

God and Girl at Catholic College

By ATHENA KERRY

Fall sessions are beginning at my Catholic university, and for the first time in five years I'm not in class, although I still live next to the big-city campus. I am now the proud possessor of a Bachelor of Arts degree (double major in English and Philosophy).

In May, I carefully made my way to an assigned folding chair along with several hundred of my peers, each of us indistinguishable from the others, amid the sea of caps and gowns that filled the pre-commencement auditorium. With adequate pomp (considering the circumstances) the faculty paraded in like bored pigeons, doing their yearly duty, pretending to know all the majors in their department as they handed out diplomas.

While my fellow graduates were a-fluster with nervous pride, I sat quietly in my chair and noticed three disturbing things about the graduation ceremony itself—three things which I think characterized the whole four year experience:

1. We never made the Sign of the Cross

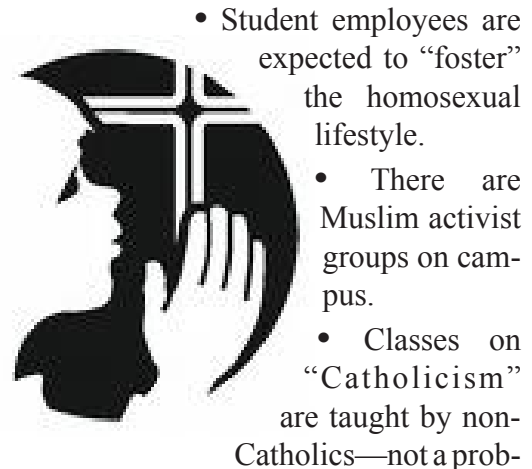
After our president stood to greet us, a priest approached the podium to give us a blessing. But instead of the traditional Catholic sacramental, "In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit," the priest said only: "Let us place ourselves in the presence of God." In fact, in the entire two-hour ceremony, the Sign of the Cross wasn't made a single time.

Why? Because, I'm sure, the administration wanted to avoid offending any Muslims in the audience. (There's a highly organized Jewish presence

on campus too, but my impression is that they are less of a concern.)

This is typical of my school's reaction to political correctness, diversity, and "tolerance": sacrifice the traditions of our faith (and nation) in order to appease the demands of outside communities.

At this point, if it weren't for the artwork in many of the old buildings, and the occasional priest spotted walking to the library, no one could recognize my school as a Catholic university.



- Student employees are expected to "foster" the homosexual lifestyle.
- There are Muslim activist groups on campus.
- Classes on "Catholicism" are taught by non-Catholics—not a problem in itself, my best teacher was a Protestant—but often with irreverent or inaccurate texts like *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Understanding Catholicism*.
- Mass schedules are not arranged around classes on Holy Days of Obligation, so students are forced to choose between one or the other (or go off campus).
- The big campus event for a recent St. Valentine's Day was a production of "The Vagina Monologues," which glorifies lesbianism, pedophilia, and rape. (In one scene, the voice of a 13-year-old girl describes being seduced by a 24-year-old woman. She says, "If it was rape, it was a good rape.")
- It's not unusual for Catholics and Catholicism to be used as objects of derision in the classroom.

Athena Kerry (email her) recently graduated from a Catholic university somewhere in America.

My friend Maeby, whom I've written about before, was in an elementary education-track class, when her professor said, "Come on, imagine how much better the world would be if Catholicism didn't exist. What has it contributed to the betterment of our world?"

Expecting a resounding "Nothing!" he was surprised when Maeby stood up and listed a few of the contributions he had so easily dismissed (like, say, universities!).

2. Instead of a diploma, the embossed leather folder they handed me contained a fundraising flyer from the alumni association.

If anything, it's easier to be a Muslim on campus, protected by the web of non-discrimination and hate-speech rules, than it is to be a Catholic.



Because we're the established denomination of the school, we aren't allowed to stand up for ourselves.

Talk about a buzz kill. You'd think after having me pay more than \$200,000 over the past four years, they'd give it a rest for just this one day—Graduation Day.

But I'm being silly. Why would they? After all, scamming people out of money seems to be the

university's most purposeful program.

It's hard to understand just how important the financial aid office is until you've experienced a bad one. Many students depend on their efficiency and discretion for, literally, their education. We dealt with the financial aid office directly or indirectly almost every day. Without it, we wouldn't be here. As a result, many of us barely were.

Misplaced funds, rude counselors, and hard-hearted committees were a given here. It was like dealing with the IRS, except worse. Lost paperwork was so common that once, while I was training to be a campus tour guide, our group walked by a girl standing outside her dorm, tears running into her cell phone as she sobbed into it, "But I can't wait that long. I shouldn't get fined if you lost it! It's not my fault!"

"What do you think is wrong with her?" I asked my fellow trainee.

"She's probably talking to the financial aid guy," was his calm response.

Maybe I shouldn't have been surprised. Bureaucracy is bureaucracy, I guess. But this is, after all, a Catholic school. And isn't compassion a Christian virtue?

But that's nothing unusual. It fits right with the

3. During the commencement ceremony, a long-time (non-Christian) Leftist—one of those who refused to say he wasn't a Communist in the heyday of that noted Catholic legislator, Senator McCarthy—was awarded an Honorary Degree.

political environment on campus. Anything (as long as it's liberal) goes—whether socialist, communist, liberation theology, environmental activism, veganism, sexual freedom, or just resisting the establishment.

This atmosphere was extremely irritating for my small coterie of conservative colleagues, especially when we're being oppressed by professors. But it also has its occasional humorous payoffs.

Recently, the university made known a decision to build a new, beautiful, and much-needed