

THE ORDERS OF ST. FRANCIS

In 1209, Pope Innocent III granted approval to the rule of Francis of Assisi and his companions dedicated to preaching peace and living poverty, later known as the First Order of St. Francis. Shortly after, Francis guided Clare of Assisi to enter into a cloistered life of prayer and poverty, whose followers later became the Poor Clares, otherwise, the Second Order of St. Francis. The Third Order of St. Francis, the Brothers and Sisters of Penance, formed soon after to follow the spirit of Francis because their state of life restricted them from the other two orders.



Franciscans became involved in education through the medieval universities in an effort to educate their members for further ministries in the Church. However, the Franciscan presence in education expanded much beyond the scope of universities to become a main apostolate of all three of the orders. By the 1500s, this presence included the future United States where Franciscans served Native American populations, and by 1606 the first Franciscan school was established in St. Augustine, FL, to educate children in “Christian doctrine, reading and writing.”

Today there are thousands of First, Second and Third Order Franciscans serving in a multitude of roles in health care, community services and education. Such is their influence that in the United States alone Franciscans run over 23 affiliated secondary schools, 22 colleges and universities and numerous elementary schools. All in all the Franciscans are a spiritual force in the world today, continuing to manifest the self-giving life of Francis in their daily service to the Gospel.

THE ORDER OF THE VISITATION OF MARY

In 1610 in Annecy, France, St. Francis de Sales and St. Jane Francis de Chantal founded the Order of the Visitation of Mary to welcome women seeking a freer contemplative life that focused on prayer and ministry to the sick and poor. The order grew quickly throughout France and by the 18th century, there were foundations across Europe.



In 1799 three women, under the spiritual guidance of Father Leonard Neale, then President of Georgetown University and later Second Bishop of Baltimore, began a school in Georgetown. The women were attracted to Salesian spirituality and sought a formal union with the order and the rule of the Visitation. The Georgetown community was incorporated into the Order of the Visitation in 1816 by a special indult of Pope Pius VII. The school, now known as Georgetown Visitation Preparatory School, was the first Catholic school for girls established in the original thirteen states.

Today, Visitation sisters operate twelve monasteries in the U.S., four of which run schools for young women. Visitation schools currently thrive in Georgetown, D.C., Brooklyn, NY; St. Louis, MO; and Mendota Heights, MN. All these sisters

continue in their commitment to the Salesian motto: Live Jesus. This simple phrase encapsulates the humility, gentleness, and patience that the Sisters of the Visitation exude, allowing Jesus to live through them and affect the lives of all they meet.

DAUGHTERS AND SISTERS OF CHARITY

Elizabeth Ann Seton arrived at Emmitsburg, MD in 1809 to open a school rooted in character formation and religious education, thus lay the building blocks of American Catholic education. Along with several companions, she founded the Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph's in the tradition of St. Vincent de Paul and St. Louise de Marillac, the first religious community for women founded in the U.S. The sisters began by opening two schools in 1810; St. Joseph's Free School for needy girls, also the first free Catholic school for girls staffed by Sisters in the U.S., and St. Joseph's Academy.



The Sisters then expanded to Philadelphia and assumed responsibility of St. Joseph's Asylum, the first Catholic orphanage in the U.S. Through the next two centuries, the sisters spread throughout North America and around the globe educating and nurturing millions of students in schools, orphanages, nurseries, daycare centers, hospitals and other social service agencies. St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, canonized in 1975, became the first native-born Saint in the U.S. and is also popularly considered the patron of Catholic schools because of her pioneering work in values-based education.

Today, the nearly 4,000 Sisters and Daughters of Charity, joined together in the Sisters of Charity Federation, have served in an estimated 165 elementary schools, 55 high schools, multiple colleges and universities, 66 schools of nursing and many other pre-school, special and adult education programs. Truly, the Daughters and Sisters of Charity embody the spirit of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in their dedicated service to educating humanity through academics and faith for a better future by instilling knowledge and values for the world in which they are destined to live.

SECONDARY SCHOOLS AWARD WINNERS



John Combes, Band Director
Notre Dame High School, Sherman Oaks, CA

For forty-one years, John has fulfilled the mission of Holy Cross to educate the hearts, minds and talents of students while leading them through a very pivotal stage of their life journeys. He began teaching at Notre Dame in 1968 with 28 boys in the band. He has since expanded the program to its present size of 105 young men and women participating in marching band, jazz band, concert band and dance flags. He has developed a program that teaches not only music, but instills in students a multitude of positive character traits.

One of the most apparent benefits to students who work with John is that they learn time management, responsibility and teamwork. Being involved with the band requires commitment and neither John nor the band have missed a football game (home or away) since 1968. The band has been such a source of inspiration for students, parents and staff that John expanded the band's venues to include other school sporting events, rallies, activities and parade competitions. It is John's unwavering command of the band that also inspires parents to accept positions among the Band Boosters for which they volunteer countless hours to support the band's myriad activities. Like the kids, the parents are eager to follow his outstanding leadership.

Carrying on a strong family tradition—John's grandfather was a musician as well as John's son, Chris—John has long been an advocate of validating the merit of the band experience. When establishing the band program, John rooted the program in the ideals and standards established by Blessed Basil Moreau at France's Notre Dame de Sainte Crois. Fr. Basil Moreau had a band at his first school in France in the mid-nineteenth century that set a precedent in Holy Cross education.

It is with great pleasure we honor John, a dynamic, forceful advocate of music education. He has preserved to keep the torch burning for student musicians through his dedication to Catholic education and the development of students through the universal language of music.



**Thomas Wm. Fay, Math, Religion & Latin Teacher
St. Mary's High School, Lancaster, NY**

Thomas Fay has never waived in sharing the teachings of Christ; young people and adults alike in the Diocese of Buffalo have benefited tremendously because of his commitment. Whether he is teaching in the classroom, leading a retreat, assisting the campus ministry team, coaching football, stepping into administrative positions at critical moments or even driving the school bus, Thomas unselfishly and generously gives his time in service to the school community.

As a teacher, Thomas has influenced the lives of thousands of students during his life-long career. He not only teaches students the academics of each subject he mastered, he teaches what it means to be a good caring Christian person. He teaches them how to respect themselves and one another, to use their abilities, and to find their hidden talents. He instructs by example, that we people are simply people, but our God is divine, forgiving and all-loving.

Thomas is a unique and gifted person who knows how to laugh, how to love, and how to serve. He has earned the love and respect of every student that he has taught. Those whom have had the pleasure of knowing Thomas regard him as a teacher, a man, and a friend. Moreover, Thomas' work with the school community and with several parishes and the diocese is a remarkable example of love, service and unwavering faith.

God made the perfect teacher in Christ. According to some of Thomas' colleagues, so many of the qualities that Catholic schoolteachers strive to achieve in their ministry is reflected in Thomas. To quote one colleague, "Somehow, I believe that parts of the same mold God used when creating Jesus looks remarkably similar to St. Mary's Thomas Fay."

Through Thomas' dedicated efforts, teachers, administrators, students, parishioners and more are better prepared to live the Gospel message and create hope for the future. We honor and bless Thomas' exemplary contribution to Catholic education.



**Fr. Gordon Gilsdorf, English Teacher
Notre Dame de la Baie Academy, Green Bay, WI**

For more than five decades, Father Gordon has taught college credit English courses at three different Catholic high schools in the Green Bay area with an emphasis on writing. He is an exemplary man of faith, teaching skill and integrity, and begins each day with Mass in the school chapel. Through his College Credit English program, he has left an indelible mark on his students' ability to write and communicate. As one of his colleagues commented, "He is grounded in faith and carries the Gospel message into his classroom."

Father Gordon had an auspicious start as a secondary school teacher. When he was a young priest happily working in the parish, the Bishop requested that he leave to open up a high school seminary and teach English. Father Gordon argued for an hour and half, trying to persuade the Bishop to change his mind, but to no avail. So, in 1953, Father Gordon began teaching high school English and never looked back.

As a testament to Father Gordon's contributions to Notre Dame Academy, the school recently announced its first-ever endowed chair, established in his name and in recognition of his outstanding contributions to faith and learning. This chair will support the salary of a member of the English faculty who shall be designated The Reverend Gordon Gilsdorf Chair in English. Fundraising for the chair has begun strong and will continue Father Gordon's legacy in the English Department and school community.

During his teaching career, he has published ten books, written contributions to eleven other books, and his poetry is included in four publications by other authors. Having just celebrated the 60th anniversary of his ordination, Father Gordon's contributions to Catholic secondary education in Green Bay are legendary.

Today, Father Gordon is joined by his two siblings, Father Daniel and Sister Marita, who have also dedicated their lives to fulfilling the mission of the Catholic Church. Given Father Gordon and his family's genuine, life-long commitment to leadership, service and direction in Catholic education, it is appropriate that we honor and bless his exemplary contributions.



**Thomas Keating, Principal
Xavier High School, Cedar Rapids, IA**

Thomas Keating's entire professional career has centered on Catholic education. He has served as a classroom teacher, athletic director, volleyball coach and now principal. Thomas takes Xavier High School's mission "to develop the total person in a Catholic environment" seriously. Since joining the Xavier community five years ago, he has expanded the school's retreat opportunities, enhanced student support programs, strengthened the school's relationship with supporting parishes and ensured that the school is first and foremost Catholic.

"Thomas just plain gets it," is the reason why his Superintendent nominated him for the award. Everything he does as a leader links to his belief that a Catholic school is to be first and foremost Catholic. Thomas works hard to encourage students, staff and parents to be held accountable to that standard and understand that strong academics, curriculum programs and student success in college doesn't count for much if the school deviates from its mission. Thus, Thomas is dedicated to operating a school that offers parents and students opportunities to explore and deepen their faith.

In the most trying of times, Tom Keating has drawn strength and inspiration from our Catholic faith in order to effectively and compassionately lead the Xavier community. Thomas lives by the motto, "You never stay the same. You either get better or worse every day." He diligently works to ensure the school is on a constant path toward improvement in all areas. He is not satisfied with the status quo no matter how strong a program is at the school; whether test scores indicate near perfection, an athletic team wins a state championship, or a show choir wins another grand championship, he demands that no one rests on their laurels.

As part of the school's 10th anniversary, Thomas is leading a comprehensive visioning program and is collecting feedback and input from constituents in the school and parish communities. Among the early findings is that the students also "get it" and know how to put their faith into action, which undoubtedly, is one of many lessons that Thomas imparts to his school community.



**Joy Lopez, Director of Instructional Technology
Bishop O'Dowd High School, Oakland, CA**

Joy Lopez is a national leader and expert on technology integration and internet safety at Catholic high schools. She earned that recognition for her commitment to building awareness and understanding of the endless possibilities as well as precautions concerning technology in the school environment. Joy has been instrumental in helping Catholic schools nationwide get on board with technology, including the NCEA. Often, when NCEA receives requests for information regarding instructional technology, safe technology practices, guidelines and more, the answer includes, “Contact Joy Lopez; she’ll know how to guide you further.”

Recently, Joy presented on online learning at a CUE (Computer Using Educators) national conference. During her presentation, she posed the question, “Why not design an online learning program for summer school? Businesses are doing it. Colleges are doing it. Why not see how it might benefit Catholic secondary education?” This sort of attitude and vision embodies the spirit of an excellent and forward-thinking Catholic school instructional leader.

Joy has been a tireless worker, and valuable team member at Bishop O’Dowd. Four years ago, Joy spearheaded the launch of Bishop O’Dowd’s inaugural one-to-one laptop program. With a student body of 1,175, this was no small task. Subsequently, Joy published a book for a national Catholic school audience on the subject.

In addition, Lopez established an online charter high school for at risk youth in Sacramento as part of her doctoral dissertation, which she earned in 2006, and currently teaches as an adjunct professor at the University of San Francisco and St. Mary’s College. Lopez is appropriately known as a “woman of all trades” who on top of all this is the mother of seven wonderful children, the youngest of whom is a senior at Bishop O’Dowd. She even spent several days recently sewing a beautiful wedding dress for her daughter. Given all that Joy has accomplished, it is fitting that we honor her at the NCEA Convention and in the spirit of “Leadership, Direction, and Service” in Catholic education.



**Sr. Marion O'Connor, O.P., Social Studies and Religion Teacher
Regina Dominican High School, Wilmette, IL**

Sister Marion's goal as teacher is "to create a love of history, to experience a love for truth and beauty and to lead students to make value filled decisions." Her teaching career began 60 years ago in Detroit with a classroom crowded with over 70 squirmy six year olds. Sister Marion moved through the ranks of primary, intermediate and junior high before settling in a high school career that is still running strong after 45 years at Regina Dominican High School.

It is in the classroom with her students that Sister Marion has made a difference. Sister Marion loves politics and finds politicians intriguing, which led her to design a seminar on Legal Issues and Criminal Court program. Her teaching is responsible for over 300 women who have gone into the law profession including the rank of federal judge, helping to produce some of Illinois's finest judges and speakers on legal matters. In addition, the Criminal Court field trip for seniors allows students to observe criminal court proceedings first hand and fully understand the importance of making value-filled decisions throughout life. "It is always amazing to us the number of clerks, lawyers and judges who were former students. Everyone knows Sister Marion," remarked one of her co-instructors.

She embodies the Dominican pillar of study taking courses almost every summer, reading the latest historical biography, or clipping an article from the Wall Street Journal for her colleagues and the Principal to read. Over the years, Sister Marion has successfully mentored many new teachers. Her latest protégé is a young man who says it best. "My time at Regina has shown that Sister Marion is a smart and dedicated educator who very much enjoys working with students."

It is not the longevity of her career that makes her deserving of this award; it is the way she fulfills her desire to make history and social studies come alive for her students by infusing values and relevancy into her curriculum. As an Adrian Dominican Sister, teacher, department chair, class moderator and role model, Sr. Marion has been a gift to Catholic high school education.

2010 MICHAEL J. GUERRA LEADERSHIP AWARD



**Dan McKinley, President
PAVE, Milwaukee, MN**

For nineteen years, Michael J. Guerra served the NCEA with exceptional leadership. In celebration of his dedication to Catholic secondary education, the Michael J. Guerra Leadership Award recognizes an individual who has made an outstanding and lasting impact on Catholic secondary education. This year's award goes to Dan McKinley, CEO and President of Partners Advancing Values in Education (PAVE), an independent non-profit foundation that provides educational scholarship opportunities for low income families in Milwaukee.

Committed to serving urban education for many years, prior to launching PAVE, McKinley was the founding Executive Director of the Milwaukee Archdiocesan Education Foundation and served as the Executive Director of the Milwaukee Archdiocesan School Development Consortium, which helped Catholic schools develop better marketing and fundraising strategies.

Under McKinley's visionary leadership since 1992, PAVE has awarded over \$27 million in scholarships to 17,000 students from low-income families with 72% of PAVE scholarship alumni enrolled in college as of 2008. Initiating a Capital Investment Program in 2001, PAVE has invested over \$16 million in school expansion projects and leveraged more than \$70 million in total private investment on the development of high-performing urban schools by the start of 2010.

In a state with one of the nation's largest achievement gaps between black and white students, McKinley has led PAVE so it would effectively respond to the community's immediate and long-term needs and improve low-income student performance. He has achieved this through critical partnerships with higher education, consulting groups, community alliances, capital investors, the Milwaukee Brewers and others. Dan was also instrumental in PAVE's certification as a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI), the first in the nation, to focus exclusively on lending to urban schools.

Although Dan has devoted his professional life to advocating for non-public schools as a group, his personal commitment to Catholic schools is second to none. The story of Messmer High School in inner city Milwaukee illustrates Dan's relentlessly to support Catholic urban schools. In 1984, the Archdiocese announced that the school would close due to declining enrollment and rising costs. Through perseverance and community support, Dan was critical in the school's reopening as an independent, Catholic school. Today, a cohesive network of four schools exists called the Messmer Catholic Schools that adheres to a successful school management model. Nearly every grade in the high school has a waiting list, graduation rates remain high, and the mission to provide high quality, Catholic education lives.