



# Mission Driven Catholic

## NEWSLETTER ISSUE 3

October 2024

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### Welcome From the President

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*"And He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two..." Mark 6:7*

When I first became a principal, I had a mentor. George Elliot was a principal at another Catholic school, and I learned a lot from his wisdom and presence. In other Catholic schools and when I became a superintendent, I did not have a mentor. They were new environments with different challenges, but I didn't have a coach to help me traverse the very different roles because there was no culture or funds in place to support executives in the Church.

Catholic educational leadership is my passion. I believe that strong, mission-driven principals have the ability to help their schools become centers of evangelization. I believe that strong, mission-aligned superintendents can make huge impacts on the Catholic culture, immersion efforts, and vitalities of their schools.

The people in these positions can be really isolated. Some diocesan Catholic school offices are only an executive and secretary tasked with ensuring that schools in their care are living the evangelizing mission of the Church. Many principals lack the skills, time, energy, personnel, or confidence to help their school communities embrace what is true, good, and beautiful in Catholic education. This is not a criticism. Catholic school leaders, like business leaders, need a coach to help them think through their strategies, encourage them during difficult decisions, and walk with them as they work to advance the mission of Catholic education.

I am so blessed that I have been able to mentor and coach principals, parish office personnel, and superintendents at Mission Driven Catholic. Some have been lay persons, religious, and even priests. Some have been first-year principals and some have had more than 33 years of experience. Each has a different story, different needs, and different challenges. Together, we have made small steps and sometimes large strides in helping their schools. But more important than that, by walking together, these fantastic leaders know that they are not alone in the work. What a blessing it is to do the Lord's work, but we were never intended to do it alone.

Together, we can rebuild the proper culture of walking with one another in advancing the beautiful mission of our Catholic schools. For those who work for us, with us, or support us, please keep us and these schools in your prayers, and consider supporting us so that we can better serve them. Be assured of our prayers for you as well. May the Lord bless you and Mary keep you.



In Christ through Mary,

Daniel Baillargeon, Ph.D.

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### Now Offering Strategic Enrollment Management

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Mission Driven Catholic now provides a strategic enrollment management program specifically designed to help Catholic schools increase student population with effective marketing.

We guide you through growing your audience by adopting comprehensive, user-friendly marketing strategies. We mentor you through implementing tools and systems to improve all aspects of school outreach.

1. **Observation and Introduction**, to analyze the health of current efforts and begin introducing strong practices.
2. **Implementation and Assessment**, to utilize the tools that will be most effective in messaging, recruiting, and retaining students.
3. **Improvement and Optimization**, to fortify best practices and use data to ensure that solid enrollment practices continue.

The program can be a one- or multi-year process. By engaging, a school will attain greater awareness of their process, possess the tools to increase enrollment, and positively impact revenue as a result.

We treat all our services like a partnership. Reach out to us to learn more about pricing and all the enrollment management program has to help your school grow.



## *Success Story: St. Stan's*

In early 2023, St. Stanislaus School in Chicopee, MA, encountered a major transition. The Franciscan Sisters of St. Joseph in Hamburg, New York, who ran St. Stan's school for 125 years, needed to return to their motherhouse and place the leadership of the school in someone else's hands. Former principal Sister Ceil Haier, FSSJ, and St. Stan's pastor Fr. Brad Milunski, OFM Conv., turned to Dr. Daniel Baillargeon of Mission Driven Catholic to help.

Dan worked with Sr. Ceil as her mentor in creating a long-range strategic plan for the school that would protect the school's Franciscan nature during and after the change to a lay principal. He also worked closely with Fr. Brad in making sure that the strategic plan was aligned with the Franciscan charism of the OFM Conv.

Dan then assisted St. Stan's by conducting a leadership search to find a new principal who would not only be able to excel in the necessary administrative duties, but who could also keep the continuity of the Catholic, and particularly Franciscan, identity of the school.

When he first heard the term "principal search," Fr. Brad was anxious about having "meeting after meeting and volumes of paper flying everywhere," but instead, "Dan made it effortless. He was very good at meeting with us and talking things through about what kind of candidate we were looking for. He reached out through his own resources to help us find candidates, he set up the interviews, and he helped us through the interviews. It really was an easy thing to do. He helped us discern how to choose what would be the best candidate for us. It was a great process."

To facilitate finding the best candidate, Dan helped St. Stan's form a full hiring committee, a committee of teachers, and a committee of parents. The new principal Mrs. Katie Rorrio and the other candidates interviewed with each group, which she says "really did allow for everyone in

the community to have a say in the process," and "it was well-organized and a great process."

Katie also recommends the ease of working with Dan during the leadership search: "He was always available if I had any questions or concerns. He was that one constant for me during the whole process."

Dan has continued to work with Katie in a mentor capacity since she was hired. Mission Driven Catholic's principal mentor program focuses on guiding mentees through the four critical areas of Catholic school leadership (instructional, organizational, entrepreneurial, and spiritual leadership), with the aim of helping them to make mission-driven decisions.

Katie says that Dan is "the type of mentor that sits and listens and gives advice, but he can also read people; he knows how much we can handle at a time, and he distributes the advice in short increments that's not overwhelming. He's very good at what he does. He may have his own opinions on how he would do things or how he thinks I should, but he lets me come to the decisions in my own time...he lets the leaders in his mentorship program find their own way to figure out the problem with his guidance," and "That really built my confidence to know I could come to the right decision. He guides you by what you say to make your own decisions."

One of the things that makes Mission Driven Catholic different is the focus on presence and relationality; once Dan and Mission Driven Catholic are involved with a school, they continue to provide constant support. That's one of Katie's favorite things about the experience. She explains, "Dan is literally there whenever I need him," and "He's helped me tremendously: he's there when I call, he reaches out to check on me, he sends messages that he's praying for me and my school, and that means a lot."



Along with mentoring Katie, Dan continues to be present as St. Stan's enacts their strategic plan. Fr. Brad explains that "He helped us formulate the strategic plan for the school, which has really formed the heart of the work of the school board. He continued to help us flesh out all of the concrete particulars, the action plans, and the committees that would need to be responsible and set up. He checks in with us, and we're very grateful for that."

In all aspects of the work, keeping the school's Catholic and Franciscan mission is always front and center. While planning, conducting the leadership search, and continuing to mentor, every decision gets viewed through the lens of its effect on the mission.

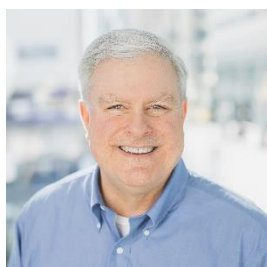
"Being mission driven is what [Dan] does; he teaches us how to be mission driven and why it's so important. Once you get that, you can't go back. When you're focused on your mission, everything else just falls into place. It just becomes part of who you are," Katie explains.

To learn more about how Mission Driven Catholic can help your school fulfill its mission, contact us!

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## ***Meet the Mission Driven Catholic Chairman of the Board***

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Mike Schafer is the Director of Communication & Evangelization for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. He is a native of southern California, but moved to greater Cincinnati 35 years ago to take a job in brand marketing at Procter

& Gamble. Mike grew up as the oldest of eight kids in what was then commonly called "a mid-size Catholic family." The product of 16 years of Catholic school education, as a child Mike thought there were only two religions: Catholic and public. He is the father of three boys and a fan of all things Notre Dame, his alma mater.

### ***Message From Mike Schafer***

Greetings in Christ! I am honored and excited to be part of Mission Driven Catholic and its goal of making Catholic schools centers of evangelization for students and their families.

When I was a child, on non-school days my mother would send my siblings and I outside to play. She told us that, if we ever got hurt or in trouble, we could knock on the door of any house on our street for help. Mom and Dad knew our neighbors and trusted them. While not all Catholic, certainly, they were collectively a like-minded community.

For many decades, the prevailing culture of the United States could be described as Judeo-Christian, with broadly shared beliefs about God and what constitutes virtue and what constitutes evil. The past couple decades, however, has seen the aggressive growth of a godless culture promoting such narratives as: there is no objective

truth; faith and science conflict with each other and science should be our guidepost; we are not created male and female in the image and likeness of God but rather can make of ourselves whatever we choose; and human life at the beginning and end should be gauged by its utility and/or the inconvenience it causes.

The call to teach, and particularly the call to be a Catholic school teacher, is a sacred one. In this era, it is also a uniquely challenging one! A prevailing worldview devoid of God, hostile to Christian belief and practice, significantly increases the difficulty of passing on the Catholic faith in our homes and schools. Our Catholic school teachers and leaders need encouragement, support and formation to fulfill their God-given vocation of collaborating with parents in the education of their children, particularly in matters of the Faith.

Christ has commissioned all of us to proclaim the Gospel and make disciples (cf. Mt. 28:18-20). Catholic schools, when fully living their mission, are uniquely positioned to do this and, in so doing, revitalize the Catholic Church and our broader culture. That is exactly what Mission Driven Catholic aims to do. I invite you to join us in this glorious endeavor!



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## The MDC Logo

Take a look at our new logo! We're thrilled to keep growing and improving in all ways at Mission Driven Catholic, including updating our branding. The symbolism for our logo was carefully chosen to represent what we do:

The blue lettering and M at the bottom are in honor of Mary and a reminder that she leads our actions through Christ; everything we do is in Christ through Mary. Dan and Megan both have a strong devotion to St. John Paul II, and even met him. His papal motto was Totus Tuus, which means "totally yours" and references devotion to Our Lady.

The arrow is red for the blood from the heart of Christ, and it comes out from center of the Eucharist to signify that our work is an outflow from Christ Himself.

The monstrance is our central image because of our devotion to the Eucharist, because everything we do is centered on Jesus, because Christ is present to us in the Blessed Sacrament, and because we want to be present to others and allow Christ to be present to them through us.



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## What We Do

We help Catholic school communities **encounter** Christ. We recruit, form, and equip Catholic school leaders to **transform** their communities. We continue to support them to **pursue** the evangelizing mission of the Church. Our services include:

- Executive mentoring for Catholic school leaders
- Leadership searches and candidate reviews
- Professional development and public speaking
- Retreats
- Strategic planning, school board development, and curriculum and Catholic identity reviews
- Strategic enrollment management

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## MDC at the Catholic Leadership Summit

Since devotion to the Eucharist is at the heart of what we do, Mission Driven Catholic is thrilled to coordinate and volunteer coverage of the Adoration chapel at the NCEA Catholic Leadership Summit in Seattle this year.

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## Share Your Intentions With Us

Prayer is the bedrock of all we do. In our Catholic Daily Drive podcast and otherwise, we'd love to include you, your diocese, your school or your community in our prayer intentions. We also welcome private special intentions.

Use the contact form on our website, message us on social media, or send us an email with your prayer intentions.

### **Thank You!**

We greatly appreciate the generous donation from Tim Flanigan to help us attend the NCEA Catholic Leadership Summit in Seattle.

Many thanks to Allison Mueller, who works for Catholic schools in the diocese of Manchester, NH, for her help creating our new logo!

If you know someone who can benefit from the services of Mission Driven Catholic, please refer them to us and let us know!

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## Donate to Mission Driven Catholic

Many of the schools we work with cannot afford the comprehensive services we provide. Mission Driven Catholic relies on generous donations to help us succeed in our mission. Please consider supporting us with a [one-time donation](#) or a [monthly contribution](#) so we can continue our work.

Learn more on our website, or email us to find out how your philanthropy can help us revitalize Catholic schools to fully embrace their mission to become centers of evangelization for students and their families.

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## Contact Us

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