

## REVIEW OF RESEARCH

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# SPIRITUAL FORMATION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATORS: UNDERSTANDING THE NEED

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*This article discusses the need for thoughtful programs of spiritual formation for lay educators who staff Catholic schools. The importance of teacher formation in spiritual growth and in knowledge of the Catholic faith and daily living of the Gospel is highlighted.*

## SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

Among the various roles assumed by a principal (Hughes & Ubben, 1984; Kimbrough & Burkett, 1990; Lipham, 1964), Sergiovanni (1984) maintains that the competent school principal must provide a school environment that is characterized by three forces: managerial, relational, and educational. The managerial force refers to the ability of a principal to use the needed skills to establish an orderly school where students and staff can rationally pursue learning. The relational force refers to the ability of a principal to build a human environment of cordiality, respect, and cooperation among students and staff. The educational force refers to the ability of the principal to establish a learning community that is aware of state-of-the-art knowledge related to the functions of teaching and learning. These qualities create school competence. School excellence is created when two additional forces are evident: symbolic and cultural. The symbolic force refers to the ability of the principal to assume the role of “chief” and to model goals and behaviors that signal a vision to others of what has meaning and value. The cultural force refers to the ability of the principal to articulate the purposes and values of the school in order to create a meaning-filled experience for staff and students.

While Sergiovanni’s (1984) remarks could apply to any school, such vocabulary is familiar to Catholic school leaders: “School culture includes values, symbols, beliefs, and shared meanings of parents, students, teachers, and others conceived as a group or community. Culture governs what

is of worth for this group and how members should think, feel, and behave” (p. 9). The Catholic faith provides principles, norms, customs, traditions, and common meanings that enliven Sergiovanni’s terms: “The Gospel spirit should be evident in a Christian way of thought and life which permeates all facets of the educational program” (Congregation for Catholic Education [CCE], 1988, §25).

The Catholic school leader applies these forces of leadership to meet the challenges of nurturing spiritual growth and formation. The Catholic school leader must possess the qualities associated with competence. However, to be excellent, the Catholic school leader must accept the challenge of articulating a Christian vision and the development of spiritually self-aware and motivated Christian individuals (Muccigrosso, 1994).

In order to assist Catholic dioceses in developing Catholic school leaders, a committee was formed in 1991 of persons associated with the then United States Catholic Conference (USCC) Department of Education, the Chief Administrations of Catholic Education of the National Catholic Educational Association (CACE/NCEA), and the National Catholic Graduate Educational Leadership Programs (NCGELP) of Catholic Colleges and Universities (Ciriello, 1994). The fruits of this committee were a set of competencies encompassing the knowledge and skills expected of a Catholic school administrator who was well prepared. These expectations were related to three leadership roles: educational, managerial, and spiritual. Building upon the solid foundation provided by educational and managerial expertise, the Catholic school principal must also foster the spiritual and faith development of all members of the Catholic school community (Muccigrosso, 1994). Spiritual leadership is central to the identity of the Catholic school. The Catholic school principal must foster both the religious and academic mission of the Catholic school. The Catholic school principal guides the spiritual formation of faculty and students, which involves “establishing and nurturing a real relationship to Jesus and the Father in the Holy Spirit, through a vigorous sacramental life, prayer, study, and serving others” (National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1979, §173). As any principal, the Catholic school principal also monitors the teaching and learning process in all subject areas.

If Catholic schools are to continue to be distinguished by their strong faith communities and not become private schools characterized as schools of academic excellence and a religious memory, attention must be given to faith leadership and how it is being developed in school leadership (Wallace, 1998). The faith leader recognizes the influence of the Catholic mission on the school (Buetow, 1988) and is able to build a community of faith around a vision of the Church that is shared by all members of the community (Gorman, 1989). The role of the faith leader may be divided

into two parts: the spiritual attributes that a person brings to the job through a personal faith experience, and the pastoral competencies to create a prayer environment, develop a sense of community service, witness to the faith, and integrate the Gospel message into the curriculum (Drahmann & Stenger, 1989).

Literature related to educational leadership identified a variety of responsibilities associated with any school leadership role. Some researchers identified these responsibilities as management and leadership, or managerial, relational, and educational. To these qualities associated with school competence, Sergiovanni (1984) added the importance of symbolic and cultural forces to distinguish schools of excellence from schools of competence. Building on the value of developing school culture, the Catholic school leader can apply these symbolic and cultural forces of leadership to meet the challenges of nurturing spiritual growth and formation of faculty, as well as students. The literature on educational leadership serves as a foundation for identifying the spiritual leadership that should be a part of the Catholic school. Recognizing that the Catholic school leader must nurture the spiritual formation of both faculty and students helps to establish the importance of addressing the spiritual needs of faculty in an ongoing, thoughtful, programmatic effort.

## **LITERACY**

Selected theories related to learning provide insight not only into the ways in which children learn, but also into the ways that adults learn. One significant theory is emergent literacy (Strickland & Morrow, 1989; Sulzby, 1994; Sulzby & Teale, 1991; Teale & Sulzby, 1986, 1996; Yaden, Rowe, & MacGillivray, 2000), describing behaviors in reading and writing that precede and develop into conventional literacy. Children are somehow innately predisposed to become literate; all adults must do is provide an environment rich in literacy artifacts and activities. The functions of literacy are an integral part of the learning process that takes place. Children learn through active engagement, constructing understanding of how the written language works. Children and parents interact through print.

Storybook reading is a socially created, interactive activity and is more than the reader's oral rendering of the text. The language of the adult and the child surrounds the author's words. The participants cooperate and seek to negotiate meaning by using verbal and nonverbal means. The adult supports the child's performance through successive engagements. Gradually, the adult transfers more and more autonomy to the child (Sulzby & Teale, 1991). Based on this scaffolding concept, reading aloud is an act of construction. Language and the accompanying social interaction are integral to

the influence of storybook reading on literacy development. Routines create predictable outcomes, which allow children to participate, serving to scaffold the activity and helping the children to complete the task beyond their capabilities. From these interactive readings, children's independent, not-yet-conventional readings emerge.

A brief review of some major theories of literacy establishes some basic principles of literacy and learning that could serve as a model of how learning takes place. These principles of learning help to establish how spiritual formation and character development can be developed. Since Bennett (1993) spoke of "moral literacy," understanding some key principles associated with literacy establishes a link between the learning process and the acquisition of spirituality and virtue. From this perspective, adult learners arguably engage in a relationship similar to that found between a parent and child where emergent literacy (Strickland & Morrow, 1989; Sulzby, 1994; Sulzby & Teale, 1991; Teale & Sulzby, 1986, 1996; Yaden et al., 2000) occurs.

## **RESEARCH ON TEACHER FORMATION**

Doyle (1990) described teacher education research as "a loosely coordinated set of experiences designed to establish and maintain a talented teaching force" (p. 3). Against this definition, Doyle identified five major themes or paradigms for the teacher; namely, "Good Employee"; "Junior Professor"; "Fully Functioning Person"; "Innovator" (p. 5); and "Reflective Professional" (p. 6). Each of these is a model for teaching. Yet, combined, these themes create a set of stages in which teacher education moved from seeking to prepare teachers in practices at one end to fostering the reflective capacities of observation, analysis, interpretation, and decision making at the other end, with knowledge, personal development, and proactive innovation in the middle.

Future research in teacher education is also a concern. Doyle (1990) stated that the study of teaching practices "shifts...to an explication of how a practice works and what meaning it has to teachers and students in a particular context" (p. 20). As a framework for the study of teachers' knowledge, context and thought must be combined. The purpose is to understand how meanings are constructed in classroom settings. Doyle stated: "Research along these lines generates not indicators but frameworks about what teachers know, how they act, and what judgments they make in solving teaching dilemmas" (p. 20).

As Doyle (1990) addressed themes in education research, Yager and Smith (1990) addressed issues in the research on teacher education. They concluded that the purpose of research is three-fold: to describe what cur-

rently exists, to explore a familiar condition for a more thorough understanding, and to manipulate the environment through the outcomes. In their study, the Santa Barbara Classroom Discourse Group (1994) proposed a broader understanding of literacy that shows how literacy was defined, redefined, constructed, and reconstructed with a group so that “the outcome of this process is not a single definition of literacy, but an understanding of the multiplicity of literacies individuals face as they become members of ever-expanding groups and communities” (p. 147). They concluded that “like their students, the teachers were influenced by the opportunities they have to learn new ways of being teachers and engaging students in learning” (p. 148). In addition, they concluded that issues of literacy and professional development are intertwined.

Feiman-Nemser (1990) explored alternative approaches to teacher preparation. In describing a “Personal Orientation” approach, Feiman-Nemser states, “The teacher’s own personal development is a central part of teacher preparation” (p. 225). Feiman-Nemser proposed three types of future research in teacher education: program studies, implementation studies, and impact studies. Program studies examine programs as educational interventions. Implementation studies examine factors that promote the success or failure of various programmatic reforms. Impact studies explore the effects of particular program components and learning opportunities on teachers’ ideas and practices.

The literature related to teacher formation established the need for research in this area, particularly to learn how various practices work. Doyle’s work (1990) is helpful in understanding how meanings are constructed in the classroom setting. The Santa Barbara Classroom Discourse Group (1994) provided a broader understanding of literacy as a means for developing the moral literacy that Bennett (1993) described. Finally, Feiman-Nemser (1990) provided a theory to support the importance and value of assisting teachers with their spiritual growth since “personal development is a central part of teacher preparation” (p. 225).

## CARING

A review of literature related to caring as an aspect of literacy not only helps to create the atmosphere for learning but also supports the premise that a teacher’s personal development is important to professional development. The concept of caring is essential to character education and spiritual formation since the caring teacher seems to be able to teach more effectively. If the caring teacher teaches how to care, then it may be possible to show that the moral, virtuous, character-educated, and spiritual teacher may teach others to be moral, virtuous, strong in character, and spiritual.

## LITERACY AND CARING

In addition to recognizing the value of storybook reading as an aide to the language and literacy development of a child, each of the reviewed studies on this topic seems to be part of one continuous developing commentary on the importance of the parent or significant caregiver in the storybook event. All of the studies cited seem to lead to a general conclusion that frequency of reading is very important. However, quantity is not the only ingredient. Quality is even more significant. Successful home experiences seem to balance an informal and natural interaction with the direction needed to focus children's attention on the picture, page, or topic in the storybook event.

In considering the importance of caring to education, Sergiovanni (2000) believed that teaching is a profession founded on both methods and mastery of a discipline: "To teach is to profess something, and professing requires standing for certain virtues that include making a public commitment to serve ideas and people. Caring is the cornerstone of this commitment" (p. 35). Sergiovanni's statement summarized the findings of several other researchers (Arlin, 1999; Elbaz, 1992; Noddings, 1984, 1988, 1991, 1993a, 1993b, 1999) on the importance of caring. Schools should be centers of care that promote human development and respond to human needs. Both teaching and caring depend on cultivating special relationships between and among teachers and students. Teaching may be equated with caring; caring may be equated with teaching.

This commitment for teaching includes a sense of being there for the other person and a sense of compassion. Caring and serving are the foundation anchors for the profession of teaching. Sergiovanni (2000) believed that every pedagogical action shows how one is oriented to children, either living up or failing to live up to teaching responsibilities. There are three life world conditions of pedagogy: "loving care for the child; hope for the child; and responsibility for the child – all of which provide a moral basis for the practice of teaching" (p. 36).

Thus, Sergiovanni (2000) believed that service to people, ideas, and caring are the professional virtues that contribute and provide substance for school character. Professionalism and character need to be intertwined. With care as the cornerstone and character a goal for education, teachers are concerned about maintaining and nurturing higher levels of competency, while paying attention to caring and community building. Sergiovanni seems convinced that competence and care need to join together in the practice of teaching.

With caring as the foundation for moral education (Sergiovanni, 2000), Noddings (1984, 1988, 1991, 1993a, 1993b) also was able to distinguish two separate but related roles in a caring relationship: the one caring and

the one cared for. Noddings noted that whatever one does in life, one is either the one caring or the one cared for. A teacher is one example of one caring, who is engrossed in the cared for and receives the other completely and non-selectively for the interval of caring.

However, to be in a caring relationship both the one caring and the one cared for must contribute appropriately. The one caring offers something that is received by and completed in the one cared for, who, in turn, looks for something that tells of the regard of the one caring. The one cared for "feels that something has been added to him" (Noddings, 1984, p. 20). Yet, the response from the one cared for is essential to the relation. Gratitude, direct acknowledgment, spontaneous delight, and happy growth are responses from the cared for that show the caring has been received. Noddings suggested that there is a need for relation and caring in teaching.

Additional research (Larrivee, 2000; Teven, 2001) supported the importance of caring for education. It is an essential quality for the committed teacher. It builds the rapport needed between teacher and student. It provides motivation for the student, not only to learn, but also to become a caring individual. The research upheld the concepts of emergent literacy and scaffolding in learning how to care, supporting the idea that if caring could emerge as a result of scaffolding, then other character qualities could potentially develop in the same manner.

However, research also supported the importance of caring in the learning process and in developing a good self-concept. It created a foundation for recognizing the importance of caring as a component of character education which is even more important in a school that professes to be rooted in Gospel values.

## **MORAL EDUCATION**

Recalling an earlier study that equated the ethical and the moral, Noddings (1984, 1988) developed a concept of moral education. However, to approach moral education from a caring orientation, Noddings affirmed that morality is more than a course of study or set of principles to be memorized. Students need to be guided toward an ethical life. Furthermore, every human encounter offers the possibility of being a caring occasion.

From this perspective, Noddings (1984, 1988) developed components for moral education – modeling, dialogue, practice, and confirmation – thus pointing us to the relationship between caring and interpersonal reason through stories in dialogue. The ethic of caring is at the heart of this interpersonal reasoning. Noddings suggested that people develop a moral orientation of caring through direct contact with those who need caring and that being cared for may be a necessary prerequisite to learning to care.

In a later study, Noddings (1993b) affirmed that the heart of moral education is ordinary conversation. To be valuable for moral education, conversation should possess three qualities. First, the adults must be reasonably good people. Second, adults need to care for children and enjoy their company. Third, they should place the person over the topic in importance. Thus, through a partnership with their students, education could be less a debate with students and more a conversation between partners who like each other and enjoy each other's company. Though this still would not be easy, the rapport established through conversation and the underlying sense of caring could make moral education more possible. Once a relation is established, there is less possibility of violence, and compromise is a possible solution to conflict. Noddings suggested that respect leaves one open to learning and exploring. It is a preparation for a moral life that is rooted in openness, friendliness, trust, and caring.

Other authors also addressed this moral dimension of teaching. Elbaz (1992) described the caring teacher as one who cares for the differences and the uniqueness of each child and recognizes variability in attitudes, abilities, experience, disposition, and need.

Bennett (1993) maintained that moral education not only involves rules and precepts, but also explicit instruction, exhortation, and training. Moral education must provide training in good habits and affirm the importance of moral example. There is the need for moral literacy, where teachers explain and model good moral practices or virtues (Bennett, Finn, & Cribb, 1999). Similar to the theme of the Santa Barbara Classroom Discourse Group (1994), Bennett suggested that the teaching of stories engages us in a renewal that can welcome children to a common world of shared ideas, to a community of moral persons, and to the need for moral literacy.

Coles (1986, 1997) examined the issue of moral conduct as it develops in response to the way a child is treated at home or in school, a response to moral experiences as they take place in a family or a classroom. The child witnesses adult morality or lack thereof, looks for cues about how to behave, and finds them in parents and teachers. Life's experiences, as well as stories (Coles, 1989), provide nourishment for the moral imagination.

Research on moral or ethical education supports the importance of moral education for any student. In addition, it provides a broader view of literacy in view of Bennett's (1993) collection of stories on virtue with the importance of "moral literacy." Noddings (1984, 1988) identified caring as a moral orientation to teaching and the aim of education. The components of moral education included modeling, dialogue, practice, and confirmation. In addition, Noddings (1993b) developed the idea that ordinary conversation served as the heart of moral education. One definition of prayer is the idea that prayer is conversation with God and the oxygen of the soul.



From a secular perspective, if conversation could serve as the heart of moral education, then from a religious perspective, conversation with God through prayer could provide the religious foundation for moral education in a Catholic school. The research of Coles (1986) on moral thinking, moral development, and moral intelligence stressed the need for this development and the importance of giving witness or learning from others' behaviors.

## CHARACTER EDUCATION

Character education has been a part of American education since colonial times with the *Hornbook* containing the Lord's Prayer and *The New England Primer* teaching skills necessary for a "proper life and eternal salvation" (as cited in Burrett & Rusnak, 1993, p. 10). The preface of the *McGuffey Reader* notes: "Careful attention is paid to develop the character of each student through selected stories" (as cited in Burrett & Rusnak, 1993, pp. 10-11). Burrett and Rusnak (1993) cited six principles for implementing what they call the integrated character education approach:

1. Character education is part of every subject.
2. The school and community are vital partners in the character education of youth.
3. A positive classroom environment supports character education.
4. Empowered teachers are in the best position to carry out the goals of character education.
5. Character education is encouraged through administrative policy and practice.
6. Character education is action education. (p. 18)

Based on Aristotle's definition of character as right conduct in relation to others and to oneself, Lickona (1991) addressed several basic questions that he considered to be important to character education: (a) Why should we teach good character? (b) What values should we teach? (c) What is good character? (d) What strategies can we develop to do this? In response to the first question, he identified several reasons why schools should make a commitment to teaching moral values and developing good character, in addition to focusing on academic achievement. In response to the second question, Lickona provided guidance for schools about how to choose values, defined a "moral value" and its relationship to religion, and highlighted two values as a foundation; namely, respect and responsibility (Lickona, 1991). In response to the third question, Lickona identified three major components of good character; namely, moral knowing, moral feeling, and

moral action. Finally, Lickona proposed a comprehensive approach to values and character education. For Lickona, a complete values education must touch both the mind and the heart if these actions of good character are to become real.

Lickona's work (1976, 1991, 1993; Lickona & Ryan, 1992) on character education provided insight on the basic elements of good character, especially, respect and responsibility. It also provides a program of how to implement character education within the classroom, the school, and the community in general. The author provided a framework of content and methods and a foundation for exploring the meaning and value of any virtue, as well as for integrating virtue throughout the school community.

## SPIRITUALITY

Today, society, in general, has an increased interest in spirituality. Contemporary magazines, such as *Ladies Home Journal* (Aborn, 1998), *Modern Maturity* (Wakefield, 2000), *America* (Martin, 2000), and *Educational Leadership* (Halford, 1999), show that the quest for spirituality could be associated not only with any particular religion, but also within a secular society. People are longing for the sacred, even those who have rejected institutional religion (Halford, 1999).

All forms of spirituality seem to have a common thread, "the quest of the human spirit for something that is above us, that is bigger, deeper, 'more than' the ordinary surface reality of life" (Guinan, 1998, p. 1). Both Hebrew and Christian Scripture have a concrete meaning of "spirit." Whether the Hebrew *ruach* or the Greek *pneuma*, the basic meaning is "wind/breath" (Merkel, 1998). Christian spirituality could be broadly defined as "our life in the Spirit of God" or "the art of letting God's spirit fill us, work in us, guide us" (Guinan, 1998, p. 2). It deals with the whole person, body and soul, thoughts and feelings, hopes and fears, living in and with the power of the Holy Spirit. It deals with the whole life of the whole person, calling the individual to live life to the fullest. The call and challenge of the spiritual life is intended for all people.

There are different styles of spirituality including Christian and non-Christian forms (Aumann, 1985). Many authors have written on spirituality, outlining principles of prayer, discernment, asceticism, direction, silence, solitude, reading, meditation, journal writing, contemplation, and service to guide a person's growth in the spiritual life (T. Keating, 1987; Morneau, 1996; Muto, 1984; Van Kaam & Muto, 1978). Growing in the spiritual life means becoming more aware of being rooted in God and depending on Him for every breath, thought, and action. However, because each person is unique, "our response to God's call will be as unique as each

person, each child of God, who has ever lived” (Guinan, 1998, p. 4).

Philosophers have viewed education as a spiritual vocation with its foundation being the educator’s own spirituality (Groome, 1998). “Spirituality” is a core principle of Groome’s (1998) approach to education. Every teacher and parent has a call or vocation to be a “humanizing educator, to teach with a spiritual vision” (p. 37). This calling (*vocatus*) is heard within one’s being and comes from beyond one’s self. As a result, philosophers, including Plato and Aristotle, “have understood educator as a spiritual vocation, implying that its surest foundation is the educator’s own spirituality” (p. 37).

Groome (1998) defined “spirituality” as “the animating and defining human principle that is the very life of God in humankind” (p. 325). Proposing that all educators can engage learners as spiritual beings, Groome included this spiritual development as an integral part of any curriculum. Groome advocated the importance of this spiritual dimension in the life of the educator and provided strategies to assist the educator’s development, as well as strategies to use in teaching the learner. In addition, religious schools should “overtly nurture the spirituality of their students” (p. 354) throughout the curriculum.

Groome broadened the value of respect and responsibility (Lickona, 1991) and linked these two qualities with reverence, which seeks to recognize the deepest truth about anything. This underlying spirituality accounts for the breadth of Groome’s humanizing and holistic vision, educating not only for character (Lickona, 1991), but also educating for life. For Groome, the purpose of education is to assist learners to become fully alive human beings who can help to create a society to serve the common good of all. The purpose and process of educating are inspired and synonymous with a spiritual vision, especially given the nature of what educators can affect at the heart’s core of learners, and if they try to educate for life for all. Groome believed that the ultimate goal of this education enables people to become fully alive human beings and to fulfill their ultimate human vocation with a horizon that stretches to the transcendent. Reflective of the value of caring in education as developed earlier, Groome believed that a humanizing education seems more likely for educators who have an abiding faith in the worth of their vocation, the potential of their learners, and in gracious mystery or God. In addition, faith in a religiously held conviction makes it more possible for that conviction to become a source of educators’ commitment in their educating. United by this spiritual vision, drawing from a variety of “depth structures,” and providing the practical guidance to make this vision a reality in the educator’s soul, style, and space, Groome developed his total vision of “educating for life.”

Palmer (1999) noted that the fear of spirituality has had negative

effects on education: “The price is a school system that alienates and dulls us, that graduates young people who have had no mentoring in the questions that both enliven and vex the human spirit” (p. 6). While the spiritual questions may be associated with God, they are also the everyday questions that drive the search for meaning in life, for the gifts and needs, for trust, for understanding suffering and fear, and for questions about death. Failure to ask these questions may lead to technical triviality, cultural banality, and a desperate cry for meaning. Spirituality (Palmer, 1999), like integrated character education (Burrett & Rusnak, 1993), is not something that needs to be added-on to be included in the curriculum. Palmer (1999) believed spirituality is at the heart of every subject just waiting to be brought to light.

Hellwig (1998) believed that spirituality must try to be in harmony with the source and meaning of our being in contemplation and in action. Christian spirituality seeks this harmony in a continuing discipleship with Jesus of Nazareth. With discipleship or apprenticeship, “Christian life is a continual learning from and empowerment by the person of Jesus of Nazareth” (Hellwig, 1998, p. 7). Hellwig proposed that a Christian spirituality should have four characteristics:

- to be thoughtful and discerning
- to be countercultural and community building
- to be open to uncertainty and attuned to an unending process of learning
- to be practical in the public and private sphere, and ecumenical in seeking allies and inspiration wherever they may be found. (p. 8)

Using the process of Christian initiation into the Roman Catholic faith, outlined in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (Catholic Church, 1986), Morris (1998) suggested that this initiation process could provide the foundation for living in the presence of the Spirit and growing in one’s spirituality. These foundations or dimensions of Christian spirituality are catechesis, community, liturgy, and service (Catholic Church, 1986). Through the student-teacher relationship, the spirituality can operate in a practical way to permeate the school culture in the Catholic school (Shimabukuro, 1998). This practical spirituality implies an interior synthesis within the teacher. This continuous spiritual process must become visible through effective interaction with others and the teacher must have great skill in behavioral areas, such as, self-esteem, authentic caring, humility, and communication skills. This is consistent with Groome’s belief that the educator’s mission is “to inform, form, and transform [students] with the meaning and ethic of Christian faith” (1996, p. 118).

Groome (1998) stressed not only the respect and responsibility of character education (Lickona, 1991), but also the importance of reverence. Groome emphasized the concept of educator as a spiritual vocation, and stressed the importance of the educator's spirituality, as well as the role of engaging learners as spiritual beings. Groome's work, though primarily focused on Catholic education, also showed how he believed any teacher could "educate for life."

## CHURCH DOCUMENTS ON CATHOLIC SPIRITUALITY AND CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Vatican Council II's *Declaration on Christian Education* (Paul VI, 1965) showed that education is an important concern of the Church, which "is under an obligation, therefore, to provide for its children an education by virtue of which their whole lives may be inspired by the spirit of Christ" (§8).

The Catholic school holds a prominent place in this process. Through the educational process, it nurtures the intellect, develops a capacity for sound judgment, and introduces students to their cultural heritage. It fosters values and prepares its students for professional life. Its multicultural diversity promotes understanding and forms the center for activity and growth for all members of its community. Like other schools, the Catholic school pursues cultural goals and the natural development of its students. However, the Catholic school also seeks to create an atmosphere enlivened by the Gospel spirit of freedom and charity. It strives to help the adolescent in his or her personal development, as well as his or her spiritual development. It seeks to link human culture to the message of salvation so that all knowledge acquired about the world, humanity, and life will be illumined by faith.

The U.S. Catholic Conference (USCC) in their 1972 document, *To Teach as Jesus Did*, affirmed that the Catholic school is distinguished by the integration of religious truths and values with life. The bishops noted the importance of this in light of the current "trends and pressures to compartmentalize life and learning and to isolate the religious dimension of existence from other areas of human life" (USCC, 1972, §105).

The Congregation for Catholic Education (1988) promulgated *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*. Among the six goals for the Catholic school, three are related to the purpose of the school:

- Defines the school's identity: in particular, the Gospel values which are its inspiration must be explicitly mentioned;
- Gives a precise description of the pedagogical, educational and cultural aims of the school;
- Presents the course content, along with the values that are to be transmitted through these courses. (§100)

In addition, the Congregation established criteria to assist in the educational objective so that the cultural, pedagogical, social, civil, and political aspects of school life would be integrated. These criteria included fidelity to the Gospel proclaimed, respect by the Church, rigor and respect in the study of culture, the autonomy of human knowledge and the rules of the various disciplines, adapting the educational process to the particular circumstances of students and families, and sharing responsibility with the Church.

The CCE (1988) stressed the importance of the religious dimension of the school to strengthen the formation process. Some of the conditions to create a supportive climate included agreement with the educational goals, cooperation in achieving the goals, interpersonal relationships based on love and Christian freedom, individual daily witness to Gospel values, and incentive for students to strive for the highest level of formation possible.

The CCE also stressed the importance of the climate, which, "if it is not present, then there is little left which can make the school Catholic" (1988, §26). This climate should be noticed as soon as one enters a Catholic school as though one had entered a new environment, permeated by a Gospel spirit of love evident in a Christian way of thought and life and the presence of Christ. The crucifix alone does not create the climate, but the people, who, by word and example, make the spirit of Jesus present and active (J. R. Keating, 1990). Instruction in religious truths and values is integral but is not simply one additional subject. It should be "the underlying reality in which the student's experiences of learning and living achieve their coherence and their deepest meaning" (USCC, 1972, §103). The Catholic school must motivate the student to come to the faith, to integrate it into life, and to accept and appreciate its values (J. R. Keating, 1990).

*The Declaration on Christian Education* (Paul VI, 1965) addressed the role of the teacher, viewed as a vocation, requiring special qualities of mind and heart, careful preparation, and readiness to accept new ideas and to adapt to the old. The teaching vocation is esteemed since the teacher helps parents in carrying out their duties and acts in the name of the community by undertaking this career. Teachers in Catholic schools, as in any school, should be prepared with appropriate qualifications, as well as adequate religious and secular learning. Skilled in the art of education, they should also "bear testimony by their lives and by their teaching to the one Teacher, who is Christ" (Paul VI, 1965, §8).

The spirituality of the teacher is a vital teaching force, especially when matched by the parents' spirituality (J. R. Keating, 1990). Saying "yes" to Christ involves accepting God's word, but then endeavoring to know it better (John Paul II, 1979). The task of the catechist is to explain the truths of

faith and Christian morality and to encourage the practice of virtue (Pius X, 1905). Formation, therefore, must be a part of and complement to the professional formation of the Catholic school teacher (CCE, 1982). The goals of this religious formation must be personal sanctification and apostolic mission, two inseparable elements in a Christian vocation. It requires a human and well-rounded formation, as well as a formation in spirituality and doctrine (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997).

Vowed religious women and men have had a powerful impact on the ministry of Catholic education and the entire Catholic community (J. R. Keating, 1990). In an age of declining numbers of vowed religious, the laity have assumed a greater role in Catholic education: "The lay teacher has emerged as the dedicated professional who can fully exemplify the ecclesial vocation described by the Holy Father. This has been one of the great gifts and joys of the post-conciliar Church" (p. 16). The culture of Roman Catholicism offers a unique vision about human existence and configuration of core commitment enabling members to bring that vision to reality. Authentic Catholic schools provide members with an experience that springs from this Catholic vision, transmits the commitments, and captures the spiritual imagination. This Catholic school culture is a Catholic school way of life (Cook, 2001). The Catholic school principal and teacher are the architects of this Catholic culture. Cook (2001) proposed seven building blocks to promote the Catholic culture of the Catholic school: identify and integrate core religious beliefs and values using the school's mission statement; honor heroes and heroines who exemplify Gospel values; create and display a symbol reflecting Gospel values; rediscover the school's religious and historical heritage; and socialize faculty and staff to Gospel values and religious mission.

## CONCLUSION

Relevant theory related to the real-world problems of maintaining and developing the Catholic identity of Catholic schools and the growing interest in character education focused on educational leadership, literacy, and teacher formation. These theories serve to establish a foundation to show the need for spiritual formation in teacher preparation. A review of some basic elements of educational leadership establishes the existence of spiritual leadership as a basic component of the role of the Catholic school principal. Recognizing this role of the Catholic school principal as the spiritual leader, who must nurture the spiritual formation of both faculty and students, helps to establish the importance of assisting principals to nurture the spirituality of the teachers within the Catholic school. A review of some major theories of literacy establishes some basic principles of literacy and

learning that could serve as a model of how learning takes place. These principles of learning help to establish how spiritual formation and character development can be developed. A review of some issues related to teacher formation considers how literacy and staff development may be intertwined. Finally, reviewing relevant Church documents supports the theory that a teacher's own personal development is an important part of teacher preparation. Thus, theory related to educational leadership, literacy, teacher formation, and Church documents serves as a foundation to establish the need for spiritual development for all adult leaders in school ministry.

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