

## CHRISTOPHER J. BAKES

October 6, 2020

**VIA FEDEX AND EMAIL** *[email where available]*

Board of Trustees  
Jesuit High School  
1200 Jacob Lane  
Carmichael, California  
95608

Copies to individual recipients as follows:

Julie Nauman, Chair  
Sean Minor, Vice-Chair  
John P. McGarry, S.J.,  
President  
Terry Street, Secretary-  
Treasurer  
Mitch Zak, At-Large Member

Robert Ahern  
Kelly Brothers  
Chris Campbell  
Kawanaa Carter  
Simi Chehrazai  
Gail de Back  
Peter Deterding  
James Donahue  
Michael Gilson, S.J.

Kevin Gini  
Edwin B. Harris, S.J.  
John Lemmon  
Sandy Malaney  
Tim Murchison  
Tom O'Neill, S.J.  
Todd Stone  
Tim Vas Dias

**Re:** *Teaching moment lost – an alumnus message about Jesuit High's website messaging*

To the Board:

I write regarding the content of Jesuit High School's website regarding the tumult and turmoil that has struck our nation these past several months.

I am a graduate of Jesuit High School, Class of 1974. I attended the University of San Francisco, both undergraduate and law ('78 and '81). As an undergraduate I selected where possible courses taught by scholarly (and by then elderly) Jesuits, to all of whom I became close. I was particularly moved as a student by Andrew Boss, S.J., who taught in USF's Department of Economics (my undergraduate degree). Fr. Boss years earlier had been a leading critic of Marxist influence on the San Francisco Labor Movement and helped found a labor movement that became the Catholic counterpoint. I came to value that form of scholarship: the *Catholic counterpoint*.

I've had a legal career many would call distinguished, representing large companies, famous personalities, and major projects all over the world. I started my legal career as a Navy JAG officer, serving in the United States and abroad. My résumé and professional bio prominently display my Catholic education. I have a continued stake in the success and vitality of Catholic education, particularly at Jesuit. The significant detail I provide in this letter reflects my strong

view that a crisis is at hand. But powerful teaching tools exist to address it. I offer this letter in that spirit.

My volunteer advocacy has taken many forms, inside and outside the courtroom: (1) school choice for the urban poor (I chaired the committee that opened Sacramento's Cristo Rey High School), (2) music and reading literacy in marginalized communities, (3) children victimized by parental abuse and agency indifference, (4) equal rights for gay military men and women (all the way to the United States Supreme Court), and (5) enhanced awareness of legal ethics. I've chaired, led, spoken, litigated, or managed undertakings in all of these categories.

I provide my activist résumé because I thought the Board may be interested in how I, by reputation and action a Man for Others, view the messaging that now appears on the Jesuit website. I do not know what protocols exist regarding content being placed on the website or what type of vetting occurs. What I do know is that the school's website content (excerpts below) is objectionable in the extreme.

The theology is defective. It is not "Ignatian" (at least not the Ignatius of actual history). The site reads more like an illiberal manifesto. In a time of crisis, it does not comfort. It falsely accuses the innocent and says nothing about the guilty. The institutional Church and many of its religious Orders seem to have lost their voices in speaking to tyranny, bullying, looting, rioting, vandalism, murder and mayhem.

Jesuit's website could have called upon the full panorama of the Church's teachings about sin and virtue – the *Catholic counterpoint*. It could have shaped a comprehensive teaching narrative drawn from the eternal Word. Instead, Jesuit's website repeats politicized jargon that first became popular in about May of this year. The website takes a further turn and implausibly merges this with "LGBTQIA+" activism.

If filters against false teaching are in place at Jesuit, it is unfathomable to me how this content made it past them. The site presents like a politicized free-for-all, tilting hard-Left. The occasional (and rare) cites to Scripture or the Catechism of the Catholic Church appear to be afterthoughts – inserted to legitimize as Catholic what is not Catholic. The same is true with what the site holds to be "Ignatian." It provides an inaccurate concept of Ignatius.

Adaptation can make old lessons current, but this is not that. The Jesuit website is not an adaptation of truth. The website departs from Catholic truth. It elevates the secular (conspicuous on the website), demands complete alignment, and rejects millennia of human experience and teaching, from Moses to Ignatius and many more – scholars, theologians, and philosophers whose teachings were once an indispensable part of a genuinely Liberal education. If we are to consider the Ignatian path to be evolutionary and adaptable, one thing I might have suggested is the conspicuous elevation of the sacred, such as the traditional Jesuit devotion to the Sacred Heart, 18<sup>th</sup> century product of the Society's own evolution. (*See The Jesuits: Their Spiritual Doctrine and Practice* (1964), Joseph de Guibert, S.J., p. 542.)

Jesuit's website displays no genuine Liberalism, no study of scholars esteemed by history, no presentation of the kinds of studies and devotions that the Ignatius of history found irresistible, no reference to the Sacred Heart of Jesus as a saving devotion relevant today. That would be

true evolutionary adaptation. But to cite Ignatius to promote a radical take on our national crisis and the reasons for it? That is an inaccurately *secular* Ignatius that *history's* Ignatius would renounce as unsacred and unholy. The secular and political talking points in evidence on Jesuit's website are far removed from Ignatius's 16<sup>th</sup> century founding of the Jesuits, from the Jesuits who aided Spanish and French evangelism and conquest, from the Society's work in support of the Counter-Reformation, from Father de Guibert's reflections of 1964, and from my own Jesuit high school and university education (1970-1981). An authoritative 1964 book by a scholarly French Jesuit in the immediate postwar era suddenly has become an excellent standard useful in assessing claims now being made about what is "Ignatian."

I turn now to the website excerpts. Some are sincere-sounding but based on no theology, well-examined history, or genuinely Ignatian philosophy – though they are worded in a way that may sound like they are. Others manage to slander the nation and its people, adopting the deconstructionist language of radicalism. My "Catholic counterpoint" follows this list of excerpts.

Jesuit High School website excerpts on Race:

- "Sadly, along with all of you, we have seen yet again in recent weeks the painful reality that the racism that has existed for centuries in our country is still alive today."
- "At the heart of our Ignatian spirituality and tradition of Jesuit education is discernment. At the heart of that discernment is listening. Our listening must lead to concrete action to address the stain of racism in our school, our community, our country, and our world so that we are transformed into the kind of community that God calls us and intends for us to be. Our commitment and action steps are informed by our faith — a faith that is lived not just by doing justice, but by responding to our brothers and sisters with love and hope, in a spirit and call to what unites us and not what drives us apart as we seek to stand in solidarity and peace with one another."
- "This is not to make a political point, or to support a political organization, or to say that only black lives matter and other lives do not. Rather, saying Black lives matter is a human and religious conviction that racism is a sin and a systemic problem that must be addressed. We, as Christians, and all people of goodwill, are called to respect people of every race, language, and way of life. This is especially true at this time in the wake of the *murders* of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, Rayshard Brooks, and many others." [Italics added.]
- "Linked: Faculty, staff, and administration (FSA) had a very powerful discussion on June 8 centered around the article by [Fr. Brian Massingale](#), Professor of Theological and Social Ethics at Fordham University, "[The assumption of white privilege and what we can do about it](#)" in the *National Catholic Reporter*."
- "The first in a series of programming for faculty and staff regarding anti-racism will be held at our 2020-2021 opening retreat and reflection session on August 10. The day will focus on the reality of racism in our world and our school. We are finalizing plans to have [Eric Abrams](#), Chief Inclusion Officer at the *Stanford University* Graduate School of Education, facilitate this discussion." [Italics added.]
- "We have made the commitment to have a more in-depth examination of the curriculum in each academic department and to develop more tangible ways to educate all students on issues of race."
- "Some departments have already begun these discussions and we will share more details about the work of our faculty and staff in the coming months."

- “Companions for Justice.”  
Faculty Moderator:  
Description: Companions for Justice is a club that helps students better understand their privilege, especially but not solely derived from the social construction of Whiteness, and that works to leverage that privilege in support of other systemically disenfranchised groups. It is explicitly anti-racist while also addressing other systemic inequities at school and in the greater world.
- From the student newspaper *The Plank*, posted on (and presumably endorsed by) the website (with the accompanying image):
  - “Racism is systemic, which has poisoned all realms of society existing from the foundation of our country. It has been integrated into our culture — in the careless jokes, stereotypes, statistics that amass into the denigration of a race. It is those not-so-subtle jabs that perpetuate a racist system, a racist climate, a racist reality.”
  - “It’s uncomfortable that this country has failed to reflect on its history and tried to do better. It’s uncomfortable that there is an absence of national leadership. It’s uncomfortable that so many have lost their lives at the hands of racism.”
  - “[There’s] meaningful dialogue on the issues of disparity in terms of race, gender, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status on campus,” Michael said.”
  - “Where would we be if members of the LGBTQ+ community waited instead of participating in the Stonewall Uprising? Where are we going if everyone waits now?”
  - “And people haven’t been waiting — the Black Lives Matter movement has held protests against police brutality and racial inequality over the last eight years.”
  - The site posted this image as accompaniment, a map of the United States mostly taken up by the word racism:



Jesuit High School website excerpts on “LGBTQIA+”:

- School Club: The All Love Alliance (ALA)  
“Description: The All Love Alliance (ALA) will serve to promote an understanding and acceptance of each individual student at Jesuit High as a unique person created in the image of God, an acceptance which includes an open dialogue about being gay, bisexual, trans, or questioning at Jesuit. All students will benefit from membership in the ALA club. The Catechism of the Catholic Church



reaffirms the Church's call to treat members of the LGBTQIA+ community with respect, compassion, and sensitivity, which the ALA aims to advocate for at Jesuit."

- "Hispanic/Latinx Heritage Month." [My comment: Use of the term "Latinx" is designed to classify as "oppressive" assignment of the "male" or "female" gender and the words "Latino" and "Latina." See, e.g., <https://www.oprahmag.com/life/a28056593/latinx-meaning/>.]

With we the laity having been scandalized for nearly a generation by abuse and misconduct within the Church, I have developed – as we the laity have a right to develop – very firm expectations for Church contrition. Particularly in this era of lay empowerment, we the laity have the right to demand the utmost holiness, the utmost dedication to Christian Catholic teaching, the utmost dedication to Catholic teaching orthodoxy, the most judicious care in presenting Catholic thought to a world in need, and the most exemplary paths for young men to emulate.

I do not observe that this is what is happening on the Jesuit website. Its narrowness is first found in its neglect of nearly all humanity except for the few classifications it names and those it slanders. Black lives matter, the site says. Which black lives? All, or just some? Few, as it turns out. The site lists only those troubled lives ended after police contact, but manages to say nothing about the black police retiree killed by looters, the black children killed in urban gun fire, disintegrating families, fatherless homes, unemployment due to a collapsed manufacturing sector, failing schools, black police officers mocked and taunted by rioters, or black police officers dead. The website refers to "White privilege" and "Whiteness" as pejoratives, wittingly or unwittingly easing the path toward cycles of retribution. Ignatius was a Basque from Spain and "white." So was Pope Paul III who authorized the founding of the Society of Jesus. Ferdinand, Isabella, and Columbus, all "white." Spanish, English, and French became "white" world languages because those nations projected their cultures and faith outward and around the world, the French and Spanish doing so in part through Jesuits. Do we now pejoratively call all of this the spread of "whiteness" or do we call it the evangelization of a world in need of the salvific message and the introduction of civilization? In classifying anyone by race or orientation or other category, doesn't the Jesuit website perpetuate the very thing the site says Jesuit is committed to ending: race-based enmity? Isn't the elevation of any race over another sinful? Isn't the placement of race over personhood and the human soul sinful? What possible good can come from simply switching race targets?

The faithful need an accurate summary of Scripture, Catholic teaching, and world and United States history. "Systemic racism" is not it. It castigates all for the sins of a few. It slanders the entire nation, place of hope for so many. No legitimate teaching can apply today's laws to people dead for centuries.

If old sins and the long dead could become the basis for present action and retribution, there is no end. No group or entity would be free from the stain of past sin. Should all pay a penalty consisting of perpetual revenge and retribution? Does that mean that the Church and papacy should today be held accountable for three centuries of Jewish ghettos in the Papal States? The Jewish ghettos closed in 1871, but only *after* papal rule ended. Does this mean the Church is systemically anti-Jewish? Would the Society of Jesus like to be penalized permanently for constructing Georgetown University through sales of black slaves the Society owned, Georgetown being one of the Jesuits' first ministries in the nation? Does this slave-holding past

make the Society systemically racist? Does the Society's overwhelmingly white membership for 400 years make it systemically racist and white-privileged? Does the Society's aid to Spanish and French colonizers make the Society "systemically imperialist"? Would the Society wish to be labelled colonialist and exploitive for advancing French North American conquest, or (as I believe) are there greater lessons to be learned about evangelization and the North American Martyrs?

And what of the New Testament? Shall it be repealed because it commands slaves to obey their masters? (*See* 1 Tim. 6:1-2.) Shall the entire Church be condemned – laity, religious, and priests – for the Church's centuries of failure to effectively respond to the slave trade? Applying the long measuring stick of the "systemic racism" charge where old acts legal at the time become modern sins demanding endless repentance, aren't the Church's *recent* sex scandals far more damning? Those acts don't even have the cover of being legal at the time they were committed. If a long-dead institution like slavery makes the nation systemically racist, what must we then call the Church and its Orders whose structures were far more recently given over to predation and scandal?

Or instead of calling anything wrong and "systemic," do we as Catholic Christians call on our teachings and our sacraments? Confess, do penance, and proceed in contrition and "firmly resolve with the help of thy grace to sin no more and avoid the near occasion of sin." Contrary to the poor teaching on the Jesuit website and its attacks on the foundations of our country, our great nation has already sought forgiveness *and* offered penance and contrition. Constitutional principles were relied on to free the slaves. A bloody Civil War was fought. Further constitutional amendments were enacted. All of this occurred within a noble century-long civil rights movement that did not call for the elimination of history or the destruction of statues – even though *those* activists were *direct* victims. Perpetual retribution is itself sinful. Where is this on the Jesuit website?

*Failures of pastoral care.* Recent events called for a genuinely pastoral response. We as Catholics can present as our counterpoint a distinctive discourse independent of highly secularized influences – particularly those that come from the Left and Leftism, traditional tormentors of the Church, and now part of an extremely dangerous broader movement coming toward us, taking the form of all of the Left's past murderous advances. As a long-time Democratic Party activist, I long opposed the precursors to these forces within the Party, unsuccessfully as it turns out. My lifetime of advocacy for the poor and marginalized has been aimed at bringing all into the mainstream, not creating multiple sub-factions that poke holes in the Body of Christ.

*Alumni giving.* The danger of adopting politicized secular jargon is found in what it excludes, and what it excludes is all we were taught at the schools of the Church. Scripture and its wisdom have no beneficial classifications other than God and Man, Man and Woman, and Man, Woman, and Child (the family); Scripture's multitude of other classifications virtually always signal the divisive or cruel or tyrannical. Militant secularism draws our attention away from scriptural truth to shine it instead on political drama that does the opposite: pitting faction against faction and making division an elevated virtue. How much easier it is to placate the rioter than to show

how and why rioting is wrong, or why slipping into a life dominated by the Seven Deadly Sins is a dead-end life indeed?

Most of us who were entirely educated in the schools of the Church view Jesuit's current messaging as upside-down and inside-out. I do not see it as pastoral in the slightest. There is no genuine congruity with timeless Scripture and devotion, like the Beatitudes (not mentioned in this context on Jesuit's website), the Psalms (not mentioned), the Sermon on the Mount (not mentioned), the value of simple devotions like the rosary (not mentioned), the Eucharist (not mentioned), the color-blindness of Christ's Passion and all devotion (not mentioned), or the value of service to community (not mentioned). The site content makes no attempt to heal the sensibilities of the faithful who watch in horror as their cities, sacred statues, and churches are vandalized and desecrated in the Leftist tradition. Instead, we are force-fed dogmatic talking points that erupted a figurative minute ago – the Scriptural wisdom and human history we were taught now apparently irrelevant.

How do we alumni justify donating to a school that renounces the wisdom, values and virtues we were taught? If those lessons are now irrelevant to our national crises, why should we donate to the source of all that irrelevant teaching? I see little to no affirmation of my Catholic education in the content of the Jesuit website. Why should I give?

Here is what my Catholic education and training *have* taught me. These points of history, theology and philosophy have precious little trace on the Jesuit website:

*Our nation is a multi-cultural triumph.* We as a nation are an unrivaled multi-cultural triumph. We gather people of all colors from all nations into one kaleidoscopic nation with Freedom and Liberty as cornerstones. Racial characteristics do not unite us as Americans (as in China, Japan or Russia). Great ideas do. And once critics begin attacking those ideas, calling our nation's very roots into question and selectively accusing without evidence or due process, they have taken our national idea, contorted it, and contribute to its disintegration. Below I attach a photo of a group of Africans trying to cross into Mexico to ultimately reach the United States. *African.* They are desperate to come here at great risk to their personal safety. That is a far more compelling and truthful image than the "systemic racism" slander Jesuit High School charges us with. People do not come to the United States from the world over because we are "systemically racist." *They come here because we are not.*

*Our nation has long been Liberty's trend-setter.* In each of the last five centuries, our nation stood for something distinctive, whether as a nascent nation gradually coming together while still colonies or as a singular nation bound by ideas following 1776. Our nation has for all of these centuries been a refuge from what troubled the rest of the world, whether oppressive monarchs or oppressive religions or dead-end national economies that perpetuated the suffering of the poor. As our nationhood evolved, it was 17<sup>th</sup> century England's own forms of rights that were brought to this country. They made their way into the governance of each of the colonies. Flawed though England or the new colonies may have been by today's standards, they were avant-garde and forward-thinking for the time. They continued to evolve.

The same holds true for the American 18<sup>th</sup> century. As monarchs and faiths continued to persecute elsewhere, and as the Pope continued to confine Jews to their ghetto, the new

Americans were calling upon Enlightenment ideals – planted here on the firm foundation of Judeo-Christianity – to form a national union that continued the evolution of old English rights. Our nation drafted a binding document to memorialize these rights, called it the Constitution, and with it was born the many constitutional guarantees of Liberty – as in “Liberal.” It was history’s first written civil protection of individual liberty.

*Liberalism vs. Leftism.* The great documents of our founding – cornerstones of enlightened Liberalism – have always been rejected by the Left and Leftism. Leftism had its own evolution. It is consistently ugly and murderous, whether in 1789 France, 1917 Russia, 1949 China, 1959 Cuba, or 2020 Venezuela. Born in France, Leftism devised a new methodology of aggressive deconstruction, destabilization, and destruction, with the Catholic Church consistently on the receiving end (which permanently diminished the Church in France). Leftist revolutions worldwide have all followed the French model. The Soviet Union’s Vladimir Lenin: “We need the real, nation-wide terror which reinvigorates the country and through which the Great French Revolution achieved glory.” Communism’s Karl Marx: “The French Revolution gave rise to ideas which led beyond the ideas of the entire old world order. The revolutionary movement which began in 1789 gave rise to the communist idea.... This idea, consistently developed, is the idea of the new world order.”

Perversely, it is the French Revolution that is today promoted as the preferred Revolution in many modern classrooms – where, of course, Leftism dominates. Leftism and its acolytes have no use for a bourgeois Revolution like the American or a traditionally stable moral construct like the Catholic Church. It wants to destroy first, and then rebuild. It is therefore a grand form of stupidity and short-sightedness that any Roman Catholic – members of the church tyrannized since 1789 by these forces – would find common cause with Leftism, Marxism, or any of their variants. While the Constitution may not have finally abolished slavery, it started the process, just as all western countries had by that time started the process. Contrast this to other continents and areas – including in Africa, in Catholic and Portuguese Brazil, and within Islam, where slavery persisted even into this century. Our Constitution was the great liberator.

In the American 19<sup>th</sup> century, the battle against slavery played out on the American continent, a bloody war was fought, and the institution ended. Remnants persisted in the form of discrimination. Yet during this exact period the United States was presented with the Statue of Liberty – forever commemorating that at the time the US was deemed the cradle of Liberty and destination of those “yearning to breathe free”: flawed in part, triumphant in part, and therefore exactly like humans and humanity itself. From the 19<sup>th</sup> century forward, the nation continued its evolution.

No genuine or thoughtful scholar would reduce all of this to “systemic racism,” or blame an entire nation for individuals’ sins, particularly where the clear national trends have been in the completely opposite direction.

*“Racism” or Teaching Failure?* Jesuit’s elevation of a singular sin called “racism” all but eliminates the comprehensiveness of Christian teaching – all of which must be brought to bear in the examination of moral crisis. Isolating just the one sin misses multiple lessons that complete the full tapestry of sin, grace and healing.



Isn't racism actually an aggregation of many sins? If the faithful of all millennia read, grasped and applied the Psalms, the Sermon on the Mount, the Commandments, lived the Seven Virtues and avoided the Deadly Sins, wouldn't all forms of racism evaporate, from venial to mortal? Don't the virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity belong in all pronouncements about grave social sin? Not on Jesuit's website. Catholic teaching ministries have over the last few decades missed many other sins and just as many opportunities to teach boldly about them. The troubled lives that end tragically (whether in police custody or anywhere else) could all have benefited from Christian teaching.

Poor George Floyd lived a dangerous life full of the pathologies that we all know corrode communities of poor people. Did he come from stability, and if he did not what can we learn from that? Did he live a stable, drug-free and socially responsible life, and if he did not what can we learn from that? Jesuit has nothing to say about this? Christianity teaches comprehensively about all of these things, but Jesuit's web messaging says nothing about any of them.

When the Church fails to teach and family structures collapse, who is left with the remnants? The police are. What do we expect might happen when spiritual and social failure ends up on the streets?

Will Jesuit teach about the horrors black residents of troubled neighborhoods face when they and their families are caught in the cross-fires of gun violence and gang intimidation, products of poverty and the collapse of family? Will Jesuit proclaim against reversing revered legal presumptions, like "innocent until proven guilty," or "to each is owed due process"? Will Jesuit teach that we should not taint jury pools or public opinion by attaching absolutes to unexamined events? Does Jesuit plan to proclaim against violent mobs and their collective lack of conscience? Will Jesuit teach that the harmonious God who orchestrated the heavens is the same harmonious God who designed Scripture as a way to grace the faithful with a how-to manual on living good lives?

Will Jesuit promote the ancient Judeo-Christian truth that personal dignity and family stability are the surest ways to community success? How many Catholic schools across the country have closed in the neighborhoods of the poor and discouraged? Those in Church leadership who today critique the faithful as "systemically racist" are in many cases the very same who have presided over the collapse of the Church's teaching and outreach over these past two generations. Schools closed. Mass attendance halved. Marriage rates plummeted. I saw no equal mention on the Jesuit website about the stabilizing effects of marriage, family, monogamy, commitment, sacred devotions, or sacramental life or worship, all cornerstones of a faithful and durable society. No teaching mention of the torments of the Saints and their lessons. No teaching mention of the repetitiveness of history. No teaching mention of the timelessness of sin or of grace.

Will Jesuit teach of the critical imperative of the Catholic school system to generations of immigrants to America and the sacrifice it took to operate that system? Speaking of our Catholic schools, will Jesuit advocate the work of the political party most likely to preserve them in poor urban neighborhoods where they would surely help resist the scourge of poverty and uplift the poor? Or will Jesuit align in talk and spirit with the political party opposed to vouchers or other

assistance for the poor? Has Jesuit taken a political side and condemned from just that podium? The greatest scholars, homilists, and teachers are those whose politics cannot be detected.

I now turn to Jesuit's LGBTQIA+ web content. This was not part of my original purpose in writing – until I saw what I saw on the website. I was shocked into including this section.

"LGBTQIA+" is a political formulation, not a theological one. In my own litigation work for gay civil rights in the 1990s, this formulation did not exist. The need to subdivide humanity for political ends has intensified. God's world has now been reduced to hyper-politicized fragments. Human subdivision has consumed society. In the "LGBTQIA+" context, to gay-lesbian was added "Bisexual," then "Transgender," then "Queer" or maybe "Questioning," then "Intersex," then "Asexual," those who are "Agender," or maybe those who identify as "Allies" of the LGBT community. The plus sign is for those who don't identify with any of the initials and may identify as "pansexual" or "gender-fluid." (See, e.g., <https://www.purewow.com/wellness/what-does-lgbtqia-stand-for>.) We learn on Jesuit's website that the school has a club known as the "All Love Alliance"? "All" "love"?

How does *any* expression of sexualized politics end up on a Catholic boys school website? In our generational milieu where Church scandal descended on us so horribly, who thought it prudent to sexualize and subdivide male teen political awareness at an all-boys school? How does expansion of genders beyond the Scriptural narrative serve any legitimate formulation of a Catholic high school education when to do so is contrary to the most explicit teachings of the Catholic Church? The single most conspicuous reference to the Catholic Catechism on the entire Jesuit High website (that I could find) was to gay-lesbian sexuality, transgenderism, and the rest of the LGBTQIA+ acronym, lifting this single concept from the vastness of the rest of the Catechism. It reminds me of those lawyers who in their written briefs take a tiny point from a cited case, decontextualize it, then present the tiny portion as exhaustive and definitive. (The informal name for that briefing technique is not flattering.)

We who look to the Church for its eternal continuity and the timeless legitimacy of its scholars, theologians and philosophers can rightly characterize Jesuit's website as incomplete and even misleading. The Church has repeatedly spoken firmly on the primacy of Man and Woman in the creation construct, in what can be referred to as the "anthropology" of the Church. In *Male and Female: He Created Them* (Congregation for Catholic Education, Vatican City (2019), [http://www.educatio.va/content/dam/cec/Documenti/19\\_0997\\_INGLESE.pdf](http://www.educatio.va/content/dam/cec/Documenti/19_0997_INGLESE.pdf)), the Church spoke on the need to proclaim Creation's paradigm of *Man* and *Woman*, the primacy of children raised by *Husband* and *Wife*, and Catholic schools' *mandates* to proclaim these values. The Catechism's tolerance of difference, yes, but proclaiming the righteousness of "gender theory" as a marker of Revelation and pathway to Salvation, no. The Jesuit website expresses support for transgenderism. Where is there any comparably conspicuous reference to sacramental marriage? To the rest of the Sacraments? Worship? Devotions? Organized and personal prayer? The Lives of the Saints?

I often wonder about the recent hard charge of "gender theory" themes into our lives. I promote in response the dangers of the oppressed becoming the oppressors. In my 1990s advocacy for gay equal rights in the military, it never occurred to me that my hard work for basic equality would eventually morph into cosmic demands that the entire human construct – gift of God and

Genesis – be eliminated. I recently wrote to the gay lobbying group “Human Rights Campaign”, sponsor of boycott threats against any business that stood for traditional marriage. I reminded HRC of the honors it bestowed on me and my pioneering legal work for equality, advised that they were now the oppressors, and that I now found no morality in a cause I once embraced but which now had become an instrument of oppression in its own right.

*Who will mold Men?* How does Jesuit teach about becoming noble, virtuous, and courageous *Men*? In educating boys to be those *Men*, what does Jesuit today propose that means? In the boy-to-Man journey, does Jesuit teach that chivalry, bravery and nobility have had, since Aristotle and King David and Augustine and Thomas More, an esteemed place in just societies, and that defense of the vulnerable has *always* been virtuous? Doesn’t Jesuit risk diluting this by factionalizing boys on their journeys to manhood into innumerable categories animated by race or sexual preference or more genders, thereby forsaking the sacred while imposing political demands? These demands sound to me like a brand new creed. When Ignatius the wounded soldier underwent his conversion as he convalesced, precursor to Manresa and eventually the founding of the Society, he immersed himself in the lives of the Saints, in sacred teachings, and in the Life of Christ.

I suggest that Jesuit High School through its website has done the *opposite*. Elevating what is referred to as “systemic racism,” “diversity” and “inclusion,” *buries* the sacred while *elevating* the political and the secular, even to the point of now influencing all aspects of the curriculum (according to the website). Analysis of “racism” will influence the *entire* curriculum? Isn’t that acknowledgment that secular-driven messaging now drives all? I note that Jesuit’s inclusion officer has no Catholic theology or philosophy credentials (at least none that are noted in his website bio). Jesuit’s website states it will look to *Stanford’s* Education Department for more inclusion guidance, still another resource that lacks Catholic theological context. There is no room for an Ignatian conversion through consideration of the sacred?

*The pathologies of poverty are the scourges of the Poor, not “racism.”* On race and achievement, does Jesuit teach about the pathologies of social, spiritual and moral failure that afflict so many poor communities of all races, failures that lead in bright straight lines to so many catastrophic outcomes? By so singularly elevating undefined “racism”, Jesuit fails to insert it into the full measure of all Christian Catholic teaching that already forbids racism and all sins of superiority, subjugation, submission, and bullying. As to “diversity,” it must only mean a secularized and myopic vision of diversity. I see no indication on Jesuit’s website that it means viewpoint diversity, because how else could a Catholic high school’s messaging be so removed from the sacred and holy?

*Leftism, Radicalism, and the slogans of Marxism.* Racism is not a group sin. Christian theology does not support group punishment. The Commandments are directed at the individual. Individuals stain their own souls, harvest of the concepts of free will and sin itself. Reducing this richness to accusations of police terror, or “white privilege” (an offense unknown to theology), or “whiteness” (racist in its own right) is hyperbolic and fashionable, but it is not truth. These are the calling cards of Leftism and radicalism, a few ideological steps away from radicalism’s further calls to “defund the police,” riot, desecrate holy statues and churches, revise history and eventually deconstruct the nation. It is ironic indeed that rioting and looting would

disproportionately affect the poor, the worker, the immigrant, the immigrant entrepreneur, and *particularly* the black poor. Jesuit's website is silent. I believe many of those victimized must wonder: "who speaks for us?"

A concerned friend from a prominent political family directed me to the St. Ignatius College Preparatory (San Francisco) website and its tribute to visiting Marxist college professor Angela Davis, who continues to believe in and promote Communism. (See <https://www.siprep.org/about-us/magis/diversity/diversity-news>). Ms. Davis is a very typical and very public deconstructionist and revisionist who would erase the western civilizational canon. She proclaims allegiance to Marxism, a worldview condemned by Pope Leo XIII's encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, focal writing of the Church's teachings on social justice, and condemned again by Pope Pius XI in *Divini Redemptoris*. Slandering the United States as intrinsically and historically racist is really an attempt to delegitimize the nation. The slander adopts the jargon and false charges of radical Leftism – which in its 20<sup>th</sup> century Marxist forms hold history's record for political killings. On December 11, 2017, a Province school celebrated a teacher of this dogma. (Angela Davis: "Feminism involves ... a consciousness of capitalism and racism and colonialism and post-colonialities, and ability and more genders than we can even imagine and more sexualities than we ever thought we could name.")

*America's "original sin" has been expunged.* Does Jesuit teach about black *achievement*? Does Jesuit (or its website) teach that the United States has the largest, most prosperous black middle class in the world? 20% of law enforcement are black. 30% of our active duty servicemembers are black. Professors. Scholars. Poets. Authors. Does Jesuit teach that our black brothers and sisters are successful and present in all sectors of society? That they entertain and enrich the nation and world in multiple ways, including through elite stardom no other country gives its people of any color? We have long lines at federal buildings seeking access to the United States from all the countries and races on Earth. They open businesses, they aspire, they hope, and they have faith in us. They thrive and prosper. While some don't, many do (just as *Rerum Novarum* described would happen in free societies). The charge of *American* "systemic racism" runs headlong into facts that say the opposite.

I end with this reflection.

A few nights ago, I stopped to pick-up restaurant take-out for our home dinner that evening. It was on Sacramento's Broadway at about 18<sup>th</sup> Street. In front of the restaurant was a black family sitting at the curb, feet resting in the gutter. Three children. One about 3. Another about 10. Another 15. Two women were with them. Both the women had lost most of their teeth. With them was a black man about 30 dressed in NBA branded shorts and shirt (crude demonstration of commercial brands' exploitation of the poor, both the wearer and the original sweatshop maker). One of the women began screaming at the man, enraged, following him up and down the street in front of the restaurant as he used his cellphone. He appeared intoxicated. The 3 year old followed her as she screamed. As I passed through all this the 15 year old asked me for money for shampoo. I approached and engaged. Shampoo? What about food. Why are you all sitting here in the gutter and curb. Have you eaten. Are you hungry. How can I help calm the grown-ups. Yes, he was hungry. He was 15, he said. His brother was 11. He was hungry too. "That's my mom hollering at her boyfriend because we don't got no money for food and he has her

money.” I insisted they eat. I thanked him for telling me the truth about things. I got them their food. I struggled to offer any kind word that could assist. So instead I just thanked the 15 year old for taking care of his brothers. 15 blocks to the east and 12 blocks to the west are the former locations of two Catholic schools who once served these poor. They are both now closed.

Jesuit’s web content does absolutely nothing to uplift poor families living tragic lives like these, and misguided charges of “systemic racism” and “white privilege” will not uplift them either.

•

I respectfully suggest a full website overhaul that reflects the fullness of Catholic teaching, including in times of crisis. The website is the forward face of the school.

I also suggest the fullest possible airing of how it is that these web excerpts came to be placed on the school’s website, and whether and to what extent this kind of poor teaching has entered the classroom.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Christopher J. Bakes". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Christopher J. Bakes

Enclosure



*All Hallows Parish School '70*  
*Jesuit High School, Sacramento '74*  
*University of San Francisco, BA '78*  
*University of San Francisco School of Law, JD '81*  
*United States Naval Justice School '82*

*Chair, Cristo Rey High School Sacramento Feasibility Study*  
*Lead counsel, Watson v. Perry (Secretary of the Navy)*  
*Board member, East Palo Alto Boys and Girls Club*  
*Chair, music literacy programs for poor and marginalized communities in Sacramento*  
*Chair, jobs and employment outreach, Alemany Projects, San Francisco*  
*Director, youth outreach, Visitacion Valley Projects and neighborhood, San Francisco*  
*Chair, reading literacy program for poor and marginalized youth, San Mateo County*  
*Directed, drive to preserve Catholic elementary education in marginalized communities in Sacramento*  
*Member, School Board, Diocese of Sacramento*



*Africans seeking refuge in Mexico on their dangerous journey to the United States.*