ethical scruples and forget their duty to the truth at the expense of their own agendas. The Catholic faith has a beautiful history of being a patron and innovator in the media. Many famous saints founded and ran newspapers, so there are also plenty of great role models to guide any Catholic who is interested in this field.

OCM: Beyond the technical part of journalism, what other core attributes should students strive to form in themselves?

POFF: You know, journalism is a trade that is learned pretty quickly on the job. The most value an aspiring journalist can get from a Catholic education is the intellectual and spiritual formation that that education offers. To be a good Catholic in journalism, you have to be a good person, a good citizen, and a good Catholic. I like to say that you don't need to study journalism in order to be a good journalist, but you have to know how to think and how to question in a measured and rational way. And more than anything, learning how to do that is the greatest gift that comes with a Catholic education. At least, it was for me. **OCM**

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