

# **Do not use guilt by association on Woodmont Academy**

As a Protestant, I'm not qualified to address the tensions between Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien's office and the Legion of Christ (CR, Feb. 26). As an ethicist, however, I can say without reservation that the article was at best an irresponsible and, at worst, an intentionally harmful injustice to the reputation of Woodmont Academy, Cooksville. The article admittedly levels no direct accusations at the school, but guilt by association damage is clearly accomplished. The fact that the reader is indirectly left to assume that the problematic issues identified by the archbishop apply directly to Woodmont makes the smearing of the school no less poisonous. Particularly devastating is the article's passive implication that Woodmont as a Legion school will impose a controlling, cult-like indoctrination to children enrolled there. As a non-Catholic, I'm especially sensitive to this issue, and we've experienced nothing even resembling inappropriate instruction during our 10 years as Woodmont parents. What we have experienced is a school community so exceptional that we've refrained from taking better jobs elsewhere so that our three girls could remain there.

I did not miss the irony that the article follows immediately on the heels of the publication of the archbishop's document supporting Catholic education. If you want to know what Catholic education at Woodmont is really like, talk to any of us who actually do set foot on its campus and enthusiastically entrust our children to it.