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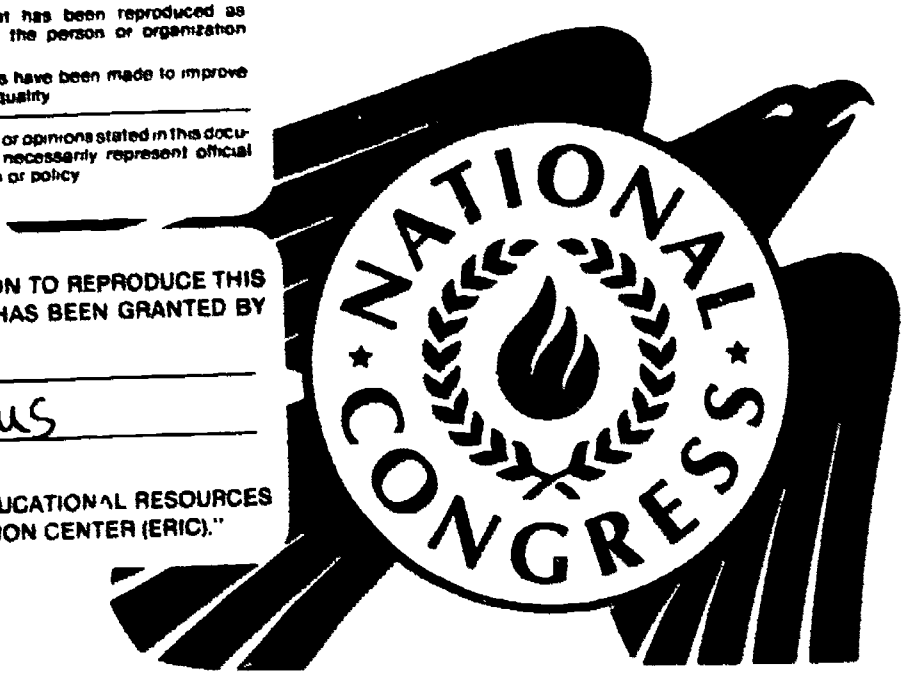
ABSTRACT

Part of a six volume series of theme papers commissioned for the National Congress on Catholic schools for the 21st century, November 6-10, 1991, this document contains two of the theme papers. In "Catholic Identity and the Future of Catholic Schools" James Heft considers several ways to think about Catholic identity, describes the historical development of Catholic schools in the United States, and outlines four possible scenarios for the future of Catholic education. The second paper, "Catholic Identity" by Carleen Reck, discusses how the Catholic school needs to understand its identity before it can clarify its relationship with the church and society. This relationship can then suggest some possible directions for the future. The document concludes with a study and discussion guide and biographical information about the authors. (KM)



CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
For the 21st Century

THEME:

THE CATHOLIC IDENTITY OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

THE CATHOLIC IDENTITY OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

CATHOLIC IDENTITY AND THE FUTURE OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

James Heft, SM, Ph.D., Provost, University of Dayton

CATHOLIC IDENTITY

Carleen Reck, SSND, Ph.D., Superintendent of Schools, Diocese of Jefferson City, Missouri

National Catholic Educational Association

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INTRODUCTION

This six volume series contains the theme papers commissioned for the *National Congress on Catholic Schools for the 21st Century*, to be convened on November 6 - 10, 1991.

The National Congress is a jointly planned venture of the three departments of the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) directly associated with Catholic schools. With the enthusiastic endorsements of the executive committees and directors of the Department of Elementary Schools, Department of Secondary Schools and the Chief Administrators of Catholic Education (CACE), this unprecedented project is intended to revitalize and renew the climate of opinion and commitment to the future of Catholic schooling in the United States.

The purpose of the Congress can be described in terms of three broad goals. To *communicate* the story of academic and religious effectiveness of Catholic schools to a national audience that includes the whole Catholic community, as well as the broader social and political community. To *celebrate* the success of Catholic schools in the United States and broaden support for the continuation and expansion of Catholic schooling in the future. To *convene* an assembly of key leaders in Catholic schooling as well as appropriate representatives of researchers, business and public officials in order to create strategies for the future of the schools. These strategies address five themes:

The Catholic Identity of Catholic Schools; Leadership of and on Behalf of Catholic Schools; The Catholic School and Society; Catholic School Governance and Finance; and Political Action, Public Policy and Catholic Schools.

The eleven commissioned papers contained in these six volumes represent a common starting point for the discussion at the Congress itself and in the national, regional and local dialogue prior to the Congress.

Since the American bishops published *To Teach As Jesus Did*, their pastoral letter on Catholic education, in 1972, the number of Catholic schools in the United States has decreased by 19% and the number of students served by those schools has decreased by 38%. Simultaneously, a growing body of research on Catholic schools indicates that these schools are extremely effective and are a gift to the church and the nation.

This dilemma of shrinking numbers of schools and established effectiveness indicates a need to refocus efforts, reinvigorate commit-

ment and revitalize leadership at the national and local levels. Thus the idea of a national forum was conceived.

These papers will be useful in fostering a national dialogue, aimed at clarifying the current status of Catholic schools in the United States, and developing a set of strategies for the future in order to strengthen and expand the network of Catholic schools throughout the country.

A number of regional meetings will be held throughout the country prior to the National Congress. These meetings will have a purpose similar to the Congress and be committed to the same three broad goals. They provide opportunities for large numbers of persons involved in and committed to Catholic education to read the theme papers, discuss the identified major issues, and develop written summaries of these discussions, using the study guides included in this series. These meetings will insure the broadest possible participation and strengthen the linkage between national strategies and local action on behalf of Catholic schools.

Delegates to the National Congress will be present at each of the regional meetings. NCEA staff and Congress Planning Committee members will be available to serve as resources and presenters. The results and recommendations from all regional meetings will be included as agenda for the National Congress.

This input from the regional meetings will allow the National Congress to be more representative of the total Catholic community. Consequently, the Congress will be more effective in representing the needs of Catholic schools and thus more able to develop effective and realistic strategies on their behalf. Regional meetings will be held after the Congress as an additional means of strengthening the linkage between national and local, strategy and action.

As Father Andrew Greeley has observed in his research and commentators are so fond of repeating, Catholic schools are most needed and most effective during times of crisis and stress. In the world of the 21st century—with its increasing population, dwindling of already scarce resources, and persistent growth in the gap between rich and poor - collaboration may not come easily. The present conflict in the Middle East being the most visible example. At the same time, rapid and largely unexpected changes in Eastern Europe remind us that the human spirit cannot be kept permanently imprisoned by those who deny the persistent presence and power of the Spirit. Catholic schools which are true to their mission can provide powerful and influential awareness, gentleness and collaboration. They can serve as models for schooling in the next millenium.

The six volumes in this series are:

Volume I: *An Overview*, containing summaries of all eleven papers.

Volume II: *The Catholic Identity of Catholic Schools*, with papers by James Heft, SM and Carleen Reck, SSND.

Volume III: *Leadership of and on Behalf of Catholic Schools*, with papers by Karen Ristau and Joseph Rogus.

Volume IV: *The Catholic School and Society*, with papers by Frederick Brigham, John Convey and Bishop John Cummins.

Volume V: *Catholic School Governance and Finance*, with papers by Rosemary Hocevar, OSU, and Lourdes Sheehan, RSM.

Volume VI: *Political Action, Public Policy and the Catholic School*, with papers by John Coons and Frank Monahan.

A number of acknowledgements must be made. Without the commitment, energy and flexibility of the authors of these papers, there would be no books. They were always willing to be of assistance. Ms Eileen Torpey, general editor of the series, brought an expertise and sense of humor to the process. Ms Tia Gray, NCEA staff, took the finished manuscripts and put them into an eminently readable design format.

Special acknowledgement must go to the Lilly Foundation, without whose funding this project would not have been possible. Catherine McNamee, CSI, president of NCEA, who allowed the human and financial resources of NCEA to be utilized for this undertaking, expressed continuing interest in the Congress and provided personal encouragement to those working on the project. Michael Guerra, Robert Kealey and J. Stephen O'Brien, the executive directors of the three sponsoring NCEA departments who conceived the project, have continued to work tirelessly for the success of this planned intervention on behalf of Catholic schools. They would be the first to acknowledge that there are many more whose present leadership is an essential element in explaining the current success of Catholic schools and whose future leadership will shape the schools in the next century. A special note of thanks is due those who issued the call to bring us together. They are eloquent role models for any who wish to be a part of this unprecedented effort on behalf of Catholic schools.

Paul Seadler
Project Coordinator
National Congress on Catholic Schools for the 21st Century
January, 1991

CATHOLIC IDENTITY AND THE FUTURE OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

James Heft, SM, Ph.D.
Provost, University of Dayton

Introduction

To treat the complex topics of Catholic identity and the future of Catholic schools, what it means to be Catholic should be clarified first. Moreover, before trying to imagine what the future of Catholic schools might be, one should review what role these schools have played in the past, and what their current situation is. This paper is, therefore, divided into three parts: (1) a consideration of several ways to think about Catholic identity; (2) a description of the historical development of Catholic schools in the United States, concentrating on the Third Council of Baltimore, on the impact of the Second Vatican Council and finally on the present situation; and (3) a sketch of four possible scenarios for the future of Catholic education.

Catholic Identity

The matter of Catholic identity itself can be approached in at least three different ways. First, the dogmatic teachings unique to the Catholic Church can be described. (Though the phrase "Catholic Church" is used differently by various people, it is used here to denote the Roman Catholic Church.) Second, theological and philosophical traditions and emphases characteristic of the Catholic Church can be identified. And third, the ways that certain institutional qualities are characteristically Catholic can be discussed. The foci of these three

approaches—the dogmatic teachings, the traditions and emphases, and the institutional qualities—are complementary.

Dogmatic Teachings

Within the Catholic tradition, a dogma is a statement in words that points to what is true about the Christian event. Through dogmas, the church attempts to clarify, defend, and express fundamentally important—that is, saving—truths, in language, despite the many limitations inherent in the verbal medium. What is true in a dogmatic statement will never be denied by the church. The words the church uses to express the dogma, however, may change, just as language changes and just as our understanding of a reality may change. The most ordinary and widely-used dogmatic expressions of the core truths of Christianity are found in the creeds of antiquity; for example, the creeds of the Apostles, of the Councils of Nicea and of Constantinople. Though never perfect, the articulation of saving truths, which more fundamentally are saving events, is a necessary and irrepressible activity of the church. Dogmas constitute an accepted articulation of non-negotiable truths, the affirmation of which identifies a person as a Catholic.

The recent controversy between the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith and Father Charles Curran has centered on the legitimacy of public dissent from certain teachings not infallibly taught (Heft 116-118). The Curran controversy has made much of the distinction between infallible and non-infallible teachings. It is important to distinguish between them, since only those teachings which are infallible must a person affirm if he or she is to be identified as a Catholic. If no distinction is made between infallible and non-infallible teachings, then ordinary Catholics run the risk of giving the same importance to a teaching on the resurrection as they would to the teaching on the permissibility of tubal ligations, to the teaching on abortion as to that on contraception, and to the doctrine of the real presence as to that on guardian angels. Most Catholics instinctively realize that each of the former teachings is more important than the latter.

Yet, as important as the distinction between infallible and non-infallible teaching is, it is neither exact nor helpful in all cases. In discussing this distinction with college students, teachers have often been asked how many doctrines have been infallibly defined. Many students mistakenly think that only the Marian dogmas have been infallibly defined. What these students and many Catholics should realize is that there is more to living the Christian and Catholic life than enumerating and affirming infallibly-defined truths. Students become exasperated when they are not provided with a definitive list, though teachers can confidently identify most of the infallible teachings—and certainly those most important for Catholic identity—beginning with those affirmed in the creed. To paraphrase scripture, the wise Catholic Christian does not live by infallibly-defined doctrines alone.

In fact, many important Christian truths have never been infallibly defined, such as the great commandment of Jesus to love God with our

whole hearts and to love our neighbors as ourselves. Frequently, dogmas have been defined only because the truth affirmed had been denied or seriously distorted, leaving many in the church confused as to the meaning of a truth of salvation. But many truths of Christian faith are so obvious and central they have never needed even to be formally defined, to say nothing of infallibly defined. What infallible teachings, for example, do we have about the importance of personal prayer, about the liturgy, and about the sacramental life? Consider also the many important insights of spiritual writers such as Dorothy Day, Teresa of Avila and Thomas Merton. There are clearly more infallible truths than there are infallibly-defined truths. In other words, all infallibly-defined truths are true but not all Christian truths are infallibly defined, including some of the most important truths that contribute directly to our becoming Christians.

Given the fact that the distinction between infallible and non-infallible teachings is neither always clear nor often helpful, what are the benefits and limitations of the dogmatic approach in describing Catholic identity? In one sense, the dogmatic approach is helpful, indeed indispensable, in that it identifies many of the most fundamental theological teachings of Catholicism. Moreover, in identifying those truths which are fundamental, this approach also alerts us not only that there are still other teachings which are not fundamental, but also that not all teachings are taught at the same level of authority, and therefore not all call for the same level of adherence.

In another sense, however, the dogmatic approach, like any approach, suffers from certain limitations. There is much more to Christianity than infallible truths. Moreover, it is not always possible to know exactly what has been infallibly defined. Finally, there are many important dimensions to the Catholic faith—the lived example of the saints and martyrs, the experience of God's grace in the practice of Christian ministry, and the knowledge and hope derived through loving God and others as oneself—that are not only not defined, but also are very difficult to verbalize at all.

Traditions and Emphases

A second way to describe Catholic identity is to concentrate not only on infallible teachings, but to also describe certain traditions and emphases characteristic of Catholicism. In the introduction to his recent book *The Catholicity of the Church*, Avery Dulles summarizes the conclusions of several authors who attempt to describe these traditions and emphases.

Dulles turns first to Richard McBrien's *Catholicism*, the last chapter of which offers a "synthesis" of Catholicism. There, McBrien states that Catholicism "is characterized by a *radical openness to all truth and to every value*. It is *comprehensive* and *all- embracing* toward the totality of Christian experience and tradition" (1173). McBrien stresses that Catholicism typically affirms a *both/and* rather than an *either/or* approach. Thus, Catholicism characteristically speaks not of "nature *or* grace, but graced nature; not reason *or* faith, but reason illumined

by faith; not law or Gospel, but law inspired by the Gospel . . ." (1174). Finally, McBrien describes three fundamental theological dimensions of Catholicism: *sacramentality* (the acceptance of tangible and finite realities as actual or potential carriers of divine presence), *mediation* (a corollary of sacramentality which means for the Catholic that grace comes through Christ, the church, and other signs and instruments), and *communion* (a further corollary which means that all grace comes to us in and through community and communion with others and nature) (1181).

Dulles also cites an article by Robert Imbelli who writes of Catholicism's identifiable "depth structure," which he describes as "sacramental consciousness." Imbelli believes that such consciousness can be expressed in various cultural forms, all of which, however, must be marked with the same "foundational sensitivities," which he groups under five headings:

(1) the corporeal, inasmuch as body sacramentalizes spirit

(2) the communal, for the community is the matrix of sacramental consciousness

(3) the universal, inasmuch as the Catholic sacramental consciousness addresses the private and the public, the natural and the cultural, the personal and the institutional

(4) the cosmic, since the whole of creation is involved in God's redemptive work in Christ

(5) the transformational, because of the Catholic conviction that the human is capable of being graced and glorified in Christ (Dulles' summary, 4-5)

Instead of following the lead of Paul Tillich, who writes of the Catholic substance (the belief that the holy inheres in people and in things) and the Protestant principle (a warning against identifying holy people and things with the holy), Dulles himself writes of the Catholic substance and of two principles:

> The Protestant principle, as a critical norm, prevents one from blurring the distinction between God and creature and from attributing divine status to that which is finite and det. .tible. The Catholic principle, conversely, criticizes the critics. It warns them not to banish God from his creation and not to minimize the gifts of God in Christ and in the Holy Spirit. (6-7)

Like the other authors he cites, Dulles also asserts that characteristic of Catholicism is the acceptance of mediation, which assumes that "God ordinarily comes to us through the structures that are given, especially those to which his gracious promises are attached, such as incarnation, scripture, sacrament, and apostolic ministry" (7).

Similar descriptions can be found in the works of other Catholic authors (e.g., Henri de Lubac, *Catholicism*; Friederich von Hugel, *The Mystical Element of Religion as Studied in Saint Catherine of Genoa and Her Friends*; Yves Congar, *Tradition and Traditions*; Rosemary Haughton, *The Catholic Thing*; Greeley and Durkin, *How To Save the Catholic Church*; and Walter Kasper, *An Introduction to Christian*

Faith). Typically, these authors stress the importance of community, the dynamic interplay between faith and reason, scripture and tradition, the centrality of word and sacrament, and the unique way in which authority functions within the tradition, especially through the ministry of bishops and the pope.

This approach to Catholic identity has the benefit of being somewhat more descriptive of the identifiable characteristics of Catholicism than an approach that would concentrate only on dogmatic teachings. The traditions and emphases approach actually constitutes the theological framework within which most dogmatic teachings can be fruitfully interpreted. For example, in the absence of a grasp of the central role mediation plays within Catholicism, one either ends up worshipping saints (what most Protestants suspect Catholics in fact do) or ends up assuming all devotion is superstitious (what most secularists think of Catholic devotion).

It might be said that the dogmatic teachings approach provides the non-negotiable content of Catholic identity, in the inevitably limited form of definitions while the traditions and emphases approach provides a sense, a framework, and a broadly sketched background of the characteristic theological qualities of Catholic identity. Dogmas are crystalizations of truth that make day-to-day sense only within the broader context of living traditions and distinctive emphases.

Institutional Qualities

A third approach to Catholic identity, one that is least developed by contemporary theologians, may in fact prove to be the most fruitful for those who wish to find ways to make their schools more truly Catholic. For over a decade, Catholic universities have attempted, with some success, to strengthen their Catholic identity by isolating characteristically Catholic traditions and emphases and asking what ways they should shape the university. In other words, instead of thinking about traditions and emphases in general, this third approach constantly asks how such traditions and emphases will mold a specific institution.

What are some of the institutional qualities that mark an educational institution *Catholic*? Surely, any Catholic institution should affirm Catholic dogmas. But more than the affirmation of dogmatic teachings is called for if an institution is to be Catholic. Some years ago, the Catholic bishops of the United States issued a pastoral letter on Catholic education, entitled *To Teach as Jesus Did*. The letter emphasizes three distinctive dimensions of Catholic educational institutions: teaching, community, and service. *Teaching* all subjects well, and especially teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ; forming *community* through which the presence of God is experienced in the midst of a faith-filled people; and *serving* others after the example of Jesus—these three constitute the essential institutional qualities of Catholic schools.

If a Catholic school is one in which the purpose of education is clear, then it already enjoys a distinct advantage over many other schools.

Many studies (most recently one published by the Rand Corporation, entitled *High Schools with Character: Alternatives to Bureaucracy*) have shown that an effective school requires both a vision of education that is held in common by students, faculty, and parents and the freedom to incarnate that vision. Catholic schools envision achieving excellence in academics within the context of a community of faith. The degree of parental support for the purpose of the school determines in large part the degree of effectiveness within the classroom.

Catholic schools should be open to all who apply. Although a few Catholic high schools are selective, the vast majority are open to any student who wishes to enter and embrace the vision of education that animates the institution. Open to all students, Catholic schools nonetheless demand discipline so that order and civility support the common good, so that no excuse is tolerated for mediocrity in academic work.

Just as excellence is expected of students in their school work, dedication and competence in the classroom are expected of teachers. Catholic schools have made considerable progress in recent years in the matter of just compensation to teachers. One of the immediate challenges facing Catholic schools is to balance the demand for just salaries against the cost of tuition. Not only must teachers receive a just wage, but our schools also must remain accessible to more than the rich.

Every educational community should be caring. The special quality of caring in a Catholic school affirms that every student is a child of God, a person who is cared for when hurting and challenged when drifting—cared for and challenged ultimately because the members of the community, students as well as teachers and parents, are the body of Christ.

Such descriptions of institutional qualities can be found scattered throughout the text of *To Teach as Jesus Did*, as well as in the texts of other episcopal and papal statements on Catholic schools. In our own day, four institutional qualities, that is, four characteristic emphases in the educational philosophy and practice, should be especially emphasized in Catholic schools: integrated learning; the development of a sense of history; art, speech and drama; and finally, service. In stressing these four areas of emphasis, one presumes that every Catholic school will continue to teach religion courses well and frequently, work to strengthen the relationships that exist between the school and the parishes from which its students come, and cultivate in the students and faculty a deep sense of the richness of the Catholic tradition.

- **Integrated Learning.** Contemporary observers of higher education have noted repeatedly that rarely is the knowledge we teach integrated. On the one hand, college students frequently select courses as if they were walking through a cafeteria line. On the other hand, professors restrict sharply their diets, keeping themselves within their departments and typically selecting a single entree as the sole focus of their research. Most of our grade school and high school teachers, having passed through such universities, found their major area of

study segregated from other areas of knowledge. As a consequence, the curricula of most of the grade schools and high schools over which these teachers have control reflect the very lack of integration that characterized their own college education.

The term "integrated education" does not refer to some form of "Catholic chemistry" or of mathematics with a "ministerial dimension" nor to the obvious points of collaboration between the biology teacher and the religion teacher when it comes to sex education. Rather, it means science teachers and humanities teachers, for example, thinking through their courses to find ways in which they might together bring to light issues that are very important but usually never treated, falling instead through the cracks that exist between the disciplines. To offer but one example, think of the illuminating insights that could be generated by considering ecological themes from the perspectives of the history of industrialization, by studying novels of Charles Dickens or Upton Sinclair, by drawing on biological insights into the balance of nature and theological insights into creation and stewardship. Anyone who has ever attempted the extensive collaboration that such synthesis of knowledge requires knows that it takes tremendous amounts of time and energy on the part of willing teachers who in turn depend upon the support of principals. Catholic education should, therefore, not only build communities of faith, but also support teachers in their efforts to create syntheses of knowledge.

● **A Historical Sense.** One of the most important characteristics of Catholicism is that it draws deeply upon historical awareness. As a people, Americans until very recently typically have moved west, have looked to the future rather than to the past, and have placed immense confidence in science, which, in the minds of some, can solve all of our problems. However, just as on a personal level a sense of one's past secures a sense of one's personal identity, so on the level of a religious tradition an appreciation of the history of the characteristic themes and emphases of the Catholic Church over the centuries secures our sense of Catholic identity. John Henry Newman once wrote, in an uncharacteristic moment of exaggeration, that to be deeply immersed in history is to cease to be a Protestant. Expressed with more ecumenical sensitivity, Newman's epigram underscores the fact that anyone who has developed a deep historical sense not only will appreciate diverse insights of different people from different historical periods, but also will identify more quickly the blind spots of the present age. Too many of our teachers know only their own subject matter, and then only its most recent codification, rather than the history of its various codifications. Catholic identity rests more securely within people who have developed a sense of history. Catholics without this historical sense may identify with the church's current institutional practices, but they often have little understanding of the meaning of those practices, and even less capacity to explain where these practices have come from and why they are important for Catholics.

● **Art, Speech, and Drama.** Catholic schools should excel in art, speech, and drama. We grow spiritually within a tradition of word and sacrament. Besides our understanding of history, we Catholics should develop more fully our sense of ritual and symbol, those ways of knowing and understanding that rely on intuition and wonder, on the power of story and on the beauty of the fine arts. Otherwise, we will reduce knowing to the merely cognitive, and then further to only clear and distinct ideas. Moreover, we tend to reduce knowledge to what can be proven empirically, a process typical in a culture mesmerized by science and technology that results in even greater narrowness. A people who seeks only that which is clear and trusts only that which can be proven becomes incapable of symbolic understanding. They deprive themselves of a rich way of knowing one of the most precious fruits of the sacramental sensibility referred to earlier. Nietzsche once wrote that "the trick today is not to arrange a festival, but to find people capable of enjoying one." Catholic schools should be filled with persons who arrange festivals, precisely because by their very tradition, rich in ritual and symbol, they become capable of entering into such festivals with their sacramental imagination and enjoying them as a celebration of their deepest identity.

● **Service.** Fourth and finally, Catholic schools should emphasize service. One step in this direction is the realization that "cooperation is a more basic comprehensive category of human relationship than competition" (Hellwig 92). Service constitutes a step beyond cooperation, for service places the needs of others first. Ultimately, after the example of Christ, service is emptying oneself, laying down one's life for others. Students should see this level of dedication in their teachers, both inside and outside the classroom. Indispensable are teachers who lead and mentor students in service. Obviously, any ways in which the parents of students can be drawn into this gospel-inspired activity will strengthen the distinctive identity of schools.

Catholic schools focus, as the pastoral letter *To Teach as Jesus Did* explains, on teaching, community, and service. These emphases shape the educational institution in a distinctive way. Public schools have greater difficulty specifying their distinctive characteristics, but have made some valuable attempts to define the qualities that should characterize their institutions. For example, on the university level, The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching recently published a special report, *Campus Life: In Search of Community*, in which the authors propose six principles that provide a formula for decision making and community building: (1) shared academic goals; (2) an openness marked by freedom of expression and civility; (3) justice through which very different persons are all honored; (4) discipline practiced by individuals as students and by the community as a whole; (5) care for all members of the campus community; and (6) celebration of the heritage of the educational institution (7-8).

These six principles should inform Catholic educational institutions also. As important as shared vision, openness, justice, discipline, care, and celebration are for any educational community, Catholic educa-

tional communities require, as *their* animating force, a deep sense of the gospel, a sense of the rich interplay of faith and reason, an acceptance of the sort of pluralism that strengthens the community, and a commitment to service.

The great advantage Catholic schools have over public schools on an organizational level derives from the freedom they enjoy as private institutions to organize themselves as they wish. On a more profound level, the advantage of Catholic schools derives from the depth and richness of the tradition from which they can draw as they define what it means to be an educational community of faith and service that teaches as Jesus did. The identity of Catholic schools, then, depends on how well they institutionalize characteristically Catholic traditions and emphases.

Catholic Schools: A Brief History

A brief review of the history of Catholic schools in this country will help us understand better why we now need to strengthen their Catholic identity in the ways described. A little over 100 years ago, the bishops of the United States made decisions that marked in a clear way the shape of Catholic education—at their meeting in 1884 in Baltimore, the bishops decided to establish an extensive parochial school system. The Third Plenary Council of Baltimore decided to establish the Catholic University of America (founded five years later in 1889) to commission the writing of the Baltimore Catechism, to develop a series of important regulations for national seminaries, and, most important for the purposes of this topic, to require that every parish build its own grade school. The bishops at that time saw a fundamental split between the Catholic view of education and the secular view that dominated what were referred to then as the "common schools." A subchapter of the main document of the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore, dealing with the topic of the "absolute necessity for parochial schools," begins: "If ever in any age, then surely in this our age, the Church of God and the Spirit of the world are in a certain wondrous and bitter conflict over the education of youth." Under the influence of those "most ruinous movements of indifferentism, naturalism and materialism," the world had drifted away from religious truth and adopted a purely secular outlook on the meaning and purpose of life (Gleason 119). The bishops were convinced of what they were about. The preservation of the faith was the key issue, and schools the most important means. Living in the midst of a Protestant America, the American bishops believed they were faced with danger greater than any previously encountered. The public schools had intimate links with the evangelical Protestantism which suffused their atmosphere. Many of them required daily bible reading from the King James Version. The only point on which the bishops had trouble agreeing was whether or not to require Catholic parents to send their children to Catholic schools under the explicit threat of refusing them absolution

in the sacrament of reconciliation. The sanction failed to carry by a vote of 37 to 32 (Gleason 132)!

Even though there was some division among the bishops in the 1890's about the absolute need for Catholic schools as the best means to form Catholics, the Americanist crisis at the turn of the century and subsequent episcopal appointments solidified support for the schools until the 1950's, when Catholics for the first time began to move into the "mainstream" of American culture. A 1955 issue of the journal *Thought* carried John Tracy Ellis' essay, "American Catholics and the Intellectual Life," a 37-page article that, in the opinion of one prominent American church historian "provoked a greater reaction than any other piece of comparable length in the history of American Catholicism" (72). It was during the 1950's that liberal Catholics began to write about the necessity of leaving the "Catholic ghetto," of dropping the "siege mentality," and of becoming active participants in the culture.

Vatican II, of course, favored ecumenism: it called for collaboration with Protestants, underscored certain values of pluralism, developed a more positive view of the world, and put a greater emphasis on the individual. It could be said that Vatican II generated a prevalent feeling that the older institutional forms of the preconciliar church needed root and branch reform. The catechetical movement, which gained great momentum in this country in the 1950's, began to explore ways of handing on the faith outside of the school context.

In 1964, Mary Perkins Ryan brought the issue of the quality of Catholic schools to a new level of urgency by arguing in her book *Are Parochial Schools the Answer?* that, aside from their other drawbacks, parochial schools were not even the best means of providing religious education, which, of course, she says to be their fundamental reason for existence. As an active member of the preconciliar liturgical movement, she argues that Catholics should be formed by the liturgy and not by classroom teaching. Incidentally, in a 1972 book, entitled *We're All in This Together*, she admits that her 1964 reliance on liturgy alone was "astonishingly naive."

Since the late 1960's, however, considerable empirical research has demonstrated the effectiveness of the Catholic schools, and the results have been a source of new confidence. Catholic schools operate, on average, at less than half the per-pupil costs of public education; have, with only a few exceptions, open admissions policies; have increased minority enrollment from 11 percent in 1970 to 23 percent in 1989; and maintain dropout rates one-fourth of those in public schools. Research has demonstrated that Catholic schools produce significantly higher achievement scores than public schools with students of comparable backgrounds. Andrew Greeley and others have measured a positive correlation between attendance at Catholic schools for more than eight years and attendance at Sunday Mass, activity in the parish, belief in life after death and opposition to abortion (for the most recent summary of Greeley's research and conclusions, see *The Catholic Myth: The Behavior and Beliefs of American Catholics*, Macmillan Publishing, 1990, Chapter 9, "The Touchstone: Catholic Schools").

Despite such evidence, the majority of Catholics today send their children to public schools, hoping that CCD classes will provide the necessary religious education. A thorough articulation of some of the reasons for this choice may be found in a recent article, "A Catholic Choice for Public School" by Michael McCauley, who explains why he and his wife decided to send their five children to public schools. He attributes the decision ultimately to a "changing concept of what being a Catholic meant." He mentions how Vatican II's document on "The Church in the Modern World" helped them to realize that to be a follower of Christ was not to be a separatist but "a leaven in the world made holy by creation." Such realizations brought him and his wife to wonder why it had never occurred to them, who, between them, could count 33 years of Catholic education, to consider anything but a Catholic school. They realized "that at least part of it had something to do with being safe and comfortable." He writes:

> The Catholic schools I attended had both nurtured the spirituality and reinforced the cultural fabric. The cultural benefits were a supportive community and a firm stance from which to view the world as it opened up to me. The costs were a limited experience of diverse cultures, values and viewpoints, a certain defensiveness against an unknown and perhaps hostile world, a tendency toward judgment and triumphalism.

He relates his experience of learning that the Catholic school received financial support from the parishes, as well as from the Archdiocese, while the majority of the Catholic children outside the school (78 percent in 1987) received no resources for religious education and had no organized program for faith development. He was especially incensed when, at the time of Confirmation, parents of the Catholic-school children requested that the children receive the sacrament together because they had built up a community during their years of preparation. This meant CCD students would sit on the other side of the aisle. He notes that "one sometimes gets the impression that they [Catholic children who are not in Catholic schools] are more on the periphery of institutional concern than those in Catholic schools." McCauley concludes his article in this way:

> These are the many factors that led to and confirmed our choice of public schools. Strangely enough, we are not sure we have made the right decision. The supplementary education we had planned to do at home has come to very little in the rush of events. I fear the power of secular culture may overwhelm a Christian counter- culture that is weak from lack of nourishment. I wonder what is happening when my son is assigned the "pro" side of an abortion debate and he wants to do it so he will "learn all sides of the issue." Ironically, I wonder if I would have cared about the CCD program if I had not gone to Catholic schools (221).

This article expresses, in an unusually articulate way, the ambivalent feelings many Catholic parents have regarding the value of Catholic

schools. Except for Hispanics and African-Americans, who for obvious and cogent reasons strongly support Catholic schools, significant numbers of Catholic parents share this ambivalence about Catholic schools. The legacy of Mary Perkins Ryan, despite the extensive empirical data on the superiority of Catholic schools, seems to persist.

Not only parents have doubts today about the value of Catholic schools. A pastor of an East Coast parish explained recently that his parish has not maintained a school, but has chosen instead to establish a Faith Formation Center that includes a school for 380 children and a program for 650 children attending public schools. The parish recently hired a layman full-time to serve as its youth and young adult minister. When asked about the situation, the priest explained that his parishioners had growing doubts about the wisdom of devoting nearly half the $500,000 in non-tuition revenue each year to subsidize the school. "The question is whether you should bankrupt the church to bankroll the school," he is quoted as saying. "At some point you have to say enough is enough" (qtd. in *New York Times* 8). This pastor is not the only one who thinks this way. Since the Second Vatican Council, more than 1,000 new parishes have opened, but very few new Catholic schools were started during the same period (McManus 12).

Andrew Greeley thinks that over the last 25 years, pastors and bishops have simply decided to give up on the schools, and in fact to adopt the proposal of Mary Perkins Ryan—religious education through CCD and liturgy—despite the findings of the researchers, which, according to Greeley, have demonstrated that CCD has no measurable religious impact. Greeley's assessment of the future of Catholic schools is bleak:

> I have no illusion that these data will reverse the decline of Catholic schools. Bishops will continue to think that they can't afford to build new ones. Suburban pastors will continue to believe that life is a lot simpler without a school to worry about. Those laity who imagine themselves to be independent-minded and sophisticated because they do not send their children to Catholic schools will continue to congratulate themselves on their own wisdom. The CCD "movement" will continue to claim superior virtue for itself although none of the effects discussed in this chapter can be found for their programs. Catholic educators will continue to feel apologetic and perhaps even sorry for themselves. The implacable critics of Catholic education will ignore these findings as they have ignored all previous findings (178).

It is clear that the bishops of the United States had, in 1884, little doubt about the absolute importance of parochial schools. It also is clear that since Vatican II, such unanimity on the value of schools no longer exists among the hierarchy, pastors of local parishes, and many Catholics. Catholics and pastors have raised questions about how best to use the already strained resources to reach all Catholics who need religious formation, most of whom are not in Catholic schools.

Four Scenarios for the Future

There are four possible scenarios for the future of Catholic schools in the United States.

Status Quo

The first is the status quo, which was described in the second part of this paper: few schools, many with high academic quality, but most, however, with little support from the majority of Catholics, laity as well as clergy. If our schools are permitted to continue to drift, as most have for the past 25 years, the mere financial realities will turn them into institutions mainly for the well-off. Fewer and fewer schools will remain in urban settings, accessible to minorities. Instead of staffing schools for the poor, religious orders, already fewer in numbers and older in the average age of their members, will continue to choose apostolates rather than schools. Specifically Catholic emphases and traditions will characterize only those few schools in which an informed leadership grasps the unique traditions and emphases of Catholic schools in the ways described, and finds ways to institutionalize them.

In this status quo scenario, the CCD programs will continue to limp along, usually staffed as they are by volunteers with little formal training in theology or pedagogy. Only 50 percent of Catholic children of grade-school age who go to public schools and less than 15 percent of those of high-school age will attend CCD. Other ministries in the church—adult education, ministry to the separated and divorced, bible study groups, and parish councils—will vary in strength according to local parish leadership.

Radical Reaffirmation

The second scenario envisions a radical reaffirmation of schools. In this scenario, the radicality of the reaffirmation is indicated by the firm commitment of bishops to develop an economic infrastructure that will support Catholic schools at a level that allows them to be accessible to students from families of diverse incomes, and to pay teachers at a fair salary. In this scenario, every school will establish an endowment large enough to accomplish accessibility and fair wages, and all Catholics in parishes, whether or not they have school-age children, will tithe in support of this commitment. At best, in 10 years, this scenario will make it possible for the children of all Catholics who wish to attend Catholic schools to do so. In essence, a CCD program will no longer be necessary, or, if necessary, will serve only a small percentage of students not in Catholic schools.

In this scenario, the bishops and leaders in Catholic schools will be motivated, not by an effort to prevent contact with Protestant influences that dominate the public schools, for Protestant influence no longer dominates either the public schools or the general culture, but rather by a clear understanding that Catholic schools offer a critically important alternative to the public sector, dominated today by the ethos

of North American culture, with its underlying themes of materialism, consumerism, and relativism. In choosing radically to reaffirm the centrality of Catholic schools, the leaders of Catholic education realize the importance of reeducating the faculty so that they understand more clearly the history and significance of the Catholic tradition, grasp more fully the need to integrate the knowledge they share with students, and commit themselves more fully to the ideals of educating both the head and the heart.

School/CCD Model

The third scenario, the school/CCD model, resembles the first scenario, the status quo, but differs in that it is characterized by a more vigorous commitment both to schools and to the upgrading of CCD programs through the professionalization of those who teach in those programs, through a closer linkage with the parents of the students who attend them, and through a greater degree of cooperation between the schools and the CCD programs. The underlying assumption is that the church must meet the needs of people where they are, and a very high percentage are not in Catholic primary and secondary schools. In this scenario, there is little need to increase the number of Catholic schools; their quality, both religiously and academically, however, remains an important issue. This scenario does not ignore the data on the effectiveness of Catholic schools, but believes that those advocates of the schools who constantly point to it exaggerate the actual effectiveness of schools, minimize the importance of prophetic ministries in modern society, and concentrate far too many resources in a ministry that touches only a small portion of Catholics, and then only at the beginning of their lives. The advocates of this scenario believe that CCD can be made much more effective with enlightened leadership that will emphasize better training of teachers, call for fuller involvement and support from parents, the parish, and even from the Catholic schools, which will give released time to their best religion teachers to train CCD teachers.

University/School Model

The final scenario is the university/school model. In this model, university faculties of education and theology will work closely with both grade school and high school faculty and principals to strengthen teaching, facilitate the integration of learning and improve the governance of Catholic schools. University faculties of science, mathematics, social sciences, and humanities will offer affordable workshops during the summer for teachers of Catholic elementary and secondary schools. The purpose of these workshops is twofold: exposure to the most recent developments in the various disciplines and exploration of how such subjects can be taught in an integrated way appropriate to Catholic elementary and high schools.

Since there are many fewer Catholic universities and colleges than Catholic grade schools and high schools, money for travel and room

and board will be provided for grade school and high school faculties on the condition that they promise to work for at least five years shaping their respective institutions in the best educational and Catholic traditions of their respective schools.

Conclusion

Obviously, it is impossible to embrace at one and the same time, the status quo scenario and the radical reaffirmation scenario. Also, if the radical reaffirmation scenario materializes, there will be little need for the school/CCD scenario. On the other hand, it would be possible to combine the radical reaffirmation scenario with the university/school scenario, using the resources of Catholic universities as one of the primary means of strengthening Catholic grade schools and high schools.

If the Catholic community, led by its bishops, can muster the vision and the will to radically reaffirm Catholic schools, and provide not only the economic support but also the unique vision of an excellent education that is truly Catholic, we will have entered into a new era of resolve even more far-reaching than that initiated by the bishops at the Third Council of Baltimore. Instead of reacting to the threats of Protestantism's domination of the public school system, a situation which clearly no longer remains, Catholics today will be reacting to those negative elements of modern culture that threaten Catholic, and for that matter, Protestant, identity at the foundations: materialism, consumerism, individualism, and the fragmentation of knowledge. Even more than this, though, Catholics will be led by a deeper sense of the Catholic tradition, by its historical depth and sacramental sensibility, by its emphasis on community and its ritual and symbolic celebrations, and will seek to fashion educational institutions that effectively hand on that tradition. Further, Catholics also will seek to build upon the great tradition of universal education characteristic of the United States and extend especially to the poor an opportunity for an education focused religiously in its teaching, community, and service.

Currently, a higher percentage of Catholics are attending universities than any other religious group. Catholics also are more affluent than any other religious group in the United States. No longer can anyone point to a lack of financial resources to achieve whatever educational goals we choose. We Catholics no longer lack, as a national community, the financial means to radically reaffirm Catholic schools. What we must discover now, in an unprecedented way, is the vision that will allow us to see the unique treasure that we have in our Catholic tradition, the will to incarnate that vision in educational institutions, and the generosity to make those institutions accessible to all who wish to attend them.

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CATHOLIC IDENTITY

Carleen Reck, SSND, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools, Diocese of Jefferson City, Missouri

Introduction

Basic to the Catholic identity of a school is an understanding of the term "Catholic." In past years, Catholics often were identified in terms of fish on Fridays, fasting during Lent, and Latin in the Mass. These identifiers became obsolete when Vatican II urged the voluntary practice of external penance and wider use of the vernacular.

In a post-conciliar church, which calls for personal formation and community support more than for simple rules and external observances, Catholic identity and the identity of the Catholic school become increasingly important. The Catholic school should understand its identity before it can clarify its relationship with the church and society. This relationship can then suggest some possible directions for the future.

Elements of Catholic School Identity

Catholics are identified today in varied ways: by parish registration, by regular use of envelopes, by baptismal records, by regular attendance at Sunday Mass. Rarely applied, however, are the more difficult norms of living according to the gospel and the calls of the church.

In terms of Catholic school identity, most of these measures are not applicable. Moreover, over 12 percent of Catholic school students do

not even claim to be baptized Catholics. Obviously, the "Catholic" identity of a school needs a different basis.

Canon Law, in defining a Catholic school, affirms the need for Catholic doctrine, as well as the need for teachers who live with integrity. Canon 803 moves quickly, however, to this clear conclusion: "...no school may bear the title Catholic school without the consent of the competent ecclesiastical authority."

Granted, this legal approval is necessary. The canon itself, however, does not help a school to strengthen its Catholic identity. Nor does it aid the bishop in determining whether a school is entitled to be called Catholic. For such practical purposes, it is helpful to examine the church's calls to the Catholic school, as well as their realization, as measured by research.

Mission of the Church—The Call

Canon 803 focuses on the bishop's acceptance of each "Catholic" school. Such a relationship, however, cannot be one-way. The school which wishes to be "Catholic" also should identify itself with the Catholic Church and its mission.

The recent document from Rome, "The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School," clearly states, "The Catholic school finds its true justification in the mission of the Church. . . ." (RD, #34). It specifies, "It is a place of evangelization, of authentic apostolate and of pastoral action — not through complementary or parallel or extra-curricular activity, but of its very nature: its work of educating the Christian person (RD, #33).

The educational goals of the school are to reflect a concern for the life and problems of the church, both local and universal (RD, #44). In keeping with the school's mission, religious instruction appears in the weekly schedule, has its own syllabus, and has appropriate interdisciplinary links with other course material (RD, #70). In brief, the school should act upon its role in the mission of the church.

Mission of the Church—The Research

The sociological evidence indicates that the mission is effective: "People who have had two or more years of Catholic education are the 'cornerstones' in most parishes" (McCready, 223). "They show a greater sense of affiliation to the Church which is over and above whatever closeness to the Church might be accounted for by either spouse or family of origin" (Greeley, 257). Moreover, a Notre Dame study on parish life found that a sense of loyalty to parish is greatest among parents of former parochial students, next highest among parents of current students, and least among non-parochial school parents and non-parents (Kealey, 284).

Even when graduates leave the church, the effects remain: "The correlation between Catholic school attendance and return to the church in one's late twenties is .35, a very powerful correlation" (Greeley, 254). The Catholic school clearly assists the church in its mission.

Religious Formation—The Call

The Church has always loved its schools, ". . .because this is where its children receive their formation" (RD, #44). To be more specific, a Catholic school guides students so they not only can develop their own personalities, but also can understand and live fully the new creation which they became by baptism (RD, #98).

To put it succinctly, "A school has as its purpose the students' integral formation" (RD, #70). Part of the formation process occurs in all schools through classes and activities. One unique dimension — presented as an ideal for the Catholic school—is for each student to have an opportunity for spiritual guidance (RD, #95).

Every school allows some "horizontal" interaction among teachers and students. In addition, Catholic schools offer "vertical" interaction through prayer, "the fullest and most complete expression of the religious dimension" (RD, #111). Students learn not only personal, but liturgical prayer, especially Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation (RD, #83).

Religious Formation—The Research

Study has demonstrated that Catholic schooling significantly impacts the religious behavior of young people. In terms of Mass attendance, communion reception, belief in life after death, activity in parish organizations, thought of religious/priestly vocation, Catholic periodical reading and TV watching, participation in home liturgy and study groups, opposition to abortion, and racial attitude — Catholic schools make a difference (Greeley, 247, 250-51).

Persons with eight or more years of Catholic schooling are more likely to picture a gentle God and to be more tolerant of other people (Greeley, 262). Catholic seniors in Catholic schools score higher in both church attendance and rate religion more important than their Catholic peers in public schools (Heart of Matter, 22).

Catholic schools do affect their graduates' attitudes and behaviors—and the effect is becoming greater (Greeley, 253). As a matter of fact, the influence of Catholic schooling on the religious behavior of young Catholics is now stronger than that of the family of origin. "The old explanation of the success of Catholic schools, that they were merely duplicating the work of the Catholic family, is simply not valid" (Greeley, 251).

Sociologist Andrew Greeley describes his contrasting data: "I could find no correlation between attendance at CCD programs and adult attitudes and behavior. On the other hand, the measures of relationship between Catholic education and adult behavior. . .were now quite strong indeed" (Greeley, 247).

True, Catholic schools do not turn out exemplary Catholics without exception. Yet, "given the difficulty of affecting human religious behavior at all, the effect is worth the cost until an alternate system, technique, or method can be devised that does as well" (Greeley, 252).

Gospel Values—The Call

Although the Catholic school is similar to other schools in many ways, the Congregation for Catholic Education names "one essential difference: it draws its inspiration and its strength from the Gospel in which it is rooted" (RD, #47). The gospel appears again in the discussion of educational goals: ". . .the Gospel values which are its inspiration must be explicitly mentioned" (RD, #100). Obviously, the identity of a Catholic school is rooted in the gospel.

Integrating the gospel with learning has been promoted since Vatican II. In the Catholic school, the worlds of human culture and of religion "...are not like two parallel lines that never meet; points of contact are established within the human person." All teachers, while effectively teaching their own subject areas, help students "to see beyond the limited horizon of human reality" (RD, #51).

Teachers in the Catholic school have the opportunity to present a complete picture of the human person with both a physical and a spiritual nature (RD, #55). This means, for example, that social studies classes treat traditional civic values and events, but students also look critically at issues and events in the light of the gospel (RD, #45). Science and technology are presented as parts of God's universe which show the Creator's wisdom and power (RD, #54).

In literature and art, the students' Christian perspective "goes beyond the merely human" and can better understand the human struggle and the mysteries of the human spirit (RD, #61). Religious themes are allowed to arise naturally when classes are dealing with topics such as the human person, the family, society, or history (RD, #64). "The special character of the Catholic school and the underlying reason for its existence...is precisely the quality of the religious instruction integrated into the overall education of the students" (Catechesis in Our Time, #69). Promoting the integration of faith and life models the belief that faith cannot be considered something that is only personal or unimportant.

Gospel values will be as evident in the school as they are in the lives of the faculty. The staff's challenge is great: "They are teachers of the faith; however, like Christ, they must also be teachers of what it means to be human. This includes...such things as affection, tact, understanding, serenity of spirit, a balanced judgment, patience in listening to others and prudence in the way they respond, and, finally, availability for personal meetings and conversations with the students" (RD, #96). Ideally, they will pursue, model, and encourage self-formation (RD, #63).

The lives of both teachers and students in the Catholic school are not divided into time for the human and time for the divine; their lives can integrate gospel values and be whole.

Gospel Values—The Research

Gospel values are indeed evident among the students. Studies show

that those who attend Catholic schools for eight years or more are happier, more tolerant of other people, more benign in their images of God, and more likely to see sex as sacramental. Moreover, Catholic school students are more likely to stress the importance of their own conscience, to reject the notion that right and wrong are usually a simple matter of black and white—without shades of gray—only half as likely to have drifted away from the church, and less prejudiced (Greeley, 259, 261-62). Catholic seniors in Catholic high schools rate higher in terms of peace/justice, pro-marriage and pro-family views (Heart of Matter, 34).

On the school level, too, justice is evident. In public schools, the achievement gap between black and white students grows between sophomore and senior years. In Catholic schools, this achievement gap narrows over the two-year period. Black and Hispanic students have a better chance of getting an education equal to their white peers within a Catholic school (Coleman, 240). Catholic school individuals and institutions show evidence of lived gospel values.

Community—The Call

Before Vatican II, a Catholic school was considered an institution; after the Council, a community. The sense of community has far-reaching effects. First, it includes everyone in school goals—teachers, students, and families alike (RD, #39). To make the parents more conscious of their role, every school initiates meetings and other programs which will build the partnership (RD, #43).

Although the school cannot replace the local church community, it can forge a unity with that community. Liturgy planning, for example, should be especially careful to bring the school community and the local church together (RD, #30). The sense of community promotes a love that excludes no one and suggests a preferential option for the less fortunate, the sick, the poor, the handicapped, the lonely (RD, #87).

At a time when youngsters are only names in large consolidated schools, the Catholic school tends to be much smaller and more community oriented. Students know their teachers and are known by them. Teachers can establish rapport with students simply by talking with them.

Schools are called to the following conditions which build community and a supportive climate:

- everyone agrees with the educational goals;
- all cooperate in achieving the educational goals;
- interpersonal relationships are based on love and Christian freedom;
- families are welcomed;
- the local church is an active participant;
- civil society—local, national, and international—is included (RD, #103).

Community—The Research

"Catholic schools seem to have their effect on those who attend

them, not so much through formal religious instruction class, but rather through the closeness to the Catholic community which the experience of attending Catholic schools generates" (Greeley, 251). The secret of the religious success of the Catholic schools is their ability to integrate young people into the parish community (Greeley, 248).

Research results say that the church community which connects families and school and church is an important resource today—and a particularly important resource for children and young people as they move toward adulthood (Coleman, 240). Across a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds, Catholic schools had a strikingly low dropout rate, compared with public schools—less than a fourth of that in the public schools and less than a third of that in the other private schools (Coleman, 233, 235).

The state prior to dropout is one of isolation, of feeling alone, of being without social support (Coleman, 233). A Catholic school has more "social capital," which means it has social supports or social resources on which a child can draw in time of need; that is, people who are attentive to the problems a student is experiencing and attentive to the growth of those problems (Coleman, 233-34). With these resources of Catholic schooling, children from single-parent families are much less likely to drop out (Coleman, 236).

The U. S. Department of Education, in "A Profile of the American Eighth-Grader," reports that a higher percentage of Catholic school eighth graders say that "students and teachers get along" and "teachers are interested" in them. Catholic school students also report that teachers often work with them outside of class time (CHS: Their Impact, 194).

A sign of the greater sense of parental participation is the higher percentage of Catholic school parents who do volunteer work in the school and who attend parent-teacher conferences and parents' association meetings. Catholic school parents, contrasted with public school parents, show dramatically more interest in students' progress and in school matters. On the other hand, a comparatively lower percentage of principals in Catholic schools say they experience verbal confrontations between parents and teachers or between teachers and administrators (*Heart of Matter*, 8).

It seems true that the parish school is "an archaic survival, a residue of the curious notion that young people can best be educated, not by outside educational bureaucracies which care nothing for local communities, but by an interaction network of Church, neighborhood, and school" (Greeley, 263).

Climate—The Call

Elementary schools especially are called to create a school climate that reproduces, as far as possible, the warm atmosphere of family life (RD, #40). Vatican II documents describe the Catholic school climate like this: "From the first moment that a student sets foot in a Catholic school, he or she ought to have the impression of entering a new environment, one illumined by the light of faith, and having its own

unique characteristics, an environment permeated with the Gospel spirit of love and freedom" (Christian Education, #8). In this setting, the pupils experience their dignity as persons before they know the meaning of the word "dignity" (*To Teach*, #55).

Education is one of the most important ways by which the church fulfills its commitment to the dignity of the person (*To Teach*, #9, 13). Although collaboration is vital to meet this commitment, the prime responsibility for creating this unique Christian school climate rests with the teachers, as individuals and as a community (RD, #26).

Students, however, are not spectators as the school climate is developed; they help to determine the quality of this climate. The more that students can be helped to realize that a school, with all its activity, has only one purpose—to help them in their growth toward maturity—the more those students will be willing to become actively involved (RD, #106).

Climate—The Research

The strongest motivator attracting teachers to the Catholic school is the desire to teach in its educational environment. Second strongest is their view of teaching as ministry, and, third, their love of teaching (CHS: Their Impact, 194).

Teachers in Catholic schools—despite lower pay—have high morale, a factor in positive school climate. Even teachers in Catholic high schools, where many students' families are below the poverty level, claim high (85 percent) job satisfaction (Heart of Matter, 9).

Students, from their vantage point, report that teachers "overwhelmingly express respect and appreciation for their school colleagues" (CHS: Their Impact, 194).

Service—The Call

Values are essential, but "every true educator knows that a further step is necessary: values must lead to action; they are the motivation for action" (RD, #107). After studying a Christian social ethic, with its focus on the dignity of the human person, on justice, honesty, and freedom, students ought to be ready to reach out to those who are in need (RD, 89-90).

Service—The Research

Research shows that Catholic high school students rate higher than their public school peers in community involvement, contributing money to the poor, and concern for others (Heart of Matter, 22). After graduation, Catholic-school-educated parishioners are the people who "do more of the volunteer work" (McCready, 224). In fact, "more than 20 years of solid research has shown that the schools are an important source of adult Catholic resources in terms of contributions and volunteerism" (McCready, 230).

Global Concern—The Call

A school is not fully "Catholic" unless it reaches beyond itself. In fact, it should see all humanity as one large family, divided perhaps by historical and political events, but always one in God the Creator.

"Therefore," the latest document says, "a Catholic school should be sensitive to and help to promulgate Church appeals for peace, justice, freedom, progress for all peoples and assistance for countries in need. And it should not ignore similar appeals coming from recognized international organizations such as UNESCO and the United Nations" (RD, #45).

Global Concern—The Research

Studies about Catholic school students find in them a vision of a just social world (Heart of Matter, 32). Catholic school students are more likely to express concern for others, and they are less supportive of militarism (Heart of Matter, 20).

At the institutional level, Catholic schools are reaching out to black and Hispanic students: "In 140 of Chicago's 242 Catholic schools, for example, black and Hispanic students make up more than 80 percent of the enrollment. In most of these schools, Protestants far outnumber Catholics" (Forbes, Dec. 12, 1988).

Catholic schools not only are reaching out, but also are teaching black and Hispanic students very effectively. Holding constant their background variables and sophomore scores, seniors in Catholic schools—Hispanic, black, and white—perform substantially higher in standardized achievement tests than do seniors in public schools (Greeley, 154). In addition, black and Hispanic graduates of Catholic high schools are far more likely to have earned a baccalaureate degree in four years than their public school peers (Heart of Matter, 4).

Students who are disadvantaged in multiple ways—by poverty, by low levels of parental education, by low personal self-esteem, by disciplinary problems, by being on the fringes of the school community, by low academic scores—are the ones most likely to benefit between sophomore and senior years in Catholic schools. The presence of these students in Catholic schools and their success stories show the broad concern of the schools.

Summary

Since *To Teach as Jesus Did*, the educational mission of the church has been described with three dimensions: the message revealed by God which the church proclaims; fellowship in the life of the Holy Spirit; and service to the Christian community and the entire human community (*To Teach*, #14).

The seven elements of Catholic school identity basically mirror the three dimensions:

Message	*Community*	*Service*
Mission of Church	Community	Service
Religious Formation	Climate	Global Concern
Gospel Values		

These three dimensions of the educational mission of the church are so basic that they parallel the answers to the Baltimore Catechism question, "Why did God make you?"

To know To love To serve

To the extent that Catholic schools reflect the seven elements and these three basic dimensions, they effectively fulfill the purpose for their existence. As times change, however, the manner of living the school's identity in the most effective manner also can change. The next section suggests some possible futures that can correlate with the Catholic school identity.

Possible Futures

The mission of the church and the religious formation of the students is central to the identity of the Catholic school. Any future vision which attempts to break this connection would violate the school's basic identity. Important to the future of the Catholic school, however, is that typical Catholics clearly perceive that the Catholic school strengthens and serves the church.

On the other hand, the basic values which the Catholic school teaches and models reflect many of the founding principles of the United States. When the American Archbishops met with members of the Roman Curia, Cardinal Bernardin explained, "As United States bishops, we value highly the founding principles of our country and its democratic traditions" (Evangelization in Culture/Society of U.S., 9). The civic community should see how much more closely the Catholic school reflects the founding ideals of the nation than does the present government-supported school. Catholic educators—when addressing possible futures related to both church and nation—should plan communication, as well as action.

Linkage with the Church—Communication

Bishop James Malone, reflecting on the apparent freeze on building Catholic schools, concludes:

> What is different today, is that we finally have become aware of this unconscious decision. The results are too evident to avoid. This means that we are in a new situation. From this time forward, we are responsible for our actions and decisions. And I believe that it is time for us to stop and ask ourselves: Do we really want to eliminate Catholic schools as an essential ingredient of the life of the Church of the United States? (Malone, 275)

The irony is that—despite the close of city schools and a construc-

tion freeze in many areas of new population growth — most bishops and priests still believe that Catholic schools are more effective than other methods of educating for the faith. The three top concerns of the clergy, who have negative attitudes toward Catholic schools, all relate to finances: they cost too much, they take too many resources for the numbers served, and they require a disproportionate amount of parish income (Kealey, 284).

The future—beginning now—should clearly communicate to the church members and leaders two points: one about finances, the other about comparative effectiveness.

1. Catholic schools are sound financial investments.

William McCready (221) estimates that the Catholic population, on average, gives about two-tenths of one percent of the yearly wages to the local parish church—not two percent, but two- tenths of one percent. If regular weekly church attenders gave even a half-hour's wages a week in the collection, the parish contributions would increase by a factor of four or five. Related to this is the fact that the mean income of Catholics has risen dramatically since early immigration days, proportionately more than other Christian groups. Andrew Greeley credits this socioeconomic growth in great part to the Catholic school system.

Not only do the current parents of Catholic school students contribute significantly more than their fellow parishioners, but Catholic school graduates also will continue over their lifetimes to give substantially more to the church than other Catholics. In a 1988 study, parishioners with eight or more years of Catholic schooling each gave $347 a year to the church, as opposed to $222 by those with less or no Catholic schooling.

The additional contributions of those who attended Catholic schools, over and above the average donation, amounts to $750 million a year (Greeley, 261).

Added to the actual financial contribution is the fact that Catholic-school-educated parishioners do more of the volunteer work than their peers (McCready, 224).

The value of these contributions becomes even more impressive when considering the comparative economy of Catholic schooling. For about one-third the cost, Catholic schools produce students who score higher than public school students in reading comprehension, written composition, mathematics, and science (National Assessment of Educational Progress). Increased awareness of their effectiveness, as well as of their comparative economy can diminish the concern that Catholic schools "cost too much."

Given a clear understanding of the Catholic schools as sound financial investments, parishes can look anew at the Catholic school as an important, productive part of the church mission which ultimately supports itself and the future church. This view should replace any existing image of "a private school for children of some parishioners."

2. Catholics should be accurately informed about the comparative effectiveness of church educational programs.

The 1984 presentation of Mary Perkins Ryan, *Are Catholic Schools the Answer?* (with her answer, "No"), was based solely on the author's opinion. All substantive objective studies show that Catholic schools are the only effective means for building identity with the church and for significant, lasting religious formation. The little-known research results about the effectiveness of CCD (religious education for public school students) should be communicated: CCD has no measurable positive religious effect on youth and even shows a negative effect on young people's future relationship with the church (Greeley, 247).

Moreover, parishes should assess the background of their current CCD teachers and consider their resources for their future teaching staffs. Many parishes are now using Catholic school graduates to teach CCD. It is ironic that often these graduates do not realize that their very ability to teach others about the faith relies heavily on their own daily Catholic school experiences. The products of yesterday's Catholic schooling will last for a generation. When a parish finds, however, that it lacks Catholics who have experienced daily religious education and a lived sense of faith community, the concern for the following generation will be apparent, but too late.

In addition to these considerations, a church with fewer clergy in the future will have to rely more and more on a well-educated and religiously-formed laity. It cannot afford to force its schools to close or to become private secular institutions for wealthy users.

Linkage with the Church—Action

After these points are communicated and understood, parishes should take action related to both areas, finances and effectiveness.

1. Parish leaders should form some viable financial plans.

These could include, for example,

- a parish tithing plan, which will support all parish services, including the school;
- diocesan and/or parish foundations, which approach all who have received or will benefit from the school.

Those who want to continue raising tuitions so that students "pay their own way" should rethink their actions. Why are public schools not supported solely by public school parents? Because the effects of the schools touch the total civic community. In the same manner, support of Catholic schools cannot be borne solely by students and their parents, not with the existing evidence that the schools positively affect the total church. Some parishes have frozen the level of parish support and continue to increase tuition. In light of the above advantages to the church, it is more appropriate to increase parish or other forms of support and to freeze parent tuition.

Some direct their financial concerns to the schools, saying that the schools take too many resources for the numbers served and so their cost is disproportionate. To refute that argument, each school should find practical ways to reach out to a broad group of parishioners.

In this area, Catholic educators can learn from some of their public school counterparts. Recent years have shown diminishing support from taxpayers—many of whom have no school-age children. Some schools have continued "business as usual" and have continued to lose bond issues. Others have reached out to their local communities — offering programs with broad appeal, extending use of their facilities— and increased their base of support. In the same manner, the Catholic school should extend its base of support in some effective and appropriate manner. The following action point addresses this need.

2. Catholic school leaders should find ways to broaden the school's potential for community and service, thereby strengthening its identity with the parish.

These ways can include, for example,

- providing some added services to the parish;
- expanding the school into a parish education center.

Both examples may use the same elements of community and service outreach. They can be offered singly on a limited basis, or combined, until the school gradually develops into a parish education center.

How might this work? Some schools already have elements in place. Obviously, the setting of a school—rural, small town, suburban, large metropolitan area, inner city—and the needs of the parishioners, beginning with the students' parents, will guide the gradual emergence of a parish education center. A few possible elements—which build on the Catholic school identity and resources—are suggested here.

Religious Education. Do any parishioners still not understand the "new" theology? Some of the best sessions on very fundamental levels are already presented to parents as they learn the content of their children's religion course. As the parents experience what the children are learning, they themselves often become more open to new ideas and attitudes. With only slight changes, these sessions could be offered to other parishioners.

Computer Use. Although "computer" has become a household term, many parishioners have had limited or no personal experience using one. The average school has at least one teacher, some parents, and many students who are computer "addicts" and who love to try new software and to teach others. Software already owned by the school can assist parishioners who need to write important letters or who want to make banners for family celebrations. Computer shareware — available for literally a few dollars—can help those who want to make simple wills, improve their Spanish vocabulary, or even record the league's bowling scores. Once at the computer, they can be introduced to other software, such as a program to help them learn more about the Bible.

Reference Library. Even the poorest Catholic school has a set of encyclopedias, an atlas, and other basic reference materials—a luxury for many homes in city or country. On-site usage would require only modest adaptations in the school's routines and could offer new opportunities for youngsters to serve the needs of others.

Research Service. Students can be motivated to develop reference

skills if parishioners are invited to ask for needed information. Depending on the complexity of each request, the program coordinator can offer either practical motivation for an underachieving student or a challenge for a student who is very adapt in reference work.

Liturgy Planning. Students who participate regularly in planning class and school liturgies have skills which are not shared by all parishioners. The school may wish to offer help to parishioners in planning special liturgies for family celebrations or even for funerals if no other parish help is provided.

Intergenerational Service. At a time when few homes encourage older persons to interact with children on a regular basis, the school can serve as a center to attract senior parishioners to the support of an ongoing community. The typical school's available facilities and services can offer a variety of options:

- daily lunch;
- an opportunity to read to or listen to reading of young children;
- simple volunteer service, such as sorting or collating;
- time to play basic number or word games with senior/child teams;
- a chance to have younger, nimbler hands write letters;
- an acquaintance with youngsters who—with parental permission—can help the older persons at their homes with leaf raking, garden work, or other errands.

Service Center. If Catholic schools are already reaching out to lonely and ill parishioners, as well as to others in need, the next logical step is for them to help parishioners to assist one another. A team of students can both develop skills and serve by setting up a computer database for "parish helpers," as well as by communicating needs to appropriate volunteers.

Book/Audio-Visual Loan. As many parishioners increase their commitments to work and other responsibilities, few parish programs can entice large groups to meetings. Some parishes are shifting to small home sessions—led by parishioners with the support of a cassette (audio and/or visual). The school—already a place that systematizes resources for students, faculty, and parents—can become a channel for loan and even delivery/pickup service.

These and similar elements for gradually developing the school into a parish education center cost little, when compared with the increased number who can share "ownership" in the center. Such a program effectively responds to arguments that "the school takes too many resources for the families and students served." In addition, the community and service opportunities further link the school with the mission of the church, strengthen the students' religious formation, and help develop in the participating youngsters two qualities which are part of total education: increased responsibility and self-esteem.

In brief, the school's identity with the church can be strengthened by communicating the Catholic school's cost-effectiveness to the church and by developing ways to extend ownership of the school within the parish.

Identity with the Nation—Communication

The Catholic school's relationship with the civic community also requires clear communication and offers new possibilities for the future. The basic values which the Catholic school teaches and models, clearly reflect the values of the nation's founders and many key leaders. While faith cannot be identified with only one culture, it can inspire any culture and call it to the basic values which are implicit in its ideals.

Unfortunately, many U.S. citizens do not know the moral values expressed by the nation's founders and are unaware that similar values are promoted within the Catholic school. The civic community should be educated on how much more closely the Catholic school reflects the founding ideals of the nation than does the typical government-supported school. Many people also should receive clarification about some related areas. Some points to be communicated are these:

1. The founders and leaders of the United States expressed the need for religion and morality.

In his farewell address to the nation, George Washington emphasized, "Let us with caution indulge in the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion." Theodore Roosevelt, in 1904, underscored the importance of total education: "It is a fine thing to be clever, to be able, to be smart. But it is a better thing to have the qualities that find their expression in the Decalogue and the Golden Rule. We must have education in the broadest sense...education of the soul as well as of the mind...." Calvin Coolidge, in 1925, also promoted the moral dimension: "An intellectual growth will only add to our confusion unless it is accompanied by a moral growth. I do not know of any source of moral power other than which comes from religion."

Many other such statements should be contrasted with the present-day avoiding of any morality or religion in government-supported schooling.

2. The interpretation of the Constitution's "establishment" clause has changed from the intent of its writers.

Every member of the Constitutional Convention came from a state that, before and after the adoption of the Constitution, gave taxes to churches to run schools for the education of children who chose to attend them. These members wrote the First Amendment: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." Through this amendment, they were accommodating the presence of many religions and guaranteeing freedom to all religions, rather than attempting to exclude religion (Buetow, 14).

One needs only to look at coins or note the early establishment of chaplaincies within the armed services to become convinced that interpretations of the "establishment" clause have varied from the intent of its writers. Through the years, their statement has become the basis for excluding all religion, rather than for avoiding the establishment of any one religion.

Because the interpretation of the U. S. Constitution's "establishment clause," as applied to schools, has constituted about 95 percent of church-state issues, it seems important to inform the broader community about the background and intent of the nation's founders.

3. The United States has been the only major free nation that, in practice, excludes religious elements from education and limits government education to the secular.

The public schools in America are the most thoroughly secularized in the Western world, excepting only those of the U.S.S.R. Ordinarily, U.S. public school educators are given more freedom to refer to Satan than to God. Moreover, when they refer to values, they cannot ground them in any religious source or principle.

Other Western nations have found it possible both to include religious observances in state school programs and to provide public financial aid to church-related schools. Why not in the U.S.? Many of today's U.S. policies can be traced to the influence of the Common School Movement of the 19th century. The leaders of that movement, predominantly Protestant clergymen, wished to retain religious instruction of a "non-sectarian" (that is, Protestant) nature in the public schools. Their efforts to secure legislation prohibiting the use of public funds for church- related schools were successful. But their attempts to impose their brand of religious practices on all school children led to a reaction.

In the late 19th century, the state courts and legislatures began to remove all religious observations from the public schools (Jorgenson, The State and the Non-Public School, 1825-1925). Members of the Catholic minority, of course, rejected the Protestant-oriented public schooling of the 19th century. Moreover, they could not accept a totally secular public system of education.

The fact is that neither the federal government nor the schools were originally intended to exclude religious elements. The nation is ·ot required to maintain a totally secular interpretation of government-funded schooling. A tax arrangement that would treat all schools and families neutrally—merely giving parents a genuine choice among all schools, public and private, religious and secular—would not violate the original principle of church and state separation.

The public should be asked to reflect on the fact that only the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. have chosen to outlaw religion from their government-funded schools.

4. Catholic schools are more effective in offering equal opportunities to minority groups than the government schools.

Parochial schools are not exclusive or elitist. The children who attend them tend to be as mixed as their geographic areas. The research of Sociologist James Coleman leads him to conclude that

> The strict separation of Church and State as practiced in America has been harmful to the least advantaged. This separation has prevented the school's making use of the social capital surrounding the Church to support the goals of the school. In many minority communities, the most

> powerful community institution is the Church; but schools cannot aid churches in aiding children, through, for example, joint after-school programs and youth organizations. Thus the disadvantaged are harmed and the minority disadvantaged are especially harmed, by making impossible the use of social capital that does exist, in a setting where this capital is not abundant. (Coleman, 237)

Citizens should hear evidence that Catholic schools are better at supporting disadvantaged students than are the schools which are receiving their tax dollars.

Identity with the Nation—Action

As understanding of the above points increases, action is needed in the directions of public recognition and parental choice. These steps could include, for example,

- earning public recognition that Catholic schools promote the founding ideals of the nation;
- giving to parents the right of choosing religious, tax-supported schools.

The action to achieve these goals should focus on five key areas that are rooted in American law and tradition.

Parental Right. In American law and by American tradition, the primary right of education does not belong to government, but to parents.

No "Normal" Schools. Bishop Francis Quinn has explained that, because of parental rights, the government school system does not belong in the same category as the police or fire department. After all, he reasons, government schools are not the only or the "normal" school system. Private and parochial schools existed first.

Tax-Supported Compulsory Education. The requirements of compulsory education are already met by attending schools other than those which are government- supported. A more equitable distribution of tax revenues would include all schools that offer students the means to meet the requirements of compulsory education.

Needed Quality. Needed quality can be guaranteed by requiring that schools be accredited in order to receive tax support. Many school accreditation associations have been established, and the U.S. Department of Education recognizes their existence. These groups ordinarily require much more than states require of their public schools and assure quality education.

Freedom of Religion. Some people fear that church schools would have to drop their religious identity to secure parental choice within tax-supported education. On the contrary, the choice of religious schooling would match closely the ideal of the nation's founders and leaders for moral and total education.

The elements of parental right, varied tax-supported schools, and

freedom of religion eroded slowly from the nation's practice. Similarly, the elements should be reintroduced gradually, through a process of education and action. Such action will again require the kind of moral vision and perseverance modeled by the nation's founders.

Conclusion

The challenges for the future are these: to project the image of Catholic schools as productive and cost-effective investments: to increase the sense of ownership and the ties between the parish and Catholic school; to raise broad consciousness of the fact that the Catholic school fits well the moral ideal of the nation's founders; and to give parents the right of choosing among religious tax-supported schools.

Identity of the Catholic school becomes increasingly important in a post-conciliar church, which needs personal formation and community support more than simple rules. Catholic school identity also is increasingly important in a nation which has lost track of the moral ideals of its founders and has moved simultaneously to amoral government education and to record levels of violent crime.

Just as Catholics may have been identified by such external observances as fish on Friday and the Latin Mass, some people may still identify Catholic schools by the mere fact that they are on the bishop's list of approved schools. More essential to the identity of the Catholic school is its involvement in the mission of the church, the religious formation of students, the inclusion of gospel values, the building of faith community, its distinctive climate, its commitment to service, and its global concern.

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STUDY AND DISCUSSION GUIDE

THE CATHOLIC IDENTITY OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

I. Background Papers

Catholic Identity and the Future of Catholic Schools
Rev. James Heft, SM, Ph.D., Provost, University of Dayton

Catholic Identity
Sr. Carleen Reck, SSND, Ph.D., Superintendent of Catholic Schools, Jefferson City, Missouri

II. Some Basic Questions

What are the essential, timeless, non-negotiable aspects which identify a school as Catholic?

What aspects can be defined as circumstantial, contemporary and adaptable?

To what extent is Catholic identity challenged and/or strengthened by the expectations of bishops, priests, parents and the Catholic community? By government, the profession, prophets?

III. Discussion

1. To what extent do the Background Papers address the basic questions?

2. What questions are not addressed by the papers?

3. What new questions are raised by the authors of the Background Papers?

4. What is the group's reaction/evaluation of the current status of this issue? Do not confine your analysis to the materials in the White Papers.

5. What is the group's judgment about desirable directions for Catholic schools in regard to this issue, and appropriate strategies for moving in those directions?

IV. Summary

1. *Clarification of the Issue* (a summation of responses to question 4: the current status of the Issue.)

2. *Strategy for the future* (A summation of responses to question 5: appropriate future directions.)

Discussion Leader_____ Location_____ Date_____

James Heft is a member of the Society of Mary (Marianists)and was ordained a priest in 1973. He earned his PH.D in historical theology from the University of Toronto in 1977. Since 1970 he has been associated with the University of Dayton, serving as a Trustee, professor and later department head in the department of religious studies, and as Provost since 1989. Prior to this, he worked for a number of years as a high school teacher and in youth ministry.

In 1986, he published the book *John XXII (1316-1334) and Papal Teaching Authority.* He has published a large number of articles on Religious education, theology and youth ministry, the most recent in 1990 being: "Mary of Nazareth, Feminism and the Tradition", in the June issue of *Thought.* He has also written many book reviews.

Carleen Reck, a school sister of Notre Dame, has been involved in Catholic education as teacher, administrator, religious community education coordinator and diocesan superintendent. She has worked in both elementary and secondary schools.

She has earned a Master's degree in English from the University of Notre Dame and a PH.D in Education—instruction and curriculum—at Saint Louis University.

For nine years she directed the Department of Elementary education at the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA). Now she is superintendent of Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Jefferson City, Missouri.

She has edited and authored scores of articles and books related to Catholic education, including the recent NCEA publications, *The Small Catholic Elementary School: Advantages and Opportunities and AIDS: a Catholic Educational Approach.*

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