

PHILOSOPHY OF HOLY FAMILY ACADEMY

Ad veritatem per fidem et rationem
(To the truth through faith and reason)

The End Of Christian Education

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

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

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

Thus the environment and the curriculum of Holy Family Academy is designed to insure the proper formation and education of the human person in light of his ultimate goal which is a life lived to the greater glory of God and eternal life lived with God in heaven. "Hence", says Pius XI, "the true Christian, product of Christian education, is the supernatural man who thinks, judges and acts constantly and consistently in accordance with right reason illumined by the supernatural light of the example and teaching of Christ."

Classical Education--The Pursuit Of Excellence

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

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

Parents--The Primary Educators

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

The Mission Of Holy Family Academy

Holy Family Academy (HFA) is established with the intention of providing "true liberty" for parents in the choice of a school to aid them in the education of their children. The Academy provides a Roman Catholic education in the classical tradition. The vision for the school is to serve students in grades seven through twelve. Desiring to be found in the heart of the Church, and providing for the formation of students in an atmosphere free from dissent of its teachings, the members of the board of trustees and all faculty and staff of HFA take an oath of fidelity to the magisterium, and sign a profession of faith in the Roman Catholic Church. HFA is dedicated primarily to serving practicing Roman Catholic families, as well as others who sincerely desire to participate in the total curriculum. The academy does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in its policies of admissions, scholarships, or employment of personnel.

Excellence in the academic formation of its students is enhanced by small class size (20-24 students per class), allowing for individual attention and the recognition of the uniqueness of each student. Desiring to provide a Christ-like atmosphere within which education can flourish, HFA sets prayer not as an isolated activity, but rather one that permeates the entire life of the Academy. In like manner, faculty and students will conduct themselves at all times as proper ladies and gentlemen. Discipline and respectful obedience to proper authority will be expected of all. In whatever is studied, spoken or accomplished, students, faculty, and parents will conduct themselves in a manner consistent with authentic Catholic living.

Holy Family Academy was founded by parents, and its success depends on the support of the parents of its students, as well as that of the community. This support will come in many ways, notwithstanding financial support. Committed to paying fair wages to its employees and to making the school affordable, in as much as it is able, to all families who sincerely desire its education and formation, HFA must have the financial support of those who believe in its mission.

The goal of education at Holy Family Academy is to produce "the true Christian...the supernatural man who thinks, judges and acts constantly and consistently in accordance with right reason illumined by the supernatural light of the example and teaching of Christ."