

Wine Press - MLSV

Christian Brothers High School, Sacramento

by Pat O'Brien
Guidance Director

Located in the State Capital, Sacramento, Christian Brothers High School was founded in 1876, the first Catholic boys high school in the Great Valley of California. Because the school served such a wide geographical area which then included Nevada, a residence facility was added for "boarders" as the residents were called during the eight decades of this practice.

During the history of the school which was located at three different locations as the school grew up with the city, the institution served elementary, secondary and collegiate groups and thus was called "The Brothers College" by the people of the area. Today the label is simply CBS.

CBS today is a school of 700 young men who are offered a comprehensive education directed toward college or career, based on the individual's desire and abilities. As in other Christian Brothers schools, the school serves a diverse economic and racial enrollment because this is the way the Brothers want it. Through the Christian Brothers winery, financial aid is available to families who could not otherwise have their sons attend, and for this help the families, staff and students are indebted for this generous support.

The school, as always, follows in the tradition of Saint La Salle, striving to develop among its students and faculty a community grounded on values that stem from the Gospel of Jesus, values born out in an education that is creative, personal, caring and alive. Without this thrust, CBS would have no purpose for existence.

This year's teaching staff, under the direction of Brother Richard Camara, FSC, Principal and former winery administrator, includes 10 Brothers, 1 priest and 34 lay persons. Also on the staff are former ^{administrators} of Justin High in the Napa Valley, Brothers Bertram Coleman and Bede Van Duren.

A constant up-dating is made in curriculum to insure that offerings are meeting the needs of students. The staff has worked hard at implementing an experiential approach to education which emphasizes the process rather than pre-determined answers. This approach also emphasizes students and teachers working together by sharing responsibility for learning through group discussion and developmental tasks rather than through a lecture or authoritarian style.

An example of this process is the school's unique humanities program which integrates the studies of English, History and Religion in freshmen and sophomore years. Learning is developed through themes such as "beginnings", discussion and frequent journal entries. Such an approach minimizes the needless duplication of subject matter when the courses are taught as traditional separate entities. Materials for this program were developed at CBS and teachers meet weekly to prepare teaching strategies and effective activities.

The school has also developed other curricular innovations: a four year science program; a rich pool of electives including computer programming,

art, and band; and off-campus offerings through community service, enrichment classes at public schools or work sites, and college courses taken concurrently. A professional Guidance department assists students in making correct choices in their individualized scheduling, as well as in personal issues through counseling.

The Co-curricular program offers a full range of activities, also based on the student involvement concept rather than offering activities because "they've always been offered." Besides traditional activities such as yearbook and student government, the students sponsor activities such as the CROP fast each year to bring awareness of the world's hunger problem...and once again, not talking about it, but hungering for a day.

Athletics, an important part of the Sacramento scene today as in the past, reached a high point this past fall when soccer and football teams (varsity, jv and frosh) captured league titles. The Brothers then went beyond their Great Valley to claim the Northern California championship by defeating the local Napa Indians in a hard-fought and exciting game, 14-10.

CBS could not continue without its support groups which lend personal as well as financial support to keep tuition at a minimum. These groups include an active Parents Service Organization; the Alumni who sponsor a unique career day which brings 80 alumni back to campus each year to advise students; the La Salle Club composed of friends who support the athletic program; and the Board of Regents. The Regents, a group of prominent community leaders, advises the principal on school matters and is the backbone of the school's financial development program.

Finally the school has earned an enviable reputation among the people of Sacramento as a result of the over-all quality and vitality of its education, its meaningful traditions, and spirit of its students ;and the loyalty of its graduates. Like a well-bottled wine, the quality should last for a long, long time.