



CENTER FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION

Note: The following quotations focus on the topic of *The Dignity of the Human Person* as it is contained in the documents of the Church which consider education. The following conditions and recommendations apply:

- ❖ The purpose of this selection is to give a sample of the topic. It is not intended to replace the reading of the entire document(s) cited.
- ❖ In-text citations are not included in this document. The document can be accessed in its entirety for this purpose. The paragraph numbers give the exact location of the quotation within the pertinent document.
- ❖ In a few instances spelling has been changed to reflect common usage and for the purpose of clarity. (“program” instead of “programme,” for example).
- ❖ The sections included are only examples and are not necessarily the only references on this topic contained in the document(s).

Dignity of the Human Person

Declaration on Christian Education (Gravissimum Educationis), #1 **Vatican Council II, 1965.**

All men of every race, condition and age, since they enjoy the dignity of a human being, have an inalienable right to an education (5) that is in keeping with their ultimate goal

The Catholic School, #55

Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977.

The Catholic school loses its purpose without constant reference to the Gospel and a frequent encounter with Christ. It derives all the energy necessary for its educational work from Him and thus "creates in the school community an atmosphere permeated with the Gospel spirit of freedom and love." In this setting the pupil experiences his dignity as a person before he knows its definition. Faithful, therefore, to the claims of man and of God, the Catholic school makes its own contribution towards man's liberation, making him, in other words, what his destiny implies, one who talks consciously with God, one who is there for God to love.

Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith, #6 **Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982.**

As such, united to Christ through Baptism, he or she shares in the basic dignity that is common to all members. For, "they share a common dignity from their rebirth in Christ. (laity)

Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith, # 18 **Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982.**

Each type of education, moreover, is influenced by a particular concept of what it means to be a human person. In today's pluralistic world, the Catholic educator must consciously inspire his or her activity with the Christian concept of the person, in communion with the Magisterium of the Church. It is a concept which includes a defense of human rights, but also attributes to the human person the dignity of a child of God; it attributes the fullest liberty, freed from sin itself by Christ, the most exalted destiny, which is the definitive and total possession of God Himself, through love. It establishes the strictest possible relationship of solidarity among all persons; through mutual love and an ecclesial community. It calls for the fullest development of all that is human, because we have been made masters of the world by its Creator. Finally, it proposes Christ, Incarnate Son of God and perfect Man, as both model and means; to imitate Him, is, for all men and women, the inexhaustible source of personal and communal perfection. Thus, Catholic educators can be certain that they make human beings more human.(22) Moreover, the special task of those educators who are lay persons is to offer to

their students a concrete example of the fact that people deeply immersed in the world, living fully the same secular life as the vast majority of the human family, possess this same exalted dignity.

The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School: Guidelines for Reflection and Renewal, #55.

Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988.

A Catholic school must be committed to the development of a program which will overcome the problems of a fragmented and insufficient curriculum. Teachers dealing with areas such as anthropology, biology, psychology, sociology and philosophy all have the opportunity to present a complete picture of the human person, including the religious dimension. Students should be helped to see the human person as a living creature having both a physical and a spiritual nature; each of us has an immortal soul, and we are in need of redemption. The older students can gradually come to a more mature understanding of all that is implied in the concept of "person": intelligence and will, freedom and feelings, the capacity to be an active and creative agent; a being endowed with both rights and duties, capable of interpersonal relationships, called to a specific mission in the world.

The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School: Guidelines for Reflection and Renewal, #56.

Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988.

The religious dimension makes a true understanding of the human person possible. A human being has a dignity and a greatness exceeding that of all other creatures: a work of God that has been elevated to the supernatural order as a child of God, and therefore having both a divine origin and an eternal destiny which transcend this physical universe. Religion teachers will find the way already prepared for an organic presentation of Christian anthropology.

The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School: Guidelines for Reflection and Renewal, #76.

Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988.

Students learn many things about the human person by studying science; but science has nothing to say about mystery. Teachers should help students begin to discover the mystery within the human person...

The educational value of Christian anthropology is obvious. Here is where students discover the true value of the human person: loved by God, with a mission on earth and a destiny that is immortal. As a result, they learn the virtues of self-respect and self-love, and of love for others - a love that is universal. In addition, each student will develop a willingness to embrace life, and also his or her own unique vocation, as a fulfillment of God's will.

The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, #9
Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997.

The Catholic school sets out to be a school for the human person and of human persons. "The person of each individual human being, in his or her material and spiritual needs, is at the heart of Christ's teaching: this is why the promotion of the human person is the goal of the Catholic school". This affirmation, stressing man's vital relationship with Christ, reminds us that it is in His person that the fullness of the truth concerning man is to be found. For this reason the Catholic school, in committing itself to the development of the whole man, does so in obedience to the solicitude of the Church, in the awareness that all human values find their fulfillment and unity in Christ. This awareness expresses the centrality of the human person in the educational project of the Catholic school, strengthens its educational endeavor and renders it fit to form strong personalities

Consecrated Persons and their Mission in Schools, #61.
Congregation for Catholic Education, 2003.

Consecrated persons must be careful to safeguard the priority of the person in their educational program. For this they must cooperate in the concrete choices that are made regarding the general school program and its formative proposal. Each pupil must be considered as an individual, bearing in mind his family environment, his personal history, his skills and his interests. In a climate of mutual trust, consecrated men and women discover and cultivate each person's talents and help young people to become responsible for their own formation and to cooperate in that of their companions. This requires the total dedication and unselfishness of those who live the educational service as a mission. This dedication and unselfishness contribute to characterizing the school environment as a vital environment in which intellectual growth is harmonized with spiritual, religious, emotional and social growth.

Educating Together in Catholic Schools: A Shared Mission between Consecrated Persons and the Lay Faithful, #8

Congregation for Catholic Education, 2007.

Every human being is called to communion because of his nature which is created in the image and likeness of God (cf. *Gen 1:26-27*).

Educating to Intercultural Dialogue in Catholic Schools: Living in Harmony for a Civilization of Love, #3

Congregation for Catholic Education, 2013.

Different conditions of environment, history and society have introduced wide diversity within the one human community, in which, however, "each individual man is truly a person. His is a nature that is endowed with intelligence and free will. As such he has rights and duties, which together flow as a direct consequence from his nature. These rights and duties are universal and inviolable, and therefore altogether inalienable."