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## Catholic Education and Intercultural Dialogue: Continuing the Conversation

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## Catholic Education and Intercultural Dialogue: Continuing the Conversation

As one of the most influential and widespread educational agencies in the world, the Catholic Church has a responsibility to ensure that its global network of schools, colleges and universities, no matter the social, political and cultural contexts in which they find themselves, offers challenging and life-enhancing educational experiences to all students. Given current scholarly and political interest in the interface between globalization and education, it should come as no surprise that the Congregation for Catholic Education has recently turned its considerable resources to addressing the issues arising from this growing contemporary phenomenon.<sup>i</sup> The publication in 2013 of *Educating to Intercultural Dialogue in Catholic Schools: Living in Harmony for a Civilization of Love* is a significant moment in the history of the Holy See's teaching on education in that the document proposes 'intercultural dialogue' as an overarching aim of Catholic schooling.<sup>ii</sup> For the purposes of the present article, the meaning of 'intercultural dialogue' will be understood as referring principally to dialogue between people of different religious traditions.<sup>iii</sup>

*Educating to Intercultural Dialogue*, published almost fifty years after the Second Vatican Council's Declaration on Christian Education, *Gravissimum Educationis*<sup>iv</sup>, offers a seven point plan as a supportive template for intercultural approaches to education.<sup>v</sup> While the title of the document eirenicly asserts (or so it seems) that so-called intercultural dialogue leads to social harmony, it remains necessary to engage critically with the nuances of this powerful proposition. Only then can we begin to make sense of what seems to be a radical shift in the aims of Catholic education.

In recognition of this evolving context, the present article begins with some general observations on the nature of Catholic culture in education. Two principal arguments are then proposed. First, the development of processes for purposeful intercultural dialogue must be predicated on a mature understanding of one's own faith tradition. Second, the authentic formation of Catholic teachers in their own religious tradition is essential for the success of the intercultural enterprise. Two 'keys' to this formational process are then proposed: the importance of liturgical formation and an active love of the Church's educational tradition.

### **‘Catholic Culture’ in Education**

A systematic reading of *Educating to Intercultural Dialogue* makes it clear that the commitment to intercultural dialogue cannot be interpreted as a cipher for a weakening of Catholic identity. On the contrary, the Catholic school remains called to exemplify in its mission an authentic Catholic culture.<sup>vi</sup>

How can this be done?

The Church must approach all forms of dialogue from a position of strength and confidence in its own worthy philosophical, theological and educational traditions. A commitment to dialogue is not a position of relative weakness aimed simply at gathering some meagre crumbs from the unsympathetic table of secularism. Furthermore, it goes without saying that, given the plural context in which Catholic schools normally find themselves today, the tone of any debate on what is understood by Catholic culture and its relationship to education and evangelization requires forms of language and imagery which are positive and welcoming. The starting point is to see how the ‘Catholic mind’ can illuminate the debate. This intellectual tradition is, as Muldoon rightly argued, ‘an intellectual tradition in service to the human family and as such it is motivated by love.’<sup>vii</sup> While there are competing visions of how best to define terms like ‘Catholic intellectual tradition’ agreement that it does indeed exist is a step forward.<sup>viii</sup> Three points naturally flow from this.

First, an authentic understanding of the implications of the term ‘Catholic culture’ must move beyond a simplistic view of culture as something ‘out there’ to which the Church has to respond. Catholic culture is better defined as a manifestation of ‘embodied religion’ as it must flow from, and remain united to, a distinct Catholic worldview.<sup>ix</sup> It is fully bound up with the reality of the Incarnation and a Catholic ‘sacramental imagination’ as shown in the many ways in which the members of the Church live their faith amidst the pots and pans of daily life.<sup>x</sup> ‘Catholic culture’ hence is a necessary corrective to some contemporary understandings of ‘spirituality’ which, unintentionally or otherwise, lessen the importance of the material and the tangible.<sup>xi</sup> In essence, Catholic culture flows from the liturgy—it can have no higher source—and traditionally has found expression in architecture, music, literature and art. These well-trodden pathways to beauty manifest in concrete terms the reality of the Christian dogma of the Incarnation. This position is close to Roger Scruton’s definition of culture as ‘high arts - the accumulation

of art, literature and humane reflection that has stood the “test of time.”<sup>xiii</sup> Scruton’s definition, however, is only partially compatible with a Catholic understanding of culture. All aspects of life, not just the ‘high arts’ as defined above, are ways in which a Catholic culture reveals itself. While this includes an appreciation of the work of esteemed figures such as Fra’ Angelico and Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina—themselves correctly logged as examples of Catholic culture—we must apportion value to what seem to be more *prosaic* cultural manifestations *viz* how we observe Sundays and feast days and striving for excellence in our daily work, no matter how insignificant a particular task may be.<sup>xiii</sup>

Second, Catholic culture, broadly understood, emerges from an encounter with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As the Gospel is the message of God’s love for humanity, there is no space for those driven by a desire take part in so-called ‘culture wars’ - the term often employed by those who see the mission of the contemporary Church in quasi militaristic terms as a succession of battles fought from the safety of deep and impenetrable doctrinal trenches.<sup>xiv</sup> Rather, an attachment to a genuine Catholic worldview is a public commitment to rebuild the foundations of society, wounded as they often are by rationalism and relativism in all its guises, by revisiting the sources which provide this cultural energy.<sup>xv</sup> Of course, such expressions of authentic Catholic culture will often run counter to fashionable and allegedly progressive understandings of the place of the human person in society and, therefore, be seen by some as a cluster of backward and fideistic manifestations of beliefs best confined to history books. Nonetheless, an appropriate response to these widespread challenges is to seek some common ground with those attached to other worldviews. Pope Benedict XVI’s ‘Courtyard of the Gentiles’ initiative, designed to reach out to proponents of atheism, is a timely example of the need for the Church to move beyond the limitations of operating within circumscribed zones of activity.<sup>xvi</sup>

Third, a rediscovery of the notion of the ‘Catholic mind’ can help us to navigate a path through the contested areas of culture and worldviews.<sup>xvii</sup> Indeed, at the heart of the ‘Catholic mind’ is a recognition of the importance of dialogue between the Church and wider intellectual and religious movements. This powerful image implies a total immersion in the long-standing Catholic intellectual tradition as expressed in, for example, the faith-reason partnership and the mystery of God incarnate.<sup>xviii</sup>

Therein we find openness to new ideas and insights on all aspects of Church life which are then assessed on how well they develop and build on the doctrinal and cultural foundations we have inherited.

The Second Vatican Council, as has been well established, endorsed the principle of dialogue with members of other religions.<sup>xix</sup> As the Church strives to find common ground with adherents of such traditions, it encounters neither an empty paganism nor a soulless relativism but communities with their own historical and cultural legacies rooted in a committed search for meaning and wisdom. Christians are called to see the hand of God working in and through these diverse expressions of life and belief.<sup>xx</sup> The success worldwide of Catholic schools in attracting people of all faiths and none has, paradoxically, brought about a situation in which the reality of interculturalism in the life of the school has played no small part in a reframing of Church teaching on the identity and related mission of the Catholic school. It is in this vibrant interplay between faith and culture that we can now attempt to shed light on what is understood as an intercultural approach to Catholic education.

### **Catholic Education: Fostering an Intercultural Approach**

A well-developed understanding of the rich educational traditions of Catholicism is an essential sign of a readiness to engage in meaningful intercultural dialogue in the school. If the so-called ‘Catholic mind’ (see above) is not permeating the life of the school through the lived experience of the staff and students—i.e. it is not fully or even partially *embodied*—how can the school as so configured truly act as a site of intercultural dialogue?

This apparent obstacle seems to limit the possibilities of fruitful dialogue. If one side to the discussion lacks an informed sense of identity, the dialogue is increasingly endangered to the point of desuetude, with ‘intercultural dialogue’ becoming no more than an inclusive phrase with little impact on the daily life of the school.

The heart of ‘intercultural dialogue’ lies in a sophisticated understanding of Catholic religious education. The concept of the Catholic school as a site of ‘intercultural dialogue’ has evolved in parallel, it seems, to the Church’s teaching on the necessary *complementarity* between traditional forms of catechesis and the school-based religious education curriculum.<sup>xxi</sup> This is a legitimate development of the

traditional faith-formatinal aspect of Catholic education in which initiation into sacramental practice through catechetically-inspired programmes of Religious Education was regarded as one of the principal aims of Catholic schooling.<sup>xxii</sup>

The focus in Magisterial documents on religious education as the principal channel for ‘knowledge about Christianity’s identity and Christian life’ can be interpreted as an important marker of a reimagining of the Catholic school as site of intercultural dialogue.<sup>xxiii</sup> Indeed, it is a sign that openness to a deepening of the religious inheritance of Catholic young people is a first step towards a genuine appreciation of plurality.

The arrival of ‘intercultural dialogue’ as a principal theme of Catholic education might be interpreted as a radical departure from cherished models of Catholic schooling. Recent Magisterial documents on Catholic education have proposed a gradual but clearly delineated shift in understanding regarding the role of the Catholic school vis-à-vis its relationship with wider culture.<sup>xxiv</sup> If culture, then, is understood as the embodiment of religion and religious worldviews, with due regard for the limitations of this definition for those not attached to any religious tradition, we need to consider what this powerful image means for the Catholic school as a place of intercultural dialogue.

The Christian Gospel, far from being a private code of conduct for the elect, is a call to develop a dynamic relationship with Jesus Christ. A Church which lacks confidence in its message and is weak in its missionary endeavours has lost sight of the universality of the Gospel.<sup>xxv</sup> If the Church professes God as the creator and Jesus as the Redeemer of all, then the life of the Church must be open to every possible means of proclaiming this message.

In the context of an educational community, the term ‘Catholic Culture’ has two principal fields of operation: a) how Catholic students encounter the wider implications for life of the Catholic faith tradition and b) how the Catholic school community works with ideas and people from other religious and philosophical traditions. All sites of Catholic education are both ecclesial *and* civic institutions where the Catholic faith interacts with the pluralism of contemporary society. This encounter, properly understood, is an opportunity to foster a constructive dialogue with those who are not of the Catholic tradition on how to promote ‘the development of human potential’.<sup>xxvi</sup>

The notion of ‘encounter’ is an articulation of the Second Vatican Council’s commitment to dialogue. Woven through *Gravissimum Educationis* and the successor documents issued by the Congregation for Catholic Education is a distinct recognition of the Catholic school as the interface between a Catholic worldview and a society with an increasingly fragile anthropological vision.<sup>xxvii</sup> Crucially, *Gravissimum Educationis* saw the school as a place of encounter between ‘Church and mankind’ (sic) which was of mutual benefit.<sup>xxviii</sup> This proposition seemed to move beyond any notion of the Catholic school as the primary agent of catechetical formation. In this respect, *Gravissimum Educationis* was aligned with the wider concerns of the Council to commit to dialogue with ‘the world’.

Of course, it would be easy to dismiss the delicate balancing act between the Catholic school’s commitment to dialogue with the ‘other’ and the requirement to foster a dedicated sense of Catholic culture as an inevitable weakening of the fabric of Catholic education. Nonetheless, there is a much more subtle interpretation available to us: while the Church talks increasingly the language of a ‘new evangelization’ of secular society, the initial steps in this process might come about from less explicit forms of proclamation. In this line of thinking, the invitation to dialogue is a form of ‘pre-evangelization’ precisely *because* a stated commitment to intercultural dialogue is in itself a manifestation of a robust, not a diluted, Catholic identity. This is where the energy emanating from the ‘new evangelization’ has the potential to strengthen the Catholic school’s approach to knowledge and understanding of the Catholic tradition.<sup>xxix</sup> In essence, the proclamation of the Gospel and dialogue with other religions, while not on the same level, are complementary pathways: in other words, authentic dialogue is a form of apostolate.<sup>xxx</sup>

As the reach of Catholic schools goes far beyond the children of Catholic families, it is uniquely placed to act as the medium whereby the Gospel irrigates the arid soil of secular pluralism. Building on the initiatives in this field of Pope Benedict, Pope Francis has in turn encouraged an explicit culture of ‘encounter’ between the Catholic tradition and the plural society.<sup>xxxi</sup> The notion of ‘encounter’ in this context is an invitation to go beyond what is familiar and comfortable in order to seek, find and embrace that which is not (fully) known to us. Clearly, misunderstandings loom if this new direction is understood as a form of moral relativism which loosens the perceived theological restrictions arising from attachment to dogma. In educational terms, to be clear, this position is manifested in an understanding of the Catholic



school as the locus of allegedly more progressive attitudes where ‘dissent’ from traditional teaching is encouraged as a mark of an intellectually-enlightened independence.<sup>xxxii</sup> While caution is needed to avoid such excesses, there remains a need for audacity and courage in the proclamation of intercultural dialogue as a central feature of Catholic education.

To conclude this section, the proposed intercultural approach to Catholic education, radical as it is, requires some form of pastoral theology as a supportive structure for teachers and school leaders involved in this mission. There can be little doubt that school leaders more generally struggle to meet the demands and expectations placed upon them by parents and governments. In particular, the ‘educational emergency’ diagnosed by Pope Benedict XVI is a manifestation of the triumph of rationalism allied to an increasingly aggressive secularism.<sup>xxxiii</sup> For Pope Benedict, education in the developed world has been reshaped as a state-driven process designed to nurture a set of values deemed essential to the operation of a liberal secular democracy. The cost of this shift in expectation is seen in a growing suspicion to the existence of religious schools *and* the desire to tighten state control of Catholic schools where they continue to exist.<sup>xxxiv</sup> Allied to these externally driven requirements, additional pressure comes from those within the Catholic system who seem unaware of the demands of Catholic education and the role it is asked to play in the life of the Church. Given this double-edged squeeze on the life of the Catholic school, careful thought needs to be given to the formation of those charged with teaching in and leading contemporary Catholic schools.<sup>xxxv</sup>

### **Formation of Teachers for Intercultural Dialogue**

The worldwide corps of Catholic teachers is made up of an obviously diverse group of professionals who share a common purpose in their calling to serve the mission of Catholic education. As a body of culturally differentiated Catholics, they are a sign of the unity-in-diversity which marks an authentic catholic spirit. In this context, serious consideration must be given to establishing some universal norms for Catholic teacher formation processes which can then be shaped to meet the particular local demands arising across the globe.

A brief historical analogy will shed some light on how best to do this. The famous *Subiaco Address* by the then Cardinal Ratzinger in 2005 ended with a powerful reflection on how St. Benedict of Nursia withdrew to the harsh solitude of Subiaco before settling on Monte Cassino, a hill south of Rome. From this vantage point, this fledgling community of monks illuminated the continent of Europe with the fruits of their learning.<sup>xxxvi</sup> Clearly, the solitude of Subiaco offered Benedict the necessary intellectual space which allowed him to think through his plans. This period of reflection underpinned the subsequent evangelizing mission of the first Benedictine monks. In short, good formation informed action.

Catholic educators are called to appreciate and learn from the famed Benedictine union of learning and service of which they are the inheritors. It follows that effective and meaningful intercultural dialogue in Catholic education requires teachers and school leaders who have been afforded the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the contours of their own religious tradition. The proper intellectual and pastoral formation of this group is essential to the ‘new evangelization’ and the related task of intercultural dialogue. Richard Rymarz’s diagnosis and analysis of diminishing levels of religious commitment in younger Catholics brings to the fore the personnel challenges facing Catholic schools in the years ahead. In concrete terms, he asks the question: ‘Who will Labor in the vineyard?’<sup>xxxvii</sup> While the question of teacher recruitment is a wider and increasingly challenging issue, all with an interest in Catholic education must ensure that prospective teachers are afforded suitable opportunities to learn from and become immersed in the rich well springs of the ‘Catholic mind’.

Paragraph 8 of *Gravissimum Educationis* underlined the importance of holistic formation for Catholic teachers, a theme often repeated in the post-Vatican II Magisterial teachings on education.<sup>xxxviii</sup> As such, it is vital to offer serving and prospective Catholic teachers the knowledge and skills necessary to engage in dialogue with people of other religions and cultures. Crucially, the effectiveness of this dialogue is conditional, as noted above, on teachers’ confidence in their own religious tradition.

*Educating to Intercultural Dialogue*, unsurprisingly, reiterates previous Magisterial calls for teachers to have appropriate cultural and pedagogical formation.<sup>xxxix</sup> Given the many expectations invested in Catholic teachers, some serious thought should be given as to how the theological and cultural

inheritance of Catholic education can be passed on to the new generations. I now propose two formative keys as essential markers of a robust Catholic teacher formation process. Both keys are offered as the starting point for what should be a wide-ranging debate on the most appropriate way to form those who aspire to teach in Catholic schools.

### ***First Key: Liturgical Formation***

As noted above, Catholic school teaching, especially (but not exclusively) in the subject of religious education, is complementary to the worthy mission of catechesis. As both initiatives must be rooted in an informed Catholic worldview, Catholic teachers, like their fellow catechists, must breathe freely the liturgical air of the Church. It is the proper celebration of the liturgy which acts as the summit and source of all aspects of Christian life, underpins the mission of Catholic education and, by extension, all formation processes for prospective teachers. In this context, it is important to explore how the liturgy offers a framework for authentic faith development for prospective teachers.

Liturgy, properly understood, is a turn towards the ‘other’ (i.e. the Trinity) and a rejection of self-centredness. The importance of liturgy to the Catholic mind is reflected in the status of *Sacrosantum Concilium* - Vatican II’s Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (SC), as a foundation document for the work of the Council. In a sense, SC continued the work of the pre-existing ‘Liturgical Movement’ and allowed this burst of reforming energy, rooted in the ideals of *ressourcement*, to flow into the work of the Council.<sup>x1</sup> SC reminds us that the liturgy is ‘the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian spirit’ and that it is the role of ‘pastors of souls’ (i.e. bishops and priests) to ensure that the people receive suitable liturgical formation.<sup>xli</sup>

Liturgy is neither a construct of the community nor an event dependent upon the human qualities of the celebrant but a truly Trinitarian action which looks beyond the circle of the worshiping community. In liturgy, we do not celebrate our talents and gifts but give thanks to God for these selfsame talents and gifts. To illustrate this point, Joseph Ratzinger offers an interesting, if deeply challenging insight into the Old Testament story of the ‘golden calf’. This event represents, he argues, a community that is closed in

on itself with worship of each other and not of God.<sup>xliii</sup> It is not too hard to discern the image of the ‘golden calf’ in education today, especially in constant focus on the self and the lauding of individual achievements to an excessive degree which permeates many aspects of contemporary western education.<sup>xliii</sup>

Christian life is underpinned and nourished by the graces offered by the public worship of the Church. The liturgical year is, for example, a symbol-rich ‘roadmap’ guiding us through the connected mysteries of Christianity and is, without question, a vital formation syllabus for all the baptized.<sup>xliiv</sup> The concatenation of fasts and feasts mirrors the human experience of sadness and joy yet it is always orientated towards the ultimate joy of the Resurrection.<sup>xlv</sup>

Catholic education is similarly inspired by grace. In liturgy, the worshiping community is actively participating in the Mass through a deep and undistracted (as far as possible) spiritual engagement with the mysteries being celebrated. This is far from mere spectating: the Spanish term *oir misa* (literally ‘to hear Mass’) is particularly unhelpful in developing a nuanced understanding of participation.

The specific call for the ‘pastors of souls’ (see above) to commit fully to the pastoral implications of the liturgical life of the Church can also be applied to the work of the Catholic teacher as it is often the teacher who acts as intermediary between the liturgical life of the Church and the daily life of the students in the Catholic school. The (lay) teacher, as educator and catechist, lives a distinct vocation which is continually energised by the grace offered in the liturgy.<sup>xlvi</sup> Crucially, on the teachers’ shoulders lies the responsibility of passing on the Church’s desire to sanctify time by means of a succession of the structure of the liturgical year. This is a natural consequence of the poignant demographic and pastoral reality of the Catholic school being, in many cases, the sole point of contact between young people and the life of the Church.

A study of the educational thought of St. Augustine of Hippo can help us to reconcile the primacy of grace, the importance of liturgical formation and the shape of Catholic thought on education. For St. Augustine, real learning comes from the student’s encounter with Christ.<sup>xlvii</sup> Following this line of thought, to teach is to indicate a direction of travel, to smooth or remove barriers to learning and to offer advice based on the teacher’s knowledge and wisdom. Educators must point explicitly towards God (i.e

away from themselves) as source of all knowledge. If we see liturgy as a window through which divine grace shines, then formation becomes a process of responding to the grace freely-offered therein.

Drawing on the important historical work of Odd Bakke and Josef Jungmann, we see that catechetical processes in the early and medieval Church were grounded in families' participation in the liturgy and the wider life of the community.<sup>xlviii</sup> Despite later catechetical developments such as the catechism, liturgical formation continues to offer a dynamic blend of cognitive and affective development by means of the ritual, stories, songs and prayers which make up the liturgical cycle. This revival of interest in 'cult' is designed to foster in turn a renewed understanding of what we understand by culture.<sup>xlix</sup> Nonetheless, liturgical formation cannot be reduced to seeing the celebration of the sacred mysteries simply as a succession of pedagogical moments or explicit teaching points. The interplay between beauty and mystery ensures that the liturgy has no space for superficiality, banality and self-centredness.<sup>1</sup> This call to beauty and harmony is the well-watered seed from which the fruits of a good life grow.<sup>li</sup>

A successful Catholic educational system, one underpinned by authentic liturgical formation, must draw more on a deeper and more contemplative set of pedagogical principles which sees 'success' as the formation of good human beings who strive to live the call to holiness. As already noted above, Catholic education is inspired by beauty. The order of creation is itself a thing of beauty and the liturgy is in turn an act of beauty in which praise of God is central. Authentic liturgical formation takes our mind away from an over burdening attachment to trifles and concerns towards the refreshing light of grace.

The various educational programmes available in centres of Catholic education are the means of evangelization of culture and hence require teachers who are prepared for this mission.<sup>lii</sup> To be liturgically formed is to be ready to be part of the community of Catholic educators and thinkers who have nourished the life of the Church throughout the centuries. Some thought will now be given to how to strengthen the 'identity' of the worldwide community of Catholic teachers.

***Second Key: Teachers 'Loving the Tradition'***

Intercultural dialogue in education must revolve around a sincere attempt to be open to wider thinking in research and policy-making.<sup>liii</sup> All such findings need to be evaluated in the light of Christian anthropology in order to identify common ground and areas for development. For example, it is vital to be aware of the research reports which attempt to explain the common factors in high-performing educational systems and strive to apply these, as appropriate to Catholic education. While this does not mean that we should fall prey to a form of neo-Pelagianism which sees ‘successful’ Catholic education as the sum of human actions and competencies, it does encourage a professional mindset which sees value lying beyond our own horizons. All of this leaves room for a marriage between Catholic educational tradition and modern insights into education.

In the Catholic mind, a love of Tradition (and its many related traditions) does not mean that we are slaves to fashion or curators of a museum. Blessed John Henry Newman’s *An Essay on the Development of Doctrine*, first published in the late nineteenth century, proposed ‘seven notes’ to guide the Church in assessing whether particular doctrinal developments were indeed genuine *developments* in the Church’s understanding of its teaching tradition as opposed to *corruptions*.<sup>liv</sup> The latter was defined in his Sixth Note as ‘a development in that very stage in which it ceases to illustrate and begins to disturb, the acquisitions gained in its previous history’.<sup>lv</sup>

Before going further, it is important first to define what is understood by ‘loving the tradition’. What ‘tradition’ is the object of this love? I have referred above to the concept of the ‘Catholic mind’ – the accumulated wisdom of the Church gleaned from prayerful study of sacred texts and considered reflection on pastoral practice in our communities. This necessarily broad term has, potentially, many subsets in the various spheres of work in which the Church is involved. The body of work known as ‘Catholic social teaching’ would be one such area. It is suggested here that the term ‘Catholic educational tradition’ is a suitable descriptor of the impact of the Catholic mind on the Church’s teaching on the aims, purposes and values of education. To be clear, this involves the promotion of education as path to virtue and human virtue centred on the partnership of faith-reason and underpinned by a robust understanding of Christian anthropology.

At the heart of this position is the professional and ecclesial identity of the universal corps of Catholic teachers. Although it is important for Catholic teachers to be fully involved in the work of secular professional bodies, Catholic teachers retain an ecclesial bond which energises and gives shape to their mission and identity. To develop this self-understanding, some form of theological framework or ‘support structure’ is vital. *Educating Together in Catholic Schools: A Shared Mission Between Consecrated Persons and the Lay Faithful*, published by the Congregation for Catholic Education in 2007 offers us a way ahead. This important document aims to reconcile themes present in two previous Magisterial documents on education: *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith*, published in 1982, and *Consecrated Persons and their Mission in Schools*, published in 2002. It recognizes the theology of *communio* as a suitable ecclesiological foundation for the ‘shared mission’ of Catholic education. This finds expression in a ‘spirituality of communion’ as a means of fostering a ‘relationship of reciprocity between the various ecclesial vocations’.<sup>lvi</sup> It is possible to extend this form of language to find ways in which Catholic teachers worldwide can foster a ‘spirituality of communion’ with those who share their vocation?

For the Catholic teacher to ‘love the tradition’ is to see the story of Catholic education as part of their own vocational journey. Catholic education has its own amazing story, its own heroes and heroines, some known, many anonymous. The educational legacy of figures such as St. Jean Baptiste de la Salle, St. Ignatius of Loyola, Blessed Mary Ward and St. Julie Billiart is testament to a witness that grew from the heart of the Church.

Given the educational challenges facing the Church today, it is perhaps opportune to offer some practical points for considered professional reflection. If we are genuine in our desire to promote confidence in intercultural dialogue, it is increasingly necessary to be challenged from history by the actions of those who share with us a commitment to Catholic education.

- Do contemporary Catholic Higher Educational institutions strive to walk in the footsteps of those who founded and supported the university system in Europe?
- Is there a contemporary St. Ignatius of Loyola ready to provide a *Ratio Studiorum* for the contemporary Catholic educational enterprise? If so, what would such a document say?

- Do we recognize the importance of the seminal work of St Jean Baptiste de La Salle for teacher education programmes? Are we ready to review contemporary processes for teacher formation?
- Do our young people have a working knowledge of the often heroic efforts of Religious Brothers and Sisters in providing educational opportunities to the poor and marginalized wherever they are found?<sup>lvii</sup>

This venerable Catholic educational tradition portrays a Church keen to listen to and learn from other ways of understanding the world.<sup>lviii</sup> While attempts at dialogue have been more or less successful over the centuries, Catholic schools must continually engage with their own family story in order to make positive contributions to wider debates on education and culture. Indeed, to ‘love the tradition’ is an indispensable attitude for a Catholic teacher who desires to commit to the promotion of intercultural dialogue. In so doing, the Catholic teacher becomes increasingly immersed in the genealogy of Catholic education and becomes increasingly able to apply the lessons of history to contemporary constructions of Catholic education. In this way of acting, Catholic educational institutions open their doors to people of all religious traditions and, *qua* Catholic schools, serve as privileged loci of intercultural dialogue.

### **Concluding Remarks**

This article has examined how the Church’s educational work can embrace the call for ‘intercultural dialogue’. This demanding but laudable enterprise remains an area of challenge. There is need for much discernment and careful thinking with regard to how well we understand the Church’s Magisterial teaching on education and culture. Drawing on Graham Rossiter’s evaluation of culture in the subject of religious education, Catholic students require a systematic teaching of their own religious tradition which offers the intellectual resources to enable them adopt a suitably critical approach to all forms of culture.<sup>lix</sup> This is a *sine qua non* of effective intercultural dialogue.

Additionally, the slow-burning fuse of anti-religious feeling in certain western countries has the potential to complicate the life of the Catholic school. While the present article did not set out to include non-religious viewpoints under the heading of intercultural education, it is legitimate to ask how these



processes of dialogue can be badged as a ‘good thing’ if non-religious cultural forces, as we often see, are intent on neutering the religious voice in the public square.

In addressing the questions raised by intercultural dialogue in a Catholic context, this article has suggested that it is necessary to be rooted in but not restricted by, knowledge of one’s own religious tradition. If this is true more generally, it is doubly true for the Catholic school as a place of encounter between a particular religious tradition and other religions. This offers an opportunity for a fruitful and vibrant exchange of insights from religious traditions with a focus on genuine understanding of the lived reality of the ‘other’.

The two initial keys for Catholic teacher formation presented here are calls to open a wider debate on how the mission of the Catholic teacher can be enhanced. The goal is to develop professional networks of doctrinally orthodox and pastorally sensitive Catholic teachers who will be a gift to the Church and leaven in society. How we reach this goal is one of the key challenges facing Catholic education today. We need to continue this conversation in the years ahead.

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<sup>i</sup> There is much energy expended on dealing with the implications for education of globalization. For a helpful introduction to these issues see Nelly P. Stromquist and Karen Monkman, “Defining Globalization and Assessing its Implications for Knowledge and Education, Revisited”, ed. Nelly P. Stromquist and Karen Monkman (Eds.) *Globalization and Education: Integration and Contestation across Cultures* (Plymouth UK: Rowman and Littlefield Education, 2014).

<sup>ii</sup> “Schools have a great responsibility in this field, called as they are to develop intercultural dialogue in their pedagogical vision. This is a difficult goal, not easy to achieve, and yet it is necessary. Education, by its nature, requires both openness to other cultures, without the loss of one’s own identity, and an acceptance of the other person, to avoid the risk of a limited culture, closed in on itself.” Congregation for Catholic Education, *Educating for Intercultural Dialogue in Catholic Schools: Living in Harmony for a Civilization of Love* (2013) Introduction.

<sup>iii</sup> The close identification between ‘intercultural dialogue’ and ‘inter-religious dialogue’ is implicit throughout the document. “Dialogue with both individuals and communities of other religions is motivated by the fact that we are all creatures of God. God is at work in every human being who, through reason, has perceived the mystery of God and recognizes universal values” *Educating for Intercultural Dialogue*, 13.

<sup>iv</sup> Second Vatican Council, *Gravissimum Educationis* –Declaration on Christian Education (1965).

<sup>v</sup> The seven criteria proposed are: i) the criterion of Catholic identity; ii) building up a common vision; iii) reasoned openness to globalization; iv) strong personal identities; v) self-awareness; vi) the values of other cultures and religions must be respected and understood and vii) one educates to sharing and responsibility (CCE 2013, 63).

<sup>vi</sup> Cf paras 15 and 17 of *Educating to Intercultural Dialogue*.

<sup>vii</sup> Tim Muldoon, “The Boutique and the Gallery: An Apologia for a Catholic Intellectual Tradition in the Academy,” *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture* 12, no. 4 (2009) 74-96 (especially page 93).

<sup>viii</sup> Frederick Erb III, “Preserving the ‘Catholic Moment’ by Inaugurating Catholic Studies at Non-Catholic Colleges and Universities”, ed. Alice Ramos and Marie George (Eds.) *Faith, Scholarship and*

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*Culture in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2002) 219-247; Ed. James Piderit and Melanie Morey, *Teaching the Tradition: Academic Themes in Academic Disciplines*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) Part II.

<sup>ix</sup> Glenn Olsen, “Christopher Dawson and the Renewal of Catholic Education: The Proposal that Catholic Culture and History, not Philosophy, Should Order the Catholic Curriculum” *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture*. 13, no. 3 (2010) 14-35 (17).

<sup>x</sup> Richard Janet, “Is There a Catholic Culture?” ed. Joseph A. Cirincione, *Deep Down Things: Essays on Catholic Culture* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2008) 161-173.

<sup>xi</sup> Graham Rossiter, “From St. Ignatius to Obi-Wan Kenobi: An Evaluative Perspective on Spirituality for School Education,” ed. Marian de Souza, Kathleen Engebretson, Gloria Durka, Robert Jackson and Andrew McGrady (Eds.) *International Handbook of the Religious, Moral and Spiritual Dimensions in Education Part One* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2008) 183-200.

<sup>xii</sup> Roger Scruton (2007) *Culture Counts: Faith and Feeling in a World Besieged* (New York: Encounter Books, 2007) 2-3.

<sup>xiii</sup> The need to sanctify daily work was emphasized continually by St. Josemaria Escrivà. A fine summary of this important message is found in St. Josemaria Escrivà, *Christ is Passing By* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1982) chapter 5 point 47: It is time for us Christians to shout from the rooftops that work is a gift from God and that it makes no sense to classify men differently, according to their occupation, as if some jobs were nobler than others. Work, all work, bears witness to the dignity of man, to his dominion over creation. It is an opportunity to develop one's personality. It is a bond of union with others, the way to support one's family, a means of aiding in the improvement of the society in which we live and in the progress of all humanity.

<sup>xiv</sup> Chapter III of *Educating to Intercultural Dialogue* lays out the firm theological foundations of the intercultural enterprise. It emphasizes in particular (29) the need to recognize interculturalism as part of the heritage of Christianity.

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<sup>xv</sup> For more on this, see Ronnie Convery, Leonardo Franchi and Raymond McCluskey, *Reclaiming the Piazza: Catholic Education as a Cultural Project* (Leominster: Gracewing, 2014).

<sup>xvi</sup> Pope Benedict XVI, *Address to the Members of the Roman Curia and Papal Representatives for the Traditional Exchange of Christmas Greetings*. (2009); Leonardo Franchi, “The Catholic School as a Courtyard of the Gentiles,” *Journal of Catholic Education* 17, no. 2 (2014).

<sup>xvii</sup> James Schall, *The Mind that is Catholic: Philosophical and Political Essays* (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2008).

<sup>xviii</sup> A partner term to the ‘Catholic mind’ is the ‘Catholic intellectual tradition’.

<sup>xix</sup> Three essential Council texts are *Unitas Redintegratio*- Decree on Ecumenism, 11; *Nostra Aetate* – Declaration on the Relation of the Church to non-Christian Religions and *Gaudium et Spes* – Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, 23 and 43. Taken together, this is a trilogy of documents which underpins the value of dialogue with other religious traditions.

<sup>xx</sup> *Lumen Gentium* – Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, 13.

<sup>xxi</sup> *Educating to Intercultural Dialogue* (73) reiterates the now standard Magisterial distinction between catechesis and school-based religious education: “From this perspective, teaching the Catholic religion in schools takes on a meaningful role. Primarily, it is a question of the right to education, based on an anthropological understanding of men and women that is open to the transcendent. Together with moral formation, it also helps to develop personal and social responsibility, as well as the other civic virtues, for the common good of society.” Paragraph 74 develops this line of thinking: “Moreover, it must be pointed out that teaching the Catholic religion in schools has its own aims, different from those of catechesis. In fact, while catechesis promotes personal adherence to Christ and maturing of the Christian life, school teaching gives the students knowledge about Christianity’s identity and the Christian life.”

<sup>xxii</sup> For a fine example of scholarly work in this field see Karen Carter, *Creating Catholics: Catechism and Primary Education in Early Modern France*. (Indiana: University of Notre-Dame Press, 2012).

<sup>xxiii</sup> Congregation for Catholic Education, *Circular Letter to Presidents of Bishops' Conferences on Religious Education in Schools* (2009) 17. Interestingly, the Magisterium has said very little about the subject of Religious Education in the Catholic school.

<sup>xxiv</sup> cf: Congregation for Catholic Education (1982) *Lay Catholics in School: Witnesses to Faith* 29, 49; (1997) *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, 14.

<sup>xxv</sup> This is the thematic core of Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013).

<sup>xxvi</sup> *Educating to Intercultural Dialogue* (2013) 13.

<sup>xxvii</sup> Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School* (1977) 15; *The Religious Dimension of Education in the Catholic School* (1988) 101; *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, 11.

<sup>xxviii</sup> Second Vatican Council, *Gravissimum Educationis* –Declaration on Christian Education (1965) 8.

<sup>xxix</sup> Richard Rymarz, *The New Evangelisation: Issues and Challenges for Catholic Schools*. Ballan: Connor Court Publishing, 2012).

<sup>xxx</sup> Francis Cardinal Arinze, (2001) "The Church and Interreligious Dialogue" *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture*, 4 no.1, (2001) 156-177.

<sup>xxxi</sup> Pope Francis, *Lumen Fidei* (Encyclical Letter, 2013) and *Evangelii Gaudium* (Apostolic Exhortation, 2013).

<sup>xxxii</sup> Regarding the relationship between a 'critical spirit' and 'dissent', see the following: Kieran McDonough, "Can There be 'Faithful Dissent' within Catholic Religious Education in Schools?" *International Studies in Catholic Education* 1 no. 2 (2009) 187-199 and Louis De Thomasis, *Dynamics of Catholic Education: Letting the Catholic School be School* (Chicago: ACTA Publication, 2013).

<sup>xxxiii</sup> Pope Benedict XVI, (2007) *Address to the Participants in the Convention of the Diocese of Rome* (2007).

<sup>xxxiv</sup> Stephen J. McKinney and James C. Conroy, The Continued Existence of State-funded Catholic schools in Scotland. *Comparative Education* (2014)

<sup>xxxv</sup> *Educating to Intercultural Dialogue*, 76-86

<sup>xxxvi</sup> Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *On Europe's Crisis of Cultures* (Subiaco Address, 2005) Available at: <http://www.catholiceducation.org/en/culture/catholic-contributions/cardinal-ratzinger-on-europe-s-crisis-of-culture.html>

<sup>xxxvii</sup> Richard Rymarz, “Who will Labor in the Vineyard? The New Catholic Mentality and Religious Commitment,” *Journal of Religion and Society*. Vol. 11 (2009) 1-17. This important volume addresses issues surrounding the apparent shortage of (practising) Catholic teachers in many parts of the Church.

<sup>xxxviii</sup> See, for example, *The Catholic School*, 88 and *The Religious Dimension of Education in the Catholic School*, 26.

<sup>xxxix</sup> “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” (*Educating to Intercultural Dialogue*, 76).

<sup>xl</sup> For a summary of this line of thinking, see the interview with Dom Alcuin Reid in the *Catholic World Report*, December 4.

[http://www.catholicworldreport.com/Item/2760/the\\_liturgy\\_fifty\\_years\\_after\\_isacrosanctum\\_conciliumi.aspx](http://www.catholicworldreport.com/Item/2760/the_liturgy_fifty_years_after_isacrosanctum_conciliumi.aspx). See also the important Encyclical of Pope Pius XII, (1947) *Mediator Dei*: “You are of course familiar with the fact, Venerable Brethren, that a remarkably widespread revival of scholarly interest in the sacred liturgy took place towards the end of the last century and has continued through the early years of this one. The movement owed its rise to commendable private initiative and more particularly to the zealous and persistent labor of several monasteries within the distinguished Order of Saint Benedict. Thus there developed in this field among many European nations, and in lands beyond the seas as well, a rivalry as welcome as it was productive of results. Indeed, the salutary fruits of this rivalry among the scholars were plain for all to see, both in the sphere of the sacred sciences, where the liturgical rites of the

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Western and Eastern Church were made the object of extensive research and profound study, and in the spiritual life of considerable numbers of individual Christians” (4).

<sup>xli</sup> Second Vatican Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* - The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 19.

<sup>xlii</sup> ‘Worship becomes a feast that the community gives itself, a festival of self-affirmation. Instead of being worship of God, it becomes a circle closed in on itself, eating drinking and making merry’ (Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000) 23.

<sup>xliii</sup> While a Christian vision of education, rightly, has a focus on the dignity of each human being as a core principle, it necessarily stops short of the fostering of ‘self-esteem’ given the close resemblance to pride, which remains the greatest of all sins.

<sup>xliv</sup> “Nevertheless the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the font from which all her power flows. For the aim and object of apostolic works is that all who are made sons of God by faith and baptism should come together to praise God in the midst of His Church, to take part in the sacrifice, and to eat the Lord's supper” (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 10).

<sup>xlv</sup> “In the liturgical year the various aspects of the one Paschal mystery unfold. This is also the case with the cycle of feasts surrounding the mystery of the incarnation (Annunciation, Christmas, Epiphany). They commemorate the beginning of our salvation and communicate to us the first fruits of the Paschal mystery’ (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1171).

<sup>xlvi</sup> Teachers share in the catechetical work of the Church, a task neatly summarised in the post-Conciliar document *Eucharisticum Mysterium* published in 1967. Referring to Bishops and priests (pastors) it says the following: “Pastors should therefore gently lead the faithful to a full understanding of this mystery of faith by suitable catechesis. This should take as its starting point the mysteries of the liturgical year and the rites and prayers which are part of the celebration. It should clarify their meaning and especially that of the great Eucharistic Prayer, and lead the people to a profound understanding of the mystery which these signify and accomplish” (15).

<sup>xlvii</sup> The key primary texts are *De Magistro* (On the Teacher) and *De Catechizandibus Rudibus* (On the Catechising of the Uninstructed). There is much secondary literature on St Augustine’s educational ideas.

For an initial sample, have a look at Leonardo Franchi, “Healing the Wounds: St. Augustine, Religious Education and Catechesis Today” *Religious Education* 106 no. 3 (2011) 299-311 and Ryan Topping, *Happiness and Wisdom: Augustine's Early Theology of Education* (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2012); Eugene Kevane, *Augustine the Educator: A Study in the Fundamentals of Christian Formation* (Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1964).

<sup>xlvi</sup> Odd Magne Bakke, *When Children Became People The Birth of Childhood in Early Christianity*. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005). (Translated by B. McNeil.); Josef Jungmann, *Handing on the Faith*. (London: Burns and Oates, 1965). (Translated by A.N. Fuerst.)

<sup>xlix</sup> For more on how doctrine can shape culture see Ryan Topping, *Rebuilding Catholic Culture: How the Catechism Can Shape Our Common Life* (Manchester NH: Sophia Institute Press, 2012) 69.

<sup>l</sup> Pontifical Council for Culture (2006), *The Via Pulchritudinis: Privileged Pathways for Evangelisation and Dialogue*.

<sup>li</sup> *Antiphon: A Journal for Liturgical Renewal* (published by the Society for Catholic Liturgy) offers a wide range of features on the importance of genuine liturgical renewal. While some of the articles are highly specialized in the topics they address, it offers a flavour of how a developed liturgical understanding can shape the wider culture.

<sup>lii</sup> Pontifical Council for Culture, *Towards a Pastoral Approach in Culture*, (1999) 29.

<sup>liii</sup> See for example, *Gravissimum Educationis* 8 and *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith* (1977) 27. The whole of *Educating to Intercultural Dialogue in Catholic School: Living in Harmony for a Civilization of Hope* (2013) is a clarion call for dialogue with other ways of thinking.

<sup>liv</sup> Newman, JH. (1845/2003) *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press 1845/2003) Chapter IV, Section VI 1 p. 99.

<sup>lv</sup> Pope Benedict summarized Newman’s proposal in his now famous remarks during his Christmas greeting to the Roman Curia in 2009. Referring to difficulties in the implementation of the decrees of the Second Vatican Council, Pope Benedict suggested that there were two contrasting hermeneutics applicable to the work of the Council: if we adopted a “hermeneutic of continuity” it would bear fruit in a



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vibrant Church; on the other hand, a “hermeneutic of discontinuity” would sow confusion and prevent the riches of the Council from being fully realized. Pope Benedict XVI, (2009) *Address to the Members of the Roman Curia and Papal Representatives for the Traditional Exchange of Christmas Greetings* (2009).

<sup>lvi</sup> Congregation for Catholic Education, *Educating Together in Catholic Schools. A Shared Mission between Consecrated persons and the Lay Faithful* (2007), 16.

<sup>lvii</sup> Secular historians increasingly recognize of education the contribution of the Catholic Church to education. James Bowen’s three-volume classic, *A History of Western Education* is essential reading for those interested in the timeline of educational developments.

<sup>lviii</sup> Ed. J. Stephen Brown, (2013) *Pope Benedict XVI, A Reason Open to God: On Universities, Education and Culture*. (Washington DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2013).

<sup>lix</sup> Graham Rossiter, “Critical Interpretation and Evaluation of Culture As A Key Component of Religious Education,” *The Well* 6, no. 3 (2013) 17-19.