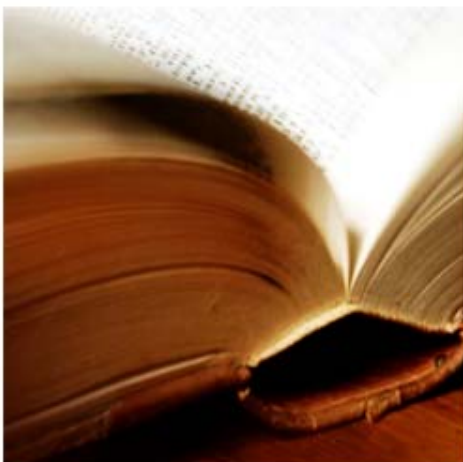


Roman documents on the Catholic school.

McLaughlin, D. (2001). .
Reading 4.2



Purpose of Document



- Explore the defining features of Catholic schools as they have been articulated from recent Roman documents.
- Issues that occur- inconsistencies different emphases, even contradictions
- Magisterium does change positions – what is theologically avant garde is often tomorrow's orthodoxy.
- Practical application is to use them as guidelines rather than policy
- Bishop – has prerogative on policy
- Great diversity of practice in dioceses

Document 1: *Divini Illius Magistri*, (On the education of youth), Pope Pius XI et al(1929)



- First Papal encyclical to focus on Catholic Education and influenced heavily Vatican II's *Declaration of Christian Education* (1965)
- Essential goal of Catholic Education is to provide an environment conducive to “salvation of souls”
- Essentially, the goal of a Christian Education is to produce a perfect Christian as preparation for eternal life.
- *Divini* sees “secular” education as a utilitarian means “necessary or useful” to Christian Education and to her (the church’s whole work for the salvation of souls” (par 66).
- *Divini* is a dualistic philosophy where the human dimension is honoured but is held in sharp contrast with the supernatural dimension which is a priority and the catalyst for human development.

Document 2: *Declaration of Christian Education* (1965) Second Vatican Council.



- Reflects the spirit of Vatican II in enunciating a new more optimistic direction of openness and dialogue with a world that is essentially good - (as opposed to dualistic approach)
- Honours personal freedom. Reflects the beginnings of a more holistic understanding of the common person.
- Places emphasis on the community role of the Catholic school
- In contrast with “next world” emphasis in *Divini*, *Declaration* advocates the utilisation of modern educational strategies for students to “develop harmoniously their physical, moral & intellectual qualities” (par 1).
- *Declaration* suggests aim of Catholic school is promotion of human potential. This implies particular concern for the poor & marginalised and has implications for the evangelising role of the Catholic School
- The foremost challenge facing Catholic schools is to relate faith with modern culture.

Document 3 “*The Catholic School*”

Congregation for Catholic Education 1977



- Challenge for the Catholic school relating faith with modern culture
- Catholic aims to assist pupils to be assimilated into current culture
- Fundamental benchmark are “the gospels”
- School should review formation in light of its vision (based on its inspiration and foundations)
- Catholic School should scrutinise traditions and practices, informed by current scholarship that informs new formulation of Church tradition
- Catholic school is committed to the development of the whole man
- Described as triumphalistic in tone (pp.115-118)

Document 4 “Lay Catholics in schools: Witnesses to Faith” 1982



- Focuses on role of Lay teachers in Catholic schools
- embracing and optimistic
- Ecclesiocentric and institutionally slanted
- Lay teachers must be convinced that they share in the sanctifying and educational mission of the Church
- Teachers model to students – contemporary Australia laity far more credible and appropriate role model than religious and priests
- Social awareness and civic and political responsibility
- Catholic education great opportunities for the salvific mission of the Church
- Catholic educator must inspire his or her activity with the Christian concept of the person, in communion with the Magisterium of the Church. (pp.118-121)

Document 5 “The Religious dimension of education in a Catholic school” 1988



- Contemporary analysis which acknowledges that youth are becoming religiously indifferent or alienated (par.16)
- Addresses the distinctive nature of the catholic school
- Highlights tension between Catholic school as civic institution and Christian community, between ‘maintenance’ and ‘mission’, tending towards providing ‘favourable conditions’
- Stresses the importance of the quality of school climate, while sensitive to the need to challenge the status quo
- Lists ‘elements of a social ethic’ which stress the human person, justice and freedom.
- Criticises the excesses of individualism
- Dualism is alive and well

Document 6 “The Catholic school on the threshold of the third millennium ” 1998



- Major theme: The promotion of authentic humanity within an inclusive school community
- School as community in an understanding of the nature of humans who are themselves, images of the nature of God - extends to the families of pupils.
- Particular challenge to be a school for all, with special attention for those who are the weakest.
- Currently, for many Catholics, the face of Christ in the school is the only face of Christ they will encounter.
- In the third millennium, the Catholic school may have as its dominant purpose, the provision of an authentic educational environment, where
 - the value of the human person is affirmed;
 - knowledge is integrated for the sake of ultimate;
 - the relationship of the human person with God is modelled, as well as taught.

Reading 4.2

Reference

- McLaughlin, D. (2001). Roman documents on the Catholic school. In *The changing Catholic school: exploring and challenging new roles. A literature review for the Queensland Bishop's Catholic schools research project 1998-2000.* (pp. 112-129). Brisbane: Queensland Catholic Education Commission.

