



INSTITUTE FOR CATHOLIC LIBERAL EDUCATION

“We Already Do That”

What Really Sets Catholic Liberal Education Apart in the Secular Era?

Often, after a brief introduction to Catholic liberal education, many educators will respond with, “We already do that.” We have found this to be the case because the intentions and desires of most dedicated, well-meaning Catholic educators are in alignment with the Church’s vision. Unfortunately, through no fault of their own, they have been cut off from the Church’s time-tested approach, rooted in the liberal arts and sciences. Instead, they have been subjected to a secular model of education that has become increasingly industrialized, thereby discouraging teachers and failing to inspire students. It is essential to understand the difference between this dominant approach and the Church’s tradition of formation for human flourishing.

Secular Education <i>- ordered toward material, temporal ends</i>	Catholic Liberal Education <i>- ordered toward eternal happiness</i>
fragmented, industrialized	integrates subjects, knowledge, faith
focuses on the utilitarian value of skills	restores inherent meaning and fosters wonder
sees education as a transfer of information	guides the intellect in thinking and discovering
politicizes the moral imagination	nurtures the moral and sacramental imagination
“one mile wide, one inch deep”	“quality over quantity,” teaches <i>how</i> to learn
lectures + standardized tests = passive learning	discussion + virtuous assessment = active learning
susceptible to indoctrination	develops intellectual freedom
ignores the spiritual dimension of the child	approaches the child as made in the image of God