



MAGDALEN COLLEGE

OF THE LIBERAL ARTS



Newsletter
December 2021



Thanks to the powerful way that we celebrate the changing seasons at Magdalen, I began to think about Christmas through the lens of Christ's kingship. Since then, I've found myself wondering if our nativity scenes should include—off to the side—the figure of a nervous King Herod, scheming to kill the newborn Jesus. This would certainly add a dark tone to some Christmas cards, but it might help balance out the overly sentimental notions we can develop about what this baby came to do.

A King Who Redirects Trust and Loyalty

When I was in graduate school, I remember a professor saying, “No one killed Jesus because of his call to love one another. He was killed because he challenged the powers that be.” And what he challenged was the idolatrous degree of trust and allegiance that people attribute to such authorities. That has always stuck with me. When we think of Jesus, we should think about not only a preacher who promotes the Golden Rule but also an authority who rules a Kingdom.

The latter brings into focus the question of trust and loyalty. Every wise king calls for—and works hard to gain and keep—the trust of his subjects. If people trust the ruler as the person to look to for protection and security, he will be more able to rely on their support, obedience, and sacrifice. It is therefore a serious thing for a ruler to have his authority challenged or for someone to direct his people's trust in a different direction.

But this is what Jesus does. He calls people to look to himself for protection from their most harmful enemies (not necessary the ones reported by CNN) and provision of what they truly need to flourish (not necessarily what consumer marketing campaigns portray). Jesus acknowledged the legitimacy of civil government and submitted to the authority of his day, but he denounced attributing to them more trust and hope than is

President's Spotlight: Dr. Ryan Messmore

Let Earth Receive Her King

One of the transformative things about being at Magdalen College is how celebrating the Church calendar focuses your heart and mind. In late November, our student choir helped me to appreciate the Feast of Christ the King—the culminating Sunday of the Church calendar—especially with their performance of the Hallelujah Chorus from Handel's Messiah. The very next Sunday we moved from that triumphant note to the first Sunday of Advent, and a few days later to a pre-dawn Rorate Mass. The mood suddenly became one of prolonged waiting and praying and hoping...for the coming of a King. It was a stark contrast!





proper. He calls all citizens to give their highest allegiance—their ultimate loyalty—their deepest sacrifice—to him rather than to any earthly governor.

This is the kind of mission that will get you killed!

course. This is a great way to prepare for the kind of learning students experience in college!

Thank you for your prayers and your partnership this year. As you celebrate the birth of Christ, may your hearts continue to prepare Him room, and may earth receive her King!

Remembering the Challenge of the Incarnation

I think Christmas is a time when we often forget this. With the shepherds we rightly focus on the news of a newborn “Saviour...the Messiah” who takes away our sins (Luke 2:11). But we need to acknowledge with the Magi that this baby is also a long-awaited king.

That would certainly explain Herod’s reaction upon talking to these wise men (Matt 2:2-3). He wanted to kill the baby, not because Jesus might become a great moral teacher who warmed people’s hearts, but because the prophets foretold that he would rule over an ever-lasting kingdom.

This Christmas, as we sing songs of a quiet infant, tender and mild, let us not forget that the Incarnation poses a defining, authoritative challenge. The challenge has to do with where we place our hearts, our loyalties, and our loves. Christmas is the birth into human history of the One who has the greatest power to protect, to save from enemies, and to overcome threats to a good life. Christmas is the birth of the true King.



Looking Ahead

In response, let us all recommit to a life lived under His reign. That’s my goal for Magdalen College in the new year. I pray that our students, faculty, and staff return rejuvenated and full of appreciation for the love and protection of our newborn King. Together we all enter the new year with hearts full of gratitude and joy for the overflowing response so far to our Christmas giving campaign. Financial gifts will help support new initiatives like our Scholarship Weekend and our summer courses for college credit, which we are announcing in this email! This July, high school students can dive deep into a two-week immersion course in philosophy, theology, science, politics, or Latin and receive college credit for completing the





Overheard From Our Podcast

These quotes were overheard on the “From the Summit” podcast this month. Visit magdalen.edu/podcasts/ to hear the full episodes!

Episode 23: The Power and Truth of Myth – Tolkien, Chesterton, and Lewis

“I went from reading Magic Treehouse to Lord of the Rings.”

“These three authors helped the Church see in fresh ways things that lend themselves to be known through the imagination rather than through propositional reasoning.”

“Sometimes you focus on certain aspects of a thing and fail to grasp it in its entirety ... like viewing the entire island of Britain as a large piece of chalk.”

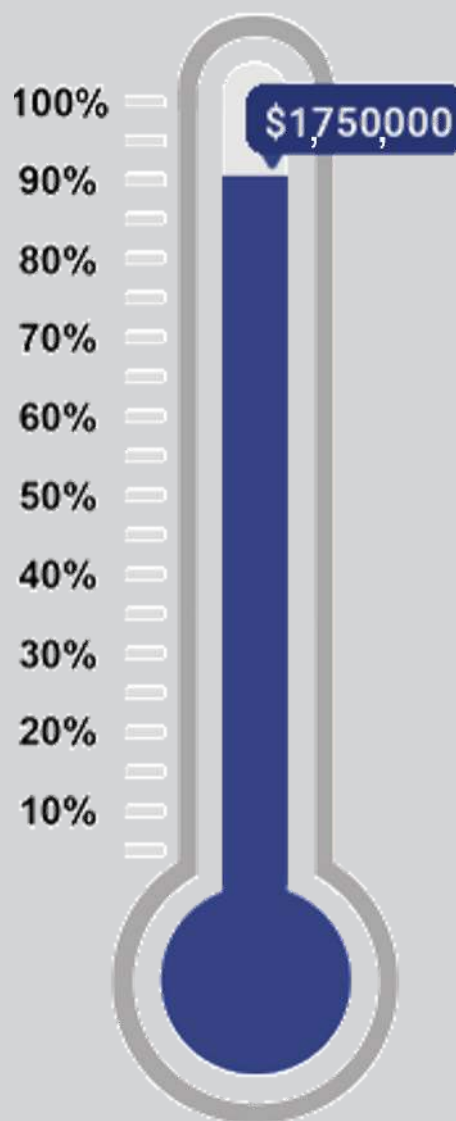
“Tolkien said that he attributes all of the beauty in his writing to the Blessed Mother. ... If Tolkien wasn’t Catholic, he would have written a different Lord of the Rings.”

“God is a creator. When we, as authors, create stories, we feel God’s pleasure.”

Listen at Magdalen.edu/podcasts

Advance the Call

Goal: \$2,000,000



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In case you missed it... Earlier this month we launched our Advance the Call giving campaign. This campaign will enable us to advance our mission of calling students to a transformative, Catholic, liberal arts education. Our goal is to raise \$2 million by March 1, 2022, and we are very close—87% of the way—to reaching that goal. If you would like to help us cross the finish line, you can give a gift of stock or give online via credit card at magdalen.edu/giving. For those who have already given sacrificially, thank you for helping us answer God’s call to provide meaningful formation to tomorrow’s leaders.

Go Deep this Summer

Deepen your college preparation
journey by spending a
transformational two weeks at
Magdalen College.

Give your high school junior or senior the gift of two transformative weeks at one of our Collegiate Summer Program sessions. Students shouldn't waste their summer—Magdalen is giving them a chance to GO DEEP into the Catholic faith, the liberal arts, and the beauty of the New Hampshire mountains! Students can choose one of two sessions: the first session (June 19 - July 2, 2022) introduces them to a variety of disciplines in the Magdalen curriculum, while the second session (July 10 - July 23, 2022) enables them to dive deep into one immersion course of their choice for college credit. **Register and pay by January 28, 2022 and save 25% on the CSP of your choice or both!**

magdalen.edu/summer

