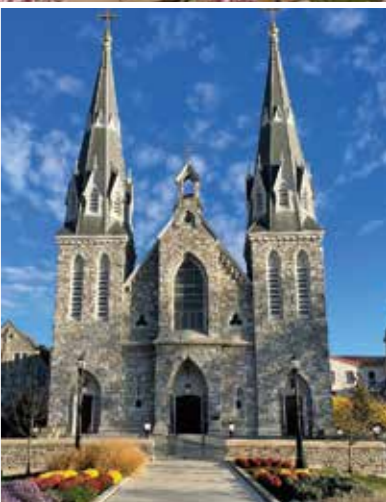


CATHOLIC
HERALD

US CATHOLIC UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES GUIDE

2023/24



The spiritual renaissance of US Catholic education

Many colleges are revitalising Catholic identity, says **Jamie MacGuire, Special Report Editor**

As we reveal in our inaugural survey of US Catholic college education, the university environment in the United States is changing – and fast. The number of students enrolled has declined from a high of 18.1 million in 2010 (where it had been more or less stable since 1990) to 16.9 million in 2023. At least 44 colleges have closed since 2020, and others are sure to follow. With Catholic high schools – the lifeblood of US college admissions – the picture is even bleaker.

Yes, prestigious colleges and universities such as Notre Dame, Boston College and Georgetown continue to be highly selective and achieve first-class results. Of these leading colleges, Notre Dame remains *primus inter pares*, a great American Catholic institution that has become a battleground for the fight to preserve a true Catholic identity on campus, with its alumni – who have donated billions – divided on the subject.

Notre Dame is at the forefront of Catholic moral and public debate in the USA. Its football team’s high-profile head coach, Marcus Freeman, recently converted to Catholicism, while on campus there is the influential Catholic professor O Carter Snead, Professor of Law at the de Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture, and author of *What It Means to be Human*, and the Scottish-American moral philosopher and Catholic convert Alasdair MacIntyre, author of *After Virtue*.

However, fissures are appearing that threaten the Catholic identity of these legacy institutions which some now regard as operating more like “Catholic hubs” with competing (even clashing) conservative and liberal factions. A significant part of the problem, argues Notre Dame professor and historian Felipe Fernández-Armesto, is the failure of Catholic institutions to sustain authentically Catholic values, drifting instead to a social and moral relativism, and secularism.

Perhaps inevitably, Notre Dame has changed since the days of its famous *uomo universale* president “Father Ted” Hesburgh, who oversaw the university’s expansion from 1952 to 1987. “My experience at the University of Notre Dame – recognised by everyone, except rivals, as the exemplary Catholic research institution – suggests that Catholic values are doomed to depletion, not only because of relentless secularism but also because political polarisation has divided us irreconcilably,” wrote Fernández-Armesto recently in the *Herald*.

These words – coming from Notre Dame’s William P Reynolds Professor of History – are worrying. The identity of many Catholic educational institutions is now under daily trespass from the forces of secularism and the progressive tide of toxic cultural and gender politics. As Nick Letts, a Catholic philosophy student at Boston College, argued in a recent article in *The Torch* (the college’s Catholic newspaper), many Catholic colleges are drift-

ing towards becoming outposts of Catholic sub-culture. In pursuit of the top applicants and retaining their academic and sporting status, many are making “uneasy compromises” with their Catholicity. They trade “Jesuit university” for “school founded in the Ignatian tradition”. They promote the call to service more than the “call to holiness”. Admissions departments claim that American universities are “only as Catholic as you make them”.

Among the factors causing this change are the rise in fees, the absence of low-cost labour caused by the decline in vocations of nuns and brothers, declining Mass attendance and participation in parish life, rising prices, and the lingering effects of the sexual abuse crisis which the bishops, in their misguided desire to present robust statistics to the Vatican, failed to address effectively for decades.

A number of initiatives have been launched to address the issue of affordability, including the Cristo Rey Jesuit schools, the Inner-City Scholarship Fund and such lay efforts as Student Sponsor Partners, the Children’s Scholarship Fund, Partnership Schools and Faith in the Future. This and the increasing availability of publicly funded vouchers and educational savings accounts and, as in Oklahoma, refundable educational tax credits for religious schools, could help stabilise and eventually reverse the downward trend. However, the institutional Church, beset as it is by an ageing clergy, a slew of sex abuse lawsuits,

the suspension of statute of limitations provisions in the states and, increasingly, once unthinkable diocesan bankruptcies, appears ill-equipped to address the situation.

Inevitably, all of these factors affect the Catholic college and university landscape as well, where upwards of 10 colleges have closed in the last decade, and others are in precarious financial condition.

With that in mind, the *Catholic Herald* has set out to survey American Catholic colleges and universities for the first time. We bring a fresh lens, as we did with our influential US Catholic Leaders of Today survey published in October last year. Our list is not in any sense exhaustive. The 100 colleges profiled represent under half of the total of 230 Catholic colleges nationally identified by the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities. Our criteria reflects excellent academics, affordable tuition, extracurricular offerings and a serious effort to preserve an authentic Catholic identity. We have also included those making the *Wall Street Journal* Best US Colleges 2024 rankings of the top 400 nationally.

While premier-league colleges such as Notre Dame, Fordham and Georgetown have been drawn into the culture wars, we found Catholic faith and identity being best preserved at many smaller, lesser-known colleges, including the 12 endorsed by the *Newman Guide*, which vets Catholic colleges for their spiritual fidelity. Good examples are the spiritual mission of Thomas Aquinas College, the Catholic University of America, the University of Dallas, the Franciscan University at Steubenville and Christendom College. Since a small college like Christendom cannot really be compared to a first-rank research university like Notre Dame, with \$17 billion in endowment, we have broken down our survey into national, regional and liberal arts colleges so all sizes are represented.

We found a continuing change in curricular emphasis away from theology, philosophy

and the liberal arts and towards business, marketing, health, computer science and recreational pursuits. The emerging thinking is that it is now time to stop spending a fortune in public funds to colleges that select students in accord with a self-serving agenda favouring wealthy donors and so-called “holistic” admissions practices. Ending public subsidies for colleges that embrace the ethos of a restrictive country club is democratic and equitable, and Catholic colleges and universities, by virtue of their philanthropic and meritocratic histories and traditions, are perfectly positioned to be part of a more socially beneficial and productive future.

We worry about how Catholic colleges and universities are dealing with the near ubiquitous trend towards woke language and thought-policing at elite secular schools. Instead of standing up for freedom of choice

“It is more pressing than ever that Catholic institutions hew to their principles and provide an education to the coming generations worthy of the name and their long-established traditions

and expression, our report reveals many instances when students felt unable to express their true feelings due to social pressure to conform to either politically correct, woke or left-wing progressive thinking.

Yet we aim to be inclusive. We are grateful for an interview with Jesuit educational leader Paul Fitzgerald, SJ, president of the liberal University of San Francisco – whose website includes no reference to Catholic religious formation or worship – as our brief has been to include all shades of US Catholic universities, including a well-known Jesuit Massachusetts college whose campus hosted a conference sponsored by Planned Parent-

hood that nearly resulted in the college being stripped of the right “to be recognised as a Catholic institution” by a local bishop. We believe students must make up their own minds. Above all, we abhor censorship and believe in intelligent, morally rooted individual choices.

As Hillsdale College’s John J Miller wrote in *National Review*: “It can seem the hardest working people on campus are those who aspire to take offence at ordinary words and phrases. As they sniff around for slights, they are like detection dogs that find false positives everywhere and won’t stop barking.”

There is, notably, a groundswell renaissance of classical education at the elementary and high school levels. Timothy Dornlan, of the Association of Classical Christian Schools, said in a January 2023 interview that over 200 new classical schools have opened in the last year. Great Hearts Academies, another network of classical charter schools, operates more than 30 schools across Arizona and Texas and is preparing to open campuses in Louisiana and Florida. It would be logical for graduates of such schools to consider Catholic higher education or to start their own, a win-win for the Catholic cause.

Of course, the interests of established educational bureaucracies and those of parents in the education of their children will continue to collide, as parents rightly refuse the state’s assertion of co-parenting privileges. Recent Supreme Court cases have recognised that parents, not the state, are the primary educators of their children, giving hope that parents, including Catholic parents, will continue to exercise their rights as they see fit.

It is therefore more pressing than ever that Catholic institutions hew to their principles and provide an education worthy of the name and their long-established traditions. It is with this fervent wish to preserve Catholic identity on American college campuses that the *Herald* publishes its first special report on US Catholic colleges and universities. **CH**



The dissolution of the universities

Felipe Fernández-Armesto, a Notre Dame professor, worries that religion is not taken seriously enough on many campuses

The indecently corpulent are under orders to slim. The girth of US higher and further education, encompassing over 7,000 institutions and enrolling over 62 per cent of the population, is bound to diminish, for three reasons: numbers of potential students are falling, costs are out of control and public confidence is deserting an over-indulged and under-informed professorate. I know of eight institutions that ran out of money and closed down in the past year. Five of them were Catholic.

Most leading Protestant universities abandoned their vocations in the 20th century. An Evangelical former colleague of mine exaggerated only a little when he told me that he joined Notre Dame because “it is the only Christian university left”. A student told me that she chose Notre Dame because she wanted to become a Methodist minister. A few years ago a student-run newspaper on campus interviewed four Muslim undergraduates who wanted, they explained, to be at a university that “takes religion seriously”.

But taking religion seriously is increasingly hard in a hostile world, where materialists and atheists think faith is, at worst, nasty and conflictive or, at best, useless and dumb. We now face not only the dilemmas of secularism that detached great Protestant places, such as Harvard, Princeton and Yale from their roots, but also dangers that particularly menace Catholics: the collapse of religious vocations, the decline in the numbers of the faithful and the withering of demand for the humanist disciplines that have always been our strength.

For the first of these, Catholic institutions

are – in large part, at least – to blame. Many orders formerly active in universities now prefer parishes or missions, deserting the classroom and placing their colleges in lay hands. At the heart of Georgetown University – the first place of Catholic higher learning in the US – is the priests’ graveyard, where generations of Jesuits are commemorated with equal humility by tiny tombstones from which their names fade in ultimate self-abnegation. There is still a Jesuit house of study there and Mass is still celebrated in a space of disappointingly unambitious smallness,

“**Taking religion seriously is increasingly hard in a hostile world, where materialists and atheists think faith is, at worst, nasty and conflictive or, at best, useless and dumb**”

but you hardly see members of the order in undergraduate classes. The Jesuits’ heroism in pioneering America’s Catholic education has yielded to what looks suspiciously like despair. Most other orders have evinced comparable diffidence. Of course, if you don’t teach and counsel young people, vocations to your order will shrivel.

The institute that founded my own university has transferred governance to a board of lay people and priests, but the Congregation of Holy Cross continues to supply us with teachers and mentors. In consequence, vocations thrive, with more than 50 young Americans in formation, almost all of whom studied at Notre Dame or the College of Holy



Notre Dame University

Cross. I’m a visceral pessimist, but our young priest-professors give me hope that the Congregation will continue to lead the university.

Everywhere, however, lay teachers replace and supplement religious in classrooms. Young people have imperfect examples of self-sacrifice before their eyes and, increasingly, professors who are indifferent or hostile to the faith. At Notre Dame we try to maintain the minimum, enjoined in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, of 50 per cent of Catholics in the professorate; but the university top brass have slackened their resolve to recruit Catholic intellectuals and few of my colleagues seem interested in identifying or favouring Catholic candidates. I’m in a small minority in starting every class with a prayer and taking pains to remedy the deficiencies of contemporary catechism. There’s a crucifix in every classroom, largely unhallowed by unseeing eyes.

Meanwhile, we vie with other universities to attract diminishing numbers of Catholics, many of whom opt for secular rivals. At the last count, 22 per cent of Harvard undergraduates were Catholics, 25 per cent at Yale, while some supposedly Catholic universities have few Catholic students and fewer Catholic teachers. Others respond to market pressures by dropping humane disciplines.

The Jesuits recently deleted their name from that of Wheeling – formerly Jesuit – University when theology courses disappeared in favour of business and nursing. Cabrini University closed after excising all programmes in the humanities. Marymount University has eliminated majors in art, English, history, philosophy and theology.

Where religious play their part, prayer prevails, and the grace of the sacraments is present in abundance, Catholic universities still have the best pastoral care, the best rate of mobilising students for service, the best record of educating the outcast and the stranger. But only a handful of the 250 or so nominally Catholic institutions meet this standard. Most of the rest are probably doomed.

And even at Notre Dame, where wealth provides against disaster – we are down to about our last 17 billion dollars – vigilance needs redoubling. My job, as I see it, is to enhance students’ life and prepare them for death. Few of my colleagues seem to be looking that far ahead. CH

Felipe Fernández-Armesto is a professor of history at Notre Dame University

Life lived in the Truth in a colonial farmhouse

William Cash on why small is beautiful for the Thomas More College of Liberal Arts

When your educational headquarters is what the *Newman Guide to Choosing a Catholic College* calls more of a “colonial farmhouse” than a sprawling campus, it’s difficult to compare the Thomas More College of Liberal Arts with, say, Boston College.

But under President William Fahey, Thomas More College (known as TMC) has carved out a small and influential renegade niche in the US Catholic college landscape. With so many more famous “legacy” universities like Fordham, Georgetown or Notre Dame (which boasts an endowment of many billions) being dragged into the cultural and political wars of education, there is a growing demand for smaller and less culturally toxic colleges, where fidelity to Catholic culture and education is the priority, of which TMC is a prime example. Its mission is to “quest for what is true, good, and beautiful”.

St Thomas More was prepared to stand up for his faith – which he paid for with his life, execution by Henry VIII and sainthood – and TMC’s Dean of Students, Dr Michael Taylor, sees comparisons today with the need for a “Catholic island” liberal arts college such as TMC – located in a leafy pocket of southern New Hampshire – to fight against the “passing fancies of the spirit of the age”. He adds that these were the “chosen weapons of the enemy to which More would not submit”.

It comes as little surprise that TMC recently welcomed Dale Ahlquist, president of the American Chesterton Society, back to campus this semester. A co-founder of the Chesterton Academy, Ahlquist gave the Commencement address at Thomas More College in 2017, where he received an honorary doctorate. Chesterton was a regular *Herald* writer and – despite efforts to cancel him – is exactly the sort of anti-establishment Catholic literary hero that TMC venerates, regarding him as possibly Britain’s most im-



Thomas More College of Liberal Arts

portant convert since John Henry Newman.

“More knew that nothing true, good or beautiful could be a threat to the One, Holy, Apostolic and Catholic Faith,” says Taylor. His “Great Books College” is certainly not going to be a place where the likes of TS Eliot are also censored. Students may not have a vast NFL-style football stadium, but they can explore the beaches of Maine, visit Boston or Robert Frost’s farm, or hike in the White Mountains. Common life is enriched daily by the “wisdom of the ages, illuminated by the light of Christ, refracted through history in myriad and inexhaustible manifestations”.

There seems to be more time to read at TMC than at other colleges. Whether that is due to the lack of Olympic-style sports facilities is uncertain. But reading is taken very seriously. “We take the time to wonder at the beauty of creation, to find leisure in discussing great matters, to take seriously the truths discovered therein, and to rejoice

in our shared love for life lived in the Truth,” says Taylor, which is something of the ethos of Thomas More College.

There is also more time for Catholic faith to be incorporated into college life than many other *soi-disant* Catholic colleges. The Catholic faith is not something that can be incorporated extrinsically or *post hoc* into a generic college experience, Taylor notes. “For an education to be genuinely Catholic, the Catholic faith must be ‘the way, truth and life’ of the community.” The Chapel is the centre of student life, with the Holy Mass celebrated every day. Notably, he chooses a quote from Pope Benedict XVI – rather than Francis – to stress his point: “Every Catholic educational institution is a place to encounter the living God who in Jesus Christ reveals his transforming love and truth.”

However, only the “authentic desire” of the faculty and students, working together spiritually and intellectually, can “preserve” Catholic culture. “What this means goes beyond what can be gleaned from the booklist for our integrated humanities curriculum. We understand that the intellectual life is incomplete if it is not lived in conversation and friendship with others who seek not only to understand but also to live out the truths therein,” says Taylor.

For students at TMC, the real question is how they engage with a refreshingly authentic Catholic intellectual charism at the college. Students are not “cultural Catholics” but living out their faith every day. What they do for leisure is as important as what they study in the classroom. They might go into Boston for a concert, visit a museum or make music (both folk and sacred), go on pilgrimages or pray outside abortion clinics. Or they might write a poem, or help host one of the campus-wide “medieval-style banquets” the college hosts on special feast days. Swing dancing is also popular.

The intellectual life of the college also overflows into *Traditio* days, when the entire college reads and discusses one text together, usually from St Thomas More. There is also the chance to attend the Milk Street Society, a student-run intellectual club (named for the street Thomas More was born on) that brings in leading speakers (such as Dale Ahlquist), drawing more than half of the student body to its events. A talk attendance rate that high is certainly a boast that big league universities like Notre Dame or Georgetown can never hope to match. **CH**

Offering a supportive campus atmosphere

An interview with Abbot Placid Solari, Chancellor of Belmont Abbey College

Catholic Herald: Please give us a brief history of Belmont Abbey College.

Abbot Placid Solari: Founded in 1876 as St Mary’s College by the Benedictine monks of St Vincent’s Abbey in Pennsylvania, the college began with just two students and was originally attended by German speakers. St Katharine Drexel, America’s first saint, who entered religious life as a wealthy widow, founded the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament and focused their mission on ministering to Black Americans and Indigenous people, visited the college in 1904 and became a benefactor.

CH: How did the college progress?

APS: The first thing to understand is how few Catholics there were in the South at that time. This was truly mission territory, and even today we are the only Catholic institution of higher learning between northern Virginia and Florida. At first, the college grew slowly. However, as we progressed, the need to adjust to new realities occurred. In the 1970s, the college separated from the monastery.

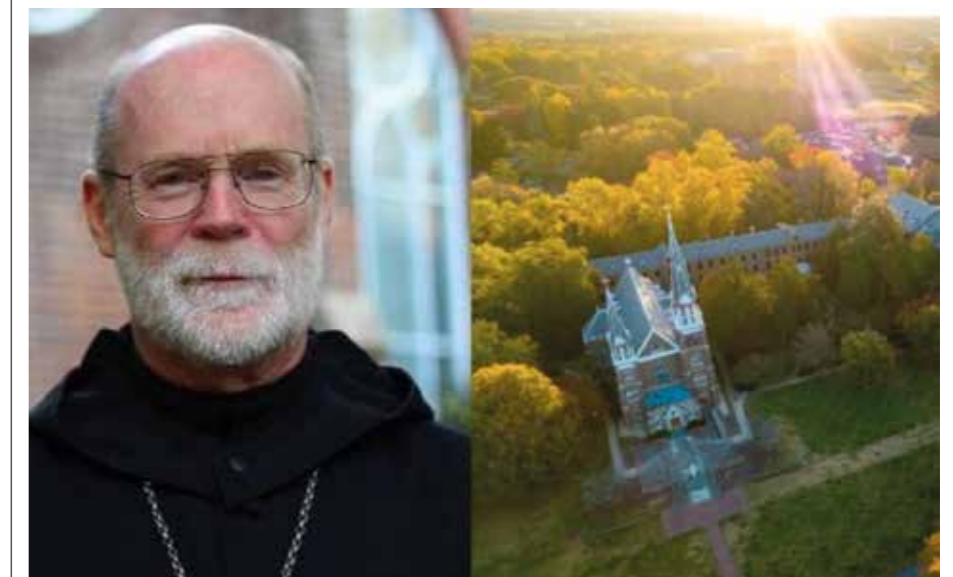
CH: What is the situation of the college today?

APS: Today the college has an enrolment of 1,500 co-ed students, 30-40 per cent of whom are non-Catholics. The college has always had the distinction of being the sole Catholic institution in its part of the Bible Belt, from lower Virginia to Florida. In 1967, Father John Oetgen OSB, the college president, conferred an honorary degree on the Reverend Billy Graham in what was then seen as a bold ecumenical gesture.

CH: How would you describe the Catholic character of the college?

APS: The monastery remains the centre of the Catholic community on campus. At present, there are 14 monks in residence,

and, thanks to their vow of stability, the monks are always available to students and alumni. The core curriculum is liberal arts-oriented, although today’s students are especially interested in sciences and the professions. Theology is a required course for at least two years. Every major connects its study to the school’s core mission. Mass and the Liturgy of the Hours are available to all daily, and the beginning of each academic year begins with a solemn Vespers. There is also an active campus ministry, retreats held on and off the campus, and many other activities. Religious art on the campus is another important daily presence that contributes to the sense of the spiritual students and visitors find here. FOCUS (the Fellowship of Catholic University Students) is another important presence on campus and has many participants, including students discerning a vocation. There are also Bible studies especially designed for athletes.



Abbot Placid Solari, Chancellor of Belmont Abbey College

CH: How is its financial health?

APS: What was originally the former farm is now commercially developed and a source of income, including a long-term lease to a regional hospital which had to assent to Catholic medical principles before signing. So, we are in good shape and able to plan for the long term.

CH: Are there other particular programmes or projects you care to mention?

APS: Our Honors College, with its Great Books curriculum, now has over 130 students in the incoming class. A new initiative, Belmont House in Washington, DC, provides a Catholic centre for members of Congress and congressional staff to meet and enjoy prayer, Mass and the sacraments, emphasis on religious liberty, and focus on helping members bring their own faith into public life. This is a very promising apostolate which we will continue to grow.

CH: Tell us a little about extracurricular life at the college.

APS: Belmont Abbey College has over 40 student organisations, including the well-regarded Abbey Players and a touring Glee Club. The Belmont Abbey Crusaders play in NCAA Division II in many major sports. There are many other social activities as well that contribute to a congenial and supportive campus atmosphere for students, faculty and parents. **CH**



‘This is a place that is deeply spiritual’

We catch up with **Marco Clark**, President of Holy Cross College at Notre Dame

Catholic Herald: To start with, could you just give me a thumbnail sketch of Holy Cross College?

Marco Clark: Sure. Holy Cross College was founded in 1966 by the Brothers of the Congregation of Holy Cross. In 2003, we became a four-year college and so we are now celebrating our 20th year as a four-year college. We are small, with roughly 500 undergraduate students, all of whom are in the tri-campus community which includes the University of Notre Dame. It’s a broad and diverse population – 35 per cent of our students are the first generation of their family to be in college.

CH: You seem to have remained very true to your founding principles.

MC: Thank you. It’s at our core. Initially, we were a pathway for students to be able to go to Notre Dame. What makes us special as we continue with those pathways is that there’s the tri-campus community. The tri-campus community is common parlance here and it refers to the three campuses of

Notre Dame, and I believe it is one of the great forces for good in the world. “One of the greatest forces for good in the world” comes from the founder of the University of Notre Dame, Fr Edward Soren, who, upon coming to St Mary Lake, said: “I believe that, one day, the university that we will create here will become one of the greatest voices for good in the world.” Part of what makes this place special is that as a student at Holy Cross, with your student ID, you are in essence a student on all three campuses. With our students particularly, we are very focused on high-impact teaching and learning practices. We integrate their formation focused on four core values.

CH: What are those four values?

MC: We say innovative and engaged scholars, courageous citizens, virtuous leaders, and hopeful disciples.

CH: What are some of your strongest academic programmes?

MC: In biology, there’s multiple tracks

and pathways that students can choose. In pre-health sciences, for example, and environmental science and ecology. In business, as well, there are multiple pathways that students can take. And then as well, there’s automatic matriculation agreements in place with the Mendoza College of Business graduate school programmes. So many of our business students are in what we call a pathway, a graduate pathway, to Mendoza College of Business at Notre Dame. And then we have our theology department. As I look back over the last 20 years working here, we are truly blessed as it’s a department where we have gifted, passionate theologians who are pursuing truth and justice and love and beauty.

CH: Wonderful. What do you think students come away with from Holy Cross College?

MC: In the world today, many US Catholic colleges and universities are straying from their mission and their core identity of being a Catholic college. We take a threefold approach where we are aiming to deeply integrate the Catholic intellectual tradition, the principles of Catholic social teaching, and then use our unique charism and mission as a Holy Cross school. I think too often in Catholic higher education, people are taking an either/or approach and sadly, there’s a lot of tribalism on the differences that exist between those more progressive thinkers in the Church versus the more traditionalist, and that’s just not the Church. The Catholic intellectual tradition evolves as well, right? As Father Ted Hesburgh said, Catholic colleges and universities should be a place to give the Catholic Church a place to think. We aspire to that. It also needs to be active and that’s where the Catholic social teaching and the principles of Catholic social teaching come in. So, teaching love and charity and justice and integrating that into all that we do as well. I would say in terms of the Catholic character of the college, this is a place that is deeply spiritual. And being in this tri-campus community where there’s a good-sized seminary right across the street, there’s a beautiful opportunity. It is the perfect place for families who are interested in ensuring that their children are in a place where they can continue to grow in their faith and their relationship with Christ. **CH**

Preparing students for their whole lives

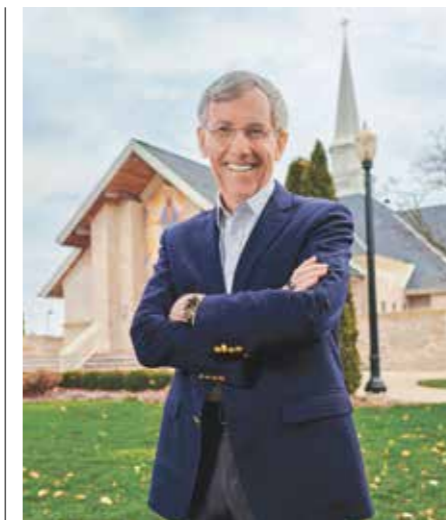
Tim Collins, President of Walsh University, on the institution’s Faith-driven values

Catholic Herald: Please give us a thumbnail sketch of the university.

Tim Collins: Sure. The university is going into its 63rd year. We were formed by a congregation of men, the Brothers of Christian Instruction, and they came about after the French Revolution, and are really closely associated with the De La Salle Brothers. We are about 2,300 students; we have about 1,000 students that live on campus and about 600 to 800 of them commute. Commuters have always been a big part of the education here at Walsh University in Ohio. I think it’s a mistake to say we’re preparing these students for a career. We’re preparing our students for that first destination in their life, but also their whole life’s purpose. Research shows this generation of student coming to school is going to change jobs 11 times before they retire, and we must ensure that we prepare them for that. Ultimately, we are committed to trying to understand and continue promoting the key ingredients of Catholic education.

CH: Let’s talk a bit about the Catholic character. Are their religious on campus at this point?

TC: In 2020, when the pandemic hit, the Brothers of Christian Instruction worldwide suffered about six or eight deaths within weeks, and they unfortunately had to pull back from what they were doing at Walsh. We are still the only Catholic college university in the Diocese of Youngstown in Ohio. However, at the moment, the only religious I have on campus is a Dominican priest who we have here full-time as our university chaplain on a three-year commitment. The Dominican Order itself here in America is exploding. There are 82 men that are in formation in Washington, DC and many of them want a PhD. I have been trying to make the case that they should come here to Walsh, so hopefully there are more to come.



Tim Collins, President of Walsh University

CH: Indeed, the Dominicans are a very hopeful and wonderful story in the present Church of America. Good for you guys.

TC: I think so. I have retired twice, and I actually tell people that this is my retirement gig. But if I ever actually stopped working, I would like to try and work on a theory I have that is that those religious orders that maintain a real tightness to the charism of their founders, I think are strong and will continue to be strong. All those that drift away from what their founder’s values were, I think end up falling apart. The Dominicans are so wrapped up around St Dominic and they’re just booming. I can’t prove that this is why, and it’s just a hypothesis, but I think staying true to your foundations can only ever be a good thing.

CH: What is the experience like for students on campus? How do they get imbued – or not – with Catholic culture and take that into the world?

TC: Our approach for Catholic education

is that we are supposed to be creating men and women that are of character. I would be willing to bet that if you walk onto most university campuses, they are going to tell you that the student is the reason they are there, the student is their customer. I don’t think that’s true so much anymore. I think that the employer is our customer. We need to make sure our students are ready for the workforce. Academics are certainly a part of it, but I personally think academics are only 25 per cent of the college experience. It’s all the other wraparound stuff that we must do in terms of developing their character, developing their temperament, teaching them how to think instead of telling them what to think. These are all crucial. We are making sure that when our students walk out the door, their education is not just about their intellectual development or skill, as I would argue that this is only going to be used for that first job. Everything we do here at Walsh is give them the skills and knowledge that will help them throughout their lives.

CH: Can you talk about Walsh’s academic strengths?

TC: I think our greatest strength is preparing our students for their whole lives and not just that first job. I think we’re trying to get them ready for wherever life takes them and whatever their purpose is. We’re talking a lot in America right now about mental health and mental challenges, but I don’t hear anybody telling these kids that they have a purpose, they have a reason to be here and it’s unique. I tell people that I was a fighter pilot, and I was at Hopkins and now I am in this role as president. That’s hardly a straight line. We need to prove to them how unique they are. All I need them to do is look at their finger and ask themselves why they are the only person with that fingerprint. No one else has ever had it and no one else will have it. **CH**

Faithful to Christ and His Church

“In fulfilling the charge entrusted to me in the name of the Church, I shall hold fast to the deposit of faith in its entirety; I shall faithfully hand it on and explain it, and I shall avoid any teachings contrary to it... So help me God, and God’s Holy Gospels on which I place my hand.”

- The Oath of Fidelity of Dr. Marco J. Clark, president of Holy Cross College, before Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend on March 25th, 2023.

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The Herald's guide to the leading 100 US Catholic universities and colleges

In our essential survey of the best places in the states to study for a life of purpose, we profile national and regional universities as well as smaller liberal arts colleges. Our top 25 starts here, with 26 to 100 from page 72

Ave Maria University Ave Maria, Florida

Founded by Domino's Pizza entrepreneur Tom Monaghan in 2003, Ave Maria University is in southwest Florida, some 24 miles inland from Naples on the Gulf Coast. It has 1,200 students, an admission rate of 64% and a graduation rate of 54%. The university costs \$41,919 and offers 31 majors and minors. There are 21 NAIA sports and six intramural clubs. The school prides itself on its orthodox Catholic identity and offers six daily Masses on campus.

Belmont Abbey College Charlotte, North Carolina

Founded in 1876, this private college is an apostolate of the Benedictine monastery Belmont Abbey, and shares with it a 700-acre property 10 miles west of Charlotte, North Carolina. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, with just over 1,500 students, Belmont Abbey College is the only Catholic college between Northern Virginia and Florida on the East Coast. It has popular programmes in Sports management, Business Management and Psychology, as well as growing graduate programmes.

The Benedictine motto *Ora et labora* is fully lived out in both the student and monastic community. "Everything about the college is grounded in our Catholic faith and Benedictine charism. Our mission is to educate students in the liberal arts and sciences so that in all things God may be glorified," says President Dr Bill Thierfelder, a charismatic educational leader, former US Olympic trials athlete, and Knight of Malta.

The college charism is based on continuing to celebrate the Benedictine tradition of prayer and providing its students with "an education that will enable them to lead lives of integrity, succeed professionally, become responsible citizens and be a blessing to themselves and to others". The college ranks highly in various college rankings guides, including the Newman Guide. In 2023, Belmont Abbey College's faculty was ranked first in undergraduate teaching in the south by *US News and World Report*. The college's athletic programme earned the prestigious Body, Mind, and Soul Dr Alan Patterson Cup Award.

Catholic life permeates every aspect of Belmont Abbey College. All students and faculty staff welcome every guest "*in persona Christi*", as Christ. "Whether you visit once, stay for four years, or live and work there for your entire life, that profound welcome never ends," the president says. "Excellence and virtue are found on the playing fields, in the classrooms, in residence halls, in the theatre, and everywhere you look. It's what makes it such a special place."

A Catholic understanding of the whole person is taken seriously and Belmont strives "to double our talents in body, mind, and soul". The college's health sciences have an over 90% acceptance rate to medical schools. The Honors College is guided by the "great books" of Western and classical literature.

Benedictine College Atchison, Kansas

Benedictine College is a private Benedictine liberal arts college in Atchison, Kansas. It was established in 1971 by the merger of St

Benedict's College (founded 1858) for men and Mount St Scholastica College (founded 1923) for women. It is located on bluffs overlooking the Missouri River, northwest of Kansas City. The school has 2,126 students and offers majors in business, education, theology and the performing arts. Tuition is \$34,000.

The college is consecrated to the Blessed Virgin Mary. President Stephen Minnis, a former Benedictine pupil and assistant district attorney, told the *Herald* that "we adhere strictly to our mission as a Catholic, Benedictine, liberal arts, residential college whose mission is to educate our students within a community of faith and scholarship". There is a focus on Catholic leadership development as well as courses on constitutional liberty, arts and beauty, family life, and even Catholic media.

The college offers Mass and Confession daily, Eucharistic adoration on weekdays, prayer at the Marian grotto, Liturgy of the Hours with the monks, and boasts a pro-life club and excellent sports teams in the NAIA Heart South conference. The Newman Guide describes it as a "faithful Catholic college" that appeals "to a growing number of Catholic families".

"Our emphasis is the Church's emphasis," adds Minnis. "We teach our students to serve the Church and serve others. Our students love the sacraments – we've had to add a daily Mass because of overcrowding – and our students love to serve the poor. Half our students skip Wednesday dinner to feed the poor in our region; over 25 international and the same number of domestic mission trips over spring break. The faith is incorporated into everything we do."

Recent years have seen the development of 20 new buildings and becoming a "premier



sponsor" of the National Eucharistic Revival. "Our students are amazing young people and they teach me a lot," says the president. "I am constantly impressed how they exhibit Christian joy in the face of adversity."

Boston College Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts

Located in Chesnut Hill, Massachusetts, Boston College – known as BC – has 9,300 undergraduates and 5,000 graduate students. Tuition is \$62,950, but the average fee paid after financial aid (received by 66% of undergraduates) is \$38,000. The acceptance rate is 19%, and the graduation rate is 94%. The college's endowment stands at \$3.7 billion. Its alumni include *Star-Trek* actor Leonard Nimoy and the politician John Kerry. The John J Burns Library holds the Graham Greene papers, a unique collection of correspondence and literary manuscripts of the British Catholic novelist, as well as his personal library (Greene defended *The Power and the Glory* in the *Catholic Herald* in 1940).

BC seeks to be a national leader in the liberal arts; to fulfil its Jesuit, Catholic mission of faith and service to society and support students

in their moral and spiritual formation; and to seek solutions, as researchers, educators and leaders, to the world's most urgent problems. Every first-year student takes part in Convocation, which explores in the Jesuit tradition the religious element of education.

There are 31 NCAA Division 1 sports teams and 27 club teams, as well as 314 clubs and organisations on campus. Boston College prides itself on "an education with a heart and soul – and the power to transform" its members.

Yet on the ground, the college's Catholic identity is under threat. A feisty level of student debate on Catholic issues can be found in *The Torch*, BC's Catholic newspaper. Last November, it reported how Catholic pro-life author Trent Horn spoke to the university community about abortion, saying that he "was greeted by a crowd of 80 people with mixed opinions on the issue".

This reflects the increasingly progressive climate of the university, including a new LGBTQ+ resource centre after a campaign from students and old alumni to "withhold donation money". In May 2023, writing in *The Torch*, the atheist turned Catholic convert BC philosophy student Nick Letts posed the question: "Is

Boston College still Catholic?" Although noting that 70% of students and over half the faculty claim to be Catholic, with Jesuits, Masses, and a campus ministry, he argued that many were cultural Catholics who did not believe "in Catholicism", ie that "Christ is God risen from the dead". A "vanishingly small proportion" would affirm this, he wrote. "Boston College is rapidly becoming a secular university with a Catholic subculture". His article provoked debate, with another student responding that it is "still very much a Catholic university, albeit with as much potential for growth in its Catholicity as that of any other Catholic institution situated in a predominantly non-Catholic context". Student majority: liberal.

WSJ ranking: 45/400

Catholic University of America Washington, DC

Located in northeast Washington, the Catholic University of America is the pontifical national university of the Catholic Church in the US and was founded by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in 1887. It's ideal for anybody wanting to embark on a life as a Catholic leader, in media, law or government, ►



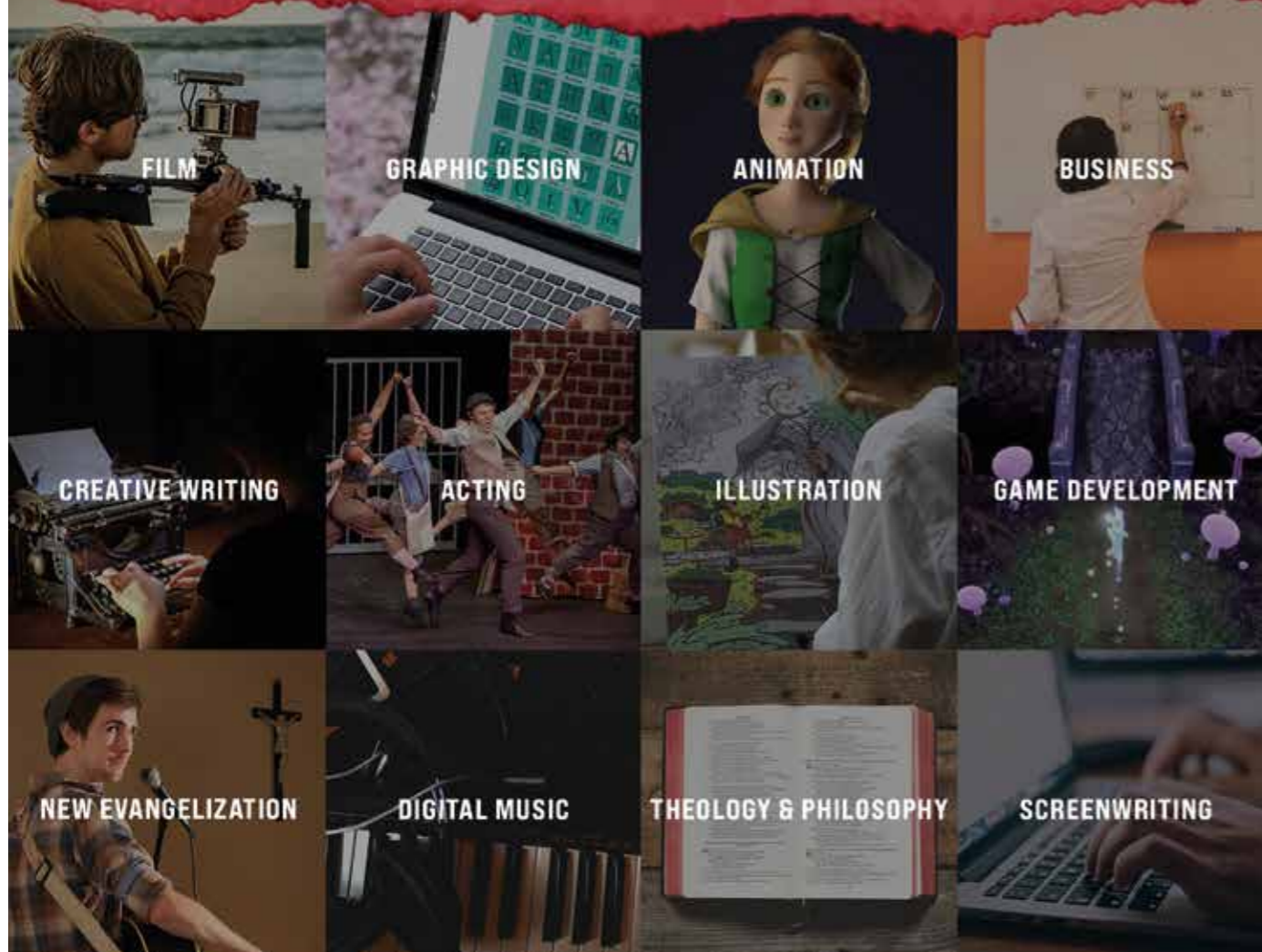
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SPOTLIGHT ON...

Dr Bill Thierfelder
President
of Belmont
Abbey College

What have you learned from your students?

I have learned from our students the deep meaning of friendship.

What was your career break?

My career is story after story of Divine Providence opening doors and then leading me through them. From a secular point of view, each career change would have been considered an impossibility.

Which church has the most meaning to you?

Mary, Help of Christians Basilica at Belmont Abbey in Belmont, North Carolina.

What holy music do you keep returning to?

Gregorian chant.

Greatest spiritual influence?

After my father, my wife Mary has been, and continues to be, the most influential spiritual person in my life. My faith and absolute trust in God has shaped my work and career.

Who is your favourite saint or pope?

St Joseph & Pope St John Paul II

Where would you go on pilgrimage?

The Holy Land with my wife Mary.

What book or film most influenced you at college?

The Mystical City of God and *Introduction to the Devout Life*.

Bedside reading?

A history of the 1565 Siege of Malta. CH

◀ with internships available in the US capital. The student and seminarian body's largely conservative stance on Catholic values and tradition was flagged up when, in 2017, its seminarian Theological College rescinded a speaking invitation to the controversial priest – and delegate at the October 2023 Synod in Rome – Fr James Martin, SJ, editor-at-large of *America* magazine, the Jesuit influential global media voice. This decision to disinvite Martin, a friend of Pope Francis who regularly speaks out in support of LGBT issues, was condemned by the university's president, who argued that the college supported free speech.

However, despite such distancing, the university is one of the more traditional-leaning Catholic universities and is a spiritual magnet for many high-flying and devout students (over 5,000 in total) wanting a strong spiritual grounding. Mass and Confession are offered daily on campus and at the beautiful Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. The liberal arts core curriculum includes three Catholic theology courses. Almost three-quarters of students and 60% of the faculty are Catholic. The first-year experience is rooted in the Catholic intellectual tradition.

The Newman Guide notes that: "All student residence halls are appropriately single-sex, but regrettably opposite-sex visitation is allowed in student rooms until late at night, with no open-door policy." Major benefactors are Napa Institute founder Tim Busch (a leading US Catholic conservative philanthropist) and his wife Steph. Busch also serves on the university board. The Busch School of Business has an acclaimed programme which combines Catholic and

business principles, much as his Napa Institute Summer conference does. The average cost after aid is \$33,000, the acceptance rate is 86% and the graduation rate is 72%.

Christendom College Front Royal, Virginia

Founded in 1977 by Catholic scholar Dr Warren Carroll in reaction to the rise of secularism in American Catholic campuses, Christendom is a small (500 undergraduates) but spiritually energised college whose Front Royal campus looks over the Shenandoah River and the Blue Ridge Mountains.

With endorsements from the likes of George Weigel, Clarence Thomas, Pope Benedict XVI and Cardinal Burke, Christendom has a strong intellectual following as one of the leading "faithful" Catholic colleges and is endorsed by the Newman Guide. Leading Catholic author and commentator Weigel has described Christendom as "one of the best liberal arts colleges in America". He singled out its "vibrant Catholic atmosphere that permeates every aspect of the college experience". Pope Benedict XVI described the "distinguished record of Christendom" as making an "outstanding contribution" to Catholic life in the US. From being a "little-known secret" in Virginia, Christendom is "now a national model of faithful liberal arts education and Catholic formation," according to the Newman Guide. A new Christ the King Chapel, with seating for 550, has recently opened, adding to the rich spiritual experience of the students.

Feast days are celebrated with special meals. There are 10 varsity sports teams and over

30 clubs. There are six Catholic theology and philosophy courses "with a strong emphasis" on St Thomas Aquinas' teachings. The professors are Catholic and make a "Catholic Profession of Faith". There is an option to study for a term or more in Rome. There is daily Confession, Adoration, Rosary and Liturgy of the Hours. Many alumni have gone on to seek religious vocations, including more than 100 priests. There are fairly strict "no visitation" rules for opposite-sex residential hall visits.

The Christendom goal is "to provide a truly Catholic education in fidelity to the Magisterium of the Catholic Church and thereby to prepare students for their role of restoring all things in Christ". Its core curriculum is designed to help students "grow in wisdom and virtue". Alumni go on to graduate schools such as Notre Dame, Catholic University, Harvard and Oxford.

Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas has said: "This is a wonderful, wonderful, college... a decidedly Catholic college." Pope John Paul II said that the college – founded during his papacy – "is doing a great work for the Church".

University of Dallas Irving, Texas

The University of Dallas (UD) is a private Catholic university in Irving, Texas which is described by the *Newman Guide* as having "a national reputation for fidelity to Catholicism and strong academics". There is the option of a semester at the university's campus outside Rome. A Dominican priory is on campus and a Cistercian monastery is nearby.

UD's 2021-22 average net price for full-time beginning students was \$27,250, the acceptance rate is 58%, and the graduation rate is 72%. UD students share a formative experience in studying the traditional works of Western civilisation. Established in 1956, the college prides itself on its extensive liberal arts curriculum. Furthermore, the college's core curriculum is an opportunity to inquire into the fundamental aspects of being and our relationship with God, nature and our fellow human beings. In autumn 2022, UD enrolled 1,453 undergraduate students of which Catholic students accounted for 75%. Religious character is a core part of the college ethos, whose motto is "the Catholic University for Independent Thinkers".

Although it is not publicly known how many of its professors are Catholic, the college is staunchly faithful to Catholic doctrine and ▶



SPOTLIGHT ON...

Stephen Minnis President of Benedictine College

What's your favourite Bible verse?

John 2:5: The wedding at Cana: "Do whatever He tells you."

Which church has the most meaning to you?

The Santissima Annunziata in Florence, where I asked Our Lady for help for the college and she helped us beyond what we requested.

What holy music do you return to?

All music that brings people closer to God.

Who is your favourite saint or pope?

Besides the Virgin Mary, I have a devotion to St Joseph, St John Paul II, St Benedict, and St Maximilian Kolbe.

How has your faith shaped your career?

It is very rare when someone's personal mission matches with the mission of their work, but it does in my case. I am continually drawn to building up community – teams, relationships, friendships – doing this in a Christ-centred way, and continually seeking the truth. In other words, community, faith and scholarship.

Where would you like to go on pilgrimage, and who would be your companion?

I would like to go the Holy Land with my wife, Amy. I am also interested in going to the Marian apparition sites.

What book or film most influenced you at college?

My constitutional law textbook in my junior year influenced me the most to go into law.

What is on your reading list?

I have been reading biographies about George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Dwight Eisenhower, George Marshall, George Patton and Padre Pio.

How would you like your students to remember their days at Benedictine College?

If you live the mission of community, faith and scholarship while you are here, you will live the mission after you graduate and bring community, faith and scholarship to your communities, parishes and workplaces as little league coaches and scout masters and influence those around to transform the culture. CH



Catholic University of America



SPOTLIGHT ON...

Jonathan J Sanford President of the University of Dallas

What's your favourite Bible verse?

John 14:6: "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." Jesus is, as St. Justin Martyr calls him, the true philosopher. Revealing to us the way to follow, the truth about ourselves, the world, and God, and the ultimate source of our lives.

Which church or cathedral has the most meaning to you?

The Basilica of our Lady of Gaudalupe in Mexico City. We go there to look upon our Mother, and find that she has been gazing upon us.

Who has been your greatest spiritual influence?

St Thomas Aquinas.

Who is your favourite saint or pope?

It has to be a tie between St Joseph and St John Paul II.

What holy music do you return to?

Gregorian chant.

Where would you like to go on pilgrimage, and who would be your companion?

I would like to return to Mexico City to visit again with Our Lady of Guadalupe. I have been blessed to visit Rome several times, and will return again to visit more of the holy places there. It is my great hope eventually to go the Holy Land. My remarkably generous and adventurous wife has been my companion on my pilgrimages thus far, and, God willing, on those to come. We both would love to take some if not all of our nine children and many grandchildren on pilgrimage with us.

How has your faith shaped your work or career?

My work as president has brought the many other facets of my career to a point of particular focus in which I am able to promote the good work of many others through my efforts.

What book most influenced you at college?

Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*.

What is on your reading list?

Josef Pieper's *Leisure: the Basis of Culture*; Dietrich von Hildebrand's *The Art of Living*; Iain McGihlcris't's *The Master and His Emissary*; II-II of St Thomas Aquinas's *Summa theologiae* and Jane Austen's *Emma*. CH

◀ Catholic teaching, with twice-daily Mass, Bible study and Confession times four days a week. Dallas University President Jonathan Sanford says his establishment "is not run by a religious community, but its ethos is formed by a wealth of them". An "open-bolt" policy requires student doors (of whatever sex) to be slightly open at all times. Sport is strong, with 15 varsity teams in the Southern Collegiate conference of NCAA Division III. Another plus, apart from the fees, is that the charism of the university draws Catholic students from across America, making it a spiritual melting pot for Catholic students wanting a high-level academic education rooted in meaning and purpose. "Our students are remarkably joyful," says President Sanford. "They are happy in the simple human sense: eager to learn, communicative, and marked by their rich friendships with each other, their professors, and God. They remind me daily of why my efforts as president are worthwhile." Student majority: conservative.
WSJ ranking: 296/400

**University of Dayton
Dayton, Ohio**

The University of Dayton (UD) is a private Catholic research university in Dayton, Ohio. Founded in 1850 by the Society of Mary, it is one of three Marianist universities in the United States and the second-largest private university in Ohio. The campus is in the city's southern portion and spans 388 acres on both sides of the Great Miami River. The campus is noted for the Immaculate Conception Chapel and the University of Dayton Arena. It serves about 8,100 undergraduate students. With an acceptance rate of 74% and a graduation rate of 81%, UD students pay around \$32,148 per year after aid and generally have an SAT score in the range of 1160-1350. Popular majors include Marketing, Finance, and Mechanical Engineering. UD is a high-flier for its national leadership in recruiting, supporting and graduating lower-income students.
WSJ 2024 rank: 77

**Fordham University
New York City, New York**

With 15,000 students spread across nine schools and campuses in the Fordham neighbourhood of the Bronx, in Westchester and at the Lincoln Center, Fordham is a top-ranked US Jesuit university. Alumni include Colin Powell, four cardinals of the Catholic

Church, US governors and ambassadors, many billionaires, two directors of the CIA, and Academy Award winners. The board of trustees often boasts names of the most influential Catholic philanthropists in America. In 2014, the university exceeded fundraising targets by raising more than \$540 million and renovated its Lincoln Center campus and famous Law School.

Despite former president Donald Trump being an alumnus, the campus is progressive and liberal in outlook, with one student reporting to the 2024 College Free Speech Rankings that: "I did not feel comfortable discussing my views on abortion policies on my social media due to potential replies from people." Another student said: "What is taught in school is extremely left-leaning". Another, in 2023, reported "pressure to conform on controversial topics".

The acceptance rate is 45.8%, the average incoming student's grade point average (GPA) is 3.64, and the tuition is \$60,335. There are numerous first-class athletic programmes, with the university supporting 21 men's and women's athletic teams, including the famous Fordham Rams football team. Track and field stars include Olympic gold medallist Tom Courtney. There is a distinguished business school at Lincoln Center. Tania Tetlow became the first woman and lay president of Fordham on 1 July, 2023, succeeding Father Joseph McShane. Campus life is urban, and the Lincoln Center campus offers many arts and cultural opportunities. Religious life is not noticeably emphasised, with the campus ministry providing multi-faith (including Judaism and Islam) programming for more than 15

faith traditions. Catholic retreats are held at the university's McGrath House of Prayer in Goshen. Student majority: liberal.
WSJ ranking: 185/400

**Franciscan University
of Steubenville
Steubenville, Ohio**

Established in 1946 as a college for Catholic Second World War veterans, and reformed under Father Michael Scanlan in the 1970s, the Franciscan University of Steubenville is a private university in Ohio, west of Pittsburgh. It has a reputation for devout spiritual fidelity and is often regarded as a "model" Catholic university, claiming to have the largest number of students in theology, catechetics and philosophy of any Catholic college in the US. Some 96% of the students are Catholic, as are 94% are faculty members. The university has some 3,600 students, including 2,602 students on campus, in 40 undergraduate and eight graduate degree programmes. Average tuition after aid is \$19,000, the acceptance rate is 68% and the graduation rate is 77%.

Although there are dormitory chapels, many students prefer to pray on campus at "The Port", a tiny stone Eucharistic Adoration chapel built to resemble that in Assisi. There are four Masses every Sunday including – unusually for a US college – one weekly Mass in the Extraordinary Form (at least before the Latin Mass restrictions ordered by Pope Francis). There is a community Rosary and a monthly Festival of Praise. A sense of spiritual community is fostered by a "faith household" system which brings students ▶



Fordham University

◀ and faculty together under a spiritual adviser. Residence halls are strictly single-sex, with the Newman Guide nodding approvingly at the “limited hours” of opposite-sex visits allowed. It adds that for those seeking “a strong faith formation and education in a charismatic Catholic environment”, at an affordable price, the university represents an “outstanding opportunity”, with the student enthusiasm for serving God being “refreshing”. There is also the option to attend a semester at Franciscan’s campus in central Austria.

The university has, fortunately, moved on from various scandals involving a former chaplain, Father Sam Tiesi, followed by two other priests, accused of making “unwelcome advances” to women at the university, following a full apology from former president Fr Sean O Sheridan. The college also hosts the Fr Michael Scanlan Scholarship Competition, which sees two students awarded full-tuition scholarships and admission to the Fr Michael Scanlan Scholarship Society. Student majority: conservative.

Georgetown University Washington, DC

Founded by Bishop John Carroll in 1789, Georgetown is the oldest and largest Jesuit Catholic university in America. It has 11 undergraduate and graduate schools in the US capital, including the Walsh School of Foreign Service, McDonough School of Business, a campus in Qatar and a student exchange programme with King’s College, London. Georgetown is one of the most prestigious and progressive universities in the United States, although not all students – liberal students



Georgetown University

heavily outnumber conservatives - would identify it as having a primarily Catholic mission. Students can enjoy an urban lifestyle that includes access rights to the Library of Congress, the Smithsonian and the Kennedy Center, as well as the bars and cafes of M Street in historic Georgetown. The campus overlooks the Potomac River and the John J Burns Library holds a collection of novelist and *Catholic Herald* writer Graham Greene’s correspondence, manuscripts, and even his personal library.

It is a mid-size institution with 7,213 undergraduate students and an endowment of \$3.2 billion. Admission is very competitive as the Georgetown acceptance rate is 12%. Popular subjects include International Relations, Political Science and Government, and Finance, with the opportunity to intern in Capitol Hill as well as Washington, DC media companies. Students pay an average of \$23,000 per annum after aid. The school’s athletic teams are nicknamed the Hoyas and include a men’s basketball team, which has won a record eight Big East championships and appeared in five Final Fours. One in 10 undergraduates is a college athlete. Georgetown’s campus ministry offers Masses, Confession, prayer services and interfaith outreach to Jews and Muslims.

Georgetown scored badly (245th out of 254) in a September 2023 survey of free speech at American colleges from the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression (FIRE). They flagged the experience of Georgetown law student William Spruance, who was suspended for criticising the university’s Covid mask mandate. He was also instructed to be subjected to a psychiatric evaluation. Another student reported feeling compelled to

use the term “birthing person” when making comments about maternal mortality rates – a controversial term employed by transgender activists to describe women. The Catholic News Agency reported another being harassed “for expressing a typical but conservative opinion online”. According to the FIRE report, Georgetown reportedly has nearly four liberal students for every one conservative student.

WSJ ranking: 12/400

Gonzaga University Spokane, Washington

Gonzaga University is a private Jesuit university in Spokane, Washington. Founded in 1887 by Joseph Cataldo, an Italian-born priest and Jesuit missionary, the university is named after the young Jesuit saint Aloysius Gonzaga. The average cost after aid is \$31,000, the acceptance rate is 76% and the graduation rate is 85%. Gonzaga is well known for its championship basketball programme. There are 7,200 students, 4,850 of whom are undergraduates. There are academic centres for lifelong learning, multicultural education, and the study of hate.

“We are a thriving Catholic community where evidence of a strong faith community exists throughout the campus,” says the university’s president, Thayne M McCulloch. “Jesuits and diocesan seminarians are part of the everyday learning environment, and our core curriculum is modelled after Ignatian pedagogy. Our students are encouraged to lead and serve the professions and communities of which they will become a part. Our students continually surprise and inspire me with their intelligence, drive and commitment. They are creative and imaginative and generous – to me, they truly represent hope for a better world.”

At Gonzaga, Jesuit Catholic values claim to inform an ethic of social justice that supports students’ spiritual development. In addition to the campus’s many mission and ministry offerings, religious study and Mass, “our community seeks out the Divine in all things,” McCulloch says. However, in November 2022, Gonzaga University rejected a request by the school’s pro-life club to host Liz Wheeler, an American pro-life and conservative commentator, for a campus lecture sponsored by Young America’s Foundation. Key strengths are offering degrees at the undergraduate, graduate and doctoral levels, including the jurist doctorate (Law). McCulloch says that Gonzaga provides an excellent Catholic education that ▶



SPOTLIGHT ON...

Thayne McCulloch President of Gonzaga University

What’s your favourite Bible verse?

Matthew 28:19-20. “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

“And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.”

Who is your favourite saint?

St Catherine of Siena.

Which church has the most meaning to you?

The Church of the Gesù, in Rome.

What holy music do you keep returning to?

Sacred music performed with the organ.

Your greatest spiritual influence?

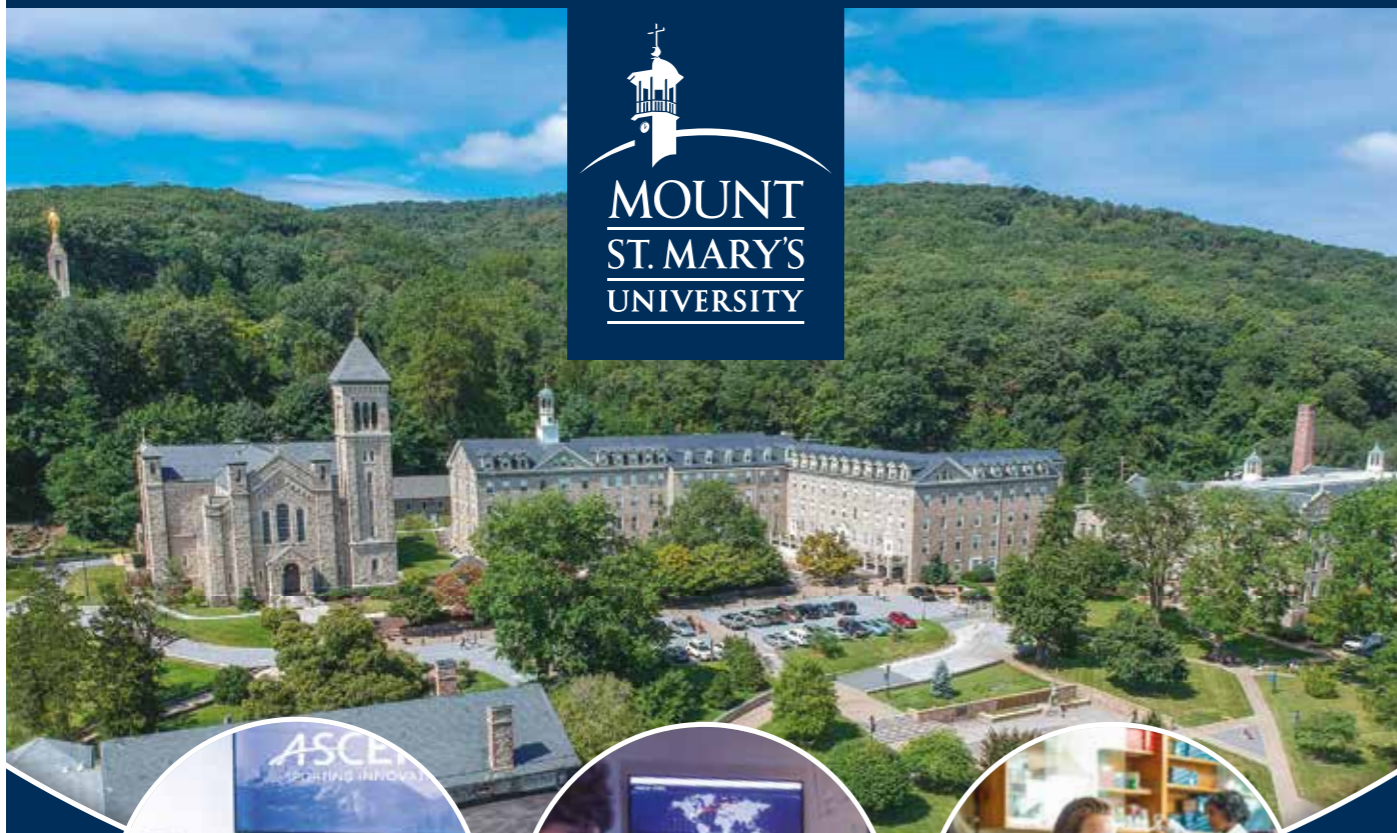
I have been deeply impacted by the life and spiritual exercises of St Ignatius of Loyola.

How has your faith shaped your work and career?

I was raised in the Church and educated in the Church. The many individuals – both religious and lay – who were part of my educational formation left an indelible mark on the vocation I myself chose, as well as the values I try to bring, every day, to my work.

Where would you like to go on a pilgrimage?

In the footsteps of St Ignatius of Loyola – on the Ignatian Camino – in Spain. CH



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SPOTLIGHT ON...

Seamus Carey President of Iona University

What's your favourite Bible verse?

The Beatitudes.

Which church has the most meaning to you?

St. Patrick's Cathedral, New York, which was started by Archbishop John Hughes, an Irish immigrant.

What holy music do you keep returning to?

Pastorale by JS Bach.

Can you remember which book had a big influence on you at college?

Being and Time, the 1927 magnum opus of German philosopher Martin Heidegger.

Who is your great spiritual influence?

Michael McCarthy, Professor of Philosophy Emeritus, at Vassar College.

Who is your favourite saint?

St Columba.

What is on your reading list?

A biography of William James, and *Passing Time in Ballymenone* by Henry Glassie. CH

◀ “underscores that their learning is a search for the Truth, which is where God is found. This education is not for their own advancement only; it is to be generously shared for the advancement of the common good.”

WSJ ranking: 136/400

College of the Holy Cross
Worcester, Massachusetts

Founded in 1843, the College of the Holy Cross is a private Jesuit liberal arts college in Worcester, Massachusetts, some 45 miles west of Boston. Holy Cross was the first Catholic college in New England and is one of the oldest in the US, with a highly distinguished list of alumni including Clarence Thomas, Nobel and Pulitzer prize winners, US Senators Peter Welch (Vermont) and Bob Casey Jr (Pennsylvania) and immunologist Dr Anthony Fauci.

There are 3,210 students enrolled. The average cost after aid is \$33,000. The acceptance rate is 43% and the graduation rate is 90%. Holy Cross has a strong athletic tradition, especially in football, (teams are called the Crusaders) and competes in the Patriot League. The college offers a broad array of spiritual resources, although the college has been described by *Time* magazine as “the cradle of the Catholic left” in 1974, since the school educated Philip Berrigan and the socialist Michael Harrington, author of the influential book on poverty *The Other America*.

Holy Cross continues its liberal Jesuit tradition with controversies over abortion, LGBTQ+ issues and putting on the *Vagina Monologues*. The campus has hosted conferences from Planned Parenthood and NARAL. In 2007, Bishop Robert McManus asked President Fr McFarland to cancel an event sponsored by the Massachusetts Alliance on Teen Pregnancy and threatened to revoke the Catholic status of the college if the event was not cancelled. The college refused to do so, saying it was only renting space and was not involved in the event.

WSJ ranking: 60/400

Iona University
New Rochelle, New York

Iona University, with campuses in New Rochelle and Bronxville, New York, was ranked 19th out of 400 for best student experience in the *Wall Street Journal's* “2024 Best Colleges in the US” guide, and a very respectable 66th overall. Not bad for a Catholic college that only

officially became a university in July 2022. Founded in 1940 by the Congregation of Christian Brothers, the transition to university – with a new campus in Bronxville – was led by President Seamus Carey. Becoming a university, he says, “better reflects our growth as an institution and the academic excellence that distinguishes an Iona education. It also makes Iona more competitive both across the country and around the world.”

The average cost after aid is \$29,000, the acceptance rate is 93%, and the graduation rate is 64%. There are 3,600 students, and a 1:15 faculty/student ratio. Iona remains steadfastly “committed to the pillars of faith, service and the transformative power of education”, inspired by the example of the Christian Brothers founder, Blessed Edmund Rice, an Irish businessman who followed St Columba in devoting his life to educating the young boys of Ireland. “You can feel both their spirits every day, across campus,” says Carey.

The transition process from a college to a university has been a “celebratory” experience, combined with being awarded high rankings by the latest *Wall Street Journal* colleges guide. The new campus has established the New York-Presbyterian Iona School of Health Sciences and attracts talented and highly motivated students. “As the demand for highly skilled health care professionals continues to grow, this premier new school will help to fill a critical need not just for our students, but for the individuals and communities they are being trained to serve,” says Carey.

Iona is known for its star Gaels basketball teams, for both men (coached by Tobin Anderson) and women (coached by Angelika Szumilo). The Iona community sells out home

games and throws pep rallies to send the teams off to the NCAA tournament. Iona's men's basketball team has been the leading team in the New York metropolitan area for 25 years, with a league record 14 MAAC tournament titles and 16 NCAA tournament appearances. “We're excited to keep that momentum going with our renowned head coaches for both the men's and women's teams,” adds Carey.

What sets Iona students apart is their dedication “to helping other people”, says the president. “They work together to engage the communities outside our campus. Their commitment to doing good is a powerful antidote to the cynicism that pervades our public narratives. Our students perform over 80,000 hours of service each year.”

The Catholic faith is incorporated into college life through the Office of Mission & Ministry, with the liberal arts curriculum requiring all first-year students to take a 3-credit course called the Columba Cornerstone, named after St Columba. This immerses students in the history, culture and spirituality of the saint and the Christian values of Western civilisation. Mass is celebrated five times a week.

Through Iona's connection to the Christian Brothers, Iona students also have the chance to serve on mission trips both locally, across the United States and around the world, including Ireland.

One key strength is being a “close-knit, caring” community. “Our small class sizes, engaged professors and network of over 50,000 alumni around the world provide a distinguished learning experience as well as unparalleled internships and career opportunities, especially given our ▶



College of the Holy Cross



John Paul the Great Catholic University

◀ proximity to New York City,” says Carey. Iona attracts bright, curious students eager to achieve for themselves and for others. Clearly a Catholic university on the rise, Iona welcomed its largest freshman class in five years. Since 2019, new student enrollment is up nearly 30% despite the difficulties in the sector. **WSJ ranking: 66/400**

John Paul the Great Catholic University
Escondido, California

John Paul the Great Catholic University – known as JPCatholic – is a private Catholic university located in Escondido, California in the San Diego area. It was founded in 2003 under the name New Catholic University. After the death of Pope John Paul II in April 2005, the board of trustees decided to change the name to honour the late pope, while retaining the word Catholic in the official name to emphasise the priorities of the school. It is a small institution with an enrolment of 266 undergraduate students. JPCatholic’s acceptance rate is 79%. Popular majors include Communications, Business, and Liberal Arts and Humanities. Of JPCatholic’s students, 62% graduate.

JPCatholic is unique, says President Derry Connolly, in being a community of student artists and innovators, centred around the beauty of the Catholic faith. The integration of storytelling, visual and creative arts with a Catholic worldview is centred on the mission to “impact culture for Christ”. JPCatholic fills

“a unique and desperately needed role”, he adds, in what the patron Pope St John Paul called a New Evangelisation – “new in its ardour, methods and expression”. “With popular culture often advancing depravity, our postmodern society is desperate for the meaning and purpose contained at the heart of Christ’s message,” says Connolly. What JPCatholic offers is an antidote to moral relativism. Every year, students and faculty produce a feature-length film as part of the curriculum, giving students a hands-on opportunity to earn IMDb credits before they even graduate. “I’m so proud of the level of professionalism and Christian witness that our students bring to those sets,” Connolly says. The Catholic faith is integrated into college life with Mass and Confession offered every day. The curriculum includes a rich study of theology and philosophy. “Our unique environment has attracted such an amazing group of talented students who are passionate about using their gifts to glorify God,” Connolly adds.

Loyola Marymount University
Los Angeles, California

Situated on a magnificent hilltop campus in Los Angeles with its affiliated Loyola Law School campus downtown, Loyola Marymount University is a private Jesuit college whose campus boasts two dramatic new buildings, the School of Film and Television Undergraduate Building, and the Drollinger Family Stage, an outdoor performance pavilion, both designed by architect Carlos Madrid III to “serve as student magnets that foster and sustain campus life”.

It is located on the west side of the city near



University of Notre Dame

Playa Vista. This year saw record applications – up 8% including more than 1,600 first-year students from 38 states and 65 nations, with an academic average weighted GPA of 4.01. The average cost after aid is \$35,000, the acceptance rate is 46%, and the graduation rate is 79%. It has an active campus ministry programme reflecting the school’s Jesuit and Marymount traditions. Student majority: liberal **WSJ ranking: 269/400**

Marquette University
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Marquette University is a Catholic, Jesuit university located near the heart of downtown Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Established by the Society of Jesus as Marquette College in 1881, it was founded by John Martin Henni, the first Bishop of the Diocese of Milwaukee. Named after 17th-century missionary and explorer Jacques Marquette, it became the first coeducational Catholic university in the world in 1909. It is an average-sized institution with an enrolment of 7,400 undergraduate students. Admissions are competitive as the Marquette acceptance rate is 86% and students have an SAT range of 1180-1360. Graduating 81% of students, Marquette alumni go on to earn a starting salary of \$62,600 and the average tuition after aid is \$33,600.

WSJ 2024 rank: 56

University of Notre Dame
Notre Dame, Indiana

The University of Notre Dame is a private Catholic research university in Notre Dame, Indiana, north of the city of South Bend. ▶



SPOTLIGHT ON...

Fr Kenneth Sicard
President of Providence College

What was your career break?

When my predecessor, Fr Brian Shanley, stepped down, I was elected as president. Note that I had been his Executive Vice President for 15 years, so the transition was natural.

What’s your favourite Bible verse?

From the Benedictus: “In the tender compassion of our God, the dawn from on high shall break upon us.” (Luke 1:78)

Which church or cathedral has the most meaning to you?

Our College chapel, St Dominic Chapel, and our Priory Chapel.

What holy music do you keep returning to?

My Dominican community chants the psalms of Morning and Evening prayer daily.

Who has been your greatest spiritual influence?

Ss Dominic and Thomas Aquinas.

Your favourite saint and Pope?

St Dominic and Pope Francis.

How has your faith shaped your work and career?

My life as a Dominican priest shapes and informs every aspect of my professional life as President of Providence College.

Where would you like to go on pilgrimage?

I visit Rome regularly, making it a point to include numerous religious sites. I will continue to do this.

Can you remember which book or film had the most influence on you at college?

That was a long time ago! From the Development of Western Civilisation programme, the religious works that influenced me most were Augustine’s *Confessions*, Dante’s *Divine Comedy* and Milton’s *Paradise Lost*. I also enjoyed and was inspired by the 1966 film *A Man for All Seasons*, based on the story of Sir Thomas More.

What is on your reading list?

Mindless fiction to read on vacation, as well as *What We Hold in Trust: Rediscovering the Purpose of Catholic Higher Education* by Briel, Goodpaster and Naughton. CH

◀ Founded by French priest Edward Sorin in 1842, it has long been regarded as one of the Holy Trinity of premier Catholic Colleges in America. Its mission is to be defined “by its Catholic character to be a powerful force for good in the world”. It excels at sports and fostering leadership with alumni that include Supreme Justice Amy Coney Barrett and Brian Moynihan, CEO of Bank of America.

The average cost after aid is \$32,000, the acceptance rate is 15%, and the graduation rate is 96%. Long renowned for its Fighting Irish sports teams, in recent decades its academic programmes have been strengthened. The School of Architecture awards the annual Driehaus Architecture Prize, with the school known for its New Classical architecture. There are over 40 Holy Cross priests on campus and 100 Masses are celebrated weekly in the church and residence hall chapels. There are over 8,000 students on the picturesque 1,200-acre Indiana campus. Campus life is vibrant. Corby’s Bar is a longstanding social centre. Football game days in South Bend see an invasion of corporate jets.

There has been controversy for honours awarded to pro-abortion politicians such as presidents Joe Biden and Barack Obama, but its values and ethos remain very much Catholic; 45% of students say heckling a speaker to prevent them from talking on campus is “never acceptable”. Notre Dame came 176th out of 254 in the 2023 FIRE campus rankings for free speech. Its many Catholic centres and institutes include the de Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture, the John J Reilly Center for Science, Technology and Values, the Medieval Institute, the McGrath Institute for Church Life, and the Notre Dame Institute for Global Investing.



Santa Clara University

There is also a successful Notre Dame presence in London with its London Global Gateway programme; this London branch acquired the GK Chesterton collection with a dedication ceremony led by the college president, the Rev John Jenkins. The *Princeton Review* has described Notre Dame’s 135,000-strong alumni network as the best in America. Its endowment is worth some \$18 billion.

Last year, Marcus Freeman, the university’s football coach, converted to Catholicism. His favourite saying since coaching at Notre Dame is: “This place will change you if you let it.” It’s a good summary of why Notre Dame remains the Catholic college to beat. Student majority: conservative

WSJ ranking: 32/400

Providence College Providence, Rhode Island

Set on an attractive campus in North Providence, Rhode Island, Providence College is a private Catholic university. Founded in 1917 by the Dominican Order and the local diocese, it offers 47 undergraduate majors and 17 graduate programmes. The average cost is \$37,000 after aid, the acceptance rate is 58% and the graduation rate is 87%. There are 4,700 students. Notable alumni include Raymond Flynn the former basketball star, Boston mayor and US ambassador to the Holy See. It partners with Portsmouth Abbey School in presenting the Portsmouth Institute. This autumn saw the largest first-year class in the history of the college. The college describes itself as “unapologetically Catholic”. Students are invited to view their education as a journey toward truth by way of faith and reason, such as the practice of *disputatio*. All undergraduates are required to take two Theology and two Philosophy requirements, as well as a two-year Development of Western Civilisation programme. From this distinctive Catholic liberal arts foundation, many also enter the School of Business. There is also a School of Nursing and Health Sciences which has a strong emphasis on Catholic teachings regarding the sanctity of life.

There is a “robust presence” of Dominican friars and sisters on campus, many under 40 years old (there is a friar assigned as a chaplain to each athletic team and residence hall).

The board of trustees includes six Dominican friars, and the Bishop of Providence supports its Catholic and Dominican identity. There is an RCIA programme designed for those who identify as Catholic but have not been raised in church-going families. Attendance at Mass and devotions is strong, with healthy student numbers. There are three daily Masses offered during the week and a further three on Sundays. “Our students are genuinely happy here,” says President (Father) Kenneth Sicard. “The number of admitted students has remained consistently strong. We are financially sound, and our campus facilities are the best among our peers. Most importantly, we do not shy away from our Catholic identity.”

Father Kenneth’s leavers advice is for students to think of Providence “as a time when they developed into the men and women God created them to be”.

WSJ ranking: 135/400

Santa Clara University Santa Clara, California

Santa Clara University is a private Jesuit university in Santa Clara, California. Established in 1851, it is the oldest operating institution of higher learning in California. The university’s campus surrounds the historic Mission Santa Clara de Asís, founded in 1777.

Located an hour south of San Francisco, tuition costs \$43,000 after aid, it has an acceptance rate of 54% and a graduation rate of 91%. The student-to-faculty ratio is a low 11:1, and the curriculum is supportive of LGBT+ identities. There are just over 9,000 students. It was ranked 322nd out of 400 for “student experience” in the *Wall Street Journal* college rankings. Student majority: liberal.

WSJ ranking: 75/400

Thomas Aquinas College Santa Paula, California and Northfield, Massachusetts

Thomas Aquinas College was founded in 1971 by Catholic professors devoted to the Catholic Faith and the study of original writings by the greatest minds of Western culture. No majors, no academic departments, no textbooks, no lectures – only Catholic formation, Great Books and Socratic discussion.

The campus is located in the hills east of Los Angeles and has a capped enrolment to preserve the small college environment. As a result of growing interest, a second

campus was opened in the hills of Northfield, Massachusetts, in 2019.

Nearly all students are Catholic and enjoy a strong spiritual life on campus, including daily Masses when classes are not scheduled and even Extraordinary Form Mass on most days. There is daily Confession, Rosary, and Liturgy of the Hours.

Thomas More University Crestview Hills, Kentucky

Thomas More University is a private Roman Catholic university in Crestview Hills, Kentucky with about 2,000 full and part-time students. The university was founded in 1921 by the local Benedictine Sisters as Villa Madonna College. President Lyndon B. Johnson attended its 1968 new dedication ceremony after it moved campus. Kentucky’s Council on Postsecondary Education formally granted Thomas More formal university status in July 2018. The current president is Joseph L. Chillo, Jr, formerly an executive director at St. Thomas Aquinas College. He has steered the college towards its very respectable ranking in the WSJ national college rankings.

“Our inclusion on the Wall Street Journal’s 2024 Best Colleges is a testament to the high-quality, Catholic Liberal Arts education that we provide at Thomas More,” said President Chillo, “Our outstanding faculty and staff prioritize student success and high impact practices while guiding students to discover the ultimate meaning of life, their place in the world, and their responsibility to others.”

With an acceptance rate of 96%, Thomas More students pay around \$19,819 per year after financial aid with SAT scores in the range

of 1010-1140. There has been an extensive building expansion programme. Key buildings on campus include the Monte Casino Chapel, Benedictine Library, Mary, Seat of Wisdom Chapel, the Zembrod Center for Leadership, Entrepreneurship & Innovation, the Center for Faith, Mission, and Catholic Education, and the College of Business. There are both coed and single sex residence halls. A highlight is the Thomas More University Observatory which includes computerised telescopes, CCD digital imaging camera systems, and a sliding roof for celestial observation projects.

The most popular majors include Business, Liberal Arts and Humanities, and Nursing. The college sports teams are known as The Saints and alumni include several NBA basketball players and Daniel K. Richter, award-winning historian of early America.

WSJ 2024 rank: 207

University of St Thomas Houston, Texas

St Thomas (UST) is a highly nationally-rated private Catholic university located in Houston, Texas. It is a small institution with an enrolment of 2,212 undergraduate students. With an impressive ranking in the 2024 *WSJ* colleges guide, it has welcomed its largest-ever incoming class this autumn. President Richard Ludwick told the *Herald*: “We have been blessed with consecutive years of growth in the recent past and continue to grow and thrive as our emphasis on Catholicity and community increases.” It was founded by the Basilian Fathers in 1947 and is the only Catholic university in the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston. The St Thomas acceptance rate is ▶



Thomas Aquinas College



Thomas More University



SPOTLIGHT ON...

Tim Collins President of Walsh University

What was your career break?

Serving as the seventh president of Walsh University is my third career. Opportunities disguised as challenges became “breaks” when I chose to try to overcome rather than retreat. I am also a retired US Air Force fighter pilot, having commanded operational combat forces around the world.

What’s your favourite Bible verse?

“Entrust your works to the Lord, and your plans will succeed.” Proverbs 16:3

Which churches mean a lot to you?

The US Air Force Academy Cadet Chapel, in Colorado; the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe, in Mexico City; and Our Lady Star of the Sea, in Cape May, New Jersey..

Who has been your greatest spiritual influence?

Fr Michael Scanlan TOR (1931-2017), a Catholic priest of the Franciscan Third Order Regular, was prophetic. He was gentle and inspirational, yet firm, and he had total trust in Christ.

Who is your favourite saint and pope?

St Dominic, the patron saint of astronomers and natural scientists, and Pope John Paul II.

How has your faith shaped your work and career?

The changing nature of my purpose shaped both my work and career. But what I have come to realise is that I also need to be open to where the spirit is moving me.

Where would you like to go on pilgrimage, and who would you bring as your companion?

My bride of 41 years was with me for three pilgrimages – in the Footsteps of St Francis, the Footsteps of St John Paul II, and the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe. I hope to go on pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

What holy music do you keep returning to?

“Be Still” from *Adoration from Carmel*, by the Carmelite Sisters of the Most Sacred Heart of Los Angeles.

Can you remember which book or film had the most influence on you when you were at college?

As a US Air Force Academy graduate, we didn’t watch movies. However, reading *The Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle’s best-known work on ethics, became foundational to my adult life.

What is on your reading list?

The Moral Wisdom of the Church by Fr Robert J Spitzer. CH

◀ 98%. Popular majors include Liberal Arts and Humanities, Nursing, and Psychology. Of the students, 62% graduate. St Thomas students pay an average of \$20,130 per year after receiving aid. The president highlighted the “diverse” student body, with a baccalaureate Mass in four languages to accommodate the Catholic community. “Even when people graduate from UST, what sticks with them is the love and acceptance they felt in this Catholic community,” Ludwick says.

WSJ ranking: 158/400

Villanova University Villanova, Pennsylvania

Villanova University is a highly rated private Roman Catholic research university in Villanova, Pennsylvania, 12 miles west of central Philadelphia. It was founded by the Augustinians in 1842 and named after St Thomas of Villanova. The average cost after aid is \$35,000, the acceptance rate is 25% and the graduation rate is 89%. There are schools of liberal arts, engineering and nursing, among others. The only Augustinian Catholic university in the nation, Villanova values a personalised experience where teachers and students are partners in learning and scholarly inquiry. From undergraduate to doctoral students, Villanovans aim to be intellectually inspired, morally grounded, and globally minded. With 9,000 students and a 125-acre campus, the school boasts excellent athletics and top-ranked basketball teams. The Villanova Wildcats, the highly successful men’s basketball team, compete in the NCAA Division I Big East Conference. Freshmen are guaranteed housing for their first three years. In 2023, Villanovans



won 24 Fulbright Scholarships for overseas study, and President Reverend Peter Donohue announced a \$20 million gift from Bancel Philanthropies for scholarship aid. The university has an active Campus Ministry and hosts an annual Special Olympics Fall Festival. Alumni include Jill Biden and actor Bradley Cooper.

WSJ ranking: 62/400

Walsh University North Canton, Ohio

Walsh is a well-rated private Catholic university located in North Canton, Ohio in the Cleveland area. Walsh College became Walsh University in 1993. The university offers more than 70 undergraduate majors, seven graduate programmes and a good sports programme. It is a small institution with an enrolment of 2,400 students. Walsh’s acceptance rate is

80%. Popular majors include Nursing, Business, and Biology, with 69% of students graduating. The Catholic ethos of Walsh University serves as the foundation for the institution’s values, mission and identity. It is a faith-based education, valuing commitment to service and an inclusive environment. Inspired by the charism of Walsh’s and the Brothers of Christian Instruction, Walsh’s core curriculum places an emphasis on community service and social justice, equipping students to become educated “change-makers” and “leaders in service”. The university’s *Spectator* newspaper reported that around 60 students participated in the March for Life rally in Washington, DC in February this year. All faith backgrounds are welcomed, and the college promotes interfaith dialogue. The culture combines academic excellence with spiritual formation so that graduates can “discover their life purpose and prosper”. Walsh was ranked fourth by Military Friendly Schools for a private university which offers doctorate programmes. President Dr Tim Collins is a graduate of the National War College. His military decorations include the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart. “As a proud member of the Yellow Ribbon Program, we have worked hard to establish a welcoming campus that supports all those who have served our country,” says Collins. Walsh looks at student relationships not as a four to six-year relationship but a 40 to 60-year one. “We lay the groundwork early to establish a partnership with our students to serve as their educational partner for life. Whether they are returning for professional development, a new degree or a reunion, they will always have a home at Walsh University,” says Collins. CH



WHERE LEARNING FLOURISHES

St. Mary's University in San Antonio, Texas, is a private liberal arts institution and the oldest Catholic university in the state. Through small classes, close student-faculty relationships and an engaged community, teaching and learning flourish here. St. Mary's offers about 75 academic programs in humanities, sciences and business, including graduate, doctoral and law degree options.

Learn more at www.stmarytx.edu.

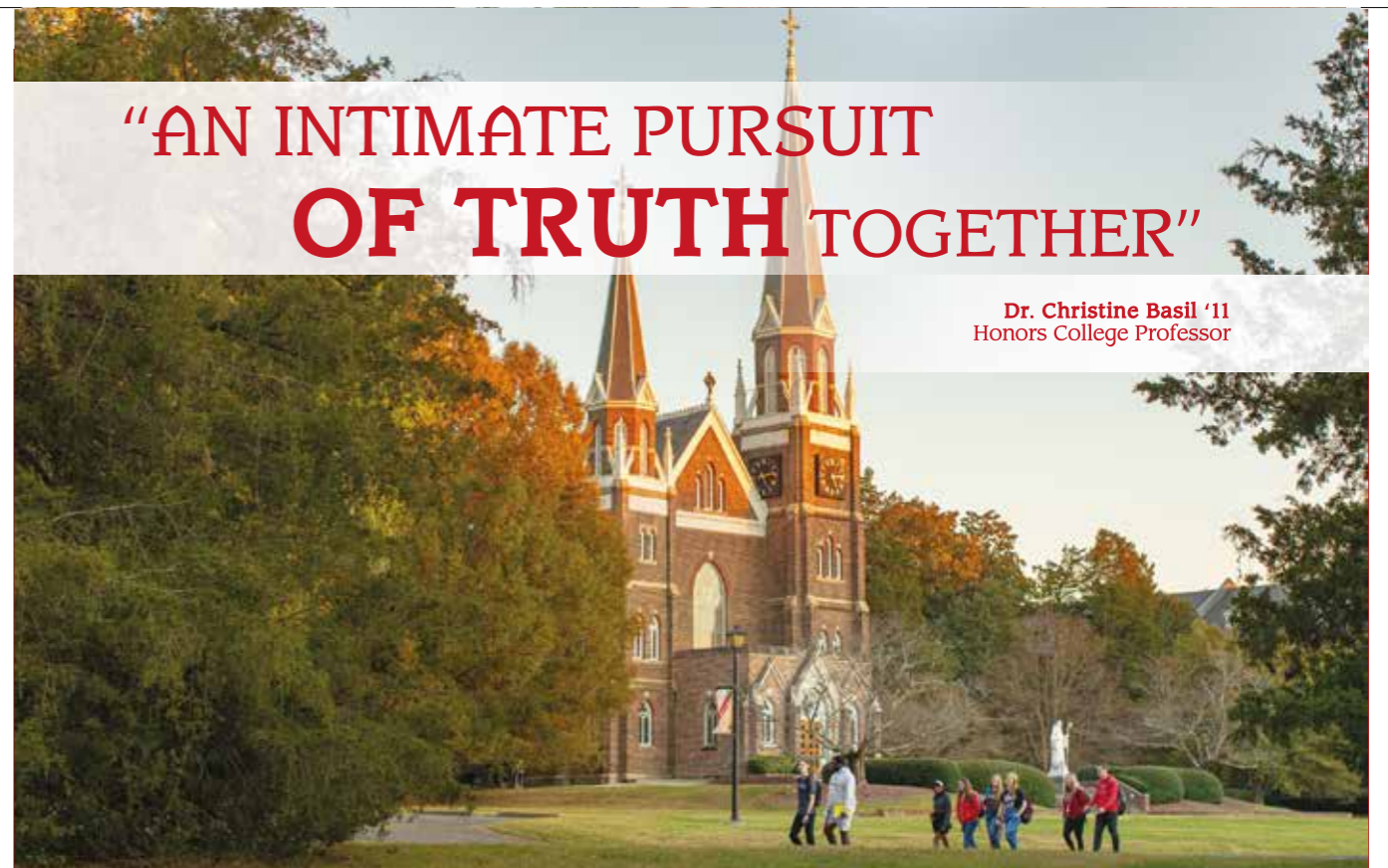


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The Herald's leading 100 US Catholic colleges

Continuing our guide to top-ranked colleges, from 26 to 100, our criteria includes academic excellence, sports, student life, campus size, spiritual formation and Catholic ethos



Aquinas College, Michigan

Aquinas College Grand Rapids, Michigan

Aquinas College is a private Roman Catholic liberal arts college in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Founded in 1886 under the name Novitiate Normal School, Aquinas College today has 1,059 full-time undergraduates. With an SAT range of 1000-1170, Aquinas accepts 89% of applicants and graduates 60% of its students. It has an average tuition fee of \$36,000 and this tends to drop to around \$18,000 for most after aid. Aquinas College is rooted in the Dominican traditions and strives "to create an environment in which integrity is prized and practised".

Barry University Miami Shores, Florida

Founded in 1940 by the Adrian Dominican Sisters, Barry is located in Miami Shores with a Law School situated in Orlando. It offers a liberal arts curriculum to over

1,000 undergraduates, as well as 50 majors with a strong emphasis on service. The average cost after aid is \$17,000, the acceptance rate is 64% and the graduation rate is 62%. Barry promotes "strong Dominican values" and also celebrates Pride Month.

Bellarmino University Louisville, Kentucky

Bellarmino is a private Catholic university in Louisville, Kentucky. Opened in 1950 as Bellarmine College, it later became Bellarmine University in 2000. Bellarmine students pursue an education based on the liberal arts in the distinguished and inclusive Catholic tradition of educational excellence. Within six months of graduation, 98% of graduates are working full-time or continuing their education. Bellarmine graduates also have the highest salaries of any Kentucky university. Popular majors include Nursing, Psychology, and Business, and the

average tuition fee after financial aid is \$24,000. It accepts 86% of applications from students with an average SAT range of 1110-1280; of those accepted, 65% graduate.

Brescia University Owensboro, Kentucky

Brescia is a private university located in Kentucky in the Evansville area. It is a Catholic, liberal arts institution founded in the Ursuline tradition of personal and social transformation through education. It encourages students to take full advantage of Campus Ministry which aims to draw students into a deeper communion with God and with his people. It is a small institution with an enrolment of 619 undergraduate students.

Admissions is reasonably competitive at Brescia which has an acceptance rate of 54%. Popular majors include Social Work and Youth Services, Business, and Psychology. Graduating 49% of students, Brescia students on average pay tuition of \$13,700 after aid.

Canisius University Buffalo, New York

Canisius College is a private Jesuit college in Buffalo, New York. It was founded in 1870 by Jesuits from Germany and is named after St Peter Canisius. Canisius stands at the threshold of its 150th anniversary and is rooted in the Jesuit tradition, and sports "an impressive reputation for academic

excellence, and solidarity with the community". Accepting 81% of students with an average SAT score of 1050-1250, Canisius graduates 71% of its students. Popular majors include Finance and Psychology.

Chestnut Hill College Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Chestnut Hill is in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. It is a small, Catholic institution with an enrolment of 867 undergraduate students. The Chestnut Hill acceptance rate is 98%, with popular majors including Human Services and Business. With a graduate rate of 63%, Chestnut Hill students tend to pay tuition of around \$26,500 after financial aid. Founded in 1924, "Chestnut Hill College espouses the beliefs and values inherent in the Abrahamic faith traditions and welcomes and respects the contributions made by other faiths in the development of the whole person."

Clarke University Dubuque, Iowa

Since its establishment in 1843, Clarke University has advocated the values of education, charity, justice and freedom in Dubuque, Iowa. Founded by Mary Frances Clarke and the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, its Catholic heritage lays the foundation for the vibrant student community found on campus. The university also provides graduate master's and doctoral degrees in

select areas of study and has a general enrolment of 1,200 students. With an acceptance rate of 89% and a graduation rate of 54%, Clarke University has an endowment of around \$30 million. Students pay an annual tuition of \$38,400 but this drops to around \$25,400 on average after aid.

Creighton University Omaha, Nebraska

Creighton University is a private Jesuit research university in Omaha, Nebraska. Founded by the Society of Jesus in 1878, the university currently enrolls about 8,700 graduate and undergraduate students on a 140-acre campus. With an endowment of \$731 million, Creighton accepts 78% of applicants with an SAT range of 1130-1370. Graduating 79% of its students, Creighton alumni go on to earn an average of \$60,000 within six years of graduation, paying about \$31,000 after receiving financial aid.

WSJ 2024 rank: 176

DePaul University Chicago, Illinois

DePaul is a highly rated private Catholic university located in Chicago, Illinois. Founded by the Vincentians in 1898, the university takes its name from the 17th-century French priest St Vincent de Paul. In 1998, it became the largest Catholic university in terms of enrolment in North America. DePaul places special emphasis on recruiting first-generation students and others from disadvantaged backgrounds. With an enrolment of 12,950 undergraduate students, admissions is competitive as the university has an acceptance rate of 69%. Popular majors include Finance, Accounting, and Psychology. Graduating 70% of students, DePaul alumni go on to earn a starting salary of \$42,100. Tuition for full-time students is

around \$51,700 but this drops to \$32,000 for most students following aid.

WSJ 2024 rank: 113

DeSales University Center Valley, Pennsylvania

DeSales is a private university located in Upper Saucon Township, Pennsylvania. Named after St Francis de Sales, the university was founded in 1964 as Allentown College of Saint Francis de Sales by the Oblates of St Francis de Sales. It is a small institution with an enrolment of 1,949 undergraduate students. Admissions are somewhat competitive as the DeSales acceptance rate is 78%. Popular majors include Nursing, Business, and Criminal Justice and Safety Studies. Graduating 69% of students, DeSales alumni go on to earn a starting salary of \$39,800. Students pay a net tuition of around \$28,000 after aid.

University of Detroit Mercy Detroit, Michigan

The University of Detroit Mercy (UDM) is Michigan's largest comprehensive Catholic university, sponsored by the Religious Sisters of Mercy and the Society of Jesus. Detroit Mercy offers more than 100 undergraduate, graduate and professional academic degrees

and programmes through seven schools and colleges. UDM focuses on excellent academics, service to the community and a deeper spirituality to prepare graduates to live lives of purpose. This term, UDM welcomed 558 freshmen. Of this, 260 will be the first in their family to earn a bachelor's degree and 191 will be the first in their family to attend college, while 18 students graduated from their high schools as valedictorians and salutatorians.

WSJ 2024 rank: 52

Divine Mercy University Stirling, Virginia

Divine Mercy University is a Catholic graduate school of psychology and counselling, founded in 1999 as the Institute for the Psychological Sciences. The university is dedicated to the scientific study of psychology with a Catholic understanding of the person, marriage and the family. The university offers a doctoral degree in Clinical Psychology, a master of science degree in Psychology and a master of science in Counselling. The need for mental health practitioners with a firm and comprehensive understanding of Catholic teaching, culture and history inspired the establishment of this institution. It has an acceptance rate of 100% and charges tuition of around \$21,000.

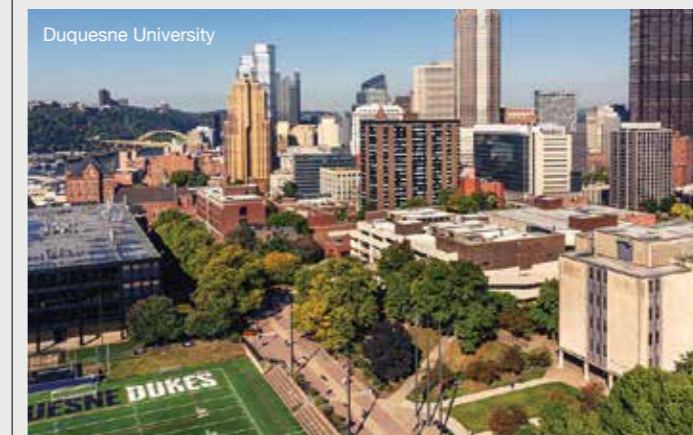
Duquesne University Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Located in the heart of Pittsburgh, Duquesne University has long been known for nursing and has a 65% to 35% female-to-male student ratio. It has just over 5,000 students, an acceptance rate of 84%, a graduation rate of 80% and tuition of \$61,000, with an average cost of \$34,000 after aid. Football and basketball have long traditions at Duquesne. In 2022, Duquesne endorsed a pro-abortion journalist, Yamiche Alcindor, a Washington correspondent for NBC News. She was awarded the university's inaugural Award for Ethics and Integrity in Journalism, despite using her platform to promote a pro-abortion agenda during her coverage of the 2022 midterms.

WSJ 2024 rank: 143

Emmanuel College Boston, Massachusetts

Emmanuel College is a private Catholic college located in Boston, Massachusetts. It is a small institution with an enrolment of 1,745 undergraduate students. The college was founded by the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur as the first women's Catholic college in New England in 1919. Acting President Dr Beth Ross said the founders "believed passionately in the power of education to liberate minds, open doors of opportunity, and prepare students to make outstanding contributions to an array of professions and to their families and communities". Today, Emmanuel's Catholic educational mission remains rooted in this commitment to "advancing progress, justice, and peace in the wider world". Emmanuel's 17-acre campus is located adjacent to the Longwood Medical District in the Fenway area of Boston. Its acceptance rate is 74%. Popular majors include Biology, Communications, and Counselling Psychology. ▶



◀ Graduating 70% of students, Emmanuel alumni go on to earn a starting salary of \$38,900, having paid an average tuition of \$28,100 per year after aid. On Emmanuel's key strength, Dr Ross said, "We hold fast to the qualities that have defined Emmanuel from the beginning: a strong sense of belonging, a rich campus life, a focus on forming the whole student, and a commitment to cultivating in students the habits of mind – and practical skills – to be in demand, both after graduation and throughout the arc of their professional life."

Fairfield University
Fairfield, Connecticut

Fairfield University is a private Jesuit university in Fairfield, Connecticut. It was founded by the Jesuits in 1942. In 2017, the university had about 4,100 full-time undergraduate students and 1,100 graduate students, including full-time and part-time students. Tuition is \$44,000 per year. Fairfield accepts 56% of applicants and graduates 83%. Though the actual Jesuit presence on campus has declined, the Jesuit tradition remains strong.

In July 2017, Mark R Nemeč became the 9th Ignatian and first lay president of Fairfield University. Working with his senior leadership

team, constituents across campus, and the university's alumni community, President Nemeč has positioned Fairfield as a model of the modern, Jesuit Catholic University – committed to lifelong learning, holistic formation, and expansive partnership.

Under Nemeč's leadership, Fairfield has renewed its commitment to the nearly 500-year-old traditions of Jesuit pedagogy, with an emphasis on excellence in all things, care for the whole student, and a broad-based liberal arts and sciences foundation. This values-based, student-centric, outcomes-focused approach is dedicated to forming men and women for and with others, in pursuit of societal stewardship and productive citizenship.

WSJ 2024 rank: 124

Georgian Court University
Lakewood, New Jersey

Georgian Court is a private, four-year university located in Lakewood, New Jersey in the New York City area. Founded in 1908 by the Sisters of Mercy, it is a small institution with an enrolment of 1,121 undergraduate students.

The university's president, Dr Joseph Marbach, said of Georgian Court: "We hold that the Catholic Tradition needs to remain at our

core and animate us in mission; at the same time, we affirm that the Tradition needs to be engaged in vigorous ecumenical and interfaith dialogue and cooperation."

Admissions are competitive as the Georgian Court acceptance rate is 80%. Popular majors include Nursing, Psychology, Social Work and Youth Services. Graduating 58% of students, Georgian Court alumni go on to earn a starting salary of \$34,500 and the average tuition after aid is \$20,500.

Dr Marbach was happy to note that "the liturgical and Sacramental life of our Georgian Court community is lively and welcoming. Sunday Masses are celebrated regularly when classes are in session in the Dorothy Marron University Community Chapel. Daily Communion services, meanwhile, take place Monday through Thursday in the St Stephen's Chapel in the Mansion. Special community Masses are also offered throughout the year for special occasions, such as Mercy Day, Mass of the Holy Spirit, and Commencement."

Holy Cross College
Notre Dame, Indiana

Holy Cross College was founded in 1966 by the Brothers of the Holy Cross as a two-year junior college, primarily to educate Holy Cross Brothers. Lay students then began enrolling with many going on to the neighbouring Notre Dame University and Princeton. After a sale of land to the latter, and overhauling its curriculum, the college has seen a radical improvement in its finances and enrolment numbers with a new two-year programme designed for students wishing to transfer on to Notre Dame and others.

"A big Catholic heart, with a big Catholic brain," is how Provost Michael Griffin describes the Catholic ethos of Holy Cross. Griffin previously worked for the

American Bishops' Conference before leading efforts at Holy Cross with its spiritual mission, enrolment and tri-campus collaborations with Saint Mary's College and the University of Notre Dame.

The college has an attractive 70-acre wooded campus in Notre Dame. Its 500 students come from more than 30 states and 12 countries. Enrolment is 60% male, 40% female, 34% students of colour, and 24% first-generation students. Its mission today is to "educate students to become global citizens with the competency to see and the courage to act".

"I think what is special is the way in which we have elevated our ethos to bring both the Catholic intellectual and social tradition equally to the foreground. The Catholic faith is 'everywhere' in college life. From weekly Eucharistic adoration to weekly opportunities to serve the poor," says Griffin.

"We help young people use their education to make a better living, and also to live a better life. That Catholic tradition, when presented passionately, is our greatest gift to them.

"As Pope Francis reminds us, young people are hungry to take action in the world. Forming them for Catholic action is something they desire," Griffin says.

John Carroll University
University Heights, Ohio

John Carroll University is a private Jesuit university in University Heights, Ohio. Located in a suburb of Cleveland, it is primarily an undergraduate-focused, liberal arts institution composed of a College of Arts and Sciences and a business school. John Carroll has an enrolment of 3,650 students.

The average cost after aid is \$29,000, the acceptance rate is 88% and the graduation rate is 76%. The school welcomes people of all faiths and no faith.



Holy Cross College

La Salle University
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

La Salle University is a private Catholic university in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The university was founded in 1863 by the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools and named for St Jean-Baptiste de La Salle. The average cost after aid is \$23,000, the acceptance rate is 81% and the graduation rate is 66%. The school offers 24 master's and doctoral programmes. The Brothers are a visible presence in the school's daily life.

Le Moyne College
Syracuse, New York

Le Moyne College is a private Jesuit college in DeWitt, New York. It was founded by the Society of Jesus in 1946 and named after Jesuit missionary Simon Le Moyne. At its founding, Le Moyne was the first co-educational Jesuit college in the United States. College President Linda LeMura says of Le Moyne: "We challenge our students to seek God in all things and all people. We speak of 'magis' encouraging our students to strive for excellence, but reminding them that such excellence is to be used for the greater glory of God. At Le Moyne, we sum all of this up in the words 'Greatness meets Goodnes'. This phrase captures the idea of

leadership devoted to the common good rather than self-promotion."

Their 160-acre, tree-lined campus is in a residential setting near downtown Syracuse. Their 48 buildings include a variety of student residential housing, several academic and administrative buildings, a stand-alone chapel, and a library. Popular majors include Biology, Psychology, and Nursing. It accepts 73% of applicants and those accepted have an SAT score range of 1140-1290. Graduating 76% of students, the average tuition after aid is \$24,600. On recent achievements, LeMura said: "I'm particularly proud of Le Moyne's decision to move to Division I in athletics, which we announced in May 2023. It is truly a milestone moment for the college and reflects our firm belief that athletics is a vital component of our Jesuit ideal of *cura personalis*: care for the mind, body and soul."

Loyola University Chicago
Chicago, Illinois

Loyola Chicago is Chicago's only Jesuit university. It has over 17,000 students with 98% of them receiving grants or scholarships. Sports have a proud history and presence. Loyola requires at least two religion courses from its students. "As one of the largest Jesuit, Catholic institutions in the United States, Loyola University

Chicago has a leadership role in the network of 27 Jesuit colleges and universities in the country," said President Mark Reed. He adds: "Jesuit trustees, regents and faculty, as well as administrators, faculty and scholastics, infuse Loyola's campuses with a Catholic human presence." The university was ranked 193rd in the free speech rankings, with one class-of-2023 student saying that, in their ethics class, they were repeatedly told that their opinion "didn't matter" as they were not a racial minority and "couldn't understand their struggles". The survey found a ratio of nine liberal students to every one conservative.

WSJ 2024 rank: 205

Loyola University Maryland
Baltimore, Maryland

Established in 1852, the average cost at Loyola Maryland before aid is \$72,400 and after aid is \$30,000. The acceptance rate is 84% and the graduation rate is 83%. Business and Management are leading programmes, along with Biology, Psychology and Speech Communication. It has 3,768 undergraduates and an endowment of \$239 million. It offers an attractive location and campus on North Charles Street in Baltimore.

Loyola University New Orleans
New Orleans, Louisiana

Established in 1904 and chartered as a university in 1912, Loyola New Orleans has an average cost after aid of \$22,000, an acceptance rate of 78% and a graduation rate of 62%. On its Catholic identity, President Xavier Cole said: "We truly embrace the definition of Catholic as meaning 'universal'. We are open to students of all faiths, as well as to students with no faith tradition. ▶

"We have a wide range of programming that encourages all students to explore their spirituality and to learn and grow as fully realised people."

It boasts a full science and art curriculum, 25 sports teams, ample club teams and many performing arts programmes. It is located in the attractive uptown neighbourhood on St Charles Avenue. Loyola New Orleans is the only Jesuit university in the United States with a school of music.

"We have been on *Billboard's* Top Music Business Schools list twice in a row," says Cole. "We also have a very strong journalism programme: the *Maroon*, our student newspaper, regularly wins top awards from the National Scholastic Press Association and the Society of Professional Journalists." WSJ 2024 rank: 327

Magdalen College of the Liberal Arts
Warner, New Hampshire

Magdalen College of the Liberal Arts was founded by Catholic scholars in 1973 in response to the secularisation of many Catholic colleges across the US.

It is recognised as a Catholic college by the Diocese of Manchester and recommended by the Cardinal Newman Society.

Located in the woods atop a New Hampshire mountain, Magdalen offers students a small and intimate community, a Great Books curriculum, and a reverent Catholic spiritual life. Almost 90% of the college's curriculum is a required core of liberal and fine arts courses, including five Catholic theology courses and four years of the 48-credit Philosophy and Humanities sequence.

Students can major in history, literature, philosophy or theology. Club activities are organised by students, including arts, sports, and local hiking and skiing. ▶



Fairfield University

◀ **Manhattan College**
New York City, New York

A Christian Brothers day school established in 1853, now situated in the Riverdale neighbourhood of the Bronx, the average cost is \$25,000 after aid, the acceptance rate is 75%, and the graduation rate is 71%.

Maria College
Albany, New York

Maria College is a private Roman Catholic college in Albany, New York. Maria is a Catholic college sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy and it provides career-relevant, opportunity education in the context of the Catholic Intellectual Tradition. It is a very small institution with an enrolment of 142 undergraduate students. Admissions are competitive as the Maria acceptance rate is 37%. Popular majors include Nursing and Occupational Therapist Assisting. Graduating 39% of students, Maria College alumni go on to earn a starting salary of \$40,400 and the average tuition after aid is \$17,200.

University of Mary
Bismarck, North Dakota

Founded in 1959 in Bismarck, North Dakota by the Benedictine Sisters of the Annunciation, who serve as sponsors today, the University of Mary has been reinforcing its Catholic identity, expanding academic programmes and increasing student enrolment. With nearly 60 degrees and 10 pre-professional programmes, the university focuses on career preparation, offering a liberal arts core curriculum, including two Catholic theology and two philosophy courses. Although the students are mostly Catholic, only about two-thirds of the faculty are. Students can join a variety of activities, including more than 40 student clubs. Athletes



Mount St. Mary's University

compete in 18 varsity teams in the Northern Sun conference of NCAA Division II, and the university has been implementing a plan of "greatness through virtue" in its athletic programmes.

Marymount Manhattan College
New York City, New York

Marymount Manhattan College is a private college on the Upper East Side of New York City. As of 2020, enrolment consists of 1,571 undergraduates with women making up 80.1% and men 19.9% of student enrollment. The college was founded in 1936 as an outgrowth of the now-closed Marymount College in Tarrytown, founded by Mother Butler. The average cost after aid is \$31,000, the acceptance rate is 77% and the graduation rate is 53%.

Marymount University
Arlington, Virginia

Marymount University is a private four-year university with its main campus in Arlington, Virginia. Marymount was founded in 1950 by the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary, whose influence and traditions continue to inform the religious vision of the university. It is a small institution with an

undergraduate enrolment of 2,606. With an acceptance rate of 81%, Marymount accepts students with an SAT range of 1120-1268. Graduating 62% of its students, Marymount alumni earn a median salary of \$64,100 within five years of graduation. On average, Marymount students pay about \$26,300 after receiving aid.

Mercy College of Health Sciences
Des Moines, Iowa

Mercy Health Sciences is a private college focused on healthcare located in Des Moines, Iowa. Mercy College was established by the Sisters of Mercy in 1899. President Dr Adreain Henry remarked that "the institution that has evolved into today's Mercy College of Health Sciences has steadfastly upheld its commitment to health sciences' professional education, with a strong focus on nursing. This enduring dedication reflects the Sisters' mission to extend 'the healing ministry of Jesus'. Embodying the Church's timeless emulation of Christ, the Divine Physician in the present day." It is a small institution with an enrolment of 535 undergraduate students. The Mercy Health Sciences acceptance rate is 97% and graduates 58% of students,

Mercy Health Sciences alumni go on to earn a starting salary of \$44,300. Current students pay an average cost \$18,129 per year after aid. Dr Henry told the *Catholic Herald* that "the college remains dedicated to offering education as a means to empower students, providing them with a pathway towards a fulfilling life of meaningful work and service. Through these endeavours, Mercy College of Health Sciences continues to live out the values and principles that have been at the heart of its foundation and evolution."

Mexican American Catholic College
San Antonio, Texas

The Mexican American Catholic College (MACC) is a pioneer in bilingual higher education with an emphasis on pastoral and Hispanic ministry. Priests, seminarians, deacon candidates and religious, who are often sent by their bishops and superiors, and lay leaders, including international students, attend and acquire academic and leadership formation for effective service in the Hispanic community. "MACC was founded to be a bridge between and among cultures, giving special emphasis to Hispanics. This continues even today, 50 years later, and has expanded to help students learn about other cultures as well as celebrate cultural and linguistic diversity in church and society," President Fr Juan Molina told the *Herald*. He continued: "This also helps to see that theology can be approached from different perspectives and points of view, while still upholding the Church's magisterium."

Molloy University
Rockville Center, New York

Molloy University is a private Roman Catholic university in Rockville Centre, New York. On

Molloy's Catholic ethos, President James Lentini says: "We were founded by the Sisters of St Dominic and we embrace the Four Pillars of Dominican Life, which are study, spirituality, service and community. These pillars serve as a foundation for the members of our campus community." Molloy provides more than 50 academic undergraduate, graduate and doctoral degree programmes for over 5,000 undergraduate, graduate and doctoral students. Its average cost after aid is \$26,000, its acceptance rate is 79%, and its graduation rate is 74%. The school offers 24 majors and many NCAA Division II sports. President Lentini was keen to note that "we have recently been the recipients of several major grants, including ones from the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation, which helps us to provide healthcare to underserved communities. This effort has had a powerful impact on our community".

Mount Saint Mary College
Newburgh, New York

Mount Saint Mary College is a private Catholic college in Newburgh, New York. It was founded in 1959 by the Dominican Sisters. The campus overlooks the Hudson River, halfway between New York City and Albany. Over 2,700 students are enrolled in more than 50 undergraduate and three graduate programmes.

Mount St Mary's University
Emmitsburg, Maryland

Mount St Mary's University is a private Roman Catholic university in Emmitsburg, Maryland. Founded by French émigré Father John DuBois, it has the largest Catholic seminary in the United States. Undergraduate programmes are divided between the College of Liberal Arts, the Richard J Bolte School of

Business, and the School of Natural Science and Mathematics. "The Mount", as it's known, has over 40 undergraduate majors, minors, concentrations and special programmes, as well as bachelor's/master's combinations in partnership with other universities, eight master's programmes and six postgraduate certificate programmes. It is a small institution with an enrolment of 1,911 undergraduate students. Admissions are somewhat competitive as the acceptance rate is 82%. Popular majors include Business and Accounting.

Mount graduates 61% of its students. On the Catholic ethos of the Mount, President Timothy Trainor says: "Mount St Mary's University wholeheartedly embraces the Church's mission to serve the world. We seek for all students to engage in a Church-world dialogue. This openness to the world is what makes us attractive to both Catholic and non-Catholic students." He continues: "Our non-Catholic students enrich our culture. Our Catholic students benefit from working and living next to people who have different experiences, which prepares them for the diversity that they will embrace after college. They come to better embrace the universality of the Catholic faith in their time at the Mount."

Neumann University
Aston, Pennsylvania

Neumann University is a private Roman Catholic liberal arts college in Aston, Pennsylvania. The university was founded as Our Lady of Angels College, with 115 female students, in 1965 by the Sisters of St Francis of Philadelphia, who still sponsor the university. Unlike in 1965, Neumann now enrolls 1,357 full-time undergraduates and the average cost after aid is \$27,000. Neumann has an acceptance rate

of 84% and a graduation rate of 50%. They have a strong Nursing programme, a well-regarded Business programme, and a variety of Education programmes. According to Niche, their most popular majors include Nursing, Liberal Arts and Humanities, Homeland Security and Disaster Management, and Business. Guided by the university's core values of reverence, integrity, service, excellence and stewardship, Neumann students engage in a campus environment that forms their character in preparation for lives of service to the needs of society.

Newman University
Wichita, Kansas

Newman University is a private Roman Catholic university in Wichita, Kansas. It is named after St John Henry Newman and was founded by the Adorers of the Blood of Christ in 1933. The average tuition cost after aid is \$18,000, the acceptance rate is 72%, and the graduation rate is 61%. It has over 2,400 students.

Notre Dame of Maryland University
Baltimore, Maryland

Notre Dame of Maryland University (NDMU) is a private Catholic university in Baltimore, Maryland. NDMU offers certificate, undergraduate and graduate

programmes for women and men, including in the arts and sciences, nursing, education, pharmacy and physician assistants. Based adjacent to the campus of Loyola University in an attractive neighbourhood of uptown Baltimore, its average tuition is \$27,000 after aid, the admission rate is 65% and the graduation rate is 70%. There are just under 3,000 students. President Marylou Yam tells the *Herald* that "the mission of NDMU is to educate leaders to transform the world. Grounded in the Catholic tradition, NDMU's mission challenges students to strive for intellectual and professional excellence, to build inclusive communities, to promote the advancement of women, to engage in service to others, and to promote social responsibility."

Our Lady of the Lake
San Antonio, Texas

Our Lady of the Lake is a private Catholic university located in San Antonio, Texas. It is a small institution with an enrolment of 1,081 undergraduate students. Admissions is somewhat competitive as the Our Lady of the Lake acceptance rate is 66%. Popular majors include Social Work and Youth Services, Psychology, and Criminal Justice and Safety Studies. Graduating 35% of students, Our Lady of the Lake alumni go on to earn a starting salary of \$31,600. It is ▶



Molloy University

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Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico
Ponce, Puerto Rico

The Pontifical Catholic University is a private Catholic university located in Ponce, Puerto Rico. It is a small institution with an enrolment of 3,744 undergraduate students and an acceptance rate is 85%. Popular majors include Biomedical Sciences and Molecular Medicine, Nursing, and Liberal Arts and Humanities. Graduating 42% of students, Pontifical Catholic University alumni go on to earn a starting salary of \$14,800.

University of Portland
Portland, Oregon

The University of Portland is a private Catholic university in Portland, Oregon. It was founded in 1901 and is affiliated with the Congregation of Holy Cross, which also founded the university's sister school, the University of Notre Dame. The university enrolls approximately 3,730 students. The average tuition is \$36,000 after aid, the acceptance and graduation rates are both 81%.

Quincy University
Quincy, Illinois

Quincy is a private, Catholic university located in Quincy, Illinois. It is a small institution with an enrolment of 939 undergraduate students. Admissions is fairly competitive as the Quincy acceptance rate is 60%. Popular majors include Nursing, Management Sciences and Information Systems, and Marketing. Graduating 42% of students, Quincy alumni go on to earn a starting salary of \$32,200. On average students pay \$16,400

after aid and the average SAT score ranges from 1060-1240. Founded by Franciscan friars in 1860, Quincy University is the only Catholic college or university serving Downstate Illinois.

Regis College
Weston, Massachusetts

Regis College is a private Catholic college located in Weston, Massachusetts in the Boston area. It is a small institution with an enrolment of 1,017 undergraduate students. The Regis College acceptance rate is 89%. Popular majors include Nursing, Dental Hygiene, and Radiation Therapy. Graduating 61% of students, Regis College alumni go on to earn a starting salary of \$35,800. On average students pay \$35,775 after aid and the average SAT score ranges from 840-1060. Regis holds weekly Mass on Sundays at 5pm where the liturgy is celebrated in the Catholic tradition. All members of the Regis community are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Regis University
Denver, Colorado

Regis is a private Catholic university located in Denver, Colorado. Founded in 1877 by the Society of Jesus, the university offers more than 120 degrees



Regis University

through five colleges in a variety of subjects, including education, liberal arts, business, nursing, and technology. The institution tells us that: "Regis University's mission is to educate people of all ages and faith to take leadership roles and to make a positive impact in a changing society. We do this through our Jesuit foundation, giving students an excellent, value-centred, experiential education that honours the whole person – mind, body, and spirit." It is a small institution with an enrolment of 1,916 undergraduate students and an acceptance rate of 81%. Graduating 62% of students, Regis alumni go on to earn a starting salary of \$50,000. On their key strengths, Regis tells us how they "dedicate ourselves to academic excellence inspired by the Catholic faith and the Catholic intellectual tradition. Our faculty, staff, and students recognise and affirm the importance of academic freedom in the pursuit of truth, and consistent with our Christian vision of the dignity of each human person, we welcome and respect students, faculty, and staff from all faith traditions and beliefs."

Rosemont College
Rosemont, Pennsylvania

Rosemont is a private Catholic college located in Rosemont, Pennsylvania in the Philadelphia

area. It is a small institution with an enrolment of 355 undergraduate students. The Rosemont acceptance rate is 80%.

Popular majors include Business, Criminal Justice and Safety Studies, and Sociology. Graduating 50% of students, Rosemont alumni go on to earn a starting salary of \$31,900. Students pay around \$25,644 per year after financial aid and generally have an SAT score in the range of 980-1200. As a Catholic institution guided by the principles of Cornelia Connelly and the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, Rosemont College is dedicated to developing the faith and spiritual lives of all students during their transformative college years. Rosemont also focuses on service and social justice.

Sacred Heart University
Fairfield, Connecticut

Sacred Heart University is a private Roman Catholic university in Fairfield, Connecticut. It was founded in 1963 by Walter W Curtis, Bishop of the Diocese of Bridgeport in Connecticut. Sacred Heart was the first Catholic university in the United States to be staffed by the laity. Its cost after aid is \$44,000, its acceptance rate is 66%, and its graduation rate is 73%. There are 6,699 students and popular majors include business, management and marketing.

WSJ 2024 rank: 263

Saint Anselm College
Goffstown, New Hampshire

Saint Anselm College is a private Benedictine liberal arts college in Goffstown, New Hampshire, near Manchester. Founded in 1888, it is the third-oldest Catholic college in New England. Its average cost after aid is \$34,000, its acceptance rate is 78%, and so is its graduation rate. Since 1889, Saint Anselm College has provided



St Mary's College, Indiana

a transformative education shaped by Catholic and Benedictine values and a liberal arts foundation. It has 1,968 students.

Saint Edward's University
Austin, Texas

Founded in 1885, St. Edward's University is a private Catholic university in Austin, Texas. It was founded and is operated in the Holy Cross tradition. The average cost after aid is \$21,000, the acceptance rate is 92% and the graduation rate is 64%. It offers over 100 majors and minors. One student, Isabel Keogh, completing her master's in clinical psychology, has called the curriculum "demanding but rewarding". There are 4,600 students.

St Francis College
Brooklyn, New York

Located in Brooklyn, St Francis College is a private Franciscan college in downtown Brooklyn, New York City. It was founded in 1859 by the Franciscan Brothers of Brooklyn as the St Francis Academy and was the first private school in the Diocese of Brooklyn. The average cost after aid is \$15,000, the acceptance rate is 85% and the graduation rate is 57%. With 2,300 students, a strong nursing programme and well-regarded basketball teams, it fills a niche

in New York education. Religion at the college is not emphasised.

St John's University
New York City, New York

St John's University is a private Roman Catholic university in Queens, New York City. It was founded in 1870 by the Congregation of the Mission, with a mission to provide the youth of New York with a Catholic university education. Today there are over 15,000 students at St John's in many academic programmes, a law school and other professional studies. The average cost after aid is \$23,000, the acceptance rate is 85%, and the graduation rate is 62%. There are numerous sports teams, including strong basketball and tennis, and an active campus ministry on both the Queens and Staten Island campuses.

The University of St Francis
Joliet, Illinois

The University of St Francis (USF), in the Chicago area, was founded as a college in 1920 and became a university in 1998. Under President Arvid C Johnson, USF has become known for its "quality education, affordability, and accessibility". It scored a high ranking of 130/400 in the 2024 WSJ Best Colleges Guide, with an average net price of fees being an

affordable \$16, 578. Their sports teams are known as the Fighting Saints. USF graduates go on to hold high-level leadership positions after graduation, especially from Business, Education, Nursing, and Arts & Sciences colleges. In 2021, the USF men's bowling team won the NAIA Championship. Alumni include several Illinois state senators.

WSJ 2024 rank: 130

Saint John's University
Collegeville, Minnesota

Located in Stearns County, Minnesota, Saint John's is noted for its many strong academic departments and Benedictine monastery, which has been reformed after a series of sexual scandals. It costs \$27,000 after aid, has an acceptance rate of 92% and a graduation rate of 79%. It has a notable ratio of students to faculty of only 12 to one. It is closely related to Saint Benedict's College for women nearby and has an expansive campus of 3,500 acres with several buildings designed by brutalist 20th-century architect Marcel Breuer. There are 1,538 students.

Saint Louis University
St Louis, Missouri

Saint Louis University is a private Jesuit research university with campuses in St Louis, Missouri, and Madrid, Spain. Founded in 1818 by Louis William Valentine DuBourg, it is the oldest university west of the Mississippi River and the second-oldest Jesuit university in the US. It costs \$28,000 after aid, has an acceptance rate of 70% and a graduation rate of 79%. There are 13,546 students.

WSJ 2024 rank: 156

Saint Mary's College
Notre Dame, Indiana

Saint Mary's College is a private Catholic women's liberal arts

“
From the beginning, students at Saint Mary's College were shown that there was a place in the world for intelligent, educated, compassionate women

college in Notre Dame, Indiana. "Saint Mary's College was founded in 1844 by the Sisters of the Holy Cross, a group of trailblazing women who firmly believed in the education of young women. From the beginning, students at Saint Mary's College were shown that there was a place in the world for intelligent, educated, compassionate women," the college tells the *Herald*, adding: "Today we remain a college that develops people of moral imagination and civic commitment – people who will build community, strive for justice, lift up the least advantaged and collaborate to steward our planet." Saint Mary's offers five bachelor's degrees and more than 30 major areas of study.

Additionally, Saint Mary's College offers five graduate degrees: Master of Autism Studies, Master of Science, Master of Social Work, and Doctor of Nursing Practice. It is a small institution with an enrolment of 1,368 undergraduate students. Admissions are competitive as the St Mary's acceptance rate is 83%. Popular majors include Nursing, Business, and Biology. Graduating 79% of students, Saint Mary's students pay an average of \$27,686 per year after aid. ▶

◀ **St Mary's University**
San Antonio, Texas

St. Mary's University is a private Roman Catholic university in San Antonio, Texas. Founded by the Society of Mary (Marianists) in 1852, St Mary's is the oldest Catholic university in Texas and the American Southwest. President Thomas Mengler remarked that "as a Catholic university founded by brothers of the Society of Mary, first and foremost St Mary's University is a community. It's a community of faith, generosity of spirit, and hospitality, of service to and care for each other – what the Marianists call 'a family spirit', a home away from home." With a student population of nearly 4,000, St Mary's is home to a College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences; School of Science, Engineering and Technology; the Greehey School of Business; and the St Mary's University School of Law. It is an institution with an acceptance rate of 88% and a graduation rate of 60%. Students pay around \$17,900 per year after financial aid and generally have an SAT score in the range of 1040-1220. President Mengler tells the *Herald*: "I would like all of our students to remember their time at St Mary's as a transformative period of personal growth and formation, when they came to better discern how God is calling them and, as a result, to view their personal and professional lives as vocational journeys."

Saint Michael's College
Colchester, Vermont

Saint Michael's College (known as St Mikes) is a private Roman Catholic college in Colchester, Vermont. Saint Michael's was founded in 1904 by the Society of Saint Edmund. It grants BA and BSc degrees in over 30 majors to over 1,600 undergraduate students. It is an



St Mary's University

institution with an enrolment of 1,430 undergraduate students and an acceptance rate of 86%. Popular majors include Business, Biology, and Psychology. Graduating 82% of those who attend, students pay around \$28,979 per year after financial aid.

Saint Peter's University
Jersey City, New Jersey

Saint Peter's University is a private Jesuit university in Jersey City, New Jersey. Founded as Saint Peter's College in 1872 by the Society of Jesus, the university offers over 60 undergraduate and graduate programmes to more than 2,000 undergraduate and 800 graduate students. Its mascot is the peacock and its sports teams play in the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference, of which it is a founding member. The university is located on a 30-acre campus just south of Journal Square, two miles west of New York City.

Alumni of the university include a Presidential Medal of Freedom recipient, a winner of the Pulitzer Prize, a US Senator and members of the US House of Representatives, federal judges, academics, physicians, and CEOs. It has an acceptance rate of 93% and a graduation rate of 60%. Students pay around \$13,000 per

year after financial aid and generally have an SAT score in the range of 970-1150. The college upholds and promotes Catholic and Jesuit traditions by educating students towards wholeness and always striving to be men and women for others.

Saint Xavier University
Chicago, Illinois

Saint Xavier University (SXU) is a private Roman Catholic university in Chicago, Illinois. Founded in 1846 by the Sisters of Mercy, the university enrolls 3,749 students. Their most popular majors include Nursing, Psychology, and Business. With a 16:1 student-faculty ratio and engaging professors, SXU offers a unique small-community experience while a diverse range of undergraduate and graduate programmes offer a plethora of opportunities. With an acceptance rate of 85% and a graduation rate of 55%, Saint Xavier students pay around \$13,419 per year after financial aid and generally have an SAT score in the range of 950-1120.

University of Saint Joseph
West Hartford, Connecticut

The University of Saint Joseph (USJ) was founded in 1932 by the Sisters of Mercy of Connecticut. It

is a small, co-ed institution with an enrolment of 904 undergraduate students. The acceptance rate is 78% and graduating 55% of students. Students pay around \$26,328 per year after aid. They are an NCAA Division III school (without football) and compete in the Great Northeast Athletic Conference. They are called the Blue Jays and have 16 teams. "Our experience reflects the values of our founders, the Sisters of Mercy, recognising the dignity of every person, and their promotion of environmental sustainability, social justice, and non-violence," says President Rhona Free.

Saint Joseph's University
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Founded 172 years ago, Saint Joseph's University is a highly rated Jesuit private university in Lower Merion, Pennsylvania. It is the seventh oldest Jesuit university in the USA and the fourth largest university in Philadelphia. It ranks 108 in the WSJ Best Colleges 2024 rankings and was listed in the top 10 of the US News & World report rankings for regional universities in the North. There is the notable Haub Business School along with a progressive campus culture typical of many Ignation "tradition" colleges. Alumni salaries rank in the top 2.5% in the US. Facilities include the Kinney Center for Autism Education and Support, and the Pedro Arrupe, SJ, Center for Business Ethics. Its sports teams are the Hawks.

University of San Diego
San Diego, California

The University of San Diego is a private Catholic university located in San Diego, California. Chartered in July 1949 as the independent San Diego College for Women and San Diego University (comprising the College for Men and School of Law), the two institutions merged in 1972.

Since then, the university has grown to comprise nine undergraduate and graduate schools. It is a mid-size institution with an enrolment of 5,669 undergraduates. Admissions are competitive as the acceptance rate is 53%. Popular majors include Finance, Business, and Marketing. USD alumni go on to earn a starting salary of \$50,100, having paid roughly \$34,155 per year after aid. Its campus was designed in the Plateresque architectural style from the Spanish Renaissance, particularly modelling the 15th-century Universidad de Alcalá.

University of San Francisco
San Francisco, California

The University of San Francisco (USF) is a private Jesuit university in San Francisco, California. The university's main campus is located on a 55-acre setting between the Golden Gate Bridge and Golden Gate Park. The main campus is nicknamed "the Hilltop". The average cost after aid is \$38,000, the acceptance rate is 71%, and the graduation rate is 74%. There are over 11,000 students. Alumni include John Paul Getty (who did not graduate) and William Hearst II. Since 1855, USF has educated Catholics and non-Catholics to be responsible, caring and imaginative leaders in



Seton Hall University

the public and the private sectors. The campus culture is highly liberal and diverse, promoting "equity and inclusion"; USF is ranked second in the USA for ethnic diversity. The law faculty includes prominent human rights advocates and a culture of student activism is encouraged. "Tell us what you want to change, and we'll provide the support and tools to help you do it." Religious formation or participation is not referred to directly on the USF website. USF President Paul Fitzgerald, SJ, a professor of theology who studied at the Sorbonne, says that as a "Catholic project, we teach intercultural humility. I like the students' stance of humble and respectful encounters with the mystery of each person, created in *imago Dei*". The university is proud to have achieved carbon neutrality. USF ranks in the top 2% of US colleges in undergraduate students outperforming their predicted graduation rates. "We are a rare island of social mobility," says Fitzgerald. "In high school, they decided that they would be good people; here at USF, they discovered the ways – personally, professionally, socially – in which they will actively be good people." **WSJ 2024 rank: 155**

Salve Regina University
Newport, Rhode Island

Salve Regina University is a private



University of Scranton

Roman Catholic university in Newport, Rhode Island. It was founded in 1934 by the Sisters of Mercy and is accredited by the New England Commission of Higher Education. The university enrolls more than 2,800 undergraduate and graduate students annually. It costs \$34,000 after aid, has an acceptance rate of 73% and a graduation rate of 78%. Located in the historic mansions district of Newport, it is convenient for many of that city's cultural sites and uses the landmark Newport Casino Theatre for its theatre programme.

University of Scranton
Scranton, Pennsylvania

The University of Scranton is a private Jesuit university in Scranton, Pennsylvania. It was founded in 1888 by William O'Hara, the first Bishop of Scranton, as St Thomas College. During the 1960s, the university became an independent institution under a lay board of trustees. The university has about 3,349 undergraduates and is composed of three colleges that each contain both undergraduate and graduate programmes. The Scranton acceptance rate is 80%. Popular majors include Accounting, Nursing, and Biology. Graduating

83% of students, Scranton students pay around \$35,913 per year after financial aid. **WSJ 2024 rank: 148**

Seattle University
Seattle, Washington

Billing itself as a "modern, progressive, Jesuit University in the heart of the city's tech corridor", Seattle has 7,121 students: 4,113 undergraduate students, 2,280 graduate students, and 728 law students, 54% of whom live on campus. Of its undergraduate students, 46% are from Washington state, 9% of undergraduate students are international, and 19% of graduate students are international. The faculty-student ratio is 1 to 11. Seattle University offers an extensive array of programmes: eight colleges and schools offer more than 120 undergraduate, graduate, and certificate programmes. **WSJ 2024 rank: 288**

Seton Hall University
South Orange, New Jersey

Seton Hall University (SHU) is a private Roman Catholic research university in South Orange, New Jersey. Founded in 1856 by then-Bishop James Roosevelt Bayley and named after his aunt, ▶



SPOTLIGHT ON...

Paul Fitzgerald
President of the University of San Francisco

What was your career break?

I joined the Society of Jesus back in 1982. God has been opening doors and beckoning me to step forward ever since.

What's your favourite Bible verse?

In Luke 19, Jesus' encounter with Zacchaeus leads to such a lovely conversion and to great social good.

Which church has the most meaning to you?

The cathedral in Strasbourg, France is where I made the decision to seek admission to the Jesuits.

What holy music do you keep returning to?

Joseph Gelineau's settings of the psalms and his hymns.

How would you say your faith has shaped your work and career?

I loved being a college professor – the classroom is a magical place to teach Theology and accompany students as they grapple with their own faith questions.

Who has been your greatest spiritual influence?

My novice master, Wilkie Au.

Who is your favourite saint?

St Ignatius of Loyola.

Where would you like to go on pilgrimage?

I was quite moved by Lourdes, Rome and Jerusalem, but Loyola in Spain is still my favourite.

What book most influenced you when you were at college?

Siddhartha by Hermann Hesse. CH

◀ St Elizabeth Ann Seton, Seton Hall is one of the oldest diocesan universities in the United States.

Interim President Dr Katia Passerini tells the *Catholic Herald* that "our key strengths are Seton Hall's caring Catholic community that welcomes and supports each student; our tradition of academic excellence that advances through more than 90 undergraduate and over 120 graduate programmes; and our proximity to New York City, which provides myriad hands-on learning opportunities and connections with successful graduates. No other college or university combines those characteristics in the unique way Seton Hall does."

Seton Hall consists of nine schools and colleges and has an undergraduate enrolment of about 5,800 students and a graduate enrolment of about 4,400. The university is known for its men's basketball team, which has appeared in 13 NCAA Division I men's basketball tournaments. With an acceptance rate of 77% and a graduation rate of 71%, Seton Hall students pay around \$33,177 per year after financial aid. Their most popular majors include Finance, Biology, and Liberal Arts and Humanities.

Siena College
Loudonville, New York

Siena is a private, Catholic college located in Loudonville, New York in the Albany area. It was founded by the Order of Friars Minor in 1937 and the college was named after Bernardino of Siena, a 15th-century Italian Franciscan friar and preacher.

It is a small institution with an enrolment of 3,394 undergraduate students. The Siena acceptance rate is 83%. Popular majors include Marketing, Psychology, and Accounting. Graduating 77% of students, Siena alumni go on to earn a starting salary of \$46,200. Siena students pay around

\$32,810 per year after financial aid. As a Franciscan community, Siena strives to embody the values and vision of St Francis of Assisi: faith in a personal and provident God, reverence for all creation, affirmation of the unique worth of each person, appreciation for beauty, service to the poor and marginalised. **WSJ 2024 rank: 91**

Spalding University
Louisville, Kentucky

Spalding is a private Catholic university located in Louisville, Kentucky. Spalding University traces its origins to Nazareth Academy, one of the oldest educational institutions west of the Alleghenies. Nazareth Academy was founded in 1814 by the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth and was located in Nelson County near Bardstown, Kentucky. Spalding was named after Mother Catherine Spalding, foundress of the Sisters. It is a small institution with an enrolment of 767 undergraduate students. The Spalding acceptance rate is 90%. Popular majors include Nursing, Health Service Preparatory Studies, and Psychology.

Graduating 45% of students, Spalding alumni go on to earn a starting salary of \$35,400 having paid an average of \$26,539 per year after aid. Rooted in the

Catholic tradition, the Spalding University community embraces individuals of all traditions, encouraging them to live from a personal philosophy centred on a value system beyond self. President Tori McClure tells the *Catholic Herald*: "Our mission gives us a common language and a shared commitment to do better. It's not uncommon to find yourself in a conversation with the president or your professor outside the classroom. We are all valued, and when you become a part of our community, you become part of something larger."

Spring Hill College
Mobile, Alabama

Spring Hill is a private Catholic college located in Mobile, Alabama. It was founded in 1830 by Michael Portier, Bishop of Mobile. Along with being the oldest college or university in the state of Alabama, it was the first Catholic college in the South, the fifth-oldest Catholic college in the United States, and the third-oldest member of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities. It is a small institution with an enrolment of 948 undergraduate students. Admissions are competitive as the Spring Hill acceptance rate is 72%. Popular majors are Business and Health Service Preparatory

Studies, and Psychology. Graduating 56% of students, Spring Hill alumni go on to earn a typical starting salary of \$33,600.

St Bonaventure University
St Bonaventure, New York

St Bonaventure University is a private Franciscan university in St Bonaventure, New York. It has 1,893 undergraduate students and was established in 1858. In athletics, the Bonnies play National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I sports in the Atlantic 10. Students and alumni often refer to the university as "Bona's". With an acceptance rate of 81%, students receive an average of \$30,000 in financial aid. Popular majors include Marketing, Health Science, Biology, Finance and Communication.

Stonehill College
Easton, Massachusetts

Stonehill is an above-average private Catholic college located in Easton, Massachusetts, in the Boston area. It was founded in 1948 by the Congregation of Holy Cross and is located on the original estate of Frederick Lothrop Ames Jr, with 29 buildings that complement the original Georgian-style Ames mansion. It is a small institution with an enrolment of 2,349 undergraduate students. Admissions are competitive as the Stonehill acceptance rate is 72%.

Popular majors include Marketing, Psychology, and Communications. Graduating 85% of students, Stonehill alumni typically go on to earn a starting salary of \$47,700, having paid an average of \$31,467 per year after aid. In the Holy Cross tradition of educating the mind and heart, Campus Ministry at Stonehill encourages students to think, act and lead with courage to create a just and compassionate world.

WSJ 2024 rank: 157 ▶



Spalding University, Louisville

“
The Great Books College is perfect for devout Catholics, fans of the outdoors, and students of Western thought

◀ The College of St Scholastica
Duluth, Minnesota

St Scholastica is an above-average private Catholic college located in Duluth, Minnesota. Founded in 1912 by a group of pioneering Benedictine Sisters, today St Scholastica educates almost 4,000 students annually and has graduated more than 29,000 alumni. The college offers a liberal arts education and is located on 186 wooded acres overlooking Lake Superior. Admissions is somewhat competitive as the St Scholastica acceptance rate is 74%. Popular majors include Nursing, Social Work and Youth Services, and Psychology. Graduating 65% of students, St Scholastica alumni go on to earn a starting salary of \$44,900,



Thomas More College of Liberal Arts

having paid an average of \$25,744 after financial aid.

Thomas More College of Liberal Arts
Merrimack, New Hampshire

Thomas More College is a private Catholic college located in Merrimack in the Boston area. It is a very small institution but highly praised. The acceptance rate is 100%. The only major offered is Liberal Arts and Humanities. Of its students, 90% graduate. It emphasises classical education in the Catholic intellectual tradition and is named after St Thomas More. Despite its tiny size, it is a highly regarded bastion of spiritual resistance to secularism being devoted to preserving the canon of Western civilisation morally rooted in Christian thought. There is regular confession, courses in both Latin and Greek, and “Catholic guilds” in which students can learn crafts like illumination and gardening. The college celebrates feast days with medieval style banquets. There is also a term spent in Rome living in a villa located five miles from the Vatican which is run by Maronite monks.

Wyoming Catholic College
Lander, Wyoming

Wyoming Catholic College (WCC) was founded in 2007 in Lander,

Wyoming, with help from the local bishop. It can be found in a small town near the Wind River Mountain Range and the Pope Agie River. The Great Books College is perfect for devout Catholics, fans of the outdoors, and students of Western thought. WCC is the only Catholic college in Wyoming and is listed as a “Newman Guide School” in the *Newman Guide to Catholic Schools*.

Wyoming Catholic’s four-year core curriculum, leading to a liberal arts degree, is focused on the Great Books and includes both lectures and dialogues.

They offer a unique outdoor programme which includes mountain hikes, horseback riding and leadership development. Spiritual life on campus focuses on liturgy and sacred music, including both the Ordinary and Extraordinary (Latin) Forms of the Mass and the Byzantine Rite. There are no classes during daily Mass and on patronal feast days. Eucharistic adoration and confession are offered daily.

Xavier University of Louisiana
New Orleans, Louisiana

Xavier University of Louisiana is a private, historically black, Catholic university in New Orleans, Louisiana. It is the only Catholic HBCU and, upon the canonisation

of Katharine Drexel in 2000, became the first Catholic university founded by a saint. The average cost after aid is \$18,000, the acceptance rate is 95%, and the graduation rate is a low 51%. There are 3,419 students at Xavier which offers Arts & Science, education and pharmacy degrees. It also has an Institute of Black American Studies. Its centenary is in 2024.

Xavier University
Cincinnati, Ohio

Xavier University is a private Jesuit university in Cincinnati, Ohio. It is the sixth-oldest Catholic and fourth-oldest Jesuit university in the United States.

Xavier has an undergraduate enrolment of 4,860 students and a graduate enrolment of 1,269 students. Xavier University is primarily an undergraduate, liberal arts institution. It provides an education in the Jesuit tradition, which emphasises learning through community service, interdisciplinary courses and the engagement of faith, theology, philosophy and ethics studies. Xavier’s athletic teams, known as the Xavier Musketeers, compete in the National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I level in the Big East Conference. Accepting 84% of applicants, Xavier students pay an average of \$32,370 per year after aid. CH



Xavier University of Louisiana

‘It’s a very vibrant liturgical life here’

William Fahey, President of Thomas More College of Liberal Arts, explains what sets his college apart

Catholic Herald: Could you give us a sketch of the school and its history, where it is now, and how you came to be involved?

William Fahey: So, Thomas More College was founded after the disintegration of Catholic higher education, after the Land o’ Lakes decision and certain structural changes occurred at the older established Catholic universities. There were several new projects, like Thomas More College, my friends at Christendom College, and Thomas Aquinas College – those would have been the three in the 1970s that were launched. So, we come out of a group of Catholic scholars who look at the turmoil in the Church, and especially the turmoil in the United States, and decide someone needs to take a stand defending and continuing traditional Catholic higher education. So, it was founded in 1978, formally by Peter V Sampo, who had been at St Anselm’s, and the Franciscan University in Biddeford, Maine. But the vision was a kind of traditional retrenchment. So that’s the basic founding milieu.

CH: What do you think sets you apart? How many students are there?

WF: Thomas More College offers a stable, small community that’s attentive to the needs of that student in a way that no large institution can be, no matter what its flag is that it’s flying. And an interesting vindication of this has come out from the most unlikely ally, and that is Facebook. Facebook is one of my favourite friends. I don’t have a Facebook account but the research behind Facebook talks about this British anthropologist Robin Dunbar. Dunbar, an anthropologist, observed that human flourishing begins to fail around 300. And that human communities will immediately start disintegrating and regrouping around smaller units. And

Facebook and most social media platforms include this insight in the way they’re trying to form friend groups. And the way networking functions, like LinkedIn, is into trying to break down to keep the community vibrant at the lower level. Once you crest a certain number, they’re naturally going to seek something smaller. Well, you don’t have to worry about being a casualty of a large institution at Thomas More College. We have no desire whatsoever to become a large institution, that’s not stable in our view. And it’s not good for human flourishing, intellectually, morally, spiritually, physically – period.

CH: Tell us about the Catholic experience on campus?

WF: They would find a faculty that is 100 per cent Catholic. You could theoretically be a non-Catholic here, but you would have to be a non-Catholic who basically believes in the full magisterium of the Catholic Church.



President William Fahey of Thomas More College

So, all the faculty are committed, and very excited about being Catholic scholars who see a happy balance between faith and reason. So, there’s no concern, about being taught by people who don’t share my faith. The student body? We don’t preclude anybody. We’ve had atheists. We’ve had Jewish students; we typically have a fair number of Orthodox students and some Anglican and Protestant students. What’s available to the students is Mass every day of different types during the week. So we have the Traditional Latin Mass offered by priests from the fraternity of St Peter, we have Benedictine monks who come and offer Mass here, and they have their own spirituality. We have a Carmelite chaplain, who’s here once a week, and we have an Anglican ordinariate chaplain, in addition to a diocesan chaplain. So the way I like to express it to the students, the liturgical treasures of the Catholic Church are presented. We don’t say this is the only way or this is what this council says, or only this true Mass. We try to show liturgically the Catholic Church is rather rich. That would be another key thing here in that it’s a very vibrant liturgical life.

CH: Where do you see your graduates heading after being here?

WF: Many people come here to prepare for teaching. But the rest are all over the map. We have a lot of people that have gone into investment banking, financial advisory services, high-tech companies. There are a lot of marriages, frankly, that come out of the college. And so that means for a good portion of our student body, what their education has prepared them for, in my view, is the most essential vocation in civilisation: running a household being a good parent, especially a good mother and sustaining a Catholic household. A lot of people go into law. It is a broad spectrum. CH

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