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CATHOLIC EDUCATION REPORT



THE CALL TO LEAD

Educational Leadership According to Catholic Church Documents

by Jamie F. Arthur, Ph.D., Denise Donohue, Ed.D., Dan Guernsey, Ed.D.

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Introduction

The Call to Lead draws upon Church documents published since the Second Vatican Council to consider essential aspects of leadership in Catholic education. These aspects include answering the call to leadership, commitment to the mission of Catholic education, the spiritual and professional dimensions of leadership, Gospel witness, and the formation needed to assume the role of faith leader.

This review is intended primarily to assist Catholic school principals, but it has clear implications for other academic and program leaders, directors and trustees, and diocesan officials who oversee Catholic education. While it draws upon Church documents focused on elementary and secondary education, postsecondary leaders will find that much applies to their roles in colleges and universities as well.

Throughout much of the history of Catholic education, diocesan priests and various religious congregations guided a school's culture, identity, and mission. Clergy and religious held most full-time administrative and faculty positions and integrated religious education and practices to ensure strong Catholic identity.

In the years following Vatican II, American Catholic education experienced a steady transition to lay teachers and leaders. By 2016, less than 3 percent of full-time professional staff were clergy and religious. The new challenge of properly forming lay teachers and leaders has made it necessary for the Church to discern and prescribe qualities of school leadership, once previously assumed in the leadership roles of clergy and religious. The result is a richer understanding of how the school leader upholds and advances the mission of Catholic education.

The role of the Catholic principal as faith leader was highlighted in *Sharing the Light of Faith* (1979), where the United States bishops elaborated on the relationship between Catholic identity, administrative leadership, and ways for realizing the Church's mission for Catholic education.

Documents in the 1980s began to highlight the ecclesial, spiritual, and pastoral dimensions of school leadership required of the laity who were now more involved in leadership roles within Catholic schools:

The lay Catholic educator is a person who exercises a specific mission within the Church by living, in faith, a secular vocation in the communitarian structure of the school: with the best possible professional qualifications, with an apostolic intention inspired by faith, for the integral formation of the human person, in a communication of culture, in an exercise of that pedagogy which will give emphasis to direct and personal contact with students, giving spiritual inspiration to the educational community of which he or she is a member, as well as to all the different persons related to the educational community. To this lay person, as a member of this community, the family and the Church entrust the school's educational endeavor (*Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education*, 1982, 24).

The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School (1988) elaborated on guidelines for Catholic education, acknowledged the movement of laity into leadership positions, and encouraged the development of formation programs necessary to ensure that administrators

obtain training comparable to religious. Research highlighted the urgency for programs to prepare Catholic school administrators and the shortage of educational leaders who understood the concepts of theological and spiritual leadership.

From the late 1990s, Church documents emphasized the relationship between faithful Catholic leadership and Catholic identity, expressed the need for preparation and formation, and linked those who served in these positions to the long-term viability of Catholic education. It became clear by this time that Catholic education leaders needed to be experienced in the professional dimension, but even more critical, they need to have an understanding and commitment to the Church's expectations for Catholic education.

At the turn of the century, the Congregation for Catholic Education acknowledged the important role of lay administrators in evangelization, building Christian community, and pastoral care in *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium* (1997).

Eight years later, referring to a "crisis in education," the United States bishops expressed the need to prepare Catholic educational leaders in *Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium* (2005).

The preparation and ongoing formation of new administrators and teachers is vital if our schools are to remain truly Catholic in all aspects of school life. Catholic school personnel should be grounded in a faith-based Catholic culture, have strong bonds to Christ and the Church, and be witnesses to the faith in both their words and actions.

And in his 2008 address to Catholic educators in the United States, Pope Benedict XVI stated:

Teachers and administrators, whether in universities or schools, have the duty and privilege to ensure that students receive instruction in Catholic doctrine and practice. This requires that public witness to the way of Christ, as found in the Gospel and upheld by the Church's Magisterium, shapes all aspects of an institution's life, both inside and outside the classroom. Divergence from this vision weakens Catholic identity and, far from advancing freedom, inevitably leads to confusion, whether moral, intellectual, or spiritual.

In 2015, the United States bishops identified leadership as a priority for the future of Catholic education:

Clarity of vision and strong leaders formed in the faith are critical to establishing a rich Catholic culture in the Catholic school. Being academically excellent is critical and necessary but not sufficient. The schools whether primary and secondary or colleges and universities must be fully Catholic. Formation of this kind would include pastors, administrators, teachers and all those serving in the Catholic schools. Faith formation that includes individual formation in prayer, sacramental life, Scripture, doctrine, and knowledge of the nature and purpose of Catholic education would appear to be component parts of the formation of future leaders and teachers.

Some dioceses have established foundations that pay for formation of leaders and teachers during the school year. Other dioceses have partnerships with diocesan

programs, associations, academic institutes and Catholic higher education to offer formation and education to teachers and staff. Bishops and pastors should be actively engaged in identifying and forming present and future leaders in the schools.

Some dioceses have established certificate and degree programs for future administrators and superintendents. Creating interest and incentive in education for the future is critical to long-term viability and success of the colleges, universities and schools. In addition to programs of training, there should be an intentional and emphasis on the sacramental and spiritual lives of the future leaders (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2015, III, B, a).

Catholic leaders are required not only to be adept in areas associated with operations, curriculum, and management but to also possess the ability to strengthen the school's Catholic identity by building a Catholic culture and community, fostering faith development, and integrating the Church's traditions and doctrinal practices into all aspects of school life. Without this intense spiritual dimension, Catholic education would only mirror secular private education and fall short of fulfilling its divine mission of evangelization and sanctification.

Specific writings directed toward Catholic educational leaders have blossomed over the years, yet most documents written on the topic of educational personnel are still very much focused on Catholic school teachers. When one reads about unique dimensions of formation and witness for these teachers, one can be certain that these apply also to its educational leaders. Thus, this document might be read in tandem with its sister document, *The Call to Teach: Expectations for the Catholic Educator in Magisterial Teaching* (2015).

Called to a special role within the Catholic school environment, educational leaders hold themselves out as formal collaborators with the ecclesial Church and are, therefore, held more accountable. Reviewing what the Church asks of them through documents such as *The Call to Teach* and *The Call to Lead* allows school leaders to substantially and efficiently fulfill the professional formation the Church asks of them. Using the formative questions at the end of this document can help school leaders with self-assessment and the development of plans for self-improvement. It is to these school leaders that parents, students, teachers, and all stakeholders of the school look to for fidelity and flourishing of the Church's mission for Catholic education. It is hoped that this document will help them in that endeavor.

Catholic Educational Leadership – Answering the Call

Overview

Leaders in Catholic education, called by God and led by the spirit of the Gospel, work for the sanctification of the world.¹ Their work is not just a profession, but a vocation, a calling to the apostolate of Catholic education.² Each leader must be fully aware of the importance and the responsibility of this vocation and fully respond to its demands, secure in the knowledge that

¹ Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982, 7.

² *Ibid.*, 37.

their response is vital for the construction and ongoing renewal of the earthly city and the evangelization of the world.³

This vocational aspect requires each leader to live in faith within the communitarian nature of the school. Through faith they will find an unfailing source of the humility, hope, and charity needed for perseverance in their work.

Catholic school leaders should have the necessary professional qualifications and an apostolic intention inspired by faith to pursue the integral formation of the human person.⁴ Through their modeling and personal witness, Catholic school leaders make Christ known to others: students, teachers, families, and all those associated with the school.⁵ This vocation to Catholic education demands special qualities of mind and heart, careful preparation, and continued readiness to renew and to adapt.⁶

Citations: Catholic Educational Leadership – Answering the Call

Gravissimum Educationis (Pope Paul VI, 1965)

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 (5).

Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982)

This call to personal holiness and to apostolic mission is common to all believers; but there are many cases in which the life of a lay person takes on specific characteristics which transform this life into a specific “wonderful” vocation within the Church. 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. In this way they can make Christ known to others, especially by the testimony of a life resplendent in faith, hope, and charity (7).

Because of the experiences that lay people acquire in their lives, and through their presence in all of the various spheres of human activity, they will be especially capable of recognizing and clarifying the signs of the times that characterize the present historical period of the People of God. Therefore, as a proper part of their vocation, they should contribute their initiative, their creativity, and their competent, conscious, and

³ Ibid.

⁴ Congregation for Catholic Education, 2007, 30.

⁵ Sacred Congregation, 1982, 7.

⁶ Pope Paul VI, 1965, 5.

enthusiastic labor to this task. In this way, the whole People of God will be able to distinguish more precisely those elements of the signs that are Gospel values, or values contrary to the Gospel (10).

One specific characteristic of the educational profession assumes its most profound significance in the Catholic educator: the communication of truth. 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 (16).

And if there is no trace of Catholic identity in the education, the educator can hardly be called a Catholic educator. Some of the aspects of this living out of one's identity are common and essential; they must be present no matter what the school is in which the lay educator exercises his or her vocation (25).

A Vocation, rather than a Profession: 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. The life of the Catholic teacher must be marked by the exercise of a personal vocation in the Church, and not simply by the exercise of a profession. In a lay vocation, detachment and generosity are joined to legitimate defense of personal rights; but it is still a vocation, with the fullness of life and the personal commitment that the word implies. It offers ample opportunity for a life filled with enthusiasm. It is, therefore, very desirable that every lay Catholic educator become fully aware of the importance, the richness, and the responsibility of this vocation. They should fully respond to all of its demands, secure in the knowledge that their response is vital for the construction and ongoing renewal of the earthly city, and for the evangelization of the world (37).

Lay Catholic educators must be very aware of the real impoverishment which will result if priests and religious disappear from the Catholic schools, or noticeably decline in number. This is to be avoided as far as is possible; and yet, the laity must prepare themselves in such a way that they will be able to maintain Catholic schools on their own whenever this becomes necessary or at least more desirable, in the present or in the future (45).

... laity should participate authentically in the responsibility for the school; this assumes that they have the ability that is needed in all areas, and are sincerely committed to the educational objectives which characterize a Catholic school. And the school should use every means possible to encourage this kind of commitment; without it, the objectives of the school can never be fully realized. It must never be forgotten that the school itself is always in the process of being created, due to the labor brought to fruition by all those who have a role to play in it, and most especially by those who are teachers (78).

Above all else, lay Catholics will find support in their own faith. Faith is the unfailing source of the humility, the hope, and the charity needed for perseverance in their vocation (72-79).

Educating Together in Catholic Schools, A Shared Mission Between Consecrated Persons and the Lay Faithful (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2007)

Just as a consecrated person is called to testify his or her specific vocation to a life of communion in love so as to be in the scholastic community a sign, a memorial and a prophecy of the values of the Gospel, so too a lay educator is required to exercise a specific mission within the Church by living, in faith, a secular vocation in the communitarian structure of the school (15).

While invited to deepen their vocation as educators in the Catholic school in communion with consecrated persons, the lay faithful also are called in the common formational journey to give the original and irreplaceable contribution of their full ecclesial subjectivity... As educators, they are called on to live in faith a secular vocation in the communitarian structure of the school: with the best possible professional qualifications, with an apostolic intention inspired by faith, for the integral formation of the human person (30).

Organized according to the diversities of persons and vocations, but vivified by the same spirit of communion, the educational community of the Catholic school aims at creating increasingly deeper relationships of communion that are in themselves educational. Precisely in this, it expresses the variety and beauty of the various vocations and the fruitfulness at educational and pedagogical levels that this contributes to the life of the school (37).

“Themes in Catholic Schools in the United States” (U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2015)

Amidst the persistent call for ongoing formation, there was an emerging sense of the vocation of Catholic school leaders, almost an awakening of the apostolate for administrators, teachers, board members and pastors. Catholic education is not just a job, it is a vocation. A school’s Catholic identity depends on effective leader formation. Competent and capable leaders are able to address other needs like finance, governance, and recruitment. Faith filled Catholic leaders keep Catholic identity strong, set a positive tone and bring the community together. Catholic school leaders need to see themselves as part of the mission and respond to the call for co-responsibility and collaboration. These men and women need to take their own faith journey seriously. Potential resources for formation were identified as: Catholic colleges and universities, Catholic studies institutes, leadership programs within seminaries, and cooperative efforts with parish and local faith communities (2).

Catholic Educational Leaders Fulfill the Mission of Catholic Education

Overview

Leaders in Catholic education, filled with deep conviction, joy, and a spirit of sacrifice⁷, share in the Church's mission and in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly functions of Christ.⁸ They constitute an element of great hope for the Church, for they are entrusted with the "integral human formation and faith education of young people who will determine whether the world of tomorrow is more closely or more loosely bound to Christ."⁹ As members of the People of God, united to Christ through Baptism, they work not for a mere employer but for the Body of Christ, carrying out the mission of the Redeemer.¹⁰

Their role is to imbue their students with the spirit of Christ, striving to excel in pedagogy and the pursuit of knowledge in such a way that they advance the internal renewal of the Church and preserve and enhance its influence upon the modern world.¹¹ By accepting and developing a legacy of Catholic thought and educational experience, they take their place as full partners in the Church's mission of educating the whole person and of transmitting the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ to successive generations.¹²

The ultimate goal of all Catholic education is transmitting clearly and fully the message of salvation, which elicits the response of faith.¹³ By enriching students' lives with the fullness of Christ's message and inviting them to Christ, educators promote most effectively the students' integral human development and build a community of truth, faith, hope, and love.¹⁴

Hiring for mission is essential to the future success of Catholic education. Leaders must be committed to Catholic identity and mission. All who are responsible for Catholic education must keep sight of the mission and apostolic value of their work so schools enjoy the conditions in which to accomplish their mission of pursuing the individual good of the student (specifically his or her salvation) and service to the common good.

Citations: Catholic Education Leaders Fulfill the Mission of Catholic Education

Gravissimum Educationis (Pope Paul VI, 1965)

The sacred synod earnestly entreats young people themselves to become aware of the importance of the work of education and to prepare themselves to take it up, especially where because of a shortage of teachers the education of youth is in jeopardy. This same sacred synod, while professing its gratitude to priests, religious men and women, and the laity who by their evangelical self-dedication are devoted to the noble work of education

⁷ Sacred Congregation, 1977, 87.

⁸ Sacred Congregation, 1982, 6.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 81.

¹⁰ Pope John Paul II, 1987. 4.

¹¹ Pope Paul VI, 1965, Conclusion.

¹² Pope John Paul II, 1987. 4.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

and of schools of every type and level, exhorts them to persevere generously in the work they have undertaken and, imbuing their students with the spirit of Christ, to strive to excel in pedagogy and the pursuit of knowledge in such a way that they not merely advance the internal renewal of the Church but preserve and enhance its beneficent influence upon today's world, especially the intellectual world (Conclusion).

The Catholic School (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977)

If all who are responsible for the Catholic school would never lose sight of their mission and the apostolic value of their teaching, the school would enjoy better conditions in which to function in the present and would faithfully hand on its mission to future generations. They themselves, moreover, would most surely be filled with a deep conviction, joy and spirit of sacrifice in the knowledge that they are offering innumerable young people the opportunity of growing in faith, of accepting and living its precious principles of truth, charity and hope (87).

Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982)

The lay Catholic working in a school is, along with every Christian, a member of the People of God. As such, united to Christ through Baptism, he or she shares in the basic dignity that is common to all members. For, "they share a common dignity from their rebirth in Christ. They have the same filial grace and the same vocation to perfection. They possess in common one salvation, one hope, and one undivided charity". Although it is true that, in the Church, "by the will of Christ, some are made teachers, dispensers of mysteries and shepherds on behalf of others, yet all share a true equality with regard to the dignity and to the activity common to all the faithful for the building up of the Body of Christ". Every Christian, and therefore also every lay person, has been made a sharer in "the priestly, prophetic, and kingly functions of Christ", and their apostolate "is a participation in the saving mission of the Church itself... All are commissioned to that apostolate by the Lord Himself" (6).

There are times in which the Bishops will take advantage of the availability of competent lay persons who wish to give clear Christian witness in the field of education, and will entrust them with complete direction of Catholic schools, thus incorporating them more closely into the apostolic mission of the Church (46).

Lay Catholic educators in schools, whether teachers, directors, administrators, or auxiliary staff, must never have any doubts about the fact that they constitute an element of great hope for the Church. The Church puts its trust in them entrusting them with the task of gradually bringing about an integration of temporal reality with the Gospel, so that the Gospel can thus reach into the lives of all men and women. More particularly, it has entrusted them with the integral human formation and the faith education of young people. These young people are the ones who will determine whether the world of tomorrow is more closely or more loosely bound to Christ (81).

When it [Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education] considers the tremendous evangelical resource embodied in the millions of lay Catholics who devote their lives to schools, it recalls the words with which the Second Vatican Council ended its Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, and “earnestly entreats in the Lord that all lay persons give a glad, generous, and prompt response to the voice of Christ, who is giving them an especially urgent invitation at this moment; ...they should respond to it eagerly and magnanimously... and, recognizing that what is His is also their own (*Phil 2, 5*), to associate themselves with Him in His saving mission... Thus they can show that they are His co-workers in the various forms and methods of the Church’s one apostolate, which must be constantly adapted to the new needs of the times. May they always abound in the works of God, knowing that they will not labor in vain when their labour is for Him (Cf. I *Cor 15, 58*)” (82).

Apostolic Journey to the United States and Canada: Meeting with the Representatives of Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools and Leaders in Religious Education in New Orleans (Pope John Paul II, 1987)

In recent years, thousands of *lay people* have come forward as administrators and teachers in the Church’s schools and educational programs. By accepting and developing the legacy of Catholic thought and educational experience which they have inherited, they take their place as *full partners in the Church’s mission* of educating the whole person and of transmitting the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ to successive generations of young Americans. Even if they do not “teach religion”, their service in a Catholic school or educational program is part of the Church’s unceasing endeavor to lead all to profess the truth in love and grow to the full maturity of Christ the head (*Eph. 4, 15*) (4).

For a Catholic educator, the Church should not be looked upon merely as an employer. The Church is the Body of Christ, carrying on the mission of the Redeemer throughout history. *It is our privilege to share in that mission*, to which we are called by the grace of God and in which we are engaged together (4).

The ultimate goal of all Catholic education is salvation in Jesus Christ. Catholic educators effectively work for the coming of Christ’s Kingdom; this work includes transmitting clearly and in full the message of salvation, which elicits the response of faith. In faith we know God, and the hidden purpose of his will (Cfr. *Eph. 1, 9*). In faith we truly come to know ourselves. *By sharing our faith, we communicate a complete vision of the whole of reality and a commitment to truth and goodness.* This vision and this commitment draw the strands of life into a purposeful pattern. By enriching your student’s lives with the fullness of Christ’s message and by inviting them to accept with all their hearts Christ’s work, which is the Church, you promote most effectively their integral human development and you help them to build a community of faith, hope and love (8).

Evangelii Gaudium (Pope Francis, 2013)

I want to emphasize that what I am trying to express here has a programmatic significance and important consequences. I hope that all communities will devote the necessary effort to advancing along the path of pastoral and missionary conversion which cannot leave things as they presently are. “Mere administration” can no longer be enough. Throughout the world, let us be “permanently in a state of mission” (25).

Educating Today and Tomorrow: A Renewing Passion (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2014)

School heads must be leaders who make sure that education is a shared and living mission, who support and organize teachers, who promote mutual encouragement and assistance (III,1, b).

USCCB Response to Educating Today and Tomorrow (U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2015)

We need Catholic educators that are strong leaders committed to Catholic identity and mission. They were described as truly Catholic, well-formed in faith and morals, active in the faith and involved in parish life (2).

Hiring for mission is essential to the future success of Catholic schools. School administrators, teachers, coaches and staff need to be thoroughly evangelized and living vibrant Christian lives. This atmosphere begins with formation of leaders in school; principals need encouragement in personal faith formation and in encouraging faculty and staff in their faith formation. Catholic education is about making sure we do everything we can to form and educate the future leaders in our Church and society. Training for teachers in an integrated curriculum is part of Catholic identity in the schools (4).

The Spiritual Dimension of Catholic Educational Leadership

Overview

Catholic education depends on strong leaders, well-formed in the faith¹⁵ and in Christian pedagogy¹⁶ and committed to the Church’s vision for Catholic education. Inspired by the Gospel, they establish a rich Catholic culture in their schools,¹⁷ serving as co-workers in the Church’s apostolate. Through prayer, sacramental life, Scripture, doctrine, and knowledge of the nature and purpose of Catholic education, they cultivate their own spiritual formation and develop a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ. These encounters awaken leaders’ love and open

¹⁵ U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2015a, 5.

¹⁶ Congregation, 2014, III, 1.a.

¹⁷ U.S. Conference, 2015b, III, b, a.

their spirits to others so that their educational commitment becomes a consequence of their faith, a faith which becomes active through love.

School leaders assume responsibility for the ecclesial and pastoral mission of Catholic education. As practicing Catholics in good standing, they understand and accept the teachings of the Church and moral demands of the Gospel.¹⁸ Their calling guides and shapes their commitment to the Church and the faith they profess. They participate simply and actively in the liturgical and sacramental life of the school and provide an example to others who find in them nourishment for Christian living.¹⁹

Catholic education leaders serve the Church in a type of ministerial function under the direction of the hierarchy²⁰ and participate in the threefold ministry of Christ: to teach doctrine, to build community, and to serve. This is the most effective means available to the Church for the education of children and young people.²¹

The Catholic education leader provides spiritual inspiration for the school, the academic and cultural organizations that the school comes in contact with, the local Church, and the wider community.²² Such inspiration will manifest itself in different forms of evangelization.²³

Citations: The Spiritual Dimension of Catholic Educational Leadership

Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982)

The communitarian structure of the school brings the Catholic educator into contact with a wide and rich assortment of people; not only the students, who are the reason why the school and the teaching profession exist, but also with one's colleagues in the work of education, with parents, with other personnel in the school, with the school directors. The Catholic educator must be a source of spiritual inspiration for each of these groups, as well as for each of the scholastic and cultural organizations that the school comes in contact with, for the local Church and the parishes, for the entire human ambience in which he or she is inserted and, in a variety of ways, should have an effect on. In this way, the Catholic educator is called to display that kind of spiritual inspiration which will manifest different forms of evangelization (23).

As a visible manifestation of the faith they profess and the life witness they are supposed to manifest, it is important that lay Catholics who work in a Catholic school participate simply and actively in the liturgical and sacramental life of the school. Students will share in this life more readily when they have concrete examples: when they see the importance that this life has for believers. In today's secularized world, students will see many lay people who call themselves Catholics, but who never take part in liturgy or

¹⁸ U.S. Conference, 2005b, p.231.

¹⁹ Sacred Congregation, 1982, 40.

²⁰ U.S. Conference, 2005a, p. 11.

²¹ National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1976, II, 1.

²² Sacred Congregation, 1982, 23.

²³ Ibid.

sacraments. It is very important that they also have the example of lay adults who take such things seriously, who find in them a source and nourishment for Christian living (40).

Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord (U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2005)

Today in parishes, schools, Church institutions, and diocesan agencies, laity serve in various “ministries, offices and roles” that do not require sacramental ordination but rather “find their foundation in the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation, indeed, for a good many of them, in the Sacrament of Matrimony” (p.9).

The term “lay ecclesial minister” is generic. It is meant to encompass and describe several possible roles. In parish life—to cite only one sphere of involvement—the pastoral associate, parish catechetical leader, youth ministry leader, school principal, and director of liturgy or pastoral music are examples of such roles (p.11).

Their functions of collaboration with the ordained require of lay ecclesial ministers a special level of professional competence and presence to the community. Their position often involves coordinating and directing others in the community... For these reasons, their roles often require academic preparation, certification, credentialing, and a formation that integrates personal, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral dimensions. These lay ecclesial ministers often express a sense of being called. This sense motivates what they are doing, guiding and shaping a major life choice and commitment to Church ministry (p.12).

National Directory for Catechesis (U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2005)

The Catholic school is a center for evangelization; this, its catechetical program is essential to its distinctly Catholic identity and character. It is “an active apostolate.” Therefore, the principal of a Catholic school must be a practicing Catholic in good standing who understands and accepts the teachings of the Church and moral demands of the Gospel. As a catechetical leader in the Catholic school, the principal is called to:

- Recognize that all members of the faculty and staff “are an integral part of the process of religious education”
- Recruit teachers who are practicing Catholic, who can understand and accept the teachings of the Catholic Church and the moral demands of the Gospel, and who can contribute to the achievement of the school’s Catholic identity and apostolic goals
- Supervise, through observation and evaluation, the performance of each religion teacher
- Provide opportunities for ongoing catechesis of faculty members

- Design a curriculum that supports the school’s catechetical goals and, if the school is associated with a parish, the parish’s catechetical goals.
- Develop goals for the implement of an overall catechetical plan for the school, and periodically evaluate progress toward these goals
- Foster a distinctively Christian community among the faculty, students, and parents
- Provide, alongside the pastor, for the spiritual growth of the faculty
- Collaborate with parish, area, and diocesan personnel in planning and implementing programs of total parish catechesis (231).

Educating Together in Catholic Schools, A Shared Mission Between Consecrated Persons and the Lay Faithful (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2007)

For this reason, Catholic educators need a “formation of the heart”: they need to be led to that encounter with God in Christ which awakens their love and opens their spirits to others, so that their educational commitment becomes a consequence deriving from their faith, a faith which becomes active through love (cf. *Gal* 5:6). In fact, even care for instruction means loving (*Wis* 6:17). It is only in this way that they can make their teaching a school of faith, that is to say, a transmission of the Gospel, as required by the educational project of the Catholic school (25).

The transmission of the Christian message through teaching implies a mastery of the knowledge of the truths of the faith and of the principles of spiritual life that require constant improvement. This is why both consecrated and lay educators of the Catholic school need to follow an opportune formational theological itinerary. Such an itinerary makes it easier to combine the understanding of faith with professional commitment and Christian action. Apart from their theological formation, educators need also to cultivate their spiritual formation in order to develop their relationship with Jesus Christ and become a Master like Him. In this sense, the formational journey of both lay and consecrated educators must be combined with the molding of the person towards greater conformity with Christ (cf. *Rm* 8:29) and of the educational community around Christ the Master. Moreover, the Catholic school is well aware that the community that it forms must be constantly nourished and compared with the sources from which the reason for its existence derives: the saving word of God in Sacred Scripture, in Tradition, above all liturgical and sacramental Tradition, enlightened by the Magisterium of the Church (26).

In the perspective of formation, by sharing their life of prayer and opportune forms of community life, the lay faithful and consecrated persons will nourish their reflection, their sense of fraternity and generous dedication. In this common catechetical-theological and spiritual formational journey, we can see the face of a Church that presents that of Christ, praying, listening, learning and teaching in fraternal communion (33).

It is also through their formational journey that educators are called on to build relationships at professional, personal and spiritual levels, according to the logic of communion. For each one this involves being open, welcoming, disposed to a deep exchange of ideas, convivial and living a fraternal life within the educational community itself (35).

Circular Letter to the Presidents of Bishops' Conferences on Religious Education in Schools (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2009)

A form of education that ignores or marginalises the moral and religious dimension of the person is a hindrance to full education, because “children and young people have a right to be motivated to appraise moral values with a right conscience, to embrace them with a personal adherence, together with a deeper knowledge and love of God.” That is why the Second Vatican Council asked and recommended “all those who hold a position of public authority or who are in charge of education to see to it that youth is never deprived of this sacred right” (1).

Educating in Intercultural Dialogue in Catholic Schools: Living in Harmony for a Civilization of Love (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2013)

For those who occupy positions of leadership, there can be a strong temptation to consider the school like a company or business. However, schools that aim to be educating communities need those who govern them to be able to invoke the school's reference values; they must then direct all the school's professional and human resources in this direction. School leaders are more than just managers of an organization. They are true educational leaders when they are the first to take on this responsibility, which is also an ecclesial and pastoral mission rooted in a relationship with the Church's pastors (85).

Educating Today and Tomorrow: A Renewing Passion (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2014)

Spiritual poverty and declining cultural levels are starting to produce their dismal effects, even within Catholic schools. Often times, authoritativeness is being undermined. It is really not a matter of discipline—parents greatly appreciate Catholic schools because of their discipline—but do some Catholic school heads still have anything to say to students and their families? Is their authority based on formal rules or on the authoritativeness of their testimony? If we want to avert a gradual impoverishment, Catholic schools must be run by individuals and teams who are inspired by the Gospel, who have been formed in Christian pedagogy, in tune with Catholic schools' educational project, and not by people who are prone to being seduced by fashionability, or by what can become an easier sell, to put it bluntly (III,1,a).

USCCB Response to Educating Today and Tomorrow (U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2015)

Clarity of vision and strong leaders formed in the faith are critical to establishing a rich Catholic culture in the Catholic school. Being academically excellent is critical and necessary but no sufficient. The schools whether primary and secondary or colleges and

universities must be fully Catholic. Formation of this kind would include pastors, administrators, teachers and all those serving in the Catholic school. Faith formation that includes individual formation in prayer, sacramental life, Scripture, doctrine and knowledge of the nature and purpose of Catholic education would appear to be component parts of the formation of future leaders and teachers.

...Bishops and pastors should be actively engaged in identifying and forming present and future leaders in the schools.

...In addition to programs of training, there should be an intentional and particular emphasis on the sacramental and spiritual lives of the future leaders (III, B, a).

The Congregation for Catholic Education has stated that, “Catholic schools are at the heart of the Church.” They are a vital aspect of the Church’s mission to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ and as such are important to the future and vitality of the Church in the United States. Because they are vital and important, it is critical to support new efforts to develop and form strong faith-filled leaders and teachers at the elementary, secondary and collegiate levels of Catholic education. Faith formation for all involved in the mission of Catholic education is part of the New Evangelization (IV).

“Themes in Catholic Schools in the United States” (U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2015)

Catholic schools depend on clarity of vision and strong leaders well formed in the faith, who are capable of establishing a rich Catholic culture in the schools. Consequently, training, both professional and spiritual, was lifted up as vitally important. Our schools need professionally prepared, competent leaders who can lead and inspire.

As principals, teachers and administrators they must know and live Catholic principles and morality. Their formation should be rooted in the vision of missionary discipleship as articulated by the Holy Father in *Evangelii Gaudium*. The bishops noted the significance of witness statements for Catholic teachers and administrators. It was Pope Paul VI that noted young people listen more to witnesses than to teachers and if they listen to teachers, it is because they are also witnesses. In service to the New Evangelization the formation of school leaders and teachers must equip them to create an evangelizing culture. The schools should be centers for evangelization and catechesis.

The formation of school leaders is foundational for a Catholic school. The bishops spoke most frequently of principals, pastors and teachers. A common term used was school leader which encompasses a broad range of people related to the school: principals, pastors, teachers, coaches, administrators, board members and parents, Latinos and Anglos, men and women, religious and lay. Through their formation, these leaders work to integrate faith into every facet of school life. Across the country, bishops call for catechetical formation for all school leaders (2).

The Professional Dimension of Catholic Educational Leadership

Overview

Professional competence is necessary to unleash educational potential. Those who oversee Catholic education must have the ability to create and manage learning environments that provide plentiful opportunities for students and teachers to flourish. Leaders respect individual differences and guide others toward significant and profound learning.²⁴ Leaders accompany their students and teachers toward lofty and challenging goals, establish high expectations for them, and connect them to each other and the world.²⁵ A solid professional formation in a wide range of cultural, psychological, and pedagogical areas will aid toward this end.²⁶

The purpose of education is the development of man from within, freeing him from that conditioning which would prevent him from becoming a fully integrated human being.²⁷ Every school and every educator in the school should strive to form strong and responsible individuals, who are grounded in Gospel values, capable of making free and correct choices, have a clear idea of the meaning of life, are open more and more to reality, and are ready to take their place in society.²⁸

It is therefore important that leaders know how to create communities of formation and of study where knowledge is explored in the light of the Gospel and where each individual can make their own essential contribution to society.²⁹

Citations: The Professional Dimension of Catholic Educational Leadership

The Catholic School (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977)

It must never be forgotten that the purpose of instruction at school is education, that is, the development of man from within, freeing him from that conditioning which would prevent him from becoming a fully integrated human being. The school must begin from the principle that its educational programme is intentionally directed to the growth of the whole person (29).

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 (52).

²⁴ Congregation, 2014, 7.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Sacred Congregation, 1982, 27.

²⁷ Sacred Congregation, 1977, 29.

²⁸ Sacred Congregation, 1982, 17.

²⁹ Congregation, 2013, 80.

Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982)

Every person who contributes to integral human formation is an educator; but teachers have made integral human formation their very profession. When, then, we discuss the school, teachers deserve special consideration: because of their number, but also because of the institutional purpose of the school. But everyone who has a share in this formation is also to be included in the discussion: especially those who are responsible for the direction of the school, or are counsellors, tutors or coordinators; also those who complement and complete the educational activities of the teacher or help in administrative and auxiliary positions (15).

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. Every school, and every educator in the school, ought to be striving “to form strong and responsible individuals, who are capable of making free and correct choices”, thus preparing young people “to open themselves more and more to reality, and to form in themselves a clear idea of the meaning of life” (17).

Each type of education, moreover, is influenced by a particular concept of what it means to be a human person. In today’s pluralistic world, the Catholic educator must consciously inspire his or her activity with the Christian concept of the person, in communion with the Magisterium of the Church. It is a concept which includes a defense of human rights, but also attributes to the human person the dignity of a child of God; it attributes the fullest liberty, freed from sin itself by Christ, the most exalted destiny, which is the definitive and total possession of God Himself, through love. It establishes the strictest possible relationship of solidarity among all persons; through mutual love and an ecclesial community. It calls for the fullest development of all that is human, because we have been made masters of the world by its Creator. Finally, it proposes Christ, Incarnate Son of God and perfect Man, as both model and means; to imitate Him, is, for all men and women, the inexhaustible source of personal and communal perfection. Thus, Catholic educators can be certain that they make human beings more human. Moreover, the special task of those educators who are lay persons is to offer to their students a concrete example of the fact that people deeply immersed in the world, living fully the same secular life as the vast majority of the human family, possess this same exalted dignity (18).

The vocation of every Catholic educator includes the work of ongoing social development: to form men and women who will be ready to take their place in society, preparing them in such a way that they will make the kind of social commitment which will enable them to work for the improvement of social structures, making these structures more conformed to the principles of the Gospel. Thus, they will form human beings who will make human society more peaceful, fraternal, and communitarian... The Catholic educator, in other words, must be committed to the task of forming men and women who will make the “civilization of love” a reality. But lay educators must bring the experience of their own lives to this social development and social awareness, so that

students can be prepared to take their place in society with an appreciation of the specific role of the lay person—for this is the life that nearly all of the students will be called to live (19).

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 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 (20).

To summarize: The Lay Catholic educator is a person who exercises a specific mission within the Church by living, in faith, a secular vocation in the communitarian structure of the school: with the best possible professional qualifications, with an apostolic intention inspired by faith, for the integral formation of the human person, in a communication of culture, in an exercise of that pedagogy which will give emphasis to direct and personal contact with students, giving spiritual inspiration to the educational community of which he or she is a member, as well as to all the different persons related to the educational community. To this lay person, as a member of this community, the family and the Church entrust the school's educational endeavor. Lay teachers must be profoundly convinced that they share in the sanctifying, and therefore educational mission of the Church; they cannot regard themselves as cut off from the ecclesial complex (24).

Professionalism is one of the most important characteristics in the identity of every lay Catholic. The first requirement, then, for a lay educator who wishes to live out his or her ecclesial vocation, is the acquisition of a solid professional formation. In the case of an educator, this includes competency in a wide range of cultural, psychological, and pedagogical areas. However, it is not enough that the initial training be at a good level; this must be maintained and deepened, always bringing it up to date (27).

New horizons will be opened to students through the responses that Christian revelation brings to questions about the ultimate meaning of the human person, of human life, of history, and of the world. These must be offered to the students as responses which flow out of the profound faith of the educator, but at the same time with the greatest sensitive respect for the conscience of each student (28).

Faced with this reality [expansion of science & technology; age of change], which lay people are the first to experience, the Catholic educator has an obvious and constant need for updating: in personal attitudes, in the content of the subjects, that are taught, in the pedagogical methods that are used. Recall that the vocation of an educator requires “a constant readiness to begin anew and to adapt” (68-70).

If the directors of the school and the lay people who work in the school are to live according to the same ideals, two things are essential. First, lay people must receive an adequate salary, guaranteed by a well defined contract, for the work they do in the school: a salary that will permit them to live in dignity, without excessive work or a need for additional employment that will interfere with the duties of an educator. This may not be immediately possible without putting an enormous financial burden on the families, or making the school so expensive that it becomes a school for a small elite group; but so long as a truly adequate salary is not being paid, the laity should see in the school directors a genuine preoccupation to find the resources necessary to achieve this end. Secondly, laity should participate authentically in the responsibility for the school; this assumes that they have the ability that is needed in all areas, and are sincerely committed to the educational objectives which characterize a Catholic school (78).

As a part of its mission, an element proper to the school is solicitous care for the permanent professional and religious formation of its lay members. Lay people should be able to look to the school for the orientation and the assistance that they need, including the willingness to make time available when this is needed. Formation is indispensable; without it, the school will wander further and further away from its objectives. Often enough, if it will join forces with other educational centers and with Catholic professional organizations, a Catholic school will not find it too difficult to organize conferences, seminars, and other meetings which will provide the needed formation. According to circumstances, these could be expanded to include other lay Catholic educators who do not work in Catholic schools; these people would thus be offered an opportunity they are frequently in need of, and do not easily find elsewhere (79).

Code of Canon Law (1983)

Directors of Catholic schools are to take care under the watchfulness of the local ordinary that the instruction which is given in them is at least as academically distinguished as that in the other schools of the area (c.806 .(2§

The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988)

Recent Church teaching has added an essential note: “The basic principle which must guide us in our commitment to this sensitive area of pastoral activity is that religious instruction and catechesis are at the same time distinct and complementary. A school has as its purpose the students’ integral formation. Religious instruction, therefore, should be integrated into the objectives and criteria which characterize a modern school.” School directors should keep this directive of the Magisterium in mind, and they should respect the distinctive characteristics of religious instruction (70).

Educating Together in Catholic Schools: A Shared Mission Between Consecrated Persons and the Lay Faithful (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2007)

Professional formation: One of the fundamental requirements for an educator in a Catholic school is his or her possession of a solid professional formation. Poor quality

teaching, due to insufficient professional preparation or inadequate pedagogical methods, unavoidably undermines the effectiveness of the overall formation of the student and of the cultural witness that the educator must offer (21).

Educating to Intercultural Dialogue in the Catholic School: Living in Harmony for a Civilization of Love (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2013)

Hence, it is important that schools know how to be communities of formation and of study, where relationships among individuals color relationships among academic disciplines. Knowledge is enhanced from within by this reclaimed unity, in the light of the Gospel and Christian doctrine, and so can make its own essential contribution to the integral growth of both individuals and the evermore heralded global society (80).

Educating Today and Tomorrow: A Renewing Passion (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2014)

The importance of schools' and universities' educational tasks explains how crucial training is for teachers, managers and the entire staff that has educational responsibilities. Professional competence is the necessary condition for openness to unleash its educational potential. A lot is being required of teachers and managers: they should have the ability to create, invent and manage learning environments that provide plentiful opportunities; they should be able to respect students' different intelligences and guide them towards significant and profound learning; they should be able to accompany their students towards lofty and challenging goals, cherish high expectations for them, involve and connect students to each other and the world. Teachers must be able to pursue different goals simultaneously and face problem situations that require a high level of professionalism and preparation. To fulfil such expectations, these tasks should not be left to individual responsibility and adequate support should be provided at institutional level, with competent leaders showing the way, rather than bureaucrats (7).

USCCB Response to Educating Today and Tomorrow (U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2015)

Catholic schools depend on clarity of vision and strong leaders well formed in the faith, who are capable of establishing a rich Catholic culture in the schools. Consequently, training, both professional and spiritual, was lifted up as vitally important. Our schools need professionally prepared, competent leaders who can lead and inspire. These leaders need to be well-formed and able to teach, govern, recruit and set the tone. They need to engage and invite minorities while making a clear case for the value of Catholic schools (5).

Catholic Educational Leaders - The Call to Witness

Overview

The concrete living out of a vocation as rich and profound as that of a Catholic educational leader requires a mature spiritual life expressed in a profound lived Christian witness.³⁰ Leaders are called in a special way to make the Church present and operative so She might become *the salt of the earth*.³¹ Catholic leaders must proclaim the Gospel message through their words and witness.³² Helping to bring about the cooperation of all, as a witness to Christ, is the cornerstone of the community. The Catholic leader becomes a living example of one inspired by the Gospel.³³

“Conduct is always much more important than speech; this fact becomes especially important in the formation of students.”³⁴ This requires following the way of Christianity to shape all aspects of the school’s life, both inside and outside the classroom.³⁵ The more completely the leader gives concrete witness to the model of Christ, the more the leader will be trusted and imitated.³⁶

The project of the Catholic school is effective and convincing only if carried out by people who are deeply motivated to give witness to a living encounter with Christ, in who alone the mystery of man truly becomes clear.³⁷ Authentic witness to the school’s values creates a community climate permeated by the Gospel spirit of freedom and love.³⁸

Citations: Catholic Educational Leaders—The Call to Witness

The Catholic School (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977)

By their witness and their behavior teachers are of the first importance to impart a distinctive character to Catholic schools. It is, therefore, indispensable to ensure their continuing formation through some form of suitable pastoral provision. This must aim to animate them as witness of Christ in the classroom and tackle the problems of their particular apostolate, especially regarding a Christian vision of the world and of education, problems also connected with the art of teaching in accordance with the principles of the Gospel (78).

³⁰ Sacred Congregation, 1982, 60.

³¹ Ibid., 9.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid., 52.

³⁴ Ibid., 32.

³⁵ Pope Benedict XVI, 2008

³⁶ Sacred Congregation, 1982, 32.

³⁷ Congregation, 2007, 4.

³⁸ Congregation, 1988, 38.

Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982)

It seems necessary to begin by trying to delineate the identity of the lay Catholics who work in a school; the way in which they bear witness to the faith will depend on this specific identity, in the Church and in this particular field of labor. In trying to contribute to the investigation, it is the intention of this Sacred Congregation to offer a service to lay Catholics who work in schools (and who should have a clear idea of the specific character of their vocation), and also to the People of God (who need to have a true picture of the laity as an active element, accomplishing an important task for the entire Church through their labor (5).

Therefore, “the laity are called in a special way to make the Church present and operative in those places and circumstances where only through them can she become the salt of the earth.” In order to achieve this presence of the whole Church, and of the Savior whom she proclaims lay people must be ready to proclaim the message through their words, and witness to it in what they do (9).

Personal Life Witness. Direct and Personal Contact with Students: Conduct is always much more important than speech; this fact becomes especially important in the formation period of students. 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... Without this witness, living in such an atmosphere, they may begin to regard Christian behavior as an impossible ideal. It must never be forgotten that, in the crises “which have their greatest effect on the younger generations”, the most important element in the educational endeavor is “always the individual person: the person, and the moral dignity of that person which is the result of his or her principles, and the conformity of actions with those principles” (32).

Professional commitment; support of truth, justice and freedom; openness to the point of view of others, combined with a habitual attitude of service; personal commitment to the students, and fraternal solidarity with everyone; a life that is integrally moral in all its aspects. The lay Catholic who brings all of this to his or her work in a pluralist school becomes a living mirror, in whom every individual in the educational community will see reflected an image of one inspired by the Gospel (52).

The concrete living out of a vocation as rich and profound as that of the lay Catholic in a school requires an appropriate formation, both on the professional plane and on the religious plane. Most especially, it requires the educator to have a mature spiritual personality, expressed in a profound Christian life (60).

The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988)

The Church, therefore, is willing to give lay people charge of the schools that it has established, and the laity themselves establish schools. The recognition of the school as a Catholic school is, however, always reserved to the competent ecclesiastical authority.

When lay people do establish schools, they should be especially concerned with the creation of a community climate permeated by the Gospel spirit of freedom and love, and they should witness to this in their own lives (38).

Apostolic Journey to the United States: Meeting with Catholic Educators at the Conference Hall of The Catholic University of America (Pope Benedict XVI, 2008)

Teachers and administrators, whether in universities or schools, have the duty and privilege to ensure that students receive instruction in Catholic doctrine and practice. This requires that public witness to the way of Christ, as found in the Gospel and upheld by the Church's Magisterium, shapes all aspects of an institution's life, both inside and outside the classroom. Divergence from this vision weakens Catholic identity and, far from advancing freedom, inevitably leads to confusion, whether moral, intellectual or spiritual.

Educating Together in Catholic Schools: A Shared Mission Between Consecrated Persons and the Lay Faithful (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2007)

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, in whom alone «the mystery of man truly becomes clear. These persons, therefore, acknowledge a *personal and communal adherence* with the Lord, assumed as the basis and constant reference of the inter-personal relationship and mutual cooperation between educator and student (4).

Educating to Intercultural Dialogue in Catholic Schools: Living in Harmony for a Civilization of Love (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2013)

Catholic schools develop, in a manner wholly particular to them, the basic hypothesis that formation covers the whole arc of professional experience and is not limited to the period of initial formation or formation in the early years. Catholic schools require people not only to know how to teach or direct an organization; they also require them, using the skills of their profession, to know how to bear authentic witness to the school's values, as well as to their own continuing efforts to live out ever more deeply, in thought and deed, the ideals that are stated publicly in words (80).

Educating Today and Tomorrow: A Renewing Passion (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2014)

Hence, one of the most important challenges will be to foster a greater cultural openness amongst teachers and, at the same time, an equally greater willingness to act as witnesses, so that they are aware and careful about their school's peculiar context in their work, without being lukewarm or extremist, teaching what they know and testifying to what they believe in. In order for teachers to interpret their profession in this way, they must be formed to engage in the dialogue between faith and cultures and between different religions; there cannot be any real dialogue if educators themselves have not been formed and helped to deepen their faith and personal beliefs (III,1, i).

Required Formation of Catholic Educational Leaders

Overview

Formation of Catholic leaders, and of all personnel, allows the Gospel message and the living presence of Jesus to permeate the entire life of the school community and, thus, be faithful to the school's evangelizing mission.³⁹ Formation needs to consider both professional matters typical of teaching and administrating, and the fundamental elements that make up a school's Catholic identity.

The synthesis of faith, culture, and life that Catholic schools are called to, is reached by integrating all aspects of human knowledge in the light of the Gospel and in fostering growth in Christian virtue. Catholic leaders facilitate growth in knowledge and growth in humanity.⁴⁰ They support and organize teacher collaboration and community by providing encouragement and assistance, so they, too, can share in the living mission of evangelization and formation.⁴¹

Leaders have a duty to ensure all personnel, including themselves, receive adequate preparation to serve effectively.⁴² Formational needs for Catholic school leaders and teachers extends beyond that of teachers in government-run schools, since the purpose and end of education are different. Therefore, formational programs for teacher and school leaders focusing on Christian cultural and pedagogical approaches must also be developed and provided.⁴³

Citations: Required Formation of Catholic Educational Leaders

Teach Them (National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1976)

We urge administrators to exercise their gifts of education leadership by promoting structures and cooperative procedures which will render such accountability and evaluation meaningful and useful to all in the Catholic educational community—parents, teachers and the Catholic community generally. They should exercise their responsibility particularly with reference to the selection, motivation and development of teaching personnel, keeping ever in mind the apostolic goals and character of the Catholic school (Administrators, 2).

Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982)

This calling says the Second Vatican Council, speaking about educators, requires “extremely careful preparation” ... The need for an adequate formation is often felt most acutely in religious and spiritual areas; all too frequently, lay Catholics have not had a

³⁹ U.S. Conference, 2005c.

⁴⁰ Congregation, 2007, 24.

⁴¹ Congregation, 2014, III, 1, b.

⁴² U.S. Conference, 2015a, 2.

⁴³ Congregation, 2013, 76-77.

religious formation that is equal to their general, cultural, and, most especially, professional formation (60).

The need for religious formation is related to this specific awareness that is being asked of lay Catholics; religious formation must be broadened and be kept up to date, on the same level as, and in harmony with, human formation as a whole. Lay Catholics need to be keenly aware of the need for this kind of religious formation; it is not only the exercise of an apostolate that depends on it, but even an appropriate professional competence, especially when the competence is in the field of education (62).

For the Catholic educator, religious formation does not come to an end with the completion of basic education; it must be a part of and a complement to one's professional formation, and so be proportionate to adult faith, human culture, and the specific lay vocation. This means that religious formation must be oriented toward both personal sanctification and apostolic mission, for these are two inseparable elements in a Christian vocation. "Formation for apostolic mission means a certain human and well-rounded formation, adapted to the natural abilities and circumstances of each person" and requires "in addition to spiritual formation...solid doctrinal instruction...in theology, ethics and philosophy". Nor can we forget, in the case of an educator, adequate formation in the social teachings of the Church, which are "an integral part of the Christian concept of life", and help to keep intensely alive the kind of social sensitivity that is needed (65).

Faced with this reality [extraordinary growth in science and technology], which lay people are the first to experience, the Catholic educator has an obvious and constant need for updating: in personal attitudes, in the content of the subjects, that are taught, in the pedagogical methods that are used. Recall that the vocation of an educator requires "a constant readiness to begin anew and to adapt". If the need for updating is constant, then the formation must be permanent. This need is not limited to professional formation; it includes religious formation and, in general, the enrichment of the whole person. In this way, the Church will constantly adapt its pastoral mission to the circumstances of the men and women of each age, so that the message of Jesus Christ can be brought to them in a way that is understandable and adapted to their condition... If the need for updating is constant, then the formation must be permanent. This need is not limited to professional formation; it includes religious formation and, in general, the enrichment of the whole person. In this way, the Church will constantly adapt its pastoral mission to the circumstances of the men and women of each age, so that the message of Jesus Christ can be brought to them in a way that is understandable and adapted to their condition.

Permanent formation involves a wide variety of different elements; a constant search for ways to bring it about is therefore required of both individuals and the community. Among the variety of means for permanent formation, some have become ordinary and virtually indispensable instruments: reading periodicals and pertinent books, attending conferences and seminars, participating in workshops, assemblies and congresses, making appropriate use of periods of free time for formation. All lay Catholics who work in schools should make these a habitual part of their own human, professional, and religious life.

No one can deny that permanent formation, as the name itself suggests, is a difficult task; not everyone succeeds in doing it. This becomes especially true in the face of the growing complexity of contemporary life and the difficult nature of the educational mission, combined with the economic insecurity that so often accompanies it. But in spite of all these factors, no lay Catholic who works in a school can ignore this present-day need. To do so would be to remain locked up in outdated knowledge, criteria, and attitudes. To reject a formation that is permanent and that involves the whole person—human, professional, and religious—is to isolate oneself from that very world that has to be brought closer to the Gospel (68-70).

As a part of its mission, an element proper to the school is solicitous care for the permanent professional and religious formation of its lay members. Lay people should be able to look to the school for the orientation and the assistance that they need, including the willingness to make time available when this is needed. Formation is indispensable; without it, the school will wander further and further away from its objectives (72-79).

Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord (U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2005)

The Church has always required proper preparation of those who exercise a ministry. In the same way, CIC, canon 231, states that “lay persons who devote themselves permanently or temporarily to some special service of the Church are obliged to acquire the appropriate formation which is required to fulfill their function properly.”

“To set high standards,” said Pope John Paul II, “means both to provide a thorough basic training and to keep it constantly updated. This is a fundamental duty, in order to ensure qualified personnel for the Church’s mission” (19).

Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium (U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2005)

Ninety-five percent of our current school administrators and teachers are members of the laity. The preparation and ongoing formation of new administrators and teachers is vital if our schools are to remain truly Catholic in all aspects of school life. Catholic school personnel should be grounded in a faith-based Catholic culture, have strong bonds to Christ and the Church, and be witnesses to the faith in both their words and actions. The formation of personnel will allow the Gospel message and the living presence of Jesus to permeate the entire life of the school community and thus be faithful to the school’s evangelizing mission.

We must provide a sufficient number of programs of the highest quality to recruit and prepare our future diocesan and local school administrators and teachers so that they are knowledgeable in matters of our faith, are professionally prepared, and are committed to the Church. These programs will require even more active involvement and cooperation by our Catholic colleges and universities in collaboration with the diocesan educational leadership.

Ongoing faith formation and professional development programs must also be available so that administrators and teachers in Catholic schools can continue to grow in their

ministry of education. These programs will introduce new and effective initiatives, educational models, and approaches, while always maintaining a sound Catholic identity in our schools. This is especially important when new Catholic school administrators and teachers come from private and state colleges and universities or from careers in the public school system (Personnel).

Work with the leaders of Catholic colleges and universities to address the critical staffing needs of our Catholic elementary and secondary schools. This would include steps to ensure that sound and effective programs of teacher education and administration are available and affordable to those interested in working in our Catholic schools (Future Actions).

Educating Together in Catholic Schools: A Shared Mission Between Consecrated Persons and the Lay Faithful (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2007)

The professional formation of the educator implies a vast range of cultural, psychological and pedagogical skills, characterized by autonomy, planning and evaluation capacity, creativity, openness to innovation, aptitude for updating, research and experimentation. It also demands the ability to synthesize professional skills with educational motivations, giving particular attention to the relational situation required today by the increasingly collegial exercise of the teaching profession. Moreover, in the eyes and expectations of students and their families, the educator is seen and desired as a welcoming and prepared interlocutor, able to motivate the young to a complete formation, to encourage and direct their greatest energy and skills towards a positive construction of themselves and their lives, and to be a serious and credible witness of the responsibility and hope which the school owes to society (22).

It is not sufficient simply to care about professional updating in the strict sense. 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. Thus educators must dedicate themselves “to others with heartfelt concern, enabling them to experience the richness of their humanity” (24).

Educating to Intercultural Dialogue in Catholic Schools: Living in Harmony for a Civilization of Love (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2013)

The formation of teachers and administrators is of crucial importance. In most countries, the state provides the initial formation of school personnel. Good though this may be, it cannot be considered sufficient. In fact, Catholic schools bring something extra, particular to them, that must always be recognized and developed. Therefore, while the obligatory formation needs to consider those disciplinary and professional matters typical of teaching and administrating, it must also consider the cultural and pedagogical fundamentals that make up Catholic schools’ identity.

The time spent in formation must be used for reinforcing the idea of Catholic schools as being communities of fraternal relationships and places of research, dedicated to deepening and communicating truth in the various scholarly disciplines. Those who have leadership positions are duty-bound to guarantee that all personnel receive adequate preparation to serve effectively. Moreover, they must serve in coherence with the faith they profess, and be able to interpret society's demands in the actual situation of its current configuration. This also favors the school's collaboration with parents in education, respecting their responsibility as first and natural educators (76-77).

Educating Today and Tomorrow: A Renewing Passion (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2014)

...a particular attention must be devoted to the formation and selection of school heads. They are not only in charge of their respective schools, but are also Bishops' reference persons inside schools in matters of pastoral care. School heads must be leaders who make sure that education is a shared and living mission, who support and organize teachers, who promote mutual encouragement and assistance (III,1, b).

"Themes in Catholic Schools in the United States" (U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2015)

Formation is a major concern for Catholic schools. While teacher formation was articulated as important, the formation of principals and Catholic school leaders emerged as an area of critical importance to the bishops. The need to cultivate Catholic school leaders was voiced numerous times across the conversations. Some bishops argue that the Catholic identity of a school depends on the faith formation of a school's leaders and faculty. Many bishops stressed the importance of finding and training competent principals and pastors able to work with the schools. It was noted that bishops, current pastors and principals play a valuable role in helping to identify leaders (2).

Conclusion

The Church's teachings convey the immense responsibility that Catholic school leaders assume in the ministry of Catholic education. In addition to financial, operational, and curricular knowledge, these leaders must work toward "an integration of temporal reality with the Gospel, so that the Gospel can thus reach into the lives of all men and women" (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982). There is a special call, a vocation to the apostolate of Catholic education where it is demanded of them to live lives of Gospel witness, fully and integrally. Not only is it entrusted to them the human formation and education of young people, but also the modeling and witness of the Catholic faith on a daily basis to edify and bolster the faith of their colleagues and peers. A school's Catholic identity depends on effective and formed faith-filled leaders who set the tone for a vibrant, worshiping community of believers who collaborate with the Church to fulfill the mission of evangelization and sanctification of its faithful.

Questions for Reflection

1. Do I look at my work in a Catholic school as a vocation, a call from God, or simply a means of sustenance?
2. Do I have the “special qualities of mind and heart” and the willingness to “renew and adapt” that this very public and high-profile position requires?
3. Do I have the capacity, both intellectually and physically, to fulfill the mission as a full partner with the Catholic Church of advancing an internal renewal within the Church and preserving and enhancing its influence in the world? In my community? In my diocese?
4. How convicted am I to fulfill the mission of Catholic education, moving beyond mere administration to enriching “student’s lives with the fullness of Christ’s message and... inviting them to accept with all their hearts Christ’s work”?
5. Am I living in full communion with the Catholic Church? Is my prayer life strong? Am I willing to share and witness my faith to all those I meet and work with?
6. Do I have a full understanding of all the teachings of the Church? Are there areas where I could learn more? What are they?
7. Am I willing and do I have the capacity to mentor colleagues and teachers?
8. What are my strengths and weaknesses in providing professional development for teachers? Do I have adequate outside resources I can call upon?
9. Am I willing and able to collaborate with religious in the formation of students? Teacher formation?
10. Am I willing to continue my own personal professional and spiritual formation even when times seem burdensome?

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