



My Dear Parishioners,

Praised be Jesus Christ! In recent weeks, Bishops across the country – including our own -- have written Pastoral Letters to the faithful in their region. Bishop Conley of Lincoln, Nebraska wrote a letter in September entitled [The Joy & Wonder of Catholic Education](#). With Catholic Schools Week now here, I share a commentary on that letter by Archbishop Chaput.

Peace, Fr. Rogers

Archbishop Chaput on Bishop Conley's newest pastoral letter

Your bishop and my friend, Bishop James Conley, has written a [wonderful pastoral letter on Catholic education](#) that reminds us that a good education must be intentional and directed toward the wonder of truth, beauty, and goodness. It is a letter that should be read widely by educators, pastors, parents, and all people entrusted with the care of young hearts and minds.

All the years I have known Bishop Conley, he has been a passionate advocate for quality education that is *liberal* in the traditional sense: an education that frees the student to receive the truth. This is a simple concept but one that has become increasingly difficult with the cacophony of distractions that demand our attention in this post-modern world.

The Joy and Wonder of Catholic Education reminds us that a genuine education is one that touches not just the intellect, but the imagination and heart. We are created for something more than facts or technical skills. We are created to know *and* love the source of creation, and that is only possible when the person opens up to those things which reveal to the soul the greatness for which each of us was created.

The idea of wonder seems to be lost on so much of education these days, even at times within Catholic schools, and yet there is no genuine education, especially Catholic education, without the spark of wonder. Children instinctively know there is something to which they are called that is greater than their experiences. This is why good stories capture their imaginations. They know there is a world outside of their limited knowledge and they want someone to lead them there. This is what a good education does: it leads us out of our ignorance and puts us in touch with the spark of the Creator. It enables the soul to sing. Anything less is a failure that eventually leads the soul to a mere shadow of its potential, and this in turn impacts the immediate and global community.

So many of today's societal problems can be traced back to a failure in education. Few people sense the wonder of what the world offers. Some entertainment eclipses wonder, and yet entertainment is a drug that quickly passes and leaves an empty space in the soul. What we need from education is a renewed sense of wonder; a renewed sense of the sacred that is at the heart of what it means to be human.

Bishop Conley's letter draws from the Holy See's Congregation for Catholic Education by identifying five marks of an authentically Catholic education: 1) inspired by a supernatural vision; 2) founded on Christian understanding of man and woman; 3) animated by communion and community; 4) imbued with a Catholic worldview throughout its curriculum; and 5) sustained by gospel witness.

All of these marks are given their due attention in Bishop Conley's pastoral letter with a simplicity that makes them accessible. A *liberal* education is not complicated, but it requires a deliberate focus that too often does not exist today.

Those who are in the field of education would do well to [read *The Joy and Wonder of Catholic Education*](#), meditate on it, and discuss it among colleagues. More than ever, we need a conversation about the proper end of education. Without understanding where education should take students, it will be impossible to get there.

Bishop Conley does us a great service in reminding us of the purpose of education. We are made for wonder, which is a wonder that breathes life into the soul and gives our lives meaning and purpose beyond the mere functional. What a gift it would be if our schools could give to our students that wonder through which God enters the heart and gives it new life.



Winter Bible Study Now Forming

Lectio: Eucharist: Discovering the Mass in the Bible

Dates: February 4 – April 15, 2025 (10 weeks)

Tuesday Evening, 7:00 PM – 8:30 PM

Where: St. Joseph Room

Acclaimed author and teacher Dr. Brant Pitre digs down to the biblical roots of the Eucharist, through its foreshadowing in the miraculous events of the Old Testament, the Gospels, and Apostolic teaching.

"The Lamb of God," "The Bread of Life," "The Body and the Blood of Christ"... these are phrases we know from the Mass. But do we understand what they mean in the greater and deeper context of Scripture and Church teaching? We'll discover firsthand how Christ's Body and Blood are an integral and wondrous part of God's plan for our salvation.

This study from Ascension Press will be held for 10 weeks and will include a combination of video segments, group discussion, and prayer. It will begin on Tuesday, February 4 in the St. Joseph Room or on Zoom. **You have the option to purchase the Individual Participant Workbook via Amazon for \$24.95 at <https://qrco.de/bfgN4B>.**

To register for this study or if you have further questions, please contact Ann Marie Gillinger at amgmag03@gmail.com. You may also register online through the Parish Website or Parish Flocknote.