

SEDES SAPIENTIAE SCHOOL

CLASSICAL CATHOLIC EDUCATION



EDUCATION AS AN APOSTOLATE

by [Aileen S. Coccia](#) / January 20, 2018

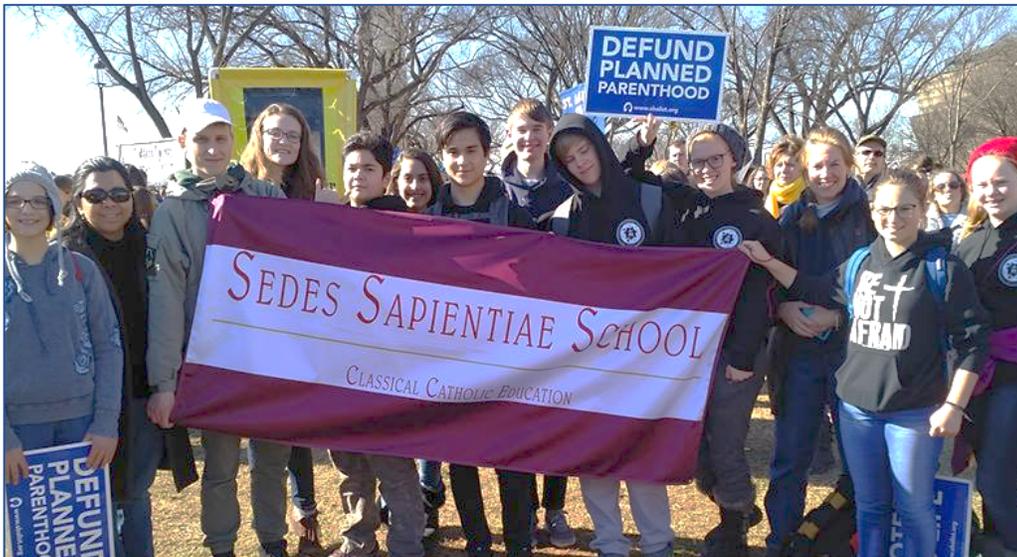
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MUCH OF THE CHURCH'S MOST IMPORTANT WORK is done through the laity's various apostolates. One thinks immediately of apostolates responding to critical situations to save lives and souls, such as evangelization, pro-life efforts, feeding the poor, and aiding the sick. "What you do for the least of your brothers," you do for Christ and for His Church.

But does education come to mind as one of these important apostolates? Perhaps it should. Perhaps Catholic education is the most important apostolate of all. In education, we cultivate minds and hearts that are still mostly pure and innocent, to strengthen and preserve them to counter the seductions of the "flesh, the world, and the devil."

The tragedy is that too many do succumb to the enemies of the Faith, and we need apostolates to provide spiritual rescue. Education, however, is preventative. As important as it is to rescue those in danger, the greater work of charity and the greater measure of success of lay apostolates is to preserve young people in truth and virtue, so that they avoid the dangers to begin with. That is the power of education.

But there are additional reasons that education is a most important apostolate.



Pope St. John Paul II once pointed out that "culture" is what happens whenever human beings interact with each other. The kind of culture that emerges depends upon the kind of people we are, and how we interact. In order to bring about changes in American culture, we need to

establish an actual, functioning small-scale culture that can influence the wider society in which it exists. Ideally, the local parish would be the center of this micro-culture. Yet more and more parishes are closing their schools, even though such schools should be the center of a culture of life for the faithful.

Education also forms minds and hearts with the “why” that underlies the other apostolates. Education, if it is done well, motivates young people to serve others and equips them to engage with a skeptical society. If other apostolates rescue those in need, education prepares the rescuers. Education underlies the success of other apostolates.

In education, we nurture the truth in the child who is growing in the faith. We form young people in virtue, not only to embrace it and thus strive to live virtuously, but also to achieve the character necessary to work in the other apostolates.

It is not simply about reading, writing, and arithmetic. A Catholic education should leave a person with no doubt about the nature of family, the nature of man and woman, and the nature of right and wrong. There should be no doubt that as Christians we strive toward virtue, in particular toward the divine virtues of faith, hope, and charity.

The apostolate of Catholic education’s mission of forming the intellects of young Catholics is the apostolate on which so many others will depend—and therefore perhaps the most important apostolate of all.

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