

Introduction

Thomas Mead

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Overview

When we published the first edition of *The Newman Guide to Choosing a Catholic College* on All Saints Day in 2007, we already knew that it was going to be an important new resource for Catholic families, as pre-orders for the book had flooded and overwhelmed our office throughout that September and October.

All told, more than 20,000 people visited our website to learn about the *Guide* and the 21 colleges we recommended. We distributed 8,000 copies of the book to parents, grandparents, priests, guidance counselors, principals, bishops and even Pope Benedict!

By the spring of 2008, our research staff had already begun work on this edition and Pope Benedict had travelled to America to address Catholic college presidents about the role that faith must play in all aspects of campus life.

At this point we decided that we could much better support Pope Benedict's vision for the renewal of Catholic colleges by making *The Newman Guide* available to even more Catholic families.

As a result, this edition of the *Guide* is available both as a book and as a free online resource at TheNewmanGuide.com.

Instead of reaching thousands of Catholic families, we will now be able to reach tens or hundreds of thousands of parents and students seeking a faithful Catholic education.

All of us at The Cardinal Newman Society believe that there is tremendous value in an education where faithful Catholicism permeates the campus "from the classroom

to the dorm room." Families seeking such an education would do well to consider the colleges profiled in these pages.

Expanded Profiles, New Colleges

Since the first edition was published, we have established wonderful working relationships with what we refer to as the "*Newman Guide* colleges." Because of these relationships, the profiles in this edition have been enhanced in a number of ways, including the inclusion of a letter to parents and students from each college president.

In addition, the economic crisis that began in the fall of 2008 clearly impacts family budgets. For this reason we have given the financial aid office of each college space in the profile to discuss the various financial aid options that they provide and, in most cases, direct contact information.

This complements the work of our Center for the Study of Catholic Higher Education, which in January 2009 published an analysis of tuition at *Newman Guide* colleges compared to other Catholic colleges and other private colleges. The study concludes that not only are the *Newman Guide* colleges faithful, they are also affordable relative to other options.

Each profile examines the college's mission, governance, academics, spiritual life, student activities and residential life. Each of these areas was evaluated for strength of Catholic identity. We also provide information on such information as unique majors,

sports opportunities and the local community.

An earnest attempt was made to provide primarily objective information in order to offer a comprehensive aid to parents and students.

In 2007 we recommended 20 U.S. colleges and one unique program in Canada because of the strength of their Catholic identity. We are thrilled that in this edition we are able to recommend 21 U.S. colleges, four international colleges, one unique program in Texas and two distance learning opportunities. In addition, we include in a single profile institutions in Rome which are available to U.S. students.

How Colleges Were Selected

The colleges we recommend are characterized by the following:

- They give priority to their Catholic identity and actively practice it in most, if not all, aspects of campus life.
- They are generally assiduous in ensuring that dissenters from fundamental Catholic Church teaching are not given a platform for their work.
- They are committed to providing a quality education.
- Any deficiencies are more than outweighed by success in other areas.

You will find a variety of institutions recommended in this *Guide*. Some are well-known for their orthodoxy, some are relatively new colleges and some are older Catholic colleges that are living proof that a renewal of Catholic identity is possible. A number of the colleges are focused exclusively on the liberal arts or even a Great Books program, while others provide a strong foundation in the liberal arts but offer dozens of majors in various disciplines.

A few of the colleges have very small enrollments, a few have thousands of stu-

dents and most are somewhere in between. Students looking for a college in an urban, suburban, small town or rural environment will have several options in each of these categories.

Likewise, a broad range of orthodox Catholic spirituality is available at these institutions. Are you looking for traditional devotions and the Extraordinary Form of the Mass? How about a charismatic experience? Something in between or a little bit of both? You will find several choices in this *Guide*.

The criteria for selection reflect an art, not a science. There is no magic formula for tallying points and we have not weighted certain characteristics over others.

Over the course of the past four years, our staff has interviewed hundreds of presidents, faculty members, parents, students, alumni and others. We have reviewed thousands of pages of materials including newsletters, websites, alumni magazines, course catalogs, admissions material, news reports, etc.

It should be noted that the responsibility for determining that the colleges recommended are Catholic rests with each college's local bishop. Only a bishop can make this determination, and we have relied on a college's inclusion in the bishops' *Official Catholic Directory* as proof of their Catholicity. Where there are questions or a particular college's status is unclear we communicate with its bishop for clarification.

Getting Started

Choosing a Catholic college is a daunting process, and to help put it in context we have included several essays to assist your family.

First, we are grateful to once again include a foreword from our long-time friend and chairman of The Cardinal Newman Society's National Advisory Board, Father Benedict Groeschel, C.F.R. We are also pleased to have an essay on the state of Catholic higher

education by Patrick Reilly, one of the editors of this *Guide* and the president of The Cardinal Newman Society.

We received such a tremendous response from readers of the first edition on essays by Father C. John McCloskey, noted philosopher Dr. Peter Kreeft and Catholic education expert Eileen Cubanski that we are reprinting them in this edition.

Father McCloskey, an Opus Dei priest and expert on our patron, John Henry Cardinal Newman, writes about finding God on a college campus. Dr. Kreeft, a prolific writer and philosopher from Boston College, explains why it is so important to study theology and philosophy. Mrs. Cubanski, the executive director of the National Association of Private, Catholic and Independent Schools, discusses the value of a Catholic education.

We have also included a new essay by financial advisor and *Our Sunday Visitor* columnist Phil Lenahan about paying for a Catholic education.

Kathryn Lopez, a noted Catholic writer and editor-at-large for National Review Online, has contributed an essay on the critical importance of finding a college with a residence life experience that reinforces Catholic values on chastity.

We also once again provide a “frequently asked questions” section to both explain some of the terms used in this *Guide* and help you navigate the college search process.

In the appendix you will find Pope Benedict’s address to Catholic educators which he delivered in April 2008 at The Catholic University of America.

Finally, we need to emphasize that this *Guide* is a starting point. As Father Groeschel notes in his foreword, all of the recommended colleges can be described as faithful, but they are not all the same, and they each have strengths and weaknesses even on matters of Catholic identity.

After reading the profiles and narrowing your choices, we cannot stress how important it is for students to visit a campus, ideally spending the night and attending a few classes.

The Cardinal Newman Society’s goal in producing this *Guide* has been to help connect parents and students with Catholic colleges and universities that are vibrant examples of a strong and faithful Catholic education. In all of our work, we are guided by fidelity to the Holy Father and Magisterium and humbly present this *Guide* in the spirit of fulfilling our mission to promote the renewal of Catholic higher education.