



ROCHE CENTER FOR  
CATHOLIC EDUCATION  
BOSTON COLLEGE  
Lynch School of Education



## **Students Enrolled at Schools in the Prestigious Two-Way Immersion Network of the Roche Center for Catholic Education at Boston College Participate in Modern Pen Pal Program**

Most Holy Redeemer Catholic Academy in Flushing, New York and St. Leo the Great Catholic School San Antonio, Texas are pleased to announce that their students are piloting a new pen pal exchange for students enrolled in the immersion language classes at their schools, which are founding members of the Two-Way Immersion Network for Catholic Schools (TWIN-CS) at Boston College.

This “digital age” iteration of the traditional pen pal exchange will allow the children at these two schools to explore a new city and culture by speaking with their peers across the country. The TWIN-CS program is to help enrolled students become global citizens as they learn to read, write, speak, and listen in two languages in a faith-based environment. This exchange will allow the students to apply their learning in a creative and interactive way.

An innovation of the Roche Center for Catholic Education, TWIN-CS is a collaborative model for whole school transformation that supports the implementation and assessment of dual-language immersion models in Catholic schools. Two-way immersion school models have been nationally recognized as the most effective approach to bilingual education and prepare all students to be bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural citizens in an increasingly diverse world, while deeply respecting the languages, identities, and cultures of all students.

Staff and faculty from Most Holy Redeemer Catholic Academy in Flushing, Queens, New York and St. Leo the Great Catholic School in San Antonio have been working with Assistant Director for the TWIN-CS program at the Roche Center, Mary Bridget Burns, to design and implement the ‘pen pal’ program with their 3rd grade students.

Using the Zoom Online Meeting platform, the students will be meeting remotely for the first time on Tuesday, January 30th. They have been learning about each other’s cities and

schools, which are quite different. Most Holy Redeemer Catholic Academy uses an English-Mandarin model and is located in one of the largest Chinatowns in the United States, while St. Leo uses an English-Spanish model and has a long history in San Antonio, which is known for its strong Hispanic heritage. Their initial meeting will be one of many activities the schools have planned for Catholic Schools Week, a celebration of Catholic education by the National Catholic Educational Association.

Mrs. Maureen Rogone, principal of Most Holy Redeemer, says that her school community is “excited to provide this opportunity for our students to be able to connect with students across the country. The students will be able to share similar experiences as Catholic school students and also appreciate the rich diversity that their communities bring through the language programs. Most Holy Redeemer Catholic Academy is grateful for the opportunities the Roche Center at Boston College has provided to our teachers and students as part of the TWIN-CS network.”

Their peers in San Antonio share the sentiment. “We are thrilled to be involved with this incredibly innovative, educational opportunity to expand cultural awareness for our children, families and staff,” said Mrs. Carol Johnson, principal of St. Leo the Great Catholic School.

TWIN-CS schools serve populations of which at least one third of students speak the same non-English language, and implement curriculum in Spanish or Mandarin as well as English. TWIN-CS draws on the experience and expertise of the Roche Center and the Lynch School of Education at Boston College. The program is in its 6th year of operation and currently serves twenty-four schools from across the country and the District of Columbia.

### **About the Two-Way Immersion Network for Catholic Schools**

[The Two-Way Immersion for Catholic Schools \(TWIN-CS\)](#) is an initiative of the Roche Center, grounded in research and lead by Boston College faculty and university partners from around the country. Its purpose is to advance the Catholic tradition of academic excellence by empowering Catholic schools to systemically transform from a monolingual to multilingual educational model in the service of vibrant culturally diverse populations with fidelity to the mission of Catholic education.

## **About The Roche Center**

### [The Barbara and Patrick Roche Center for Catholic Education \(The Roche Center\)](#)

strengthens Catholic education through the promotion of research-based educational innovations and the generation of research to lead the transformation of Catholic schools to serve with a preferential option for the poor and marginalized. The Roche Center accomplishes this mission through a strong commitment to research, professional development, advocacy, and outreach.

Housed within the top-ranked Lynch School of Education at Boston College, the Roche Center brings together a collaborative community of Catholic school leaders, teachers, researchers, scholars, and innovators to sustain and improve K-12 Catholic education. Signature professional programs include: the [Two-Way Immersion Network for Catholic Schools \(TWIN-CS\)](#), a national dual-language immersion initiative; [the Emmaus Series](#), a leadership advancement program for Catholic school leaders; and [Urban Catholic Teacher Corps of Boston College \(UCTC\)](#), a two year faith formation and graduate program for Catholic education, in which licensed teachers serve full-time at an urban Boston Catholic school. For more information, visit [www.rochecenter.org](http://www.rochecenter.org).

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