

# CHRISTOPHER DALE OWENS

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## CATHOLIC EDUCATION EXECUTIVE

### *Driving significant results in Catholic Education*

- Accomplished and results-driven professional with expertise directing education programs at the university and high school levels; proven record of providing solid guidance to students and colleagues using an inclusive leadership style.
- Expertise in collaborating with stakeholders across governance and operations to meet the needs of students, faculty, and staff and position them for success. Fosters a culture of innovation and effective implementation, coupled with a commitment towards improving student access, equity, and success.
- A demonstrated record of success establishing relationships and producing consistent results in a series of teaching and leadership positions with Veterum Sapientia Institute, the Dominican School of Philosophy & Theology, Chesterton Academy of Sacramento, Marin Catholic College Preparatory, and St. John's University.



*"As Chief of Staff, Chris Owens has navigated difficult issues involving two boards, faculty, donors, and staff. Leveraging the challenges and opportunities presented by the pandemic, he has developed a strategic growth plan for an increase of enrollment by 68% over the next four years, and a fiscally responsible plan for increasing faculty FTE by 16% in order to support that growth. In some ways, he has served as de facto chief executive. And he has done this with discipline and prudence."*

**Quote from DSPT Board Member & Vice-President, 3D Printing Division, Hewlett-Packard**

- Seasoned in Operations and Strategic Leadership
- Experienced in Board Development
- Leading Engagement with Students
- Skilled in Analysis/Process Improvement
- Leading Fundraising Efforts
- Experienced Classroom Instructor/Facilitator
- Experienced in College-Level Teaching
- Guiding Program Development
- Builds and Leads Strong Teams
- Meeting Accreditation Standards for Education
- Fostering Accountability and Productivity
- Meeting and Surpassing Performance Targets

### Professional Experience

#### **2022 to Present • VETERUM SAPIENTIA INSTITUTE | BELMONT, NC**

*Veterum Sapientia Institute exists to form Catholics in their cultural and spiritual birthright by teaching living Latin and Greek languages. They are committed to becoming the premier institute for this purpose, and to setting the standard for pedagogy in Latin and Greek.*

#### **CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

As CEO, crafted a visionary plan for strategic growth; inspired staff, faculty, board, and other stakeholders with this vision towards long-term stability of a new start-up academic institution.

- *grew the enrollment of students 500% in the second year of the start-up organization, with another 100% growth in the first semester of the third year.*

- *Has leveraged professional relationships and organizational partnerships to position the Institute for future growth; notably, through developing a unique in its class teaching license for latin teachers, as well as a home-school distance learning latin program for middle and high school age students.*
- *Grew donor base both in support of annual fund and also major gifts by 100%, covering operational costs and academic development for 18 months*
- *Planned and executed the implementation of a new Online Learning Management System for scalability of course offerings, as well as more consistent, repeatable, and measurable student outcomes.*

#### **2024 to Present • BELMONT ABBEY COLLEGE | BELMONT, NC**

*Our mission is to educate students in the liberal arts and sciences so that in all things God may be glorified. In this endeavor, we are guided by the Catholic intellectual tradition, the Apostolic Constitution Ex Corde Ecclesiae, and the Benedictine spirit of prayer and learning.*

#### **ADJUNCT INSTRUCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

- *Taught Introduction to Philosophy, a required course for all undergraduates, following a primary source / textual approach with seminars in order to expose students to the great ideas of the Western Philosophic tradition, including a heavy reading of Plato, some Aristotle, Boethius, and Aquinas, and an exposure to contemporary issues in Catholic philosophy.*

#### **2022 to 2023 • DIOCESE OF CHARLOTTE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS | CHARLOTTE, NC**

*In communion with our families and parishes, we form students to be virtuous disciples of Jesus Christ. Rooted in Scripture, Tradition, and the defined teachings of the Catholic Church, our students pursue excellence of intellect, heart, and soul with salvation as the ultimate goal.*

#### **DIRECTOR OF CATHOLIC CULTURE & IDENTITY**

- *Resourced and supported all 20 Catholic schools in the western part of North Carolina, working with teachers, principals, and advisory boards to further define and clarify a robust culture for our schools*
- *Implemented Education in Virtue program in 12 of the 20 schools. EIV is a process for deep integration of the virtues into all aspects of the life of the school. The foundational year focuses on teacher / staff formation, while subsequent years involve curricular, co- and extra- curricular, environmental, and policy-based intentionality on the virtues, recognizing that the goal of learning the virtues is not simply to know the virtues but to be virtuous.*
- *Served as point of contact for liberal arts growth and development in the system, including a K-8 school, a well-established high school, and a new high school which opened in fall of 2023*
- *Created a pipeline of mission-minded teacher candidates graduating from mission-aligned universities*
- *Fostered and grew relationships with external stakeholders in support of better realizing the school as a ministry in the church*

#### **2020 to 2022 • DOMINICAN SCHOOL OF PHILOSOPHY & THEOLOGY | BERKELEY, CA**

*The Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology (DSPT) is a Catholic graduate school. It offers degree and certificate programs to lay men and women, Catholics and non-Catholics, as well as serving as the seminary for the Dominicans of the Western Province USA.*

#### **CHIEF OF STAFF**

Fulfilled a critical leadership role, with a scope of accountability that included strategic planning, fundraising, operations management, program development, and the oversight of the transition process associated with the retirement of the school's president. Administered a \$3.5MM budget and a \$10MM endowment, with authority over 22 direct reports.

- *Credited with designing, securing funding for, and attaining accreditation to launch a hybrid Master's degree program in 2022, encompassing four years of part-time instruction for working professionals.*
- *Re-imagined the scholarship program in order to position the School as a more competitive player among the best graduate programs by consolidating from the award of many partial scholarships to six full scholarships, including two assistantships.*
- *Established a partnership with an educational technology company to bolster recruitment, reversing declining enrollment and leading to a 400% increase in applications.*

- *Developed and implemented a budget-neutral \$500K educational technology renovation for 4 classrooms on the main campus to support distance-learning during the pandemic, and to serve as a foundation for the future growth of distance-learning.*

**2018 to 2020 • DIOCESE OF SACRAMENTO | SACRAMENTO, CA**

*The Diocese of Sacramento is an ecclesiastical territory of the Catholic Church, covering the 20 northern-most counties in the state of California, serving 102 parishes, 40 missions, 3 Newman Centers, 36 elementary schools, and 6 high schools in support of the 3.6 million people, including 1.4 million Catholics, who live in the territory.*

**DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF FAMILY AND FAITH FORMATION**

Served as a resource to the Bishop, with oversight of many facets of policy and pastoral support for all of the parishes, schools, and numerous charity organizations. Supervised 7 staff, and oversaw a budget of \$800K.

- *Pioneered the use of Salesforce to collect and centralize employee and volunteer data from throughout the diocese, leading a \$300K project to establish a system and database with 75,000 names. This enabled the diocese to gain insight into demographics, diversity, and trends, and to conduct outreach to promote continuing education and professional development opportunities.*
- *Served as a working member of the Bishop's clergy abuse task-force in light of the 2018 Clergy Abuse Crisis to offer a transparent, pastoral response to the members of the Diocese, to provide healing for those affected, to foster a culture of mutual accountability, and to own and atone for mistakes occurring under previous leadership.*
- *Led an annual three-day Conference for some 2300 volunteers and professionals from around the Diocese for professional and spiritual development, including a symposium on the disaffiliation of young Catholics, and a collaboration between clergy, school, and parish leaders.*
- *Re-designed the primary catechist formation and training programs by developing a distance learning program for core volunteer roles, increasing access to rural areas and Spanish-speaking volunteers.*

*"I've worked with Christopher Owens in multiple capacities, and he has a strong vision for education and formation in Catholic education and catechesis. In his time with the Diocese of Sacramento, Chris used his directorship to rethink formation in the Catholic ethos, logos, and pathos, including a reimagination of catechist certification, and how the diocese best serves its parishes, schools, and various ministries."*

**Quote from President/CEO of the National Catholic Educational Association**

**2017 to 2018 • MARIN CATHOLIC COLLEGE PREPARATORY | KENTFIELD, CA**

*Marin Catholic High School is a Roman Catholic college preparatory school located in Marin County, California, with over 700 students. The school is owned by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of San Francisco.*

**THEOLOGY FACULTY MEMBER, TEACHER OF SCRIPTURE AND MORALS**

Taught classes in moral theology to high school students. Leveraged unique experience in Music and the Arts to invite students to participate in a project entitled the Soundtrack of Your Life, which had students list influential pieces of music and discuss the impact of each piece on their lives.

**2015 to 2018 • ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY | NEW YORK, NY / ROME, ITALY**

*St. John's University is a private Catholic university in New York City with an enrollment of more than 21,000 students.*

**ADJUNCT INSTRUCTOR, FACULTY OF THEOLOGY**

Designed and delivered curricula and lesson plans for the Moral Theology, Catholic Social Teaching, and History of Christian Theology courses at the university's campus in Rome.

- *Successfully integrated experiential learning into each course by encouraging student participation in a program that had students prepare and deliver sandwiches to homeless individuals in the city, resulting in thousands of sandwiches distributed over three years.*
- *Strengthened the writing skills of students with an assignment to create an essay focusing on a social issue of great personal importance to them.*

## Courses Taught

- Introduction to Philosophy - PH200 (Belmont Abbey College)
- History of Latinity - LLH301 (Veterum Sapientia Institute)
- History of Christian Theology I - THE 2501 (St. John's University)
- Moral Theology of the Marketplace - THE 3305 (St. John's University)
- Aquinas' Commentary on Peter Lombard's Sentences, Book IV (Albert the Great Center for Scholastic Studies)
- Thomistic Biblical Commentary Series (Albert the Great Center for Scholastic Studies):
  - "Human Suffering and Divine Providence": The Book of Job (Summer Program 2018)
  - "The Transcendent Christ": St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews (Summer Program 2016)
  - "Light unto the Mysteries of God": St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians (Summer Program 2015)
  - "By Faith in Jesus Christ": St. Paul's Letter to the Romans (Summer Program 2014)
- Introduction to Sacred Scripture (Marin Catholic)
- Moral Theology and Catholic Social Teaching (Marin Catholic)

## Theses

"Predestination and the Church: A Sacramental Approach to the Doctrine of St. Thomas Aquinas", in partial fulfillment for the requirements of the S.T.L. degree, Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas, Rome, 2025.

This work takes as its starting point the 20<sup>th</sup> century theology of the Church, as exemplified by *Lumen gentium* and proceeding from a questions raised in a chapter of Henri de Lubac's *Catholicism* on the predestination of the Church. Examining the writings of Thomas Aquinas on predestination from the Tertia Pars on the Predestination of Christ, this work is partially historical and partially speculative. As a historical work, it examines the Thomistic doctrine of predestination as unveiling a theology of the Church, not only as a sacramental cause of predestination, but also revealed to be the reality towards which the predestined are directed. As a speculative work, it follows in the footsteps of the Dominican Benoit de la Soujeoule, particularly on the personality and subsistence of the Church, and argues for the priority of the predestination of the Church as a participation in the predestination of Christ, from which the predestination of individuals is effected.

"*Verbum Supernum Prodiens*: an Investigation into the Liturgy as a Theological Source", in partial fulfillment for the requirements of the S.T.M. degree, International Theological Institute, Trumau, 2015.

This thesis takes as its point of departure an exploration of Prosper of Aquitaine's maxim, "ut legem credendi lex statuat supplicandi" (lex orandi, lex credendi); that is, in what way does the law of praying establish the law of believing? How can the liturgical rites not only convey theological truths, but also be judged an authority in clarification or development of doctrine. This investigation seeks to establish that the liturgy is in fact a source for theology by examining the Great Masters of the tradition in order to see whether they use the liturgy in their theological arguments, and if so, in what way. Our investigation encompasses the work of the Church Fathers, both East and West, and also the work of St. Thomas Aquinas as representative of the Scholastic era. Developing from this investigation, in the final part the thesis examines the role of the liturgy in the ressourcement theology of divine revelation and the liturgy as a monument to tradition.

### *Publications, Papers, Book Reviews, Translations, Copy Editing*

- “Sentire et Loqui cum Ecclesia: Renewing Catholic Education from the Sources”, Address at 2<sup>nd</sup> Adeodatus National Conference, Belmont Abbey College, Belmont, North Carolina, June 2025.
- “From Sacrament to Participated Reality: The Church, Predestined as Mystical Person”, Paper delivered at the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of The Sacra Doctrina Project, Theological College, Catholic University of America, Washington, DC, June 2025.
- “Predestined in Nature? The Incarnation, Obediential Potency, and Predestination”, Paper delivered at the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of The Sacra Doctrina Project, St. Paul Seminary, University of St. Thomas, Minnesota, June 2024.
- “Virtue Ethics, Teleology, and Religion in the Aristotelian Tradition,” in *Virtue Ethics: Retrospect and Prospect*. Ed. Elisa Grimi. New York: Springer, 2019.
- “The Nature of Truth in the doctrine of Hervaeus Natalis, an Early Thomist,” Paper delivered at the 23<sup>rd</sup> Convegno Internazionale di Studi, Pontificia Università della Santa Croce, Rome, Italy, February 2017.
- “The Common Good and the Need for a Care of Religion: An Aristotelian-Thomistic Approach,” Paper delivered at the 1<sup>st</sup> Conference of the European Society for Moral Philosophy, Verona, Italy, October 2016.
- Book Review: Olga Weijers, *A Scholar's Paradise: Teaching and Debating in Medieval Paris* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015), September 2016.
- “The Relationship between the Old Law and the New according to St. Thomas Aquinas’ *Summa Theologiae*,” Paper delivered at the 5<sup>th</sup> AMCSS Lecture Series, Norcia, Italy, July 2016.
- Translation of: “Dominicans in Hungary in Relation to the Sovereign and the State Authority in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century”, by Fr. Viliam Štefan Dóci OP (from the original German), October 2015.
- “Just Worship: The Necessity of Divine Revelation for Perfection in the Virtue of Religion”, Paper delivered at the 20<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Society for Catholic Liturgy, New York, NY, October 2015.
- Cyrill Riga O.P. (1689–1758): *The Life and Work of a European Preacher in the Age of Reason* by Jakub Zouhar (Copy Editing Credit), September 2015.

### *Service to Academy and Community, Professional Associations*

*Ordinary Member, Sacra Doctrina Project*

*Fellow, Boethius Institute*

*Vice-President, Albertus Magnus Center for Scholastic Studies*

*Member, American Catholic Philosophical Association*

*Editorial Board Member, Philosophical News, Journal of the European Society for Moral Philosophy*

*Chairman, Board of Directors, North Carolina Classical Charter Schools, Inc.*

*Founding Chairman, Board of Directors, Chesterton Academy of Sacramento*

### *Early Career*

*Director of Catechesis and Youth Ministry, Our Lady of the Mountains Catholic Church (Jackson, WY)*

*Director of IT and Technology Resources, Maryvale Institute (Birmingham, England)*

*Retreat Ministry Team Member, Living Water Ministry (Taynuilt, Scotland)*

*Self Employed, Event Design and Show Production (Raleigh, NC)*

*Eagle Scout, Vigil Honor Recipient, Scouting America*

### *Education*

**PONTIFICAL UNIVERSITY OF SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS (ROME, ITALY) – Licentiate of Sacred Theology (S.T.L.)**

**INTERNATIONAL THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE (TRUMAU, AUSTRIA) - Master of Sacred Theology (S.T.M.)**

### *References*

*Available upon request*