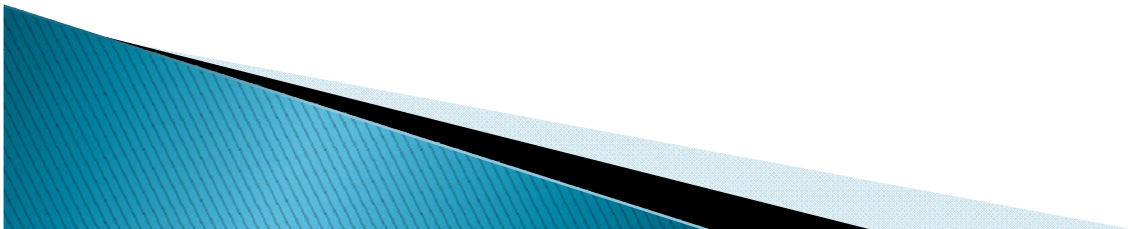


Reading 4.4

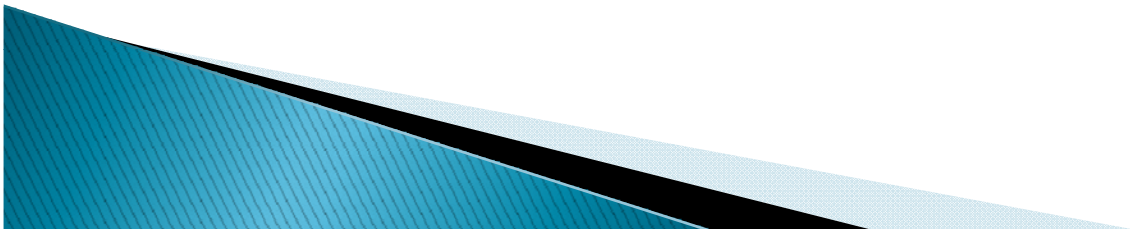
Putney, M. (2004). *The Catholic school of the future. A private discussion paper.*

Summarised by
Rahel Delosa,
Alannah Runnalls,
Fr. Carlton De Silva



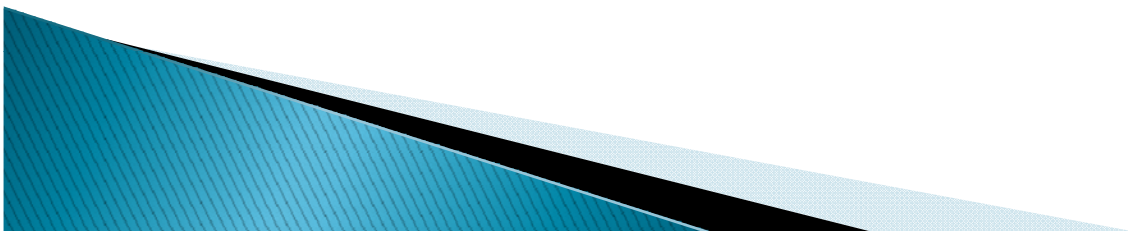
Aim of paper

- ▶ Written in the hope of generating a conversation that would work towards identifying strategies to achieve a ‘genuine Catholic Identity for our schools in the future’ (p.1).

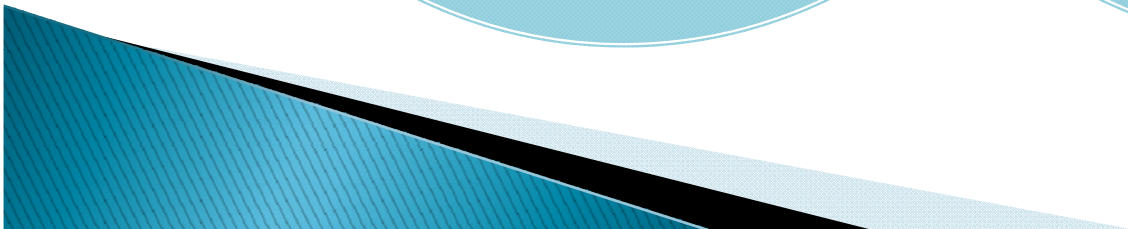
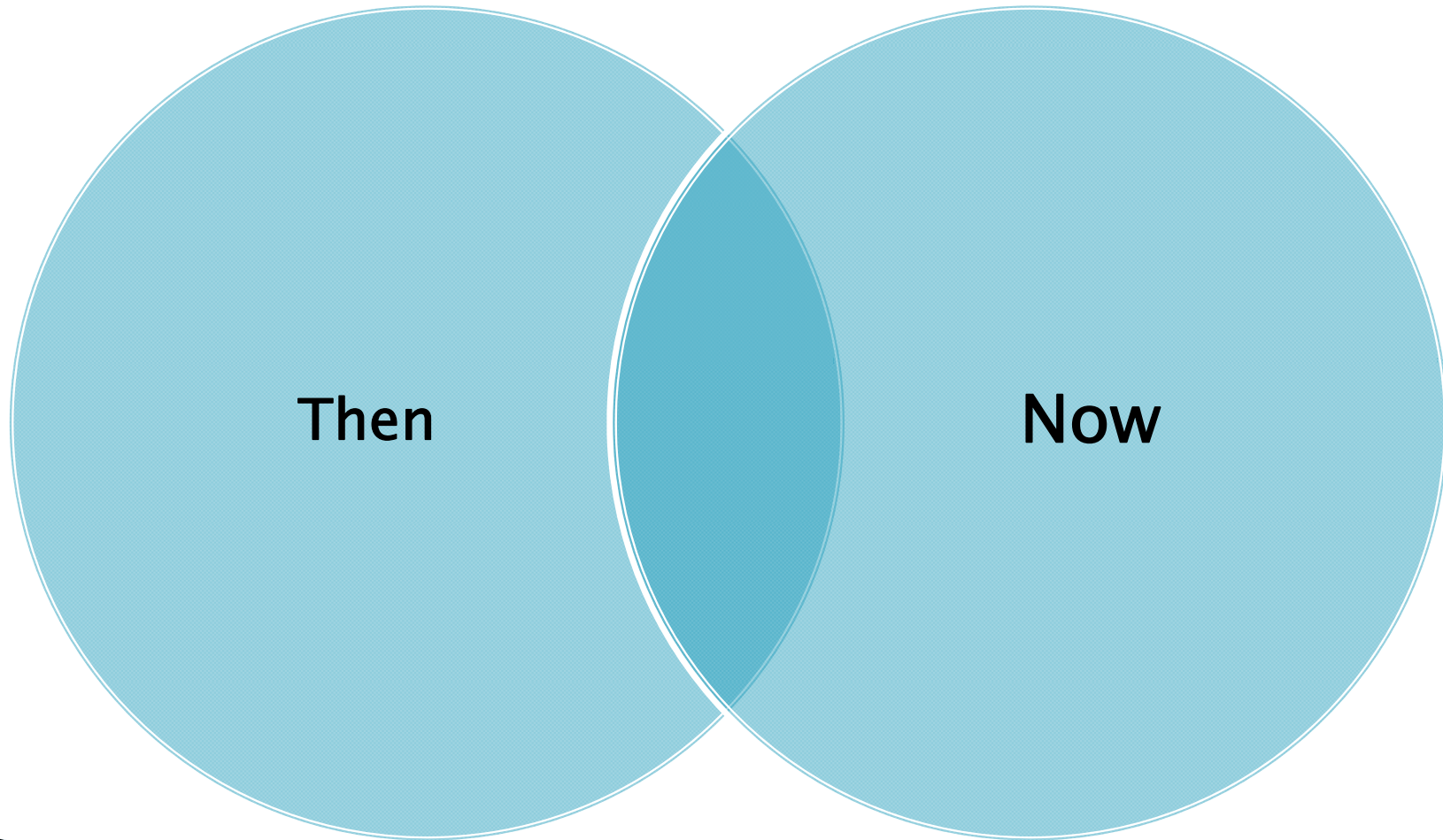


What Bishop Putney explored

- ▶ Bishop Putney identified various characteristics of Catholic Schools of the past, comparing these with the context of today's Catholic schools.
- ▶ Dimensions of Catholic schools which are new to modern society were also outlined.



As it once was & how it has changed

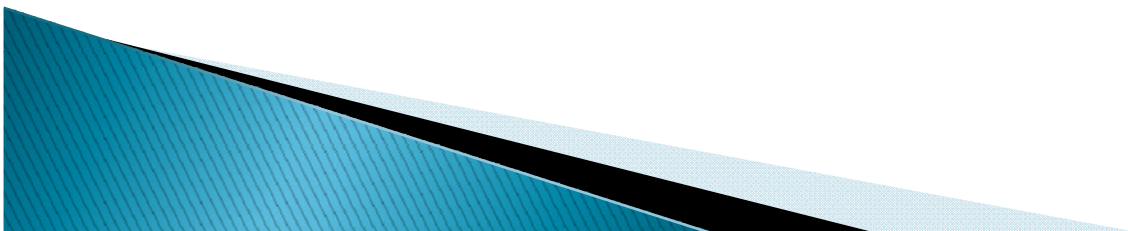


How Catholic Schools have changed...

The major changes in Catholic Schools were noted as –

- ▶ Students and their families may not be all Catholic
- ▶ Teachers in the school may not be Catholic
- ▶ Catholic students and teachers in school may not often participate in Sunday Eucharist
- ▶ The language of ‘open to all those who appreciate and share its qualified educational project’ from Congregation of Catholic Education has raised questions about mission and enrolment policies
- ▶ Funding is mixture of Federal, State and school contributions.

(p. 2).

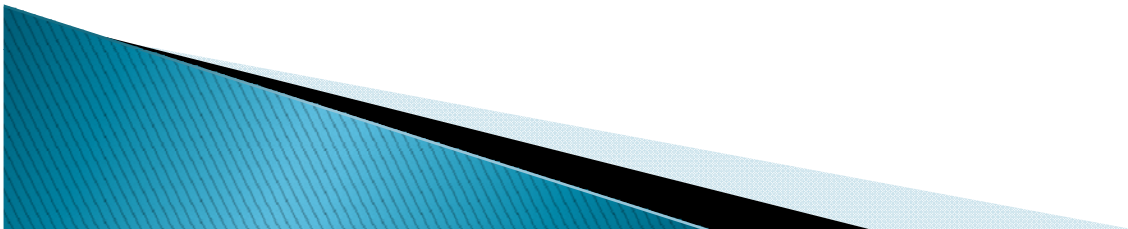


Some things remain the same

Despite the many changes, much effort is made to retain the following characteristics:

- ▶ The school would be established by Catholic Church authorities
- ▶ Curriculum will definitely contain Catholic Religious Education
- ▶ Espoused values, public profile, arts and symbols of school would be Catholic
- ▶ Catholic Eucharist would be celebrated in the school community
- ▶ Priests would still be present at times

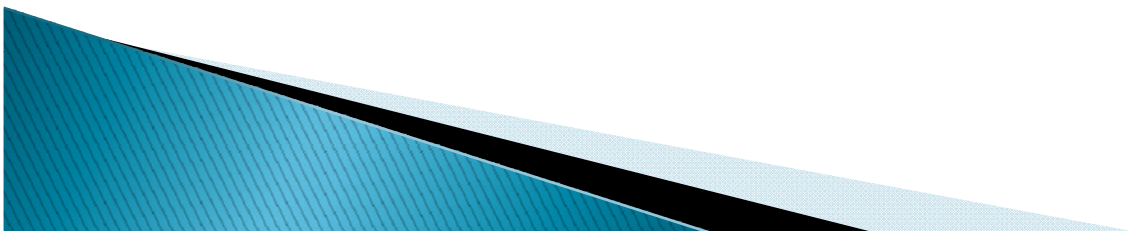
(p. 2).



However, even those dimensions have altered...

- ▶ Adjusted stream of Catholic Religious Education to deal with diversity of student Religious background
- ▶ Catholic Eucharist celebrated less frequently
- ▶ Priests less visible in schools
- ▶ Values may not be adhered to by staff or families and are sometimes in conflict with modern culture
- ▶ Understanding of term 'Catholic'
- ▶ Less specific art and symbols
- ▶ Prayers in less traditional or new forms

(p.3)

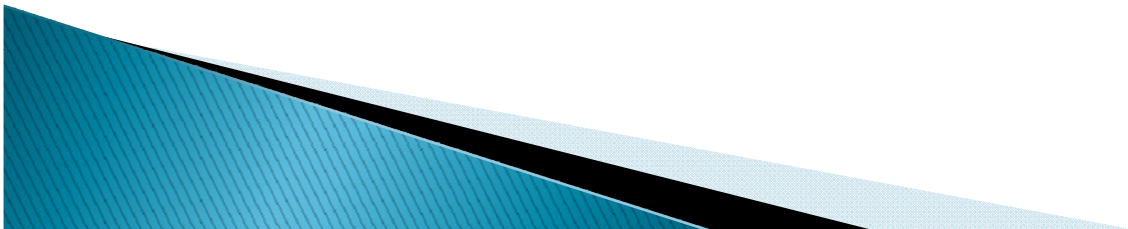


And, there are some 'added extras'

New characteristics that affect the Catholicity of the school:

- ▶ Lay leadership of schools
- ▶ Ecumenical community
- ▶ Catholic school is 'The Church' for many students
- ▶ Questioning about 'how' best to teach the Catholic tradition
- ▶ motivators for parents to enrol students into Catholic education are often not for religious purposes
- ▶ Pressure on school to espouse secular values
- ▶ Competition with government schools in 'educational marketplace' (p. 4)
- ▶ Fees often discourage poorer Catholic students from enrolling, despite offers of financial assistance
- ▶ Many Catholic students attend non-Catholic private schools

It was also noted that there are many other characteristics that haven't been mentioned in this paper (p.5).



Are the schools still Catholic in the same sense?

The narrow answer to this is 'Yes', because the ownership of the Schools continue to be Catholic.

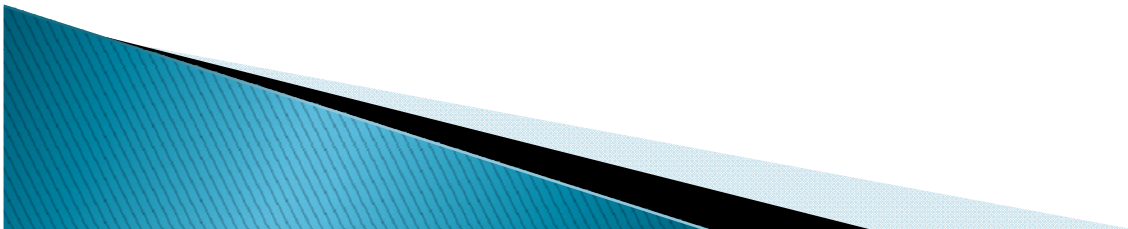
Having Catholic characteristics, such as it's title, public profile, Religious Education curriculum, symbols and prayers do not automatically make a school 'Catholic' in it's essence. Even 'fairly un-catholic schools' could have these characteristics (p.5).

Schools that 'go further' in being identified as Catholic would:

- have Catholic based values/ethos
- have presence of Priests/bishop in school at times
- celebrate the Eucharist

Each of these 'indicates that the school belongs to something larger which is certainly Catholic' (p.6) - the Catholic Church.

The meaning of the word 'Catholic' was then discussed.



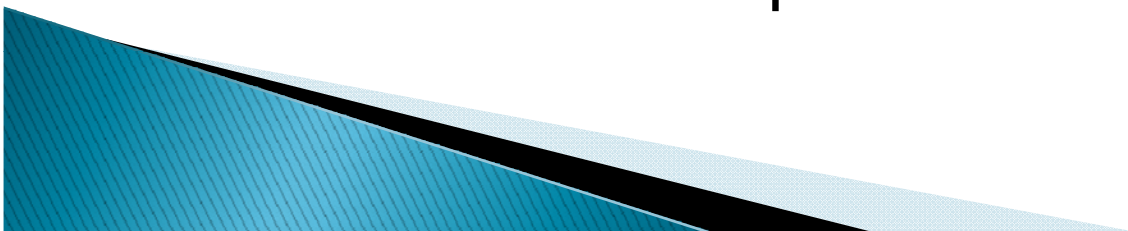
The Catholic School of the Future

Thomas Groome's use of the word 'Catholic'... Education for Life. A Spiritual Vision for Every Teacher and Parent

- "There is such a thing as Catholic education, Catholic educators and a Catholic school that depends upon a particular spiritual vision and approach to education, a certain fundamental cluster of beliefs etc which produce a particular kind of education, educators and school".

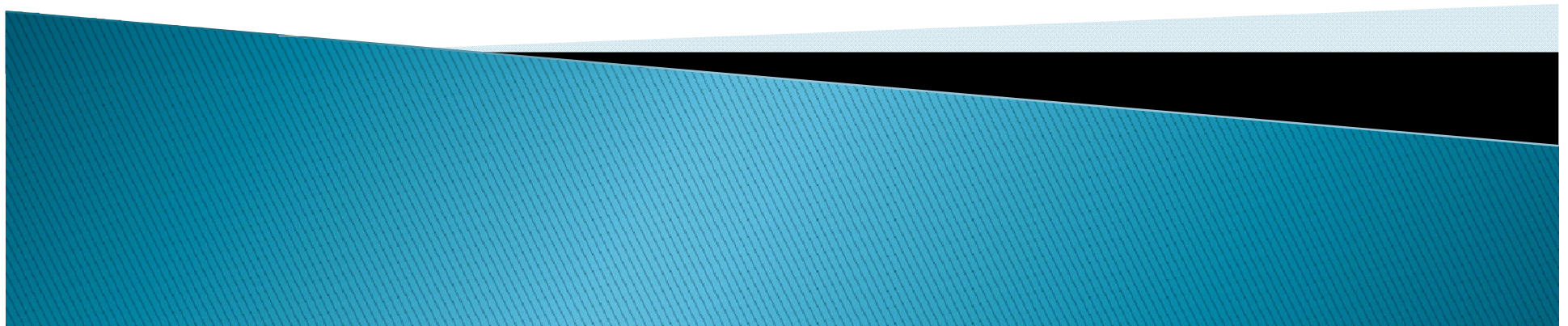
The Catholic School of the Future

- ▶ Groome believes that Catholic education can be taken up by other educators.
- ▶ “...when spirituality is grounded in a particular tradition it is most likely to have universal appeal” (p. 6).
- ▶ Catholic Christianity has a universal appeal and can be life-giving.
- ▶ Supports a “...humanizing philosophy of education” (p. 7).
- ▶ Groome argues that ‘Catholic education’ can happen outside publicly recognised and owned Catholic schools. p. 8



The Catholic School of the Future

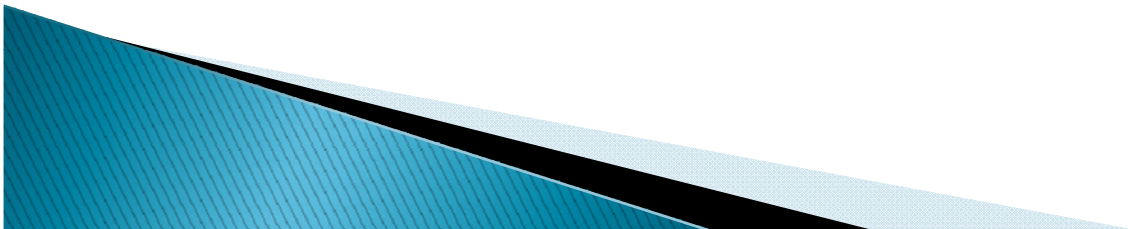
- Groome talks about 'depth structures' of the Catholic tradition.
 - "Embracing the spiritual vision of Educating for Life would mean allowing the philosophical convictions suggested by such depth structures to become operative convictions that seep into one's soul and then permeate how, what, why, and where one teaches— the whole curriculum". P. 7



The Catholic School of the Future

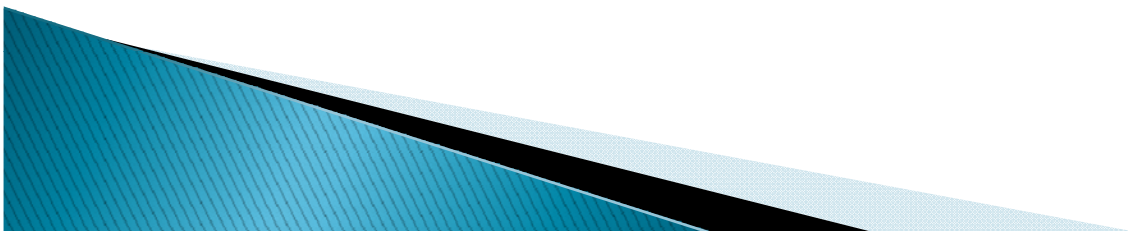
Groome suggests that educators need to embed these qualities to fulfill their vocation.

- ▶ Positive anthropology
- ▶ Sacramental consciousness
- ▶ Commitment to relationship and community
- ▶ Appreciation for tradition
- ▶ Cultivating reason for wisdom of life
- ▶ Fostering holistic spirituality
- ▶ Formation in social justice
- ▶ Including a catholic worldview.p. 7



The Catholic School of the Future

- ▶ “A Catholic school in our Australian context needs to offer more than this Catholic kind of education which, in fact, could be offered by an educator who is not a Catholic in an institution which was not Catholic in ownership or public perception” p.8
- ▶ Groome’s argument needs to be further explored.



The Catholic School of the Future

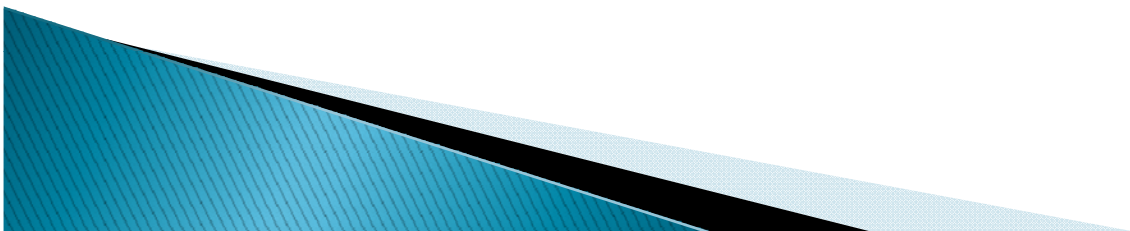
The understanding of the Congregation for Catholic Education...

- ▶ “It is from its Catholic identity that the school derives its original characteristics and its ‘structure’ as a genuine instrument of the Church, a place of real and specific pastoral ministry” p. 9.
- ▶ “The Catholic school participates in the evangelizing mission of the Church and is the privileged environment in which Christian education is carried out. In this way ‘Catholic schools are at once places of evangelization, of complete formation, of enculturation, of apprenticeship in a lively dialogue between young people of different religions and social backgrounds’. p. 9.
- ▶ It is a ministry of the Church.

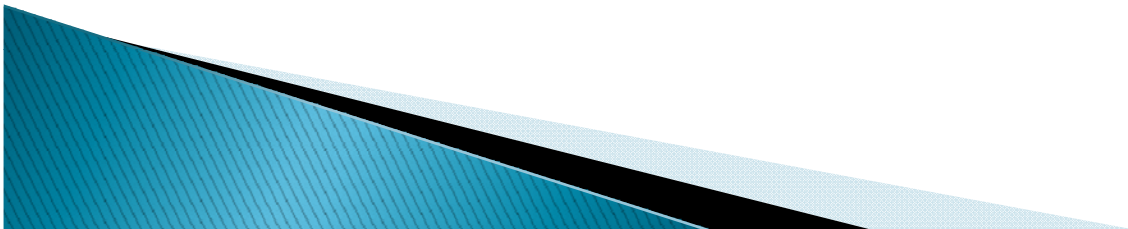


The Catholic School of the Future

- ▶ “All of this requires teachers who are themselves imbued with the Catholic faith and vision if they are to evangelise, form or assist enculturation” p. 10.
- ▶ “The Catholic s school...receives from the Bishop in some manner the ‘mandate’ of an apostolic undertaking” p.11.

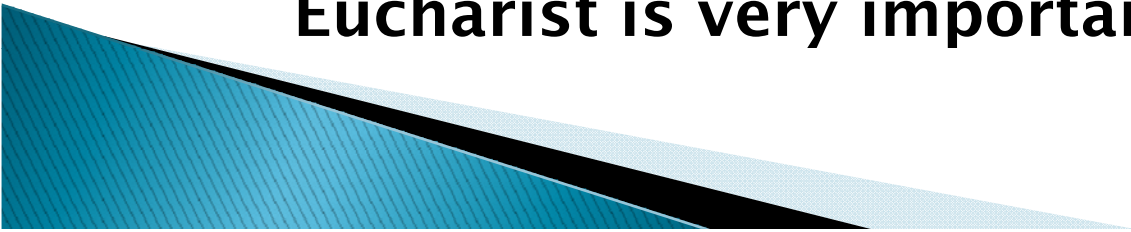


A Catholic school needs to be the bearer of the full richness of the catholic tradition in every aspect of life. More than ever before, a Catholic school's job is infinitely more difficult and more complex. It is urgent to sensitise parochial and diocesan communities to the necessity of their devoting special care to education and schools.



One of the sad realities facing the church in Australia is that the church itself is struggling in some ways at this moment in the history.

In the future a Catholic school needs to be seen and experience by all as a work of the Catholic Church (ownership, public recognition, Catholic ethos, appointment of teachers). Jesus Christ should be the centre and the point of reference for all values, relationships, spirituality and religious teaching. The celebration of the Eucharist is very important.



The presence of the bishop or the local priest is necessary to enhance the sense belonging to the larger community. Efforts should be made to connect the parish and school programmes.

The teachers should be aware that they work for the Catholic education office of the diocese. Due attention should be given to the professional formation programmes of teachers. At this point of the history in Australia we have to find the creative ways of maintaining or deepening the ecclesial identity of our schools.

