

INSTITUTE FOR  
CATHOLIC LIBERAL  
EDUCATION

# Aspiring School Leaders

## *Mission and Vision Statements*

DANNY FLYNN



All: Come Holy Spirit! Fill the hearts of thy faithful and enkindle in them the fire of Thy love.

Leader: Send forth Thy spirit, and they shall be created,

All: And Thou shalt renew the face of the earth.

Leader: Let us pray...

All: O God, Who by the light of the Holy Spirit, instructed the hearts of Thy faithful, grant us, in the same Spirit, to savor what is right and to ever rejoice in His consolation. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.



# Introductions

1. Name and where you are from.
2. School name, grade level served, parochial or private.
3. What inspired you to go into Catholic Education?
4. Comfort level with Classical Liberal Arts
5. One fun fact about you.

# Pentecost-The first vision statement



# Creed-The First Mission Statement



“Evangelization is therefore the mission of the Church; that is, she must proclaim the good news of salvation to all.

Generate new creatures in Christ through baptism and train them to live knowingly as children of God.”

#7 The Catholic School  
The Sacred Congregation for  
Catholic Education.

# The Church and the School

*“The mission of The Church is to evangelize, **for the interior transformation and the renewal of humanity.** For young people, the school is one of the ways for this evangelization to take place.”*

Congregation for Catholic Education.

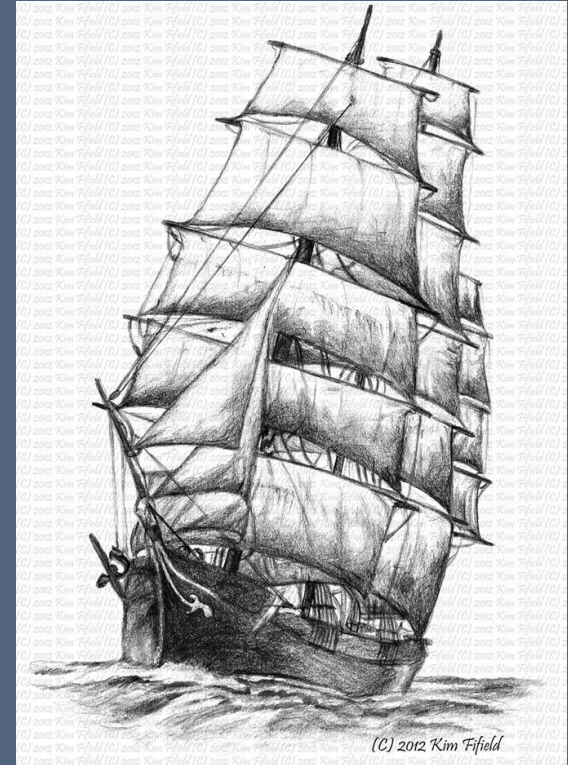
*“The whole vision for education in the classical tradition can be summarized in the proposition that **education is directed at perfecting inherent human abilities.** Education trains and directs these things.” p. 23 Clark and Jain*

*“The logos or word of God taking a child on his lap will forever remain the mission of education.” Bishop Fulton Sheen Treasure in Clay.*



# What is education?

- Teachers must start with this question and desire the truth for truth's sake
- Reconsider your own personal 'Philosophy on Education'
- Take the time to draw out a full sense of your ideal school. Have a journal or notebook that says, "When I am a principal..."
- Shaping your answer to this question will require you to use the lens of classical education.





# What education is not

- Education is not about college and career readiness.
- Not about bolstering a child's self esteem
- Not about proving proficiency on a standardized test.
- To become a good citizen
- To earn certifications
- To go to IVY league schools
- Acquisition of knowledge
- Mastery of Skills
- Completion of standards
- Not Daycare Center



# Rethinking the pillars

“The Catholicism in a Catholic school cannot simply be added on to an existing curriculum or atmosphere. Precisely because a religious faith affects everything, even changing the way we view the cosmos, **it cannot be compartmentalized.**”

P. 15 Caldecott *Beauty in the Word.*



# Education is more like gardening than manufacturing

*“Healing is done by our bodies: yet we need doctors. Growing is done by the plants, yet we need gardeners. Learning to think is done by young people. We need teachers, as we need doctors and gardeners.”* P. 35  
Margaret Atkins, *The Good Teacher*.

*“Education was enculturation in piety, virtue wisdom, grace, and the curriculum served the culture.”* p. 4 Clark and Jain

*“Wisdom and virtue are cultivated by nourishing the soul on truth, goodness and beauty embodied in great books and works of art.”* Dorothy Sayers *Lost Tools of Learning*.



# Philosophical Principles

“Ancients believed that education was about shaping Loves” p. 4 Clark and Jain

- What do you love?
- Have you considered the transcendental questions?
- Quo Vadis?
- Consider the statement: You become what you behold.
- What role do the true, the good, and the beautiful play in your school?



# Culture shaping

*“The greeks uniqueness came by way of increasingly founding their educational practices on universal principles that could be adopted by non-greeks as well. The word paideia came to mean much more: it referred to the overarching human culture toward which the whole society aspired.”*cf. The Heart of Culture.

*“Revelation is like that first new fallen snow. It is a gift from above. It does not destroy the place beneath, but neither does it leave the earth as it was. Culture is born of our response to revelation. We shape culture and it in turn shapes us.”* Topping Rebuilding Catholic Culture.

*“A vibrant Catholic culture makes intelligible a model of life and the habits of being that fit us for heaven.”* Topping Rebuilding Catholic Culture.



# Catholic Liberal Education

- *Catholic liberal education (from the Latin, liber, which means free) is ordered to the Truth that sets us free. This formation frees us for growth in faith, wisdom, and virtue. While recent attention has been aimed at the revival of liberal learning in higher education, we understand that these habits of mind and heart must first be cultivated in the very young. The sacramental and moral imagination is nurtured in childhood.-ICLE*

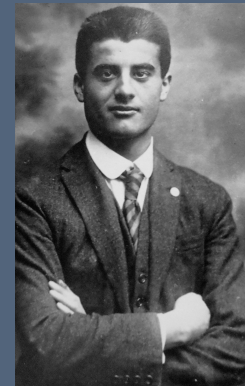
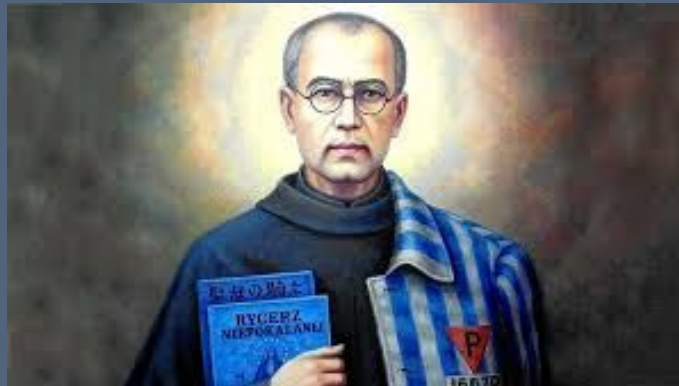


*“Liberal Education , the, aims to teach a man or woman how to be good. Since the greeks, the seven liberal arts--grammar, logic, rhetoric, geometry, arithmetic, astronomy and music have been enlisted as the formal means in the service of this ambition.”The Case for Catholic Education p. 17*

*“Instruction in the liberal arts produces devotees more alert and steadfast and better equipped for embracing truth” St Augustine on Order (1.8.24)*

# Above all, a witness.....

*“Above all, the gospel must be proclaimed by witness. Take a Christian or a handful of Christians who in the midst of their own community, show their capacity for understanding and acceptance, their sharing of life and destiny with other people, their solidarity with the efforts for all for whatever is noble and good. Let us suppose that, in addition they radiate in an altogether simple and unaffected way their faith in values that go beyond current values, and their hope in something that is not seen and that one would not dare to imagine. Through this wordless witness these Christians stir up irresistible questions in their hearts of those who they know how they live: why are they like this? Why do they live this way? What or who is it that inspires them? Why are they in our midst? Such witness is already a silent proclamation of the good news and a very powerful and effective one.” #21 Evangelii Nuntiandi*



# In simple terms

- Cultivating wisdom and virtue
- Bring them to encounter Christ
- Preparing for eternal life
- Unlocking their birthright.
- Giving them something better to love.
- Recovery of Church tradition
- Learning the abiding things





# Casting a new vision



- Consider making a retreat to pray and reread founding principles.
- Read the rich tradition of the church on evangelization.
- Why does your school exist?
- Does your staff see their roles as jobs or a mission?
- What are your marching orders from the parish, charter, board or religious order?
- Pray through your goals and objectives.

# Compare and Contrast Mission and Vision

## Vision

- Focused on tomorrow
- Focused on what one wants become
- Questions to consider:
  - What are our hopes and dreams?
  - What problem are we solving for the greater good?
  - Who and what are we inspiring to change?

## Mission

- Focused on Today
- Focused on what one is.
- Confirms value.
- Gives you a goal to advance towards
- Questions to consider:
  - What do we do?
  - Whom do we serve?
  - How do we serve them?

# Getting Practical

Practical considerations to use in rethinking your school's mission and vision statement

- Considerable amount of self reflection-Honest blunt and detailed.
- Use measurable input and not subjective or anecdotal.
- Consider where you are and where to are hoping to go. (platonic vs. actual)
- Use parent surveys and focus groups
- Numbers of references, referrals, or publications
- Staff critique



If you build it..... they will come....

If you have an open door policy....They will ask for it.



## WHAT IS THE OBJECTIVE?

What can you direct parents to?

What do you refer to in times of trouble?

What directs and guides your decision making?

Will your door be closed?

# What will be your compass in guiding a school?

Sales people?  
Lock ins?  
Disney cruise?  
Fundraisers?  
Various holidays and traditions?  
Valentines dance?  
Which historical figures will you  
highlight/celebrate?



# Ripple Effects of a clear Mission and Vision

HSA

School plays

Attire for dances

Fundraisers

Book fairs

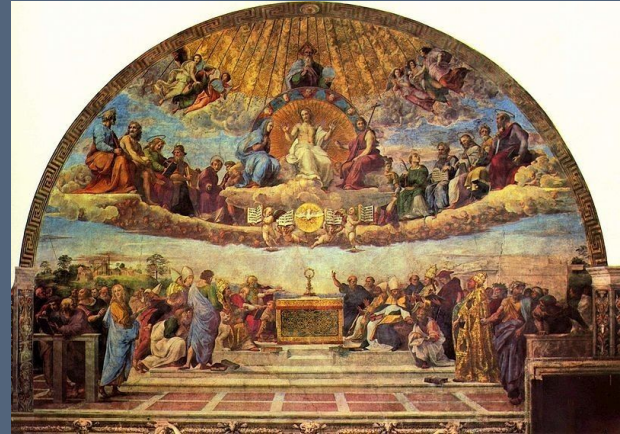
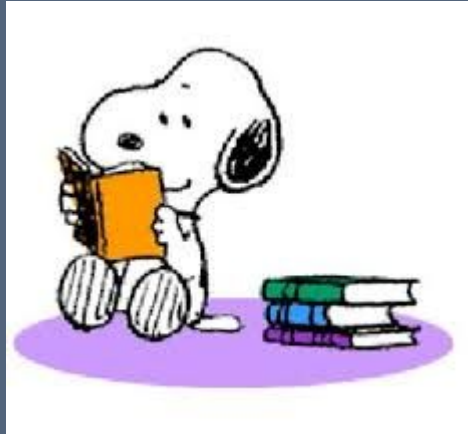
Scholars pledge

Disciplinary actions

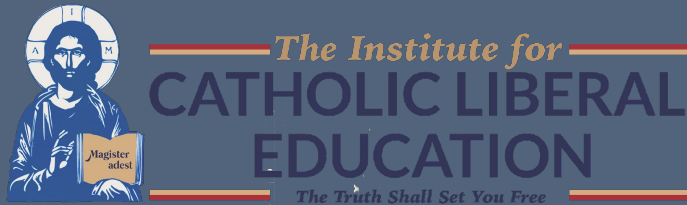
Guest Speakers

Community events

Recruitment of new families



# Sample Mission Statements



The Institute for Catholic Liberal Education inspires and equips Catholic educators to renew today's Catholic schools by drawing on the Church's tradition of education, which frees teachers and students for the joyful pursuit of faith, wisdom, and virtue.

# Common Core Mission Statement

*“The Common Core State Standards provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them. The standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers. With American students fully prepared for the future, our communities will be best positioned to compete successfully in the global economy.”*





# Branding the School

- Most important aspect of branding your school is the *mission statement*.
- Your mission statement should be everywhere.
- Have short, concise statements about what makes your school stand out from the others.
- Keep your collateral materials consistent, simple, and beautiful.
- Highlight Truth, Goodness and Beauty, and of course, the commitment to authentic Catholic education.

N.B. -- *Apologia*, if needed. In the early years of founding or renewal, other local Catholic schools often think your school is reactionary, more Catholic than the pope, etc. They feel threatened, as if your existence is a barb shouting “that parish school is not Catholic enough.” A good tactic many schools have used to promote good will and unity is to emphasize that ‘our school just uses a different educational model, one that some people want. We support our other Catholic schools, but ours is like a Catholic charter school, specializing in classical education.’

Our Lady of Lourdes

Catholic Classical School and Montessori Preschool

## The Lourdes Classical Shield Explained



### Devotion to Our Lady

The fleur de lis is a traditional symbol for Mary as is the color blue. Since it has also been used to represent French royalty, the fleur de lis also connects to our Queen Mother's apparition at Lourdes, France in 1858.

### Joyful Fidelity

The top of the fleur de lis (flower of the lily) doubles as a Bishop's miter, representing the authority of Christ the King handed down through the Apostles to today's Bishops. We are joyfully faithful to the Magisterium of the Catholic Church.

### Discipleship Formation

Overlaying the fleur de lis is the Shield of Faith topped by the Crown of Martyrdom. Our Lady always leads us to her Son, and we seek to form disciples of Christ the King, prepared to "drop their nets" and bear witness to His victory over death.

### Classical Training

Our integrated intellectual and spiritual formation fosters a love for *verum, pulchrum and bonum* (the true, the beautiful and the good). The merging of the natural order of the universe with the supernatural revelation of the Incarnation is represented by the Star of the Magi.

### Family Centered

The Magi discovered the Christ child in the context of the Holy Family. We serve the family, supporting parents in their God-given role as the primary educators of their children.

# Spread the word through your mission



- **Go tell it on the mountain!** Ask any nearby parish that does not have a school attached if you can be present at weekend Masses to share information about your school.
- Hold forums and **panel discussions** explaining the vision and mission.
- Ask your **pastor** to help you with this. He can speak with his brother priests and get them excited about the mission of your school. Have him invite other pastors to come tour the school with him.
- When you meet with **new parents**, share the mission with them and ask them to share their thoughts on it.

# Assignment for this month

1. Provide 2 formal mission or vision statements taken from real organizations (school preferred)
2. Compare and contrast the 2 statements to each listing differences and similarities.
3. Provide suggestions to strengthen and/or refine these statements.
4. Write a mission or vision statement for your school or for a dream school you would hope to open one day.

# Discussion Questions

1. What are the metrics used to determine if a Mission is being lived and permeated within a school's culture or if it is unknown?
2. Which hill do you want to die on? What are your non negotiable core factors that go in into your mission/vision?
3. What aspects of your school community, traditions and culture might be altered by a new or refined mission/vision?
4. Is there a particular catchphrase or one question you could create and use that would help the staff and parents be unified behind the mission? Meaning, when someone brings a concern or and idea to you is there something simple you can use to remind them of the focus and direction of the school?
5. How does one know if the school mission or vision needs to be rebranded in conjunction with a shift to a liberal arts curriculum ?

# Scenarios

1. A new parent comes to you a week after you have been hired as headmaster and volunteers that she would love to be on the HSA board because she has experience being a room mother and sells cosmetics so she knows how to sell people on anything and communicate well. She also informs you that her husband is a math professor at a local university and has some ideas on improving the math curriculum. How will you respond?
2. A recent review of your schools updated demographics shows that your school is now 55% Catholic and 45% Evangelical. During a team review of your core principles, your administrators says it is likely time to remove the word Catholic from you mission/vision statements and go for something more ecumenical. What is your next comment?
3. A parent sends you data from a straw poll of all parents telling you that they would like for your school to provide pre-SAT practice tests monthly to increase scores for your students. What is your response?
4. A new teacher comes to you and says that they want to manage the social media for your school. You do not have anyone currently doing this so your interest is piqued. How will you guide her to ensure that content and the quality aligns with the mission and vision?
5. You take a job as principal of a school you have never worked in before. A month in, you quickly learn that the culture of the school is quite different from the mission and vision on found on paper and used during the hiring process. How will you pivot to bring this school back to life?