

*Catholic Education Foundation presents*

# THE CATHOLIC EDUCATOR



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## A Word from Our Editor

I first editorialized on the topic of this reflection in *The Catholic Response* (September/October 2010) and feel compelled to address it anew in this forum, with a special eye on its application to our Catholic schools, especially in light of recent developments emanating from the White House.

Quite some time ago, astute observers of the political scene noted a disturbing trend in the jargon being employed by the Obama Administration as our constitutional right to “freedom of religion” is being spoken of as “freedom of worship.” Matthew Warner documents this trajectory:

“Freedom of worship” first appeared in President Obama’s November remarks at the memorial service for the victims of the Fort Hood shooting. Days later, he referred to worship rather than religion in speeches in Japan and China. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton echoed the shift in language. In a December speech at Georgetown University, she used “freedom of worship” three times but “freedom of religion” not at all. While addressing senators in January, she referred to “freedom of worship” four times and “freedom of religion” once [but that was only] when quoting an earlier Obama speech.

Mr. Warner rightly comments: “Our freedom of religion is not just a freedom to

worship – but the freedom to *practice*.”<sup>1</sup>

Is this Father Stravinskis picking on the President again? Is this just quibbling over words? Words, my dear readers, matter. For instance, if you’re living in a house, does it really matter whether you are deemed the “landlord” or the “tenant”? Coming from an Eastern European background (with a martyr on the Ukrainian side of the family), I have a special sensitivity to religious freedom issues. For decades, the Soviets proudly and boldly proclaimed that they had “freedom of worship” (and even that wasn’t true), but there was certainly no “freedom of religion.” The same situation prevails in Communist China today, as well as in many Islamic states. Pope Benedict obviously agrees with the interpretation I am offering, as he chose for the theme of 2011’s World Day of Peace: “Religious Freedom, the Path to Peace.” The Vatican communiqué accompanying the announcement explained that “in many parts of the world there exist various forms of restrictions or denials of religious freedom, from discrimination and marginalization based on religion, to acts of violence against religious minorities.” The statement also highlighted situations “where communities of believers are not a minority, and where more sophisticated forms of discrimination and marginalization exist, on the cultural level and in the spheres of public, civil and political participation.” It went on to declare that religious freedom “is rooted in the equal and inherent dignity of man” and is “oriented toward the search for ‘unchangeable truth.’” It called religious freedom the “freedom of freedoms.” The Pope’s conclusion? “It is inconceivable that

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<sup>1</sup>“Obama Supports Your Freedom to ‘Worship,’” on the blog of the *National Catholic Register*, 5 July 2010.



believers should have to suppress a part of themselves – their faith – in order to be active citizens. It should never be necessary to deny God in order to enjoy one’s rights.” He returned to this topic in an *ad limina* address to American bishops in January, noting that many bishops had informed him of the unrelenting assaults on the Church’s freedom launched by the Obama Administration.

Perhaps it would be useful now to present a mini-course in American civics because it seems that many Catholics in this nation are quite ignorant of the history and jurisprudence undergirding freedom of religion. And ignorance isn’t bliss. So, here goes American Freedom of Religion 101.

The majority of the early colonists came to the “New World”(from a European perspective) for reasons of either faith or fortune, that is, to escape religious persecution or to make it “big” in what looked to be an entirely open market from a financial and commercial perspective. Their hopes were so high that they even had recourse to biblical language suggesting that the “New World” was a new “Promised Land.” Leaving aside their overall treatment of the indigenous peoples (which was, by the way, far worse at the hands of English Protestants than of Spanish Catholics), we find a deeply religious people, even if relatively intolerant of what some today would call “diversity.” There is high irony here, to be sure, since so many of them had left the mother country, precisely due to religious intolerance. And while many could allow for some religious diversity, it was limited to what we would now classify as “mainstream Protestantism.” No such toleration could even be imagined for Catholics who, in most of the original thirteen colonies, could not vote or hold

public office. While we Catholics were the principal victims of intolerance, it is worth citing Cardinal Newman’s insight that a coming age of “infidelity” would make the old Catholic-Protestant battles seem inconsequential!<sup>2</sup>

With independence from England and the establishment of the Constitution of the new nation, various safeguards were instituted to guarantee freedom of conscience – more often noted in the breach than in the observance, especially for Catholics. The First Amendment to the Constitution speaks of “Congress mak[ing] no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.”<sup>3</sup> By the time Thomas Jefferson referred to that legal doctrine as the “separation of Church and State” in 1802, the nervousness of the Holy See becomes quite understandable, especially because she viewed it through the prism of the European experience of hostile regimes (e.g., French Revolution).

Here let me distinguish between secularity and secularization. There is a good secularity or “laicity” (we don’t even really have the latter word in the American lexicon!), which the Church has come to recognize, especially as she has viewed the American situation from the vantage point of the twentieth century. Jesuit Father John Courtney Murray helped the Church Universal come to this awareness through his ground-breaking book, *We Hold These Truths* (1960), and through his contributions to the decree on religious liberty at Vatican

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<sup>2</sup>See: John Henry Newman, “The Infidelity of the Future,” *Faith and Prejudice* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1956), 113-128.

<sup>3</sup>For an excellent discussion of this matter, consult: Stephen Mansfield, *Ten Tortured Words: How the Founding Fathers Tried to Protect Religion in America, and What’s Happened Since*. Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 2007.



II, *Dignitatis Humanae*. Father Murray stressed that freedom *for* religion, not freedom *from* religion was the goal of the U. S. Constitution and Bill of Rights. Secularization, on the other hand, is a conscious effort to marginalize religion, religious influence and religiously motivated citizens. Peter Berkowitz uses the French situation as a point of contrast: "... the doctrine of *laïcité* – which is inscribed in Article 1 of the French Constitution and proclaims France a secular republic – separates Church and State differently than in America. For many French, *laïcité*, roughly translated as national secularism, has acquired a militant meaning, according to which government must confine religion to the private sphere."<sup>4</sup>

Let me anticipate one of my ultimate conclusions by submitting at this moment that vigorous *secularization* demands vigorous *evangelization*: for the sake of the Church's future and for the sake of a society's future (*pro mundi salute* [for the salvation of the world], as the Liturgy of the Hours puts it).

I believe that Divine Providence saw to it that two sets of circumstances coalesced in the American situation, giving the Church the possibility of not only surviving but even thriving.

The first was the constitutional reality and, given the essential commitment to fairness endemic to the American people, there was good reason to hope that religious freedom would eventually be extended even to

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<sup>4</sup>Peter Berkowitz, "Can Sarkozy Justify Banning the Veil?" *Wall Street Journal*, 5 April 2010, A19. The comments of the President of Malta, welcoming Pope Benedict XVI on 17 April 2010, are also a good example of a Church-State relationship which is secular but not hostile to religion and religious influences.

Catholics. The second fact concerns what we might term the fundamental "religiosity" of Americans, noted by the Frenchman Alexis de Tocqueville in 1835. He writes in *Democracy in America*: "The religious aspect was the first thing that struck my attention." That same observation comes from the pen of the great English convert, G. K. Chesterton, who dubbed the United States "the nation with the soul of a Church" (*What I Saw in America*, 1922).

That basic religiosity is still operative in spite of many secularizing forces exercised by a vocal even if tiny minority. The liberal media elite consistently attempt to drive public opinion in a leftward direction, but numerous studies have demonstrated that those people are very far removed from the average citizen. Indeed, their positions on matters like the existence of God, the importance of church membership and attendance, abortion, pornography and issues of sexuality are polar opposites to those of the vast majority of the population.<sup>5</sup> Another example: no U. S. President could ever be elected who did not give at least lip-service to religion. Or again, visitors (especially from Europe) are always amazed at the friendliness of the populace toward clergy and religious on the street, even in such a rough-and-tough environment as New York City. Being greeted as a priest in public is a commonplace in the United States; it is a rarity in Rome!

What kind of secularity would be beneficial

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<sup>5</sup>This was documented in a most impressive way in Lichter and Rothman's study in 1980; their work has become the standard point of departure for all subsequent discussions of this "disconnect" between "regular" people and those in control of the media. See: Bernard Goldberg, *Arrogance: Rescuing America from the Media Elite*. New York: Warner Books, 2003.



to the Church – and society? One which promotes pluralism, a concept espoused by most modern democracies – an approach which enables diversity to flourish within a unity of purpose, achieving unity without uniformity. From a religious perspective, that would mean not mere toleration of religious influences but encouragement of them. Indeed, the very nature of a free society demands that all voices be raised and that all be respectfully heard, including religious voices.

This is not a new battle for believers; indeed, it is as old as the Church herself. Cardinal Newman pointed this out in his famous *Letter to the Duke of Norfolk* (1875): “It was this same conviction that the Church had rights which the State could not touch, and was prone to ignore, and which in consequence were the occasion of great troubles between the two, that led Mr. Froude at the beginning of the movement to translate the letters of Saint Thomas Becket, and Mr. Bowden to write the *Life of Hildebrand*.”<sup>6</sup> Newman reduced the whole discussion to the rights of conscience, seeing the battle being waged in various institutions of culture and academia:

All through my day there has been a resolute warfare, I had almost said conspiracy against the rights of

conscience, as I have described it. Literature and science have been embodied in great institutions in order to put it down. Noble buildings have been reared as fortresses against that spiritual, invisible influence which is too subtle for science and too profound for literature. Chairs in Universities have been made the seats of an antagonist tradition. Public writers, day after day, have indoctrinated the minds of innumerable readers with theories subversive of its claims. As in Roman times, and in the middle age, its supremacy was assailed by the arm of physical force, so now the intellect is put in operation to sap the foundations of a power which the sword could not destroy.

And then he gets eerily prescient:

So much for philosophers; now let us see what is the notion of conscience in this day in the popular mind. There, no more than in the intellectual world, does “conscience” retain the old, true, Catholic meaning of the word. There too the idea, the presence of a Moral Governor is far away from the use of it, frequent and emphatic as that use of it is. When men advocate the rights of conscience, they in no sense mean the rights of the Creator, nor the duty to

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<sup>6</sup>Cardinal Newman here alludes to two of his colleagues in the Oxford Movement and their works: James Anthony Froude, *Life and Letters of Thomas à Becket* (1846) and John William Bowden, *The Life and Pontificate of Gregory VII* (1840). The former deals with the saint’s confrontation with King Henry II, immortalized in the film *Becket*. The second documents the struggle of Hildebrand (Pope Gregory VII) to protect the freedom of the Church against the unjust assaults of the State, leading to his excommunication of the Emperor Henry IV. This, too, would make for great cinematography as the Pope literally brought the Emperor to his knees in the snows of Canossa.



Him, in thought and deed, of the creature; but the right of thinking, speaking, writing, and acting, according to their judgment or their humour, without any thought of God at all. They do not even pretend to go by any moral rule, but they demand, what they think is an Englishman's prerogative, for each to be his own master in all things, and to profess what he pleases, asking no one's leave, and accounting priest or preacher, speaker or writer, unutterably impertinent, who dares to say a word against his going to perdition, if he like it, in his own way. Conscience has rights because it has duties; but in this age, with a large portion of the public, it is the very right and freedom of conscience to dispense with conscience, to ignore a Lawgiver and Judge, to be independent of unseen obligations. It becomes a licence to take up any or no religion, to take up this or that and let it go again, to go to church, to go to chapel, to boast of being above all religions and to be an impartial critic of each of them. Conscience is a stern monitor, but in this century it has been superseded by a counterfeit, which the eighteen centuries prior to it never heard of, and could not have mistaken for it, if they had. It is the right of self-will.

I trust you did not miss his powerful assertion: "Conscience has rights because it has duties." In other words, this is not a free-for-all. Believers need to be convinced – and then need to convince everyone else – that the Fathers of Vatican II got it right when they declared in *Gaudium et Spes*: "Without the Creator, the creature vanishes" (n. 36). History supports that assertion, and it would have gladdened the heart of Blessed John Henry Newman. Just look at the bloodshed of every godless movement of modernity from the French Revolution to the Mexican Revolution and the Spanish Civil War to the murderous campaigns of the Nazis and Communists. Clearly, "without the Creator, the creature vanishes."

Freedom of religion, as one should be able to see by now, is far more than being able to go to one's house of worship once a week. Because faith makes a claim on the totality of our lives, it permeates every dimension of a believer's existence and all the institutions with which he is involved. For the Catholic Church which, by her very nature, exhibits a public face and presence, that means freedom for all our corporate works emanating from our schools, health-care facilities, and charitable outreaches. For the Church to be the Church, she cannot be muzzled in her proclamation of the truth of Jesus Christ, whether that truth is proclaimed from the pulpit, in the classroom, in counseling sessions, or in lobbying for programs that seek to make the City of Man look more and more like the City of God. Freedom of religion, as envisioned by our Founding Fathers and as understood by the Catholic Church for two millennia, necessarily means the freedom not only to believe, not only to worship within the four walls of a church, mosque or synagogue, but to practice what one believes



openly, fearlessly and joyfully. Anything less is no more than the charade served up by every totalitarian regime in history that has sought to “chain the word of God.” However, Saint Paul reminds Timothy and everyone else since: “But there is no chaining the word of God!” (2 Tim 2:9)

Hence, it is important to point out that for the first time in our history, the Catholic Church is experiencing overt, hostile incursions from a President, causing Archbishop Timothy Dolan of New York, in his capacity as president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, to write to all the bishops of our country on this past September 29, expressing alarm that freedom of religion “is now increasingly and in unprecedented ways under assault in America.” He then highlighted six areas of public life where religious freedom rights are being undermined.

In Archbishop Dolan’s letter to the American hierarchy he felt compelled to underscore the incredible arrogance and disrespect shown to the Catholic Church by President Obama: “... last week I wrote to President Obama to object to the continuing threats to religious liberty in the context of the effort to redefine legal marriage promoted by his Administration. I had previously written to him privately, as had my predecessor Cardinal George, but, since neither of us had received a response, and, since the trends continued, I decided to make this letter public. I have offered to meet with the President to discuss these concerns and to impress upon him the dire nature of these actions by government.” So problematic is the current situation that the episcopal conference has established an *ad hoc* committee on religious freedom, for which Archbishop Dolan offers the rationale for this dramatic move: “Never before have

we faced this kind of challenge to our ability to engage in the public square as people of faith and as a service provider. If we do not act now, the consequence will be grave.”

Intelligent and committed Catholics, then, need to know what their God-given rights are, as well as their constitutional rights founded on those God-given rights, and to resist mightily in every forum possible any effort to reduce “freedom of religion” to “freedom of worship.” As Barack Obama and his minions doggedly move toward inhuman, ungodly and unconstitutional violations of conscience against Catholic (and other religiously based) institutions, we must be prepared to fight every such attempt while a fight is still possible. The unanimous rebuke of the Obama Administration by the Supreme Court in its *Hosanna-Tabor* decision (January 11, 2012) gives us cause to hope that the battle can still be engaged – and won. The survival of our schools – as identifiable Catholic entities – is at stake, a fact we need to etch indelibly in our collective consciousness as the coming presidential election unfolds. This realization caused former Archbishop of Los Angeles, Roger Cardinal Mahony, to assert:

For me there is no other fundamental issue as important as this one as we enter into the Presidential and Congressional campaigns. Every candidate must be pressed to declare his/her position on all of the fundamental life issues, especially the role of government to determine what conscience decision must be followed: either the person's own moral and conscience decision, or that dictated/enforced by the



Federal government. For me the answer is clear: we stand with our moral principles and heritage over the centuries, not what a particular Federal government agency determines.

As Bishops we do not recommend candidates for any elected office. My vote on November 6 will be for the candidate for President of the United States and members of Congress who

intend to recognize the full spectrum of rights under the many conscience clauses of morality and public policy. If any candidate refuses to acknowledge and to promote those rights, then that candidate will not receive my vote.

Devotedly yours in Christ,  
Reverend Peter M. J. Stravinskas, Ph.D.,  
S.T.D.  
Executive Director



# The Meaning of a Catholic Grade School Education – to a Recent Graduate

BY BRENDAN O’CONNOR

*Brendan O’Connor lives in Wayne, Pennsylvania. He is the second oldest of five children. Brendan is currently a freshman at Malvern Prep (operated by the Augustinian Fathers) in Malvern, Pennsylvania. At Malvern, he writes for the school newspaper, gives tours, hosts visitors and is the lacrosse team manager. Brendan attended Saint Katharine of Siena School for nine years. He wrote this speech for grade school graduation. Brendan enjoys following the Boston Red Sox, the Philadelphia pro sports teams and several college football and basketball teams.*

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Good evening, Msgr. Browsers, Mr. Tosti, faculty, parents, guests, and the Class of 2011. My name is Brendan O’Connor, and I welcome you on behalf of our class. Nearly nine years ago, our grade school career started in the church where we were welcomed to the school. It only seems appropriate that we end it here as well. In my nine years at Saint Katharine’s, this church has meant so many different things to me. Various words can describe what kind of place this church has been and will continue to be for me. However, one word comes to mind. Ever since I have arrived here, I thought of the church as a place of equality. Here, we are equal before the eyes of God. Here, it does not matter what mood you are in, where you just were, or what you just did. You will still be loved. This is a church of equality, a church of acceptance, and it will always be that for me.

Our church and school have also been places to learn. It is not only learning about the

Mass and the Church, but a place to learn from the mistakes you have made or ways you can become a better person. We learn to be more like our Heavenly Father every day. Although we make mistakes, we learn from them and become better people through the guidance of our teachers. This is why parents send their children to Catholic schools year in and year out. You do not stop at the math, science, and reading. Not only do we learn about God, our faith, and our morals, but how God is ever-present in our education. Without God, a Catholic school would have no purpose. God is the sole reason for this school. We are blessed to speak freely about our faith. Catholic schools allow us to profess everything in which we believe. They allow us to express who we are.

Our school teaches us by warm, open faculty who are there to guide and assist us on our path in life. The teaching alone is enough to move forward in life. I will never write another paper without the voice of Mrs. Sullivan giving me instructions as I write as if she was next to me. It was hard not to get a good start to your day when Mr. Gavin greets you at the door with a smile on his face. Our teachers go beyond the usual teaching. They do not teach us to be *good* Catholics; they teach us to be *great* Catholics. All our faculty members have a gift from God. They have instilled their experience in our minds and our souls. What they have imparted will be valuable for the rest of our lives. Without nine years of their leadership, we would not be here tonight.

Sometimes, we forget who taught us before we came here. We fail to remember the



people who were there in the good times and the bad times. As much as they are there for us, we sometimes forget how much our parents have sacrificed for us. We overlook who pays the tuition, so we can be here tonight. We disregard who our first teachers were before we came here. We fail to notice who had our best interest at heart the whole time, even if we did not know it. We forget who played the biggest role in making us the young men and women we are today. We remember you tonight, for we would not be here without you.

The school has been more to me. It was not just a place where we would worship and learn. It was even more than a home away from home. It is a place where we can worship and learn together. We have been together throughout our time at Saint Katharine's. We have grown together as a class. I remember that first day of kindergarten when I was too scared to talk unless spoken to. In time, I slowly opened up as the school community welcomed me with open arms. Eventually, I established friends here that I will never forget. They taught me something I lacked and needed. They taught me to laugh. Through that, we have become a family. When one celebrated, we all celebrated. When one struggled, we all fell. We have overcome issues together and have become stronger because of them. This class has taken "being there" to a literal point. They have been with me for nine years. In some ways, they know me better than almost anyone. They have become

something of a second family to me – a family that listens to you, teaches you, supports you, and works with you. We have learned things from each other that cannot be taught by a teacher. Rather than losing our composure or starting a fight, we have learned to have a conversation. These are things that you can only learn from your peers. These are things that are just as valuable as anything you have learned in a classroom. There is no such thing as a textbook that tells you how to live. Our Church and school would not be a home away from home without the students who were with me every day. Although we will part ways, we will stay together. That is why I owe so much to students that are with me tonight.

Although we are leaving Saint Katharine's, it will always be with us. We leave Saint Katharine's with a love for God, a new appreciation of our Faith, and an understanding of what it means to be a Catholic. We are, and always will be, a part of Saint Katharine's. It is now our responsibility to take what we learned outside the four walls of this school. It is our time to continue our journey in life as strong, moral Catholics. It is our turn to lead others by example with what we learned here. Although we part from each other and Saint Katharine's, we will always remember it. It is much more than something we learned from a textbook now. It is part of us. It is in us, and it always will be.



# Catholic Education: Does It Still Make a Difference?

## Education

We have asked about attendance at a Catholic school or college several times since we began this series of studies of American Catholics. The questions were included in 1993 and 2005 as well as in this 2011 survey. The results have been very consistent with what we know about access to Catholic education over time. In general, pre-Vatican II Catholics had relatively good access to Catholic education: About four in 10 attended a Catholic elementary school, one in four attended a Catholic high school, and one in 10 attended a Catholic college.

Likewise, Vatican II Catholics also had good access to Catholic schools. Half of that generation attended a Catholic elementary school, about a quarter attended a Catholic high school, and about one in 10 attended a Catholic college or university.

In the 2011 survey, for the first time we have enough millennials to begin to measure the impact of the tremendous demographic changes that we describe in other essays here. We also have a sufficient number of Hispanic Catholics to measure access to Catholic education on that aspect as well. This essay takes a first look at some of those differences.

Overall, 37 percent of Catholics in our sample attended a Catholic elementary, middle or junior high school and half of them attended for at least eight years. One in five attended a Catholic high school, on average for four years. About one in 10 (8 percent) attended a Catholic college or university, with half of them attending at least four years.

By generation, 29 percent of millennials attended a Catholic elementary school, compared to 31 percent of post-Vatican II, 48 percent of Vatican II, and 44 percent of pre-Vatican II Catholics in this study. Similarly, 15 percent of millennials attended a Catholic high school, about the same as post-Vatican II (17 percent), but less than Vatican II or pre-Vatican II (24 percent and 27 percent). The pattern is similar for Catholic college or university attendance, although the difference among generations is too small to be meaningful.

This survey also provides us with our first clear look at the difference between Hispanics and non-Hispanics in access to Catholic education. Although there were too few pre-Vatican II Hispanics to sample, we do have sufficient numbers in the other three generations to compare. As [Table 9](#) shows, Hispanic Catholics of any generation are never more than half as likely as non-Hispanic Catholics of the same generation to have attended a Catholic school at any level.

When we separate the 2011 survey into Hispanics and non-Hispanics, the differences in Catholic education are striking.

[Table 9](#) displays the expected distribution for Catholic education among non-Hispanic Catholics of the pre-Vatican II and Vatican II generations, just as we have seen in the 1993 and 2005 surveys: About half attended a Catholic elementary school and about a quarter attended a Catholic high school.

Post-Vatican II and millennial Catholics, however, are less likely than the generations that preceded them to have attended a Catholic elementary school. They would



have been in elementary school in the 1980s and '90s, a time of immense social and economic change. Their parents, among the many Catholic families that had moved out of the cities and into the suburbs, out of the Rust Belt and into the Sun Belt, were learning firsthand that building and staffing new Catholic schools to meet the demand was prohibitively expensive. Instead, many of them opted for more readily available and less expensive public school, combined with parish-based religious education. These two generations were also a little less likely to attend a Catholic high school, although the difference between them and the two older generations is within the margin of error. There is no difference in the likelihood of attending a Catholic college or university.

We report on some education and earnings differences between Hispanic and non-Hispanic Catholics in another essay ([see story](#)). Here we take another look at those same variables, to see if Catholic education makes a difference. What we see in the data is that for non-Hispanics, having attended a Catholic elementary school is not associated with graduating from college or achieving a household income of \$75,000 or more. Attending a Catholic high school is only modestly associated with these two outcomes.

Among Hispanic Catholics, though, there is a stronger association between Catholic schooling and socioeconomic success. Hispanics who attended a Catholic elementary school are twice as likely as those who did not to have a college degree and a household income of \$75,000 or more. The association is even stronger for those who attended a Catholic high school. We are not suggesting that Catholic schooling causes success later in life – certainly there are many other intervening factors – but the

comparisons here are worth noting. Catholic schooling does make a difference for Hispanics.

### **Behaviors and Attitudes**

Does Catholic schooling make a difference in the way Catholics practice their faith and in their attitudes about the church? If so, do these differences hold for Hispanic Catholics as well as for non-Hispanic Catholics?

The data show that, at least in terms of the way Catholics practice their faith, attending a Catholic high school makes a difference. For example, among non-Hispanics who attended a Catholic high school, three in four are registered in a parish, compared to 62 percent of those who did not attend a Catholic high school. Among Hispanics, seven in 10 of those who attended a Catholic high school are registered in a parish, compared to less than half of those who did not attend. Non-Hispanics who attended a Catholic high school are also more likely than those who did not to attend Mass more than monthly (49 percent compared to 38 percent), to pray at least daily (66 percent compared to 46 percent), and to rank as highly committed on our commitment scale (28 percent compared to 17 percent).

When asked about why they attend Mass, Catholic schooling also makes a difference. Hispanic Catholics who attended Catholic elementary school are more likely than those who did not to say they attend because they enjoy experiencing the liturgy (88 percent compared to 68 percent) and they are less likely to say they attend out of habit (36 percent compared to 46 percent). For both Hispanics and non-Hispanics, about a quarter of those who attended a Catholic elementary school, compared to about a



third of those who did not, say that they are too busy to attend Mass more often than they do.

Attending a Catholic school also makes a difference in some aspects of Catholic identity, especially among non-Hispanic Catholics. Six in 10 non-Hispanic Catholics who attended a Catholic elementary school (and seven in 10 of those who attended a Catholic high school) say they would never leave the church; less than half of those without Catholic schooling said the same. More than half of non-Hispanic Catholics who attended a Catholic high school, compared to three in 10 who did not, agree that being Catholic is a very important part of who they are. Four in 10 non-Hispanic Catholics who attended a Catholic high school, compared to three in 10 who did not, strongly agree that it is important to them that younger generations of their family grow up Catholic. Similarly, six in 10 Hispanic Catholics who attended a Catholic elementary school, compared to half of those who did not, agree as strongly with this statement.

Finally, attending a Catholic school makes a difference, particularly among non-Hispanics who attended a Catholic high school, in the importance of a number of belief statements about the church. Non-Hispanics who attended a Catholic high school are more likely than those who did not to say that each of the items in Table 13 is very important to them as a Catholic. Hispanics who attended a Catholic high school are more likely than those who did not to say that the sacraments and the church's involvement in social justice are very important to them as a Catholic. They are less likely than Hispanics who did not attend a Catholic high school to say that the

teaching authority of the Vatican is very important to them as a Catholic.

## Summary

Catholic schools are less available now than they were 50 years ago and fewer Catholics are sending their children to a Catholic school. Catholics remain conflicted about their value, expense, necessity and efficacy. Nevertheless, the data show that attending a Catholic school does make a difference in many aspects of Catholic identity and practice. For Hispanics in particular, Catholic schooling can also make a difference in socioeconomic status.

Mary Gautier  
Center for Applied Research in  
the Apostolate



**TABLE 9**

**DID YOU EVER ATTEND A CATHOLIC SCHOOL OR COLLEGE FOR ANY OF YOUR EDUCATION?**

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**Percentage "Yes" in 2011**

	Non-Hispanic				Hispanic			
	Pre-Vatican II	Vatican II	Post-Vatican II	Millennial	*Pre-Vatican II	Vatican II	Post-Vatican II	Millennial
Elementary, middle, or junior high school	<b>44%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>17%</b>
High school	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
College or university	<b>12</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>

\*This group was not surveyed.

**TABLE 11**

**CATHOLIC SCHOOLS MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR HISPANICS IN EDUCATION AND INCOME OUTCOMES**

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	NON-HISPANIC				HISPANIC			
	CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY		CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL		CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY		CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL	
	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
College graduate	<b>40%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>10%</b>
Household income over \$75,000	<b>46</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>11</b>



**TABLE 13**

**AS A CATHOLIC, HOW IMPORTANT TO YOU IS EACH OF THE FOLLOWING?**

**Percentage responding "Very important"**

	NON-HISPANIC ATTENDED CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL		HISPANIC ATTENDED CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL	
	YES	NO	YES	NO
Jesus' resurrection from the dead	<b>80%</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>81%</b>
Sacraments, such as Eucharist	<b>73</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>65</b>
Mary, the mother of God	<b>69</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>71</b>
Regular daily prayer life	<b>57</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>53</b>
Teachings that oppose abortion	<b>51</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>49</b>
Teaching authority of the Vatican	<b>36</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>39</b>
Church involvement in social justice	<b>33</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>40</b>
Teachings that oppose the death penalty	<b>29</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>44</b>



## Pastor to Walk for Two Days — For His Students

It's not exactly the Camino de Santiago de Compostela, the Spanish pilgrimage trail featured in the new Emilio Estevez film *The Way*. But the road from Peekskill, N.Y., to St. Patrick's Cathedral can be just as colorful.

Father John Higgins, the 43-year-old pastor of Assumption parish in the Westchester town, will be walking the 58 miles to Manhattan today and tomorrow.

His purpose? To raise money for his struggling parish school.

In a letter to friends, he writes that Assumption School is having difficult times, and many of the parents, hit hard by the economic downturn of the past several years, are struggling to keep their kids in the school.

Father Higgins told me that he plans to traverse the roads of some of the river towns along the Hudson on his way down to Yonkers. He plans to overnight at St. Joseph's Seminary, where he studied for the priesthood, and on Friday, he hopes to "survive to make it to St. Patrick's" to offer Mass at 6:30pm.

His pilgrimage is part of a larger fundraising effort being undertaken by the school's advisory board. Deemed "105 for 105," the campaign is trying to raise \$105,000 for the 105 years the school has been in existence. At last report, the effort had already brought in pledges worth over \$24,000.

Father Higgins, an acquaintance from when he was a young priest in the Bronx, has been pastor since 2006. The school, he points out,

has had a history of educating immigrant children — the Irish, the Italians, the Germans and Hungarians — and that tradition certainly continues, as the area is now largely Hispanic and the majority of the almost 220 children are of Ecuadoran descent.

This is not an uncommon situation for Catholic schools, particularly those in large metropolitan areas and its outlying districts. Nor is it an uncommon story that Catholic schools manage to give kids a superior education with far fewer dollars than their public counterparts.

In a very Catholic atmosphere to boot. Students attend Mass weekly and Confession monthly, and prayers throughout the school day and special devotions are a part of school life. The school prayed a Novena to St. Therese this year, in view of the financial situation.

"The cost to run our school last year was \$1,327,000.00, and we've been told we run lean," Father Higgins said. It costs over \$6,100 to educate one child at the school. In-parish tuition is \$3,300, which barely covers it.

"Add to that the fact that many of our children live far below the poverty line," the priest said. "We embraced the mission of helping every family who wants a Catholic education for their child regardless of their ability to pay. Financially speaking, that means we have a deficit. And, yet, we still embrace the mission. This year, to be frank, our parish was no longer able to bridge the gaps. We are an inner-city parish, with all that implies."



Parish and parents strive to make up the gap with fundraising events and a monthly second collection. And the school now has a development director, who reaches out to alumni, business owners and community leaders. And, Father Higgins added, “We apply for grants and for direct scholarships through the New York Archdiocese Inner-City Scholarship Fund and other scholarship granting organizations.”

Father Higgins told supporters that as he walks to New York they can follow him on Twitter: @CatholicPeek. And if you want to help the school, visit [the parish website](#).

Godspeed, Father Higgins.

John Burger  
*National Catholic Register*  
November 10, 2011



## Muslim Students Criticize Banzhaf's Legal Action

University Muslim students have announced their opposition to the recent lawsuit against the University proposed by George Washington University professor John F. Banzhaf, who claims that the University is discriminating against Muslim students by not offering them a separate place to pray on campus.

The University has not received any official statement from the Office of Human Rights in regard to the lawsuit.

"Neither me nor any Muslim student I know has ever filed a complaint against CUA for any reason," said sophomore biomedical engineering major Alawiyah Al Hashem. "I haven't seen any actions taken by the university or any of its students that would justify doing so."

Al Hashem is an international Muslim student from Saudi Arabia who plans to return to Saudi Arabia upon graduation.

The news of the lawsuit has attracted the attention of the national media since Banzhaf first announced his intentions to sue the University for religious discrimination on October 20<sup>th</sup>.

It has sparked an onslaught of public criticism of the University's Muslim students based on the premise that the lawsuit was a result of student complaints, despite the fact that Banzhaf never received any complaints from the University's Muslim students.

Catholic University Muslim students have been accused of a multitude of offenses including asking the University to remove

Catholic religious objects and issuing formal complaints to the University for not allowing a private room for Muslim prayer and for not allowing a chapter of the Muslim Student Association to form on campus.

The quantity of national criticism of the University's Muslim students prompted University President John H. Garvey to issue a formal statement to the entire University community on Friday, October 28<sup>th</sup>.

"I regret very much that our Muslim students have been used as pawns in a manufactured controversy," he said. "I want to reassure all of you that our Muslim students are welcome at our University. Our Catholic teaching instructs us to embrace our fellow human beings of all faith traditions. They enrich us with their presence and help to promote inter-religious and inter-cultural understanding."

Garvey also called a closed-door meeting with the Muslim students yesterday in order to express his regret for the misstatements and hate speech against Muslim students which has spread online.

Junior electrical engineering major Wiaam Al Salmi said that she has not encountered anything that could be defined as discrimination during her time at the University.

"I have found that my closest American friends are the more religious Catholics; those who pray before they eat, or who are shocked to see a person cheat," she said. "They are the ones that allow me to listen to them pray the Rosary or attend Renew with



them. These friends not only shared their religious beliefs with me, but they also allowed me to do the same, which then created a sense of respect for one another's religion."

Al Salmi is a native of Oman who has lived in the U.S. since 2002.

She said that while the University should have no legal obligation to provide Muslim students with a prayer room, she would also be very grateful to have a secluded place to pray on campus.

"We have to take so many things into consideration," she said. "We must not start praying on the hour because there might be a class here in 10 minutes, all the classrooms that are in the building that I am may all be full at prayer time, so I have to go to another building but there is still no guarantee that I will find an empty room and I don't like to pray outside because I like to have some kind of privacy."

Al Hashem denied Banzhaf's claim that Muslim students were complaining because they could not pray in places that displayed Catholic symbols, such as the crucifixes which are affixed to the walls of all University classrooms.

"It is obvious that Banzhaf has no idea what Muslim students are experiencing here on campus and I would not want to be represented by a person like Banzhaf," she said. "He is claiming that we as Muslims

can't pray in a room that displays Catholic symbols. I'm not sure where he got that idea from, but I'm certain that it is not true. It is perfectly fine to pray in a place like that. I've prayed in many rooms that had crosses and pictures of Jesus, and there was no problem doing so."

Al Hashem said that part of her decision to attend the University was because she had a strong desire to be at a place that took religion seriously, no matter which religion that was.

"I chose to attend CUA because it is a religious school," she said. "I didn't really care what religion it belonged to. As long as God is present in their everyday life, then it is fine with me."

She said that one of her favorite parts of the University is the beautiful Catholic symbols which are displayed all over campus.

Both Al Hashem and Al Salmi said that they were surprised that this issue has gotten so much national attention and that the facts about how Muslims feel about the University have been so erroneous.

*Editor's note: The lawsuit against Catholic University was dismissed on November 29, 2011.*

Regina Conley  
*The Tower*  
November 4, 2011



# School Choice Programs Snowball

## Forty-one States Introduce or Pass New Programs

Since launching in 2004, Washington, D.C.'s voucher program has helped send over 3,200 disadvantaged D.C. students to private school. The idea is simple enough: Parents receive a sum of taxpayer money to use to send their children to a better school, public or private. But opposition centered on the use of federal funds for religious education crystallized in 2009, when opponents convinced lawmakers and the White House to cut funding.

Among those who responded were Virginia Walden Ford, the founder of D.C. Parents for School Choice, and Kevin Chavous, a board member of the Black Alliance for Educational Options, a network of education activists. The groups ran ads, sponsored rallies, mobilized parents, and even staged a civil disobedience protest in front of the Department of Education building.

"Fighting for this under a president for whom most of our families voted has been really hard. They believed in him, and he didn't support the program," said Ford. "It was devastating." The battle in D.C. is a microcosm of one raging across the country.

### Spectacular Gains

Ford said that school reform has always felt like a calling, thanks to her family's history.

Growing up in Little Rock, Arkansas, Ford's parents were prominent public school educators at the height of the civil rights movement. They attended White Memorial United Methodist Church, where Ford was president of the Methodist Youth Fellowship. The family's efforts to get Ford and other black children into desegregated

public schools incited hate from the KKK, who threw rocks at the Fords' windows and planted a burning cross in their yard.

Her son's experience in public school has also fueled her fight. "Drug dealers were courting him," said Ford, until a neighbor offered to pay his tuition to any private school. They selected Archbishop Carroll, a top Catholic high school in northeast D.C. "It was like a miracle," she said. "It saved his life. That's why I have to fight."

Ford has been a vocal champion of the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program, the first federally funded school voucher program. It allows students to leave some of the nation's lowest-performing public schools and attend private schools using federally funded tuition vouchers.

Ford's vision for school choice has gained traction across the country. According to the Heritage Foundation, 41 states, including the District of Columbia, have introduced or passed school-choice legislation in 2011. Eight states established new educational programs, while eleven others augmented or expanded existing programs.

Such reforms are largely due to Republican 2010 election gains. Governors and GOP-majority state legislatures have enacted education plans aimed at injecting greater choice, reform, and competition into public education.

New coalitions have broken down political boundaries and drawn activists to a common goal. "It's like nothing I've seen in my lifetime," said Clint Bolick, a lawyer with the Arizona-based Goldwater Institute and a



defender of many high-profile school voucher programs. "You primarily have Republicans joining forces with low-income communities, faith-based communities, [and] a fair number of liberal activists including black mayors and legislators."

The result, Bolick said, has been "almost constant momentum over the past decade that culminated with spectacular gains this year."

This September, Wisconsin lifted restrictions on the number of students who can participate in Milwaukee's Parental Choice Program, the nation's longest-running voucher program. The state established a similar program in the neighboring city of Racine.

Earlier this year, Indiana implemented a progressive education-reform plan that includes a voucher program that will allow more than 50 percent of low- and middle-income students to attend private or religious schools. The state also has a new tax-deduction program for families who are already in private schools or are homeschooling, and has relaxed restrictions on charter schools.

Ohio dramatically expanded its Edchoice Scholarship Program, increased its cap and pool size of eligible students, and established a new program for special-needs students.

Georgia, Oklahoma, Iowa, and Florida are among the states that have new or enhanced tax-credit scholarship programs. In addition to its New Orleans-based school voucher program, Louisiana now offers greater state income-tax breaks for private school tuition. In North Carolina, parents of children with special needs can now claim a tax credit for

private-school tuition expenses (up to \$6,000).

Arizona has the nation's first educational savings account program for special-needs children. The state deposits 90 percent of the per-pupil educational funding into a savings account that parents can use for a broad range of expenses. (The program is now being challenged in court.)

This spring, the U.S. Supreme Court tossed out a legal challenge to an Arizona program in which taxpayers gain tax credits for donations to local nonprofit scholarship funds. In 2009, the program provided an average of \$1,889 in private-school tuition scholarships to 27,500 students.

### **A Contested Struggle**

These gains, often parent-led, have not gone unchallenged. In several states, teachers' unions and church-state watchdogs are contesting the programs.

The Indiana State Teachers Association has sued over the state's new voucher program, currently funding nearly 3,800 students. Students use vouchers worth up to \$7,930 to attend one of the 250 participating private schools, all but six of which are religious. The union has argued that the program violates the state's constitution and will siphon off funds from public schools.

In Florida, a teachers' union has challenged a Republican-led ballot proposal to repeal the state's Blaine Amendment, which bans the public funding of churches and religious organizations. The union says the effort is "a shady way of opening the door for school vouchers for all." Proponents counter by saying that lifting the ban would prevent



religiously affiliated schools from being discriminated against.

In Colorado, Americans United for the Separation of Church and State and the American Civil Liberties Union successfully sought an injunction blocking Douglas County's new Choice Scholarship pilot voucher program. Some 14 of the 19 private schools approved to participate are religious.

Attorney Bolick is part of the legal team that successfully defended Cleveland's voucher program before the Supreme Court in a landmark 2002 case. He said that even in states with Blaine amendments, where vouchers have been struck down, school-choice supporters still have many options.

"We now have four arrows in our quiver: private-school vouchers, tax credits, education savings accounts, and charter schools," said Bolick.

The movement has grown among African American Democrats, many of whom believe school choice is the new civil rights struggle. "School choice has become a bipartisan principle," said Greg Forster, senior fellow at the Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice, based in Indianapolis.

The Black Ministers' Council of New Jersey, which represents more than 600 African American churches, is engaged in a drawn-out battle to pass a tax-credit scholarship program. Derrell Bradford, executive director of Better Education for New Jersey Kids, said there is "very visible outrage among black leadership, particularly clergy" over efforts within the Democratic Party to block educational choice.

In Florida, black churches and pastors are also actively backing school choice pro-

grams, while the John McKay Scholarship for Students with Disabilities Program provides private-school tuition vouchers to 20,000 students with special needs.

More than 34,000 low-income students benefit from the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program, which gives tax credits to businesses that fund scholarships. Two-thirds of recipients are black or Hispanic. The program had received 33,000 new applications, and 9,000 students were on the waiting list.

"Through these two scholarships, it's now possible for private schools in the low-income, African American, and Hispanic communities to become viable," said Doug Tuthill, a former teachers' union president. He now heads Step Up for Students, the Tampa-based nonprofit that administers the tax credits. "We've seen an explosion of these schools that normally wouldn't make it financially," he said. "Increasingly, black churches and black community groups are able to create their own schools, and they're sustainable."

H. K. Matthews, a Florida pastor, is another champion of the state's school choice programs. Former president of the Pensacola Council of Ministers, Matthews was jailed repeatedly in the 1960s for staging civil rights demonstrations. He said his desire is not to take monies away from public schools.

"We have to face reality," said Matthews. "I've seen too many children who have come out of school choice and have nothing but positive stories." At the voucher-backed private schools in Florida, "I have seen what I would call deliverance."



## Choice Results Disputed

As with most public-policy issues, both sides in the school choice debate use research to bolster their case. Last March, the Friedman Foundation released a report summarizing ten empirical studies of school voucher programs. Nine found that vouchers "improve student outcomes" for all or some of the students. None reported a negative impact.

'We now have four arrows in our quiver: private-school vouchers, tax credits, education savings accounts, and charter schools.' — Clint Bolick, school-choice attorney

And last year, the Department of Education's research institute found that participation in D.C.'s voucher program "raised a student's probability of completing high school by 12 percentage points, from 70 percent to 82 percent, based on parent reports."

Meanwhile, a report this summer from the pro-public education group Center on Education Policy found that long-term studies of publicly funded voucher programs have "generally found no clear advantage in academic achievement for students attending private schools with vouchers."

Education historian Diane Ravitch has noted that "20 years after the initiation of vouchers in Milwaukee and a decade after the program's expansion to include religious schools, there was no evidence of dramatic improvement for the neediest students or the public schools left behind."

But others say such conclusions ignore important facts, such as voucher students' increased graduation rates and high parental satisfaction. University of Wisconsin —

Madison professor John Witte, an official evaluator of the Milwaukee voucher program, said that while there has not been "a great deal of difference in achievement based on test scores," there are other positive outcomes.

"The demand continues to grow," said Witte. "Survey evidence in all of these cases, including Washington, D.C., shows satisfied parents, more satisfied than public school parents. So in those regards, there certainly is a positive aspect to it."

## Reform and Transform

Few school reformers seek to end public education altogether. Rather, many have committed to comprehensive change, including a role for school choice programs, in the short term at least.

Sajan George, founder of Matchbook Learning, has worked as a consultant for some of the nation's largest school districts. "I'm not against vouchers," said George, also an elder at Perimeter Church in Johns Creek, Georgia. "I am for anything that broadens the choices parents have for their children and breaks the monopoly of the local neighborhood poor-performing school."

"However, vouchers can never scale to meet the needs of all, most, or even a minor percentage of children. Eventually you run out of available seats at good private schools, and you're back to trying to reform broken public schools."

The Friedman Foundation's Forster said, "School choice is the way to transform the incentives of the system so that public schools will have an institutional mission focused on serving parents and students."



"The public schools are packed with people who love kids and want to serve them, but they're in an institutional context that doesn't empower that. I see school choice as the best thing that could happen to public schools."

Last April, Congress reauthorized the D.C. program for five more years, expanding it to impact more children. In June, voucher advocates celebrated the program's renewal on Capitol Hill.

"This program opened doors for me," said 19-year-old Ronald Holassie, a voucher

recipient and Archbishop Carroll alum who attends a Florida university. Looking toward Ford, Holassie declared, "You have absolutely changed my life."

Sheryl Blunt  
*Christianity Today*  
November 2011

*Sheryl Blunt, a Christianity Today senior writer and 2009 Phillips Foundation fellow, is based in Washington, D.C.*



## *Africae Munus*

*The following are excerpts from Pope Benedict XVI's Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, dated November 19, 2011.*

74. The defence of life also entails the elimination of ignorance through literacy programmes and quality education that embraces the whole person. Throughout her history, the Catholic Church has shown particular concern for education. She has always raised awareness among parents, providing them with encouragement and assistance in carrying out their responsibility as the first educators of their children in life and in faith. In Africa, the Church's teaching establishments – her schools, colleges, high schools, professional schools, universities and so forth – place tools for learning at people's disposal without discrimination on the basis of origin, financial means or religion. The Church makes her own contribution by recognizing and making fruitful the talents that God has placed in the heart of each person. Many religious congregations were founded with this end in view. Countless holy men and women understood that leading people to holiness first entailed promoting their dignity through education.

75. The Synod members noted that Africa, like the rest of the world, is experiencing a crisis of education. They stressed the need for educational programmes combining faith and reason so as to prepare children and young people for adult life. These solid foundations will be able to help them address the daily decisions arising in every adult life on the affective, social, professional and political plane.

76. Illiteracy represents one of the principal obstacles to development. It is a scourge on

a par with that of the pandemics. True, it does not kill directly, but it contributes actively to the marginalization of the person – which is a form of social death – and it blocks access to knowledge. Teaching people to read and write makes them full members of the *res publica* and enables them to play their part in building it up; for Christians it provides access to the inestimable treasure of the sacred Scriptures that nourish their life of faith.

77. I ask Catholic communities and institutions to respond generously to this great challenge, which is a real testing ground for civilization, and in accordance with their means, I ask them to multiply their efforts, independently or in collaboration with other organizations, to develop effective programmes adapted to people's needs. Catholic communities and institutions will only be able to meet this challenge if they maintain their ecclesial identity and remain zealously faithful to the Gospel message and the charism of their founder. This Christian identity is a precious good which must be preserved and safeguarded, lest the salt lose its flavour and end up being trampled underfoot (cf. *Mt* 5:13).

78. It is surely necessary to raise the awareness of governments so that they will increase their support for schooling. The Church recognizes and respects the role of the state in the educational domain. She nevertheless affirms her legitimate right to play her part, offering her particular contribution. And it would be helpful to remind the state that the Church has a right to educate according to her own rules and in her own buildings. This is a right which is part of that freedom of action “which her



responsibility for human salvation requires.” Many African states recognize the eminent and disinterested role played by the Church through her educational structures in building up their nations. I therefore strongly encourage governments in their efforts to support this educational work.

134. Catholic schools are a precious resource for learning from childhood how to create bonds of peace and harmony in society, since they train children in the African values that are taken up by those of the Gospel. I encourage bishops and institutes of consecrated persons to enable children of the proper age to receive

schooling: this is a matter of justice for each child and indeed the future of Africa depends on it. Christians, and young people in particular, should study the educational sciences with a view to passing down knowledge full of truth: not mere know-how but genuine knowledge of life, inspired by a Christian consciousness shaped by the Church’s social doctrine. It will also be fitting to ensure that personnel in the Church’s educational institutions, and indeed all Church personnel, receive just remuneration, in order to strengthen the Church’s credibility.



## Benedictine Academy Runners Bow Out of Race to Help Competitor

ELIZABETH – The story of the “good Samaritan” told so long ago, lives on, as evidenced this week at the 74th Union County Championships, when Benedictine Academy runners chose to interrupt their cross-country race during the height of competition in order to attend to the wellbeing of an ill runner from a competing school. They were honored by their own school on Oct. 27 for their compassion and sportsmanship.

The saga unfolded as the Benedictine freshman cross-country team was running its two-mile race on Oct. 26 at Warinanco Park in Elizabeth. Three-quarters of the way into the race, Benedictine student Tahjanaya Dorival noticed a Governor Livingston High School runner lying face down in the dirt on the track. Also observing that other runners were passing the girl by, Dorival decided to stop racing and offer her help. Five other Benedictine teammates did the same.

Benedictine Academy (Elizabeth) students Aaliyah Hill Grevious of Union, Deja Rudolph of Newark, Ramira Mayse of Linden, Alyssia Hudson of Irvington, and Zhane Lee of Newark were Good Samaritans during a championship track meet at Warinanco Park this week.

“Her face was in the ground,” Dorival recalled. “I just felt badly for her. I thought about getting help,” Dorival explained. The stricken runner was conscious but couldn’t get up, and Dorival “was worried she might stop breathing.” While Dorival was talking to the girl, Benedictine runner Aaliyah Hill-Grevious interrupted her running to offer help, trying to reach her school’s track

coach, Angelo Clark, who was on the other side of the park waiting for the varsity team’s meet to start.

Clark advised the girls to call for assistance, and at that moment, Benedictine runners Alyssia Hudson and Ramira Mayse arrived. They used a cell phone to call 911. With the stricken student now unconscious, Benedictine teammates Deja Rudolph and Zhane Lee stopped to offer their help. Lee was on her way to the varsity meet, while Rudolph was running in the freshman meet. Out of the six girls offering help, two (Dorival and Rudolph) never got to finish their championship race. Grevious completed her running in the freshman meet. Hudson, Mayse and Lee all were able to compete in the varsity event.

Following the event held at Benedictine Academy in their honor the following day, all six runners remained unphased by the attention. They were more concerned about the physical condition of the Governor Livingston runner. They reported that they have been emailing the girl’s coach, sending best wishes and prayers. While on the track, the girl returned to consciousness but was taken by ambulance to a local hospital for observation.

“We didn’t care so much about sacrificing the meet,” Mayse stated. “We’re not thinking of the race at all now, we are all praying for her recovery,” she added. Mayse said, “We feel like we did a good thing. If we didn’t stop, we wondered, who would have?” “It was our duty to stop,” she said.



Hudson believes that “being in our religion classes at BA helped us to know what to do. Our motto at school is ‘Whatever hurts my sister hurts me’”, she noted. “We learn to be sisters and to help...we learn how to live in civilization,” she said. Lee said with conviction, “If I was passed out, I wouldn’t want anyone to leave me there.” Lee was “shocked that people ran past someone lying helpless on the ground; she looked like she needed help.”

“They are a good team and they negotiated winning,” Sister Donna Jo Repetti, OSF, Benedictine Academy Director of Guidance commented. “They had to make a decision whether winning the race was more important than helping someone in great need,” she observed. “They realized that people are more important and valued, than winning a race,” she added.

Benedictine student Alyssia Hudson summed up her feelings about the whole event. “Yesterday was Ramira’s (Mayse) 15th birthday; she got to help somebody in need,” Hudson said. “It was our first instinct,” Mayse said. “It’s just how we were brought up.”

NJTODAY.NET  
October 28, 2011



# Catholic School Affordability: Progress Made but Still a Long Way to Go

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- When educational leaders look at ways to make Catholic schools more affordable, they are happy about some of the positive steps that have been made but fully aware that there is still a lot to do.

During a recent conference at The Catholic University of America, a group of panelists focused particularly on the status of tuition tax credits and how they have enabled students who would normally not be able to afford Catholic schools to attend them.

Currently, there are 11 school voucher programs in the United States and nine scholarship tax-credit programs. Some states have more than one program.

The school voucher programs in Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Ohio, Oklahoma, Wisconsin, Utah and the District of Columbia offer private school vouchers to low-income students, students with special needs or children in failing schools.

The scholarship tax-credit programs in Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island also are primarily for students from low-income families or those with special needs.

Tuition vouchers are funds awarded by a government agency to a low-income family to spend at any school of their choice. Tuition tax credits generate scholarships for Catholic schools by allowing individuals and businesses to deduct a portion of their income taxes to donate to education. These donations can go to public or private schools. Donations to public schools

typically help pay for after-school programs, school trips or supplies.

Last April, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the practice of allowing Arizona residents to take a tax credit for their donations to school tuition organizations. During the 2008 fiscal year more than \$54 million in scholarship money was awarded to students through the tax credit program.

"We have made a good deal of progress in the past 15 years," said John Schilling, chief operating officer of the American Federation for Children, a school choice advocacy group. In fact, he noted that "it's as good as it's ever been" as far as choice initiatives.

But panel members were not about to rest on these laurels and almost all of them at the conference pointed out that the successes were not easy and certainly did not guarantee similar actions in other states.

To keep these programs going and see similar legislation passed, they said, Catholic leaders need to garner a lot more support for tuition tax credits from leaders of both parties, the general public and even the wider Catholic community.

In a question-and-answer session, Michael Guerra, former National Catholic Educational Association president, asked: "Why do we want tax credits? Is it just to keep Catholic schools alive?"

In response to his own question, he said that approach "won't fly" and the real reason to make Catholic schools an option for more



students is "because they're good for families and kids."

Similarly, Frank Butler, president of Foundations and Donors Interested in Catholic Activities, or FADICA, said: "We have to do a better job of making our case that we contribute to the common good through our schools."

Butler asked what's holding Catholics back from "a more robust and unified effort to enlist the public's support for more choice in education" and speculated that Catholics tend to think locally and look to their parish and diocese for initiative on schools. He also said there has not been a lot of national leadership on this topic and "in many ways we have ceded the issue of tax credits to libertarian and conservative think tanks."

He also said there has been a "hospice mentality" when it comes to Catholic schools as a result of recent closings and wondered if people lacked "confidence in the long-term survival of schools" coupled with a "passive disposition among Catholic laity when it comes to taking responsibility for the church's mission."

The Nov. 30 conference, organized by Catholic University's Institute for Policy Research & Catholic Studies and co-sponsored by the Catholic Association of Latino Leaders in San Antonio, urged educational and state Catholic conference leaders to essentially get back to basics: recognizing the good that Catholic schools do and promoting that.

In luncheon remarks, Washington Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl said he was not just

preaching to the choir but to the choir directors by pointing out the positive aspects of Catholic schools, which he said not only provide students with academic excellence but a moral foundation and hope for the future.

They are a "gift for the whole community," he added.

Mimi Schuttloffel, who chairs the education department at Catholic University, also spoke of the benefits of Catholic education and said Catholic schools still have an important role in today's society in their tradition of providing quality education to marginal groups and training future church leaders.

She lamented that this country, unlike many others, does not support religious schools and said Catholics as a whole do not support Catholic education if their children do not attend a Catholic school or their parish doesn't sponsor a school.

"We have not been able to adequately sell Catholic education," she said, emphasizing that this needs to be done more aggressively.

To keep Catholic schools alive and a viable option for the poor, she said, "We need leaders who get it, ... who understand our story matters."

Carol Zimmermann  
*Catholic News Service*  
December 29, 2011



## Many of India's Poor Turn to Private Schools

HYDERABAD, India — For more than two decades, M. A. Hakeem has arguably done the job of the Indian government. His private Holy Town High School has educated thousands of poor students, squeezing them into cramped classrooms where, when the electricity goes out, the children simply learn in the dark.

Parents in Holy Town's low-income, predominantly Muslim neighborhood do not mind the bare-bones conditions. They like the modest tuition (as low as \$2 per month), the English-language curriculum and the success rate on standardized tests. Indeed, low-cost schools like Holy Town are part of an ad hoc network that now dominates education in this south Indian city, where an estimated two-thirds of all students attend private institutions.

"The responsibility that the government should shoulder," Mr. Hakeem said with both pride and contempt, "we are shouldering it."

In India, the choice to live outside the faltering grid of government services is usually reserved for the rich or middle class, who can afford private housing compounds, private hospitals and private schools. But as India's economy has expanded during the past two decades, an increasing number of India's poor parents are now scraping together money to send their children to low-cost private schools in hopes of helping them escape poverty.

Nationally, a large majority of students still attend government schools, but the expansion of private institutions has created parallel educational systems — systems that are now colliding. Faced with sharp

criticism of the woeful state of government schools, Indian policy makers have enacted a sweeping law intended to reverse their decline. But skeptics say the litany of new requirements could also wipe out many of the private schools now educating millions of students.

"It's impossible to fulfill all these things," said Mohammed Anwar, who runs a chain of private schools in Hyderabad and is trying to organize a nationwide lobbying campaign to alter the requirements. Referring to the law, he said, "If you follow the Right to Education, nobody can run a school."

Education is one of India's most pressing challenges. Half of India's 1.2 billion people are 25 or younger, and literacy levels, while improving, could cripple the country's long-term prospects. In many states, government education is in severe disarray, with teachers often failing to show up. Rote drilling still predominates. English, considered a prerequisite for most white-collar employment in India, is usually not the medium of instruction.

When it took effect in April 2010, the [Right to Education Act](#) enshrined, for the first time, a constitutional right to schooling, promising that every child from 6 to 14 would be provided with it. For a nation that had never properly financed education for the masses, the law was a major milestone.

"If we nurture our children and young people with the right education," said Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, commemorating the act with a televised address, "India's future as a strong and prosperous country is secure."



Few disagree with the law's broad, egalitarian goals or that government schools need a fundamental overhaul. But the law also enacted new regulations on teacher-student ratios, classroom size and parental involvement in school administration that are being applied to government and private schools. The result is a clash between an ideal and the reality on the ground, with a deadline: Any school that fails to comply by 2013 could be closed.

Kapil Sibal, the government minister overseeing Indian education, has scoffed at claims that the law will cause mass closings of private schools. Yet in Hyderabad, education officials are preparing for exactly that outcome. They are constructing new buildings and expanding old ones, partly to comply with the new regulations, partly anticipating that students will be forced to return from closing private institutions.

"Fifty percent will be closed down as per the Right to Education Act," predicted E. Bala Kasaiah, a top education official in Hyderabad.

As a boy, M. A. Hakeem listened as his father bemoaned the slow progress of his fellow Muslims in India. "Son," he recalls his father's saying, "when you grow up, you should provide education to our community."

A few months after Mr. Hakeem completed the 10th grade, his father died. A year later, in 1986, Mr. Hakeem opened a small preparatory school with nursery classes. He was 15 years old.

Not yet old enough to vote, Mr. Hakeem held classes in his family's home and enlisted his two sisters to handle administrative tasks. By the mid-1990s, Mr.

Hakeem had opened Holy Town. The school has since produced students who have gone into engineering, commerce and other fields.

"I'm fulfilling my father's dream," Mr. Hakeem said.

When Holy Town opened, Mr. Hakeem's neighborhood at the edge of the old quarter of Hyderabad had one private school, a Catholic one. Today, there are seven private schools within a half-mile of Holy Town, each charging a few dollars a month and catering to Muslim students with a largely secular education in English.

Their emergence roughly coincided with the economic liberalization that began in 1991. For decades, government officials had blamed rural apathy for India's high illiteracy rates, saying that families preferred sending their children into the fields, not the classroom. But as the economy started taking off, public aspirations changed, especially among low-income families.

"In India today, demand is not really a constraint for education — it's the supply," said Karthik Muralidharan, an assistant professor at the University of California, San Diego, who has studied Indian education. "Parents are seeing education as the passport out of poverty."

The rising demand created a new market for private schools, and entrepreneurs big and small have jumped at the chance to profit from it. Corporate educational chains opened schools tailored to higher-income families, especially in the expanding cities. Low-cost schools like Holy Town proliferated in poorer neighborhoods, a trend evident in most major cities and spreading into rural India.



Estimating the precise enrollment of private schools is tricky. Government officials say more than 90 percent of all primary schools are run by or financed by the government. Yet one government survey found that 30 percent of the 187 million students in grades 1 through 8 now attend private schools. Some academic studies have suggested that more than half of all urban students now attend private academies.

In Mumbai, so many parents have pulled their children out of government schools that officials have started renting empty classrooms to charities and labor unions — and even to private schools. In recent years, Indian officials have increased spending on government education, dedicating far more money for new schools, hiring teachers and providing free lunches to students. Still, more and more parents are choosing to go private.

“What does it say about the quality of your product that you can’t even give it away for free?” Mr. Muralidharan said.

Most low-cost private schools also follow rote-teaching methods because their students have to take standardized tests approved by the government. But some studies suggest that teachers in government schools are absent up to 25 percent of the time. Poor children who attended private schools scored higher on reading and math tests, according to a study by Sonalde Desai, a professor of sociology at the University of Maryland, and other scholars.

“There is not much teaching that happens in the government schools,” said Raju Bhosla, 32, whose children attend one of Hyderabad’s low-cost private schools. “I never even thought about putting my kids in government schools.”

Across Hyderabad, work crews in 58 locations are expanding government schools or constructing new ones. To education officials, the building spree signals a rebirth of the government system, part of an \$800 million statewide program to bring government schools into compliance with the new law.

For Mr. Sibal, the national education minister, government schools had atrophied because of a lack of money. Under Right to Education, states can qualify for more than \$2 billion to improve facilities, hire new teachers and improve curriculums, he said.

“All these changes are going to transform the schools system in the next five years,” Mr. Sibal predicted. As for the tens of thousands of private schools opened during the past 15 years to satisfy the public’s growing hunger for education, Mr. Sibal said, “We’ve given them three years time,” referring to the 2013 compliance deadline. “We hope that is enough.”

Skepticism abounds. Elite private schools, already struggling with requirements that they reserve slots for poor and minority students, have filed lawsuits. But the bigger question is what will happen to the tens of thousands of low-cost private schools already serving the poor.

James Tooley, a British scholar who has studied private education in India, said government statistics grossly underestimate private schooling — partly because so many private institutions are not formally registered. In a recent survey of the eastern city of Patna, Mr. Tooley found 1,224 private schools, even though government records listed only about 40.



In Hyderabad, principals at several private schools said inspectors regularly threatened them with closings unless they paid bribes. Now, the principals say, the inspectors are wielding the threat of the Right to Education requirements and seeking even bigger bribes.

Mr. Anwar, the private school entrepreneur trying to organize a lobbying campaign, estimated that roughly 5,000 private schools operated in Hyderabad.

“Can the government close 5,000 schools?” he asked. “If they close, how can the government accommodate all these students?”

Vikas Bajaj and Jim Yardley with Sruthi Gottipati

*New York Times*

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## Holiness, Not Hot Air

*At Mount de Sales Academy in Maryland, the Nashville Dominican Sisters and faithful lay teachers demonstrate what Catholic Education ought to be.*

On a Friday morning, I walked into a room full of young women. They sat in desks arranged in a circle, with a habited Sister amongst them mediating discussion. The discussion was even in tone, conversational, intelligent. The women were discussing a text, to which they referred regularly, highlighting passages, and raising points or questions that moved the conversation forward. No one argued. The other women in the room listened intently to whomever was speaking. They read each other's body language, and waited until the speaker completed her point before anyone else chimed in.

This kind of mature discourse would be difficult to find on many college campuses. Students must be taught how to do it correctly. I'm hard pressed to remember a seminar from my own college experience in which everyone had read and apparently understood the assigned text, much less could they discuss the reading without interrupting one another and pushing the conversation toward emotional arguments.

Impressively, this seminar took place at a high school, [Mount De Sales Academy](#), just outside of Baltimore, a single-sex Catholic high school operating under the guidance of Nashville Dominican nuns. Perhaps more impressively, the text to which they referred was Blessed John Henry Newman's "An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine," which is, to say the least, difficult reading.

"Holiness, not hot air!" was the goal listed on the rubrics for the course, and it brings to light the bright potential of Catholic Education when faith is integrated into every aspect of the school experience, rather than tacked onto the beginning and the end of the school day with opening and dismissal prayer.

Students at Mount de Sales wear blazers, skirts, and a miraculous medal around their necks. The chapel is located in the middle of the school's historic facility, and students passing through it genuflect on their way to class. Many times a day, the young women are made aware of the presence of Jesus in their midst, either through the physical presence of the Sacrament in their school building, through the Christ-like example of the Sisters and faithful lay people who teach them, and through the other students striving to live Christ-like lives.

"We are body and soul," says school principal, Sister Anne Catherine Burleigh, OP. "And there is a body and soul to the school as well. We cannot afford not to be academic. There's no choice to be made between faith and academics. You can be both."

Sister Anne Catherine notes that Catholic schools have a mission, which is the same mission as that of the universal church: to inform, to form (character and virtue), and to transform (go out and evangelize). "I think many schools struggle to create an identity, coming up with mission statements and so forth, but the mission of Catholic education comes from the tradition of the Church. We articulate our Catholic identity a thousand times a day when we live faithful lives."



What is a Catholic Identity? As with many things, we know it when we see it. The entire faculty in all the disciplines at Mount de Sales share the Catholic Faith, which creates a Christian Community. I spoke with several students about what brought them to the school, and all of them, independently of each other, noted the family atmosphere, and Christ who is at the center of it.

Love, sharing, caring — this is the extent of virtue education in many schools. Sister Anne Catherine notes that students can see through the emotionalism of a faith that's not grounded in reasoned principles. They know it's wrong to hit, but it's wrong to hit in the public schools as well. A Catholic school can go the extra step and explain why it's wrong, why a life of virtue is preferable, with clearly and unapologetically stated Gospel truth; and this is where studying the Doctors of the Church comes in. It also provides the Sacramental tools that make living a virtuous life possible.

[Sister Anne Catherine explains,] "Our students are receiving the education we would have loved to have, and hopefully they graduate with an awareness of the responsibility that it entails. They are equipped to go out and be leaven in the world."

There will always be other schools with more money for computers and state of the art facilities, but it is a privilege for a school to call itself Catholic. Once a school has a handle on its Catholic Identity, then it can really soar academically. People want that difference that maybe they haven't been able to articulate for themselves, but when they see it, they know it's the real deal.

The [Nashville Dominican Sisters](#) have gained a national reputation for helping to facilitate this Catholic identity wherever the sisters go. Many parents and administrators are wondering, how can we get the Nashville Dominicans to come into our schools and transform them? The Sisters shine a light on the potentialities of Catholic education, but they also point a way for the laity. Christ is the one who transforms us. If He is integral to our lives, He will be integral to our schools. Holiness, not hot air.

[Elizabeth Duffy](#)

*Patheos.com*

December 22, 2011

*Elizabeth Duffy is a freelance writer and author of the blog, ["Betty Duffy."](#) Her writing has appeared online at [Faith and Family](#), the [Korrektiv Press Blog](#), and numerous other venues. She and her husband live in rural Indiana with their five children.*



## Bishop Asks if Church Should Stop Funding Schools that Are 'Catholic in Name Only'

The Rt. Rev. Michael Campbell, Bishop of Lancaster, asked if it was right for parishioners to continue paying for the upkeep of schools where the majority of pupils and teachers belong to other faiths and none.

He said faith schools are meant to help the Church in its mission of evangelisation, and that mergers should be considered in parishes that are now “quiet and empty.”

His comments will be welcomed by traditionalists who want church schools to retain their Christian ethos, but will be seen as controversial elsewhere.

The hierarchies of both the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of England have been accused of trying to make their schools more secular by relaxing admissions rules for the less devout.

Official figures show that faith schools outperform state-run primaries and secondaries, with the result that middle-class parents in some areas start attending church or even falsely claiming their children had been baptised in the hope of winning them sought-after places.

Elsewhere there are so few churchgoers that schools are dominated by followers of other religions or none, even though dioceses still own the buildings and pay for 10 per cent of their running costs.

In parts of Lancaster diocese, more than 80 per cent of the pupils at some schools are non-Catholics. In Salford diocese, a primary school could become the first to be

converted into an Islamic faith school because so many pupils are Muslim.

Catholic schools also struggle to find headteachers because of a stipulation that they follow the faith.

[Bishop Campbell wrote in his New Year's pastoral letter](#) to parishes that they needed to “address some demanding questions that will grow larger the longer we put them off.”

“Is it right or sustainable to expect our Mass-going population of 21,000 to support our schools and colleges in which often the majority of pupils, and sometimes teachers, are not practising Catholics?”

“Is it time for us to admit that we can no longer maintain schools that are Catholic in name only?”

“Faced with fewer priests and smaller congregations, where should our parishes and schools of the future be located? Where should we consolidate and merge others?”

He said 25 years ago some parishes in “wonderful neighbourhoods” were “teeming with large, young families” but are now “quiet and empty,” while those in outlying areas “seem to be thriving.”

Admitting that his flock will know friends, colleagues and family members for whom the Gospel message has become “stale,” he said they should be the “primary object of our missionary or evangelising efforts.”



“The Church only exists to evangelise – that means buildings, churches, parishes, schools and colleges are only valuable insofar as they help the Church in that mission of salvation.”

A spokesman for the Diocese of Lancaster, which oversees 87 schools, added to his comments, telling the *Catholic Herald*: “Is it right that our old folk are supporting the kids they won’t ever see at church?”

“The real issue is not the Muslims, but our own people who won’t darken our doors. And unlike in London, we don’t have significant numbers of immigrants in the north to bolster that.”

The Rt. Rev. Malcolm McMahon, the Bishop of Nottingham who chairs the Catholic Education Service of England and Wales, said in a statement: “Bishop Michael Campbell has raised an important question during a time in which we are all having to examine our priorities. The Church has established her own schools because she considers them as a privileged means of promoting human formation and education in the Catholic faith; as such, Catholic schools contribute to the common

good of society and support the Church’s evangelising mission, and are a valuable investment in our young people.”

But some Catholic dioceses are at odds with the governors of local schools over the way they give preference to more devout families.

Westminster reported the highly successful Cardinal Vaughan Memorial School to the admissions watchdog, claiming parts of its policy for 11 year-olds were “unlawful” and “unfair.”

Southwark also complained about the entry rules at Coloma Convent Girls’ Schools, which give more “points” to families to take part in parish activities, on the grounds that they discriminate against single parents.

Meanwhile Opus Dei, the strict Catholic organisation made famous by the Da Vinci Code novel, hopes to open two new single-sex schools in south London.

[Martin Beckford](#)

*The Telegraph*

January 6, 2012



## Excerpt from Pope Benedict XVI's Annual "State of the World" Address

Continuing our reflection, a similarly essential role in the development of the person is played by *educational institutions*: these are the first instances which cooperate with the family and they can hardly function properly unless they share the same goals as the family. There is a need to implement educational policies which ensure that schooling is available to everyone and which, in addition to promoting the cognitive development of the individual,

show concern for a balanced personal growth, including openness to the Transcendent. The Catholic Church has always been particularly active in the field of education and schooling, making a valued contribution alongside that of state institutions. It is my hope that this contribution will be acknowledged and prized also by the legislation of the various nations.

January 9, 2012

