

# ST. PIUS X + ST. MATTHIAS

A C A D E M Y

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. Why is St. Matthias becoming a co-ed school?

First and foremost, we want to create a stronger school with more course offerings and extra-curricular activities. We want to hire and keep the very best teachers. We also want to make a quality Catholic high school education available and affordable to as many students in the community as possible. At the same time, we must protect the financial health of the school. It is only possible to accomplish all of those goals by recruiting and attracting more students and making better use of our wonderful campus in its entirety. Finally, our mission is to be warm and welcoming to all students – so that boys and girls alike will enjoy the advantage for life that a quality Catholic education provides.

### 2. How was this decision made, and by whom?

Last year, the St. Matthias Advisory Board and the Archdiocese asked Loyola Marymount University's (LMU) Center for Catholic Education to conduct a detailed study on options for St. Matthias. The Center for Catholic Education study looked at how we are achieving our Catholic education mission on this campus, with this school, at this time. It also looked for ways that we could better serve the needs of our community.

The LMU team sought the opinions of current students and their families; current and former teachers and staff; alumni of both St. Pius X and St. Matthias; priests, lay leaders, teachers and administrators from surrounding parishes and schools; and educators and lay leaders from the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. In total, they received more than 240 survey responses and conducted 76 one-on-one, in-depth interviews. They also reviewed the history of St. Matthias and St. Pius X, our current use of the campus and other resources, and estimated the number of students who might attend a Catholic high school in future years as well as the number of schools that could meet their needs.

They presented us with a number of options to consider for the future. Together with the Archdiocese, we decided that the best choice is to become a co-ed school.

### 3. When will St. Matthias become St. Pius X – St. Matthias Academy?

Beginning this year, our admissions efforts will reach out to boys as well as girls. We hope to admit approximately 25 boys who will enter as freshmen for the 2013-14 school year. The “official” change will take place on July 1, 2013.

### 4. Will current students graduate from St. Matthias High School or St. Pius X – St. Matthias Academy?

The graduating class in June 2013 (current seniors) will receive St. Matthias diplomas. Students who are freshmen, sophomores, or juniors in 2013 – and all future classes – will graduate with diplomas from St. Pius X – St. Matthias Academy.

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ACADEMY

## 5. What are your plans for future growth?

In order to make use of the full potential of our beautiful campus, offer a full scope of high-quality programs, and attract and retain the best possible faculty, the student body will grow from 285 girls to 500+ boys and girls over the next five to seven years. In other words, the student body will approximately double.

For the 2013-14 year, we expect to admit a freshman class of about 75 girls (about the same number of girls who are entering freshmen in the current 2012-13 academic year) and approximately 25 boys.

We plan to grow in a way that will build on the strengths of St. Matthias as it is now. We are confident that current students will share the warm, welcoming, friendly culture for which St. Matthias is already known, and that new students will embrace this important part of the school's culture. At the same time, we are looking forward to having a new school that returning and new students build together starting in 2013-14.

## 6. What will the curriculum be at St. Pius X – St. Matthias Academy? How will it be different from the current St. Matthias curriculum?

St. Pius X – St. Matthias Academy will continue to offer a full curriculum of UC Regent approved A – G college preparatory courses. In addition, a larger student body will allow us to offer a broader range of AP and Honors courses as the student body grows, and will also enable us to tailor instruction and elective A-G course offerings to meet the needs, talents, and interests of students over time.

## 7. In what other ways will St. Pius X – St. Matthias Academy be different from St. Matthias?

First and foremost, of course, the new school will be co-ed, and though class sizes are likely to be similar to current class sizes in most cases, the overall student body will double in size. This growth allows us to continue to offer the kinds of programs, resources, and best practices that are very expensive in a school of our current size but more affordable in a larger school. It also helps to keep the cost of tuition affordable for as many families as possible while we add more programs and more value to the education students receive.

In addition, students will have the opportunity to create a new school together, with traditions that they put in place. They have the opportunity to be leaders and pioneers in a way that many students never do. This can be an advantage when it comes to college applications and everything else they do in their lives!

## 8. What programs will St. Pius X – St. Matthias Academy offer to help my child prepare for and get into college?

Our curriculum is designed so that every student will graduate with the A-G course requirements that represent the standard college preparatory track for California students.

In addition, our four current Advanced Placement (AP) courses will grow to six offerings in 2013-14, and more AP classes will be offered to meet the needs and interests of students in the next few years.

For students who want or need additional help getting ready for AP courses, we will offer summer honors courses.

College counselors will begin working with students in their freshman year with activities like visits to local colleges and universities. Of course, we will involve parents and family members at every step of the way with seminars and educational programs about the college admissions process.

Accelerated and high-achieving students also have the opportunity to participate in programs like Young Scholars Early College program at Cal State Dominguez Hills. They are also eligible for recognition through the National Honor Society and California Scholastic Federation (CSF).

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## **9. What programs will you offer to help with general academics?**

There is no such thing as a typical student, nor a typical learning style. St. Pius X – St. Matthias Academy will set high standards for all students, and will provide the support to help each student reach those standards with individual strategies.

Here's what you'll find at St. Pius X – St. Matthias Academy:

- Counselors who “follow” each class of students from freshman year through graduation. This allows counselors to get to know students, and work with them as they move through each stage of academic and personal development during their high school years;
- Summer school for incoming freshmen and sophomores who need help preparing for the next grade level, or for students who want to boost their academic performance (offered at a nominal fee, with need-based scholarships available);
- Honors and AP courses, leadership opportunities, extracurricular activities and other programs for students who are ready to challenge themselves;
- Programs to assist individual student learning needs such as STEP/MAP (Support Team Education Plan / Minor Adjustment Plan), the Renaissance math learning platform, the Acellus computer-based learning tool, and many other opportunities for students to progress in one or more subjects, beginning in their freshman year;
- A commitment to keeping parents involved and in the loop, through parent education and communication applications such as PowerSchool.

## **10. How are you going to keep my child safe at St. Pius X – St. Matthias Academy?**

Creating a safe school community starts during the admissions process, when students and their families agree to the standards and policies set forth in the Student Handbook as a condition of attendance. There is a clear and stringent discipline policy. Students (or families) whose actions are detrimental to building a safe and productive school community are asked to leave.

The school's location also contributes to its safety; nevertheless, St. Pius X – St. Matthias Academy will maintain a closed campus, just as St. Matthias does now.

School size is an important part of school safety. Even at full capacity, the entire student body at St. Pius X – St. Matthias Academy will be much smaller than the average graduating class at local public high schools. Students and teachers who know and care about one another help to create a culture of safety will help to create this environment.

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## **11. Will the new school have new teachers and administrators? Who will be in charge?**

St. Pius X – St. Matthias Academy will continue to be a Diocesan high school under the supervision of Monsignor Sal Pilato, Superintendent of High Schools for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, just as St. Matthias is. The current administrative team for the school will continue in roles with the new school: Erick Rubalcava as Principal, Veronica Zozaya as Vice Principal and Director of Curriculum, and Keani Romero as Director of Marketing and Outreach, and Roxanne Santiago, Director of Admissions. They are looking forward to watching the student body grow and thrive on a campus that has been devoted to Catholic education since 1953.

The administrative team is committed to hiring and retaining a faculty that is highly qualified and passionate about Catholic education, something they are already doing for St. Matthias and will continue to do for St. Pius X – St. Matthias. Three of the four new teachers who are joining the faculty in 2012-13 have Master's degrees and one is completing a PhD. The fourth will complete a Master's degree at Loyola Marymount in May 2013.

The volunteer Advisory Board is made up of lay leaders from throughout the Archdiocese, local community leaders, educators and professionals, and alumni of St. Pius X and St. Matthias. They are responsible for supporting the school as a whole in terms of its finances and future planning.

## **12. Why did you choose the name St. Pius X – St. Matthias Academy?**

The name was chosen to honor the two schools that previously made this campus home: Pius X and St. Matthias. Even as we look ahead to all that the future has in store for a new school on this site, we want to honor the alumni, faculty, and supporters who built the campus and its rich history of Catholic education. (For more about the histories of both schools, see [www.piusxstmatthiasalum.org](http://www.piusxstmatthiasalum.org)). In addition, we believe these saints are particularly appropriate to our mission; St. Pius X believed in the power and vitality of youth and St. Matthias exemplifies answering the call to service.

## **13. What are the advantages of St. Pius X – St. Matthias Academy over a charter school or our local public high school?**

A Catholic education meets and exceeds the California standards that public and charter schools do, but it also teaches Catholic faith and values, which public schools cannot do. Teachers and administrators are motivated by their faith, values, and commitment to Catholic education; they are truly called to service and care deeply about their students. Moreover, the school holds both teachers and students accountable. They regularly review faculty and students using a wide variety of measures that go well beyond standardized testing alone. Students apply for admission to St. Pius X – St. Matthias, and they are admitted as the result of a careful and thoughtful admissions process, not by chance.

In addition, students who attend Catholic high schools understand that they are part of a community. They are more likely to graduate from high school than public high school students (nationwide, 99% of Catholic high school students graduate vs. 75% in public high schools), and they are more likely to attend a four-year college (85% of Catholic high school students vs. 40% of public high school students nationwide).

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## **14. What will tuition be at St. Pius X – St. Matthias? Will financial aid be available?**

Base tuition at St. Matthias for the 2012-13 year is \$7,020. Tuition and fees for the 2013-14 school year will be explained in the admissions packets for new students. Families will be notified of tuition in the same way that they are at St. Matthias.

72% of St. Matthias families qualify for financial aid (reduced tuition). St. Pius X – St. Matthias Academy will have similar programs and a similar application process.

For more information about financial aid and scholarships at St. Pius X – St. Matthias Academy, please contact Ms. Roxanne Santiago in the Admissions Office.

## **15. What is the Victorian Leadership Scholarship and will it be offered to boys?**

St. Matthias has been fortunate for the last four years to be able to offer a unique Scholarship called the Victorian Leadership Scholarship (VLS). The VLS pays for four years of tuition at St. Matthias except for \$2,000 which families are expected to pay. VLS Scholars are chosen based on grades, test scores, financial needs and leadership qualities. The sponsors of the VLS are very supportive of St. Pius X-St. Matthias Academy and are pleased to offer a total of twelve scholarships next year: six for boys and six for girls.

## **16. What are the advantages of being a member of the first co-ed class at St. Pius X – St. Matthias Academy?**

Students who are willing to “go first” tend to get extra points in the college admissions process. It shows that they know who they are, and they can make the right choices for themselves, whether in education or in life. College admissions officers often take the time to learn about a new school, and to take a closer look at its students.

Finally, there is a once-in-a lifetime opportunity for students who attend St. Pius X – St. Matthias Academy in the first few years. They can choose a mascot, form new clubs, start new traditions, and create the wonderful school they have always dreamed of attending.

## **17. What sports will St. Pius X – St. Matthias Academy offer for boys and for girls?**

The boys sports program will grow to meet the needs, interests, and number of boys in the student body. In the 2013-14 year, when we welcome 25 new boys to the freshman class, we expect to offer one sport per season: cross-country in the fall, soccer in the winter, and track & field in the spring.

For girls, the same sports will be offered in 2013-14 as are currently offered at St. Matthias: volleyball, cross-country, basketball, soccer, track and field, softball and cheer. As with boys, the sports offerings for girls will expand as the student body grows to meet the needs and interests of the students.

## **18. What kinds of extra-curricular activities and clubs will St. Pius X – St. Matthias Academy offer?**

Student interest and leadership will drive extra-curricular offerings at the new school, just as they do now at St. Matthias. Students who want to start a club just need to find others who share their interest, ask a faculty member to sponsor their club, and submit a proposal to the Director of Activities. Current offerings at St. Matthias include the Science Club, which is planning a trip to Costa Rica during the summer of 2013; the International Club; Cheer; HOPE Club, which raises funds for orphanages; and Campus Ministry.

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## **19. I am an alumnus of St. Pius X. Why should I support the new school?**

The new school bears the names of both St. Pius X and St. Matthias in recognition of the many alumni of both schools who are part of the history of Catholic education on our beautiful campus. As a graduate of Pius X, you know that Catholic education is an advantage for life. It's an advantage that is made possible by many people. Many people have already invested generously to support Catholic education for this community, knowing that it would directly benefit the students of Pius X who were their friends and neighbors. Likewise, your support of Pius X – St. Matthias Academy will ensure that our campus will continue to be the home for quality Catholic education for current and future generations of students.

## **20. I am an alumna of St. Matthias – why should I support the new school?**

The new school bears the names of both St. Pius X and St. Matthias in recognition of the many alumni of both schools who are part of the history of Catholic education on our beautiful campus. As a graduate of St. Matthias, you know that Catholic education is an advantage for life. It's an advantage that is made possible by many people. Many people have already invested generously to support Catholic education in this community, knowing that it would directly benefit the students of St. Matthias who were their friends and neighbors. Likewise, your support of St. Pius X – St. Matthias Academy will ensure that our campus will continue to be the home for quality Catholic education for current and future generations of students.

## **21. What are the school colors for St. Pius X – St. Matthias Academy?**

The school colors are red and gray.

The color gray, which represents penance and repentance, reminds us of our imperfections as human beings and that we are stained by original sin. It is also a reminder that our lives will sometimes be faced with challenges that remind us of our need for divine grace, prayer, and the humility to recognize our shortcomings.

Red represents the God who loved us so much that he became human flesh and blood to redeem us from our sins and failings. It is symbolic of the blood of Jesus Christ, who gives himself to us on the cross and in the Eucharist. Red is also the color of fire and so symbolizes the presence of God through the Holy Spirit which engulfs us at Confirmation and prepares us for our mission in this life: to love and serve God and each other with Pride, Virtue, and Purpose.

## **22. What is the St. Pius X – St. Matthias Academy mascot?**

The 2013-14 St. Pius X – St. Matthias student body will have the unique opportunity to propose and vote for a school mascot!

## **23. Is there a commitment to keeping St. Pius X – St. Matthias Academy open?**

For a number of years, St. Matthias High School has remained open with subsidies from the Archdiocese even though its enrollment was too low for a campus of this size. This is one of the many ways that the Archdiocese has supported Catholic education on this site for many years. The Archbishop is committed to continuing to serve this community by maintaining a Catholic high school on this campus, and has enlisted the help of lay leaders from all over Los Angeles; they also support the plan for the new co-ed school. Each member of the current St. Matthias administration is enthusiastic about the new school, and will stay to lead the school through this next exciting chapter in its history. Under their leadership, St. Matthias has already increased its enrollment and we are confident that the new school will continue to grow with their help.



**24. Will the boys be in the same classes with the girls?**

Freshman boys will be in classes with girls beginning in Fall of 2013.

**25. What are your plans to integrate boys into the campus smoothly?**

From a student perspective, we expect all students to behave with dignity as young men and women, treating one another with respect. New and returning students will become acquainted with these expectations and standards during the orientation process.

This campus previously supported both male and female students as Pius X, and the necessary facilities – such as separate locker rooms and showers in the gymnasium -- already exist as a result.

**26. Can boys who will be sophomores, juniors, or seniors apply for the 2013-14 year?**

Boys' applications for the 2013-14 year will be limited to the Freshman class in order to manage the growth of the school. In addition, this respects the current St. Matthias students in upper grades who originally enrolled in an all-girls school.

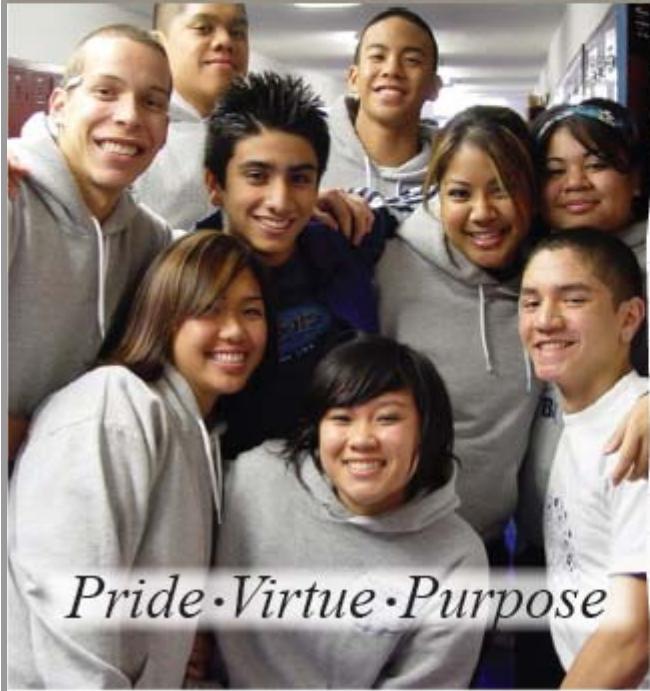
**27. Will current St. Matthias students need to re-apply for admission to St. Pius X – St. Matthias Academy?**

No, current St. Matthias students in good standing need not re-apply for admission. However, St. Matthias students who receive financial aid must apply annually to St. Pius X – St. Matthias Academy for continued financial support, just as they must now apply annually to St. Matthias.

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