

Non-Catholic students enroll in parochial schools

More and more, parents of different faiths choose to give their children a Catholic education

The Associated Press

EUGENE — Ten-year-old Rachel Parshall and her classmates at St. Paul Catholic School walk with an air of solemnity as they prepare for Holy Communion.

But instead of the traditional wafer and grape juice, Rachael receives a hand on the head and a whispered blessing: "May the Lord's peace be with you always."

Rachel, a fifth-grader, hardly feels singled out. Nearly every fifth classmate is just like her: a non-Catholic.

Attracted by high academic standards, small classroom size, safe campuses and an emphasis on family values and community service, more and more non-Catholic parents are paying to send their children to parochial schools.

Non-Catholics make up about 13 percent of total enrollment nationally.

In Oregon the number of students in all private schools climbed 28 percent from 1992 to 1997 against 6 percent in public schools.

Private schools now account for 6.9 percent of all students in kindergarten through 12th grade in Oregon, up from 5.7 percent in 1992.

At St. Paul, Principal Jerry Ragan is not surprised by his school's good times. "You have folks who really want an academic challenge and folks who want a strong spiritual dimension," he said. "Sometimes it's the same people who want both."

Every family must volunteer at least 40 hours at the school each year or pay an extra \$10 for each hour below that.

The requirement, Ragan said, reflects the school's belief that parents hold the primary responsibility for raising their children.

Dianne Parshall, Rachel's mom and a reading teacher at St. Paul, said she and her husband, Ralph, have been sold on St. Paul since enrolling two older sons, one with an attention-deficit disorder and the other a straight-A student. Both thrived in the school's demanding yet caring atmosphere, she said.

The Parshalls attend First Baptist Church.

"There are some teachings that we need to do at home, but the things they're learning about the Catholic faith are still good, moral things," she said.

At St. Paul, students pray three times a day. Religious education is part of the daily curriculum.

Katie Nelson, an eighth-grader, transferred to St. Paul last year from public schools in Springfield. Raised in a nominally Unitarian home, Katie said she's glad she made the switch.

"Everybody here has been very welcoming," she said. "I have more friends here in a school of 250 kids than I did in my old school with 600 kids."

Rachel Parshall said her only gripe about St. Paul is its dress code. "No sports shorts or tear-away pants or shirts with a logo, and no open-toe or open-heel shoes," she recites.

Coupled with the bill for son Michael, a junior at Marist High School, the Parshalls will spend about \$7,000 on their two younger children's tuition this school year.

"People say, 'We could never afford it.' Well, neither can we," Dianne Parshall said. "It's a sacrifice, but we're very committed."

Such parents are creating a challenge for schools determined to keep small classes. O'Hara is adding a new classroom each year.

Marist High School had 275 students in 1990. It now has 590.

Jack Wharfield, the school's director of business affairs, said the No. 1 reason parents give for enrolling their children is the school's high academic stan-

dards.

"Kids will be what you expect them to be so we expect great things of them," he said. "We set the bar high and darn if they just don't jump right over it again and again."

In the past two years, every graduate has continued onto college, he said.

Marist students take a religion class each semester, on subjects ranging from Old and New Testament studies to Catholic teachings and sacraments.

Last year's valedictorian, Simon Apter, is Jewish.

Daryl Johnson, pastor at Eugene First Church of the Nazarene, said he's had no qualms about enrolling his two sons, Bryan and Chad, at Marist.

Marist teachers "give the Catholic viewpoint, but they're not heavy-handed at all," Daryl Johnson said. His sons, he adds, "are mature enough to sort things out. They already know a lot about the Bible."

Internet addiction is a growing problem, OSU counselor says

Therapist Bert Epstein says new students are especially susceptible

The Associated Press

CORVALLIS — Surfing the Internet has its charms, but like tobacco or alcohol, it can become addicting.

An Oregon State University counselor says the problem hits many people, especially students who are new to the campus.

"Statistically, the data is not in yet," said Bert Epstein, a staff

therapist with the university's counseling and psychological services. "But anecdotally, we know from students coming into counseling centers around the country that this is a growing problem."

At his previous job at Ohio State University, he tried to do something about it. By winter term he hopes to have published tips for healthy Internet use.

He cites a study at Alfred University in New York that found that half of the freshmen who dropped out of school reported

logging "marathon late night hours" on the Internet.

A study published in American Psychologist found a connection between depression and Internet use. But Epstein said it is unclear whether the Internet caused depression or if lonely, depressed people sought solace and companionship through their computers.

He said Internet addiction can be triggered through loneliness, anxiety or depression but can also be a symptom of seeking

fun. He likened the addiction to that of people hooked on slot machines.

"Internet addiction is reinforced by a 'variable-ratio schedule,'" he said. "You don't know when you are going to win, but you know that eventually the machine will pay off. Surfing the net is somewhat the same. If you look hard enough, you'll eventually find something you like."

He said the addiction can cause students to sleep irregular-

ly and form poor study habits.

He said psychoanalysts would describe the Internet as a place where fantasies can run wild.

"You can go into a chat room, change your name and be virtually anonymous," he said.

His advice? Everything in moderation.

"Get an alarm and set it for a certain time," he suggested. "When it goes off, turn off the computer — no matter what you're doing."

News briefs

Skate boarder loses leg after train injury

ROSEBURG — The left leg of a 19-year-old Roseburg man was amputated after he was run over by a train on Saturday in Green, according to a Douglas County Sheriff's office report.

Christopher R. Ash was listed in fair condition Monday at Mercy Medical Center.

Ash was skateboarding in a parking lot when a train passed. He and a friend decided to run alongside the train while another friend took their photograph.

While running, Ash reached up and grabbed one of the cars. His legs swung underneath the car and his left leg was run over by the car's wheels.

More voters choose absentee ballots

SALEM — More than 866,000 voters, more than 44 percent of those registered, have requested to receive their ballots for the Nov. 3 election by mail.

Secretary of State Phil Keisling said this election will likely duplicate the May 19 primary in which more than half of the ballots cast will be absentee.

Those who do not vote absentee must vote at an assigned polling place.

Absentee registration runs from a high of 70 percent in Wasco County to a low of 18 percent in Umatilla County.

Ballots will not be mailed after Oct. 29. Voters wanting to vote absentee after that date must pick up a ballot at the county election office.

County officials must receive the ballot by 8 p.m. Nov. 3.

— The Associated Press

UO Cultural Forum Presents:

Oct. 19 to Nov. 20	Exhibit Roctography Adell McMillan Art Gallery
Oct. 21 7-9 PM Free	Eugene Weekly's "Singled Out" Party The Buzz Coffeehouse
Oct. 23 8 PM \$2/\$3	Film Painting the Town 180 PLC
Oct. 28 12 PM Free	Concert Burlingame and Shorr The Buzz Coffeehouse
Oct. 30 and 31 7 PM \$5/\$6	Film The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari With Live Musical Score by Kyle Sanna! 180 PLC
Nov. 4 12 PM Free	Concert Alan Charing The Buzz Coffeehouse

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