



Professional Reading and Reflection Journal

Head of Establishment Induction Course

2022 - 2023

Newly Appointed Head Teacher/ Head of Establishment Induction Programme

Distinctive nature of the Catholic School and the Catholic School Leader

If you would prefer to access this information in SWAY, please click [here](#)

Welcome to your Induction programme and your post as Head Teacher of a Catholic school. This pack contains resources to complement and enhance your Local Authority Head of Establishment programme. These materials are intended to be used in conjunction with the induction pathway that you are following within your school, with your mentor and in partnership with your Local Authority.

There are three different sections:

- [Pre-Course Materials](#)
- [Intersession Materials](#)
- [Vocational Reflection Materials](#)

Each section will be used at different points across your first year(s) in post.

Catholic schools are communities of faith and learning. While we may work as an individual within the school, we are part of a wider community, contributing to the Mission of the Church. Therefore, we should see our professional and vocational journey both in terms of our own personal progress AND in terms of the development and contribution to a faith community. These materials are intended to be used *with* others and you will be directed to collaborate with different members of your community in order to complete the directed tasks.

These materials aim to assist you in 'viewing' your role through the lens of Catholic-leadership, that is, to help you to see your position as a Catholic head teacher and not as a Catholic who is a head teacher.

SCES, CHAS, CHAPS and your Diocesan RE offices also plan to deliver bespoke CLPL that links the themes of 'Companion on the Journey' with your leadership role. The materials that follow can be used in conjunction with those offered from the Catholic education community.

Head of Establishment Induction Programme

Distinctive nature of the Catholic School and the Catholic School Leader

Section One: Pre-Course Materials

Setting the Context

#CatholicSchoolsGoodFor Scotland

Watch this short video, made to mark the centenary of the 1918 Education Act about Catholic schools in Scotland: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pcM3XC5Vjfo>

- Make a note of the important messages that the video contains about the history of Catholic schools and the legacy that they provide.
- Reflect on your role within that historic legacy.
- Think about what steps you will take, as a Catholic Head Teacher, to maintain that legacy.

(If you have time, you may want to re-watch the documentary film made by SCES in 2018 that the video you watched was advertising (it is 59 minutes long)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zs-OqGmOyxY>)

Notes



Distinctive nature of the Catholic school

Over the years that you have been a Catholic teacher you will have reflected on your personal vocation to teach and your role as a faith witness. As the head teacher of a Catholic school this vocation and witness takes on a new dimension. You are now the 'chief catechist' within the school and you have a unique role as Apostle and Disciple. One of the many new responsibilities that you will undertake is to encourage, nurture and grow the faith life of the Catholic community that you will lead.

Over the course of your time as Head Teacher you will: welcome and accompany new cohorts of pupils (and families); appoint new staff; re-visit and strengthen the Vision, Values and Aims of the school; develop the skills and opportunities for every member of your school community to use their God given talents and succeed.

As a Catholic leader you understand that your role is one of stewardship and shepherding – you are leading the school *on behalf* of the community that you serve.

You recognise that it is a choice for parents to send their children to this school, and they do so because of the faith community of the Catholic school, the excellent education that their child will experience and the outcomes they will achieve.

As you start out on this next stage of your vocational and professional journey, take some time to reflect on the phrase that we regularly use (and perhaps over use without really thinking about the significance) to describe the 'difference' between a Catholic school and the neighbouring non-denomination school. We regularly say that Catholic schools have a 'distinctive nature, built on Gospel values' – but what do we mean by that? What do ***you*** mean by that?

Read the guidance paper, published by SCES, on the next page. With your peer-mentor (a HT from a neighbouring Catholic school) discuss the ways in which you will maintain and develop the distinctive nature of the Catholic school you now lead.

The Distinctive Nature of the Catholic School

Catholic schools are guided in all they do by a coherent vision of life and a corresponding philosophy of education. This faith-based vision sees the world as God's creation and human life as made in God's image and destined for everlasting life with God. Christians believe that Jesus Christ is "the Way, the Truth and the Life" and that we should try to follow his footsteps throughout our life's journey.

Catholic schools aim to help all students to develop their fullest potential, preparing them for life, informing their minds and forming their characters so that they can transform the world. This does not only entail the fullest possible human flourishing but a hope for the world to come. It means looking to a fullness of life with God which will never end and which makes sense of our whole human existence. It also means that eternal life is not "an imaginary hereafter" but "is present wherever God is loved and wherever his life reaches us."¹

Catholic schools, working in partnership with parishes, play an important part in the Church's mission to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ to every generation. They are communities of faith and learning which are open, welcoming and inclusive. The Church expects that Catholic schools, working with parents and families, will seek to prepare pupils to find happiness and to lead lives of goodness, built upon Christian values, personal integrity and moral courage:

Every educator in the school ought to be striving to form strong and responsible individuals who are capable of making free and correct choices, thus preparing young people to open themselves more and more to reality, and to form in themselves a clear idea of the meaning of life.²

This aim is explicit not only in religious education programmes but in all aspects of a school's life. A vision of education inspired by Jesus Christ who came into our world so that we might "have life and have it in all its fullness" (John 10:10) is concerned with the development of the whole person and is the foundation of the Catholic school's learning and the hallmark of its ethos:

The Catholic school . . . with its educational service that is enlivened by the truth of the Gospel . . . faithful to its vocation . . . appears as a place of integral education of the human person through a clear educational project of which Christ is the centre.³

Pope Benedict XVI has made explicit the Church's understanding of the centrality of Christ in the Catholic school:

First and foremost every Catholic educational institution is a place to encounter the living God who in Jesus Christ reveals his transforming love and truth.⁴

¹ *Spe Salvi*, Pope Benedict XVI, N.31

² *Lay Witnesses in Schools: Witnesses to Faith*, Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982, No. 17

³ *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997, N4

⁴ *Address to Catholic Educators*, Pope Benedict XVI, Washington DC, 17th April 2008

The challenge for the school is to provide structured opportunities of encounter with Jesus, opportunities to learn about His life, to understand His teaching, to develop the virtues and values which He promotes and to follow His witness in service to others. Such opportunities, provided across the life of the Catholic school, will promote genuine human growth for Catholic pupils and for those of other Christian denominations or other faiths or stances of living.

Useful references:

1. Catholic schools are guided in all it does by a vision of life and a philosophy of education which is *“attentive to the needs of today’s youth and illuminated by the Gospel message”* (The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School, Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988, n22)
2. Catholic schools are communities of faith and learning, where *“the life of faith need to be the driving force behind every activity in the school, so that the Church’s mission may be served effectively and the young people may discover the joy of entering into Christ is being for others.”* (Pope Benedict XVI, addressing Catholic schools, Twickenham, 17th September 2010)
3. Catholic schools are a community of faith and learning which help young people to come to know Jesus Christ as the Son of God, to become familiar with His teaching and to use their own gifts and talents in order to give personal witness to Him in their daily lives. The context of Catholic schools in Scotland is expressed through the expectations in the Charter for Catholic Schools in Scotland. (Developing In Faith: Scottish Catholic Education Service pg 3)
4. *“Catholic schools offer a distinctive form of education through: • proclaiming Gospel values • nurturing relationships based on respect and dignity • promoting service to others • helping young people to know, to celebrate, to pray and to live the Catholic faith.”* (Shining the Light of Christ: Scottish Catholic Education Service)
5. *“Catholic schools are communities of faith and learning whose educational vision is based upon the teachings and values of the Catholic Church...”*

Catholic schools aim to help students to develop their fullest potential, preparing them for life, informing their minds and forming their characters so that they can contribute with others, and above all with God, to the transformation of the world...

Catholic schools are communities which are open, welcoming and inclusive. The Church expects that Catholic schools, working with parents and families, will seek to prepare pupils to find happiness and to lead lives of goodness, built upon Christian values, personal integrity and moral courage” (THIS IS OUR FAITH: Scottish Catholic Education Service THE NATURE OF THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL (pg 8)

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Section Two: Intersessional Material

TERM ONE

Leader Versus Manager: What is different about being a Catholic School Leader to your previous role?

Watch this video: (Simon Sinek – Leader versus Manager)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nSUJwmPOEyg>

Professional Reflection:

Reflect on your new role and consider what Simon Sinek has said about the difference between your role now, as leader of the school, compared to being depute or teacher.

Have you made the transition from being responsible for the tasks to being responsible for the people who are doing the tasks?

What is your biggest priority? (Pupils, parents, stakeholders, partners OR the staff who look after the pupils, parents, stakeholders and partners?)

Professional Discussion:

With a peer talk through the following:

Discussion 1)

Starting with those who do the job...

Who are the “Juniors” in your school? Do they know that their only responsibility (for now) is to be good at their job? What training do they get/do you give on how to do their job?

From the perspective of a Catholic leader of a Catholic school, what do **you** mean by being ‘good at your job’? How do you share that expectation with staff?

Discussion 2)

When those who are good at the job get promoted...

Who are those in your school who “used to do the job and have been promoted to a position of being responsible for the people who now do the job” (principal teachers, deputies, you?)

Do they know how to do the job better than those who are now doing it? How do you help your middle managers to move from being responsible for the job to being responsible for the people doing the job?

“Like parenting, everyone has capacity, not everyone wants to or should be a parent”. How do you work with and support those who were great at the job, were promoted, but haven’t developed the skills to lead others?

Discussion 3)

Catholic Leadership, developing the ‘muscle’...

“Leadership is a skill – you work on it – a muscle – you can become a strong leader” How have you ‘trained’ to be a strong Catholic Leader? What ‘exercises’ do you continue to work on to develop that strength? What help do you need? Who will you ‘work out’ with?

Reflective Journal:

Write your thoughts on the following. What does Simon Sinek mean when he states “*Great leaders are not responsible for the job and not responsible for the results*”?

Personal Prayer:

Prayerfully read the following Gospel passage:

The Gospel of John, Chapter 10 : 11-18

¹¹ I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹² The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. ¹³ The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. ¹⁴ I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, ¹⁵ just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶ I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. ¹⁷ For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. ¹⁸ No one takes^[a] it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father.’

Think about what Simon Sinek said about personal sacrifice in light of the above passage. Note your thoughts in your journal.

While remaining in a time of prayer, contemplate the following and consider what impact it will have on your leadership development:

“Leadership comes at great personal sacrifice”

You are NOT in charge

You have to give away the credit when it all goes well

You have to take all responsibility when it goes wrong

When something goes wrong, say “try again”

All the pressure is on you not them.

As a newly appointed leader of a Catholic school, how will you lay down your life for your sheep?

Additional Resources:

You may wish to follow up by watching this video too:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FnH_RAMXxPQ

Notes



TERM TWO

Read the following article:

Leadership in Catholic Schools

Throughout the Gospels there are lessons to be learned either from what Jesus had to say and more often in the actions He took, and why and how He did what He did - examples are there for us all on the nature of the leadership that we can expect in our Catholic educational faith communities.

At the Last Supper, after Jesus had powerfully demonstrated the concept of 'Servant Leadership' by washing of the feet of His disciples, He responded to arguments about status by patiently explaining His view of leadership.

"But, he said to them, among pagans it is the Kings who lord it over them, and those who have authority over them are given the title 'benefactor'. This must not happen with you. No; the greatest among you must behave as if he were the youngest, the leader as if he were the one who serves. For who is the greater; the one at the table or one who serves? The one at table surely? Yet here am I among you as one who serves!" Luke 22: 25-27

The enormous variety of demands made on leaders in all schools, is further complicated by the expectation that our leaders will be able to expertly accomplish these tasks whilst also fulfilling the role of 'faith leader' to their local Catholic community. In a Catholic primary school in particular this will inevitably include the expectations of the local parish community where the headteacher may well be directly involved with such activities as the Sacramental Programme. These complications are by no means restricted to our own country as Merylann Schuttoffel, writing about the difficulties of recruiting and retaining leaders for Catholic schools in the USA says: "the burden of administration; constant changes and developments in government policy; demands of accountability... And the added difficulty in Catholic schools of recognising the faith dimension of education"

All headteachers, whether in community schools or Catholic schools would recognise the need to have a strong sense of purpose, which in a Catholic school is expressed in terms of 'mission'. In the increasingly bureaucratic world of school headship the challenge is to find a strong leader who can maintain a sense of mission against all the obstacles.

There are definitions of leadership which are about preferred styles, behaviours, strengths and needs, but to be a Servant Leader necessitates looking outwards, to the individuals or the whole school community and putting their needs before one's own. We are not, in this case, thinking of the word 'servant' as a noun, but rather as an adjective, used to describe the function of leadership. It is about serving and not about being servile – how things are done, rather than what is being done, which differentiates servant leadership from other definitions.

Any good leader will ensure that effective management is in place which enables the work of the educational community to be accomplished successfully, and will seek out and promote excellence for all who learn and work there, but the challenge continuing to face leaders in Catholic schools today is to be what John Sullivan calls 'Living Logos', who "transmit meaning

and values in all the seemingly mundane things they do.” As Saint Francis of Assisi instructed his followers “preach the Gospel. Use words if you have to”, or, in modern leadership parlance ‘walk the walk as well as talk the talk.’

But to continue to be effective our leaders also need to develop the capacity to reflect regularly, so that they ensure a strong, clearly articulated vision and the means to make that vision a reality, one which continues to be relevant to the community in which they work, reflects the real world, and acknowledges their own role and that of the school in the on-going mission of the church.

Albert Einstein said that ‘The intuitive mind is a sacred gift and rational mind is a faithful servant. The paradox of modern life is that we have created a society that honours the servant and has forgotten the gift.’ A ‘Servant Leader’ will depend on both, but rooted in the teachings and example of Jesus will consistently bear in mind and base their actions upon the ‘sacred gift’ which results from reflection, prayer and the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

Geraldine Bradbury, former Diocesan Schools' Commissioner, Salford Diocese

<http://www.catholiceducation.org.uk/schools/item/1002838-leadership-in-catholic-schools>

Now watch this short video on Servant Leadership:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aKk0AaaFqtU>

Vocational Reflection:

What are the differences between the secular and Christian definitions of Servant Leadership?

Where does your leadership approach lie – in the Biblical or Secular?

Take a look at Gordon Greenleaf’s legacy website: <https://www.greenleaf.org/what-is-servant-leadership/>. Having read the home page, do you think that the video captured the entirety of his concept, or have the video makers altered his approach to suit the business world?

What can you take from this article, the video and Greenleaf’s work into your role?

TERM THREE

Use the article below from Archbishop Eamon Martin as the starting point for a conversation with your mentor.

Professional and Vocational Discussion:

- Discuss how your leadership includes the points on:
Calling and Charism, Communicating the Catholic Vision and Values, Fostering Faith Formation and Mission
- Think ahead to the next school session, when you will no longer be a 'newly appointed head'. What have you learned in this year that has helped you to see your role from a "Catholic Perspective"?
- With your mentor, identify the key messages from the article and discuss how you can incorporate some of these messages into your whole school community life.

'Leadership – a Catholic Perspective' Opening address by Archbishop Eamon Martin to Annual Round Table Discussion at Marino Institute of Education

It is dangerous when you are preparing a talk to 'Google' your theme. You get 492 million results for the word 'leadership', 106 million for 'Catholic leadership'! An Amazon book search brings up almost 20,000 books on leadership. I decided it was best to offer you instead some personal reflections, largely based on my experience of working in a variety of leadership roles in schools: as a teacher, school principal, a member of several Boards of Governors, as a Trustee, and of course as a priest, and more recently as a Bishop. Thank you for inviting me.

I am conscious that I'm standing in a roomful of leaders, so, in our round table discussion I look forward to learning from you. I'd like to share with you three ideas of leadership from a Catholic perspective: Calling and Charism, Communicating Catholic Vision and Values, and Fostering Faith Formation and Mission.

CALLING AND CHARISM

From a Catholic perspective I have always considered leadership to be a calling and a charism. In the secular world, people speak of ambition to become a leader – if necessary, it's 'dog eat dog' on the way to the top. Seeing leadership as a 'calling', or a vocation from God, is something very different. It has its roots in our baptismal calling. I also see leadership as a charism – a gift given to some people by the Holy Spirit for the good of others and for the building up of the Body of Christ. When God grants us the gift of leadership, and calls us to use it, it is not for our own benefits or simply to satisfy some personal ambition. It is given to us to make a difference, and, in the case

of educational leadership, it is given for the well-being of our children and young people – can be a more precious and wonderful vocation or charism than that?

It is not surprising that many people react against a call to leadership. Almost in scriptural terms they say: ‘Not I Lord’. ‘You couldn’t possibly mean me’. At every juncture in my own vocational journey, I have found myself instinctively recoiling from additional leadership responsibilities – and no small part of this has been my sense of personal unworthiness, a knowledge of my own weakness. Nowadays leadership puts us in the spotlight of public attention. There is a false perception out there that leaders must be perfect people – squeaky clean – women and men who know it all, who have it all worked out.

I was inspired by Pope Francis in his first interview when he said, in words reminiscent of St Patrick: ‘I am Jorge Bergoglio, a sinner’. The motto he chose was taken from the call of St Matthew; ‘miserando atque eligendo’ – in showing mercy, God chose me. The consolation of these words draws upon a well-known maxim within Catholic spirituality that when God calls us, for example to a position of leadership for the good of His People, he does not leave us alone. He helps us out. As the medieval saying puts it: ‘to those who do what is in them to do, God does not deny his grace’.

In imitation of Christ, the Teacher, the Catholic leader is ‘one who serves’ and ‘one who shares’ leadership. The Catholic leader will always be on the look-out for others who have a calling to leadership – she or he will learn to recognise the gifts of leadership in others, and will call these gifts forth. Hence, leadership in Catholic schools and organisations cannot be concentrated in one person ‘at the top’. Instead, it will be collaborative, collegial, and will permeate all aspects of the life and activity of the school or parish or wherever it is being exercised.

That is why we ought to be on the look-out for leadership everywhere: for young leaders among our pupils; for beginning teachers or support staff who are demonstrating leadership potential in their ideas and activities; for the enthusiastic parent who leads by example; for the member of middle or senior management, or the Board member who is clearly bringing something special to the table.

From the Catholic perspective, leadership is never autocratic or selfish; it respects and calls forth the gifts and skills of everyone; it acknowledges initiative and creates a culture where a variety of gifts is nourished, developed and celebrated. At times this might mean taking a risk with new leaders, allowing someone to lead even when you are uncertain it will work out. We all know our Leadership ability grows through mistakes, gentle constructive criticism and reflective conversations where we are not ‘put down’ or ridiculed for failure, but encouraged to try again doing things slightly differently.

COMMUNICATE THE CATHOLIC VISION AND VALUES

The second idea I’d like to stress about leadership from a Catholic perspective, is the importance of the leader communicating Catholic Vision and Values. The desire to articulate what is distinctively ‘Catholic’ about the organisation, be it school or parish, to a wide variety of internal and external audiences, is central to the role and responsibility of the leader.

This can be challenging, especially if the leader is unclear about what the Catholic ethos is, or sees it as merely an ‘add-on’ to the role. In recent years we have gotten better at describing and envisioning what is distinctive about Catholic education and schooling. The work of diocesan education teams and Trusts like ERST, CEIST and others at macro level, and more openness to discussing ethos at school level, have helped considerably in this regard. I should mention the tremendous catalyst that Catholic Schools Week has been in encouraging young people, teachers, Boards and parishes to describe and celebrate in simple, yet powerful ways, what it means to be a Catholic school.

The school leader needs to be at the heart of these efforts. In a Catholic school, leaders like the principal, the Board of Management and Trustees have a particular responsibility to promote what it means to be a Catholic school – and to provide resources so that there will be opportunities every year (for example at an in-service day) for the whole school community to better understand and evaluate progress against the ethos ‘indicators’ that are now described in the charter and policy documents of most patron bodies and trustees. Unlike many other sectors, the family of Catholic schools shares a vision for Catholic education. There are, of course, particular embodiments of this vision rooted, for example, in the foundational charisms of various religious congregations. These add richness and diversity to our understanding of the ‘Catholic school’.

Recently, during his visit to the Philippines, Pope Francis, perhaps unintentionally, gave us a model of the Catholic vision for education. He told young people that the most important subject they must learn in life is to love. To love like Jesus, he said, we need three languages: the language of the mind, the language of the heart and the language of the hands. These three languages, he said, must be spoken together in harmony, so that what we think harmonises with what we feel and what we do.

Applying Pope Francis’ words to our Catholic schools challenges us to see our schools as communities where our young people can learn to love and to serve God with the languages of the mind, the heart and the hands. We ought not to concentrate all our energies on any one of these three languages: as if the language of the mind was superior to that of the hands; or, as if our knowledge and actions mean anything without love – the language of the heart. A good Catholic school leader ensures that young people are given opportunities to integrate their thoughts, feelings and actions so that they leave school as fully rounded and developed individuals, not only with good grades, but also with Christian attitudes and values. In a good Catholic school our children and young people learn to think like Jesus, to feel and love like Jesus, and to do and act like Jesus – with all three in harmony.

The wonderful privilege of the leader in the Catholic school is to put flesh on the macro-level vision statements about Catholic education, whether they be from the Congregation of Catholic Education in Rome or from the ERST Trustees in Dublin or Belfast. As leaders in Catholic schools we have that sense of belonging to a much wider family and one of our main tasks is to promote a sense of being the Body of Christ at school level. None of us are leaders to promote our own vision. Building links with our

neighbouring schools within the Catholic family is an important aspect of the leader's role. Together, we are active participants, keepers and shapers of a vision that is much greater than any of us. Our task is to 'incarnate' what it means to be a Catholic school today, with all the joys and hopes, achievements and struggles of this time and place. This is what makes leading from a Catholic perspective at once so fulfilling and challenging.

Today's leaders in Catholic education have no easy task. To articulate Catholic vision and Gospel values in an increasingly secular world and sometimes in an aggressively secular environment which sees no place for faith schools, can make us defensive or even guilty about our 'Catholicity'. Our schools exist within a culture of individualism and moral relativism where 'truth' is often presented as personal opinion. We can no longer take the Catholic vision and ethos of our schools for granted. As leaders, it is good to ask ourselves key questions: what is unique and distinctive about Catholic education? Is Jesus Christ the centre of everything that we are doing? Are our pupils leaving us, not only with the best possible grades and achievements, but also having had a living encounter with Jesus? To what extent do they leave us with a mature understanding of the fullness of faith which will sustain them in the ups and downs of their lives?

Leaders at all levels in Catholic education should not be afraid of these questions. On the contrary, these are the questions which add spiritual value and fulfilment to our day. To have a sense of direction for education that is more than simply about equipping young people with grades and skills to be contributors to the economy – this puts heart and soul into the teacher's and principal's occupation – or should I say, vocation.

In my travels around schools I notice that deep sense of calling in our school leaders. It presents as optimism, joy and positivity about young people and the dignity of every person; it shines out in their wanting to promote a culture of forgiveness, reconciliation, tolerance and respect for all; it is there in the pursuit of excellence and high expectations for all young people, but not in an overly competitive way, boasting success over neighbouring schools against a very narrow range of 'success indicators'. Rather, the Catholic vision looks way beyond exam outcomes to the ultimate purpose of life – our personal fulfilment and salvation in Jesus Christ. Our leaders will therefore invest in relationships and people. They show commitment to improvement at every level and for everyone in the school community. Pupils and staff are encouraged to become the best they can be: intellectually, socially, morally, emotionally, physically and spiritually. –

FAITH FORMATION AND MISSION

That brings me to my third point about leadership, from a Catholic perspective: the role of leaders in faith formation and mission.

It is important for us not to lose sight of the responsibility that our schools have, along with our parishes and homes, for helping young people to grow in faith. Parents are, of course, the first educators of their children in the ways of faith. The parish community

will also be supportive of its young members as they continue their faith journey from infancy to childhood to adulthood. The contribution of the Catholic school to this is essential and life-giving. There are some who question the role of Catholic schools in faith formation and mission – some prefer to place responsibility for sacramental preparation, catechesis and faith development wholly within the remit of the home and parish.

The vision for evangelisation and catechesis articulated in the National Catechetical Directory, *Share the Good News*, sees a continued role for all three partners – home, school, and parish – in evangelisation and the handing on of faith. But the corresponding roles and responsibilities of each need to be revisited – we cannot rely on a model of forty years ago. Why is it that, despite the wonderful examples of awareness, outreach and prayer in many of our Catholic schools, the presence of young people in our Churches at weekends is ‘few and far between’?

In many of our primary schools, teachers find themselves quite literally ‘in loco parentis’, being the first to introduce children to God, to teach them to pray and what it means to be loved by God. First Holy Communion and Confirmation teachers are often disappointed that, having put so much effort into explaining the meaning and beauty of the sacraments to their pupils, parents are simply not bringing their children to Mass on a regular basis.

These issues are important for all of us in respective leadership roles within our schools and Church. How much do our teachers and school leaders see it as part of their calling to help educate our young people in the faith? What is the optimum relationship between school, home and parish in the Ireland of 2015 to enable all our young people to hear the Good News, begin and build a mature and prayerful relationship with Jesus nourished by the sacraments, grasp and profess the central truths of the Catholic faith, live good and moral lives, make decisions which promote love, peace, justice and dignity for all? It is time re-imagine and re-configure the traditional ‘triad’ of home, school, and parish, and to put in place the best infrastructure for the proclamation of the Gospel with a coherent programme of catechesis and faith formation for young people.

Young people are often left without moral reference points and are easily swayed by ethical relativism, or by a comfortable ‘spirituality without challenge’. In some cases they are tempted towards a kind of ‘nihilism’, viewing life as basically meaningless. Why is it that so many of our young people are struggling with addictions, depression or anxiety at such an early age? My most difficult and traumatic experience as a school principal was to get news that a pupil or past pupil had taken his own life and to witness the devastating impact it had on their families, close friends and my school colleagues. Our challenge, as leaders, is, as the first letter of Peter puts it, to give our pupils a reason for the hope that is within us (1 Pet3: 15).

There are ways of doing this. An essential task of leaders is to ensure that prayer and worship forms part of the day for every teacher and pupil, that there are opportunities for Confession and for the celebration and adoration of the Eucharist, and that the Catholic prayers and the Rosary are taught to all pupils. In cooperation with diocesan

religious education advisers, leaders should also ensure that there is a strong catechetical component to Religious Education so that all pupils can learn the truths of the faith, are offered relationships and sexuality education within a Catholic morals and values framework, are instructed in all aspects of the moral life and grasp the essentials of Catholic social teaching. This responsibility does not rest solely within Religious Education. Other subjects can help pupils engage in dialogue about the interaction of faith and culture, promote a culture of life, love and respect for creation and develop a sense of wonder through the beauty of religious art and music.

There is no doubt that our schools are becoming increasingly more diverse with pupils and teachers from a wide variety of cultural, religious or non-religious backgrounds. Speaking last year, Pope Francis pointed out that our Catholic schools and universities are spaces of 'dialogue and encounter, not unlike that in which Jesus began to proclaim the Good News – a 'Galilee of the nations', a crossroads' of people, diverse in terms of race, culture and religion'.

It is also true that many teachers are struggling with their own faith and practice and may feel inadequate when it comes to faith formation or dialogue. An important leadership task, therefore, is to encourage and provide opportunities for teachers to pray, to speak about faith, and learn their own mature language for discussion about faith matters. A help in this is the variety of faith development and adult catechism opportunities are now available at parish, diocesan and national level throughout Ireland. These initiatives are helping many Irish Catholics, young and older, to find their 'Catholic voice'

It is clear from what I am saying that I see schools playing a critical role in the new evangelisation within Ireland. I would go so far as to encourage a re-writing of our approach to Catholic education within a missionary frame of reference. In *Evangelii Gaudium* Pope Francis suggests we should put everything we are doing in the Church in a 'missionary key' and evaluate all of our structures, schedules in pastoral ministry in the light of mission.

An essential part of this mission is to be on the look-out for those who are being left behind or neglected in any way. The holy founders of our schools were inspired by a preferential option for the poor and we can be rightly proud of our efforts to serve the most disadvantaged students in our Catholic schools. It is important that leaders in our Catholic schools continue to evaluate school assessment and admissions policies, exclusion policies, special needs and bullying policies to ensure that those who are most marginalised are not being neglected or unfairly disadvantaged and that they are enabled to reach their full potential.

A good Catholic school will also challenge us to confront 'worldliness', that 'throwaway culture' which reduces everyone and everything nowadays to consumers or units of consumption. Catholic school leaders will encourage their pupils and staff to 'tune in' to the cry of the poor in the world. I applaud those Catholic schools which organise outreach programmes for their pupils, establish youth branches of St Vincent de Paul Society, organise trips to Lourdes for pupils as helpers of the sick, plan educational visits to orphanages in Romania, or to mission countries like Kenya or Uganda. These

experiences can have a profound, lifelong impact on our young people and on the teachers who accompany them, helping them to grasp key concepts of Catholic social teaching such as solidarity, fair distribution of the world's goods, and the impact of poverty on the dignity of the human person.

Having examined three key issues for leadership from a Catholic perspective: **Calling and Charism; Communicating the Catholic Vision and Values; Fostering Faith Formation and Mission**, I would like, in conclusion, to thank you for accepting the call to leadership and encourage you to persevere.

Being a leader in Catholic education today is a privilege but also a tough challenge. To remain enthusiastic, fresh and positive as a leader, you need regular opportunities to rest and reflect, and to nourish the spirit. When I look back on my own journey in leadership, I know I have been sustained by trusted mentors and by close and caring friends who are there to listen when I feel stressed or frustrated. From a Catholic perspective, I also know it is essential to feed the soul, to replenish the spirit through prayer and regular confession. Unless you are a saint, you will make many mistakes in leadership, and possibly hurt people at times through over-tiredness, irritability or lack of understanding. I have found the Word of God and a close relationship in prayer with Mary, our Blessed Mother to be indispensable in my leadership. Bringing the joys and struggles of the day to her in prayer helps me to renew my 'Yes' to God's will and to my call to leadership.

I recommend that all leaders in Catholic education should be alert to their own faith journey. In addition to some form of professional supervision, I believe that a spiritual director or regular confessor will be of immense help. Not only is it important for a leader to be merciful, compassionate and forgiving towards others, but it is equally important to receive forgiveness and mercy yourself.

And every morning, before leaving for work, it is worthwhile offering all up to God – the prayers, works and sufferings of every day. After all, we are mere servants, God's instruments, doing God's work, building God's kingdom.

<https://www.catholicbishops.ie/2015/03/03/leadership-a-catholic-perspective-archbishop-eamon-martin-annual-round-table-discussion-marino-institute-of-education/>

Head of Establishment Induction Programme

Distinctive nature of the Catholic School and the Catholic School Leader

Section Three: Vocation Reflection

Choose one of the themes from 'Developing In Faith' (below) and discuss with your school chaplain, or Diocesan RE adviser how you witness to this theme through your role as a Catholic leader.

THEME: Honouring Jesus Christ as the Way, the Truth and the Life

"The Catholic school is committed to the development of the whole person since, in Christ, all human values find their fulfilment and unity."

(The Catholic School, Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977, n2)

A Catholic school is centred on the person of Jesus who, as Son of God, is the model of "excellence" (perfection) for our lives. Each person is valued as having been created in God's image and likeness and is uniquely endowed with talents and potential for life. The Catholic school provides a range of activities, experiences and programmes which will develop their pupils' capacities for life. Teaching and learning resources promote a faithful understanding of the Gospel and of Church teaching.

THEME: Developing as a community of faith and learning

"What makes the Catholic school distinctive is its attempt to generate a community climate that is permeated by the Gospel spirit of freedom and love."

(Declaration on Christian Education (Gravissimum Educationis), Congregation for Catholic Education 1965, n8)

A Catholic school is a community where Jesus Christ is its foundation and faith in Him is the "driving force" behind the school's planning and actions. It is an inclusive community which welcomes, values, affirms and supports all students, parents and staff to fulfil the potential of their God-given talents.

THEME: Promoting Gospel values

"It is precisely in the Gospel of Christ, taking root in the minds and lives of the faithful, that the Catholic school finds its definition as it comes to terms with the cultural conditions of the times." (*The Catholic School*, Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977, n9)

A Catholic school, in proclaiming the joy of the Gospel, helps its students to understand and experience the values proclaimed in the Gospel - love, sacrifice, faithfulness, humility, justice, compassion, tolerance - expressed in the *Beatitudes*. It proclaims these values through its teaching programmes and learning experiences. It teaches how many of these values are shared among the great religious traditions of the world.

THEME: Celebrating and worshipping

"It is important that lay Catholics who work in a Catholic school participate simply and actively in the liturgical and sacramental life of the school. Students will share in this life more readily when they have concrete examples; when they see the importance that this life has for believers."

(*Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith*, Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982, n40)

The Catholic school is a believing community which celebrates faith in Jesus through prayer and liturgy, inviting all to participate appropriately and to develop their spiritual capacities. The local parish and diocese will enhance the school's own efforts with pastoral support and sacramental ministry provided by local clergy.

THEME: Serving the common good

"Knowledge is not to be considered as a means of material prosperity and success, but as a call to serve and to be responsible for others"

(*The Catholic School*, Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977, n56)

The Catholic school teaches young people to overcome individualism and to discover their vocation to live responsibly with and for others. It takes opportunities provided across various areas of learning to offer insights into the relevance of Catholic Social Teaching in the world.

Notes



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Scottish Catholic Education Service, 75 Craigpark, Dennistoun, G31 2HD

www.sces.uk.com E: mail@sces.uk.com T: 0141 556 4727

