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Barbara DeLaTorre: Educational Commission- Embracing Tradition and Faithfulness of the Magisterium

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1 Chanel Carter

2 Interview with Barbara DeLaTorre

3 CC: Alright, it is March 18, 9:32am at Saint Joseph's Academy with Barbara De La Torre.

4 BD: 16TH

5 CC: 16th, sorry! March 16th.

6 BD: [Laughter] I was going to say; did I miss St. Patrick's Day?

7 CC: I just wanted to get your verbal consent that you know this is for the UD oral repository?

8 BD: Yes.

9 CC: Wonderful. So, one of my first questions that I wanted to ask you is: so, you cofounded St.
10 Joseph's correct?

11 BD: Yes.

12 CC: And what year did that finally become established?

13 BD: We actually got our 501c3 and we started school in 1995, but we had a year before that to
14 get it ready.

15 CC: Okay, gotcha. And so, what was your educational background just growing up?

16 BD: Oh, okay. So, I just went to public school k-12, and then went to the community college in
17 Ventura for 3 years. I switched majors from biology to nursing, and then I took my prerequisites
18 and then I transferred to Cal State Long Beach into their nursing program. I had to wait a
19 semester because it was impacted. And then I went into the nursing program and graduated three

20 years later with a bachelor's degree in nursing. And then I worked as a nurse and got married and
21 worked as nurse until Johnny was born.

22 CC: Okay, great. That kind of leads to my next question...so your career background before St.
23 Josephs was nursing? So, you didn't do any teaching or anything before that?

24 BD: No, no education background, except going to school. [Laughter]

25 CC: So, then that leads to my next question, what were your motives for cofounding, or how did
26 you come across this idea?

27 BD: Well, yeah I did come across the idea. So, before when um.. I mean I could go way back
28 but...

29 CC: Yeah, please!

30 BD: Well, yeah, I got interested in things going on in the community probably when I was at the
31 community college. I had to take a speech class and I am not one to get up and talk at all in front
32 of everybody. But it forced me to and so I did... actually way back then it would have been 1979
33 or 80. I picked abortion. And I really grew up in public school and CCD was nothing and I just
34 really think God lead me to do that not really knowing much about it all...I did a lot of research
35 and presented as a persuasive. And so, from there on out I had a desire to do more community
36 things. I was good at researching, but of course that was before internet and everything.

37 [laughter]

38 But anyway, so it was a lot of phone calls and writing and mail and things like that. So, I got
39 involved in a few of the community things out there and then I got married and then having a
40 child set my mind on a different path...more focused on things that would affect my child. Vince

41 was the first. So, we thought we would go ahead and put him into public school because Dave
42 and I were both public school. I had never been to Catholic school in all my life. And so, we
43 didn't really know our faith either of us at all. And so, I thought I would research the public
44 school and it's a long story but in researching I found out they were just...the sex ed. in there
45 was just explicit... starting in kindergarten. I got on a committee and tried to change it, and that's
46 a whole story into itself. It's all rigged... there is no change. People [say] "Oh come on our
47 committee as a parent." No, it's all rigged. The whole thing is rigged. And you will make no
48 difference whatsoever. They already have their plan. That's what I learned from that. After
49 spending numerous hours of talking and effort. And so there is no changing that system. Plus
50 their education... there was no phonics back then it was just outcome based education, it was not
51 traditional. It was just not what we wanted. So, during this time to we were growing in our
52 faith... kind of self-teaching, you know, both of us were. So I was learning more and more and
53 becoming a more and more stronger Catholic in that regard as well. I morally knew the issues but
54 just knowing more about the faith itself and what it all was. And so then we said okay well
55 public school is out. We'll try the Catholic school. So, I took Vince to go take the little
56 kindergarten test at a local parochial school. So, they put me in the nurse's room, while he was
57 taking the test, to listen to the Gazelle for parents...I think it's called the Gazelle test... and this
58 is for parents saying "this is the Gazelle test your kid is taking bla bla bla." So at this point I was
59 getting a lot of newsletters in the mail. And I belonged to human life international—[like] your
60 mom—and Paul Marx. So, I got his newsletters back in the day. And so, I would read those and
61 there were all kinds of exposés that he wrote on this horrible catholic sex ed. program called
62 New Creation...so I was already aware of it through his newsletters...and he just wrote exposés

63 [saying] this is terrible and so I'm sitting there listening to the Gazelle test and I'm looking up at
64 the nurse's wall and there up on the shelf was New Creation. And I went... Oh my...

65 CC: Red flag!

66 BD: This is what Fr. Paul Marx said! And I'm looking and I'm like oh my gosh. So afterwards
67 we leave and my friend Diane Durrant had been there, she's probably 10 years older than me...
68 and she had all of her kids over there and she was a friend and she was on the school board and
69 she knew everything about that school, completely involved. I said, "Did you know they were
70 teaching New Creation, this terrible sex ed. program in the school your kids are going to?" And
71 she said "I had no idea." She goes, "I'm on the board... I'm on everything." We come to find out
72 the principal snuck it in and didn't tell anyone. It had been there for years. And so she was
73 furious you know. And a little side story: her daughter was in kindergarten when Vince was in
74 kindergarten and so she told the principal, "I do not want my daughter to be exposed to this."
75 Because what happened was she found out her 8th grade daughter was in class and the teacher
76 said, "well the church says abortion is wrong but I think it's right for these reasons." So then she
77 told the principal, "I don't want my kindergartener exposed. I don't want her getting the classes."
78 And so her kindergartener comes home and she says [to her daughter], "so what did you do
79 today?"

80 And she says, "Well they put me in the second-grade class."

81 "They did? Why?"

82 "They took me out of my class because they were doing that program but then I got it." She got
83 the second-grade program. So I'm just like dying! Like what are these people doing? And if you
84 read the exposé by Fr. Marx you would feel the same way. It is horrific. So I start my research

85 again... I had the whole program mailed to me and I contacted all these women that were writing
86 articles about it, fighting it in other areas. I pulled all the information together and wrote...I still
87 have it... because everything was hand written back then you know... about this thick [holds up
88 thumb and index finger about three inches apart], a three-page letter but this much backup
89 information on how this was heinous, it was Anti-Catholic, it was destroying the innocence of
90 children...I had psychologist back up...everything. From the Vatican saying it was no good. I
91 sent it to the diocese. Eventually they did remove it...they took it off. But then they just replaced
92 it with another horrible one. So we did get rid of New Creation which was good, but still again at
93 the end of it all... after a whole year of that only three parents were on board with me to, Dianne,
94 me, and what's her name... I forget it was so long ago... Rene. And we were the only ones.
95 Nobody else cared. [they would say] "Oh this is good." You see? "Oh no.."

96 CC: Do you think they were just ignorant of it? They didn't know?

97 BD: They didn't want to know. They didn't want to. And so we went to the priests and
98 everything and he was just...no. Super liberal. So anyway, at the end of that, I said "okay hon,
99 what are we gonna do with Vince?" He did go through a year there. He went through
100 Kindergarten. And there was a lot of battles going on with other things there. Other moral issues.
101 And so then I said I'm going to homeschool [laughs]. At the same time as we made that decision,
102 I was still doing research and at that 20 years ago it was Values Clarification... it was a big
103 deal... we called it that. Which nowadays, good grief, it's gotten 100 times worse. But so I got a
104 hold of Eagle Forum which is Phyllis Schlafly's group, who is a wonderful... I think she just
105 passed away... but she is a wonderful... she formed [unclear] for America.. wonderful Christian
106 woman... wonderful. So I called them and they said, "well you need to call... you need to talk to
107 so and so. And she's in orange county." So [I thought] well I can call her. So I call and I get the

108 number... and she goes... I can't even remember her name now... but this is so and so and
109 we've moved to Arizona. And here's my number. And I go I'll call her in Arizona...I don't care,
110 you know. So I get to talking to her, by now she's Catholic, find out they've moved to Arizona
111 and they found this little parent run school. Unheard of...unheard of. There were only five in the
112 country at that time, you know... Ville de Marie Academy...she goes, "it's wonderful you walk
113 in and there's rosaries and there's no...the sex ed. is for the parents and we use the Faith and Life
114 series and the Baltimore Catechism..." and all these things you know... and the uniforms are to
115 the knees and all of this. And so we were gonna be in Arizona that weekend for my cousin's
116 wedding and she says "come see it." So I go, "Dave, let's go out a day early and look at it." So
117 we drove out there and left the kids with the family and it was just at the back of a building they
118 rented... it was a multiuse building... they were in the back... kind of a strip mall-ish place..."

119 CC: Sounds familiar...

120 [laughter]

121 BD: So I walked in and we walked on that campus and saw those kids... we just... that's all we
122 had to see was that. And when we went in the classroom and started talking to the principal... I
123 mean it sealed it. But when we walked in we could feel God's presence there. It was completely
124 different from anything we've ever experienced before. So by the time we left we said we gotta
125 have one of these. We can do this.

126 CC: That's amazing!

127 BD: So we came home and during this time I was doing all of this research somebody had
128 connected me with Pat Hansen and said she had been fighting sex ed. at another school over
129 there [laughter]... and so she's about fifteen years older than me and so I was... how old was I...

130 35 at the time and so she was 50. So I had only known her by the phone and we would talk...
131 and I was just going to start homeschool...I had never done it before. She had been doing it
132 for... I don't know seven years or something. We had a lot of similarities. And so I came home
133 [and] I said who can help me do this so I called her up...I don't think I had met her...it was just
134 on the phone...and I said would you want to start a school. And I told her about Ville De Marie.
135 I took her to fly out to see it. And then we came back and said we're gonna do it.

136 CC: Wow.

137 BD: Then we held garage sales to make... we had to earn \$1,000 to get our 501c3 so we're tax
138 exempt so we could get donations. So we did that...if you go on our website and our history
139 you'll see pictures of the garage sales... it's hilarious.

140 CC: [laughs] I will have to check that out.

141 BD: Yeah, it's pretty funny. But then Father Healey over here at St. Mark's was Pat's pastor. I
142 was over in Ocean Side. And so he really knew her and was very conservative and traditional
143 and the good thing was that in San Marcos there was no parochial school that we were
144 competing with. They didn't have one. It was perfect.

145 CC: Yeah, no competition.

146 BD: Perfect. And he supported us. So we didn't do it through his parish but we had his support.
147 So we held our first meeting over there... information meeting...

148 CC: Oh my gosh.

149 BD: And we had Denis Uniform company... we tried to look for professional so we did have
150 uniforms. We wanted it set up as a school, not a homeschool. A real school. You know, with

151 desks, books, recess, lunch, rules, everything. So that first year we found that strip mall over
152 there. We had to go through the city and the conditional use permit to put it there...which was...
153 you know, and we had to do that yearly so. But, it all came together and we opened in September
154 of '95.

155 CC: Oh my gosh, wow! So how long did it take to get it started? Did you say?

156 BD: About a year.

157 CC: About a year? Okay, wow.

158 BD: And there were no... there was only like...like I said maybe four other schools. There was
159 Kolbe Academy up in Napa, there's Ville De Marie over in Arizona where we visited, and then
160 maybe one or two more? And then we started. Now there's hundreds. There's lots of them now.
161 And there's all kinds of organizations that will help you. NAPCIS is the biggest one but they all
162 formed after we had started. So, and we got to put in there Faith and Life, you know, that has
163 been stamp approved by the Vatican. It's beautiful... they won't use it in the diocese. And we
164 said why won't you use... why won't you use the Faith and Life series...religion series 1st-8th
165 grade not on your accepted book list? [They said] because it's too hard for the kids to
166 understand. We've been using it for twenty-two years with no problem.

167 CC: They don't want to raise the rigor.

168 BD: No, they don't want to raise their... it's all stupid... the religion books out there...they're so
169 pathetic. They're completely devoid of anything with "s", saint, sin, sacraments... you know all
170 the "s" words that they don't want to say...

171 CC: Are you serious? Oh my gosh...

172 BD: Yeah they're so bad. They're just empty. Full of fluff and no meat. But the Faith and Life is
173 very very good. And then we back it up with Baltimore Catechism. So we got to put in our
174 curriculum... you know no Values Clarification... none of those stupid outcome based education
175 where you take away grades and give them checkmarks and all this... and all of our teachers sign
176 an oath of allegiance to the magisterium of the church... they will teach only what the church
177 teaches and that's it. And so they all sign an oath, which is unheard of... nobody does that. And
178 so we made it very traditional. We have pictures of Jesus and Mary, we have them pray the
179 rosary at lunch and...

180 CC: That's right, I've always loved that.

181 BD: All the traditional... novenas... we're doing our St. Joseph Novena right now. So the kids
182 are exposed. They get the explicit Latin Mass; we do that once a quarter where they can see the
183 Latin Mass. And so throughout the years we have maintained all of that.

184 CC: Okay, great. You kind of, a little bit, answered my question of what would you say is the
185 basis of the curriculum you chose for the school? So it would be...

186 BD: Traditional. The traditional curriculum. Even now we see the attack even more. Like I said
187 they... back then they had outcome based education... now its common core... they just change
188 the name...they just... every... I heard this article... I think every twelve years?... he gave a
189 certain number of years... they just change the name. It's the same thing they just change the
190 name... but it's the same liberal, progressive, education ideas that completely eliminate
191 traditional education that served us for thousands of years... the traditional education that has
192 brought up Einstein and all the great thinkers of the world... and they refuse to use that. We use

193 classical. We use the three stages... the grammar stage k-5, the logic in middle school and the
194 rhetoric... the rhetorical stage in high school.

195 CC: Okay, and is there like a particular educational theorist/philosopher or anything that you
196 would say you kind of look to as the foundation of your curriculum or? Does a particular name
197 come to mind?

198 BD: Not a certain person, but we look at... we're members of NAPCIS and members of the
199 Independent... classical...Catholic education something like that...so they have a lot of
200 recourses and this year in particular we've made some real big changes in that regard. Not
201 change... Its's not that we weren't using... like we were using Rod and Staff for years which is
202 completely grammar... diagraming... the whole thing but now we're using Shirley Grammar
203 which is... well you diagram do all that but it's more of a classical approach. So, it uses sing-
204 song in a grammatical stage... they like that. Then you change when you get into the middle
205 school because they're more logic... they want to hear more logic. They want to hear
206 arguments... teach them how to argue with logic. And then in the rhetorical stage we teach them
207 how to speak clearly, concisely, and intelligently... you know? and be able to back up their
208 arguments.

209 CC: Right, that's great. I just did my theorist report on St. Elizabeth Ann Seton so I was just
210 wondering if you... well I'm sure you know plenty about her... but she's great. And then... let's
211 see... so what kinds of educational issues or concerns came up when founding the school? If
212 any?

213 BD: Educational issues or concerns...

214 CC: Like, did anyone try to combat you with what you were trying to do in the schools or
215 anything like that? I know you had the support of... what's his name? Father... Father Marks?

216 BD: Oh Father Paul Marks. He came and visited the school too. That's in the history...if you
217 look under history [on the school website] there's a picture of him in there.

218 CC: Oh awesome, so you definitely had his support.

219 BD: Yeah... let's see um... did anybody... well we've always been seen as different... because
220 we are not a diocesan school. So, and they know we use the Baltimore Catechism... but that's
221 our rote... that's for rote memory. But we use Faith and Life as our catechism but still nobody
222 else does... you know. So they kind of... I think they see us as either as rebellious or maybe pre-
223 Vatican II... that might be the thought but we're not. We're totally you know... we are right
224 there with the Holy Father and the Vatican and you know Vatican II says they want more laity
225 participation spreading the Gospel and that's what we're doing.

226 CC: And that's in your mission statement...yeah.

227 BD: Yeah, so we're not... we're totally up to date with everything that's going on in the church
228 you know, although we... what the magisterium teaches... not everything going on in the church
229 right now but what the magisterium teaches...that's what we're yeah... let me clarify that...
230 because there is some crazy stuff going on right now. So yeah, it's what the magisterium
231 teaches... we hold to that.

232 CC: Yes, I love that. Let's see what else... What about parent involvement? Would you say that
233 has increased or decreased over the ages?

234 BD: Well, it was very high over there... the old school...

235 CC: I remember they had parent... the room moms.

236 BD: We still do. We have room moms and a lot of ways... they're all in all the fund-raising
237 activities which we have tons of...and they're involved in bake sales and all in that regard. We
238 don't quite need them in other regards as much here because we're fenced in. Over there we
239 were half and half fenced in with two separate campuses... so it's a different setting here which
240 does not require them in those positions anymore... but yes in other positions. And so yeah its
241 still high and we encourage it.

242 CC: Oh, good. That's great. What about student academic performance or behavior? How has
243 that changed since the founding or has it changed?

244 BD: Well you know you always get the...we've always had the really really higher level
245 academic achievers and the lower ones... and then you've got the mid-range. And it's been that
246 way from the beginning... you know we try to help those that can't or are having difficulty
247 through tutoring or things like that. The mediums are okay and the high ones are just off the
248 charts. We just had Therese Aguilarre just got national merit. She got a full ride to UD. Four
249 years full ride.

250 CC: Really! Oh my gosh.

251 BD: Yes! Therese Agularee, our senior. Can you imagine?

252 CC: That is amazing.

253 [laughter]

254 BD: It's just like wow! So she's off the charts you know. But we have several kids you know
255 that are super... but it's been that way from the beginning. So I haven't seen a change in that
256 regard. Our SAT scores have been going higher and higher every year I've noticed.

257 CC: Yes I did notice that on your website, it mentioned that.

258 BD: Mhm, those are going up but the IWOA'S from the k-8s they've always remain up in the
259 90... 80-90 percentile... they always have from the beginning because we use that solid
260 curriculum.

261 CC: Yeah, I agree with that...let's see... and so would you say the same about behavior? Do you
262 think?

263 BD: Kids behavior, you mean?

264 CC: Yeah, so with the influences of society now and then...?

265 BD: Oh yeah... I guess the issues are sometimes maybe different because now you've got issues
266 of... I don't know if I would say the um... the ADD has gone up or not... cus we did have our
267 ADD kids all throughout...I'm just trying to relate it to technology... computers... we're such an
268 electronic age over here verses there. We started off... there were no computers...we didn't have
269 a computer until like year two or something. So, now you deal with you know... no you can't...
270 there's no... what's that poky-man? Find the poky-man?

271 CC: Oh, yeah, Pokémon Go?

272 BD: Oh yeah, all that here. These are the issues we're dealing with you know. These are the
273 kinds of things...keep your cell phone away... we don't... they live on them. It's like parents
274 what are you doing? So it is what you're dealing with. But in the school here they're here a lot

275 and we don't...we have one rolling computer lab cart of computers and the whole school shares
276 it. So, there's no iPads... because we have handwriting...and you do cursive.

277 CC: Right, and I was wondering about that because a lot of schools don't practice cursive so...

278 BD: Nope. We got handwriting every day. Cursive starts in second grade and you have to do
279 cursive throughout. Now in high school you're taking notes and stuff yeah you're writing...but
280 when you're doing a paper you turn it in and even in middle school if you're writing a paper...

281 CC: Yeah, that's on the computer.

282 BD: Then that's computer, yeah. It's not like we're against computers... like we want to get a
283 keyboarding class going as well. I have Sarah doing Mavis Beacon at home. So, I want her to
284 learn to type correctly... and we do too. So these are things we're working on... we're not... you
285 know I mean they've done studies... if you read a book off of an iPad versus off real paper and
286 pencil or article then you put them both away and the kids test, they're going to score higher on
287 the paper and pencil because the iPad... something with the eyes and pixels and it's not staying.

288 CC: And the interaction is different because when you have a paper and pencil you can make
289 notes, circle words... vocabulary... whatever it may be... you know?

290 BD: You don't have to plug it in to... "my battery ran out"... or "I can't see because of the glare
291 of the sun"... "I can't take it to the beach to read my book because the sand"... you... just
292 carrying around a novel...

293 CC: There's something about it.

294 BD: Yeah, there's something about it. And there is. And the same thing with the writing and all
295 of it... people don't know grammar anymore... What we're seeing now with this common core

296 and its just... what we hear and what we see... we do no common core... and the kids that test in
297 here... oh my gosh it would make you want to cry... you know they got a simple maybe thirty
298 times eight problem... we give them admissions test... so you know eight times zero is zero,
299 eight times three is twenty-four... 240 is your answer. They're writing thirty, eight times and
300 adding them all up and drawing boxes and drawing a number line and going like this with the
301 number... it's like don't you know eighty times three like this? No... They can only do it
302 through boxes, and drawings... they have no concept... I had a woman bring her fourth grader...
303 well she's in fourth grade now... so third grader at the time in the summer to test for the fourth
304 grade... so she tested. And she did horrible. And the mom is an RN and the dad is an
305 entrepreneur... very very smart... the parents are extremely smart. So she's not coming from...
306 she's coming from smart parents you know. And I said, she doesn't know any math! And the
307 mom says, "she brings her math home and I can't help her do her third-grade math. It makes no
308 sense."

309 CC: Yeah it's so different from the way we've learned it so.... that's understandable.

310 BD: It's pathetic. You know you read the interview to astronauts and people that use it in the real
311 world math and they're like... uh-uh... no... when I'm up in space and I need to know what
312 3,000 times you know... I can't...

313 CC: You don't draw a picture of it.

314 BD: Because I want the answer now and I want the right answer. And it's just proven to be
315 horrible but the education system out there just won't let it go... you know hopefully Trump will
316 do something but California won't... so stupid... liberal...but we have people coming to us to
317 get out of common core... because they can see its destroying their kids... It's just a big

318 educational experiment that's going to show these kids to be damaged the rest of their life
319 because they won't know math... they won't know English... you know... any other subjects...
320 they know no history... when they come test for us out of the public school or even out of the
321 parochial they don't know history. They don't know who the first president of the United States
322 is...

323 CC: Oh my gosh...

324 BD: They don't... they get social studies... "Oh, so Madonna what is she doing now?" You
325 know their social studies books will have...

326 CC: Pop culture...

327 BD: Pop culture and nothing about... there's no history being taught... and you're doomed to
328 repeat history if you don't learn from it... and they don't know it... they're also being taught that
329 socialism is wonderful and that democracy... the republic... is not. And they're being
330 brainwashed out there...

331 CC: Yeah, no when I student taught in a public school and I was just talking to some of my
332 friends because we noticed that none of them knew... like you would say, "what city do you live
333 in?" "Texas..." "Okay, no... that's the state you live in... what country do you live in?" and they
334 would say Dallas.

335 BD: They know no geography. None. We do mapping the world by heart so they memorize the
336 entire world by heart in ninth grade. But we also give the geography throughout the grades.

337 CC: Yeah I remember those map... books...

338 BD: Yeah, Map Skills!

339 CC: Yeah, I remember doing that in like second grade or something...

340 BD: Yeah we did Map Skills.

341 CC: And what grades do you do map skills in?

342 BD: Well we're inserting it through the history now. So it's done a little differently. We're not
343 using the Map Skills but yeah we do geography.

344 CC: Okay, that's wonderful. They sure need it.

345 BD: They don't know anything. Well what it is that world today... the culture today is this... it's
346 a mirror and it's right here [holds hands right in front of face]. So the kids, this is about how far
347 they see... and all they see is themselves. So it doesn't matter where Japan is... it doesn't
348 matter... truth doesn't matter. Truth... well obviously,, everything is fake news out there
349 right...but I was talking to this one lady who's teaching in a public preschool right now. And she
350 said she heard the two little three-year old's talking, "yeah men can marry men now... I
351 know...yeah... and I know two mommies that are married..." and she's just like... but she can't
352 say anything. She can't say anything... and of course all the bathroom issues going on right now.

353 CC: Oh, yeah, the kids talk about it just as much as their parents do.

354 BD: Oh yeah they do. So on and on and on it's just getting to the point you know... I... we pray
355 that God will keep the school going but I don't know... who knows what will happen... they
356 might shut it all down and throw us all in jail, who knows. But we'll keep going as long as we
357 can.

358 CC: Yeah, of course. And cuz how you do deal with... do those issues come up in school? I
359 wouldn't really assume so since it is so...

360 BD: Not yet but you know the devil is attacking this place because we're forming the souls of
361 these Catholic children and he hates it. So we're protected... we have the new tabernacle now,
362 did you see that?

363 CC: Yes! I would love to go visit once we are finished. When did you guys build the chapel?

364 BD: I think it was about three years ago...

365 CC: Okay, what a great addition. That's awesome.

366 BD: Yeah. We're very very blessed.

367 CC: Yes. Let's see... has disciplinary action changed? I remember when I went to school here
368 we would get our number on the board... check marks...

369 BD: It's still that way, yeah.

370 CC: Okay, so and then how does it go? Once you get four check marks it's principal's office or?

371 BD: Yeah, it's different. K-5 has one, middle school has one, and high school has one. So they're
372 different. Its consequence. Follow the rules and this will happen... and the lower grades is more
373 rewards... they get a class pet or pizza party or movie... but if you don't follow the rules then
374 you're going to stay after. There's detention, there's writing what you did...

375 CC: Oh okay, copying out of the dictionary? Do you guys do that still?

376 BD: Well more what did you do wrong and what are you going to do to change it.

377 CC: Right, more reflective.

378 BD: Mhm, and if its misspelled or its sloppily written you're going to stay and do it again

379 [laughter]

380 CC: Right, exactly.

381 BD: Yeah so that's pretty much stayed the same. The school hasn't changed much in 22 years.

382 CC: Yeah, no I mean I loved it. It's been so crazy comparing... because I was just shocked when
383 I went to the public schools for student teaching. I was like what? This is so new to me... But
384 yeah I very appreciate the tradition that this school carries. Let's see... so, I know you just said
385 not much has changed but would you say there is something that has changed the most...?

386 BD: Well, our new campus of course. But what we're really going for right now... our
387 concentration is...we've always been traditional and we've been classical to some degree... but
388 we're going more the classical route. We had Mary Pat Donoghue from that ISEL, catholic
389 liberal education group come... and what's his name... can't remember his name. He's from
390 Thomas Aquinas College... and he came down as well, he's part of the group. And they gave our
391 teachers a two-day in-service on classical education. And we put more of that in, you know, like
392 I said we switched from Rod and Staff which is a great, traditional, wonderful program, but the
393 Shirley Grammar is a more classical approach. And we switched from Write Source to this other
394 writing program... and we're going to bring in Institute of Excellence for writing in middle
395 school. And then just things like our history you know we used to do just mostly American
396 history, and we still are, but we're doing the Greeks, the Romans, like that. So we're doing more
397 classical. And also concentrating more on the grammatical stage k-4 is memory, which is what
398 the kids naturally... that's where they get their foundation.

399 CC: Yeah, that's the basis.

400 BD: They're memorizing math facts, times tables. Memorizing nouns, pronouns, where these
401 things are so that when they get to middle school and high school, they already have the base and
402 the things just fall in.

403 CC: Yeah, and kind of go into a deeper meaning as well.

404 BD: Yes. Then the logic stage... is again, that's where they want to argue. Typical adolescent,
405 right? So you teach them how to argue. You teach them to use logic. And so we teach logic, and
406 teach them you can't just say stuff without backing it up. And then in high school it's the
407 rhetorical stage where were doing more of getting up and making speeches that are clear and like
408 I said concise... meaningful... and substantiated. So, that's more the classical approach.

409 CC: So it's a traditional but with a classical approach.

410 BD: Yes, traditional school, classical approach.

411 CC: So what would you say are some of the remaining traditional things that you guys do?

412 BD: Yeah I mean we still have the rosary, the novenas, you know we pray four times a day. We
413 do the classical prayers. We do the Amina Christi, the Our Father in Latin, Pater Noster. They
414 learn all the traditional prayers... we do... it's a traditional classroom setting. The desks are
415 facing forward. We'll circle up as they get older, or when they're really young.

416 CC: So there's none of the grouped desks all the time? It's more of just...

417 BD: Right, kindergarten is more of that but once they get older 1st-5th its more traditional setting.
418 But that doesn't mean there isn't classroom discussion. An example of that would be like, "what
419 do you think the main character is doing right here?" And Johnny raises his hand, "okay Johnny"

420 “well I think he’s da da da.” And then you say, “well Mary what do you think of what Johnny
421 had to say? Do you think he’s correct or not?” So it’s not just you know...

422 CC: Yes, it’s not just the teacher telling the answer.

423 BD: See that’s the... how say... people stereotype traditional education. It’s just the teacher up
424 there bla bla bla.

425 CC: Yes, we just had a discussion about this in one of our classes.

426 BD: Yeah, that’s the stereotype... an unfair stereotype... and maybe that does exist in some
427 places or at sometimes but in the classical approach... it is that traditional... it’s the teacher led.
428 We’re not into the “here’s the information students, you figure it out and I’ll go facilitate you.”
429 No, its teacher led here, and teacher driven but the students are pulled in and they do discuss
430 things and they discuss things as a group and give each other information... it’s not just the
431 teacher talking. So I know people will stereotype and write you off but that’s not what it is.

432 CC: Yeah, okay, gotcha. And have you ever had new teachers coming in wanting to change that
433 because it may not be what they’re familiar with?

434 BD: Yes.

435 CC: And what are some of the things they would like to change that didn’t happen or things they
436 wanted to change and it did work out to be something that was beneficial? Can you think of
437 anything?

438 BD: I can think of two cases right now that... it was bad.

439 CC: Really? Would you mind sharing what that was?

440 BD: Bringing in progressive education... and it did not work.

441 CC: And in what ways did they want to bring that in?

442 BD: They wanted to run their classrooms with progressive techniques. And with all the stuff out
443 there... and there was no changing their mind... you can talk to them and talk to them, in-
444 service, talk... no. So, we parted ways. And it was best for them and best for us. It just did not...
445 it was not what we wanted.

446 CC: Yeah, well.... You gotta stand true to your values and you do...

447 BD: Yeah we do... and we did. We're not going to budge. You know? And that's fine. This
448 school isn't for everybody... it's not for every teacher and its not for every kid, not for every
449 parent... it's not. So, that's fine.

450 CC: Yeah so what would you say is the target community? I'm sure devout...

451 BD: Well I think that's who we attract honestly. People who are desiring an education like ours.

452 CC: Yeah, that's great. Um... let's see.... So, I think you might have touched on this but, what
453 do you deem as one of the most successful component to your school? What do you value the
454 most in St. Joseph's?

455 BD: At the school? That we are faithful to the magisterium...

456 CC: Don't budge on that...very...

457 BD: that's it. That we've remained faithful from day one. We started the school and we didn't
458 just dedicate it to God, of course we dedicated it to God but we gave it to Him. This is His
459 school. It's not the board of directors, it's God's school.

460 CC: That's beautiful.

461 BD: So, that's how I see the school and I know Pat does to. "Oh Barb" or "Oh Pat... your
462 school... what do you think about your school now after all these..." It's not my school. It's not.
463 It is not. I do not see it that way at all. It's God's school. It's in His hands one hundred percent.
464 We just do the labor here and try not to screw up too bad. Hoping we can fix everything we've
465 ruined... mess up... but it is His school.

466 CC: Yes, of course.

467 BD: And the timing and everything you know "oh we've had the old campus for so long..."
468 Well, God decided we're going to be here now. "Well when are we going to get a gym?" When
469 God wants us to get one we'll get one. I'm not in any hurry. Whenever He wants one we'll get
470 one. Yeah, its...

471 CC: Absolutely. And how did you come across naming the school St. Joseph's? Opposed to
472 Sierra Madre?

473 BD: Well, we always wanted a Catholic name but when we first started the school we were
474 advised do not pick a saint name because the diocese might not like that because you're starting
475 off independent. We did write a letter to the head of the schools that time, Sister Clare Patrice,
476 she's since passed away... saying we're opening this school... here's our religious ed.
477 program... we'd like you to bless it. And she did. So, that was all we needed. And we didn't
478 really need it but it was good. And so, then... I forgot your question.

479 CC: Oh, how you came across St. Joseph's?

480 BD: Oh, yeah. And so, we just picked Sierra Madre... just... it was a pretty name. And a lot of
481 schools... like Opus Dei schools and stuff name their schools after mountain tops or whatever...
482 you know... so we thought we'd do that. But we always wanted a religious name. But we never

483 wanted to shake up the diocese... we always remained very quiet and small and try not to disturb
484 anybody. Just leave us alone and we'll leave you alone. Although we have great relations with
485 other schools and this and that. And they do have us on their website... although we aren't
486 included in everything... we don't go to the meetings... we don't have to do the curriculum or
487 teachers or anything so....

488 CC: Well that's good you still get the mention.

489 BD: Oh, yeah...And so but when we moved... when we had our building campaign at the old
490 school, St. Joseph was our... that's who we were praying our novena to to get the school. So
491 when we moved, we said now's the time we name it. So, that's why.

492 CC: So he's always watching out for the school.

493 BD: Mhm.

494 CC: Oh good... and then so what do you hope to see improve in the future? Whether it's
495 anything?

496 BD: Well, for me personally?

497 CC: Just for the school, yeah.... Wherever you would like to see from the school...

498 BD: Well if you just talk about the physical location and all that... then I would love for us to get
499 that property up there [points up the hill].

500 CC: That's where the...the church is up there isn't it?

501 BD: Mhm, and a field and stuff. And we have put some medals up there... so... in God's time.
502 I'm not in any hurry but I would like that. If I could have a wish list... you know... and then for
503 the school itself... I would like us to continue going doing the path of really solidifying ourselves

504 as classical... you know... and get the word out...nobody knows we exist. So, to get more...
505 people to know about us. So that would be...

506 CC: So, you want to expand more? Overall?

507 BD: Yeah, well... not necessarily... I don't want to be some gigantic school or anything like
508 that...

509 CC: Right, you still want to keep the tight community...

510 BD: Mhm. It would be nice to have that property, that church. And get the word out... not so
511 much... I mean yeah we could use a few more students of course...

512 CC: What is the student-teacher ratio? For most classes?

513 BD: Well high school it's like 1:15... and grade school its anything from 1:19 to 27 or
514 something.

515 CC: Okay and sorry, I didn't mean to interrupt you there with that question.

516 BD: Oh, that's okay. I like the word to get out... more... well yes of course so people can know
517 us and you know... we need to financially sustain... it's on outside contributions. You know we
518 get no help... we self-sustain our selves. But also, that people know that such a place exists...
519 because I feel like people are out there and they feel they don't have any options...

520 CC: You want to give them hope...

521 BD: We want to give them hope... that there is... you know you can can put your child in an
522 environment... you know we are helped financially a ton... we've always been about that large
523 families... large family discounts... so for that reason, just as much as the other reason.

524 CC: Yeah, I really like what you say about giving families hope because it does seem sometimes
525 hopeless to find a school that truly sticks to what the magisterium teaches, while also really
526 tending to the intelligence and making them grow intellectually.

527 BD: I see it as child abuse. You know God gave all these babies out there brains and intelligence
528 and they're being brought up out in the public school system... just destroying their
529 intelligence... you know they should be learning all this information and they're being reduced
530 down to stupidity...and by the time they get out of school they aren't going to be able to think
531 for themselves. They aren't going to be able to reason... what's the University of Dallas's
532 saying... independent...

533 CC: Yeah, independent thinkers?

534 BD: Yeah, they have the same philosophy we do... you know we teach the children to think...
535 and base their... on reason and truth... you don't base your thoughts on stuff that's not true...
536 and that's what they're getting... you know or stuff that's not reasonable...or natural law... you
537 learn your faith but you realize God put natural law in everybody... and oh yeah the church says
538 that it should just be a one man and one woman marriage... well that comes from natural law...
539 because that's how God made man and woman... you know and it's not natural for the
540 opposite... you know the same sexes to be together it's not natural physically, it's not natural
541 emotionally, spiritually... anyway. There's something wrong... something went wrong...
542 usually it's a missing father... but you need help... not continue to go down this path that's not
543 true love... that's... "oh yeah here... transgender bathroom... we'll call you he/she whatever..."
544 that's encouraging them and enabling them to go down that path... that is destructive in every
545 way... in every part of their body... rather than telling them the truth... in love... God made you
546 not to be that way... God made you all in love... but the truth...

547 CC: And the reasons for that truth because it's not enough just to say... just oh I believe... even
548 if it is the truth... I believe this... you would need to be able to back it up so you can defend
549 yourself...

550 BD: Exactly.

551 CC: And you can draw others to your view... you know... it's not just about being able to spew
552 out whatever you want to say...

553 BD: Facts...

554 CC: It's really being logical and putting your heart into it as well... you're not condemning
555 anyone... you're there to give them reasons...

556 BD: You're doing it because you love them and you want them to go to Heaven.

557 CC: Exactly.

558 BD: And that's why you do it...

559 CC: Mhm, well that's great. Well I really think that wraps up all I wanted to say. Did you have
560 any other comments on anything?

561 BD: No, it's just great to see you.

562 CC: Okay, thank you so much for being with me and helping me... it's so wonderful...

563 BD: Well give my love to your whole family.

564 CC: I will... absolutely.

565 BD: I miss you guys.

566 CC: I know!

567 BD: We gotta go... I got to go out to dinner with Sheri.

568 CC: Oh, she always brings up... she's like "I really want to call Barb DeLaTorre..."

569 BD: We haven't done that in so long... well let her know Dave's got....

570 End interview.