

Eucharistic Education with Archbishop Cordileone

Transcript of Q & A with Patrick Reilly and Archbishop Cordileone at Sacra Liturgia in 2022

Patrick Reilly, The Cardinal Newman Society

For those of you who cannot see me, I am sitting next to the holy and courageous Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone.

My name is Patrick Reilly. I'm president of The Cardinal Newman Society. Our mission is to promote and defend faithful Catholic education at all levels. We're thrilled to be one of the co-sponsors for this conference. We're very excited by everything that's going on here and the work of renewing sacred liturgy. Our work is renewing Catholic education, and the two I think intersect in many ways, and this is the conversation that we'll be having today.

I wanted to just quickly give a quick little plug and let you know about something that we just had a meeting about with some of the educators here this morning, and we're working on putting out the announcement today on a Task Force for Eucharistic Education. This is an effort to unite our work with the bishops' Eucharistic Revival over the next three years, and it's an effort to work with educators, with Catholic schools, homeschooling programs, colleges around the country in strengthening faithful Catholic education, in particular with regard to promoting education and devotion to the Eucharist. If you're interested in learning more about that, we just launched a website at EucharisticEducation.org.

I'm delighted today to have this opportunity to have a public conversation with Archbishop Cordileone. Our task is again to talk about how faithful Catholic education can be a leader in the Eucharistic Revival and the renewal of sacred liturgy. So, Your Excellency, thank you so much for taking this time and for hosting this conference.

Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone

You're welcome.

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Let's start with this concept of Eucharistic education. The Vatican's documents on Catholic education have made it clear that the sacraments—both participation in the

sacraments and also formation of students to receive sacraments—are foundational to an authentic Catholic education.

Yet the surveys show that upwards of 70 percent of young adult Catholics today do not believe in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. And while we may be tempted to blame this on a crisis of dissent, in fact, I think it's a failure of the Church to educate—in part, because we see from these surveys that the large majority of those who say that they do not believe in the Real Presence also say that they actually believe that the Church teaches that the Eucharist is nothing but a symbol of Christ. And so therefore they're not getting the message and the teaching of the Church.

Thinking particularly about Catholic education—Catholic schools, Catholic homeschooling, college level—what immediate priorities would you recommend for improving a Eucharistic education in our Catholic institutions?

Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone

I think Cardinal Sarah hit on those key points in his opening keynote speech when—remember the list of the *ars*, he went through *ars celebrandi* of course, *ars formandi*, *ars vivendi*. We need to make sure the catechesis is correct, is solid, is convincing. But catechesis is more than what's taught with words. It's what is experienced. It's what is lived. It's especially how our worship is conducted. And it's the culture of the whole school. I would focus then on renewing the liturgical life in the school and focusing on the *ars celebrandi* which, as he pointed out, is not just the celebrant of the Mass, but it's everyone. Everyone has a role in the Mass so that it's celebrated properly. What kind of music is sung? What are the movements like? Are those who serve the Mass, are they taught to present themselves reverently, to walk gracefully with true liturgical sense. These are little things, but they add up, and they create a sort of an atmosphere.

I remember when I read in *The Tipping Point* by Malcolm Gladwell, he spoke about how when Rudy Giuliani was the mayor of New York, what he did to slow down the crime rate. He said he began by focusing on what he called the petty, above-ground crime. So graffiti, the window washers at the street corners, public urination, public intoxication. He cleaned that all up. So he basically took away the context that is conducive to crime. So looking at it in reverse, we have to set up a context that's conducive to real reverence in the liturgy. So to focus on those qualities of the *ars celebrandi*, that leads to the *ars formandi*. The liturgy itself should be formational.

I would especially focus—as we were reflecting on today, and especially this morning at this breakfast—on the music. I've made this observation many times that we—I suppose

it might be natural to think, if we're not thinking it all the way through, that if we have a Mass with school children, we want to make it relatable to them. So we sing music that is childlike music, this music that children listen to. But it doesn't seem to be working, because when they grow up, they then fall away from the practice of the faith. And I mentioned earlier this morning at this gathering about the chant camps that are done with children and teens, they eat it up. We know how successful this is with young people. But more than that, it attracts them.

Really because it's our tradition that it's not bound by any kind of generation or time or culture. When they sing children's songs—I think for me, and I think for a lot of us, maybe my age and older, I don't know about younger, but we treasure so many memories of growing up Catholic because of the beauty of the liturgy and the quality of the worship. So if we look back on that, I think someone who experiences childlike music as a child grows up, looks back on growing up Catholic, thinks that it's something for children.

How often do we hear someone say, "I was raised Catholic"? We don't hear that too much with people in other religions. You don't hear too much, "I was raised Baptist." Or you certainly don't hear, "I was raised Jewish." Right?

So I think when we do what's part of the timelessness of our tradition, we form a Catholic soul in our young people, and it enhances the reverence for the Eucharist. So I would begin with focusing on the quality of the liturgy and then, expanding that, we can do Adoration (but we need to prepare them for that adoration). What about attending Mass on Sunday? Can we think of maybe creative ways to instill a sense of responsibility for that? Something as simple as a teacher on Monday, reflecting on what the priest or the deacon said in the homily that Sunday, giving a little reflection of that. It sends a signal about the teacher is also to be a witness, and the teacher is bearing that witness of how important the Sunday Mass is. And a child might think, well, I didn't hear the homily. Or maybe ask the children to reflect on the homily that they heard that Sunday, so we create a whole kind of culture in the school, but the worship is at the heart of it.

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Very good. It makes me think of, there was a—there's still a great article on the Thomas Aquinas College website by Ronald MacArthur, one of the founders of the college. And he talks about the importance not only of—in the Church, we very often focus on developing, cultivating habits, of the repeated practice of doing things right, and especially moral habits—but he talked especially about custom and about the

environment that young people grow up in. And if they don't have the strength—he was speaking specifically about academia and becoming intellectuals, and he said—if you don't grow up with the customs of having the kind of dialogues and reading the right sort of things that it's highly unlikely that as an adult, they will become serious academics.

And so I would think the same thing is true for the Church as well, that it's difficult as an adult to be serious about your faith if it's seen as just a childhood thing and you didn't have the custom of enjoying good, serious liturgy and Adoration and all of these things that we as adults should be practicing.

Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone

Yes, certainly. And if it's treated very casually, whereas if it's something banal, it's not going to instill a sense of awe and reverence for the gift that the Eucharist is. That kind of education, you know, we're getting toward the idea of classical education—which is another reflection I've repeated often that, you know, the Second Vatican Council urged us to read the signs of the time, so we need to look around and see what is working. We're very distressed at the disaffiliation, but some things are working. What I perceive that's working is what is classically Catholic, especially in education, in liturgy, and in religious life. Right? Look at the thriving religious orders, the ones that embrace what is classical that is to say timeless about the qualities of religious life. It attains that status of being classic precisely because it's withstood the test of time. It's not something confined to the time it began, but it has this timeless quality. Certainly with liturgy, with what is classical within our liturgy, as we've heard reflections on and we'll continue to throughout this conference and then the classical education. I mean, there are so many riches the Church has to offer. And one of the common lines I hear from young people who discover it later in life, when they didn't get it in their faith formation or sometimes even their Catholic schools, when they discover the beauty of what the Church has to offer through what is timeless, they say I was deprived of my Catholic birthright. This is a Catholic birthright, all the beauty the Church has to offer the world. We need to open up these treasures to young people. As I said, we will really form a Catholic soul in them and they'll be Catholic for life. It's not something that they grow out of or they say they were raised in.

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That resonates very much with me, because I've been trying to formulate the argument that Catholic intellectual development is also a birthright. It's a right of baptism to be

able to understand the world and understand reality through the light of our faith. Catholic education is and has been the Church's most effective, most important means of evangelization. It's our way of truly forming young people, over a long period of time, in the faith and an understanding of the world.

On the other hand, we're seeing that since 1970 enrollment in our Catholic schools has declined by more than two thirds, and it's not really stopping. We had a bit of a boost—thanks to COVID, frankly—because many of the schools stayed open. But we also know that many of our schools, frankly, over the last 50 years have not been outstanding in their catechesis and in their intellectual development. And many of our colleges have become quite secular.

And then at the same time, there's this renewal of great faithful Catholic institutions—strong schools, and then this whole burgeoning movement with homeschooling. And so there's real hope and good things happening, as you say.

And so, if we truly want this Eucharistic Revival, if we want the Church to be renewed in the United States, is there something that maybe more needs to be done in terms of the Church fully embracing these different modes of education, the growing variety of types of education, and not being stuck in one particular model, but being focused on what works and what's truly faithful? And that may be very good parochial schools, that may be good independent schools, it may be homeschooling, good colleges—really making those distinctions.

Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone

I do believe we need more sort of versatility in the forms of education. I think we're still trying to transition into a new reality, although we are making progress. But you can't replace the idea of schools run by religious orders—nuns and brothers and priests—with the kind of formation they get, you know, they're taken out of the world for six or seven years or even longer, given a very deep formation, and then they're sent out to teach.

So I think one thing is good formation of our teachers. Now I do believe we're seeing a renaissance in that. We're seeing more of the faithful Catholic colleges, especially the universities, are turning out teachers that are deeply well-formed in the faith and can begin to turn schools around that need that happening. So I think focusing on teacher formation is important.

And I think, yes, more openness to versatility. The Church has, I think, been slow to enthusiastically embrace homeschooling, because we're so invested in our schools. It's part of our Catholic identity as Catholics in the United States. We are so proud of our Catholic school system and we're very invested in that. So I think we've been a little bit reticent. But I like the hybrid idea, supporting parents who want to educate their children at home, but having opportunities for them to come together.

I think it's important to see there are lights and shadows, right? You brought up COVID. I think COVID brought about a great light of our Catholic schools, at least here in our Archdiocese, and it was true around the country. Our Catholic schools really did us proud during COVID because when everything had to shut down, they quickly transitioned to online instruction. And then in the fall, when it was possible slowly to return, they immediately were bringing children back into the classroom—doing it in a safe way and in compliance with health ordinances, so typically they would have half the students in person and half online initially. But we were very agile in transitioning to realities and health orders as they were changing. As you said, it engendered a lot of respect for Catholic schools and attracted some parents to send their children here. So I think there are lights that we need to recognize. I still believe that in our Catholic schools, even if the catechesis is weak in some of the schools, there's a sense of a mission that's beyond just trying to etch out a comfortable lifestyle or something like that. There is a sense, a mission there. So there's a lot of positive energy for us to tap into.

But as I said, teacher formation and more openness to versatility, I think both would be helpful in a renewal of the broader vision of Catholic education.

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Okay, great. So the Vatican recently issued a document on Catholic education—on Catholic identity in our schools. One of the major emphases of that document was on the witness and the formation of the teacher. It made some pretty strong statements coming from the Vatican's Congregation on Catholic Education. They said that every single teacher—not just the religion teachers, but teachers in every discipline—need to be well-formed in the faith and need to be integrating the faith into their studies as appropriate to their particular discipline.

And so, when we talk about Eucharistic education, trying to teach young people to behave as if the reality of Christ is within them—they're carrying the body and blood, soul and divinity of Jesus inside of them—how important is it that Catholic educators

themselves model this Eucharistic lifestyle? And what's the appropriate response when they don't, when a school or college sets before [students] someone who is clearly acting opposed to an appropriate Catholic lifestyle—such as a homosexual relationship? That's of course the big issue right now, but there are many other moral issues that come up in terms of the behavior of the teacher. What should our schools and colleges be doing in response to that?

Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone

Again, the importance of teacher formation. Yes, the teachers are, first of all, witnesses. It reminds me of that now oft-quoted line of Pope St. Paul VI from *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, about the world looks for witnesses more than teachers, and if it looks for teachers, it's because first they're witnesses. The teachers do have to be a witness to the identity and the mission of the school.

Going back to the culture of the school, if the culture of the school is faithfully and vibrantly Catholic, a teacher who disagrees on some of these key issues is not, I don't think, going to feel really very comfortable there. They're not going to feel like they fit in. So it takes a long time, though—but changing, I've seen it happen though, changing the culture of the school. Teachers naturally, who don't fit in, will go look somewhere else. Sometimes issues do happen. Controversies erupt, and they have to be addressed. But I think to try to instill this sense of a Catholic culture in the school—and again, it comes through in little ways too. I mean, just the vocabulary that is used, the issues that are discussed, how people respond to some of the issues such as you brought up, that it's an authentic Catholic response. So people aren't siloed into pro- and con-, but can recognize the dignity of the human person and what that means, how we live that out in different circumstances.

Sometimes there are issues of human weakness. But when someone uses that as an excuse to be defiant, that's one thing, versus someone who's repentant and reforms their life. It's something else that could be a positive witness, in fact. So any particular circumstances have to be taken into consideration in any, in any concrete case.

It's forming the culture of the school, so that people who appreciate that culture will be drawn to it, and those who don't will be repelled by it.

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Okay. Very good. In terms of the discipline—the integration across disciplines... I teach a philosophy level course to high schoolers, and we were able to, in the context not of

theology but of Aristotelian philosophy, able to apply his language to the understanding of transubstantiation. It was just an outstanding conversation. I would think you could do that in a science class as well, when you're talking about substance and matter and the things that are and how they work. And so, this idea of trying to create or build a better understanding of the Eucharist and Eucharistic lifestyle and devotion and all of that, I can see many opportunities for teachers within different disciplines to start talking about that. But again, we have this issue with many of the people, especially teaching things like math—which is the order of the world as God created it, and yet we don't often teach it that way. Science is the observation of the creation of the world.

How can we do a better job of forming or identifying teachers who can truly bring the faith into the classroom, no matter what discipline they're teaching?

Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone

Hiring is certainly critical, so schools, school departments have to be very careful about whom they hire in any discipline, as you were saying, not just in religion courses, philosophy courses, but in every discipline. And to try to actively recruit from, again, the good and faithful Catholic colleges and universities to try to recruit teachers.

It is very important that it's across the curriculum, because we know everything is interrelated. It's not like we have a moral teaching here and then the physical world is something else, and they're not connected, and our spirituality is something subjective that we feel. It's all interconnected: the morality, the way the physical world is created and works, and our spirituality, our social relations, how society works. It's all interconnected. So I think it is very important that we be aware of this with cross-curriculum integration.

It's important for the schools to try to vet teachers who have that understanding, but it ultimately all comes down to the hiring.

Patrick Reilly, The Cardinal Newman Society

Your Excellency, getting back to liturgy, we talked about the importance of forming young people in the liturgy, in schools and in colleges and for homeschoolers. But how do we do that?

We know know that for decades, the typical student liturgy was frankly not very beautiful, often not very reverent, and sometimes even violated liturgical norms with the

experimentation that was going on. We seem to have gotten away from some of the worst aspects of that. But how do we truly move that forward and get genuine liturgical education and formation into our schools and our colleges?

Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone

Yes, there is something of a challenge there in terms of resources. The resources are there, but they're not in abundance, and then the financial resources to pay for them. So finding people who are qualified to do it, then being able to fund it, is I think the biggest challenge. I don't see as much of a challenge nowadays as maybe 20, 30 years ago, where there was a resistance to teaching beautiful music and beautiful liturgy. But it's more a lack of awareness. So I think, to find ways with the resources.

But we can begin little by little the campus ministry at a school, especially thinking about high schools. It's critical to get the right priests involved, the right director of campus ministry, who understand that and can begin to focus on that. Perhaps connect the school with the nearby parish, if you have a good team of priests at the parish that can provide pastoral support to the school, and make sure they oversee any liturgy that is planned—if you have good and faithful priests. So there are, I think, small steps that can be taken, but we need to build and build and build.

I see our cathedral music director, Chris Tietze, sitting right in front of me here. This is a great treasure we have in our Archdiocese. We have a choir school at St. Brigid School—it's a few blocks away from the cathedral—that Chris directs, and they sing at our cathedral liturgy sometimes. It's a great blessing, and again, we're forming children well. So I think if we can begin focus on an effort and try to build it out from there.

Patrick Reilly, The Cardinal Newman Society

I just have two more questions, but you just led into my next one very well. This is regarding, talking now specifically about college level. Canon Law—I was surprised as I was looking at it closely, I was surprised to notice that Canon Law actually puts the authority over all campus ministry, whether a non-Catholic institution or at a Catholic university under the bishop. And typically in practice campus ministry has largely been managed by the institutions themselves, often by a particular religious order or by their choice of campus ministers. The problem is, of course, that, that we've seen a lot of sometimes outright abuses but often just not very strong liturgical efforts.

Do you see a path for the bishops, maybe taking a stronger role in that, or is there some other way that we can bring some of the liturgical and just general campus ministry reform into our Catholic colleges, many of which are just not very strong.

Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone

Yes. Well, it's tricky with Catholic colleges, since most of them are run by religious orders. And especially if it's a religious order or priest, they have their priests that they provide for campus ministry. So practically speaking, the bishop would have to try to establish more of a kind of collaborative relationship rather than directive.

I see more immediate possibilities for the bishop if it's a secular campus, because he's directly responsible for the campus ministry there. So to assign the right priest there, give him some support. We have FOCUS missionaries now, another great blessing with the Church and our age, and to try to bring a group like FOCUS to be involved. So I think it's more, say, immediately possible at a secular campus. Or there are some diocesan universities, too, so he has more direct responsibility.

With the religious order campus, there has to be more, like I said, a collaborative or cordial relationship. Hopefully, if he has a good relationship with the president of the university, then things can be, if problems arise, if there's a preexisting cordial relationship, there's communication, ongoing problems arise, they can be more easily dealt with than if the only time there's communication is when there's a controversy.

Patrick Reilly, The Cardinal Newman Society

There have been some wonderful, great leaders in the history of Catholic education in the United States. As you mentioned, it's really the great pride of the American church in particular, the parochial school system that was developed. Archbishop John Hughes in New York and St. John Neumann in Philadelphia both built strong faithful parochial school systems in response to the floods of immigrants coming in, and also because of the great need to get those Catholics out of the public school system, because of the dangers that they were seeing within the public schools.

Today we see many of our parochial schools closing down and the vast majority of young Catholics are attending public schools. And yet I think we see, especially with the shifts in the culture and the politics, that public schools are again by and large dangerous to Catholic students, to their souls, in apparent ways in terms of embracing radical ideologies, but also in subtle ways where the very secular education is not embracing

the fullness of the faith and an understanding of every discipline and all the great things that you can get from a Catholic education.

So is it time, once again, to overtly encourage Catholic families to get out of [public] schools? And of course we know that there's a great challenge that Catholic families have in getting out of [public] schools because of the costs of Catholic schools without the nuns. And so do we need to be putting—I guess this goes back to my earlier question—do we need to be thinking much more broadly and much more aggressively about how can we—if the priority is to get the students into a good Catholic education—then we need to find every possible cost-effective way of doing it in an affordable way? Which may include hybrid options, or homeschooling, or just maybe not having such expensive facilities at many of our Catholic schools, or something like that, because the priority is to get them into a good faithful Catholic education?

Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone

Yes, we do need creative solutions. Of course, in the early waves of Catholic immigration, the danger that was perceived was that they'd be kind of, in the public schools, they'd be co-opted by Protestant faith communities. But now the problem's at a much deeper level. It's on, "What is a human being? What is a man? What is a woman?" Very deep. And in fact our concerns are shared by some of our Protestant brothers and sisters who are equally repelled by this, and they have a basic understanding of the human person and of the primacy of Jesus Christ.

So creative solutions, maybe. Maybe there are some ways to work with our, our Protestants who have the same view of the human person that we do and believe in the Bible and following what the Bible teaches. Other creative solutions, one that comes to mind is the—you may be familiar with the Cristo Rey model for low-income families. You have to be below a certain income level. The students attend class four days a week. On the fifth day, they work at an entry-level job at a local business. So there's a sponsor, a religious order—could be the diocese, usually it's a religious order—and they work with local businesses that will hire these high school students to work at an entry-level job. So they learn good job skills. They learn responsibility. They learn how to dress for a job and relate respectfully to people, so they're developing good practical job skills. They're getting an excellent education and the income they earn from the job goes to the school to pay for the education. And it's been very successful in getting these children for very poor families out of poverty, getting them to college, and breaking that chain of poverty.

So it's an example of a creative solution. And I think we need more ideas like that. And like I was saying earlier, more versatility as well.

Perhaps we need to be less invested in buildings, especially when new ideas come about. We have a place like San Francisco, this Archdiocese, other older dioceses, we do have a lot of property and think we should use it well. But if when new ideas come about, maybe we don't have to be so bound by property. Especially with online possibilities—I don't think exclusively online instruction's a good idea, but it could perhaps be supplemented in some way. So we just, I think, need to keep brainstorming for new and creative ideas.

Patrick Reilly, The Cardinal Newman Society

Excellent. Wonderful. Well, Your Excellency, the Cardinal Newman Society and I'm sure many people here have been following you over the years. And the example—you know, we talked earlier about the witness of teachers—you are our chief teacher certainly in the Archdiocese San Francisco, but I'm on the other coast and I've been following you since the beginning and the model and the influence that you have is outstanding. And so we certainly appreciate your example as our chief educator and your example and your strength in continuing to improve the Catholic education here and to bring the faith to as many young people as possible. So thank you and God bless you.