

## We Need ‘Eucharistic Education’

It is in faithful Catholic education that young people learn not to separate their lives and their knowledge from Christ, who enters into every study and every activity.

By Patrick Reilly – June 11, 2022

As the U.S. Bishops prepare to kick-off a three-year revival on devotion and belief in the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, I have been reflecting on how faithful Catholic education is key to the success of this revival. It is the Church’s primary means of evangelization.

Consider Christendom College in Front Royal, Virginia, where the truth that the Eucharist is the “source and summit of Christian life” is taught and lived. While many Catholic colleges spend time and resources on extravagant athletic or arts facilities, yet they neglect the formation and souls of their students, Christendom graduates smart, virtuous, and capable Christians and focused its latest capital campaign on building a magnificent new Christ the King Chapel to glorify God.

Many Christendom students attend Mass every day, and they don’t have to worry about “fitting it in,” because classes and activities are never scheduled during Mass times. There is a refreshing emphasis on beautiful, reverent liturgy in both the Ordinary and Extraordinary Forms. Students have frequent opportunities for Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and Confession. The First Friday Holy Hour is popular, as well as the Eucharistic procession on the Solemnity of Christ the King.

That’s Eucharistic education. It places Christ at the center, with the Mass at the center of campus life, and students are taught to live as bearers of Christ within them.

Sarah Davis, a homeschooled student in Pennsylvania, who will be heading to Christendom College this fall, was drawn to study at a college which “keeps Our Eucharistic Lord at the center of campus life,” according to her award-winning essay submitted to The Cardinal Newman Society. She won a \$5,000 scholarship in the Society’s Essay Scholarship Contest, in which high school students were asked how attending a Catholic college that is strongly devoted to the Eucharist will uniquely impact their religious, moral, intellectual and social formation.

Such a “devotion to the Eucharist, nurtured during college, will be my strong foundation as I continue to grow into the woman God has created me to be,” Davis predicted.

“In front of the Blessed Sacrament,” she wrote, “I will find the strength to conscientiously perform my duties as a student, treat others with true charity, and keep fighting for



sanctity. If our Eucharistic Lord reigns over the college which I attend, I will be challenged to let Him reign over my own heart and life.”

While Sarah will find strong support for her faith at Christendom College — one of several colleges recommended in the Newman Guide and the Register Guide for truly Catholic education — the reality is that many of her peers students go off to college and lose their faith. After college graduation, nearly 75% of Catholics do not believe in the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist.

While this may seem a crisis of dissent, it is more a crisis of education and a failure of the Church. In that same study, about two-thirds (64%) of the young adults who denied the Real Presence admitted to being unsure or unaware of the Church’s teaching on the Eucharist. And 62% actually believed the Church teaches that the Eucharist is just a symbol of Christ.

We greatly need a revival of Eucharistic education. It is in faithful Catholic education that young people learn not to separate their lives and their knowledge from Christ, who enters into every study and every activity. We need this in our Catholic parish schools, lay-run independent schools, homeschools, hybrid programs, and colleges.

Christendom College is a shining example of the Eucharistic education that every Catholic child needs and deserves. It is a great feeling to help Sarah Davis get this sort of education — but the Church should be committed to ensuring it for every baptized child and young adult.