



CENTER FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION

Note: The following quotations focus on the topic of *Integration of Faith. Culture and Life* 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).

Declaration on Christian Education (Gravissimum Educationis), #8
Vatican Council II, 1965.

No less than other schools does the Catholic school pursue cultural goals and the human formation of youth....finally to order the whole of human culture to the news of salvation so that the knowledge the students gradually acquire of the world, life and man is illumined by faith.

The Catholic School, #37
Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977.

These premises indicate the duties and the content of the Catholic school. Its task is fundamentally a synthesis of culture and faith, and a synthesis of faith and life: the first is reached by integrating all the different aspects of human knowledge through the subjects taught, in the light of the Gospel; the second in the growth of the virtues characteristic of the Christian.

The Catholic School, #37
Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977.

In helping pupils to achieve through the medium of its teaching an integration of faith and culture, the Catholic school sets out with a deep awareness of the value of knowledge as such. Under no circumstances does it wish to divert the imparting of knowledge from its rightful objective.

Integration of faith and culture
The Catholic School, #38-#43

Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977.

38. In helping pupils to achieve through the medium of its teaching an integration of faith and culture, the Catholic school sets out with a deep awareness of the value of knowledge as such. Under no circumstances does it wish to divert the imparting of knowledge from its rightful objective.

39. Individual subjects must be taught according to their own particular methods. It would be wrong to consider subjects as mere adjuncts to faith or as a useful means of teaching apologetics. They enable the pupil to assimilate skills, knowledge, intellectual methods and moral and social attitudes, all of which help to develop his personality and lead him to take his place as an active member of the community of man. Their aim is not merely the attainment of knowledge but the acquisition of values and the discovery of truth.

40. Since the educative mission of the Catholic school is so wide, the teacher is in an excellent position to guide the pupil to a deepening of his faith and to enrich and enlighten his human knowledge with the data of the faith. While there are many occasions in teaching when pupils can be stimulated by insights of faith, a Christian education acknowledges the valid contribution which can be made by academic subjects

towards the development of a mature Christian. The teacher can form the mind and heart of his pupils and guide them to develop a total commitment to Christ, with their whole personality enriched by human culture.

41. The school considers human knowledge as a truth to be discovered. In the measure in which subjects are taught by someone who knowingly and without restraint seeks the truth, they are to that extent Christian. Discovery and awareness of truth leads man to the discovery of Truth itself. A teacher who is full of Christian wisdom, well prepared in his own subject, does more than convey the sense of what he is teaching to his pupils. Over and above what he says, he guides his pupils beyond his mere words to the heart of total Truth.

42. The cultural heritage of mankind includes other values apart from the specific ambient of truth. When the Christian teacher helps a pupil to grasp, appreciate and assimilate these values, he is guiding him towards eternal realities. This movement towards the Uncreated Source of all knowledge highlights the importance of teaching for the growth of faith.

43. The achievement of this specific aim of the Catholic school depends not so much on subject matter or methodology as on the people who work there. The extent to which the Christian message is transmitted through education depends to a very great extent on the teachers. The integration of culture and faith is mediated by the other integration of faith and life in the person of the teacher. The nobility of the task to which teachers are called demands that, in imitation of Christ, the only Teacher, they reveal the Christian message not only by word but also by every gesture of their behaviour. This is what makes the difference between a school whose education is permeated by the Christian spirit and one in which religion is only regarded as an academic subject like any other.

Integration of faith and life

The Catholic School, #44-#48

Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977.

44. The fundamental aim of teaching is the assimilation of objective values, and, when this is undertaken for an apostolic purpose, it does not stop at an integration of faith and culture but leads the pupil on to a personal integration of faith and life.

45. The Catholic school has as its specific duty the complete Christian formation of its pupils, and this task is of special significance today because of the inadequacy of the family and society. It knows that this integration of faith and life is part of a life-long process of conversion until the pupil becomes what God wishes him to be. Young people have to be taught to share their personal lives with God. They are to overcome their individualism and discover, in the light of faith, their specific vocation to live responsibly in a community with others. The very pattern of the Christian life draws them to commit

themselves to serve God in their brethren and to make the world a better place for man to live in.

46. The Catholic school should teach its pupils to discern in the voice of the universe the Creator Whom it reveals and, in the conquests of science, to know God and man better. In the daily life of the school, the pupil should learn that he is called to be a living witness to God's love for men by the way he acts, and that he is part of that salvation history which has Christ, the Savior of the world, as its goal.

47. Being aware that Baptism by itself does not make a Christian - living and acting in conformity with the Gospel is necessary - the Catholic school tries to create within its walls a climate(15) in which the pupil's faith will gradually mature and enable him to assume the responsibility placed on him by Baptism. It will give pride of place in the education it provides through Christian Doctrine to the gradual formation of conscience in fundamental, permanent virtues - above all the theological virtues, and charity in particular, which is, so to speak, the life-giving spirit which transforms a man of virtue into a man of Christ. Christ, therefore, is the teaching-centre, the Model on Whom the Christian shapes his life. In Him the Catholic school differs from all others which limit themselves to forming men. Its task is to form Christian men, and, by its teaching and witness, show non-Christians something of the mystery of Christ Who surpasses all human understanding (16).

48. The Catholic school will work closely with other Christian bodies (the family, the parish and Christian community, youth associations, etc.). But one must not overlook many other spheres of activity in society which are sources of information and in their various ways have an educational influence. Alongside this so-called " parallel school ", the school proper is an active force through the systematic formation of the pupils' critical faculties to bring them to a measure of self control(17) and the ability to choose freely and conscientiously in the face of what is offered by the organs of social communication. They must be taught to subject these things to a critical and personal analysis(18), take what is good, and integrate it into their Christian human culture.

Religious teaching

The Catholic School, #49-#52

Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977.

49. The specific mission of the school, then, is a critical, systematic transmission of culture in the light of faith and the bringing forth of the power of Christian virtue by the integration of culture with faith and of faith with living.

Consequently, the Catholic school is aware of the importance of the Gospel-teaching as transmitted through the Catholic Church. It is, indeed, the fundamental element in the educative process as it helps the pupil towards his conscious choice of living a responsible and coherent way of life.

50. Without entering into the whole problem of teaching religion in schools, it must be emphasized that, while such teaching is not merely confined to "religious classes" within the school curriculum, it must, nevertheless, also be imparted explicitly and in a systematic manner to prevent a distortion in the child's mind between general and religious culture. The fundamental difference between religious and other forms of education is that its aim is not simply intellectual assent to religious truths but also a total commitment of one's whole being to the Person of Christ.

51. It is recognized that the proper place for catechesis is the family helped by other Christian communities, especially the local parish. But the importance and need for catechetical instruction in Catholic schools cannot be sufficiently emphasized. Here young people are helped to grow towards maturity in faith.

52. The Catholic school must be alert at all times to developments in the fields of child psychology, pedagogy and particularly catechetics, and should especially keep abreast of directives from competent ecclesiastical authorities. The school must do everything in its power to aid the Church to fulfill its catechetical mission and so must have the best possible qualified teachers of religion.

Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith, #20.
Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982.

A school uses its own specific means for the integral formation of the human person: the communication of culture. It is extremely important, then, that the Catholic educator reflect on the profound relationship that exists between culture and the Church. For the Church not only influences culture and is, in turn, conditioned by culture; the Church embraces everything in human culture which is compatible with Revelation and which it needs in order to proclaim the message of Christ and express it more adequately according to the cultural characteristics of each people and each age. The close relationship between culture and the life of the Church is an especially clear manifestation of the unity that exists between creation and redemption.

For this reason, if the communication of culture is to be a genuine educational activity, it must not only be organic, but also critical and evaluative, historical and dynamic. Faith will provide Catholic educators with some essential principles for critique and evaluation; faith will help them to see all of human history as a history of salvation which culminates in the fullness of the Kingdom. This puts culture into a creative context, constantly being perfected.

Here too, in the communication of culture, lay educators have a special role to play. They are the authors of, and the sharers in, the more lay aspects of culture; their mission, then, is to help the students come to understand, from a lay point of view, the global character that is proper to culture, the synthesis which will join together the lay and the religious aspects of culture, and the personal contribution which those in the lay state can be expected to make to culture.

Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith, #29.

Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982.

For the accomplishment of this vast undertaking, many different educational elements must converge; in each of them, the lay Catholic must appear as a witness to faith. An organic, critical, and value-oriented communication of culture (27) clearly includes the communication of truth and knowledge; while doing this, a Catholic teacher should always be alert for opportunities to initiate the appropriate dialogue between culture and faith - two things which are intimately related - in order to bring the interior synthesis of the student to this deeper level. It is, of course, a synthesis which should already exist in the teacher.

The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School: Guidelines for Reflection and Renewal, #31.

Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988.

The Catholic school is one of these pastoral instruments; its specific pastoral service consists in mediating between faith and culture: being faithful to the newness of the Gospel while at the same time respecting the autonomy and the methods proper to human knowledge.

The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School: Guidelines for Reflection and Renewal, #34.

Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988.

The Catholic school finds its true justification in the mission of the Church; it is based on an educational philosophy in which faith, culture and life are brought into harmony.

The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School: Guidelines for Reflection and Renewal, #48.

Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988.

Students who are sensitive to the religious dimension of life realize that the will of God is found in the work and the human relationships of each day.

The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School: Guidelines for Reflection and Renewal, #49.

Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988.

The light of Christian faith stimulates a desire to know the universe as God's creation. It enkindles a love for the truth that will not be satisfied with superficiality in knowledge or judgment. It awakens a critical sense which examines statements rather than accepting them blindly. It impels the mind to learn with careful order and precise methods, and to work with a sense of responsibility. It provides the strength needed to accept the sacrifices and the perseverance required by intellectual labor.

The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School: Guidelines for Reflection and Renewal, #51.

Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988.

Human culture remains human, and must be taught with scientific objectivity. But the lessons of the teacher and the reception of those students who are believers will not divorce faith from this culture;

The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School: Guidelines for Reflection and Renewal, #52.

Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988.

A Catholic secondary school will give special attention to the "challenges" that human culture poses for faith. Students will be helped to attain that synthesis of faith and culture which is necessary for faith to be mature. But a mature faith is also able to recognize and reject cultural counter-values which threaten human dignity and are therefore contrary to the Gospel. No one should think that all of the problems of religion and of faith will be completely solved by academic studies; nevertheless, we are convinced that a school is a privileged place for finding adequate ways to deal with these problems. The declaration *Gravissimum Educationis*, echoing *Gaudium et Spes*, indicates that one of the characteristics of a Catholic school is that it interpret and give order to human culture in the light of faith.

The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School: Guidelines for Reflection and Renewal, #57.

Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988.

A Catholic school conforms to the generally accepted school programming of today, but implements these programs within an overall religious perspective. This perspective includes criteria such as the following: Respect for those who seek the truth, who raise fundamental questions about human existence. Confidence in our ability to attain truth, at least in a limited way - a confidence based not on feeling but on faith.... The ability to make judgments about what is true and what is false; and to make choices based on these judgments... Making use of a systematic framework, such as that offered by our philosophical heritage, with which to find the best possible human responses to questions regarding the human person, the world, and God...Lively dialogue between culture and the Gospel message. The fullness of truth contained in the Gospel message itself, which embraces and integrates the wisdom of all cultures, and enriches them with the divine mysteries known only to God but which, out of love, he has chosen to reveal to us. With such criteria as a basis, the student's careful and reflective study of philosophy will bring human wisdom into an encounter with divine wisdom.

Consecrated Person and their Mission in Schools: Reflections and Guidelines, #38.

Congregation for Catholic Education, 2003.

Catholic schools especially have a priority: that of "bringing forth within what is learnt in school a Christian vision of the world, of life, of culture and of history.

Consecrated Person and their Mission in Schools: Reflections and Guidelines, #54.
Congregation for Catholic Education, 2003.

The community of a Catholic school offers not only teaching of religion but also other opportunities, other moments and ways for educating to a harmony between faith and culture, faith and life

Educating Together in Catholic Schools: A Shared Mission between Consecrated Persons and the Lay Faithful, #3.

Congregation for Catholic Education, 2007.

...Catholic school, which is constantly concerned with the formational requirements of society, because the problem of instruction has always been closely linked to the Church's mission. The Catholic school participates in this mission like a true ecclesial subject, with its educational service that is enlivened by the truth of the Gospel. In fact, faithful to its vocation, it appears as a place of integral education of the human person through a clear educational project of which Christ is the foundation, directed at creating a synthesis between faith, culture and life.

Educating Together in Catholic Schools: A Shared Mission between Consecrated Persons and the Lay Faithful, #24.

Congregation for Catholic Education, 2007.

The synthesis between faith, culture and life that educators of the Catholic school are called to achieve is, in fact, reached «by integrating all the different aspects of human knowledge through the subjects taught, in the light of the Gospel [...] and] in the growth of the virtues characteristic of the Christian.

The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, #14.

Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997

From the nature of the Catholic school also stems one of the most significant elements of its educational project: the synthesis between culture and faith. Indeed, knowledge set in the context of faith becomes wisdom and life vision. The endeavor to interweave reason and faith, which has become the heart of individual subjects, makes for unity, articulation and coordination, bringing forth within what is learnt in school a Christian vision of the world, of life, of culture and of history. In the Catholic school's educational project there is no separation between time for learning and time for formation, between acquiring notions and growing in wisdom. The various school subjects do not present only knowledge to be attained, but also values to be acquired and truths to be discovered. All of which demands an atmosphere characterized by the search for truth, in which competent, convinced and coherent educators, teachers of learning and of life, may be a reflection, albeit imperfect but still vivid, of the one Teacher. In this perspective, in the Christian educational project all subjects collaborate, each with its own specific content, to the formation of mature personalities.