



# The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium

Congregation for Catholic and Education (1997)

# The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium.

## Introduction

On the Threshold of the Third Millennium, education faces new challenges which are a result of a new socio-political and cultural context.

Values are now at a crisis, with highly developed societies in particular.

We now lack community identity, structural changes are taking place, technical innovations and globalisation of the economy is affecting us all. We are now witnessing the wider gap between the richer and the poor.

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Today the scope of education has broadened becoming more specialized, new contents, new capabilities and new educational models, are being offered.

→ From this education and schooling are becoming difficult.

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Such an outlook calls for courageous renewal on the part of the Catholic School, we must be able to speak effectively and convincingly, our duty is to evangelize.

'As the Catholic School is a place of integral education of the human person through a clear educational project of which Christ is the foundation.'

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## Joys and difficulties

The Catholic school must be congratulated on its invaluable service to the Spiritual and Material development of less fortunate people.

Appreciation is expressed to schools' contribution, this is inclusive of Pastoral Care for families. The school is undoubtedly the meeting point to face problems besieging young people today. As it is apparent today the new generation of students are unable to self-sacrifice, persevere, lack authentic models to guide them lacking in Religious or moral formation.

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## Joys and difficulties

Among the existing difficulties, obstacles can impede on our Catholic Education System. Finance is a source of difficulty where there is little government aid for fee paying Catholic Schools.

Such financial strain on parents is leading us to exclusion for those who cannot afford to pay, leading us to deprivation of one of its distinguishing features... 'A school for all'.

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## Looking ahead

The Catholic school should offer its  
students:

- A strengthening of two aspects
  - Relevant knowledge and skills to navigate a contemporary society
  - A solid Christian formation

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The human person and his or her education

- Education is threatened by :
  - a reduction to technical and practical aspects and the consequent fragmentation at the expense of meaningful values and vision
- The human person is at the heart of Christ's teaching, therefore the Catholic school is called to
  - respond to this pressure
  - promote the human person as its goal

# The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium.

The Catholic school at the heart of the Church

Key elements to be emphasised about the Catholic school;

- the ecclesial identity
- Its evangelizing mission as part of the Church
- Its role in bringing faith, culture and life together
- Ecclesial identity must permeate all activities

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## The Catholic school at the heart of the Church

Key elements to be emphasised about the Catholic school;

- The need to be a genuine experience of Church and its pastoral role
- Needs to favour the Christian formation of the young
- Include and promote the religious as an example of a life “gifted” to God and the service of others

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## Cultural identity of the Catholic school

- The Catholic school fulfills an important role in educating and forming in student, a Christian view of the world.
- Disciplines → knowledge, values and a search for truth
- teachers → a reflection of Teacher (Christ)

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## *Care for learning means loving*

- The Catholic school has its root: it is a school for all – special attention is given to the weakest (being the socially & economically disadvantaged).
- In many parts of the world today material poverty prevents many youths and children from having access to formal education and adequate human and Christian formation.
- To these new poor the Catholic school turns in a spirit of love with the aim of offering to all, especially to the poor and marginalized.
- The manifestation of Christ's love for the poor, the humble, the masses seeking for truth.

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## *The Catholic school at the service of society*

- The Catholic school must be firmly resolved to take the new cultural situation in her stride.
- The perspective of Catholic faith is not reserved to Catholics only, but is open to all those who appreciate and share its qualified education project.
- Catholic schools fulfil a public role, for their presence guarantees cultural & educational pluralism and above all the freedom and right of families to see the sort of education they wish for them.

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## *Climate of the educating community*

- The importance of a positive relationship b/w students, parents, teachers, directors and non-teaching staff.
- A student needs to experience personal relations with outstanding educators.
- Teachers & educators fulfil a specific Christian vocation and share in the participation in the mission of the Church and ensuring the Catholic school achieves its purpose.
- The aim of the school should be to be in continual and close contact with the pupils' families – have a personalised approach.

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- Conclusion
- Second Vatican Council mandate which the church handed down to the Catholic school
  - “ Since the Catholic school can be of such service in developing the mission of the People of God and in promoting dialogue between the Church and the community at large to the advantage of both, it is still of vital importance even in our times”.
- People of God to promote dialogue b/w the Church and the community at large is still vitally important today.