



October 2021

## Formation of the Human Person in Catholic School and College Sports

Everything in a Catholic educational institution must serve its mission of seeking and teaching truth, the sanctification of its students, and service to society. The primary means of advancing this mission is the academic program, which has pride of place and first claim to resources in the life of the institution. The delivery of the academic program takes place within a rich Catholic environment and is inspired by a Catholic worldview. However, co-curricular and extracurricular programs also are important to students' formation and also must take place within this same rich Catholic environment and worldview. This is particularly true of sports which, in Catholic educational institutions, are an effective means to provide for the well-being of man and to give glory and praise to the Creator.<sup>1</sup>

The goals of a Catholic institution's sports program include student-athlete growth in physical skills and strength, growth in Christian character and virtue, and becoming a selfless and supportive member of a community. Through integral and holistic Catholic education, student-athletes will come to understand who they are as unified persons of body and soul, as sons and daughters of God, and as responsible members of a community.

These essential goals are threatened if physical health or safety is compromised or ignored, if the pursuit of human physical excellence neglects concomitant growth in moral excellence, if the truth and dignity of the human person is distorted by presenting an errant understanding of the human person, or if sports are placed above the good of the person or of the community. Sports enthusiast St. John Paul II, while recognizing the power of sport for good, also notes its danger if sport is simply "reduced to mere effort and to a questionable, soulless demonstration of physical strength."<sup>2</sup> He also stresses that particularly in sport, "Every care must be taken to protect the human body from any attack on its integrity, from any exploitation and from any idolatry."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Pope Pius XII, *Sport at the Service of the Spirit* (1945).

<sup>2</sup> St. John Paul II, *Address to the Organizers and Participants in the 83rd Giro d'Italia Cycle Race* (2000).

<sup>3</sup> St. John Paul II, *Jubilee of Sports People. Homily of John Paul II* (2000).

Catholic sports programs must not only focus on the positive formative power of sports, but also guard against a deformation that sports might bring about through exploitation of athletes, abuse of the body through steroids or drugs, intemperance, vanity, or lack of charity and justice toward competitors, to name but a few challenges. The recent movement to allow athletes to compete on teams based on a self-determined gender not tied to biological sex (i.e., “transgendered athletes”) is another danger that must be resisted. In teaching and affirming the truth about the human person, a Catholic school or college must communicate care and respect for others, who are at various stages of physical development, moral formation, and self-understanding. While affirming the dignity of all persons and seeking to lead all to the saving love of Christ, Catholic educational institutions must, in service to truth, charity, and justice, give witness in their athletic programs to the “total and harmonious physical, moral, and social development”<sup>4</sup> of student athletes.

## Principles

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**Principle 1: “The Church is interested in sport because the person is at her heart, the whole person, and she recognizes that sports activity affects the formation, relations and spirituality of a person.”<sup>5</sup>**

Catholic educational institutions form the whole person, mind, body and spirit: “integral formation of the human person, which is the purpose of education, includes the development of all the human faculties of the students.”<sup>6</sup> While classrooms lend themselves to development of the mind and spirit, sport is particularly valuable for forming the whole person:

Sport, rightly understood, is an occupation of the whole man, and while perfecting the body as an instrument of the mind, it also makes the mind itself a more refined instrument for the search and communication of truth and helps man to achieve that end to which all others must be subservient, the service and praise of his Creator.<sup>7</sup>

Many Catholic schools and colleges, recognizing this reality, interject spirituality throughout their sports programs by including prayers at both practices and games, celebrating team Masses, providing for team chaplains, engaging in service projects, and ensuring that sports do not interfere with Sabbath and Holy Day obligations.

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<sup>4</sup> St. John Paul II, *Address to Italian Olympic Medal Winners: Sports Offers Opportunity for Spiritual Elevation* (1984) 50.

<sup>5</sup> See Pope Francis, *Address to the Italian Tennis Federation* (2015).

<sup>6</sup> Congregation for Catholic Education, *Male and Female He Created Them: Towards a Path of Dialogue on the Question of Gender Theory in Education* (2019) 41.

<sup>7</sup> Pope Pius XII, 1945.

Rightly understood, sport is capable of helping empower the mind to pursue truth and, in its own way, give honor and glory to God. St. John Paul II further develops this Catholic understanding:

Sport, in fact, even under the aspect of physical education, finds in the Church support for all its good and wholesome elements. For the Church cannot but encourage everything that serves the harmonious development of the human body, rightly considered the masterpiece of the whole of creation, not only because of its proportion, vigor, and beauty, but also and especially because God has made it his dwelling and the instrument of an immortal soul, breathing into it that "breath of life" (cf. Gen. 2:7) by which man is made in his image and likeness. If we then consider the supernatural aspect, St. Paul's words are an illuminating admonition: "Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? So glorify God in your body" (1 Cor 6:15; 19-20).<sup>8</sup>

Given the power and benefits of sports in human formation, Catholic schools and colleges should ensure opportunities for all students to benefit from athletic formation, not just accomplished athletes. Physical education classes, intramural sports, "pick-up games," and informal opportunities of physical play among students of all types should be encouraged given the benefits of such activities. The money and time put into interschool sports should not detract from the larger role and opportunity sports can play for all students, not just the formal team athletes. And even accomplished athletes should bear in mind that the desire to win must not hinder or obscure the many other benefits sports offers to them.

**Principle 2: "The Catholic educator must consciously inspire his or her activity with the Christian concept of the human person."<sup>9</sup>**

Sport is a powerful tool for teaching basic truths about the human person. "Students should be helped to see the human person as a living creature having both a physical and a spiritual nature; each of us has an immortal soul, and we are in need of redemption."<sup>10</sup> The stakes are high, because "neglecting the unity of body and soul results in an attitude that either entirely disregards the body or fosters a worldly materialism. Hence, all the dimensions have to be taken into account in order to understand what actually constitutes the human being."<sup>11</sup> With the fundamental concept of the human person so grievously under attack in the common culture, Catholic educational institutions cannot remain passive or silent, but must give witness to the truth of the human person.

Among these fundamental truths are:

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<sup>8</sup> St. John Paul II, *Address to the Athletes of the Italian "Youth Games"* (1981).

<sup>9</sup> Congregation for Catholic Education, *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith* (1982) 18.

<sup>10</sup> Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* (1988) 55.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

- the material world (and everything that exists) is good, as it is created by God;<sup>12</sup>
- the things of creation are to be received in awe, respect, and gratitude as gifts from God and not manipulated, dominated, and controlled in ways contrary to their natural ends;<sup>13</sup>
- everyone, by nature of their creation by God and eternal destiny, has inherent dignity and must be treated with love and respect;<sup>14</sup>
- the very existence of our bodies is one of the awesome creative gifts of God, and the body is “a temple of the Holy Spirit” (1 Corinthians 6:19) which we must treat with honor and respect according to God’s original purpose;
- the human person is a “being at once corporeal and spiritual; body and soul”;<sup>15</sup>
- God made us male and female, two distinct but equally dignified and complementary ways of being human;<sup>16</sup>
- the concepts of sex and gender can be distinguished but not disaggregated,<sup>17</sup> and a person “should acknowledge and accept his sexual identity”;<sup>18</sup>
- there is a natural “language of the body” which helps us understand and express our united physical and spiritual selves;<sup>19</sup> and
- God, through Jesus Christ, the perfect man, fully reveals man to himself.<sup>20</sup>

The transmission of this Christian understanding of man, this Christian anthropology, is an important part of the mission of Catholic education. The elemental nature of sport can assist in properly situating students in reality and experiencing the unity of body and soul. The Vatican notes that, “In the context of the modern world, sport is perhaps the most striking example of the unity of body and soul.”<sup>21</sup> While this unity is evident in other contexts, the context of sport seeks the harmony of body and will as an athlete negotiates complex physical realities often amid moments of high stress.

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<sup>12</sup> CCC 339.

<sup>13</sup> CCC 307.

<sup>14</sup> CCC 27.

<sup>15</sup> CCC 362.

<sup>16</sup> Genesis 1:27; CCC 2334, 2383.

<sup>17</sup> Pope Francis, *Amoris laetitia* (2016) 56.

<sup>18</sup> CCC 2393.

<sup>19</sup> St. John Paul II, “Language of the Body, the Substratum and Content of the Sacramental Sign of Spousal Communion” (January 5, 1983) in *The Redemption of the Body and Sacramentality of Marriage (Theology of the Body)* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2005) 268-270.

<sup>20</sup> St. Paul VI, *Gaudium et spes: Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* (1965) 22, at [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_const\\_19651207\\_gaudium-et-spes\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html) (accessed on Oct. 6, 2020).

<sup>21</sup> Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life, *Giving the Best of Yourself: A Document on the Christian Perspective on Sport and the Human Person* (2018) 3.10.

The Catholic attempt to use sport toward the integral formation of the human person and to give praise and honor to the Creator is subverted by competing ideologies in the common culture, especially gender ideology. The issue is bigger than just about sexual politics; Catholic educators must resist gender theories that “aim to annihilate the concept of ‘nature’”<sup>22</sup> and our understanding of who we are and how we exist in the world. The Congregation for Catholic Education has recently warned of gender ideology:

It is becoming increasingly clear that we are now facing with [sic] what might accurately be called an *educational crisis*... [a] disorientation regarding anthropology which is... bringing with it a tendency to cancel out the differences between men and women, presenting them instead as merely the product of historical and cultural conditioning.<sup>23</sup>

Catholic educational institutions must fight for social justice by providing “the conditions that allow associations or individuals to obtain what is their due, according to their nature and their vocation.”<sup>24</sup> All athletes are due a fair environment in which to compete against their biological and age-related peers. A college student is typically bigger, faster, and stronger than a high school student, so we do not normally let them compete in high school events. By nature, men are typically bigger, faster, and stronger than women and so should not play against them in competitive interschool athletics.<sup>25</sup> No student should usurp the right of another student to fair competition with his or her physical peers.

It is therefore unjust for any student to be forced to surrender his or her right to compete against others of the same biological sex because of another student’s gender dysphoria. Requiring an athlete who may be struggling with gender dysphoria to compete against his or her physical peers does not deprive the opportunity to participate in sport but is acknowledging his or her biological and God-given nature.

In particular, allowing a male to compete on a female team is unjust for several reasons. It may mean he takes the place of a weaker female who otherwise would have made the team and is now denied the chance to develop and compete. A female on the team may see reduced playing time. It may put smaller females at greater risk of injury, especially in sports like football, basketball, or soccer in which contact is common. Injustice is also present, since males will disproportionately find success against females and hence an elevated social status. Finally, there is the injustice of “economic valuing,” as males will have greater access to scholarships at the collegiate level and contracts at the professional level if allowed to compete head-to-head against females. Permitting biological males to compete against biological females violates the notion

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<sup>22</sup> Congregation for Catholic Education (2019) 23.

<sup>23</sup> Congregation for Catholic Education (2019) Introduction.

<sup>24</sup> CCC 1928.

<sup>25</sup> Taryn Knox, Lynley C Anderson, and Alison Heather, “Transwomen in Elite Sport: Scientific and Ethical Considerations,” *Journal of Medical Ethics*, Vol. 45, Iss. 6 (2018). Retrieved from <https://jme.bmj.com/content/45/6/395>.

that sports must be “an occasion to practice human and Christian virtues of solidarity, loyalty, good behavior and respect for others, who must be seen as competitors and not as mere opponents or rivals.” The solidarity, loyalty and bonding that sports provides for groups of men and women is different in gendered and mixed gendered environments.

**Principle 3: “Sport has in itself an important moral and educative significance: it is a training ground of virtue, a school of inner balance and outer control, an introduction to more true and lasting conquests.”<sup>26</sup>**

Catholic education “aims at forming in the Christian those particular virtues which will enable him to live a new life in Christ and help him to play faithfully his part in building up the Kingdom of God,”<sup>27</sup> and sports are particularly well-suited to develop many of these critical virtues.<sup>28</sup> St. John Paul II emphasized that sports require basic human qualities such as “awareness of one's personal limits, fair competition, acceptance of precise rules, respect for one's opponent and a sense of solidarity and unselfishness. Without these qualities, sport would be reduced to mere effort and to a questionable, soulless demonstration of physical strength.”<sup>29</sup>

A virtue is “an habitual and firm disposition to do the good.”<sup>30</sup> The virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance are all acquired by human effort. They come through practice. In this they mirror the acquisition of sports skills: opportunity for practice and repetition are critical to mastery and habitude. Sports provide rich opportunities for safe and regulated venues to work on virtue development.

If sports are not carefully managed, however, vice can also develop. St. John Paul II notes that:

Sport runs the risk of degrading man if it is not based on and supported by the human virtues of loyalty, generosity and respect for the rules of the game as well as respect for the player. These are virtues that harmonize well with the Christian spirit because they demand a capacity for self-control, self-denial, sacrifice and humility, and therefore an attitude of gratefulness to God, who is the giver of every good and therefore also the giver of the necessary physical and intellectual talents. Sport is not merely the exercise of muscles, but it is the school of mortal values and of training in courage, in perseverance, and in overcoming laziness and carelessness. Besides, it is an antidote for weakness, discouragement and dejection in defeat. There is no doubt that these values are of greatest interest for the

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<sup>26</sup> St. John Paul II, *Sport as Training Ground for Virtue and Instrument of Union Among People: Address to the Presidents of the Italian Sports Federations* (1979).

<sup>27</sup> Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School* (1977) 37

<sup>28</sup> St. John Paul II (1984).

<sup>29</sup> St. John Paul II (2000).

<sup>30</sup> CCC 1803.

formation of a personality which consider sports not an end in itself but as a means to total and harmonious physical, moral, and social development.<sup>31</sup>

Anything that might degrade a person should be prohibited in a Catholic institution's sports program, for "The Church understands the human person as a unit of body, soul and spirit, and seek[s] to avoid any kind of reductionism in sport that debases human dignity."<sup>32</sup> Catholic sports programs should ensure there is never any type of player hazing; any type of coaching that is physically, emotionally, or spiritually abusive, harmful, or degrading; and any type of fan behavior that is derogatory or unsportsmanlike.

While physical health is naturally showcased in sports, physical modesty is also to be pursued in a Catholic program. Athletic dress (formal and informal) should assist toward this end, and facilities for dressing should help promote modesty, privacy, and chastity.

While a healthy acknowledgement of one's gifts is appropriate, the virtue of humility is also to be extolled, and individual or team opponents are never to be cruelly humiliated through mindless, overwhelming dominance. The goal of sports is, through healthy competition, to build up both one's self and others through growth in mind, strength, skill, and virtue. While these virtues may not be evident in an opponent's program or well-modeled by professional athletes or programs, in a Catholic context there is a difference in the way sports and virtue are united. In fact, this public witness can be extremely powerful. For good or for ill, competition with another team's athletes and fans may impact their view of Catholics and Catholicism in general and should be taken into consideration.

Catholic educational institutions seek to leverage the powerful virtue-building opportunities sport provides, and they must protect the integrity of sport so that this powerful tool is not subverted or co-opted by forces promoting a counter-Catholic worldview and concept of man.

## **Standards for Policies Related to Catholic School and College Sports**

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In Catholic education, policies involving Catholic school and college athletics programs should:

- complement and extend the institution's academic and religious mission;
- ensure that the academic enterprise and the spiritual priorities of the institution take precedence over athletics;
- assist in the holistic and integral formation and flourishing of the human person and thereby help the athlete to give glory and praise to the Creator;

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<sup>31</sup> St. John Paul II (1984).

<sup>32</sup> Dicastery for Laity, Family, and Life (2018), 1.1.

- provide for the spiritual development of student-athletes through prayer and, if possible, the services of a chaplain;
- guard against exploitation or idolatry related to the body and protect the body not only from physical injury but also from any attack on its physical, spiritual, and psychological integrity;
- ensure that school and college personnel and players are formed in a Christian and virtue-based approach to sport, highlighting virtues including justice, with its emphasis on fair play and respect, and temperance, with its emphasis on modesty and self-control in action and speech, especially in moments of pain and tension; and
- promote the common good through self-sacrifice and seeking the good of others.

### **Operationalizing the Standards**

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To meet these core standards, policies and practices such as those below can be of assistance:

- Describe to students and in official policy documents—such as an athletics mission statement—how sports complement and extend the institution’s mission.<sup>33</sup>
- Ensure that the institution’s academics and religious programs are prioritized over athletics in resources and marketing, so that the institution’s primary public identity and pride are situated in its academic and religious identity.
- Ensure that athletes are held to the same standards of academic performance, morality, and decorum as other students, so as to avoid a perception of two classes of students.
- Create opportunities for all students to participate in sports at various levels (intramural, pick-up, informal) so as to benefit from their formative value. Avoid focus on just inter-school athletics or privileging the most talented athletes above other students.
- To ensure that sporting programs effectively develop the spiritual, emotional, social, and moral dimensions of student athletes, establish professional development programs and policies for athletics personnel. They should be formed in a spirituality of athletics as part of their ongoing professional development. Such formation may include presentations by theologians on Christian anthropology, the role of sport and play in human wellbeing, and sports as a tool of evangelization and virtue development.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> See The Cardinal Newman Society’s policy guidance on mission statement.

<sup>34</sup> See appendix for select resources.



- Standards for hiring and evaluating coaches should require that they be role models for Christian virtue and maturity and avoid humiliation, degradation, or disrespect of student athletes.
- Ensure that public prayer is a part of each home pre-game program and encourage post-game team prayers as well. Designate a program or team chaplain, if possible, to schedule and lead team Masses, retreats, and service projects.
- Avoid practices and games on Sundays to allow for proper celebration of the Lord's Day. Ensure that, if Sunday is a day of travel, students can attend Mass.
- Insist that student safety and wellbeing are non-negotiable. If size or strength differentials or any other factor creates a situation of physical or psychological harm, ensure that a policy is in place to end a competition.
- Develop policies to prohibit the use of steroids, assist students struggling with substance abuse, and promote integral bodily health.
- To maintain the program's mission and to ensure student safety, fair play, and justice, determine participation on sex-specific athletic teams by students' biological sex, not gender expression or self-proclaimed gender identity. Sex identified at birth on a birth certificate can normally suffice to determine team placement. The extremely rare case of a child identified at birth with a disorder of sex development can be handled on a case-by-case basis with medical consultation.
- Consider invoking opt-out provisions when offered by a league or sport association that permits transgendered athletes or otherwise compromises the integrity of athletics and risks scandal to students.
- Develop a policy requiring users of campus facilities to use restrooms or locker rooms corresponding to their biological sex, even when visiting from another institution. A person suffering from gender dysphoria should, if possible, have access to a designated, private gender-neutral facility for changing or bathroom needs.
- Temper a win-at-all-costs mentality to ensure that sports are seen as beneficial in and of themselves, as an opportunity for human play and personal and team development in skill, strength, and virtue.
- Ensure that athletic programs, policies, practices, and competitions promote the development of student virtue, good sportsmanship behavior, and the dignity of the human person including modesty in personal decorum and comportment. Modesty in dress avoids clothing that might be too tight, too short, reveals undergarments, or is missing altogether and requires changing in private areas. Modesty in talk means

avoiding offensive songs, jokes, or other speech. Modesty in action means not seeking undue attention to oneself or envy of others' successes.

- Promote community by teaching students to show respect and care for fellow athletes, cheering them on, forgiving mistakes, showing encouragement them, and establishing positive friendships. Consequently this means a complete prohibition of hazing, cruel teasing, establishing cliques, and ostracizing others. Respect is also due to coaches and officials, precluding criticism of them in the performance of their duties.
- Ensure that all persons attending sporting events (athletes, teams, coaches, and fans) are required to respect each other before, during, and after sports competitions. Bullying, mockery, or any sort of uncivil or unsportsmanlike behavior directed at any athletic participant for any reason is always forbidden.

## Possible Questions

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**Question:** Could we just let sport be sport, run a competitive program like our peers, and leave the rest to theology class or Sunday school?

**Response:** Catholic schools and colleges are educational evangelical communities of faith. Sports in our communities are a part of something much bigger than simply competition and athletic glory. Because Catholic education is different, with a more comprehensive integrated approach to student formation, our sports programs are different. They are orientated to integral formation of mind, body, and spirit within a Catholic understanding of the human person.

**Question:** Our coaches and trainers are not theologians and, in some cases, not even Catholic. Isn't a philosophical and theological agenda impracticable for them?

**Response:** This may be a weakness that needs to be addressed. The Appendix has a few resources to start coaches and programs on a path to deeper Catholic understanding in these areas. The Cardinal Newman Society's publication "All Employees Matter" may also help athletics personnel realize the privilege and responsibility of working in a Catholic educational institution.

**Question:** Isn't it a violation of good taste and religious freedom to offer a specifically Christian or Catholic prayer before a game? Is that proselytizing? Shouldn't we choose the most generic and universal sentiments to avoid offending others?

**Response:** In athletic events, the home team is responsible for the pre-game program. When we invite guests into our "home," it is a Catholic home. We have a chance to show our guests who we are: a community of faith and part of the Catholic Church, and in this instance the Church at play and prayer. While we respect our guests and should never choose a Catholic prayer that might lead to confusion, we also respect them enough to assume they are capable of the virtue of

tolerance and respect incumbent upon guests in another person's home or Church. We should never shy away from the name of Jesus in any prayer or circumstance out of a false sense of inclusivity or a fear of appearing pious, e.g., John 14:13-14: "Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it." Also see Matthew 10:33: "But he that shall deny me before men, I will also deny him before my Father who is in heaven."

**Question:** Don't laws and athletic associations require a school or college to provide students access to the team of their choice according to their declared sexual identity?

**Response:** Local, state, and federal laws in the United States and athletic association policies are changing rapidly on this subject, and there is no national consensus. A Catholic school or college must carefully review applicable laws and affiliations. Regardless, there is no option for a faithfully Catholic institution to deny or cast doubt upon the God-given biological sex of any person, including students and employees. This would violate the mission of Catholic education to teach and witness to truth. Faced with a legal challenge, a Catholic institution's best defense may be to assert religious freedom by claiming exemption from the law, seeking relief under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, or appealing to the First Amendment or provisions in a state constitution. A school or college has the strongest claim to religious freedom protections if its policies and actions are directly explained by Catholic teachings, consistently faithful, and consistently applied over time and across situations.

**Question:** Not allowing a student the choice of team based on self-declared sexual identity seems bigoted and discriminatory. Isn't equal opportunity in all aspects of school or college programming a core value in education?

**Response:** A policy of assigning students to single-sex teams according to the truth of their biological sex treats all men and women equitably and provides access to sports based on the disinterested classification of sex. The policy exists precisely to ensure equal opportunity for women, most of whom would otherwise be excluded from competition simply because they are naturally and physically different from men. Unjust discrimination occurs when similar people are segregated based on unchosen or unchangeable characteristics like race or sex, and the characteristic is irrelevant to the nature of the activity or policy. A school or college's single-sex team policy acknowledges the scientific fact that men and women are not similar physiologically because of their biological makeup, yet ensures that all men and all women have similar opportunities to engage in sports.

**Question:** Won't it hurt the feelings of students and attack their dignity if they are not allowed to choose a team?

**Response:** On the contrary, students benefit from acknowledging reality and wrestling with desires and ideas that are opposed to what is truthful and healthy. A single-sex team policy

determined by biological sex is truthful, compassionate, and based on common sense. It provides a solution that does not compromise the dignity or safety of any athlete, and it protects female athletes who have access to athletic competitions that might not be otherwise available if forced to compete against males.

**Question:** Doesn't allowing students access to sex-segregated changing facilities and locker rooms according to their gender identity affirm their dignity?

**Response:** Student athletes would not be treated with dignity if they were forced into a state of undress in front of the opposite sex. Coaches also have a right to be treated with dignity and should not be expected to supervise or observe an undressed student of the opposite sex. Maintaining the integrity of sex-designated facilities according to biological sex is the most protective policy given the conflicting needs and interests of all parties.

*This document was developed with substantial comment and contributions from education, legal, and other experts. The lead author is Dan Guernsey, Ed.D., Senior Fellow at The Cardinal Newman Society and principal of a diocesan K-12 Catholic school.*

## **Appendix A: Examples of Policies for Catholic Schools**

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This Appendix includes examples of policies in use at the time of publication. These are presented in alphabetical order by category and are not necessarily exemplary in all possible areas.

### **Athletic Mission and Philosophy**

#### **Belmont Abbey College, Belmont, N.C.<sup>35</sup>**

Belmont Abbey Athletics: We exist to affect a positive change in the culture of sport by upholding a standard of virtue and excellence in all we do. Our mission is to provide positive athletic experiences in an academic environment where students will be encouraged to strive for virtue and excellence so that in all things God may be glorified.

#### **University of Mary, Bismarck, N.D.**

##### Marauders Vision Statement

To be the preeminent intercollegiate athletic department for developing the greatness within each human person through the practice of virtue and the formation of authentic friendships.

##### Marauders Mission Statement

Create a department-wide culture committed to individual greatness through Virtuous Leadership.

##### Philosophy

Virtues themselves are at the core of the athletic experience, and there are many that could be useful for scholar-athletes. In keeping with the Catholic Intellectual Tradition, the University of Mary has chosen to focus on six virtues: the four “Cardinal Virtues” of prudence, justice, courage, and temperance; paired with two virtues worthy of particular note as they pertain to sport: magnanimity and humility. Additionally, we recognize that the signs of these virtues—and thus the signs of greatness that will demonstrate our progress—will be solidarity and harmony. These reveal an integrated individual and communal living.

Our Strategic Plan ultimately focuses on five essential elements of the scholar-athlete experience at Mary. The following five essential areas taken together will serve as the blueprint for athletics at the University of Mary: 1. Virtuous Leadership and Whole-Person Development 2. Virtue-Based Approach to Academic Excellence 3. Virtue-Based Approach to Athletic Excellence 4. Virtue-Based Approach to Scholar-Athlete Safety, Health and Well-Being 5. Virtue-Based Approach to Community Integration and Connectedness

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<sup>35</sup> Excerpted from student athlete handbook at [https://abbeyathletics.com/documents/2020/8/3/Student\\_Athlete\\_Handbook.pdf](https://abbeyathletics.com/documents/2020/8/3/Student_Athlete_Handbook.pdf)

## Code of Conduct

### **Belmont Abbey College, Belmont, N.C.<sup>36</sup>**

While there are great incentives and advantages to being a student-athlete, there are also special responsibilities and requirements that accompany being a student athlete and representing Belmont Abbey College. The athletics department places the highest priority on respect and integrity in all endeavors and expects its student athletes to conduct themselves, both on and off campus, in a manner which reflects positively on Belmont Abbey College and its athletic teams. As such, student athletes must be concerned with any behavior which might discredit themselves, their teams, and/or the college and shall act in a manner that respects opponents, coaches, administrators, fans, and officials.

As a Benedictine Catholic College, the ten Benedictine Hallmarks, especially those of hospitality, obedience, humility, and community, guide and permeate the athletics activities on campus. In particular, these Hallmarks embody an expectation of one's self and of one's neighbor. Student-athletes are expected to act in concert with these Hallmarks so that the mission of the institution – That In All Things God May Be Glorified – is fulfilled.

Belmont Abbey College, Conference Carolinas and the NCAA encourage and promote good sportsmanship on and off the field. Student-athletes are expected to abide by core values of civility and respect for opponents. Profanity, racial, ethnic or sexual comments or other intimidating actions will not be tolerated and may be grounds for disciplinary actions.

The College expects its student-athletes to train and strive for their highest degree of athletic excellence, to demonstrate academic honesty and integrity and to conduct themselves as responsible citizens. Student-athletes must abide by all College, NCAA and Conference Carolinas codes, rules, regulations and policies, in addition to adhering with all state and federal laws.

In addition, student-athletes are subject to the rules and regulations specified by each head coach for team membership. A head coach, athletic administrator, or senior-level college administrator may at any time, if they believe the student athlete has engaged in misconduct, reprimand a student-athlete, suspend the student-athlete from the team, or impose conditions of probation or consequence on the student-athlete's continued participation on the team. Any reprimand will be administered by the head coach and/or athletic administration.

#### Disciplinary Procedures for Rules and Conduct Infractions

1. The designated athletic administrator will meet with the head coach of the student-athlete to discuss the possible disciplinary actions.
2. The student-athlete will meet with the designated athletic administrator or coach to evaluate the incident. The designated athletic administrator or coach will present the charges of infraction to the student-athlete.

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<sup>36</sup> Excerpted from student athlete handbook at [https://abbeyathletics.com/documents/2020/8/3/Student\\_Athlete\\_Handbook.pdf](https://abbeyathletics.com/documents/2020/8/3/Student_Athlete_Handbook.pdf)

3. The designated athletic administrator or coach will meet with student athlete to discuss and implement the disciplinary actions.

#### Role of the Student Athlete

As a student-athlete you are a role model. You are a visible representative of your team, the athletic department and Belmont Abbey College. As such you should remember you are an ambassador of the institution and at all times represent the college with the utmost integrity, honor, dedication and pride. The staff of the athletic department is here to assist you in achieving both your academic and athletic goals. However, you must take responsibility for your experience and actions.

As a student-athlete at Belmont Abbey College:

1. I acknowledge that it is my responsibility to honor the college's values as a Christian academic community which is set forth in its mission, vision, and values statement.
2. I understand it is my responsibility to be aware of and abide by all current and future college, NCAA and Conference Carolinas policies, procedures, rules and regulations.
3. I understand it is my sole responsibility to be aware of and abide by all current and future federal laws, state laws and local laws and ordinances.
4. I will honor the principles of sportsmanship, refrain from using profanity, demonstrate fairness and be hospitable to my opponent. I will exercise humility in victory and grace in defeat. I will not brag or boast.
5. I will not gamble, wager or bet in any form on any athletic activity.
6. I will not engage in academic dishonesty including but not limited to cheating, plagiarism, and submitting work not my own.
7. I will meet regularly with my assigned faculty advisor so that I can be guided toward my plan for my academic course of action.
8. I will not engage in trickery or evasion of rules in order to gain an advantage over an opponent.
9. I will not engage in behavior considered by the college to be harmful to the honor and reputation of the college, its athletic programs and my teammates.
10. I will not engage in any form of hazing or harassment.
11. I will not make, print, or publish any offensive, profane or sexually suggestive language, or make, print or publish any inappropriate, derogatory or disparaging remarks about the college, its athletic program, the faculty, staff or students including in websites such as Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, etc.
12. I will strive, in both attitude and behavior, to make a positive contribution to the college, the athletics program and my team.
13. I will respect myself, my coach, my teammates, game officials and college officials at all times.
14. I will recognize authority of faculty members in the classroom and respect and honor them.

15. I will respect college property and facilities, including residence halls and academic buildings.

16. I will follow all policies and procedures established by the athletic training department to ensure a safe environment.

17. I will immediately report any misconduct or violation of college policies by my teammates or other student-athletes to my coach or the athletics administration

## **Drugs and Alcohol**

### **Belmont Abbey College, Belmont, N.C.<sup>37</sup>**

Belmont Abbey College is in full compliance with the Drug-free Schools and Communities Act Amendment of 1989 (Public Law 101-226) and is committed to a program which discourages the illegal use and abuse of alcohol and controlled substances by students and employees.

Belmont Abbey College prohibits the unlawful possession, use, manufacture, distribution or dispensing of alcohol or controlled substances by students or employees in college buildings, on grounds or property, or as part of any college activity. Any full or part-time student or employee found in violation of said policy will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the policies and laws of the College, City of Belmont, the State of North Carolina and the US Federal Government.

Controlled substances include but are not limited to marijuana, cocaine, cocaine derivatives, heroin, barbiturates, LSD, PCP, amphetamines, tranquilizers and inhalants. Students and employees are to be made aware that illegal manufacture, possession, use, distribution or dispensing of controlled substance may subject individuals to criminal prosecution.

Belmont Abbey College administers and maintains an institutional drug testing policy for all of its student-athletes. Each year, prior to participation with their teams, student athletes are educated about its contents and sign an acknowledgement that they understand its tenets.

## **Gender**

### **Diocese of Toledo, Ohio<sup>38</sup>**

In Catholic parishes, schools and ecclesiastical organizations... all activities and ministries are to be rooted in, and consistent with, the principles of Catholic doctrine. Therefore, in every parish, school and institution, all paid employees and unpaid volunteers will... 5) Confirm that uniforms and gender specific dress, bathrooms, locker rooms, showers, and sponsored activities will all be according to biological sex. 6) Require that participation on athletic teams and extra-curricular activities be according to biological sex.

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<sup>37</sup> Excerpted from student athlete handbook at [https://abbeyathletics.com/documents/2020/8/3/Student\\_Athlete\\_Handbook.pdf](https://abbeyathletics.com/documents/2020/8/3/Student_Athlete_Handbook.pdf)

<sup>38</sup> Excerpted from "Policy Statement on Gender-Related Matters" at <https://www.dioceseoftoledo.org/policy-statement-on-gender-related-matters-1>



**Toronto Catholic District School Board, Ontario, Canada<sup>39</sup>**

The provision of female-only and male-only spaces and activities in a Catholic school is consistent with our understanding of the complementary differences between the sexes and the responsibility to provide for the safety and flourishing of all students.

In competitive sports, issues of safety, modesty, and fairness are of primary importance when considering which students should be allowed to participate in particular events. Male and female students should not be put in athletic situations that would threaten safety, modesty, and fairness.

**St. Ann Catholic School, Hamilton, Ohio<sup>40</sup>**

In all Catholic schools, all curricular and extra-curricular activity is rooted in and consistent with, the principles of Catholic doctrine. Catholic schools:

- Support students with gender dysphoria by treating them with sensitivity, respect, mercy, and compassion.
- Require that participation on school teams be according to their biological sex.
- Require that names and pronouns be in accordance with the person's biological sex.
- Designate Catholic sex education, uniforms and gender appropriate dress, bathrooms, locker rooms, showers, and sleeping accommodations on trips according to their biological sex.
- Maintain names in school records according to the student's biological sex.
- Provide reasonable accommodation to a private bathroom for use by any student who desires increased privacy.

**The Cardinal Newman Society<sup>41</sup>**

Students are only eligible to participate on our school's sport teams consistent with their biological sex. In order to maintain dignity, modesty, and respect for forms of physical contact between members of the opposite sex, at no time will members of the opposite sex wrestle each other in intra-school or inter-school activities.

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<sup>39</sup> Excerpted from student/parent handbook at <https://saintanncs.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/StAnnHandbook2017.pdf>

<sup>40</sup> Excerpted from "Speaking the Truth in Love: Pastoral Guidelines for Educators Concerning Students Experiencing Gender Incongruence" at <https://tcdsbpublishing.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=19105>

<sup>41</sup> Excerpted from Denise Donohue and Dan Guernsey, "Human Sexuality Policies for Catholic Schools" (March 2016) at [https://newmansociety.org/wp-content/uploads/Human-Sexuality-Policies-for-Catholic-Schools\\_For-Web.pdf](https://newmansociety.org/wp-content/uploads/Human-Sexuality-Policies-for-Catholic-Schools_For-Web.pdf)

## Privacy

### Alliance Defending Freedom<sup>42</sup>

#### PHYSICAL PRIVACY POLICY

##### I. PURPOSE

In recognition of student physical privacy rights and the need to ensure student safety and maintain school discipline, this Policy is enacted to advise school site staff and administration regarding their duties in relation to use of restrooms, locker rooms, showers, similar school facilities, and school-related overnight accommodations where persons may be in a state of undress in the presence of others.

##### II. DEFINITIONS

“Sex” means a person’s immutable biological sex, either male or female, as objectively determined by anatomy and/or genetics existing at the time of birth. Evidence of a person’s biological sex includes, but is not limited to, any government-issued identification document that accurately reflects a person’s sex as listed on the person’s original birth certificate.

##### III. POLICY

###### A. Use of School Facilities and Overnight Accommodations

1. Notwithstanding any other Board Policy, every public school restroom, locker room, and shower room accessible by multiple persons at the same time shall be designated for use by male persons only or female persons only.
2. In all public schools in this District, restrooms, locker rooms, and showers that are designated for one sex shall be used only by members of that sex; and, no person shall enter a restroom, locker room, or shower that is designated for one sex unless he or she is a member of that sex.
3. In any other public school facility or setting where a person may be in a state of undress in the presence of others, school personnel shall provide separate, private areas designated for use by persons based on their sex, and no person shall enter these private areas unless he or she is a member of the designated sex.
4. During any school authorized activity or event where persons share overnight lodging, no person shall share a bedroom or multi-occupancy restroom with a member of the opposite sex, unless such persons are members of the same family (i.e., parent/guardian, child, sibling, or grandparent).
5. This section shall not apply to a person who enters a facility designated for the opposite sex:

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<sup>42</sup> Excerpted from Alliance Defending Freedom, Memo on “Access to Privacy Facilities: Protecting the Privacy and Dignity of All Students” (2015) at <https://adflegal.blob.core.windows.net/web-content-dev/docs/default-source/documents/resources/campaign-resources/marriage/safe-bathrooms/student-privacy-letter-and-model-policy.pdf>

- a. for custodial or maintenance purposes, when the facility is not occupied by a member of the opposite sex;
  - b. to render emergency medical assistance; or
  - c. during a natural disaster, emergency, or when necessary to prevent a serious threat to good order or student safety.
6. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit schools from adopting policies necessary to accommodate disabled persons or young children in need of physical assistance when using restrooms, locker rooms and shower rooms.

#### B. Accommodations

Persons who, for any reason, are unwilling or unable to use a facility described in subsection A may submit a request to the principal or other designee of the school district for access to alternative facilities. The principal or designee shall evaluate these requests on a case-by-case basis and shall, to the extent reasonable, offer options for alternate facilities, which may include, but are not limited to: access to a single-user restroom or controlled use of an employee restroom, locker room, or shower. In no event shall the accommodation be access to a facility described in subsection A that is designated for use by members of the opposite sex while persons of the opposite sex are present or could be present.<sup>43</sup>

### Profanity

#### **Belmont Abbey College, Belmont, N.C.<sup>44</sup>**

The use of profanity by Belmont Abbey College athletics department personnel and Belmont Abbey College student-athletes is prohibited. Head coaches shall inform their student-athletes of this policy and implement clearly defined team sanctions for any departure from this policy by members of their team.

### Religious Observance

#### **Belmont Abbey College, Belmont, N.C.<sup>45</sup>**

Practice and Competition – Sundays. Practice and Competition are not permitted with the exception of Golf, Baseball, Softball, and Reserve Team Basketball Practice.

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<sup>43</sup> An alternative might read: “Students who assert that their gender is different from their sex and request special accommodation regarding the facilities described in subsection A shall, to the extent reasonable, be provided with an available accommodation that meets their needs. Such accommodation may include, but is not limited to: access to a single-stall restroom, locker room, or shower. In no event shall the accommodation give access to a facility described in subsection A that is designated for use by members of the opposite sex.”

<sup>44</sup> Excerpted from student athlete handbook at [https://abbeyathletics.com/documents/2020/8/3/Student\\_Athlete\\_Handbook.pdf](https://abbeyathletics.com/documents/2020/8/3/Student_Athlete_Handbook.pdf)

<sup>45</sup> Excerpted from student athlete handbook at [https://abbeyathletics.com/documents/2020/8/3/Student\\_Athlete\\_Handbook.pdf](https://abbeyathletics.com/documents/2020/8/3/Student_Athlete_Handbook.pdf)

Catholic Holy Days of Obligation. Practice, competition, conditioning, and travel are not permitted on Catholic Holy Days of Obligation. If Conference or NCAA Postseason competition is scheduled on a Holy Day of Obligation special approval may be granted.

## **Social Networking**

### **Belmont Abbey College, Belmont, N.C.<sup>46</sup>**

Our main concerns regarding the usage of social networking sites are your personal safety and the integrity of Belmont Abbey student-athletes. Potential employers, clients, and family members can, and do, access your site. What will they learn about you? Your personal integrity and safety are at issue. Any information, once posted to the web, is no longer private and can be utilized by anyone with internet access.

In addition to our concern about your personal well-being is the protection of the image of Belmont Abbey College, Belmont Abbey athletics, and you, our student athlete. We understand these sites are your "personal" space, but please remember, any information posted on-line becomes part of the public domain and therefore you forfeit any right to privacy. The pictures, blogs, and comments you post today may be archived forever and can be accessed by virtually anyone.

Due to the fact that we recognize the positive qualities of such networking sights and the educational and personal merit of them, we have decided against creating a hard and fast policy regarding the usage of such web sites. However, please be advised that we are, and will continue to be, aware of their content. It would be wise for you to review your personal space and reassess its content before your coach or a member of the athletics administration does so for you.

Basic guidelines for consideration are:

- never post personal address or residence hall location;
- avoid posting personal and cell phone numbers;
- do not make references to alcohol or drugs in photos, blogs, personal information, etc.;
- do not post explicit pictures;
- do not post negative references to your teammates, coaches, athletic administration, Belmont Abbey faculty/staff, or the college itself;
- logos and pictures posted on the college or athletics department websites are copyrighted and should not be used without expressed written permission;
- do not post references to infractions of team rules.

If a Belmont Abbey student-athlete posts any of the above mentioned items, violates, or appears to violate, college policy, team policy, state law or federal law disciplinary action will be taken.

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<sup>46</sup> Excerpted from student athlete handbook at [https://abbeyathletics.com/documents/2020/8/3/Student\\_Athlete\\_Handbook.pdf](https://abbeyathletics.com/documents/2020/8/3/Student_Athlete_Handbook.pdf)

## **Sportsmanship**

### **University of Mary, Bismarck, N.D.<sup>47</sup>**

It is the responsibility of all students to act as good stewards of the university's name and reputation at all athletic competitions, whether at home or away, and at all other events. This includes the responsibility to support our student-athletes and other students participating in extra-curricular activities with dignity and pride while evidencing a spirit of hospitality, respect and civility for the student-athletes, coaches and fans representing other institutions. Further, University of Mary students are responsible to maintain a positive and respectful stance even when opposing fans or student-athletes adopt a disrespectful or insulting tone. Finally, University of Mary students are responsible to show respect for the game officials and all personnel responsible for the facility where the competition is taking place. The University of Mary reserves the right to eject any student from a university sponsored event who fails to conduct himself/herself as a good ambassador of the university or who otherwise acts contrary to the values of the university.

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<sup>47</sup> Excerpted from student athlete handbook at [https://goumary.com/documents/2020/8/5/2020\\_21\\_SA\\_Handbook\\_Complete\\_Version\\_.pdf](https://goumary.com/documents/2020/8/5/2020_21_SA_Handbook_Complete_Version_.pdf)

## **Appendix B: Selections from Church Documents Informing this Topic**

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### **Integral formation and Christian understanding of the person**

Therefore children and young people must be helped, with the aid of the latest advances in psychology and the arts and science of teaching, to develop harmoniously their physical, moral and intellectual endowments so that they may gradually acquire a mature sense of responsibility in striving endlessly to form their own lives properly and in pursuing true freedom as they surmount the vicissitudes of life with courage and constancy.

St. Paul VI, *Gravissimum Educationis* (1965) Introduction.

In today's pluralistic world, the Catholic educator must consciously inspire his or her activity with the Christian concept of the person, in communion with the Magisterium of the Church.

Congregation for Catholic Education, *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith* (1982) 18.

Any genuine educational philosophy has to be based on the nature of the human person, and therefore must take into account all of the physical and spiritual powers of each individual, along with the call of each one to be an active and creative agent in service to society.

Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* (1988) 63.

The Catholic school sets out to be a school for the human person and of human persons. "The person of each individual human being, in his or her material and spiritual needs, is at the heart of Christ's teaching: this is why the promotion of the human person is the goal of the Catholic school". This affirmation, stressing man's vital relationship with Christ, reminds us that it is in His person that the fullness of the truth concerning man is to be found. For this reason the Catholic school, in committing itself to the development of the whole man, does so in obedience to the solicitude of the Church, in the awareness that all human values find their fulfillment and unity in Christ. This awareness expresses the centrality of the human person in the educational project of the Catholic school, strengthens its educational endeavor and renders it fit to form strong personalities.

Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium* (1997) 9.

The educational value of Christian anthropology is obvious. Here is where students discover the true value of the human person: loved by God, with a mission on earth and a destiny that is immortal. As a result, they learn the virtues of self-respect and self-love, and of love for others - a love that is universal. In addition, each student will develop a willingness to embrace life, and also his or her own unique vocation, as a fulfillment of God's will.

Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* (1988) 26.

Human development and growth in faith is a lifelong journey. Renewing the Vision builds upon the growth nurtured in childhood and provides a foundation for continuing growth in young adulthood. Effective ministry with adolescents provides developmentally appropriate experiences, programs, activities, strategies, resources, content, and processes to address the unique developmental and social needs of young and older adolescents both as individuals and as members of families. This

approach responds to adolescents' unique needs, focuses ministry efforts, and establishes realistic expectations for growth during adolescence.

U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry* (1997)

The Church esteems highly and seeks to penetrate and ennoble with her own spirit also other aids which belong to the general heritage of man and which are of great influence in forming souls and molding men, such as the media of communication, various groups for mental and physical development, youth associations, and, in particular, schools.

St. Paul VI, *Gravissimum Educationis* (1965) 4.

Students should be helped to see the human person as a living creature having both a physical and a spiritual nature; each of us has an immortal soul, and we are in need of redemption. The older students can gradually come to a more mature understanding of all that is implied in the concept of "person": intelligence and will, freedom and feelings, the capacity to be an active and creative agent; a being endowed with both rights and duties, capable of interpersonal relationships, called to a specific mission in the world. The human person is present in all the truths of faith: created in "the image and likeness" of God; elevated by God to the dignity of a child of God; unfaithful to God in original sin, but redeemed by Christ; a temple of the Holy Spirit; a member of the Church; destined to eternal life.

Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* (1988) 55.

Ministry with adolescents promotes the growth of healthy, competent, caring, and faith-filled Catholic young people. The Church is concerned for the whole person, addressing the young people's spiritual needs in the context of his or her whole life. Ministry with adolescents fosters positive adolescent development *and* growth in both Christian discipleship and Catholic identity. Promoting the growth of young and older adolescents means addressing their unique developmental, social, and religious needs and nurturing the qualities or assets necessary for positive development. It also means addressing the *objective* obstacles to healthy growth that affect the lives of so many young people, such as poverty, racial discrimination, and social injustice, as well as the *subjective* obstacles to healthy growth such as the loss of a sense of sin, the influence of values promoted by the secular media, and the negative impact of the consumer mentality.

U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry* (1997)

Students may need to be convinced that it is better to know the positive picture of personal Christian ethics rather than to get lost in an analysis of human misery. In practice, this means respect for oneself and for others. We must cultivate intelligence and the other spiritual gifts, especially through scholastic work. We must learn to care for our body and its health, and this includes physical activity and sports. And we must be careful of our sexual integrity through the virtue of chastity, because sexual energies are also a gift of God, contributing to the perfection of the person and having a providential function for the life of society and of the Church. Thus, gradually, the teacher will guide students to the idea, and then to the realization, of a process of total formation.

Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* (1988) 55.

## **The unique power of sport to aid in virtue and character formation**

Sport, properly directed, develops character, makes a man courageous, a generous loser, and a gracious victor; it refines the senses, gives intellectual penetration, and steels the will to endurance. It is not merely a physical development then. Sport, rightly understood, is an occupation of the whole man, and while perfecting the body as an instrument of the mind, it also makes the mind itself a more refined instrument for the search and communication of truth and helps man to achieve that end to which all others must be subservient, the service and praise of his Creator.

Pope Pius XII, *Sport at the Service of the Spirit* (1945).

Sport, in fact, even under the aspect of physical education, finds in the Church support for all its good and wholesome elements. For the Church cannot but encourage everything that serves the harmonious development of the human body, rightly considered the masterpiece of the whole of creation, not only because of its proportion, vigor, and beauty, but also and especially because God has made it his dwelling and the instrument of an immortal soul, breathing into it that "breath of life" (c1. Gen. 2:7) by which man is made in his image and likeness. If we then consider the supernatural aspect, St. Paul's words are an illuminating admonition: "Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? So glorify God in your body" (1 Cor 6:15; 19-20).

St. John Paul II, *Address to the Athletes of the Italian "Youth Games"* (1981).

...the key principle of which is not "sport for sport's sake" or other motives than the dignity, freedom, and integral development of man!

St. John Paul II, *Jubilee Year of The Redeemer: Homily Given at the Olympic Stadium in Rome* (1984).

Sport runs the risk of degrading man if it is not based on and supported by the human virtues of loyalty, generosity and respect for the rules of the game as well as respect for the player. These are virtues that harmonize well with the Christian spirit because they demand a capacity for self-control, self-denial, sacrifice and humility, and therefore an attitude of gratefulness to God, who is the giver of every good and therefore also the giver of the necessary physical and intellectual talents. Sport is not merely the exercise of muscles, but it is the school of mortal values and of training in courage, in perseverance, and in overcoming laziness and carelessness. Besides, it is an antidote for weakness, discouragement and dejection in defeat. There is no doubt that these values are of greatest interest for the formation of a personality which consider sports not an end in itself but as a means to total and harmonious physical, moral, and social development.

St. John Paul II. *Address to Italian Olympic Medal Winners: Sports Offers Opportunity for Spiritual Elevation* (1984).

In fact every sport, at both the amateur and the competitive level, requires basic human qualities such as rigorous preparation, continual training, awareness of one's personal limits, fair competition, acceptance of precise rules, respect for one's opponent and a sense of solidarity and unselfishness. Without these qualities, sport would be reduced to mere effort and to a questionable, soulless demonstration of physical strength.

St. John Paul II. *Address to the Organizers and Participants in the 83<sup>rd</sup> Giro d'Italia Cycle Race* (2000).



A sense of brotherhood, generosity, honesty and respect for one's body - virtues that are undoubtedly essential for every good athlete - help to build a civil society where antagonism is replaced by healthy competition, where meeting is preferred to conflict, and honest challenge to spiteful opposition. When understood in this way, sport is not an end, but a means; it can become a vehicle of civility and genuine recreation, encouraging people to put the best of themselves on the field and to avoid what might be dangerous or seriously harmful to themselves or to others.

St. John Paul II, *Address to the Lazio Sports Club* (2000).

With this celebration the world of sport is joining in a great chorus, as it were, to express through prayer, song, play and movement a hymn of praise and thanksgiving to the Lord. It is a fitting occasion to give thanks to God for the gift of sport, in which the human person exercises his body, intellect and will, recognizing these abilities as so many gifts of his Creator... It is important to identify and promote the many positive aspects of sport, but it is only right also to recognize the various transgressions to which it can succumb. The educational and spiritual potential of sport must make believers and people of good will united and determined in challenging every distorted aspect that can intrude, recognizing it as a phenomenon opposed to the full development of the individual and to his enjoyment of life. Every care must be taken to protect the human body from any attack on its integrity, from any exploitation and from any idolatry.

St. John Paul II. *Jubilee of Sports People. Homily of John Paul II* (2000).

### **Sport and the unity of body and soul**

In the context of the modern world, sport is perhaps the most striking example of the unity of body and soul... Neglecting the unity of body and soul results in an attitude that either entirely disregards the body or fosters a worldly materialism. Hence, all the dimensions have to be taken into account in order to understand what actually constitutes the human being.

...The human person who is created in the image and likeness of God is more important than sport. The person does not exist to serve sport, but rather sport should serve the human person in his or her integral development. As has been mentioned, the person is a unity of body, soul and spirit, this means that the embodied experiences of play and sport necessarily also involve and impact young people at the level of soul and spirit. For this reason, they can be a part of the education of the whole person.

...The Church understands the human person as a unit of body, soul and spirit, and seek to avoid any kind of reductionism in sport that debases human dignity. "The Church is interested in sport because the person is at her heart, the whole person, and she recognizes that sports activity affects the formation, relations and spirituality of a person." If sport is actually a competition regulated by particular rules of the game, then the *equality of opportunities* has to be warranted. It simply would not make sense to have two or more competitors, be they individuals or teams, whose starting conditions are largely unequal. That's the reason why in sport competitions usually a distinction is made between the sexes, performance levels, age classes, weight classes, degrees of disabilities and so forth.

Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life, *Giving the Best of Yourself: A Document on the Christian Perspective on Sport and the Human Person* (2018).

Sport, as you well know, is an activity that involves more than the movement of the body; it demands the use of intelligence and the disciplining of the will. It reveals, in other words, the wonderful structure of the human person created by God as spiritual being, a unity of body and spirit. Athletic activity can help every man and woman to recall that moment when God the Creator gave origin to the human person, the masterpiece of his creative work. As the Scriptures tell us: "Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being" (Gen 2:7). We are reminded then that even the laws of sport belong to a certain order, which is basically that of all creation. The observance of this order is the condition for success...You are true athletes when you prepare yourselves not only by training your bodies but also by constantly engaging the spiritual dimensions of your person for a harmonious development of all your human talents.

St. John Paul II. *The Ideals of Sport Promote Peace to the Participants of the 43rd Italian International Tennis Championship* (1986).

### **Sport, community, and justice**

Freedom is a gift to us from God that reveals the grandeur of human nature. Created in the image and likeness of God, men and women are called to participate in divine creation. But freedom comes with responsibility, for free choices made by every human person impact one's relationships, the community, and in some cases, all of creation. Nowadays, many people believe that freedom is doing what one wants, without any limits. Such a view decouples freedom and responsibility and may even eliminate regard for the consequences of human acts. However, sport reminds us that to be truly free is also to be responsible.

In recent decades, there has been an increasing awareness of the need for fair play in sport, i.e., that the game is clean. Athletes honor fair play when they not only obey the formal rules but also observe justice with respect to their opponents so that all competitors can freely engage in the game. It is one thing to abide by the rules of the game in order to avoid being rebuked by a referee or formally disqualified because of a rule violation. It is another thing to be attentive to and respectful of the opponent and his freedom regardless of any rule advantage. Doing so includes not using hidden strategies, such as doping, to have an illicit advantage over competitors. Sporting activity "must be an unavoidable occasion to practice human and Christian virtues of solidarity, loyalty, good behavior and respect for others, who must be seen as competitors and not as mere opponents or rivals." In this way, sports can set higher goals beyond victory, toward the development of the human person in a community of teammates and competitors.

Fair play allows sports to become a means of education for all of society, of the values and virtues found in sports, such as perseverance, justice and courtesy, to name a few that Pope Benedict XVI points out. "You, dear athletes, shoulder the responsibility –not less significant – of bearing witness to these attitudes and convictions and of incarnating them beyond your sporting activity into the fabric of the family, culture, and religion. In doing so, you will be of great help for others, especially the youth, who are immersed in rapidly developing society where there is a widespread loss of values and growing disorientation."

In this sense, athletes have the mission to be "educators as well, since sport can effectively inculcate many higher values, such as loyalty, friendship and team-spirit."

Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life, *Giving the Best of Yourself: A Document on the Christian Perspective on Sport and the Human Person* (2018).

Young people have to be taught to share their personal lives with God. They are to overcome their individualism and discover, in the light of faith, their specific vocation to live responsibly in a community with others. The very pattern of the Christian life draws them to commit themselves to serve God in their brethren and to make the world a better place for man to live in.

Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School* (1977).

## Scriptural Verses

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

Hebrews 12:1

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

2 Timothy 4:7

No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees.

Hebrews 12:11-13

...for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.

1 Timothy 4:8

For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:12

Do nothing out of rivalry or conceit, but in humility consider others as more important than yourselves. Everyone should look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

Philippians 2:3-4

It is not good to eat too much honey, nor is it honorable for people to seek their own glory.

Proverbs 25:27

Let not the wise boast of their wisdom or the strong boast of their strength or the rich boast of their riches, but let the one who boasts boast about this: that they have the understanding to know me, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight," declares the Lord.

Jeremiah 9:23-24

...whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

1 Corinthians 10:31

I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

Philippians 4:13

But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

Isaiah 40:31

Similarly, anyone who competes as an athlete does not receive the victor's crown except by competing according to the rules.

2 Timothy 2:5

Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear

Ephesians 4:29

Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.

1 Timothy 4:12

Whoever claims to live in Him must walk as Jesus did.

1 John 2:6

My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.

John 15:12

## **Appendix C: Selected Resources for Staff Training on Sports**

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Kevin Lixey, Norbert Müller, and Cornelius Schäfer (eds.), *Blessed John Paul II Speaks to Athletes: Homilies, Messages and Speeches on Sport* (London: John Paul II Sports Foundation, 2012). Retrieved from

<http://www.laici.va/content/dam/laici/documenti/sport/eng/magisterium/jpii-pastoral-messages.pdf>

Congregation for Catholic Education, “*Male And Female He Created Them:*” *Towards a Path of Dialogue on the Question of Gender Theory in Education* (2019). Retrieved from

[http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc\\_con\\_ccatheduc\\_doc\\_20190202\\_maschio-e-femmina\\_en.pdf](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20190202_maschio-e-femmina_en.pdf)

Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life, *Giving the Best of Yourself: A Document on the Christian Perspective on Sport and the Human Person* (2018). Retrieved from

<http://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2018/06/01/180601b.html>

Christian or Catholic sport virtue programs such as:

- Sports Leader, at <https://www.sportsleader.org/>
- FOCUS’s Varsity Catholic at <https://www.focus.org/what-we-do/varsity-catholic>
- Notre Dame’s Play Like a Champion at <https://www.playlikeachampion.org/>

## **Appendix D: Selected Resources for Policy Development**

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University of Mary, *Student-Athlete Handbook* (2020) at  
[https://goumary.com/documents/2020/8/5/2020\\_21\\_SA\\_Handbook\\_Complete\\_Version\\_.pdf](https://goumary.com/documents/2020/8/5/2020_21_SA_Handbook_Complete_Version_.pdf)

University of Mary, *Greatness through Virtue Athletic Strategic Plan* (2019) at  
[https://goumary.com/documents/2019/8/19//Athletic\\_Strategic\\_plan.pdf?id=1330](https://goumary.com/documents/2019/8/19//Athletic_Strategic_plan.pdf?id=1330)

Alliance Defending Freedom, *Student Physical Privacy Policy* (2015) at  
<http://www.adfmedia.org/files/StudentPhysicalPrivacyPolicy.pdf>

Diocese of Springfield, Ill., *A Pastoral Guide Regarding Gender Identity* (2020) at  
<https://www.dio.org/policy-book/77-650-gender-identity/file.html>

Archbishop Robert J. Carlson, *Compassion and Challenge: Reflections on Gender Ideology* (2020) at  
<http://www.archstl.org/Portals/0/Pastoral%20letters/Compassion%20and%20Challenge%20-%20letter%20size.pdf>

Minnesota Family Council, *Responding to the Transgender Issue: Parent Resource Guide* (2019) at [https://genderresourceguide.com/wp-content/themes/genderresource/library/documents/NPRG\\_Full\\_Document\\_Links\\_V18.pdf](https://genderresourceguide.com/wp-content/themes/genderresource/library/documents/NPRG_Full_Document_Links_V18.pdf)