



BECAUSE WE ARE CATHOLIC

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN CALIFORNIA SERVES AND ADVOCATES FOR THE POOR, VULNERABLE AND THOSE IN NEED NOT BECAUSE THEY ARE CATHOLIC, BUT *because we are Catholic.*



“School [is] a journey that enables you to learn three languages that a mature person should know how to express: the language of the mind, the language of the heart and the language of the hands. Harmoniously though, that is, to think what you feel and what you do; to feel deeply what you think and what you do; and to do well what you think and what you feel. Three languages, together in harmony!”

— Pope Francis

Year of Mercy: Catholic Schools in California- Educating All

Today more than 212,000 ethnically diverse students attend Catholic elementary and high schools. With almost 17,000 teachers educating these students, if Catholic schools were a public school district, they would be the second largest in California. With millions of dollars devoted to financial assistance, families living in poverty, struggling to make ends meet with middle incomes, as well as those of means, are all able to experience the blessings of a Catholic school education together.

In this Jubilee Year of Mercy, two examples wonderfully reflect how well Catholic education serves those most in need.

The Tenderloin — San Francisco’s most brutal square mile. Streets and alleys are crowded with drug addicts, homeless men and women and other lost souls.

But the Tenderloin also is home to hundreds of children, living there because their working poor parents cannot afford housing anywhere else. Yet the Tenderloin has no elementary

school within walking distance — except for De Marillac Academy.

Inside De Marillac’s plain walls the environment is stunningly different from the grim streets outside. It is a loving, extraordinarily hopeful environment where 120 students “receive the gift and beauty of a Catholic education,” explains President Mike Daniels.

Continued on next page



De Marillac students with Sister Kathleen Powers, D.C.



BECAUSE WE ARE CATHOLIC

De Marrillac's holistic program liberates fourth through eighth grade students to lead lives of choice, meaning and purpose. Each child is embraced with a 12:1 student to teacher ratio, a nine-hour school/after-school program year-round, and graduate support through high school and college.

Is it successful? No question! Some 90 percent of De Marillac's graduates complete high school and 60 percent continue on to college.

De Marillac is a wrap-around program that continues to provide support after its students leave. "It is education for the whole family," Daniels explains. "We help the parents understand the opportunities that are available to them."

Every day De Marillac unites philanthropists with low-income families to break the cycle of poverty through education. Thirty percent of its funding comes from the De La Salle Christian Brothers and the Daughters of Charity. Individuals, foundations and corporations contribute around 65 percent and the final five percent is family fees; everyone pays at least a little.

FROM DIRE STRAIGHTS TO COLLEGE PREP

Located in Watts, Verbum Dei High School opened in 1962. The neighborhood is no stranger to civil unrest, first in 1965 with the devastating Watts Riots and later in 1992 following the Rodney King Trial.

The urban decay of the neighborhood soon affected Verbum Dei and it was on the brink of closure. Knowing how vital it is to keep schools open in economically depressed areas, the Archdiocese of Los Angeles asked the Jesuits to take over the school in 2000.

The school joined the Cristo Rey Network, an innovative effort to give youth from economically disadvantaged families a strong college prep experience combined with an integrated work-study experience.

The school partners with corporations that employ the students to help cover their tuition costs and simultaneously give them real-world job experience.

The goal is to acclimate students to corporate culture, build their character and motivate them to seek a higher education.

A Los Angeles Times' headline in 2013 sums up what has happened since: "Next stop for disadvantaged kids: college. In 2002, Verbum Dei High School in Watts began accepting only low-income students and doubling up on core classes. It's working." All of Verbum Dei's graduates are accepted into college, equipped to succeed.

When individuals and corporations see the value of education and invest in it, the possibilities for success are endless. These generous investors along with innovative Catholic schools are bringing children out of poverty and into college.

For more information, go to:

Year of Mercy Website
<http://www.im.va/content/gdm/en.html>

Cristo Rey Network
cristoreynetwork.org

De Marillac Academy
demarillac.org

Daughter of Charity
daughtersofcharity.com

Bishop's Pastoral Letter on Education
www.cacatholic.org/education