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Message from the President

Yesterday, an article that questioned Father Ryan's curriculum regarding the Human Sexuality portion of our Theology I and Theology II courses was posted on an Internet site. While we respect the concerns expressed by the parents in this article, we feel the story presents a very misleading view of our curriculum. In particular, we strongly disagree with the depiction of Father Ryan as ignoring Catholic teaching.

The Human Sexuality portion of the curriculum has been a part of the Father Ryan Theology curriculum for more than 30 years, and during that time it has been taught to thousands of students. The course, like all Father Ryan courses, is developed in keeping with guidelines of the United States Council of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), under the supervision of our bishop, and designed to meet recognized academic standards. It is reviewed by our Academic Dean with the input of the school's Chaplain. By every measurement, it conforms with the teaching of the Catholic Church.

To ensure that this subject is taught in keeping with Catholic teaching, Father Ryan presents this curriculum in the Theology course. Human sexuality is so fundamentally important to an individual's identity and relationship with God that it must be taught in light of sound theological foundations. It is not sufficient to present it solely as a biological process. Presenting the material in the context of a moral Theology class is most appropriate and necessary.

Over the more than three decades that this portion of the course has been offered, Father Ryan has only received a handful of concerns from parents about the curriculum, and we have responded to each of those concerns. The overwhelming majority of our families have found this program to be very beneficial.

The article also questioned why we don't allow students to opt out of this course. It is our policy that all students participate fully in all required classes and in any elective classes in which they choose to enroll. Theology classes are an essential element of the curriculum in a Catholic school.

Christ is at the center of everything we do here at Father Ryan, including our curriculum. Presenting a clear, accurate explanation of human sexuality in the context of Theology class not only helps students understand the nature of their own human identity, but also serves as the basis for an understanding of the Church's teaching on marriage and of natural family planning. The Human Sexuality curriculum at Father Ryan is taught in a manner that reflects the beauty and dignity of the human person, the roles of man and woman in God's plan for married life, and the proper role of natural family planning, all in full conformity with Church teaching.

If you have any questions, please email me at mcintyrej@fatherryan.org.

Thank you for the opportunity to work with you in the education of your children.

God bless you,

Jim McIntyre
President