



Let's Be Good To One Another!

SCHOOL OF THE MADELEINE NEWS

WINTER 2025

Pope Leo's values, his care for the environment and concern for those with less, are alive at the School of the Madeleine.

Our school is using Pope Leo's example as our community Call To Action!

Pope Leo's values already in play at the School of the Madeleine

By Sheila Ring

In May of this year, the Catholic Church experienced an unprecedented event when Fr. Bob Prevost from Chicago became the Church's first American Pope, Pope Leo XIV. Although it is still early in Pope Leo's papacy, he has given the world some indication of the values that will guide his tenure. It is clear that care for the environment is a fundamental priority for Pope Leo. At an international conference celebrating the 10th anniversary of Pope Francis's encyclical, Laudato Si, On Care For Our Common Home, Pope Leo stresses that we cannot "call ourselves disciples of Christ without participating in his outlook on creation and his care for all that is fragile and wounded."

Another priority that has emerged is care for the poor. In Pope Leo's Apostolic Exhortation, *Delexi Te, I Have Loved You*, he emphasizes that care for the poor and work that strives for a fair and just society are at the heart of the Christian mandate. The Madeleine strives to use these two priorities to set the overarching tone that guides our Dominican values of prayer, study, community and service.

The Madeleine has a robust recycling and composting program that is spearheaded by our Green Glove Initiative. Each class takes a turn monitoring the trash bins at lunch to make sure that students place their waste in the proper receptacle. The goal is to produce as little landfill as possible. Students also participate in a no-waste lunch contest and a trash weighing event, so they can see how much trash they are diverting from landfill. Students are encouraged to evaluate their own consumer habits so that they are mindful of their impact on the environment. In addition, the Madeleine is now largely powered by newly installed rooftop solar panels which reduce its overall environmental impact.

The Madeleine takes to heart Pope Leo's exhortation not only to love the poor, but also to work for a just society. This fall, students participated in creating care boxes for The Healing Well, an organization that provides wellness assistance for the financially vulnerable. The Kindergarten and Fifth Grade buddies had a Friendsgiving Party and part of the festivities included making "treat bags" for the guests at St Mary Magdalen's Sunday Dinner for the Poor. The whole school gathered to create Thanksgiving Boxes for families in the diocese who are so grateful for the food assistance.



As the school community gathers each day for Morning Prayer, Pope Leo's priorities are woven into the daily reflections. Whether praying in gratitude for a fantastic Fall Festival or the accomplishments of an individual class or for the needs of the community, there is always the reminder for students to care for not only one another, but also all who live in the world, especially those who have less than they do.

The Madeleine lives out Pope Leo's ideal that, "the supreme rule in the Church is love...all are called to serve."



Green Glove Initiative: middle-school students help younger Panthers sort lunchtime and recess trash.



Third grade students research their family history and design a heritage map with dolls in traditional clothing.

Madeleine encourages deep thinking and student relationships to counter the effects of a screen centric childhood

By Sheila Ring

Emerging computer technology was once seen as a powerful force in creating effective learning strategies and engaged students. While judicious use of technology can be an effective tool in the classroom, educators, parents and society at large have realized that a screen saturated life has brought many unintended negative consequences. Studies have found that attention span has been diminished. The constant stimulation that the screen provides has made it difficult for children to sustain focus on the slower tasks that learning demands. In addition overuse of technology robs children of the real life experiences and relationships that are critical for building emotional maturity and resilience.



At the Madeleine, teachers are making a concerted effort to create classroom environments that stress cooperative activities while covering all aspects of the curriculum. Lessons are designed to increase students' attention spans and the stamina they need to concentrate on a task. Although the answers to many questions are available with the swipe of a finger, Madeleine students are encouraged to contemplate questions which leads to wonder and even awe.

Children are growing up in a rapidly and constantly changing world. As they grow they will be challenged to adapt and then readapt to an evolving environment. The Madeleine strives to prepare children for this challenge by stressing the low-tech skills of deep thinking, sustained concentration and building meaningful relationships.

Middle School Enrichment Program Emphasizes Creative Expression

By Sheila Ring

Middle school students at the Madeleine participate in an arts program that broadens their creative expression. In addition to studio art which is taught concurrently with the classroom curriculum, middle school students participate in engaging enrichment classes each trimester which focus on the arts. Additional enrichment classes, including Shakespearience, Digital Arts and Music Enrichment, are tailored to the unique interests and energy of Middle School students.

During the Shakespearience class, the class studies a Shakespeare play and then performs a modified version of that play. The class stages and blocks the play and each student has a speaking part. They are taught basic acting techniques, including stage sword fighting.

Digital Arts is the second component of the Middle School Enrichment program. In Mr. McMillian's class, students create their own fictitious business. For this business, they must develop a website that includes all aspects of their business, complete with a logo and tagline. They then make a digital presentation to their classmates which promotes their business.

When students enter Mr. Berkeley's (Matt Schildgen, MAD '92) music classroom, they are entering a performance space. Each student must design and make their own instrument.

The class then arranges, improvises and performs a musical piece. Students experience the ancient communal aspect of creating music where they are encouraged to have rhythmic empathy for their classmates. This empathy is a value that Mr. Berkeley hopes students will translate into all their social interactions and their lives well beyond Middle School. The Middle School students participate in an engaging enrichment program that emphasizes both creativity and compassion.



High Rates of Teacher and Staff Retention Preserve Values and Traditions and Create Positive School Culture

By Joseph Nagel

Relationships are the heart of education. The personal connection between students and teachers enables children to learn in a safe, structured, loving environment. Classroom culture, school climate, and peer interactions all thrive when cultivated from a solid foundation of shared trust.

Developing and nurturing these relationships takes time and care. In Catholic education, with its K-8 model, students grow as a cohort, maturing into a family over their years together. Madeleine students enter as seedlings in Kindergarten, branch out in elementary school, blossom as middle schoolers, and finally go forth to bear fruit at 8th grade graduation. At each new phase, our students are tended to and overseen by our long-serving Madeleine educators.

Our teachers grow together as a family as well. Many staff and faculty have been at the Madeleine for 5, 10, 20... even close to 50 years! Over the past five years, we've averaged over 90% teacher retention. Why do our teachers remain at 1225 Milvia Street for so long? Because they in turn are cared for and supported by our families and community. Actions big and small – from a note of appreciation, to a kind word, or a home-made teacher treat – all contribute to our common sense of mission.

The shared dedication to Catholic education requires sacrifice and selflessness from all parties. Our outstanding teacher retention is a testament to the kindness, commitment and generosity of our Madeleine families. Thank you for supporting and appreciating our most valuable resource: our Madeleine teachers!



Your MAD Annual Fund support makes a difference!

Your gifts - no matter the amount - make a real difference in a student's life. Your tax-deductible donation supports long-range projects which gave us the resources to recently install solar panels, new playground structures, and expanded outdoor play and learning space.

Your support will also help us set up the new TK (Transitional Kindergarten) program so we can better serve our Madeleine families!

Your gift is valued and greatly appreciated

Remember the School of the Madeleine in your estate planning and leave a lasting legacy for our students and community. Contact Advancement by emailing advancement@themadeleine.com or call the school at 510-526-4744 for more information.

The School of the Madeleine is a non-profit organization as described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.



Latino Enrollment Institute at Notre Dame

Outreach to Spanish-Speaking Berkeley Catholic Community

Fr. Nick Glisson, Pastor

In June, I joined our Principal, Joseph Nagel, Vice Principal, Paula Rice, and Outreach Coordinator, Rowena Tarantino, for a conference at the University of Notre Dame run by ALMA (Advancing Latino and Multilingual Learner Achievement) — the Latino Enrollment Institute for principals of Catholic schools and their pastors.

This was the 13th cohort under the able and inspiring leadership of the University of Notre Dame ALMA group. The conference brings together Catholic educators from across the country, providing research and experience-based strategies to connect and support Catholic schools with families of Latino heritage.

We have been applying our outreach action plan, visiting with our fellow Berkeley parishes, St. Joseph the Worker and St. Ambrose. Both of these parishes have thriving Spanish-speaking Catholic communities, and we are eager to support interested families to join the School of the Madeleine.

When people immigrate to the United States from traditionally Catholic countries, many are not aware of the sharp line drawn here between religion and the state. They do not understand that moral issues are generally omitted from the curriculum. The lack of moral underpinning in public education makes family cultural values difficult to maintain. Religious education in the parish can help, but there is no substitute for the intense immersion students receive in a Catholic school. The Madeleine provides this extremely well.

Do you have school-aged children who are not attending Catholic school? Or how about your grandchildren or children of a neighbor? We have financial aid that can help bring the School of the Madeleine within reach for most families. We are committed to these children receiving a superior education that will make them well-rounded and committed citizens for the future.

Maybe more importantly, we would like to attract children whose lives could be transformed by attending our school. The Madeleine provides a top-notch education, builds character, fosters social engagement, and is prayer-centered. Our school supports students and enables them to excel.



The Blue & Gold Gala returns to the Berkeley Country Club!

The School of the Madeleine has always been more than classrooms and hallways. It's a place where lifelong friendships are formed and lasting memories are made. Last March, more than 200 parents, teachers, alumni, and friends gathered at the Berkeley Country Club to celebrate the spirit of community. Together, we raised over \$75,000 to support our school. On February 21, 2026, we'll gather again for another evening of joy, connection, and purpose.

Proceeds from the Blue & Gold Gala go towards programs that make a difference for every student: classroom resources, arts and athletics, library and technology upgrades, and teacher support. We hope the entire Madeleine community past and present can be part of these efforts!

How you can help:

- **Join us** - Make it a date night or reconnect with your Madeleine besties. Tables can be reserved for alumni groups.
- **Sponsor our Event** - Help offset the costs of this event by becoming a Gala sponsor. Sponsors will receive special recognition and "shout outs".
- **Donate Auction Items** - vacation homes, event tickets, wine, or unique experiences are welcome, along with cash gifts. Contact madauction@themadeleine.com.
- **Spread the word** - Invite fellow alumni, parish families, and friends to join the celebration.

Let's make this year's Gala the best yet!

MADBook Alumni Updates



Richard Haukom, (Class of 1962), and several fellow MAD alumni are making a difference in the slums of Nairobi, Kenya! Tim Hassler, Anne (Acton) Decker, Tom Larkin, Jim Malarkey, and Mark Jenkins are the backbone of support for the work of '62 alum and founder of Kijiji Solutions, Richard Haukom.

Richard founded 'Kijiji', a Swahili slang term for slums, to improve conditions for people living in the highest concentrations of poverty on Earth. Nairobi's Kibera slum is home to nearly 1 million in an area about half the size of Golden Gate Park. With his classmates' help, Richard's nonprofit is supplying safe water and dignified sanitation to a neighborhood of over 150 in the heart of Kibera. 'Kijiji' plans to serve hundreds, perhaps thousands, more with its innovative water filter approach. *To learn more visit www.kijiji-solutions.org*



Jennie Smith (née Jennie Olson, School of the Madeleine 2000-2006), and her husband Benji Smith are excited to share with the Madeleine community that UQBAR Mediterranean Cafe is now open in West Berkeley! Located at 2265 Fifth Street, UQBAR (pronounced "ook-bar," the name comes from a short story) serves fresh, organic breakfast and lunch, and hosts expanding happy hours/events. Opening a cafe together has long been their dream, and Jennie is grateful to be doing that here in Berkeley.

We're inspired by the "Mediterranean" climate we enjoy here in California, buying from local suppliers and celebrating CA's year-round abundance, and, of course, the Mediterranean Sea – a region famous for its hospitality and the birthplace of so many cuisines, cultures, and stories that influence us and our cooking.

UQBAR is open 8AM-2PM Tuesday through Saturday! Come for coffee, breakfast, house-made baked goods... a spot to read in the morning. We have a lovely outdoor courtyard seating area that is dog friendly. At 11AM, our lunch menu becomes available with soups, salads, sandwiches and more. On Fridays and Saturdays, we are open til 8PM –serving wine and beer, snacks and mezze. UQBAR is closed Sundays and Mondays. *We hope to host you soon!*



UQBAR Mediterranean Cafe serves fresh food, prepared in-house using wholesome ingredients in line with the "Mediterranean" diet – meaning lots of fruits and veggies, whole grains, legumes, lean proteins, spices and olive oil.

Announcing the School of the Madeleine TK Program

By Rowena Tarantino

We are excited to announce the opening of a full-day Transitional Kindergarten (TK) program at the School of the Madeleine beginning in the 2026–27 school year. The TK classroom will be located adjacent to the kindergarten room with a target enrollment of 10 students. Our youngest learners will have the opportunity to build essential pre-academic skills and further develop their social and emotional growth in a warm, nurturing, and supportive environment. To lead this new program, we are thrilled to welcome as our incoming TK teacher Ms. Christin Weber! Ms. Weber brings a Bachelor's degree in Child and Family Studies from the University of

Louisiana at Lafayette, and a master's degree in Education from Loyola University in Baltimore. For the past seventeen years, she has taught primarily in Montessori preschools including the last 10 years as a lead early education teacher at a local Berkeley independent school.

School of the Madeleine is currently accepting applications for the upcoming 2026-2027 school year.

We invite you to join us for a tour on Wednesdays at 9:00am, at our upcoming Information Morning on Friday, January 9, 2026 at 8:30am and at our Open House on Sunday, January 25th at 10:30am following our Family Liturgy at 9:30am.

Please feel free to contact us at admissions@themadeleine.com or (510) 526-4744 for more information.

Join our team!

If you would like to contribute to upcoming newsletter editions or participate, please contact advancement@themadeleine.com.

Panther community - Please send us any news and photos you have for our next issue. We love to hear about your gatherings, reunions, interesting events or experiences.

Just email advancement@themadeleine.com

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Our Mission

The Mission of the School of the Madeleine is to inspire students to grow as educated, morally informed individuals. In the tradition of Catholic education we believe that every student is an exceptional learner, and our goal is to help students become lifelong learners and compassionate leaders.

If this newsletter is addressed to a daughter or son who no longer lives at your home, please help us stay connected. Please mail, e-mail, or phone in the correct address.

Thank you!

Email: ddinneen@themadeleine.com

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ROOTED IN THE DOMINICAN TRADITION
SINCE 1937

IMPORTANT DATES:

- *Open House - K-8 Information Session (in person) - January 25, 2026*
- *Campus Tours - Mornings @ 9:00am, call to reserve your spot*
- *Priority Application Deadline - January 31, 2026*

Madeleine Introduces a TK Program for 4 and 5 year olds!

The School of the Madeleine is Berkeley's vibrant and inclusive TK-8 Catholic school, with a rich tradition that unites academic achievement and spiritual development.

IN MEMORIAM

Tribute to Betsy Harvey

By Heather Skinner

All who gathered at St. Mary Magdalen Church last March to honor and celebrate the life of Betsy Harvey, long time administrative secretary (33 years!) at the Madeleine, were gratified and sustained by the beautiful tribute entitled *The Life of Betsy*, lovingly compiled by her daughter, Erin Harvey. This tribute was printed in the program, but also found heartfelt expression throughout the Mass, from the Words of Remembrance to the amazing music offered by grandsons, Caleb and Austin, to the Final Commendation.

Of course, Erin captured all the wonderful nuances of Betsy's life in her tribute, but her paragraph on "the Mad years" gave us all a chance to ponder the meaning and the gift of community in all our lives. As Erin put it, Betsy found her "lasting community" when she first enrolled her oldest child, Patrick, in first grade. Her expertise and dedication at being a "reading mom" led to her being offered the position of administrative secretary. What she loved about her Mad job most of all was being close to the students, handing out comforting words along with the band-aids and ice packs, as well as forming lasting friendships with students, staff, parents, and parishioners.



She was also the Queen of Mad Hospitality, co-hosting or hosting staff parties, and helping with parish events like the Crab Feed, Fall Festival, and in later years, the Mad Auction.

Betsy was truly a gift to all of us, and the memory of her gift guides all of us to reflect on the power of community and the lasting impact we have on one another.