

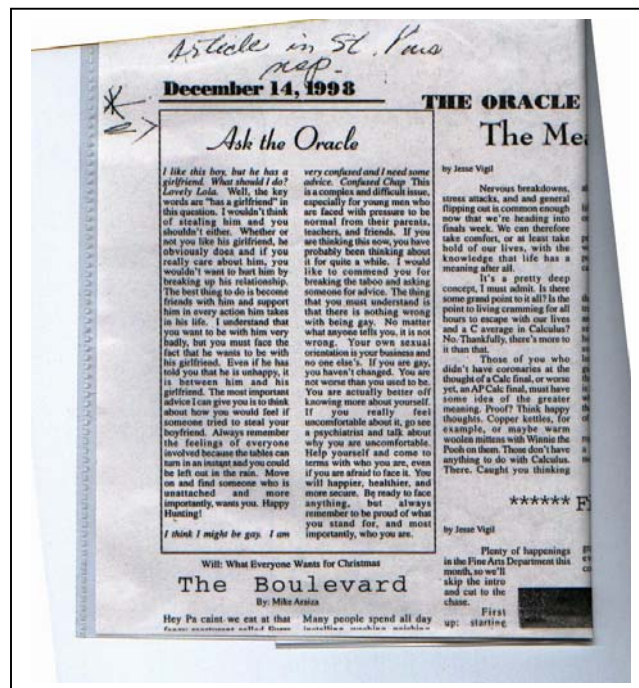
# The Oracle, Pius Student Paper

## Ask the Oracle

The December 14, 1998 issue of *The Oracle*, student newspaper of St Pius X contained a section: "Ask the Oracle." The question was, "I think I might be gay. I am very confused and I need some advice."

The answer was: "This is a complex and difficult issue, especially for young men who are faced with pressure to be normal from their parents, teachers, and friends. If you are thinking this now, you have probably been thinking about it for quite a while. I would like to commend *you* for breaking the taboo and asking someone for advice. The thing that you must understand is that there is nothing wrong with being gay. No matter what anyone tells you, it is not wrong. Your own sexual orientation is your business and no one else's. If you are gay, you haven't changed. You are not worse than you used to be. You are actually better off knowing more about yourself. If you really feel uncomfortable about it, go see a psychiatrist and talk about why you are uncomfortable. Help yourself and come to terms with who you are, even if you are afraid to face it. You will be happier, healthier, and more secure. Be ready to face anything, but always remember to be proud of what you stand for, and most importantly, who you are."

Not one word of Catholic teaching after "This is a difficult and complex issue..."



# Pius HS Student Paper Substantiates Parental Concerns

While parents and administration attempt to bring about reforms at St. Pius X High School of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, the student newspaper, *The Oracle*, provided an impressive illustration of the problems under discussion.

The student paper does demonstrate lots of bright awareness of the world. Topics in the March-April 2002 issue include body piercing, gun control, teen pregnancy, use of anti-depressants, sports, and a couple of responses to the “parental activists” who have “bombarded” other students and parents with their worries about “the future of the children at St. Pius.” (Quoting student Matt Stevens, “A Response to the letter written by Parents for a Roman Catholic Education, *The Oracle*, 3-4/02.)

What seems to be lacking from the editorial choices of *The Oracle* is a cultivation of the life of the soul – odd for a “Christian” school. One article, “It’s My Choice,” offers the pros and cons of remaining Catholic after graduation. For the “con” side of the argument, student author Carly Moya echoes the mantra of pop wisdom: “Don’t rush into a commitment of religion. You need to remember that this is your life and your choice.”

The one article that might be construed as actually addressing a “religious issue” is titled “What Color Is God’s Face,” by Patrick Furlong. It concerns a student’s frustration over multicultural liturgies. Referring to the school’s Christmas Mass, he writes: “We had so much of an emphasis on Guadalupe, that I almost forgot it was the ever so sacred Christmas Mass...”

Kids reflect their environment. Older teenagers struggle to demonstrate independent thought, but are still largely products of their training. Looking back at Matt Stevens’ complaint against the Parents for a Roman Catholic Education, one finds this insightful line. Describing the parents’ efforts to obtain meeting space at the Catholic Center: “If they have such valid issues and concerns, why can’t they be forthcoming and honest with the archdiocese, and why must they wish to quietly sneak in the backdoor undetected?” Since Matt began his article by accusing the parent group of “bombarding” other parents and students with its concerns, there’s a disturbing disconnect of logic in the young man’s thought. Are the parents being aggressively in-your-face with their concerns, or are they being sneaky? Really, you can’t have it both ways.

Where did this fellow’s knowledge of the incident originate? He wasn’t part of the parent group nor is he part of the Pius High School Administration. His information, therefore, is second hand and reflective of things he’s been told.

**No wonder parents are concerned. There’s a wedge being driven between them and their kids – and the Faith they had hoped to pass on.**

# The Oracle

St. Pius X High School Vol II. Number 5

March-April 2002

## A Response to the letter written by Parents for a Roman Catholic Education:

Dear Fellow St. Pius X High School Students, Parents, and Administration,

For the past week, the students and parents at St. Pius have been bombarded with concerns from parental activists worried about the future of the children at St. Pius. After an initial reaction of both alarm and irritation, I only now feel that I can respond after hearing from both sides and formulating my opinion on the letter.

The truth of the matter is that there are some things in the letter that the administration cannot address, because they deal with individuals and are private and confidential matters between these individuals and the school. A sort of Catch-22 ensues; the parents cry about alleged negligence on the part of the administration, but the administration can only reassure both parents and students that this is not the case, unable to provide any in-depth analysis that could calm the fire. It's bad enough that the parents' perceptions of the matter (not necessarily the truth of the matter) fuels their fire for change, but it's even worse to think that they can go and spread these accusations, (developed by a friend's, uncle's brother), while the school - due to liability - can only sit back and watch.

Honestly, I do not stand in the position to say that nothing in the letter ever happened, and the school did not make mistakes in dealing with situations. But on the same note, I am not one to believe something on face value,

especially when I view it as a sort of name-calling debacle that is sure to do just as much for improving the school as the KKK did for the promotion of diversity. Every student in the school has done something wrong at some point (we sin, we're human), but it has always been understood as a private matter. Not only did the parents who wrote the letter deny the school the ability to make even the slightest mistake, they also crossed the line by bringing personal student situations out into the public arena. This ridiculous struggle, whose focus could result in a self-destructing mission, shows that the parents do not care if their actions 'dirty' the rest of the school while they carry out their witch hunt. They indicted the entire school, rather than pinpointing specific problematic areas. The parents damaged the reputation of the entire administration, staff, and students, whether or not they were involved in the alleged claims. I find this intrinsically unacceptable.

Heaven forbid a Catholic school should promote individual growth within its students. Heaven forbid the students be given the opportunity to think on their own, discuss issues in class (even if they have difficulty with the Catholic faith) and investigate where they stand on controversial issues. Heaven forbid a Catholic school go beyond the stories of the 'birds and the bees' in order to give the students a more complete, accurate and age appropriate interpretation of sexuality and

its implications in the Catholic Church.

When I read the letter, I get a feeling that some of these parents would wish to bring plaid skirts and sports jackets to St. Pius. Perhaps it's a faulty assumption, but honestly, they give me no reason to give them the benefit of the doubt. Their euphemism of a name 'Parents for a Roman Catholic Education,' makes me think of President Bush's address on terrorism, and his statement that 'you are either with us, or with them.' Apparently, the administration plays the role of the 'bad guys.' The 'parents' obtained the Sandia Room in the Catholic Center because they said that they were a "St. Pius curriculum review board." If they have such valid issues and concerns, why can't they be forthcoming and honest with the archdiocese, and why must they wish to quietly sneak in the backdoor undetected?

In their letter, they lead us to believe that, after extensive investigations, they have found similarities in the non-responsive administration for the past few years. If the administration tells someone "no," or doesn't agree with the allegations, isn't that in fact a response? I can compose my own 'extensive studies.' In fact, Scott Stromberg and I exposed a group of teenage boys to *Hamlet*, and found that the majority of them had unclean sexual thoughts. That must mean that we can't use *Hamlet* as a teaching tool, right? Of course, we got the same results when we exposed them to potatoes, a cashmere sweater,

and *60 Minutes*, but that's beside the point.

Although the Catholic Church has been around for nearly two thousand years, there have been many instances where education has been placed above religious fundamentalism. If the parents have concerns, before addressing them to the administration, maybe they should first reevaluate their own reasoning. Can a horoscope, or "dream interpretation" (gotta love those euphemisms) that tells students to have fun and support St. Pius extracurricular activities really be that bad? If there are one-percent of the parents who find the Lion King unacceptable viewing material because of the sexual innuendoes and the subliminal appearance of the word 'sex,' should it not be allowed because of their concerns?

I agree that the parents should have some say in the way administrative processes are carried out. I also agree that there are some legitimate concerns that were addressed by the parent group. But the administration has and is taking action (although it might not be as extreme as some might have hoped) and the school is better because of it. In the end, we must act on the spirit of the law rather than the letter of it, and in doing so, we are capable, thanks to St. Pius, of incorporating Catholic teachings into everyday life.

Yours in Christ,

Matt Stevens

Senior, St. Pius High School

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## Servant Leadership Program

In an *Oracle* interview of the Servant Leadership Program Director, he expresses an error that is being propagated through the program, that is, that the contemporary theory of radical pacifism, the “Theory of Principled Non-violence” is equally orthodox to the Church’s consistent teaching, referred to as the “Just War Theory.” Note the inappropriate use of the acronym “CE” – Common Era – rather than AD – *anno Domini* (the year of the Lord).

6 The Oracle October 2002

### “Servant Leadership” Community Service Program Coming to SPX

By A. J. Chavez, Assistant Editor

A new community service program is being developed at St. Pius.

The program, entitled “Servant Leadership,” has been a dream among school administrators for the past eight years that is finally being realized, said its new director Mr. Michael Marciano.

Mr. Marciano is in charge of developing the program this year and implementing it at the start of next year. He said that while no changes will take place to this year’s community service program, there will be tighter monitoring at all grade levels; Mr. Marciano will read every Senior service project paper. Individual theology teachers will monitor service hours completed by underclassmen.

“The whole tone of what Servant Leadership is about is peace. For me in the image of Jesus washing his apostles’ feet at the Last Supper,” he said. “Servant Leadership should be about a reinforcement of respect, power and worth.”

Mr. Marciano plans to create a board with representatives from the student body, alumni, parents and faculty, which will help craft Servant Leadership programs and assess the needs of the community. He said that organizations such as Habitat for Humanity and the New Mexico Solar Energy Association have already come forward to ask for volunteers.

—BACKGROUND—  
A Catholic educational environment gives tremendous freedom to explore what it means to be human, according to Mr. Marciano. Proclaiming Jesus as his hero, he cites teaching at St. Pius as “a wonderful opportunity to actualize the gospel message and work with young people.”

But not all the young people he has worked with have described their experience as wonderful.

Comments made by Mr. Marciano regarding the September 11 terrorist attacks ignited controversy between members of last year’s Senior class and parents.

“People think that I am teaching a private agenda which is off the wall, and they use the word ‘radical.’ Radical is a good word – the root of it, radix, means root. I’m not a liberal, I’m not a conservative, I’m not a Democrat, I’m not a Republican – I’m radical, I’m radical gospel,” he said. Mr. Marciano explained that radical means attempting to reach the root, or essence, of the gospel teaching, which he believes is “a prophetic message of non-violence.”

“One of the problems is, in Catholic teaching, you have the whole range (of opinion) from Just War Theory to the other valid theory pole of Principled Non-Violence. At this particular point, they are both equally orthodox.” Mr. Marciano said. The Church itself was non-violent up until 313 C.E., when Constantine issued the Edict of Milan, granting Christians freedom of religion and political favor in exchange for their military service, marking the start of official Christendom.

“If He came back here today, and taught His message, I’m not so sure we would hire Jesus to teach at St. Pius,” Mr. Marciano said. “For me, ... violence has no place in Jesus’ life. I can’t see Jesus picking up a machine gun to fight a terrorist, or hitting a button to take out two or three hundred thousand, or a million people, for some ideology.”

Social change is Mr. Marciano’s main objective. “In no way am I judging people – I have dearest sons working in that kind of (military) setup up in Los Alamos,” he said. “But – you have to challenge the system and the structures and the institutions who take good people, people of integrity, with commitment and devotion, and get them involved in doing bad things.”

*“I’m not so sure we would hire Jesus to teach at St. Pius.”*




Photo by A. J. Chavez  
New Servant Leadership director Mr. Michael Marciano arranges a community service project on the phone.

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