

# Connect

A newsletter for  
high school  
religion teachers,  
campus ministers,  
and principals

## New Campus, New Tools, Same Mission *by Kären Engdorf*

### Introduction for Scope of Technology

At Christian Brothers College High School (CBC) in suburban Saint Louis, Missouri, every one of the school's nearly 1,100 students has a laptop. Students and teachers log on wirelessly to the local network and the Internet. Homework assignments are online. A swipe card is all that is needed to make a purchase at the bookstore, to buy lunch in the cafeteria or a soda at the snack bar, or to check out a book at the library. And not a blackboard or a stick of chalk can be found on the whole campus!

The mission of CBC is to empower its students to realize their full potential as young men of faith by engaging them in an excellent learning experience that is values-based, service-oriented, and responsive to the needs of the individual. CBC is administered by the Brothers of the Christian Schools, a lay order of religious that ministers in eighty countries. The Brothers are dedicated to teaching students of various academic, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. As CBC looked toward carrying out its mission, it discerned that technology held potential as a

teaching tool. With that in mind, an extensive technology infrastructure became part of the construction of a new campus. The new CBC high school opened in fall 2003 with the technological infrastructure we had envisioned. Students, administrators, faculty, and parents are linked to one another in the education process and to the outside world.

For eighty-two years, CBC occupied a 110,000-square-foot facility in Clayton, Missouri. Last year we moved into our new facilities in the suburb of Town and Country, with a total of 245,000 gross square feet on nearly twenty-five acres and the following amenities:

- 52 classrooms
- 11 specialty classrooms (art room, fine arts room, science labs, computer instruction areas, TV production studio)
- 3,000-seat stadium (William Klemm Field)
- 380-seat performing arts center (Gundaker Theater)

"As CBC looked toward carrying out its mission, it discerned that technology held potential as a teaching tool."

- 300-seat chapel (Chapel of Our Lady of the Star)
- 500-seat dining hall (Ross Hall)
- modern library and student resource center (Dunne Library)
- 1,800-seat gymnasium

With all those amenities, the most significant addition to our school has been the technological infrastructure that includes cabling for voice, data, and video; wireless networking options for a local area network; IP security camera system and security access system; AV capacity in each classroom and the commons areas; specifications for desktop computers, with recommendations for critical software compatibility; and IP telephone options.

(continued on page 2)

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(continued from page 1)

### Room to Train and Test

One of the early steps we took in researching the level of technology to include in our new campus was the creation of a demonstration-training room on our old campus. In March 2003, the team of administrators and technology partners for the new school gutted a classroom on the old campus to prepare it for use as a demo room to test available technologies, hardware, and software. The demo room allowed us to evaluate the following in the classroom setting: monitors versus projectors, button-

control panels versus touch screens, and different types of electronic whiteboards, laptops, batteries, and software. That testing helped us design the new classrooms around technology and the school mission through input from the teachers and students who would be using the rooms. The demo room was also used for training teachers and for evaluating online tools for the new learning environment.

### Partnerships

A recent Market Data Retrieval study reveals that about 15 percent of the nation's schools have wireless networks. Far fewer schools, however, issue each student a laptop, and even fewer schools are built around a high-speed, universally accessible wireless network and the concept of total integration of technology into the educational process. Programs in Maine for seventh and eighth graders and in Michigan for sixth graders are highly visible and well-funded exceptions. We had to face the reality that we did not have that level of funding.

For that reason, constructing a comprehensive infrastructure that would support the integration of technology into the educational process required extensive partnering with the business community outside of CBC. As a result, we joined forces with numerous businesses to build our system. The list of partners ranges from Cisco Systems Inc. for the wireless routers and switches to Microsoft Solutions for the Class Server and SharePoint products and services, from SMART Technologies

Inc. for interactive whiteboards to IBM for its T Series laptops. The development of the CBC technology infrastructure was not achieved through the actions of a small group of people. Out of necessity and for efficiency, the project had to be far-reaching in scope and innovative in forming mutually beneficial partnerships.

### Tools for Teaching

Each of the fifty-two classrooms at CBC has a teacher's workstation designed to assist the teacher in maximizing the classroom's technology. Each custom-designed teaching station includes a touch panel that controls all applications in the classroom—cable television, Internet, SymNet sound system, video, DVD

(continued on page 3)

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(continued from page 2)

equipment, and document cameras. The teaching station is where technology and the curriculum meet. Teachers have the combined power of a projector, a computer, and a whiteboard to teach in a new interactive learning environment. Audio and video recordings of lesson plans are part of the value of the new learning environment. One particularly useful application of this new technology is that math teachers can record problems and store them for students to review at a later time on Class Server.

In addition to the workstation, each room has an interactive SMART Board whiteboard. Simply by touching the whiteboard, a teacher can highlight key points, access applications and Web sites, and write notes in electronic ink. Also, this new “chalkboard” allows teachers to save all their work to one file that can be printed, e-mailed, or posted to a Web site.

## Around the School

Advancements have also been implemented outside of the classroom. For example, the phone system provides an interface between voice mail and e-mail. As a result, teachers can listen to e-mails or retrieve them as text. The quality of the audio system

throughout the school has been improved with the installation of a quality sound system in each classroom, conference area, and six other large venues on campus. Basically, before installing any new systems, we evaluated what was truly needed for our administration, faculty, staff, and students to fulfill the mission of CBC. The wide scope of our undertaking—to design and build the campus—made us constantly aware of the need to balance the additions to our campus that would truly enhance our mission with those that would be added just for the sake of having them. With all the advancements we have made, we can honestly say we have stayed true to our mission’s driving the addition of technology, not technology’s driving our mission.

**Dr. Kären Engdorf** is the director of technology for Christian Brothers College High School in Saint Louis, Missouri. She did her graduate work at Saint Louis University, where she received a doctorate in education and technology. Her personal mission, she says, is “to give back to a community and build opportunity for students, teachers, and the greater good.”

### About Connect

*Connect* is a complimentary newsletter from Saint Mary’s Press for high school religion teachers, campus ministers, and principals. It is published each October, January, and April.

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### Acknowledgments

The quote on page 5 by John Baptist de La Salle is from *Meditations*, by John Baptist de La Salle, number 155.1, translated by Richard Arnandez and Augustine Loes (Landover, MD: Christian Brothers Conference, 1994), page 286. Copyright © 1994 by Christian Brothers Conference.

The statistic on page 2 by Market Data Retrieval is from “Technology in Education 2004: A Comprehensive Report on the State of Technology in the K-12 Market,” at <http://schooldata.com/mdrreports.asp#techined>, accessed November 15, 2004. Copyright © 2004 by Market Data Retrieval.

# from the classroom

## One Teacher's Experience *by Rob Staggenborg, APR*

### Preparing for Success

The advent of technology at Christian Brothers College High School (CBC) in Saint Louis, Missouri, has yielded some tremendous results for students, while significantly changing the way teachers teach their classes. I would like to highlight for you the way one of our theology teachers has embraced technology to enhance his classes.

For religion teacher Peter Abegg, a 1981 CBC graduate, the evolution of technology has given his students a new tool to learn about CBC's Lasallian heritage. The Lasallian philosophy of education was developed by Saint John Baptist de La Salle, a seventeenth-century priest from Reims, France, who revolutionized the system of education of his day. De La Salle's teachings put a special focus on making education available to all—not just to those of nobility or wealth.

"De La Salle taught in the vernacular of his day," said Abegg. "He taught his students things they could use immediately. It's the same thing with technology; we teach the students things they can take home and use immediately. So, what we are doing with technology is really the vernacular of today."

Two years ago, the administration at CBC decided to implement an innovative technology program to coincide with a move to a new school

facility. Abegg was one of many who took advantage of the free training offered to the staff.

"I learned a ton from (those training sessions). But the more I learned about the different capabilities of programs like Microsoft Office, for example, the more I realized how these tools could improve my effectiveness as a religion teacher," he said. Abegg added that because most students enjoy working on computers, encouraging them to use the tools was not a tough sell.

### Introducing Ninth Graders to De La Salle

Many freshman students' first exposure to the life of De La Salle is in Abegg's class. On the first day, they are introduced to the familiar Lasallian mantra: "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God."

A PowerPoint presentation projected onto the SMART Board in Abegg's classroom takes the students through the syllabus and the expectations for the class. In addition, the majority of homework assignments are submitted via e-mail, and very little paper is exchanged between Abegg and his students over the course of a semester. The opening slide show is just one aspect of the students' introduction to the life of De La Salle. Using the World Wide Web, Abegg's students embark on "Web quests"—a sort of Internet

scavenger hunt for information. Using Web sites operated by the Christian Brothers and their Lasallian partners, students in Saint Louis learn about the fifty-four colleges, high schools, middle schools, and elementary schools the Brothers operate in the United States alone.

"I try to give my students an appreciation for just how large in scope the Lasallian mission is around the world. It is truly a global mission, one that extends to one million students in eighty-five nations," he said. "It's much larger than just CBC in Saint Louis. We teach that to them their freshman year."

Abegg dedicates the first three weeks of class to the Web-quest assignment, which is designed to give students a general overview of what it means to be a Lasallian school. Students learn about the *signum fidei* crest, locations in the world where the Brothers teach, and even why the Brothers wear long black robes and white religious collars.

### Exploring the Lasallian Heritage Online

One of Abegg's favorite Web sites is one he helped develop. A handful of CBC teachers, including Abegg, attended a college-level computer training course offered through Fontbonne University. The group

(continued on page 5)

## Ambassadors of Christ

(continued from page 4)

developed the Web site Our Lasallian Heritage, [www.cbhs.org/lasallian\\_resources/lasallian\\_heritage1.htm](http://www.cbhs.org/lasallian_resources/lasallian_heritage1.htm), which is dedicated to the Lasallian approach to educating young people. Other faculty members involved in the development of this site were Anne Monks, Dorothy Ripplinger, Br. Chuck Gregor, Jane Eschmann, Karen Fiasco, Carolyn Leeman, and Sue Shostrand. The information on the Web site is for use by any Lasallian school with Internet access.

"Sites like these," Abegg said, "help religion teachers set the theme of who De La Salle was and what he means to the CBC community. This site gives students a snapshot of De La Salle and what he did to revolutionize the system of education." Abegg uses technology to provide his students with a clear image of the mission of the Christian Brothers in a format that allows them to begin owning that mission as they enter their academic career at CBC.

**Rob Staggborg, APR**, is in his sixth year as director of communications for CBC. Rob came to CBC in 1998 after a brief stint as an independent public relations consultant. He has also served as media relations coordinator for a large public school district in Missouri. He entered the public relations field after a successful career as a business, news, and sports reporter. He is a native Saint Louisan and a graduate of CBC.

Do you know someone who touches the hearts of teens? The Saint Mary's Press™ Ambassador of Christ Recognition Award is presented annually to three persons who enliven in young people the Christian spirit.

Adults and teens who are role models for Catholic teens, ages 10 to 19—those who genuinely touch the hearts of teens and inspire in them the Christian spirit—are eligible for nomination. One award is given in each of three categories: Catholic school staff member, Catholic parish staff member or volunteer, and Catholic high school senior.

The recipients of the 2005 Ambassador of Christ Recognition Awards will receive the following:

- \$1,000 in cash or scholarship
- \$500 in SAINT MARY'S PRESS resources
- a beautiful stained-glass award

To nominate someone for the 2005 Ambassador of Christ Recognition Awards, go to [www.smp.org/Ambassador](http://www.smp.org/Ambassador). You can also get a nomination packet in the mail by calling Carol Hunger toll-free at 800-533-8095. Completed packets must be returned to Saint Mary's Press by February 18, 2005.

"Look upon your work as one of the most important and most excellent in the Church, for it is one most able to strengthen it by giving it a solid foundation."

—Saint John Baptist de La Salle,  
patron saint of teachers

# classroom activity

## Internet Search: Religious Orders

The following activity is designed to help your students become more familiar with the range of charisms and ministry in the vowed religious life. As the teacher you can determine the level of technology used in the activity. At a minimum, your students can do the necessary research online. By having your students use the Internet to do the research, you are able to increase the efficiency of this activity and spend less time in the research phase. You may also consider having your students develop a PowerPoint presentation or produce a commercial highlighting the order they researched. If you teach at a school associated with a particular religious order, you might want to have your students compare the charism or mission of the order that administers your school with the mission statement of your school. To conduct the activity, follow these steps:

**1.** Brainstorm with your students the names of religious orders they know about, jotting their responses on the board.

**2.** Ask your students to spend a little time searching the Internet for information about Catholic religious orders. Tell them they will each need to select a different order and present it to the class. Be sure to have them sign up for their orders before they begin extensive research so that you do not have an entire class presenting on one or two orders, such as the Jesuits or the Dominicans. Instruct them to prepare a 3- to 5-minute overview of the religious order they select. Be sure they address the following points:

- Why did you select this group?
- What is the origin of the order (when, where, and how did it start)? Include descriptions of the founder, the patron saint, and key events that facilitated the group's formation.

- In what ministries are members of this order involved? Be specific with the names and locations of the ministries. Also describe how far-reaching the order is (e.g., whether it is located mainly in one country or is spread throughout the world).
- What unique gift does this group give to the Church?
- How can someone find out more about this order?

### Additional Assessment Ideas

- Have your students design a brochure or Web page for the religious order they researched. The brochure or Web page should provide current and historical information about the order as well as relevant contact information for a person who is interested in finding out more about the order.
- Invite your students to research "significant" people from the religious order they have selected. In their research have your students prepare a bullet-point biography of the significant people they have identified. You will want them to include basic information such as the dates of birth, death, and final vows. You will also want them to highlight major events and accomplishments such as the publishing of books, the founding of new ministries, and so on.

## resource reviews Teaching with Technology

### Catholic Youth Bible Triple Challenge

This exciting new Bible trivia game gives students the opportunity to learn about the Bible in a fun and engaging manner. Designed to run on operating systems of Windows XP or higher, Triple Challenge has more than 1,000 multiple-choice questions at various levels of difficulty: *How many tribes of Israel were there? The first nine chapters of which book are filled with genealogy? Which king was not permitted to build the Temple because of his bloody war record?* These are just a few of the questions you will find in the game to challenge your students to become more familiar with the Bible. For information about *Catholic Youth Bible Triple Challenge*, visit the Saint Mary's Press homepage at [www.smp.org](http://www.smp.org).

### SAINT MARY'S PRESS E-Books

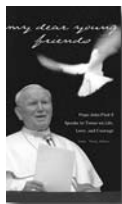
Saint Mary's Press now offers some of its most popular books in electronic format. Saint Mary's Press e-books contain the same content as the printed books. Titles in the e-book series include *Dreams Alive*, *My Dear Young Friends*, and *Bringing Catholic Youth and the Bible Together*. These books are in PDF format; in order to view them, you must have a .NET Passport account through Microsoft and Adobe Acrobat 6.0, both of which are free products. When you order an e-book, you will receive an e-mail with instructions for downloading Adobe Acrobat 6.0 and a link to the e-book. If you don't have a .NET Passport account, the link will lead to step-by-step instructions for setting up an account. Once your account is established, the e-book will open. For more information about Saint Mary's Press e-books, go to [www.smp.org](http://www.smp.org).

### Real Lives

Real Lives, by Educational Simulations, is a unique, interactive life simulation that enables students to live in any country in the world. Through statistically accurate events, Real Lives brings to life different cultures, political systems, economic opportunities, personal decisions, health issues, family issues, schooling, jobs, religions, geography, war, peace, and more. This resource offers first-person simulations of life in more than 190 countries. As your students make decisions for their characters and experience the consequences of those decisions, they will learn about the world and increase their appreciation of their own culture and the cultures of other peoples. For information about Real Lives and to download a free trial version, visit [www.educationalsimulation.com](http://www.educationalsimulation.com).

### Sacred Space, [www.sacredspace.ie](http://www.sacredspace.ie)

Sacred Space offers a daily online prayer experience in the tradition of Ignatian spirituality. Each daily prayer takes students through six stages, and each stage links to a prayer guide that explains the stage in greater detail. Additional features include the capability to click on a link for in-depth exploration of a Scripture passage, the capability to download the daily prayer to a Personal Data Assistant (PDA), and the option to read the daily prayer in eighteen different languages. This Web site is an excellent resource for individual prayer or prayer with the entire class. The site is administered by the Society of Jesus Ireland (the Irish Jesuits).



## what's inside

- "New Campus, New Tools, Same Mission" ..... 1-3
- contributors ..... 2
- from the classroom  
"One Teacher's Experience" 4-5
- Ambassadors of Christ ..... 5
- quote from De La Salle ..... 5
- classroom activity ..... 6
- resource reviews ..... 7

## in touch

Dear Reader,  
Ten years ago I would have been hard-pressed to find a handful of schools that had digital projectors in all classrooms and whose students regularly used laptops. The times are changing. Today we are surrounded by technology, be it computers, cell phones, digital music, or personal planners. Many of the young people we work with are growing up knowing no other way to work than with wireless constant connections to one another and to the world. As a tool to help educate youth, technology holds amazing potential, but it also has the potential to overrun the school and be a source of headaches and frustration.

In this issue of *Connect*, you will find articles from a school that is committed to making the current technology part of how they educate young men. Also in this issue is an overview of how a theology teacher developed a curriculum that uses technology to teach his students about the charism of the school. As we all continue to struggle with lifting up young people who are "in, but not of, the world," I pray we continue to view new educational tools as just that—tools.

Peace,



Steven McGlaun, development editor

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