

# God and Girl at Catholic College

By ATHENA KERRY

**F**all 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

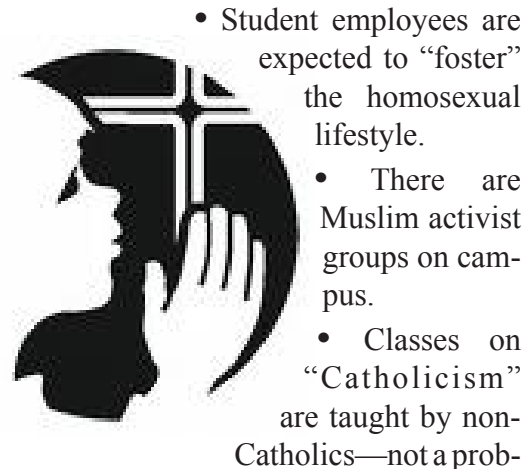
After our president stood to greet us, a priest approached the podium to give us a blessing. But instead of the traditional Catholic sacramental, "In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit," the priest said only: "Let us place ourselves in the presence of God." In fact, in the entire two-hour 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.



• 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.

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*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

study library on what was once a giant green lawn used for student recreation. Immediately, a group organized itself, recruiting members via the college-oriented social networking website [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com). With silly signs reading “building here is like building on the National Mall,” they protested. Intrigued, I asked one of them, “don’t you think this will help our school and improve student learning opportunities?”

“Well, yeah,” she conceded, “but it won’t be finished by the time I graduate.”

Suddenly, it all became clear. After all, it’s the way she’s been taught.

The problem I see with Catholic universities today—not just my school in particular, but Catholic universities in general—is that they are moti-

vated by the paradoxical but surprisingly common combination of selfishness and self-doubt. The faculty and administration are merely parts of a whole, one entity that is suffering from an identity crisis. As a result, it continues to prostitute its values for instant gratification.

Having lost sight of the heavenly rewards inherent in humility, compassion, and most of all, faith, the Catholic university desires the worldly reward gotten from exercising oppressive “Tolerance,” exclusive “Diversity,” the cult of Multiculturalism—the plaudits of Establishment opinion. ■

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[http://www.vdare.com/kerry/060830\\_education.htm](http://www.vdare.com/kerry/060830_education.htm)

## God and Girl at Catholic College

### *Readers Respond*

BY ATHENA KERRY

**M**y last article, “Girl and God at Catholic College,” brought in tons of e-mail responses, partly because of a link from LewRockwell.com. (Thanks, Lew!) Apparently, the sell-out of my Catholic university to the multiCult gets on a lot of people’s nerves.

I’d be lying if I said that all the e-mail I received was supportive (as you will see). But the huge majority of it was. There are a lot of people who have experienced frustrations similar to mine when dealing with “Catholic” institutions. Between requests that I disclose my school’s name, guesses about my location, and a few doubting accusations, there were a lot of interesting stories about religious institutions and what one reader called “offendophobia” (the fear and dread of—shudder—offending someone).

According to several readers (some of whom requested anonymity), Catholic universities aren’t

the only disappointment. One reader wrote: “I am over fifty, and a Protestant, rather than a Catholic, but I assure you that the same degeneracy has afflicted Protestant campuses.” Another went on to say, “as a Catholic myself I couldn’t agree more. Not only is it that way in universities...it’s that way in elementary and high schools too!!” [Brian Schroder]

A third reader described the “crisis of faith in the Catholic educational community” as “terminal.” A Catholic high school graduate in 1990, he says things have since gone rapidly downhill:

Suicides among the student body, drug use so rampant on campus that the school is thinking of instituting mandatory testing of all students, and promiscuity more befitting a kegger than a learning environment.

Not only is the situation in these places rotten, but also, for many, fighting it seems like a hopeless waste of time. I can’t count the number of times I’ve unsuccessfully attempted to rouse a group of friends to argue with some university policy or

requirement—they're happy to sit in my now-off-campus apartment and wring their hands, but very few actually try to take any real action.

There are two important reasons for this:

(1) No one wants to be a martyr. Public denunciation, bad grades or the loss of a campus job are all very real possibilities;

(2) It's unlikely that any bad will be prevented or that any good will be initiated by our action.

As one reader wrote:

I graduated Boston College ten years ago. I was very active in the College Republicans and helped found a Christian newspaper, *The Observer*. We raised money and we highlighted the hypocrisy of our "Catholic" college. I sat in every communist, gay and lesbian, multicultural meeting there was. We badgered Ted Kennedy and stood up to union campaign cronies. I argued against my liberal professors and got bad grades in return.

In the end I look back at the whole experience, I know despite a lot of hard work, I did not change one mind. [Chris Duane]

Peter Brimelow often reminds me that "no one outside of the universities knows what's going on." But I have reason to believe that is slowly changing. Many of my responses come from Catholic and non-Catholic parents and grandparents of high school and college age students who are looking for better options. Some tell me they get my article through home-school e-mail lists or forwarded on from fellow parishioners. Some are even concerned clergy.

One reader put well what many readers tell me:

I am a student at a small Franciscan College in our area. We have another Catholic university here which is Norbertine and is liberal, like the one you attended. They host guest speakers in that are very anti-Catholic. The diocese here condemns my priest for not going with the modern changes, and yet they let any old liberal Sr. Mary Make Believe come in

and destroy the faith. [Scott LaLonde]

And this father writes a short note not unlike many, many others I've received—all mentioning different schools ( Georgetown, Fordham, Notre Dame, Loyola Marymount, etc):

Good article Athena. Your school sounds just like my daughter's school at Seattle University. It's a sad time for Catholic education. ["JMC206"]

Even people who don't seem to have any direct connection to the modern erosion of Catholic education are nonetheless touched by it. As a reader from Fort Wayne, Indiana writes:

I once had a co-worker from the University of Dayton. Although the name may sound secular, it's in fact a Jesuit university in Dayton, Ohio. This gent was a classic born-again Christian type, so I asked him how he got along as a Protestant attending a Jesuit school. When he heard the word "Jesuit," he responded, "You're crazy, Dayton isn't a Jewish college." It was apparent that he had never even heard the word Jesuit. I said, "You know, the Jesuit Catholic order..."

The baffled look on his face made it obvious to me that he had no idea that the University of Dayton was in any way associated with a church.

My exposing the stories from my school has encouraged people to share the stories they have from theirs—and many eagerly take the bait, giving their own schools some well-earned criticism.

One reader shared numerous examples of perfidy in Australian Catholic University (ACU—a.k.a., he quips, Allegedly Catholic University):

There, a nun lecturing theology said "It's just not true that God forgives us because of Christ's sacrifice."

Someone said "I'm studying scripture," and when my friend asked what he was learning, the man replied 'I'm learning that we can't trust it.'

ACU teaches that the priesthood and the episcopacy are completely separate things (contra ancient church teaching wherein the episcopacy is the fullness of the priesthood), and thus that the Pope’s teaching on the impossibility of female priests doesn’t apply to bishops.

There was no regular mass or chaplain on campus, even major events were celebrated with a “liturgy of the word” not a mass. There were priests available, so I suspect this was to be ecumenical.

I also spent time at United Faculty of Theology in Melbourne, where Jesuit seminarians are trained. On the first day there I heard from the head of the New Testament Studies department: “Now, in the past, Christians used to think the Bible was the Word of God.”

The head of the moral theology department said “As Christians, we all understand that we can’t say that anything someone else does is wrong.” (I’m not making this up, I swear)

From a member of the Philosophy department: “When we do philosophy, we need to remember that there are no true and false answers.”

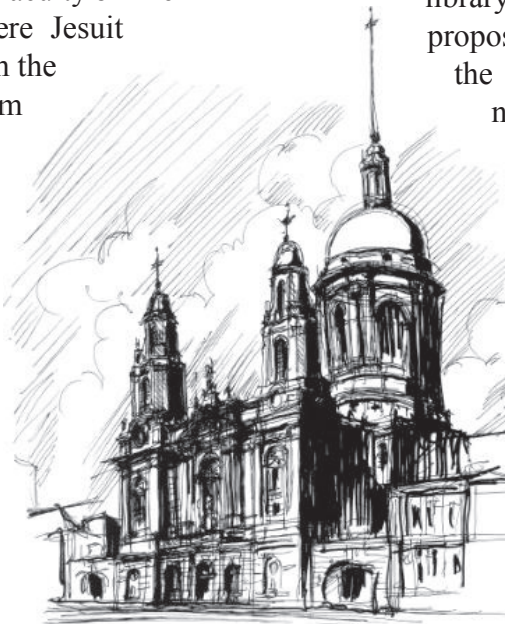
My tutor for New Testament studies got her PhD in “eco-feminist biblical criticism.” Once again, not making this up.

And finally, from the head of the religious education department: “I don’t think education should have anything to do with passing on the faith.”

Another reader, a 1971 graduate now living in

New Jersey, shared the following anecdote:

I completed graduate studies at Villanova University (an Augustinian school outside of Philadelphia) many years ago and still receive their alumni bulletin. If one didn’t know that Villanova was a Catholic school, one would be hard pressed to realize it from the bulletin. The final straw came some two years ago when a distraught professor murdered her Downs syndrome child and then committed suicide, a very tragic series of events. Other faculty proposed a memorial in the library. After a large outcry, the proposal was shelved. Of course, the article in the bulletin made no mention of murder and suicide as mortal sins. [Jason Cebalo]



But there are always rays of hope. Yes, there are some good Catholic colleges. When asked, I usually recommend University of Dallas, Christendom Collge, Thomas Aquinas, and Ave Maria. The Australian reader quoted above went on to praise Campanion College in New South Wales, where he now attends school, saying they are true

and devout, traditional Catholics.

It’s finding the real state of faith on campus that is so difficult—one shouldn’t trust the brochures or admissions counselors. Instead, one should go directly to the theology department and start asking hard questions.

But don’t expect to get answers you want to hear. This reader didn’t:

I recently had the opportunity to meet with one of the top officials at one of the most well-known Catholic universities in the USA. I took the opportunity to ask about how they dealt with maintain-

ing their Catholic identity in the face of growing secularism.

My heart sank when I received the reply. Basically I was told that serious Catholic criticism is discounted as fanaticism from people with too much time on their hands. So sad, especially from someone in charge of one of the most prestigious universities in the world. [D'Arcy Drachenberg]

But after all this condemnation, is this change in Catholic education really so bad? I mean, after all, my school is supposedly teaching me to respect the people around me, opening my eyes to different viewpoints and teaching me not to judge—isn't it?

The last reader I feature in this article challenges my entire take on university education (ignoring that fact that I'm talking about specifically Catholic institutions—schools that are promising a faith-based education).

Kris's note exemplifies just exactly the kind of open-minded, tolerant, and non-offensive tone that made liberal (not Catholic) education so worthy of my many thousands of dollars:

Athena,

The purpose of a liberal arts education is to take closed minds and open them as much as possible. It sounds like they at least tried to do that in your case.

My Aunt, who's been a nun for 51 years now, teaches that if men could become pregnant, abortion would be a sacrament.

By the way, I remember from high school that Catholic girls were the biggest hoochies, is that still true?

Best, Kris Martinsen, Berkeley. ■

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[http://www.vdare.com/kerry/060921\\_response.htm](http://www.vdare.com/kerry/060921_response.htm)



VDARE.COM BLOGOSPHERE POSTINGS



**More Bilingual Blather**

POSTED BY ATHENA KERRY

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Bilingualism in the U.S. “not only ensures that immigrants participate more fully in society and integrate more quickly, it also makes the nation and its democracy stronger.” At least that’s according to New York University law professor Cristina Rodriguez in the recent article published in *Democracy: A Journal of Ideas*.

According to the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Rodriguez goes on to say:

“There is a beneficial trade-off for society... when the focus does not fall exclusively on having immigrants learn English, but also on having them retain their native language.” “Indeed,” she writes, “bilingual capacity helps companies access foreign markets, and those with language skills are in demand.” Meanwhile, when public services are available in other languages, non-English-speakers can develop more confidence in the government.

That can help promote “democratic habits” among immigrants, she says.

Rodriguez recommends we face “the differences in the population directly, rather than [trying] to suppress them with rules that posit a uniformity that does not exist.”

Rodriguez admits that the rise in demand for bilinguals is actually the result of huge numbers of immigrants. But, needless to say, she does not mention the problem VDARE.COM keeps stressing: institutional bilingualism in effect skews hiring toward the linguistic minority, which as a practical matter is more likely to acquire the majority’s language, thus materially disadvantaging English-only native-born Americans.

And there’s this: By encouraging immigrants to be bilingual, we would be requiring Americans and American government to be quadra- deca-, even ventalingual. And who, Ms. Rodriguez, is willing to pay for the price of that? ■

<http://blog.vdare.com/archives/2007/04/23/more-bilingual-blather/>