

St. Benedict
Classical Catholic School



Family Handbook
2018-2019

St. Benedict School Prayers

Opening School Prayers

A PRAYER BY SAINT BENEDICT FOR SEEKERS OF FAITH

Gracious and Holy Father,
give us the wisdom to discover You,
the intelligence to understand You,
the diligence to seek after You,
the patience to wait for You,
eyes to behold You,
a heart to meditate upon You,
and a life to proclaim You,
through the power of the Spirit of Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

A PRAYER ATTRIBUTED TO ST. IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA

Dearest Lord, teach me to be generous;
teach me to serve You as You deserve;
to give and not to count the cost,
to fight and not to heed the wounds,
to toil and not to seek for rest,
to labor and not to ask for reward
save that of knowing I am doing Your Will.
Through Christ Our Lord,
Amen.

Closing School Prayer

We give You thanks, merciful God,
for the instruction and direction which we have received.
Grant us Your grace that we may remember this lesson
and carry it into action, for Your glory and our eternal salvation.
In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
Amen.

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*Prepare for life with seriousness and diligence.
Always remember that only if one builds,
as Saint Paul says,
on the foundation which is Jesus Christ,
will one be able to construct something really great and lasting.*

*With the liveliness that is characteristic of your age,
with the generous enthusiasm of your young hearts,
walk towards Christ.*

*He alone is the solution to all your problems.
He alone is the way, the truth, and the life;
He alone is the real salvation of the world;
He alone is the hope of mankind.*

Pope St. John Paul II
Speech to Children, Guadalajara, Mexico

Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to the third school year of St. Benedict Classical Catholic School! It is an honor to continue this unique partnership as we strive to educate our children in a truly Catholic and Classical manner. Our focus remains forming faithful young adults, instilled with wisdom and virtue. When we better understand the classical method of schooling, we will easily see how this type of education is the surest way to reach our desired end. Our school motto touts the goal proudly- Wisdom, Faith, and Virtue! (Sapientia, Fides, Virtus)

Douglas Wilson, in *Recovering the Lost Tools of Learning*, writes “In Acts 14:1, we are told, “At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue. There they spoke so effectively that a great number of Jews and Gentiles believed.” This is what should be sought in Christian schools, not just teaching, but effective teaching. Christian content alone is insufficient. It must be presented in a certain way, and that way cannot be reduced to technique. Nevertheless, God has graciously made it possible to bring people the truth by how the truth is presented.”

We know he is right, that’s why we are here. That certain way, is classical education. But do we really know what we mean when we say ‘classical education’? Our senses perceive ‘classical’, but most of us have not been classically educated, do we really know what it is? Could we explain it or defend it well to someone else? We want to avoid descriptions which imply that we simply teach Latin in addition to other courses... So what should we say?

In studying how to best provide a truly classical education, I came across an article written by Paul Schaeffer (Director of the Schools Division at Memoria Press). I’d like share some relevant points from that article. It’s important that we all understand the how and why... We need to understand the very real way in which all of the hard work (by both faculty and students), over the past two years, has brought us to a place where we can offer this best sort of schooling – classical.

Mr. Schaeffer suggests that we follow Aristotle’s lead – “Aristotle states in his book, the *Physics*, that you know what something is when you know its four causes: the formal cause, the material cause, the efficient cause, and the final cause. The formal cause is the thing’s shape or soul. The material cause is what it is made of. The efficient cause is who or what makes it, and the final cause is what its purpose is.” Using this classical formula, we can define in a clear and complete way, that which is classical education.

Let’s begin with the material cause. In our classical school, “the material we are working with is the child himself.” From the very beginning of our young school, we have consistently stated that we have only one aim, the proper formation of the child. We know that “though books and knowledge are crucial, they are (only) a means” and...any other material cause would reduce the education we provide to a set of rules or a mere “method” to follow.

In a classical classroom, we can see the importance of the experienced teacher, leading his/her students in their pursuit of wisdom and virtue. So while the curriculum and texts chosen are excellent, we know the efficient cause. The teacher is the efficient cause. He/she is the one molding and shaping, educating the child. Without firm direction and instruction we would ultimately lose the form we desire.

“The formal cause then, is the ideal the teacher has in his mind of what he wants the unformed student to become.” As we already know our focus is on educating/forming the whole child, body and soul, we can easily recognize our ideal of form (formal cause): virtuous young men and women, armed with true wisdom, because they will have mastered the art of learning. They will obtain this mastery, because they will study the great works of literature and study truths spoken by the best minds of Western Civilization. They will know how to think, and what (the right thing is) to do. Because we have chosen the classical tradition, we will not be simply teaching your children excellent material, but truly developing their love of learning through immersion in the lost liberal arts. We hope to recover that lost heritage of the great books, all the treasures found in the forgotten culture of Rome, and in her language (and what a great language it is!).

I would be remiss if I didn't mention the essential role played by the study of Latin. Latin teaches our students mental discipline. It's rigorous and systematic. Latin also transmits that essential cultural literacy I just spoke about. As I have encouraged the entire faculty, I encourage each of you to begin a study of Latin. As the language of Western civilization, it incorporated the best ideas of the ancient Greeks, of Romans, and after Rome's conversion, put all of these into the service of the Church and Truth. This gives Latin 'new life' as the language of the Christian faith for over a thousand years, and a critical place in classical education.

As we delve into a better understanding of classical education, we can see how our final cause, the end we hope to achieve, can be only one thing. Our school mission/goal is perfectly supported by the education model we have chosen! The final cause is simply and elegantly- for our students “To be in the image and likeness of God, He who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.” Stated another way, our final end is to raise people, who will know, love, and, serve God in this life, and become Saints, happy with Him in eternity. We honor Our Creator and His plan by teaching students to be able to recognize the truth (wisdom), and walk faithfully in the Way (virtue). “We recognize that God...is the prime mover behind the teacher and working directly in the child.” We can joyfully remind ourselves of that motto - Sapientia, Fides, Virtus!

Classical education is something that we can now clearly define. We have a child (material cause), taught by a teacher (efficient cause), to think and speak well via studying Latin, great books... the liberal arts (formal cause), for the greater glory of God (final cause)! This shared definition or understanding of what classical education is will benefit our entire school community. Mr. Schaeffer eloquently puts it-- “Classical education is a teacher forming a child into someone skilled in the liberal arts (and steeped in the Great Books) in order to instill wisdom and virtue.”

It is my hope, that each of us will continue to grow in our understanding and appreciation of classical education during this academic year. As we work to bring these beautiful subjects alive for your children, rest assured that we will be doing everything we can to achieve that final cause.

Kathleen A. Tully

In Christ, through Mary,

I encourage you to read Paul Schaeffer's excellent article here:

<https://www.memoriapress.com/articles/the-four-causes-of-classical-education/>

Saint Benedict Classical Catholic School

SAPIENTIA ~ FIDES ~ VIRTUS

2018-19 HANDBOOK

*“Be not conformed to this world,
but be transformed by the renewal of your mind
that you may discern what is the will of God,
what is good, pleasing and perfect.”*

Romans 12:2

The Mission and Philosophy of St. Benedict Classical Catholic School

The Mission of St. Benedict Classical Catholic School

In partnership with parents, and guided by the Catholic Faith, we seek to educate students to the highest standards of the classical tradition, so that they may grow in knowledge, wisdom, and the love of Our Lord; to incorporate our students into the wisdom of two thousand years of Catholic thought, history, culture, and arts, so that they might understand themselves and their world in the light of the truth; and to enable students to use their gifts in the service of others, and for the glory of Christ and his Church.

St. Benedict's was established with the intention of providing "true liberty" for parents in the choice of a school to aid them in the education of their children. The school provides a Catholic education in the classical tradition. Desiring to be found in "the heart of the Church," and providing for the formation of students in an atmosphere free from dissent of its teachings, the members of the board of directors and all faculty and staff of the school take an oath of fidelity to the Magisterium, and sign a profession of faith in the Catholic Church. St. Benedict's is dedicated primarily to serving practicing Catholic families, as well as others who sincerely desire to participate in the total curriculum.

Excellence in the academic formation of its students is enhanced by small class size, allowing for individual attention and the recognition of the uniqueness of each student. Desiring to provide a Christ-like atmosphere within which education can flourish, St. Benedict's sets prayer, not as an isolated activity, but rather as one that permeates the entire life of the school. In like manner, faculty and students will conduct themselves at all times as proper ladies and gentlemen. Discipline and respectful obedience to proper authority will be expected of all. In whatever is studied, spoken or accomplished, students, faculty, and parents will conduct themselves in a manner consistent with authentic Catholic living.

St. Benedict's was founded by parents, and its success depends on the support of the parents of its students, as well as that of the community. This support will come in many ways, notwithstanding financial support. Committed to making the school affordable, inasmuch as it is able, to all families who sincerely desire its education and formation, the school must have the financial support of those who believe in its mission.

The goal of education at St. Benedict's is to produce "...the true Christian...the supernatural man who thinks, judges and acts constantly and consistently in accordance with right reason illumined by the supernatural light of the example and teaching of Christ." (Pius XI)

Our emphasis on academics, important as it is, comes after the proper spiritual formation of each student. Our core objectives are:

1. **Spiritual Growth:** guiding children to a deeper understanding of the Catholic Faith and love for God. We will foster love for one another, and the whole world, with charity in truth.
2. **Intellectual Growth:** instill a love of learning while developing critical thinking and effective communication skills. Encourage the pursuit of excellence in thought and deed. We will teach children how to think, so that they can make right judgments and prudent choices. Through a solid, classical education informed by faith, they will know what to do when faced with difficult decisions. This is accomplished using the teaching objectives of self-guided activity, mastery, and formation.
3. **Social Growth:** as fellow Christians, we will encourage healthy friendships, charity and kindness toward all people, tolerance of our differences, as well as good counsel and fraternal correction when necessary. We will focus on service to others as we do unto others as we would have done to us.

Parents—The Primary Educators

The *Declaration on Christian Education (Gravissimum educationis)* of the Second Vatican Council teaches that parents are the first and foremost educators of their children, and that "their role as educators is so decisive that scarcely anything can compensate for their failure in it." Furthermore, we find this same thinking expressed in Pope John Paul II's Apostolic Exhortation on the family, *Familiaris consortio*, in which he states that "the right and duty of parents to give education is essential...it is original and primary with regard to the educational role of others...it is irreplaceable and inalienable and therefore incapable of being entirely delegated to others or usurped by others." Thus acknowledging these truths, St. Benedict's aids parents in the formation and education of their children based on the principle of subsidiarity. It does so by providing an atmosphere that maintains and fosters the Christian spiritual, intellectual, moral, and physical formation that the students receive at home. The school exists primarily to form the intellect of the student, and, in so doing, aids parents in those tasks of education that they are not able to completely fulfill on their own.

The End of Christian Education

St. Benedict's philosophy is based on the entire tradition of the Catholic Church, including the documents of the Second Vatican Council and all papal pronouncements on Catholic education. Having been given the command by Christ to "go forth and teach," it is to the Church that we look to gain an understanding of the purpose and the ultimate end of education.

Men and women were created by God in His image and likeness and destined to spend eternity with Him in heaven. This is man's ultimate end, and no amount of earthly knowledge or goods alone can satisfy his heart or bring true happiness to his world. St. Augustine so beautifully expressed this deep desire of all mankind when he said, "Thou didst create us, O Lord, for Thyself, and our heart is restless till it rest in Thee." Man yearns for something greater and seeks to fulfill this higher calling by means of education. If any education does not seek God as the "first principle and last end of the whole universe" then it easily falls into error, as we read in Pope Pius XI's encyclical *On Christian Education (Divini illius magistri)*. Pius XI continues:

It is therefore as important to make no mistake in education, as it is to make no mistake in the pursuit of the last end, with which the whole work of education is intimately and necessarily connected. In fact, since education consists essentially in preparing man for what he must be and for what he must do here below, in order to attain the sublime end for which he was created, it is clear that there can be no true education which is not wholly directed to man's last end, and that in the present order of Providence, since God revealed Himself to us in the Person of His Only Begotten Son, who alone is 'the way, the truth, and the life,' there can be no ideally perfect education which is not Christian education.

Thus the environment and the curriculum of St. Benedict's is designed to ensure the proper formation and education of the human person in light of his ultimate goal, which is a life lived to the greater glory of God and eternal life lived with God in heaven.

Classical Education—The Pursuit of Excellence

In order to live a life “for the greater glory of God,” human persons are called by Christ to go forth into the world and to become “as it were the saving leaven of the human family” (*Declaration on Christian Education*). The Christian, then, must be ready to enter the world in which he lives prepared to “promote effectively the welfare of the earthly city...and to serve the advancement of the human family.” Pope Pius XI states that: “The true Christian does not renounce the activities of his life, he does not stunt his natural faculties; but he develops and perfects them by coordinating them with the supernatural.” Called by God to bring peace, justice, and truth into the society in which he lives, thus fashioning a world more in tune with the dignity of the human person, the Christian graduate must be educated in excellence. The study of that which is excellent in human attainments will bear witness to truth, and thus to God. Authentic classical education, or liberal education, informs students with the most excellent intellectual accomplishments in the order of nature (i.e., the liberal arts, sciences, and fine arts) and thus disposes them to the crowning intellectual accomplishments of those steeped in grace (i.e., sacred doctrine or theology).

In keeping with the perennial philosophy and theology that is the intellectual heritage of every Christian, St. Benedict’s seeks to carry on the living tradition of authentic Christian classical education. Grounded in the liberal arts, the school teaches its students how to think like the great thinkers that produced our civilization. Education must not simply seek to impart knowledge of the various disciplines, but more importantly, it should give students the tools whereby they can live a full life, gaining knowledge on their own. These tools will include the ability to reason from premise to conclusion, to distinguish, to articulate well, and to persuade. These educational methods, which have produced the outstanding men and women who have fashioned our world in the first and second Christian millennia, surely will continue to produce graduates who are capable of excellence in all arenas of life, fully armed to meet the challenges of the third millennium.

I. The Curriculum

“Human happiness lies in the perfection of our highest faculties.”

St. Thomas Aquinas

The function of education, in cooperation with the student, is twofold: 1) to seek the truth and to be formed by it in every human capacity (i.e., the spiritual, intellectual, aesthetic, social, emotional, and physical); and 2) to fulfill God’s plan for the student, which is to achieve his potential as a child of God created to glorify Him and to inherit everlasting life.

The aim of the St. Benedict curriculum is to educate the “whole person” by cultivating within the student the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity; the moral virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance; and the intellectual virtues of knowledge, understanding, wisdom, right judgment, and love of beauty.

St. Benedict’s presents to the student a unified view of knowledge by means of an integrated curriculum. The integration of subjects in the curriculum means that a relationship between one subject and another, and between all the subjects and the educational aims of the school is established, so that an ordered and unified view of knowledge is made possible for the student.

The school’s curriculum is integrated horizontally by the study of history, with the Incarnation as the pivotal and central event of that history.

The curriculum is integrated vertically by the study of Catholic truth. The study of the Catholic Faith can be said to be the “supreme integrating principle” of the school’s curriculum because it is reflected in the treatment of every subject. It becomes the frame of reference for viewing, interpreting, and evaluating every subject studied. The Catholic Faith, through its presence, influence, and illumination, gives order, unity, and intelligibility to the entire curriculum.

The Aim of Liberal Arts Education

The term *liberal arts* is frequently used to describe the curricula of schools and colleges, but it is a term that often lends itself to misunderstanding. Liberal arts education, or simply liberal education, does not refer to the liberal-conservative political divide. In the case of liberal arts education, the word *liberal* is used in its original Latin meaning of *free*. The liberal arts curriculum is designed to produce a student who is truly freed from the erroneous opinions of others and the political agendas of the day in order to seek and embrace the truth.

In every subject...the aim of liberal arts education is to give the student the principles of the subject studied in such a way that he will be able to make right judgments about that area of reality. That is why this kind of education is called 'liberal' education.

Liberal means 'free,' a liberally educated man is a free man because he is able to direct his own life and is not dependent upon the judgments or understanding of others.

(Laura M. Berquist, *Designing Your Own Classical Curriculum*, 3rd Ed.)

A. The Classical Curriculum

A classical education embraces excellence in human achievement and holds this before students as a model. It is an education in excellence. Such exposure to excellence gives witness to goodness, beauty, and truth, and thereby to God, and awakens in the student the deepest sensibilities to all that is noble and good. The classics of literature, art, and music endure and remain to inspire and to educate those who study and absorb their lessons. The classics document humanity's search for the truth; this search finds its complete fulfillment in the Incarnation of the Son of God.

The classical curriculum:

1. Is suited to the full development of the student according to his needs and abilities;
2. Recognizes, in its choice of subjects and experiences, a hierarchy of values with certain subjects having more intrinsic value than others and, thus, contributing more to the attainment of the educational aims of the school;
3. Provides for the progressive mastery of material that constantly challenges the developing abilities of the student;
4. Is integrated through the coordination of several subjects and activities with a common philosophy permeating the whole; and
5. Promotes self-discipline in the student as exhibited in conduct, study, memorization, thinking, expression, and imagination.

B. Three Objectives of Teaching

The three traditionally proven objectives of sound pedagogy are:

- 1 *The Principle of Guided Self-Activity.* Implicit in all teaching is the principle of student self-activity. There can be no learning without the full cooperation and persistent effort of the student. Private study on the part of the student is essential and is the primary means by which learning occurs. Class time alone will not suffice when the aim is the formation of intellectual and moral habits. The role of the teacher is to elicit the active cooperation of the student in learning, to create the mental situation, and to stimulate the activity of the student. The classroom time is both a preparation for and a recitation of what occurred during the student's private study. Only with the student's persevering application to study can mastery be achieved.
- 2 *Mastery.* One of the most effective motivations for the student in study is the growing sense of mastery that is acquired in completing progressively more difficult material. In this way, the intellect is expanded and the student gains increasing self-confidence. This, in turn, motivates the natural operation of the mind and draws it onward in its search for truth. Such mastery enables the student to understand and to trust his own process of rational thought.
- 3 *Formation.* The final objective is formation, not information. While the acquisition of information is a large part of learning, it must always be seen as a means to an end. The end is to form the student's mind to think, reason, express, and convince. This is done by means of the acquisition of information in the various subjects studied. The formation of intellectual and moral habits (the formation of Christian character) is the end toward which all subjects and activities of the school are directed.

C. Academic Skills

The student will acquire the following skills by means of the curriculum:

- Correctness in grammar and spelling;
- Logical clarity in written and oral expression;
- Accuracy in mathematics;
- Sharpness of memory;
- Legibility and neatness in penmanship;
- Organization in studies.

D. The Subjects of the Curriculum

1. Primary School: Grades K-2

The purpose of the primary school is to ground students in the fundamentals of reading and to form their tastes in the appreciation of good literature and beautiful art and music. The focus is on phonics, basic numeracy and arithmetic, award-winning classic picture books, and enrichment through the arts.

Primary School Courses:

Kindergarten	1 st Grade	2 nd Grade
Recitation	Recitation	Recitation
Phonics	Phonics	Phonics
Numbers	Math	Math
Faith Formation	Faith Formation	Faith Formation
Literature	Reading	Reading
Copybook	Copybook	Copybook
Enrichment Activities	Cursive	Cursive
	Spelling	Spelling
		Latin

Several of these courses beg for explanation:

- a. **Recitation.** A student of classical education aims for mastery of his learning, and there is no better assessment tool for promoting mastery than recitation. When a student is required to memorize, then recite a body of knowledge, he truly owns that material; he is master of it. Recitation, whether individually or as a class, fosters not only mastery, but confidence, poise, and the satisfaction of intellectual accomplishment. All classes of the lower school (grades K-6) regularly employ recitation, and the practice continues, though less frequently, into the higher grades. Some may argue that the recitation of cumulative learning is a waste of class time better spent on learning more subjects, but the Latin phrase *multum non multa*, meaning “much, not many” describes the classical approach. It is better to learn fewer things well (much) than more things (many) only cursorily.

Students in the primary grades are especially sponge-like in their aptitude for retention and recall. For this reason, grades K-2 have specific class time each day designated for memorization and recitation. In the form of rhymes, songs, and well-crafted lists, students gain mastery of facts that will serve as the groundwork for deeper study and critical thinking in later grades. As recitation will continue to be a key component of pedagogy in higher grades of the classical school, the devotion to it in the primary grades “primes the pump” for its later use.

- b. **Copybook.** In the Copybook class, students read a Bible story and copy and memorize a verse related to that story. Sometimes the copy work is a poem. The purpose is to practice penmanship while learning beautiful and meaningful verses and internalizing good language patterns.
- c. **Enrichment Activities.** These include activities in connection with read-aloud books, social studies and science lessons, studies of artists and composers, and poetry lessons.

- d. **Latin.** *Prima Latina* is a gentle introduction to the Latin language. Children are introduced to some grammatical forms, but the focus is on vocabulary, derivatives, practical Latin phrases, and prayers and songs.

Assignment Book (optional)

Students in grade 2 are encouraged, but not required, to keep an assignment book for work they will do at home. Lessons to be completed at home and notes about upcoming tests and quizzes will be written on the board for students to copy.

2. Grammar School: Grades 3-8

Grammar school begins the formal classical education. Although students have been introduced to Latin in second grade, in grammar school they study it with more rigor. The subjects of classical studies, geography/history, science, and composition are all new in first-year grammar school.

Grammar School Courses:

3rd-8th Grade
Math
Faith Formation (Bible, Saints, Catechism)
Latin
Literature
Classical Studies
Geography/History
Science
Composition

Again, we offer additional explanation for some courses:

- a. **Classical Studies.** Western Civilization is built on three cultures: those represented by Athens, Rome, and Jerusalem. In order to understand ourselves, we need to understand the cultures that most influenced our civilization. That is why we study Greece and Rome as well as Bible and Church history.
- b. **Composition.** The writing course is based on the ancient Greek system of teaching composition, the progymnasmata. The progymnasmata is a series of 14 writing exercises that teaches students the art of communication and prepares them for the study of rhetoric.

Cursive Requirement

Students in grades 3 and higher are required to use cursive in all of their assignments. Students who do not yet know cursive should use either *New American Cursive* (grades 3 &4) or *Teach Yourself Cursive* (grades 5 and up) during the fall semester and begin writing their assignments in cursive during the spring semester.

Assignment Book

Students in grades 3 and up are required to keep an assignment book for homework. Lessons to be completed at home, as well as notes about upcoming quizzes and tests, will be written on the board for students to copy. As students mature, they will be expected to become completely responsible for copying down assignments and reminders for upcoming tests. Students in 5th grade and above should be able to complete a good portion of their work at home with decreasing assistance as the year progresses.

3.High School: Grades 9-12

The formative function of education is to develop, discipline, and direct the capacities of the human person. This is

achieved when the mind assimilates, with and through subject-matter, definite ideas, attitudes, methods, habits, and principles. In handling subjects, this formative function of knowledge is the aim.

- a. Faith Formation: The faith formation curriculum presents the beauty, logic, and saving truth of the Catholic Faith by the study of the following: Catholic doctrine; the seven Sacraments and the history of the Church; the primacy of St. Peter and the role of the Magisterium; the Bible; papal encyclicals and the Fathers of the Church; the teaching of the Church Councils; and the lives of the Saints. In addition, the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, the Sacrament of Penance, prayer, and days of recollection will be integrated into the class schedule on a regular basis.
- b. History: History is studied “at its deepest level as salvation history” (Pope John Paul II). The student is led through the course of human history from the classical world to early Christianity through the flowering of Christian civilization to the modern world. Memory is broadened and perfected through the retention of “the four facts of history:” persons, places, dates, and events.
- c. English: Critical and aesthetic reading of literature, literary analysis, vocabulary, rules of grammar, composition, and research skills are the emphases. The Classics determine the scope and content of the literature program at all levels. Extensive reading and written expression form the basis of the curriculum.
- d. Languages: Latin study is required of all students beginning in second grade. Latin merits a special place in a Catholic curriculum given its rich heritage in Western civilization and its privileged place in the life of the Church. Latin study leads the student to an understanding of the logic of language, and Latin roots are the basis of some 60% of English vocabulary. Ancient Greek and a modern language may be added to the curriculum in a future year.
- e. Mathematics: The realm of mathematics is primarily in the mind; it strengthens the ability of the student to handle abstraction.
- f. Science: The science curriculum helps the student develop an appreciation of the order and beauty of creation and introduces the student to the scientific disciplines.
- g. The Fine Arts: The art and culture of Western civilization has flourished under the patronage of the Catholic Church because it views beauty as the “attractive radiance of the truth” of Divine Revelation. In future years, St. Benedict’s plans to integrate the study of the Fine Arts throughout the school’s curriculum as a complementary and vital part of the student’s education. Students will be exposed to the masterpieces in art, music, and architecture which comprise Catholic culture through the centuries. The students will learn the classical criteria for beauty and how beauty in art is at the same time an expression of Divine beauty and a vehicle to lead the mind and heart to God. The entire student body will form a choir for liturgical singing and will learn pieces from the great treasury of Catholic music, including Gregorian chant, as well as other types of music.

E. Expectations for Homework/Private Study

Diligent and consistent private study is the key to learning. Homework, such as reading, memorization, practice of newly learned material, writing, research, etc., is required daily. There is simply no way around this “truth.” There is a direct proportion between study time well spent and results. There are no short cuts.

Why do many students fail to work to their greatest potential? It is because they do not study effectively. Reasons for this include: not knowing what study means, not having the proper motive for study, not overcoming one’s laziness, not knowing how to study, or not having the right atmosphere for study.

To study means to apply one’s entire self to the search for truth and to be formed by the truth in one’s intellect and will. It is often easier and more fun to study a subject you are interested in; however, the best way to become interested in something is to study it. Study is hard work and, yet, as one acquires good study habits, he comes to experience the unique joy and satisfaction that only study can bring.

Frequently, the reasons for study are not adequate motivations: “I don’t want to fail;” “I don’t want to be tutored after school;” “I must get into *that* college;” “I don’t want to look stupid.” Rather, the very best and most effective motive for study is simply: “I must pursue the truth of the subject matter before me because this is participation in the perfection God intends for me. I must know God and His works first, so that I can love and serve Him.” Therefore, the traditional motto, *Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam*, or simply *A.M.D.G.* (for the Greater Glory of God), serves as the highest motive for study.

1. Homework/Private Study Expectations by Grade Level

The school week begins on Tuesday. School is in session on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday. The required material for the week will be covered during in-session school hours and at home on Thursdays. Monday is the primary day for homework and study. Students should use Monday to complete any assignments given during the previous week (in all subject areas) and to prepare for the upcoming week's tests and quizzes.

- b. **Grades K-2:** Teachers will assign work to be accomplished at home on Mondays and Thursdays. Teachers will notify students of required assignments in class. They may also email assignments to parents to ensure homework expectations are communicated clearly and completely.
 - i. Little to no homework will be assigned, with the exception of math-fact drills and Latin review for second graders.
- c. **Grades 3-8:** Teachers will assign work to be accomplished at home on Mondays and Thursdays. Teachers will notify students of required assignments in class. They may also email assignments to parents to ensure homework expectations are communicated clearly and completely. The following subjects are taught during school when classes are in session: Latin, Math, Science, Geography/History, Classical Studies, Literature, Composition, and Faith Formation.
 - i. Math and Latin study (approximately 15 minutes per night for each subject) should be completed daily at home. There may also be some review work for the one-day subjects taught at the school (Faith Formation, Geography/History, Science, Classical).
 - ii. Monday is the primary day for homework and study. Students in grades 3 through 8 should use Monday to complete any assignments given during the previous week (in all subject areas) and to prepare for the upcoming week's tests and quizzes.
- d. High School: Students should expect a full 6-hour school day at home on Mondays and Thursdays. In addition, there may be true "homework" in the form of essays or review for tests.

2. Study Habits

Since education is largely a self-motivated activity by which one not only learns important material but also learns how to learn, it is necessary that the student cultivate responsible, efficient, and productive study habits.

The responsible student will...

1. Bring notebook, paper, pen, pencil, and all necessary material to class;
2. Pay attention in class, listen well, take copious notes, and participate;
3. Ask questions when he does not understand;
4. Plan his work and use daily private study time productively;
5. Make sure he writes down and understands assignments before leaving class;
6. Strive to do his best, never satisfied with "just getting by";
7. Pray for success.

F. The Grading Scale

Evaluation of the student's academic performance is reported at the end of each semester using the grading scale below. Numerical grades are used on the report card and permanent record. Letter grade equivalents are shown below.

Grading Scale	
Range	Letter
98-100	A+
94-97	A
90-93	A-
87-89	B+
84-86	B
80-83	B-
77-79	C+
74-76	C
70-73	C-
67-69	D+
69-60	D
60-63	D-
59 or less	F

G. Grades and Report Cards

Grades are given to help parents identify in what subjects their children are succeeding and where they need more help; the school will not keep track of grade point averages or institute an honor roll this year. Report cards are issued at the end of each semester to assist parents in record keeping. The attached school year calendar indicates planned dates for release of mid-term grades and parent teacher conferences.

H. Parent Conferences

Each semester, parent conferences will be offered to interested parents. The purpose of these conferences is to provide parents and teachers the opportunity to discuss the student's academic progress. The conferences are optional; however, a teacher who is concerned about a student's performance will request a meeting with parents as needed.

I. Recitation Day

At the end of the academic year, the students will have mastered several skills, of which they should be very proud! Many classes will have memorized epic poems and excerpts from classical works of literature and music. There will be a recitation day scheduled for families to come and be delighted by the excellent accomplishments of the students.

II. The Formation of Christian Character

“The ordinary acts we practice every day at home are of more importance to the soul than their simplicity might suggest.”

St. Thomas More

The uniquely Catholic and Classical nature of our school provides a wonderful opportunity to cultivate a distinct environment or school culture. Our Faith in the Eucharist compels us to revere and celebrate our Lord’s Real Presence as He informs and affects each and every school day. He is our ultimate teacher and His image and likeness can be seen and felt in every student at St. Benedict’s. Our actions show the world that we are His. Our school closely integrates the Catholic school environment we have created, with the warm and intimate atmosphere of family life. Our teachers, as individuals and as a community, strive to demonstrate Catholic values in their speech and actions. They show respect toward one another and toward their students. Through this daily witness, the students will come to appreciate the shared love for each and every person.

In addition to educating the student’s intellect, St. Benedict Classical Catholic School assists parents in the crucial task of training the will. It is important to recall that the root of a person’s moral failure is in the will, not the intellect, for it is by use of the will that a person chooses his actions. Therefore, any education that fails to form the student’s will, fails the student.

When the will is trained so that the person makes choices based upon solid Christian principles, rather than upon mere impulse, emotion, passions, and the like, this person has developed a truly Christian character. This is our goal. Character is defined as the combination of distinctive qualities belonging to an individual, in particular, the acquisition of moral strength through training and self-discipline. Character is demonstrated when a person does the right things for the right reasons. By forming a Christian character, students take confident possession of themselves, building their lives on the rock solid foundation of truth and principle, rather than on the perilously shifting sands of relativism and opinion.

The development of character is affected by the individual’s temperament which, if allowed to have its way and left untrained in the formative years, results in weak character or in the lack of character. Such temperament shows itself as inconsistency, impulsiveness, obstinacy, self-will, and the absence of rational discernment and self-control. Indeed, the work of the student is the work of mastering and governing the self. As Pope St. John Paul II said, “Self-mastery is the sign of maturity.”

Obviously, the battle for self-conquest is the battle of a lifetime. As Catholics we are thankful for the grace of the Sacraments, especially the Holy Eucharist and Penance, that can convert the weaknesses of our character toward the good. Indeed, the regular reception of these Sacraments instills in the student a holy discipline: the habit of self-examination, the truthful admission of wrong, and the promise of amendment of life. It is in this way that the young person is adorned with the virtues.

At St. Benedict’s, the student will be encouraged to develop the qualities of integrity, diligence, steadfastness, reliability, perseverance, reverence, and self-sacrifice.

A. Student Discipline

*“Exercise self-discipline, for you are
God’s athlete; the prize is immortality
and eternal life....”*

St. Ignatius of Antioch

The word *discipline* comes from the Latin word which means *to learn*. The disciples are those who learn from and follow Christ, the Teacher. The training of the mind, like the training of the body, requires self-discipline. A disciplined student is a responsible and successful student. It is fundamental to the philosophy of St. Benedict Classical Catholic School that the atmosphere in school be disciplined, quiet, and orderly, that is, conducive to learning. Student cooperation and self-control are expected in order to uphold the dignity of the academic setting and the spiritual nature of the school. Students conduct themselves at all times in a manner that reflects favorably upon themselves as Christian boys and girls, ladies and gentlemen.

Sacred Scripture teaches that self-discipline is a means of sanctification. “So then, have your minds ready for action....Be obedient to God, do not allow your lives to be shaped by those desires you had when you were still ignorant. Instead, be holy in all your behavior, just as God who called you is holy. For it is written, ‘You shall be

holy, because I am holy” (1 Peter 1: 13-16). Scripture also shows us that the responsibility and authority to discipline come from God. “Son, do not disdain the discipline of the Lord, nor reject His correction. For whom the Lord loves, He corrects, and He disciplines the son he favors” (Proverbs 3:11-

12). And, again, Scripture reveals the fruit of discipline. “At the time, all discipline seems a cause not for joy but for pain; yet later it brings the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who are trained in it” (Hebrews 13:11).

In order for our children to develop a truly Christian character, discipline at home and at school must be compatible, consistent, and unified. As parents and those who stand in place of parents (*in loco parentis*) during the school day, we know that love, indeed, is at the heart of all discipline and that correction is an essential part of the firmness of love. Our vocation as parents and as teachers requires that we teach our children to observe all that God has commanded, i.e. the Ten Commandments and the Laws of the Church. We do this both by word and example. The enthusiastic support of parents for the rules of the school is essential for the effective education of their children.

B. Student Code of Conduct

Teachers and administration recognize that maintaining a well-disciplined classroom is key to learning. We believe “*knowledge without virtue is a dangerous thing,*” therefore encouraging virtuous behavior is as important as encouraging excellence in math and grammar. Student behavior, attitude, and physical disposition should contribute positively to the classroom environment and SBCCS’ culture of excellence in character. To that end students are expected to uphold the SBCCS *Student Code of Conduct*, printed below. The Code of Conduct exists to help train students in moral virtue, but remember that moral development is not guaranteed by reciting rules. In day to day classroom instruction, teachers model the virtues, offer opportunities for students to imitate virtue, and both praise and correct students in their moral development.

1. We cheerfully and promptly obey the authority under which we are placed.
2. We do not argue or negotiate.
3. We love and honor one another.
4. We give encouragement to each other.
5. We do not point out the shortcomings of others in order to build ourselves up.
6. We tell the truth.
7. We do not disrespect the classroom and teacher by passing notes or otherwise interrupting.
8. We do not spread rumors or gossip.
9. We will not make excuses for our wrong actions but will admit them.
10. We avoid cliques, clubs, or games that exclude others.
11. When others are sorry, we forgive them.
12. When others are sad, we comfort them.
13. When we have work to do, we do it without complaining.
14. We treat one another with respect and patience.
15. Stand up when any religious priest, brother, or sister enters the room. Students will also stand and greet school administrators when they enter the room. At the beginning of the school day, students will greet their teacher. When another adult enters, stop what you are doing and greet your visitor (s).
16. Come to school on time and dressed in your uniform and remain in your uniform for the entire school day. Students are not to change out of their uniforms during lunch/recess time.
17. When leaving the gym or classroom, students will clean up after themselves, and other students. Students will not leave behind any messes, simply because they did not create them. After using the gym, any balls and equipment should be put away. At the end of the day, classrooms should be clean and tidy. This includes chairs pushed in, trash picked up, items on shelves should be neat and orderly. Out of respect for the rest of the school community, always try to leave a place better than you found it.
18. Avoid talking in the hallways during school hours.
19. Never run in the building hallways or classrooms.
20. Offer to help carry books, packages, etc., for your teachers, or anyone else who has their hands full unless you are managing your own heavy load.

C. The School Uniform

One's appearance is the first statement one makes about one's identity. It speaks volumes. As the body reflects the soul, so one's dress reflects one's attitudes. St. Benedict's students dress modestly and in good taste. Students are always neat, clean, and well groomed while at school and at all school-related functions.

The following will constitute the required uniform dress for students of St. Benedict Classical Catholic School:

1. All Grade levels:

- a. Boots will be allowed during the winter months period from November 13, 2018 - March 8th, 2019. If boots are required outside of this time frame, please ensure your students brings a change of shoes.
- b. A solid NAVY BLUE long-sleeve sweater may be worn. Both pullover and cardigan styles are acceptable. Sweater vests are also acceptable. Sweaters must be solid navy in color, and free from distracting embellishment.
- c. All accessories, including girls' hair bands/ties and barrettes, should be conservative and complement the uniform. Matching headbands in the school plaid (#0845) are acceptable.
- d. All skirt hems must fall below the knee.
- e. Shoes will be BLACK or BROWN dress shoes. Loafer style shoes are acceptable.
- f. The St. Benedict CCS school code for Schoolbelles is S2732. All plaid uniform items will be color #0845 grey/blue plaid from Schoolbelles (www.schoolbelles.com).

2. Pre-K

Students in the pre-K class should dress in neat, clean, and modest clothing. Pre-K students are not required to wear the uniform.

3. Girls

- a. Shirt - WHITE long- or short-sleeve polo shirts (Peter Pan collar is ok.)
- b. Socks/tights/leggings NAVY BLUE, BLACK, GREY, or WHITE opaque tights or socks will be worn.
- c. Navy, black, grey, or white leggings or bicycle shorts (or similar style shorts) will be worn under skirts/jumpers unless opaque tights are worn.
- d. Jumper/Skirt
 - i. GIRLS enrolled in KINDERGARTEN THROUGH 2ND GRADE will wear the uniform jumper: The pleated round neck plaid jumper style #1407, Plaid color #0845 - skirt hems below the knee. To ensure proper length the "T" style should be ordered in the correct size. This will ensure adequate length.
 - ii. GIRLS enrolled in 3RD GRADE THROUGH HIGH SCHOOL will wear the

uniform Skirt. The LONG pleated skirt #1517, Plaid color #0845, skirt hems below the knee. To ensure proper length the “PT” or “J” styles should be ordered in the correct size. The St. Benedict CCS school code for Schoolbelles is S2732.

4. Boys

- a. Trousers - DARK GREY flat-front dress pants
- b. Belt - BLACK or BROWN belt worn with dress pants
- c. Socks - NAVY BLUE or BLACK socks
- d. Shirt
 - i. BOYS enrolled in KINDERGARTEN THROUGH 6TH GRADE will wear a WHITE long- or short-sleeve polo shirt.
 - ii. BOYS enrolled in 7TH GRADE THROUGH HIGH SCHOOL will wear a WHITE long- or short-sleeve COLLARED DRESS SHIRT and Tie. The tie may be Pre-tied/clip-on or regular ties in plaid #084

D. The Academic Environment and the Common Good

In the words of St. Augustine: “Peace is the tranquility of order.” A peaceful atmosphere where tranquil order ensues is essential for learning. Nothing so contributes to this atmosphere as quiet. Shouting, screaming, and horseplay are never permitted inside the school building. When it is time for class to begin all talking should cease immediately, so the student may be completely attentive.

In order to maintain a peaceful environment for learning it is necessary to have and enforce rules for the guidance of the community. Without such rules, disorder would result and the common good of the academic community would suffer.

1. Cheating and Dishonesty: Cheating, lying, and stealing are violations of the General Principles of the School and undermine the basic trust upon which the academic community is built. A student who has cheated on any assignment will receive a zero for the assignment and will be punished appropriately by his parents. A second offense will result in a parent- teacher conference.
2. Plagiarism: Plagiarism is a form of cheating and presents the work of another as one’s own. Failure to cite the source(s) of quoted, paraphrased, or summarized material, whether published or not, is defined as plagiarism (Cf. *Harbrace College Handbook*).
3. Language: Blasphemy, profanity, obscenity, vulgarity, and the like in word, writing, gesture, or action is unacceptable in Christian society. Use of such language demeans the speaker and the community.
4. Electronic Devices: Cell phones, smart phones, tablets, and any other electronic devices **are not permitted in the classroom**. Students who need to bring a phone for later use may leave it in the headmaster’s office during the school day.

E. Discipline Procedures

Given the nature of our school and the commitment of our parents, it is expected that students will act as Christian boys and girls or ladies and gentlemen at all times in school. The school relies on parents, the primary educators, to correct and punish their children when warranted. In the rare event that a student “crosses the line” at school, parents can be assured that correction will be done with the firmness and appropriateness required both by the common good of the academic community and the God-given dignity of the student(s) involved. Long experience has shown the simplest, most immediate correction is the most effective.

1. The teacher’s decisions regarding correction and punishment in his classroom are final. Students should accept them with obedience and respect.
2. The normal sequence of correction for minor offenses is the following:
 - First offense warrants a verbal admonition to the student.

- Second offense warrants a phone call or written notice to parents and some form of punishment (e.g. detention after school, a written assignment, work duty, etc.). At this level, the matter should be remedied quickly and effectively, with an apology to the teacher immediately forthcoming from the student.
 - Third offense warrants a parent conference and may indicate a more serious problem. A pattern of chronic misbehavior is incompatible with attendance at the school.
3. Normally, behaviors of a more serious nature warrant immediate contact with the parents followed by either immediate corrective action, suspension, and/or expulsion, depending on the nature and circumstances of the offense. Examples of such offenses would include: disrespect for authority; insubordination; refusal to follow teacher's instructions; gossip or calumny; immoral or vulgar language; cheating, theft, or dishonesty; seriously disruptive behavior; destruction of property; fighting; possession of any controlled substances or weapons; and any conduct which would offend against the Catholic nature of the school.
 4. St. Benedict's prohibits corporal punishment. If a student's conduct cannot be controlled without force then the school is not capable of providing for his/ her education.

III. Miscellaneous Policies

A. Chain of Command

Respect for persons and concern for the common good require that the principle of subsidiarity be observed in the life of a community. This principle, enshrined in Catholic social teaching, requires that decisions and issues be handled at the lowest, most appropriate level in order to safeguard the rights and responsibilities of the human person. The Board of Directors establish the mission and philosophy of the school, create policy, ensure that it is properly carried out, and are responsible for the financial funding of the school. The headmaster is responsible for the day to day operation of the school and for implementing the policies established by the Board.

Questions or issues, which, from time to time, may arise in the life of a school, should first be addressed to the faculty member concerned. Normally, issues are resolved at this level. Students in grades 5-8th, should bring their concerns to their home room teacher, if they cannot resolve their issue with a particular instructor. If the student's concern involves their homeroom teacher, or remains unresolved, the issue should be brought to the attention of the headmaster for final resolution.

The homeroom teachers are:

5/6th grade: Mrs. Kimberly Schneidt

7th grade: Mrs. Rebecca Dauby

8th grade: Mrs. Margaret Geene

B. Communication

Teachers would like to be in frequent contact with parents regarding school performance. Please let your child's teachers know what form of communication you prefer (e.g., telephone, email, text).

C. Class Schedules

The school gathers for Mass on Wednesday at 11:40am, and on Friday at 8:30am.

Students should arrive in their classrooms by 8:20am each morning to ensure they are prepared to begin the school day. **On the First Friday of each month, when school is in session, students should arrive at 8:10am, so they will be seated in Church in time for Benediction.** Students arriving after Benediction begins, should wait in the Narthex until

Benediction is over. They can join their class prior to the beginning of Mass.

Please see the attached class schedules. Due to mid-morning Mass scheduled on Wednesdays, the schedule is adjusted and dismissal is at 2:50pm. Dismissal on Tuesday and Wednesday will be at 2:15pm.

D. Lunch and Snacks

Students must bring their own snacks and/or lunch, and may eat in the gym.

Students in grades pre-K through 2nd grade have two snack breaks built into the schedule at 9:30am and 12:30pm. They eat lunch at 11:00am on Tuesdays and Fridays. In order to observe the Eucharistic fast, they will eat lunch at 10:30am on Wednesdays.

Grades 3 through 8 will have lunch at 11:30am on Tuesdays and Fridays. High School students will have lunch at noon. Students in grades 3 through 8 (and High School) will have lunch after Mass on Wednesdays, at 12:10pm.

Students are expected to leave the lunch area as they found it. A microwave is available for use by teachers and students.

Parents should pack lunches and snacks for their children each school day. The pre-kindergarten classroom will be stocked with supplemental toddler-friendly snacks. Pre-K parents will be asked to contribute these extra snacks as needed/determined by the Pre-K teachers.

D. Emergency School Closings

--AN UPDATED POLICY WILL BE PUBLISHED IN OCTOBER--

St. Benedict's will announce school closings due to snow or inclement weather on the public St. Benedict Classical Catholic School Facebook page. The cancellation or school delay will be posted by 6:00am on the morning of the closure or delayed schedule. Please go to <https://www.facebook.com/stbenedictccs/> for that information. You do not need to have a Facebook account to see this page. If you already have a Facebook profile, you can search for and follow our page by typing @stbenedictccs into the search bar.

In the case of a one or two-hour delay, St. Benedict's will meet at either 9:30am (one hour delay) or 10:30am (two hour delay). Classes will be reduced to include 4 or 3 class periods respectively for 3rd-8th grade, and 9 or 8 class periods for pre-k -2nd grade.

For example, we will follow the following alternate schedule for two-hour delays.

Grades K-2 will adjust class periods as follows:

1st period: 10:30-10:50am

2nd period: 10:50-11:10am

3rd period: 11:10-11:30am

Lunch recess: 11:30am-12:00pm

4th period: 12:00-12:20pm

5th period: 12:20-12:40pm

6th period: 12:40-1:00pm
snack/recess: 1:00-1:20pm
7th period: 1:20-1:40pm
8th Period: 1:40-2:00pm

Grades 3-8th will adjust class periods as follows:

1st Period: 10:30-11:30am
2nd Period: 11:30-12:30pm
Lunch: 12:30-1:00pm
3rd period: 1:00-2:00pm

The reduced schedules for 3-8th grade will cover Latin, Math, and third/fourth subjects (as determined by the Director of Curriculum). If a delay occurs on a Wednesday, the schedule will be adjusted accordingly to allow students to attend the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass at 11:40am.

F. Parent Involvement in Homework

While the junior and senior high student needs a good deal of private study time in a setting free of distraction, (such as phone, e-mail, T.V., radio, etc.), parents must be actively and appropriately involved in their child's school work. This could include (depending upon the needs and level of the student): daily discussions about what the student is learning, monitoring of private study time, checking assignments for completion, reviewing written work, quizzing student on memory work, reading and discussing books the student is reading, offering encouragement to persevere through difficult material, and expressing trust in the student's God-given ability. In no case should the parent ever do the student's work.

G. Tuition

It is an aspect of the mission of St. Benedict Classical Catholic School to make the school affordable, inasmuch as is possible, to all practicing Catholic families who desire its education. To this end, the school has set tuition income for 2018-19 to cover approximately 40% of the school's operating expenses and relies upon the generosity of our benefactors and the abundant mercy of God to supply the additional funds necessary to educate our students. Tuition for the 2018-19 academic year is \$1000 for grades K-8 and \$2,400 for high school. Pre-K tuition is \$800. Individual high school classes are available for \$400 per class. The school depends upon the timely payment of tuition in order to pay its bills in a timely manner. In addition to tuition, there is a book cost that varies by grade.

H. Service

Students and parents are encouraged to support the school through such acts of service as volunteering in the classroom, helping with fund raising, planning special events (such as feast day celebrations) for the school, assisting in the upkeep of the school building and grounds, and reading Scripture or serving as altar boys at mass.

I. Altar Servers

We would like to take this opportunity to state our school policy regarding altar servers. At St. Benedict Classical Catholic School, Mass will be celebrated with only male altar servers. We believe that this is the most appropriate policy in light of Catholic teaching.

To begin, we recognize the shortage of able and willing servers most parishes face. In the recent past, some parishes have perceived a need to have girls serve at Mass. Our school's policy is in no way meant to cast judgment on these parishes. We wish simply to aim for the highest, most reverent Mass that we can celebrate. To this end, we believe that having only males serve at the altar is the better option. It more perfectly honors both genders and the Holy Sacrifice that is offered.

The altar server's function is to aid the priest during preparation and administration of the Most Holy Sacrament. It is our hope that by having male students serve at the altar, we will be able to foster religious vocations. At St. Benedict's, we hope to encourage religious vocations for both our male and female students. Having girls serve at the altar does a disservice to both genders. As Christ was a man, the priest who stands in His place (in persona Christi) must also be a man—as he must figure the Heavenly Bridegroom. The priesthood is, in fact, the ultimate expression of manhood. Priests serve and act after the model of Christ, the ultimate man. The priest must both serve and sacrifice himself for his bride, the Church (i.e., the rest of us). The priestly vocation is not about being “in charge” of a parish. Rather, it is about service, and even possibly service unto death—and we need boys to see this clearly.

In modern society our preoccupation with individual rights leads to an assumption that serving at Mass should be a “right” for any boy or girl. This is simply not the case. To attend the priest during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is to

assist him in confecting and offering the Sacrifice. It is not simply moving dishes around or processing around the church and sanctuary. The altar servers are there to show us how to join our prayers to the Mass. They set the tone and posture for all the faithful to follow. They offer prayers with the priest to complete the ritual and liturgy. (This is most obvious when the extraordinary form of the Mass is said.) As they are the closest to the priest, the servers are in a position to know and to participate in the most intimate details of the Mass. It is only from this close vantage point that they can discern whether they might be called to the priesthood. It is critical that young men witness the true and correct masculinity of the priest's role. The Church can unwittingly feminize the liturgy when the important marital aspect of the Mass (specifically, the role of Christ the Bridegroom to His bride, the Church) is ignored. Neutering the Divine Liturgy and Sacrifice of the Mass can turn off many adolescent boys from serving because they see girls doing it and decide that it is not masculine enough for them. Additionally, if girls are serving in this capacity, boys may not have opportunities or even be needed to serve at all.

The decision to have only boys serve at the altar is not in any way meant to imply that boys are superior or that girls are incapable. Rather, the Catholic Church recognizes that the divine plan includes both men and women—equal in dignity, yet very different. Above virtually every earthly institution, the Church has championed the rights of women and preserved a sublime and unparalleled understanding of the dignity of women. To one who has not carefully considered the teachings of the Church on this matter, this may seem counter-intuitive. The world would happily propose that the Catholic Church's teaching is oppressive or "anti-woman." To the contrary, the Catholic Church reveres and holds women in high regard as mothers and nurturers, something which the world no longer values. Beyond this, it is the Catholic understanding that in God's Providence and design, women have a sacred role as co-participants in God's ongoing work of creation. As only a male can figure the Heavenly Bridegroom, only a female can figure the generative and nurturing persona of the Living God, the Creator and Sustainer of all. The greatest example and the high point of all God's creation is a woman. Of all creatures, only a woman gave perfect consent to God's will. In doing so Our Lady became Theotokos—MOTHER OF GOD. She is our constant example of what to do and how to achieve sanctity. She is holy not because she followed any man's example, but because she did what God wanted her to do.

By God's awesome design, women possess the creative power to bring forth new life. This sharing in creation with God is a gift given only to women, which sets them apart from men. In a very practical way it sets them above men, as only they can participate with God's will by bringing new life into the world. Unfortunately, many let the worldly view of power and sexuality twist this beautiful teaching and call it oppression—falsely claiming that the patriarchy of the Church holds an unfair power over women. In reality, exactly the opposite is true. Women are owed respect and honor simply because they are women. This is how much the Church loves women, as it is only they who can perfectly exemplify the Bride of Christ—which is in reality the entire Catholic Church. When we push for our daughters to serve in the same way that men do, we are actually diminishing their position from the one who is sacrificed for, to the one who is serving. In this light, it is clear that teaching girls of their ultimate dignity (as holy and set apart for God) will enable them to listen for their own important vocation.

Finally, let us consider our own approach to Mass. Often we are distracted by our daily routines and concerns, and it becomes very easy to forget that the Mass is not like anywhere or anything else on earth. As such, it should neither be treated like anything in our fallen world, nor be subject to the demands of our fallen world. During Mass, heaven comes down to meet earth and they intersect at the altar. There is no experience "in the world" that is owed as much reverence and adoration as Our Lord in the Most Blessed Sacrament. During the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass we are focused on eternal things—things of heaven. The Divine Liturgy and the Sacrifice of the Mass are subject to heaven's eternal standards rather than the whims of our 21st century society. The idea that we should have both male and female altar servers because our current society demands equal gender representation should have no more influence on Holy Mass now than it would have had at the First Mass offered during the Last Supper. A demand to have females serve at the altar in order to achieve equality for women would subordinate the Mass to the expectations of our current society. However, the Mass should look, smell, and feel different than anywhere or anything else on earth. It should be noticeably NOT like the world.

St. Benedict's seeks to provide its students with the best possible spiritual formation. This undoubtedly includes promoting vocational awareness and an understanding of each student's unique role as a male or female member of the Body of Christ. With this in mind, we have carefully considered and formulated our altar server policy.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful to the National Association of Private Catholic and Independent Schools (NAPCIS) for the resources they provided in the development of this handbook.

St. Benedict Classical Catholic School may, of necessity, from time to time, amend and alter this Handbook. If so, the academic community will be informed in a timely manner.

St. Benedict Classical Catholic School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in its

policies of admissions, scholarships, or employment of personnel.

Warn my children to avoid the precipices of pride and haughtiness and to walk in the pleasant
meadows of modesty;
not to be dazzled by the sight of gold; not to lament that they do not possess what they erroneously
admire in others;
not to think more of themselves for gaudy trappings, nor less for the want of them;
neither to deform the beauty that nature has given them by neglect, nor to try to heighten it by
artifice;
to put virtue in the first place, learning in the second; and in their studies to esteem most
whatever may teach them piety towards God, charity to all, and Christian humility themselves.

These, I consider the real and genuine fruits of learning,
and I would maintain that those who give themselves to study with such intent will easily attain
their end and become perfect.

**Saint Thomas More
to his children's tutors**