



RAMTELL

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Catholic Education is for all

Reflection

The Catholic Church seeks to provide a wholistic education and formation in faith to as many people (adults, youth, and children) as possible. According to “The Identity of the Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue” (No 22) by the Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education in a statement published on January 25, 2022:

A distinctive feature of [a Catholic school's] ecclesial nature is that it is a school for all, especially the weakest. This is testified to by the “establishment of the majority of Catholic educational institutions [in response] to the needs of the socially and economically disadvantaged. It is no novelty to affirm that Catholic schools have their origin in a deep concern for the education of children and young

people left to their own devices and deprived of any form of schooling.

Catholic schools are for every student, not just the few who can afford to seek them out and pay for them. Those who are “socially and economically disadvantaged” need the gift of a deeply rooted intellectual and spiritual formation in faith as much, or more, than students who are blessed with social and economic well-being. That’s why Catholic parishes and dioceses struggle to make their schools accessible and affordable to as many families as they can.

The Church teaches that Catholic schools should be:

Inspired by a Supernatural Vision

God, and the wonder of all His creation, should represent the primary focus of every Catholic school’s curriculum.

Founded on a Christian Anthropology

The dignity of every human person—regardless of his or her individual gifts and talents—should be celebrated in all Catholic schools.

Animated by Communion and Community

Catholic schools should seek to foster a genuine unity-in-diversity that respects the differences among people while maintaining the intellectual and spiritual truths that make us all one in Christ.

Imbued with a Catholic Worldview

The vision of Catholic schools should be truly catholic, meaning universal and open to all, without sacrificing the firmly held beliefs and practices that distinguish Catholicism from other ways of understanding the world.

Sustained by Gospel Witness

Catholic schools should always be centers of prayer and worship, formation in daily Christian living, and service to others—especially those who are poor and marginalized.

As the Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education states:

In the Catholic school's educational project there is no

separation between time for learning and time for formation, between acquiring notions and growing in wisdom. The various school subjects do not present only knowledge to be attained but also values to be acquired and truths to be discovered. All of which demands an atmosphere characterized by the search for truth, in which competent, convinced and coherent educators, teachers of learning and of life, may be a reflection, albeit imperfect but still vivid, of the one Teacher.

A Catholic school's teaching, indeed, its formation in the spirituality of everyday life, is meant to be a unified, all-inclusive introduction to the person of Jesus Christ. A Catholic school is a community of believers—students and families, teachers and staff, volunteers and donors—who come together for the sole purpose of encountering Jesus Christ in and through the teaching and practice of the Catholic faith. This profound experience deserves to be shared with everyone.



IMMACULATA CLASSICAL ACADEMY

Profile

Immaculata Classical Academy is an independent Catholic, classical school in Louisville Kentucky, serving all children – including those with special needs – from pre-school through high school. Immaculata's mission is to provide students with a solid foundation in the liberal arts with the goal that they become men and women of character, virtue, and holiness.

The origin of the name, Immaculata Classical Academy, is a title of the Blessed Virgin that St. Maximilian Kolbe coined and is intimately connected to the mystery of Her Immaculate Conception. Immaculata is a school for everyone regardless of economic, social, or religious background, and the entire community prides itself in integrating the joy of the Gospel into every dimension of the school's educational program.

The "heart" of the school is evident in its warm and welcoming Christian environment. There is a humble reverence in everything Immaculata does—including its daily prayer and worship, school assemblies, academic programs, athletics, and other extra-curricular activities. While the Academy is open to students of all faiths, there is no question that this is vibrant Catholic community that:

- Invites all students to grow in holiness and in devotion to the

Blessed Virgin Mary like St. Maximilian Kolbe, one of the Academy's four patron saints.

- Prays for its students' Baptismal birthdays.
- Encourages religious vocations (1 out of 20 graduates study for the priesthood or some form of religious life), by displaying pictures of seminarians outside each classroom.
- Proudly promotes Catholic images and works of art throughout the entire building.

Every morning, the school community prays the Immaculata prayer written by St. Maximilian Kolbe who was a conventual Franciscan (hence the grey uniforms that students wear). When Maximilian was only 9 years old, he had a vision of Mary who offered him two crowns—a white one for purity and a red one for martyrdom—and he accepted both. That's why the school's colors are red and white. Additionally, St. Maximilian founded the Militia Immaculata to work for the conversion of sinners, and he published a monthly magazine called *Knight of the Immaculata*, which is where Immaculata Classical Academy's mascot comes from. According to Justin Fout, Principal, "Immaculata Classical Academy is a school for the **whole family, including children**

with special needs. We see special needs, and Down Syndrome in particular, as gifts to be celebrated and a beautiful part of God's plan for His creation!"

Immaculata follows a rigorous, but inclusive, program of academic and spiritual formation for all students, including children with special needs. The Academy's distinctive K—12 curriculum offers a unique educational environment where these children are:

- Immersed in a coherent Christian worldview.
- Challenged to reach their greatest personal potential.
- Able to interact and form friendships with typically developing students in integrated classrooms.
- The philosophy that classrooms should reflect natural proportions, each classroom generally incorporating 1-2 children with special needs, or about 15-20% of the total student body.

This arrangement benefits both typically and specially-developing children, who would in all likelihood be otherwise deprived of the opportunity to interact with each other. The school's philosophy of inclusion perfectly complements the goals of a truly classical education, whose end is the development not only of the intellect but the entire human person.

Located in the former St. Leonard School building in Louisville, Immaculata is a small school with plans to grow gradually in response to the increasing demand for an inclusive Catholic education that is a) faithful to the Church's teachings and devotions, b) rigorous in its approach to education in the classical tradition, and c) a school for the whole family regardless of size, income, or individual learning disabilities.

Dr. Thomas Davis, a parent who serves as Director of Stewardship, describes the first time he attended Mass at Immaculata. When it came time for Holy Communion, he saw a high school senior carrying a younger student with Down Syndrome down the aisle to receive the Blessed Sacrament. Dr. Davis says this captures for him what makes this school so special. Everyone in the school community—families, students, faculty and staff, alumni, donors and friends—learns what it means to be a member of the Immaculata family, a vibrant community of faith and learning based on the teaching and principles of Jesus Christ. No one is left out. Everyone belongs.

RamTell, Inc. is proud to support Immaculata Classical Academy. Individuals who wish to contribute can contact: Dr. Thomas Davis, Director of Stewardship, Immaculata Classical Academy, 440 Zorn Avenue, Louisville, KY, 40206. Phone: (502) 365-3545. Email: info@immaculata.org. Website: www.immaculata.org.