

*The Mission and Identity
of the
Catholic School:
A Reflective Resource for Educators*



CENTER *for*
CATHOLIC EDUCATION
at AQUINAS COLLEGE

Its [The Catholic school's] 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***

Documents Cited

Note: Unless indicated otherwise, all documents were issued by the Congregation for Catholic Education. Listed chronologically, the initials in parentheses indicate how each is cited in this resource.

<i>Declaration on Christian Education</i> (<i>Gravissimum Educationis</i>) Vatican Council II	1965	(GE)
<i>On Evangelization in the Modern World</i> (<i>Evangelii Nuntiandi</i>) Pope Saint Paul VI	1975	(EN)
<i>The Catholic School</i>	1977	(TCS)
<i>Lay Catholics in School: Witnesses to Faith</i>	1982	(LCIS)
<i>The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School: Guidelines for Renewal and Reflection</i>	1988	(RD)
<i>The Catholic School on the Threshold Of the Third Millennium</i>	1997	(TM)
<i>Catechism of the Catholic Church</i> <i>2nd edition</i> <i>Libreria Editrice Vaticana</i>	2000	(CCC)
<i>Consecrated Persons and their Mission in Schools: Reflections and Guidelines</i>	2003	(CP)
<i>Educating Together in Catholic Schools: A Shared Mission between Consecrated Persons and the Lay Faithful</i>	2007	(ETCS)
<i>Educating to Intercultural Dialogue in Catholic Schools</i>	2013	(EID)
<i>The Joy of the Gospel</i> (<i>Evangelii Gaudium</i>) Pope Francis	2013	(EG)
<i>Educating to Fraternal Humanism</i>	2017	(EFH)
<i>Instruction: The Identity of the Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue</i>	2022	(ICS)

The documents quoted in this resource are available on the Holy See's website and through this link:

<https://www.aquinascollege.edu/centers/center-for-catholic-education/church-documents/>

Sent on a Mission



Ascension
John Singleton Copley
The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
Public Domain

Sent on a Mission
Commissioning of the Disciples
(*Matthew 28:16-20*)

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Sent on a Mission Documents

To fulfill the mandate she has received from her divine founder of proclaiming the mystery of salvation to all men and of restoring all things in Christ, Holy Mother the Church must be concerned with the whole of man's life, even the secular part of it insofar as it has a bearing on his heavenly calling. Therefore she has a role in the progress and development of education. – *GE, Introduction*

The influence of the Church in the field of education is shown in a special manner by the Catholic school. No less than other schools does the Catholic school pursue cultural goals and the human formation of youth. But its proper function is to create for the school community a special atmosphere animated by the Gospel spirit of freedom and charity, to help youth grow according to the new creatures they were made through baptism as they develop their own personalities, and 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. So indeed the Catholic school, while it is open, as it must be, to the situation of the contemporary world, leads its students to promote efficaciously the good of the earthly city and also prepares them for service in the spread of the Kingdom of God, so that by leading an exemplary apostolic life they become, as it were, a saving leaven in the human community. – *GE, #8*

Evangelization is, therefore, the mission of the Church; that is she must proclaim the good news of salvation to all, generate new creatures in Christ through Baptism, and train them to live knowingly as children of God. – *TCS, #7*

The mission of the Church is to evangelize, for the interior transformation and the renewal of humanity. For young people, the school is one of the ways for this evangelization to take place. – *TCS, #8*

The Catholic school forms part of the saving mission of the Church, especially for education in the faith. Remembering that "the simultaneous development of man's psychological and moral consciousness is demanded by Christ almost as a pre-condition for the reception of the befitting divine gifts of truth and grace", the Church fulfills her obligation to foster in her children a full awareness of their rebirth to a new life. It is precisely in the Gospel of Christ, taking root in the minds and lives of the faithful, that the Catholic school finds its definition as it comes to terms with the cultural conditions of the times. – *TCS, #9*

The Catholic school is committed thus to the development of the whole man, since in Christ, the Perfect Man, all human values find their fulfilment and unity. Herein lies the specifically Catholic character of the school. Its duty to cultivate human values in their own legitimate right in accordance with its particular mission to serve all men has its origin in the figure of Christ. He is the One Who ennobles man, gives meaning to human life, and is the Model which the Catholic school offers to its pupils. – *TCS, #35*

The complexity of the modern world makes it all the more necessary to increase awareness of the ecclesial identity of the Catholic school. It is from its Catholic identity that the school derives its original characteristics and its "structure" as a genuine instrument of the Church, a place of real and specific pastoral ministry. The Catholic school participates in the evangelizing mission of the Church and is the privileged environment in which Christian education is carried out. – *TM, #9*

For the Catholic school, a great responsibility is to bear witness. "The Christian presence must be shown and made clear, that is, it must be visible, tangible and conscious. Today, due to the advanced process of secularization, Catholic schools find themselves in a missionary situation, even in countries with an ancient Christian tradition". They are called upon to commit to bearing witness through an educational project clearly inspired by the Gospel. – *ICS, #28*

Sent on a Mission for Reflection and Discussion

The words given in the Gospel passage are the last words Jesus said on earth before ascending to the Father. Why is this significant?

Why does the Church have a fitting role in education?

How is our mission of education related to Jesus's own mission?

In what ways does the mission of your school support the evangelizing mission of the Church?

What characteristics in today's society make the mission of the school more critical for the student and for the society?

Other thought and comments:

Notes

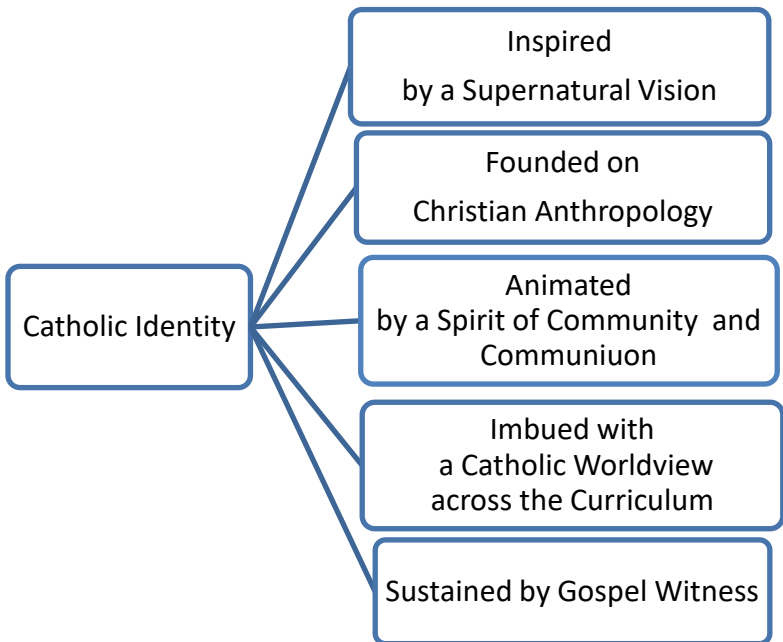
Catholic Identity

The Council, therefore, declared that what makes the Catholic school distinctive is its religious dimension, and that this is to be found in a) the educational climate, b) the personal development of each student, c) the relationship established between culture and the Gospel, d) the illumination of all knowledge with the light of faith.

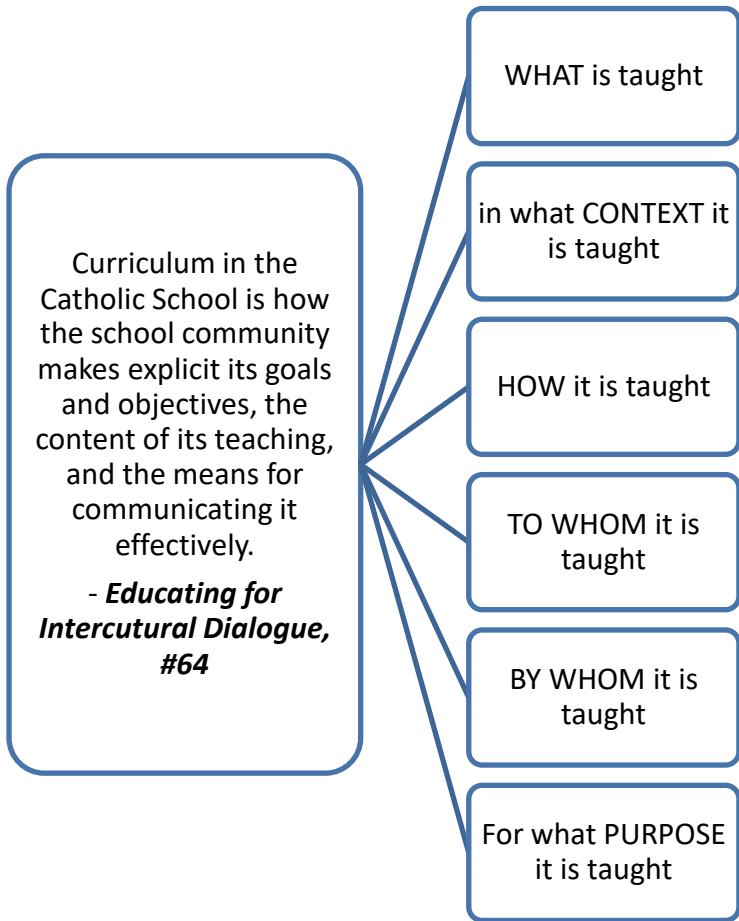
– *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*,
#1

Attributes of Catholic Identity:

designated by Archbishop Michael Miller, C.S.B. former secretary for the Congregation for Catholic Education



Catholic Identity: Impact on Curriculum



Inspired by a Supernatural Vision



The Miracle of the Wedding at Cana

Leandro Miguel Velasco

Photograph taken at the

National Shrine of the

Immaculate Conception

Used with permission

Inspired by a Supernatural Vision
The Wedding at Cana (John 2:1-11)

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, “They have no wine.” And Jesus said to her, “Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.” His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.” Now standing there were six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, “Fill the jars with water.” And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, “Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.” So they took it. When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom and said to him, “Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.” Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

Inspired by a Supernatural Vision Documents

For a true education aims at the formation of the human person in the pursuit of his ultimate end and of the good of the societies of which, as man, he is a member, and in whose obligations, as an adult, he will share. – *GE, #1*

A Christian education does not merely strive for the maturing of a human person as just now described, but has as its principal purpose this goal: that the baptized, while they are gradually introduced the knowledge of the mystery of salvation, become ever more aware of the gift of Faith they have received, and that they learn in addition how to worship God the Father in spirit and truth (cf. John 4:23) especially in liturgical action, and be conformed in their personal lives according to the new man created in justice and holiness of truth (Eph. 4:22-24); also that they develop into perfect manhood, to the mature measure of the fullness of Christ (cf. Eph. 4:13) and strive for the growth of the Mystical Body; moreover, that aware of their calling, they learn not only how to bear witness to the hope that is in them (cf. Peter 3:15) but also how to help in the Christian formation of the world that takes place when natural powers viewed in the full consideration of man redeemed by Christ contribute to the good of the whole society. Wherefore this sacred synod recalls to pastors of souls their most serious obligation to see to it that all the faithful, but especially the youth who are the hope of the Church, enjoy this Christian education. – *GE, #2*

When certain categories of reason and the sciences are taken up into the proclamation of the message, these categories then become tools of evangelization; water is changed into wine. Whatever is taken up is not just redeemed, but becomes an instrument of the Spirit for enlightening and renewing the world. – *EG #132*

Christ is the foundation of the whole educational enterprise in a Catholic school. His revelation gives new meaning to life and helps man to direct his thought, action and will according to the Gospel, making the beatitudes his norm of life. The fact that in their own individual ways all members of the school community share this Christian vision, makes the school "Catholic." – *TCS, #34*

Education is not given for the purpose of gaining power but as an aid towards a fuller understanding of, and communion with man, events and things. Knowledge is not to be considered as a means of material prosperity and success, but as a call to serve and to be responsible for others. – *TCS, #54*

While the Catholic school is like any other school in this complex variety of events that make up the life of the school, there is one essential difference: it draws its inspiration and its strength from the Gospel in which it is rooted. The principle that no human act is morally indifferent to one's conscience or before God has clear applications to school life: examples of it are school work accepted as a duty and done with good will; courage and perseverance when difficulties come; respect for teachers; loyalty toward and love for fellow students; sincerity, tolerance, and goodness in all relationships. – *RD, #47*

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. This means that Catholic educators must attain a special sensitivity with regard to the person to be educated in order to grasp not only the request for growth in knowledge and skills, but also the need for growth in humanity. – *ETCS, #24*

Inspired by a Supernatural Vision for Reflection and Discussion

How does the selected Scripture passage apply to this characteristic of Catholic Identity?

At Cana, both natural and supernatural elements come into play. How is that also the case in the Catholic school?

How can the role and actions of Our Lady at Cana be an encouragement for teachers?

How does the “natural vision” of education relate to the “supernatural vision” in a Catholic school?

How do you see this quality of Catholic Identity evident in your school? How could it be strengthened?

How is the teaching that “grace builds on nature” pertinent to this characteristic of the Catholic school?

Other thoughts and comments:

Notes



The Incredulity of Saint Thomas
Caravaggio
Sanssouci Picture Gallery, Potsdam
Public Domain

Founded on Christian Anthropology
Jesus and Thomas (John 20: 24-29)

But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe."

A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

Founded on Christian Anthropology Documents

All men of every race, condition and age, since they enjoy the dignity of a human being, have an inalienable right to an education that is in keeping with their ultimate goal. – *GE, #1*

She [the Church] establishes her own schools because she considers them as a privileged means of promoting the formation of the whole man, since the school is a center in which a specific concept of the world, of man, and of history is developed and conveyed. – *TCS, #8*

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. – *TCS, #55*

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.
– *RD, #56*

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 fulfilment of God's will. – *RD, #76*

The integral formation of the human person, which is the purpose of education, includes the development of all the human faculties of the students, together with preparation for professional life, formation of ethical and social awareness, becoming aware of the transcendental and religious education. – *LCIS, #17*

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 fulfilment and unity in Christ. – *TM, #9*

HUMAN PERSON: The human individual. made in the image of God; not some thing, but some one, a unity of spirit and matter, soul and body, capable of knowledge, self-possession, and freedom, who can enter into communion with other persons—and with God. The human person needs to live in society, which is a group of persons bound together organically by a principle of unity that goes beyond each one of them. – *CCC, p. 893*

Founded on Christian Anthropology for Reflection and Discussion

How does the selected Scripture passage apply to this characteristic of Catholic Identity?

Why is it significant that Christian Anthropology is the foundation for the concept and identity of a Catholic school?

How does the meaning of the phrase “educating the whole person” vary between schools founded on Christian anthropology and schools with different foundations?

How do the 3 basic capacities of the human person as cited in the *Catechism* relate to the mission of the school?

What is the relationship between the Christian view of the human person and the formation of community in a Catholic school?

How do you see this quality of Catholic Identity evident in your school? How could it be strengthened?

Other thoughts and comments:

Notes

Animated by a Spirit of
Communion and Community



*The Palsied Man
let down through the Roof*
James Tissot
Brooklyn Museum
no known copyright

Animated by a Spirit of Communion and Community
Jesus Heals a Paralytic (Luke 5:17-26)

One day, while he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting nearby (they had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem); and the power of the Lord was with him to heal. Just then some men came, carrying a paralyzed man on a bed. They were trying to bring him in and lay him before Jesus; but finding no way to bring him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down with his bed through the tiles into the middle of the crowd in front of Jesus. When he saw their faith, he said “Friend, your sins are forgiven you.” Then the scribes and the Pharisees began to question, “Who is this who is speaking blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?” When Jesus perceived their questionings, he answered them, “Why do you raise such questions in your hearts? Which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Stand up and walk’? But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he said to the one who was paralyzed—“I say to you, stand up and take your bed and go to your home.” Immediately he stood up before them, took what he had been lying on, and went to his home, glorifying God. Amazement seized all of them, and they glorified God and were filled with awe, saying, “We have seen strange things today.”

Animated by a Spirit of Communion and Community Documents

No less than other schools does the Catholic school pursue cultural goals and the human formation of youth. But its proper function is to create for the school community a special atmosphere animated by the Gospel spirit of freedom and charity... – *GE, #8*

The Catholic school, far more than any other, must be a community whose aim is the transmission of values for living. Its work is seen as promoting a faith-relationship with Christ in Whom all values find fulfillment. But faith is principally assimilated through contact with people whose daily life bears witness to it. Christian faith, in fact, is born and grows inside a community. – *TCS, #53*

The community aspect of the Catholic school is necessary because of the nature of the faith and not simply because of the nature of man and the nature of the educational process which is common to every school. – *TCS, #53*

The Catholic school pursues cultural goals and the natural development of youth to the same degree as any other school. What makes a Catholic school distinctive is its attempt to generate a community climate in the school that is permeated by the Gospel spirit of freedom and love. – *RD #1*

Achieving the educational aims of the school should be an equal priority for teachers, students and families alike, each one according to his or her own role, always in the Gospel spirit of freedom and love. Therefore channels of communication should be open among all those concerned with the school. – *RD, #29*

As far as Catholic schools are concerned, the conciliar declaration represents a turning point, since, in line with the ecclesiology of *Lumen Gentium*, it considers the school not so much as an institution but as a community. – *ICS, #16*

Every human being is called to live in a community, as a social being, and as a member of the People of God. Therefore, the educational community of a school is itself a “school.” It teaches one how to be a member of the wider social communities; and when the educational community is at the same time a Christian community—and this is what the educational community of a Catholic school must always be striving toward—then it offers a great opportunity for the teachers to provide the students with a living example of what it means to be a member of that great community which is the Church. – *LCIS, #22*

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). Therefore, within the sphere of biblical anthropology, man is not an isolated individual, but a person: a being who is essentially relational. The communion to which man is called always involves a double dimension, that is to say vertical (communion with God) and horizontal (communion with people). – *ETCS, #8*

It is also helpful to bear in mind, in harmony with the Second Vatican Council that this community dimension in the Catholic school is not a merely sociological category; it has a theological foundation as well. The educating community, taken as a whole, is thus called to further the objective of a school as a place of complete formation through interpersonal relations. – *TM, #18*

“Humanizing education” means putting the person at the center of education, in a framework of relationships that make up a living community, which is interdependent and bound to a common destiny. – *EFH, #8*

Animated by a Spirit of Communion and Community for Reflection and Discussion

How does this Gospel selection reflect the power of community in the school?

How are “communion”, “community” and “communication” each related to the identity of the Catholic school?

How does the attribute of “community” relate both to the nature of the human person and to the nature of faith itself?

How does today’s culture impact the importance of community in education?

What is the distinction between the “community” that should be present in the Catholic school and that experienced in another educational setting?

How do you see this quality of Catholic Identity evident in your school? How could it be strengthened?

Other thoughts and comments:

Notes

Imbued with a
Catholic Worldview throughout the Curriculum



Gang nach Emmaus
Robert Zunn
St. Gallen Gallery, Switzerland
Public Domain

**Imbued with a
Catholic Worldview throughout the Curriculum
*The Walk to Emmaus (Luke 24: 15-35)***

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, “What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?” They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, “Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?”

He asked them, “What things?” They replied, “The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him.”

Then he said to them, “Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?”

Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.” So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight.

They said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us¹⁴ while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?” That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!” Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Imbued with a Catholic Worldview throughout the Curriculum Documents

Therefore children and young people must be helped, with the aid of the latest advances in psychology and the arts and science of teaching, to develop harmoniously their physical, moral and intellectual endowments so that they may gradually acquire a mature sense of responsibility in striving endlessly to form their own lives properly and in pursuing true freedom as they surmount the vicissitudes of life with courage and constancy. – *GE, #1*

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. – *TCS, #39*

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. – *TCS, #44*

Catholic schools think out their curricula to place center-stage both individuals and their search for meaning. This is the reference value, in view of which the various academic disciplines are important resources and take on greater value to the extent that they are tools for educating. From this perspective, what is taught is not neutral, and neither is the way of teaching it. – *EID, #65*

Intellectual development and growth as a Christian go forward hand in hand. As students move up from one class into the next it becomes increasingly imperative that a Catholic school help them become aware that a relationship exists between faith and human culture. – *RD, #53*

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. – *RD, #55*

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. – *TM, #14*

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. – *TM, #14*

**Imbued with a
Catholic Worldview throughout the Curriculum
for Reflection and Discussion**

How does the selected Scripture passage apply to this characteristic of Catholic Identity?

Identify ways in which the Catholic worldview affects the whole curriculum. Referring to the chart on page 11 of this resource may be helpful.

How does a Catholic worldview impact extracurricular activities such as sports, drama, the arts, etc.in schools?

How does Catholic Identity affect scheduling in a school including curricular offerings?

How do you see this quality of Catholic Identity evident in your school? How could it be strengthened?

The Church documents caution against a “fragmented” curriculum. What makes a curriculum fragmented?

Other thought and comments:

Notes



Christ's Charge to Peter
Raphael
Victoria and Albert Museum
Public Domain

Sustained by Gospel Witness
Jesus and Peter (John 21: 15-22)

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my lambs.” A second time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Tend my sheep.” He said to him the third time, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, “Do you love me?” And he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep. Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go.” (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, “Follow me.” Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them; ... When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, “Lord, what about him?” Jesus said to him, “If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? Follow me!”

Sustained by Gospel Witness Documents

Beautiful indeed and of great importance is the vocation of all those who aid parents in fulfilling their duties and who, as representatives of the human community, undertake the task of education in schools. This vocation demands special qualities of mind and heart, very careful preparation, and continuing readiness to renew and to adapt.

– *GE, #5*

But let teachers recognize that the Catholic school depends upon them almost entirely for the accomplishment of its goals and programs. .. Intimately linked in charity to one another and to their students and endowed with an apostolic spirit, may teachers by their life as much as by their instruction bear witness to Christ, the unique Teacher. – *GE, #8*

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. – *TCS, #41*

The extent to which the Christian message is transmitted through education depends to a very great extent on the teachers. 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 behavior. – *TCS, #43*

For the Catholic educator, whatever is true is a participation in Him who is the Truth; the communication of truth, therefore, as a professional activity, is thus fundamentally transformed into a unique participation in the prophetic mission of Christ, carried on through one's teaching. – *LCIS, #16*

Most of all, students should be able to recognize authentic human qualities in their teachers. They are teachers of the faith; however, like Christ, they must also be teachers of what it means to be human.

– *RD, #96*

Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses. – *EN*, #41

The more completely an educator can give concrete witness to the model of the ideal person that is being presented to the students, the more this ideal will be believed and imitated. For it will then be seen as something reasonable and worthy of being lived, something concrete and realizable. It is in this context that the faith witness of the lay teacher becomes especially important. Students should see in their teachers the Christian attitude and behavior that is often so conspicuously absent from the secular atmosphere in which they live. – *LCIS*, #32

By their witness and their behavior teachers are of the first importance to impart a distinctive character to Catholic schools. – *TCS*, #78

In the Catholic school, "prime responsibility for creating this unique Christian school climate rests with the teachers, as individuals and as a community". Teaching has an extraordinary moral depth and is one of man's most excellent and creative activities, for the teacher does not write on inanimate material, but on the very spirits of human beings. – *TM*, #19

Today too, people prefer to listen to witnesses: they "thirst for authenticity" and "call for evangelizers to speak of a God whom they themselves know and are familiar with, as if they were seeing him." – *EG*, #150

**Sustained by Gospel Witness
for Reflection and Discussion**

What does it mean to lead pupils to “the heart of total Truth?”
(See document entry *The Catholic School*, #41).

Why is the example given by teachers critical in the faith development of the student?

In what ways is the witness to the Gospel given by educators a “sustaining” influence for the Catholic school?

How do you see this quality of Catholic Identity evident in your school? How could it be strengthened?

Why do teachers have a greater responsibility to give witness than those in other professions?

Other thoughts and comments:

Notes

Sent on a Mission: Revisited



Ascension

John Singleton Copley
The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
Public Domain

Sent on a Mission: Revisited
Commissioning of the Disciples
(*Matthew 28:16-20*)

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Our role in the Kingdom

The kingdom of heaven is like
yeast that a woman took and mixed in
with three measures of flour until
all of it was leavened. – **Matthew 13:33.**

“God has given the first place to apostles,
the second to prophets, the third to teachers;
after them, miracles...”

– **1 Corinthians 12:28**

Documents

The project of the Catholic school is convincing only if carried out by people who are deeply motivated, because they witness to a **living encounter with Christ**. – *ETCS, #4*.

The first and fundamental contribution to the educational mission in schools by consecrated persons is the evangelical completeness of their lives...They are called to live the evangelical councils and bring **the humanism of the beatitudes** to the field of education and schools. – *CP, #6*.

The laity seeks the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God. They live in the midst of the world's activities and professions, and in the ordinary circumstances of family and social life. And there they are called by God so that by exercising their proper function and being led by the spirit of the Gospel they can work for the sanctification of the world from within, **in the manner of leaven**. – *LCIS, #7*

The work of a lay educator has an undeniably professional aspect; but it cannot be reduced to professionalism alone. Professionalism is marked by, and raised to, a **super-natural Christian vocation**. – *LCIS, #37*

Each believer is a link in the great chain of believers. I cannot believe without being carried by the **faith of others**, and by my faith, I help support others in the faith.” – *CCC #166*

Catholic schools, which always strive to join their work of education with the explicit proclamation of the Gospel, are a most valuable resource for the **evangelization of culture**, even in those countries and cities where hostile situations challenge us to greater creativity in our search for suitable methods– *EG, #134*

From the Popes and Saints

“Christian teaching not only bestows on the intellect the light by which it attains truth, but from it our will draws that ardor by which we are raised up to God and joined with Him in the practice of virtue.” – **Pope Saint Pius X**

“As teachers, you kindle in your students a thirst for truth and wisdom. You spark off in them a desire for beauty. You introduce them to their cultural heritage. You help them to discover the treasures of other cultures and peoples. What an awesome responsibility and privilege is yours in the teaching profession.”
– **Pope Saint John Paul II**

“First and foremost every Catholic educational institution is a place to encounter the living God who in Jesus Christ reveals his transforming love and truth.” – **Pope Benedict XVI, 2008**

“Let us thank all those who teach in Catholic schools. Educating is an act of love; it is like giving life.” – **Pope Francis, 2014**

“Just as it is better to illuminate than merely to shine, so to pass on what one has contemplated is better than merely to contemplate.”
– **Saint Thomas Aquinas, O.P.**

“Do your part to help build up the kingdom of God in the hearts of your students.” – **Saint John Baptist de La Salle**

“Love the children first, and then teach them.” – **Saint Mother Theodore Guerin**

“Do you want to do a good deed? Teach the young! Do you want to perform a holy act? Teach the young! Do you want to do a holy thing? Teach the young! Truly, now and for the future, among holy things, this is the holiest.” – **Saint John Bosco**

“We must teach more by example than by word,” – **Saint Mother Mary MacKillop**

“If you are what you should be, you will set the whole world on fire. Let the truth be your delight – proclaim it, but with a certain congeniality.” – **Saint Catherine of Siena**

Sent on a Mission: Revisited for Reflection and Discussion

In what ways are teachers called to be like leaven or yeast?

What is inspiring about the quotation from the First epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians?

What do the quotations from the various popes tell us about the role of teaching?

Which quotation of a saint encourages you the most? Why?

Consider your own “chain of faith.” Who forms “the links” on it? Are there any students included? If so, how did they contribute to your own formation in the faith?

What are the challenges Christians face today in their efforts to evangelize culture?

How can Catholic schools help to meet those challenges?

Notes



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