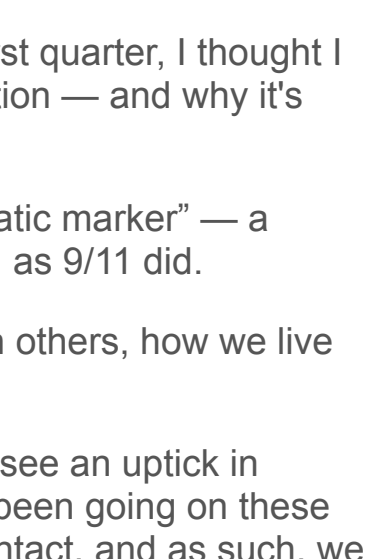


Cardinal Mooney High School CMHS



FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

WEEK OF OCTOBER 18, 2020



Our message rises above fear

Cardinal Mooney educates for hope and happiness

Dear Mooney Family:

Autumn has arrived in the Valley, and as we approach the end of the first quarter, I thought I would share some thoughts on Catholic education — a Mooney education — and why it's vital to our community.

What we're experiencing with COVID-19 can be understood as a "somatic marker" — a bookmark of sorts in our brains that affects our behavior and decisions, as 9/11 did.

COVID has had — AND is having — an impact on how we interact with others, how we live our daily lives, how we feel our sense of security, and much more.

Amid uncertainty and fear, we opened school. Seven weeks in and we see an uptick in positive cases around the country. Fear has settled into a lot of what's been going on these past months. As humans, we are social beings, designed for social contact, and as such, we are very attached to our families, groups, and associations. COVID has triggered fear of being separated from each other. For many, that fear has been realized.

In 2009, the news reported that "billions were at risk of being infected by the H1N1 virus" and yet the global reaction was to keep on with their daily life. I'm not suggesting we shouldn't continue to be prudent in our responses to this global pandemic. I'm suggesting that a Catholic education — a Mooney education — provides us with another way to respond.

Since 9/11, an accumulation of fear has been building up in our brains. We see the anxiety in our students. You have heard me and other educators speak to the mental health concerns we have in schools. Movies were made about this, namely Contagion. Our news is bleak. As a result, when we heard the word pandemic, we were preconditioned to have an extreme reaction to it. Social media does not help either, as it tends to amplify our fears. The hoarding of consumer goods last spring is a prime example of how our thinking and behaving had been conditioned with fear.

Enter Mooney, and what you are providing for your children.

There is a distinct way that Catholic schools educate, and it extends beyond our theology department and the school itself. Mooney is a place where our Catholic approach to intellectual life is practiced. What is it that makes the Mooney education distinct? Unique? The essence of Mooney's approach to education is based on our Catholic worldview. A view that:

- Has a deep commitment to truth found in the experience of history and tradition;
- Has a positive anthropology that acknowledges human failings, yet also sees humans as being essentially good and drawn toward the good;
- Our sacramental approach to life where God is experienced through the created order;
- A rationality — a passion for reasoned approaches to the world.

In the context of the fear surrounding COVID, Mooney teaches Thomas Aquinas who, posited that "God who is love is the first cause, the prime mover of things. All that is created, including our students, participate in the Creator God, whose will is to be known by his creations. Human beings, made in the image and likeness of God, have the capacity for both love and truth, and thus the pursuit of truth and love is the pursuit of God. Our happiness and fulfillment is found precisely in learning and loving." Through our questioning of students' conclusions and assumptions, and of their meaning and implications, we invite students to learn more and to experience a God much bigger than the one they've created in their own image and likeness (Sanctity). This is significant because the way we teach students to learn also influences what they're able to learn (Scholarship).

Equally important in our world of uncertainty we teach Aquinas' maxim:

- The pursuit of life is happiness;
- Happiness is found through the development of our capacities with excellence, expressed in the world through action;
- This path leads to God, the ultimate happiness.

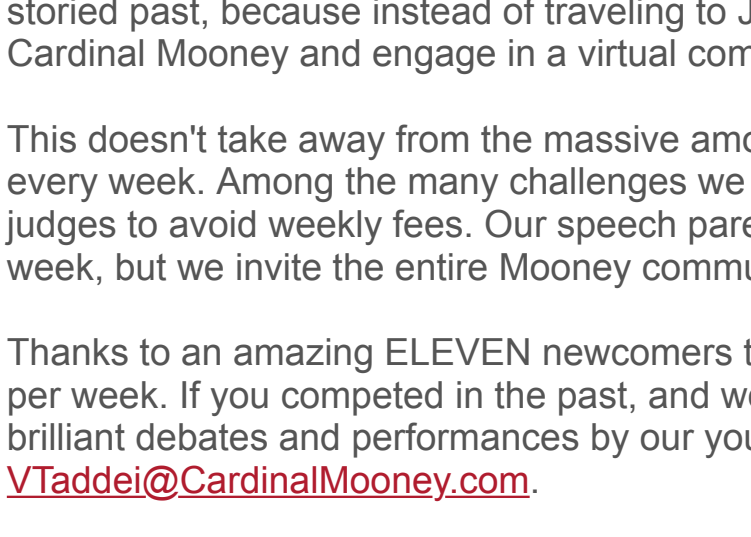
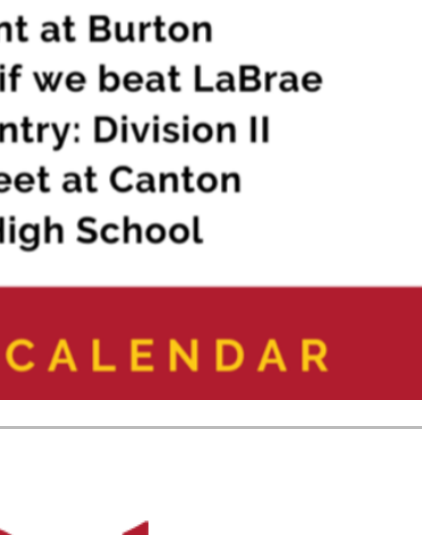
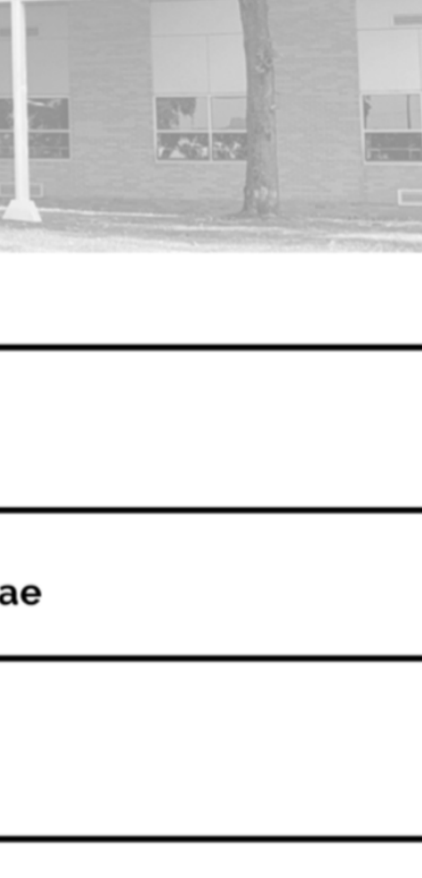
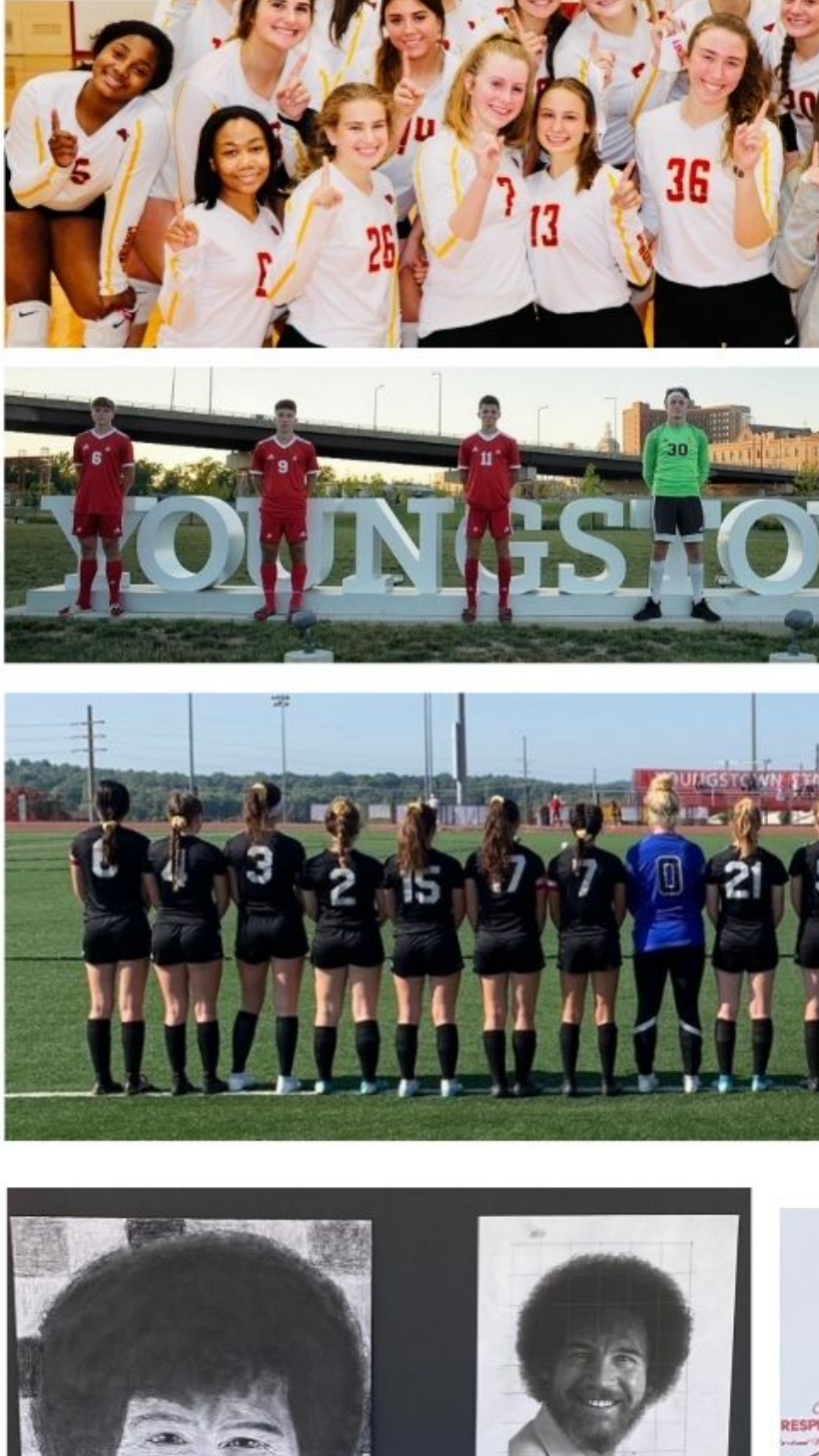
At Mooney, learning is a virtue to be pursued. Our Catholic worldview is a way of learning and has content.

- Our commitment to history and tradition gives our students a deposit of faith that influences moral, political, and economic life. Thus, our graduates become bridge builders, among others. I'm certain this is why so many of our graduates are successful and skilled in the art of service to others (Discipline).
- Mooney theology teaches our students to develop what Aquinas calls a "retentive memory" of experiences of faith believers which is our Catholic tradition. The content of what we've learned over 2,000 years about life is not unimportant and learning it gives our students at a great advantage.
- Lastly, Mooney education is not disembodied from our students lives or their experiences. A Mooney education is not a spectator sport.

Throughout the first quarter, our students have been active participants in learning and playing with excellence. You can see the proofs in the pictures below my letter.

Fear can inhibit us, and for some, it promotes innovation, creativity, problem solving. As we all begin to reimagine the future, Mooney is educating our students in a worldview that prepares them to be the innovators, problem solvers, and leaders.

Thank you for your confidence in and support of Mooney as we move into the second quarter.



Tyler Hayes

