



Catholic

# Education

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Leading  
through  
**COVID-19**

A HARD, FRUSTRATING YEAR  
TO REMEMBER FOR A VERY  
LONG TIME.



**AN ENVIRONMENT  
OF CHANGE**



**10 SUGGESTIONS ON  
HOW TO HANDLE  
CARBON FOOTPRINTS  
IN SCHOOLS**



**COMBATTING  
COMPASSION FATIGUE  
IN SCHOOLS**



**GETTING TO THE  
HEART OF R.E.**

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The second edition of Catholic Education takes us on another journey through the pandemic that has defined 2020. At this time of the year, we would normally send out the third publication, but we are grateful to all the contributors who paused and found the time to write at the most difficult time, making our two editions so extremely rich in content.

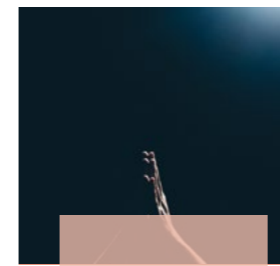
Reverend Deacon Leonard Malatsi shares his experience of leading through COVID-19 with Mariasdal Secondary School also sharing their school's experience. The Northern Cape office and educators in the province tell us about "the new normal" and the remarkable way in which the pandemic might have caused physical distance, but greater online closeness.

We feature an opinion piece on climate change commemorating four years since the Paris Climate Agreement was signed bringing a perspective on how schools in South Africa are doing. "10 steps to reduce your carbon footprint" is a useful tool for schools that wish to improve existing efforts.

On the back of the future of the planet, we look at 21st century schools from a sociological perspective to map out education during the pandemic and beyond. We report on the 8th Annual Catholic Schools chess tournament. Mark Potterton looks at Pam Christie's book, "Decolonising Education in South Africa" and Gloria Marsay provides a thought-provoking article on compassion fatigue.

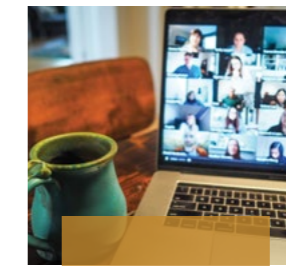
The final page is getting to the heart of Religious Education with an exciting new course starting next year and we encourage those interested to register.

Wishing you all a joyous Christmas and blessings for the New Year.



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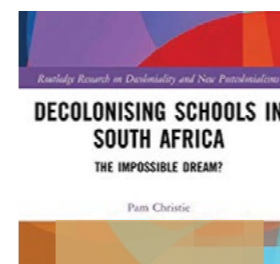
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# LEADING *through* COVID-19

*A hard, frustrating year to remember for a very long time.*

*Rev Dcn Leonard Kope Malatsi*

On the evening of the 15th March 2020, we were greeted with “my fellow South Africans”, a saying by the President that would become synonymous with bad news. For us that news came in the form of an announcement that all schools will close with effect from the 18th March due to the Corona Virus pandemic around the world that had now arrived in South Africa.

On arrival at school on Monday the 18th, it was a very different day to all the other days. In the course of leadership there are great days and not so great days but this day stands out as different to all others.

Everyone was fearful, restless and panic stricken. We converged for morning assembly and people were a bit hesitant but eventually we came together and prayed. What was natural to meet, greet, hug, share a conversation and stand in common union with one another was now potentially a way to get infected. The virus shook our very being of what connects us to one another.

The school community was addressed on the presidential pronouncement and the possible implications. Learners dispersed to their classes and I asked to meet with the staff on the situation to share ideas and plan ahead. This was possibly the hardest moment in my time of leadership and there were so many unanswered questions but eventually we agreed that we should prepare work packages for the learners so that they could be kept busy at home during the lockdown.

*On arrival at school on Monday the 18th, it was a very different day to all the other days. In the course of leadership there are great days and not so great days but this day stands out as different to all others.*

As the days and weeks went by, parents started calling to say they need more work and sadly most of them had simple phones without social media gadgets. It became very clear that having children at home, parents and caregivers needed something to keep them busy. What a challenge! For parents who might have thought the school or the teacher, were a problem, they soon came face to face with the true character of their own children, the good, the bad and the ugly. How parents who unconditionally love their children deal with seeing the reality of childhood, brought about new respect for educators. The increased demands for school work deeply touched us to see the value given to our vocation which may have been silently hidden in the busy-ness of everyday life.

Gradually things unfolded and we had to return to work on the 25th of May to prepare for the reopening of schools to welcome everyone back, teachers and learners amidst the fears, concerns and frustrations. The number of infections began to rise country wide and we were no exception.

A number of our learners got infected, staff members began to resist and blame the management and the department for exposing them to the deadly virus. Sadly, a good number of my staff members got infected too and we were a bit paralysed, needing to deliver education with even fewer resources. The tension rose daily as more and more learners started showing some symptoms, support staff and educators alike. To most it seemed that we had been left here to fend for ourselves. Our experience may have been similar to the Israelites on the return to the Promised Land. After being freed from the burden of lockdown, we now were wandering in the desert unclear about why we had left at all.

The phones kept ringing as parents were blaming and accusing us for exposing their children and them to the virus. The same parents who valued us so dearly in the lockdown now turned against us. This must have been what Moses felt like in those 40 years.

In the midst of all these challenges, I was under severe pressure from my family and had a lot of self-doubt. I have comorbidities and technically am high risk, meeting so many people daily, some with symptoms, some infected and so on could mean life or death.

We had all the necessary Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for everyone but they seemed not adequate because of what we were going through. These PPE were like manna from heaven to us in the school.

I found myself struggling with high levels of stress, very difficult decisions to take and almost paralysed for days and weeks. The power of doubt can make the most experienced person feel like a novice. For me this was all new and nothing had prepared me for this challenge until I realised, being a Catholic School principal, I had the most powerful force on my side.

To my rescue came the words of Saint Paul to the Philippians 4:6-7 "Do not be anxious about anything, but in prayer and petition with thanksgiving present your requests to God".

I invited the school chaplain to come and help calm and reassure the staff that life needs to go on beside all the problems we are facing. We went further and invited the health care workers, the priest and the social worker to address the parents to help calm them and to cope with the situation they were faced with. As a Catholic, having access to the chaplain and priests made God visible in our school.

We continued with our morning devotions to help keep the learners calm, encouraged and supported through out. I often wonder how schools who did not have these resources coped and I respect the principals and school leaders elsewhere who managed without the graces we have in our schools.

I tried hard but couldn't just be myself. It was purely through prayer and God's grace that I went through this rough patch, which I can't even tell you how I survived. If I had a mountain to climb and collect commandments, I would gladly have left for the moment of peace.

We are grateful to the Lord, that we had 100% recovery from all those who were infected and are all back at school. Importantly the stigma and fear is not impeding on our teaching and learning.

*To my rescue came the words of Saint Paul to the Philippians 4:6-7 "Do not be anxious about anything, but in prayer and petition with thanksgiving present your requests to God".*

Looking back at the entire situation and experience, I only hope and wish that we all learnt some very good lessons.

We need to trust in God at all times.

We need to be together and supportive to each other in times of difficulties and forget differences and stop blaming each other.

We need to be open-minded and understanding and not become rigid in our own thoughts and ideas especially in difficult times.

Be patient, open to advice, accept criticism, and avoid naivety and rigidity.

As a leader, no matter how difficult and challenging the situation and circumstances are, remain strong, focused, open and accept blame, insults and whatever is thrown at you.

Try not to be emotional though at times, this is very difficult or seems impossible. Pray often, do some meditation, go for debriefing and read the word of God. Your courage and strength which at times we think is not visible because of our weaknesses, might look very small and minute yet we do not know that it can make a huge difference and impact in other people's lives.

*Be patient, open to advice, accept criticism, and avoid naivety and rigidity.*

# MARIASDAL

## Challenges

M.B Maleme

### Challenges since lockdown

### Solutions

- The major challenge has been to get into contact with learners in order to assist them online. Some learners did not have phones or data, or they were just not responsive
  - Many learners came back weeks after reopening making it difficult for teachers to bring them onboard and on par with the rest
  - 6 of our learners tested positive for COVID19. We thank God none of our teaching staff contracted the virus
  - The school lost all SGB posts due to the financial constraints brought about by the pandemic
- WhatsApp groups were created to ensure communication with stakeholders, since meetings of parents and assemblies could not be held
  - Follow up with parents of absent learners to establish their whereabouts
  - Financial planning and processes all to mitigate the loss of income
  - All learners came back on the 24th August to allow for catch up
  - We incubated all Grade 12 learners to have extra tuition
  - The timetable is revised weekly to accommodate rapid changes in staff numbers

# Die Nuwe Normaal

By: Chris Jones



The Northern Cape regional office shared their experiences of working with schools during the pandemic with some excellent feedback from principals which we are delighted to share with you. For the office, the key was to keep in touch, stay connected, care for self and others, ride the storm together, support each other, be in it together. Psycho-social and leadership support was provided to principals and school leadership during the lockdown.

## Support included

- Frequent telephone conversations
- WhatsApp messages with principals
- WhatsApp groups with RE coordinators, DCSGP'S, SGB chairpersons and Owner representatives

Zoom meetings were held with principals to check in. During this intervention principals shared how they were doing in the disruption caused by the pandemic. They also shared how they managed the situation at their school, their Standard Operating Procedures in the Covid19 management plans, the challenges they face and how these were managed. The most important element was the fact that principals and school leadership felt cared for as individuals as well as a group. Also the realization that no one is alone in this, but that all of us together are in it and that we should care and support each other, look after each other, appreciate each other during this trying times.

A Principals Forum 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the year, was held virtually covering the following topics

- Navigate the storm – becoming a hope provider
- Emotional intelligence – Listening – How to become a more effective listener
- How to improve body language as a mode of communication.
- Self-care and personal development (techniques to harness the astounding power of thought)
- Leadership and Management Coaching and Support – One on one virtual sessions with principals
- The 4 Pillars of Leadership.

We also held a Religious Educators coordinators meeting and a DCSGP workshop

## Some Challenges faced by schools:

1. Social distance of learners especially foundation phase learners during break. Educators supervised but this remained problematic.
2. Trimmed ATP contributes to the backlog of learning. It doesn't provide for 2nd term work and forces educators to work back. New concepts cannot be taught until previous work is consolidated.
3. Learners who tested positive contributed to the fact that Grade 12 learners lost 15 school days and subject advisers did not take this into account when visiting schools.
4. Daily submission of data (sometimes repetitive) to CM's and HR officials.
5. Unscheduled school visits by subject advisers, poor communication of departmental officials.

L Cloete noted the following challenge for having in person meetings: "As you know, we are currently working on a shortened curriculum with limited time at our disposal. In order to maintain social distance, we are working on the alternative day timetable model which means that all grades do not attend school every day and therefore have even less time at their disposal. School visits takes up almost a day's of tuition, which we cannot afford at this stage.

M September from Blaauwskop noted "At present it is sufficient for me that we handle it as we have done so far so that we can maintain the COVID 19 protocol i.e. virtual sessions"

## Feedback from Schools

- Francois De Klerk from Friersdale RC noted that virtual meetings saved a lot of time and more was achieved. The ways of working during the lockdown had become the new normal- presentations were well prepared in advance by facilitators

“Virtuele vergaderings goed aangesien geskeduleerde tyd vooraf bepaal word. Kan plaasvind sonder ontwinging en steuring. Nuwe normale vorm van kommunikasie – aanbiedings goed vooraf voorberei deur fasiliteerder en is leerontvanklik ten opsigte van hoe om ‘n doeltreffende leier te word met verwysing na vaardighede en houdings werksessie”

- M Miggel “My suggestion to you would be, if at all possible, to continue with the virtual support currently being offered to schools. This is done excellently and we as staff use it for staff development sessions. We find it really instructive. At the same time, we are also given the opportunity to support educators, where necessary with the sessions offered.

“My voorstel aan u sou wees om , indien enigsins moontlik, voort te gaan met die virtuele ondersteuning wat tans aan skole gebied word. Dit word uitstekend gedoen en ons as personeel gebruik dit vir personeel-ontwikkelingsessies. Ons vind dit werklik leersaam. Terselfdertyd word ons ook die geleentheid gebied om opvoeders te ondersteun , waar nodig met die sessies wat aangebied word. ”

- D P Saal from Okiep Laerskool commented “The SGB, SMT and staff have in principle decided to allow as little movement as possible. Our school will therefore adhere to the standard operational procedures as prescribed by DBE. The school has 11 educators with underlying illnesses and wants to expose them as little as possible to possible infection. Virtual sessions are beneficial to us because we can participate in them in the comfort of our school. It reduces the risk of traveling to

places and the expenses that schools have to incur there. Maximum curriculum activities can be completed because less time is taken. The virtual sessions join the fourth industrial revolution and our school recommends that this should be the future.

“Die SBL, SBS en personeel het in beginsel besluit om so min as moontlik beweging toe te laat. Ons skool gaan dus hou by die standaard operasionele prosedures soos deur DBE voorgeskryf word. Die skool het 11 opvoeders met onderliggende siektes en wil hulle so min as moontlik blootstel aan moontlike infektoring.

Virtuele sessies is vir ons voordelig omdat ons in die gemak van ons skool daaraan kan deelneem. Dit verminder die risiko van reis na plekke en die uitgawes wat skole daarheen moet aangaan. Maksimum kurrikulumaktiwiteite kan afgehandel word omdat minder tyd in beslag geneem word. Die virtuele sessies sluit aan by die vierde industriële rewolusie en ons skool beveel aan dat dit die toekoms moet wees”.

- Pella R K shared the following “Virtual sessions contribute to more time for teaching in classrooms because educators do not move from the school grounds. Technology improves communication schools realize that they are still interdependent but we do not feel isolated. The sessions create cohesion although physical contact does not take place is quality in the sessions. It contributes to positive attitude support from colleagues thinking ability is positively stimulated

“Virtuele sessies dra by tot meer tyd vir onderrig in klaskamers deurdat opvoeders nie vanaf die skoolterrien beweeg nie. Tegnologie verbeter kommunikasie -skole besef dat hulle steeds interafhanklik is van mekaar maar ons voel nie geïsoleerd nie. Die sessies skep samehoringheid alhoewel fisiese kontak nie plaasvind nie is kwaliteit in die sessies. Dit dra by tot positiewe ingesteldheid ondersteuning vanaf kollegas denkvermoens word positief gestimuleer

- Port Nolloth shared the following ” The virtual presentations made possible by CIE helped us overcome a lot of the problems we faced, because we have a platform where you can interact with other educators and can share with each other because all of us more or less were experiencing the same challenges at our schools.

“Die viruele aanbiedings wat moontlik gemaak was deur CIE het baie gehelp om van die probleme aan te spreek,want daar het ons 'n platvorm waar jy kan interact met ander opvoeders en kan deel met mekaar omdat alma' min of meer dieselfde uitdagings by hul skole ervaar”.

We also received positive feedback on the four pillars of leadership

Caroline Cloete from Port Nolloth RK had the following to say “It was good to be able to talk about the characteristics of leadership. It was a very good topic. It gave me the opportunity to introspect and look anew at myself as a leader and reflect on where growth has taken place, especially in this time of many challenges, but more importantly, to look at where gaps are so that I can work to become a better leader. However, it is a continuous process. This session once again made me aware of how important it is to build solid, healthy relationships with those you work with in order to be successful. For me to build and maintain successful relationships, it is important for me as a leader to constantly evaluate myself, but at the same time to empower the people who are with me”.

“Dit was goed om te kan praat oor die karaktereenskappe van leierskap. Dit was’n baie goeie onderwerp. Dit het my die geleentheid gebied om introspeksie te hou en opnuut na myself as leier te kyk en te besin waar groei plaasgevind het, veral in hierdie tyd van vele uitdagings,maar belangriker nog, om te kyk na waar leemtes is, sodat ek daaraan kan werk om ‘n beter leier te word. Dit is egter ‘n aaneenlopende proses.

Hierdie sessie het my weereens kom bewus maak van hoe belangrik dit is om stewige, gesonde verhoudings te bou met diegene met wie jy saamwerk, om suksesvol te kan wees. Vir my om suksesvolle verhoudings te bou en te handhaaf, is dit belangrik dat ek as leier myself voortdurend moet evalueer,maar dat ek terselfdertyd die persone wat saam met my is ook bemagtig”.

Venessa van Rooyen from Sacred Heart shared the following “To be a good leader you have to have certain skills to interact positively with your co-workers. To be an effective and respectful leader you will have to compromise and be respectful towards everyone. Knowledge and skills gained that will assist me to build more meaningful and solid relationships. The ability to communicate effectively with your co-workers is essential. As a leader your primary goal is to support, motivate and develop individuals to make an excellent team. It is important that you be able to relate to others on a human level. You as a leader must always make sure that your staff feels as if they are interacting with someone who genuinely cares. I hope to continue learning from you and appreciate all your encouragement and support. Accept my heartfelt gratitude.



# An Environment Change



Pope Francis' seminal encyclical *Laudato Si* ('Praise be' - taken aptly from a poem of St Francis of Assisi) effectively brought the long held perspectives of the faith community into the international climate change negotiations that led to the signing of a climate deal in Paris at COP 21. In this encyclical, the Pope called for radical changes to how we interact with each other and the environment. He poignantly calls for an end to the throw away culture, all too common in society today. He also highlights inequality and injustice around environmental issues and makes a call to all, not just Catholics, to save the planet and our humanity. *Laudato Si* was so powerful it brought religious leaders across the world and across faiths to a strong ecumenical point of unity, unseen before, with various religious leaders, even anti-religion groups, quoting and supporting the writings of Pope Francis.

*For schools, the call of  
Laudato Si, is both  
inspiring and a  
monumental challenge.*

For schools, the call of *Laudato Si*, is both inspiring and a monumental challenge. In the only study of its kind, the United Kingdom Sustainable Development Commission calculated that 9.2 metric tonnes of gases were emitted by UK schools. This study calculated energy use, transport, procurement and waste and the figure is astounding. Schools in the United Kingdom produce twice as much greenhouse gas as the 15 lowest carbon emitting countries combined.



For South Africa, without a similar study we can only estimate based on energy usage. In this regard, schools in urban or wealthier areas currently have an energy density of 13% which is comparable to schools in the United States while poorer schools use a mere 28% of the energy of affluent schools. In a study conducted by Samuels, Grobbelaar and Booysen titled Light-years apart: Energy usage by schools across the South African affluence divide, they calculate that a quintile five school uses 643 Wh/pupil compared to a quintile 1 school using 178 Wh/pupil. So like the United Kingdom we produce a significant amount of greenhouse gases to operate schools, further inequalities mean that the top 20% of schools are emitting at levels similar to developed countries while the poorer schools who are on the receiving end of climate change, in the form of water shortages, increases in vector borne diseases emit at levels comparable to the targets developed countries expect to reach in 2050 in terms of the Paris deal. These facts are cause for reflection especially in Catholic Schools.

When one anecdotally looks at urban schools and the daily drop and pick up run, with cars in idle forming queues that make the election queues of 1994 look like a summer picnic, the collection of trash cans on bin day at schools, and the various procurement of greenhouse gas loaded equipment for school entertainment, the usage of water and energy for astro-turf, swimming pools, fibre glass rowing boats, the inequality in energy usage only increases. Looking at quintile 5 versus quintile 1 while a useful comparison hides the fact that the quintiles 4, 3, 2 face the same usage levels as quintile 5 schools in many areas. While we do not have researched figures yet, there is a strong correlation between at least q3 to q5. An interesting phenomenon is that lighting makes up 46% of the schools energy usage in Q5 schools, and naturally this is when learning is not happening but in the night for security purposes. Effectively wealthier schools require more energy to avoid being victims of crime.

One of the interesting though disputed ideas and processes emanating from the climate negotiations, was the creation of carbon markets. Simply put the idea was that polluting countries would pay countries that do not pollute. Each country was given a carbon quota which would collectively ensure that climate change was moderated. In essence, carbon markets allowed a country to use the carbon that another country did not emit. The process became controversial as the world of finance houses took over the management of the process and poor countries never received the money.

Here is an interesting idea though, what if each school in the country completed a carbon assessment and paid per metric tonne to a poorer school the difference in carbon emissions in recognition of the energy, waste and procurement privileges. This would be an extremely radical way to ensure that when we recycle, change to energy efficient light bulbs and all the other wonderful projects that save the planet, we would remain cognizant and humbled by the awareness that while these efforts are admirable, poorer schools without these efforts are still 30 years ahead and more importantly have in the past contributed less to greenhouse gases, that we owe them a debt of gratitude. As Pope Francis puts it, the planet is our common home and the change we need to make begins with becoming aware and present to the planet and, importantly, to each other.

*The planet is our common home and the change we need to make begins with becoming aware and present to the planet and, importantly, to each other.*

# 10 SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO HANDLE

# CARBON FOOTPRINTS IN SCHOOLS



1

## Go with the greener alternatives

If you would like to reduce the carbon footprints in schools, then the need to check and make a review of the schools' purchases becomes quite imperative. You obviously need to check what the school needs and weigh the available options and suppliers as there would always be an efficient alternative.

Take paper consumption for instance. If the school is conscious about the effect it creates in the environment then the schools can take actions to use less paper and recycle them afterwards.

Also, the computers used at schools should be the ones with higher efficiency and less energy consumption. Companies that supply goods and services to the schools should be eco-conscious. The schools should choose the ones with green manufacturing processes. Their supply vehicles should also be energy efficient.

2

## Run a more eco-friendly school system

An eco-friendly school system can be established if certain things are taken into consideration. This is done by encouraging students and even teachers and staff to walk or cycle to or from school if possible instead of driving. Carbon footprints can be reduced if walking buses can be introduced.

3

## Get students to be involved

One of the many methods of reducing carbon footprints in schools is to educate more students to become more conscious about our planet. They are young and they have ambitions, dreams and enthusiasm for a bright future. Get them involved and work together on a great cause of saving the planet.

They can be involved in sustainable workshops where they participate in environmentally-friendly projects within the school. They can learn how to read energy meters, monitor and report energy consumption while setting targets towards reducing the rate of energy consumption.

4

## Encourage active travel

If you're leading the carbon footprint reduction projects in schools, then encouraging active travel among students, teachers staff members becomes quite important. Local authorities should take the responsibility to make roads safer and more attractive for walking and cycling. Raising awareness with students and teachers can also make a difference.

5

## Make new connections and networks

Many times when you first start out working towards a big cause, it can seem a little bit scary and lonely at the beginning. So make connections, create networks, find people that can be a part of your great cause of saving the one and only planet. The change starts with one single steps and it spreads forward. Reach out to and connect with other schools and environmental organizations and use the power of unity to influence local authorities to contribute to your fight with the climate change.

6

## Make compost trash can for non-animal based organic matter

When you make a compost for non-animal materials, that can be put into good use on your school garden. You can also purchase it from various stores with garden supplies.

7

## Reduce energy waste

If you would like to improve the insulation in your school building to lower the quantity of heating required, you can make use of a motion sensor lighting. You can effectively reduce the electric energy used most especially when light bulbs are left on in the classrooms without making use of them.

8

## Use the air conditioner and the heater wisely

Anytime you use air conditioner or the heater to either cool or heat your classroom, you should always make sure that the windows of the class are closed. If you'd like to get some fresh air then turn off the air conditioner or heater just before you open the window.

9

## Switch off your computer when you're not using it

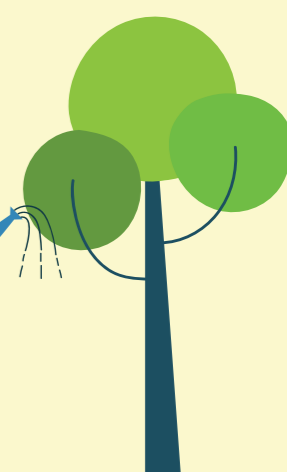
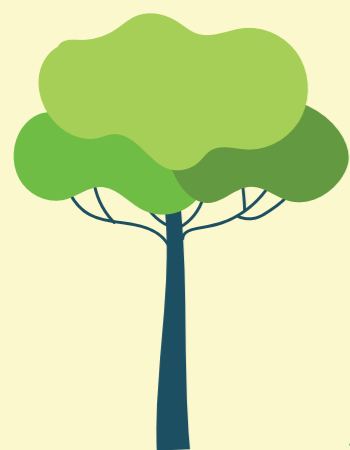
A computer can consume up to 65% of energy when it is left on. So make sure you switch them off completely when you're done using it. Keep in mind that when electronics are not in power, they can still make use of energy. Whenever electronic gadgets are not in use, switch them off and unplug the cables.

10

## Recycle more

Recycling is a very important aspect of reducing carbon footprint in schools. Teach your students how to separate wastes. This would be very helpful as significant amount of the things they use can actually be recycled. In fact, to make it more fun, you can plan a trip together with the kids to a local recycling center as this would provide them the opportunity of seeing how lots of wastes ends up in landfills. You can also to show them a documentary on how unrecycled materials are harming the environment.

These suggestions on how to reduce carbon footprint in schools can also be used in many places. They can expanded. If our kids are eco-friendly and know the real value of saving our planet then when they become adults they will be even more conscious.





# 21ST CENTURY Schools

When we think of 21st century School, the common jump is to assume that technology is changing schools and a focus on what this means defines education in the future. I will argue that this is incorrect, as it presupposes that technology is new or the pace is so radical that it transforms long established norms in society. In fact, technology has always been a feature of education and many technological jumps have occurred because of schools either directly from the outputs of the education system or importantly due to the demands of schools. Think for a moment, just how fundamentally writing tools have evolved, from writing in the sand in ancient times to etching on tablets, the amazing invention of chalk and blackboards, the pencil, the pen and the now the modern tablet operated by stylus or the power of a human pointer - the finger, there is no lack of technology integration in schools.

Another way of understanding 21st century schools is to situate analysis in the interesting sociological phenomenon occurring in our lifetime. Children born in the year 2000, now make up our school cohort and unlike previous generations, there are socially connected in multiple ways due to technology and societal evolution. Some have called them digital natives. Even people without a personal computer and high fiber internet, are connected through readily available and cheap mobile phones. South Africa has one the highest internet take up rates especially due

to mobile connectivity. For these learners, there has been no world where the digital and physical world were divided.

These young people, are collectively known as Generation Z and many studies have been conducted to understand this generation born between 1995 and 2009. In all of these studies some common themes emerge: connectivity to technology, brand awareness, and gender neutrality. Importantly, amongst this generation are higher levels of what is called neuro atypical syndromes, with autism spectrum disorder, attention deficit and hyperactivity and a range of other cognitive make ups that non generation z see as health problems. Some members of the scientific community are beginning to explore if the prominence of so called neuro atypical conditions are not in fact, the next step in evolution.

It is important to recognize the learners and their generation, in understanding 21st century schools. We have a choice to be the like the majority today who see change as a problem or to embrace the future. After all, we cannot ignore that two Generation Z females have changed the world. Malala Yousafzai won a noble peace prize for demanding education for girls, challenging long held beliefs on girl's education in her country. Greta Thunberg, a Generation Z member who is also neuro atypical, has been nominated consecutively for a Nobel peace prize and holds amongst many accolades, Forbes' 'Most Powerful Women's List' and Times' 'Person of the Year'. Both, while changing the world, are viciously attacked. In Malala's case, she nearly lost her life.

For educators, there are often deep philosophical reflections as to why we do education the way we do. Simply put, the enlightenment and the Gutenberg press in particular, technology and ideas, brought about the most powerful and radical human breakthrough ever. The thought that all children irrespective of colour, culture, class and creed deserved to be

taught in a publicly funded school, 200 years ago, was so revolutionary an idea that it has persisted and remains supported today. However, this period of enlightenment also saw the change to industrialised capitalism which gave us a 'factory model' of schooling. As the late Sir Ken Robinson observed, we put children through a factory, bundled by age, and progressing through the machine of education until they become nice upstanding educated citizen products able to make a meaningful contribution to the society.

Can such a powerful idea be changed? Yes. While the first cohort of Generation Z may not have altered the education system, the rapid access to technology and more importantly the social connectivity, invariably creates a sea change moment throughout society.

For one, the deeply rooted masculine or some would say patriarchal outlook of the world is directly in conflict with a gender neutral person. Malala comes to mind here again, and it is important to recognize

***Can such a powerful idea be changed? Yes. While the first cohort of Generation Z may not have altered the education system, the rapid access to technology and more importantly the social connectivity, invariably creates a sea change moment throughout society.***

that she was supported by her family and other children. The individualism required of the education system, you ultimately sit and write an examination alone and received a personalized result, is anathema to community orientated individuals. For Malala and her support base, the collective mattered more than individual security.

The access to false and honest news and the lack of means to decipher which is which is more rapid. One does not have to look far back to see how widely held and sometimes scientifically supported ideas are now completely discredited. Eugenics would have been science fact and today genetics is giving way to molecular biology and rightly so, as advances in knowledge make formerly held truths, now obsolete. To illustrate this change, 20 years ago you would tell people to never get in a car with a stranger, today we do just that in Uber without thinking twice.

What does this mean for us seekers of the truth? It starts with understanding just that – seeking the truth is more important than the truth of our time. This is why Jesus says, ‘I am the truth.’ You cannot go wrong seeking the truth if you understand this simple proclamation from our Lord. Technology and advancement has shown us that no one knows what is coming round the corner. A new virus can spread around the world and democratic governments with great constitutions can impose the most draconian confinements of people with loud cheers of support. We literally clapped while our rights were taken away.

What does a school look like in these times? Some schools used technology and adopted online methods. You can look back at Mark Potterton’s article in the previous edition for some insight into this.

Here are some other features of the 21st century School that I think are likely to emerge. Education will remain a radically important facet of humanity but technology and the sociology of learners will prompt some major changes. There will be more pressure for the eradication of private schools and the promotion of universal quality public education. This trend has intensified and those in independent schooling are fully aware of the continued restrictions and challenges to this way of schooling. One can argue independent schools are becoming more public and similarly public schools are demanding more independence. A quality public education system of the future will be one that has higher degrees of autonomy than current.

The graded approach to schooling will slowly disappear. Increasingly there are more schools like Sudbury Valley in Boston, L’ecole Dynamique in France, and other versions, that allow children to learn as they want. Some children only feel like learning to read and write at age 15 and no one forces them to in a graded approach where by Grade 1 they must meet certain milestones and this continues from yearly school assessment to the next. You cannot simply put the current method into an online cloud and expect it to work. It matters less if you have a robotics class or a laboratory, and not about the how of education but the when of education. Increasingly, more and more schools have science laboratories, and you do not have to go far back in time when these were considered facilities for the privileged only.

Relationships of respect between learners and teachers will change. What some consider defiant behavior such as hairstyles, speaking in mother tongue, length of skirts and many other weird anomalies wrongly used as litmus tests for discipline will give way to actual respect. The idea that respect must come from

discipline and a rigid rules based system is completely against the values base of Generation Z and most obviously seen when so-called neuro atypical conditions are present. Some adults would be appalled at Greta and Malala and their discipline, yet they are possibly the most faithful people for achieving a goal for humanity and are selfless in their respective sacrifices. Instead, respect will come from facilitated learning, the removal of irrational anxieties, and the achievement of what we have called the Catholic ethos, with a prominence of care and the absence of fear.

However, the trend of unrest in schools in the form of bullying and the use of technology as a means to do harm is unlikely to stop and concerted efforts will be needed to build peaceful schools. But, as graded academic contestations diminish, the ugliness towards one another will disappear. Many deficits we see in the schooling system today are results of the contestation between the old conventional and tried ways versus the new which we do not know yet. This tension will remain and while it’s human to discern and act, the train to the future has left the station and we will all get to the final destination.

Some good advice to take, when dealing with the 21st century School, comes from Jesus: ‘Be not afraid, I go before you always.’

***Some good advice to take, when dealing with the 21st century School, comes from Jesus: ‘Be not afraid, I go before you always.’***

# Catholic High Schools

## online Chess Tournament 2020 results

The 8th annual Gauteng Catholic Schools Chess tournament took place on Saturday 3 October. Because of the unusual circumstances of this year of covid-19 lockdowns and social distancing, the tournament was hosted and run online – on the Lichess arena tournament platform together with WhatsApp groups.

The level of chess was pleasingly strong, with a number of good players. However, one player stood head and shoulders above the field, the eventual winner Chirag Joshi of St Benedict's. St Benedict's also won the team event. See results on left.

### FINAL TEAM STANDINGS

	School	Points
1	St Benedicts	93
2	St Dominics Boksburg	57
3	St Dominics Priory PE	55
	Sacred Heart	55
5	Veritas	49
6	De la Salle Holy Cross	47
7	Assumption Convent	39
8	Maris Stella	16
9	Our Lady of Lebanon	4

Nine schools, and 43 individual chess players participated. All players pre-registered and set up their own Lichess player profiles, familiarising themselves with the online chess environment. The organisers set up a WhatsApp group with the coaches, sports co-ordinators and/or teachers in charge of chess at the different schools, who in turn had WhatsApp groups with their players. In this way, we were able to continually communicate both before and during the day's matches. We included our usual welcome, prayer, and outline of tournament rules and expectations.

Assumption Convent was once again very happy to host the chess tournament. We believe chess is an excellent activity – incorporating elements of a sporting contest, scientific study, and aesthetic appreciation. It promotes critical and strategic thinking, problem solving ability, the joy of camaraderie, and an opportunity to compete against players from all walks of life.

The online format gave us the ability to invite schools from outside of Gauteng for the very first time. Maris Stella of Durban, and St Dominic's Priory of Port Elizabeth were welcome new additions to the tournament.

Micaela Brandao, our chess captain for 2020/21 performed very creditably, ending in 16th position with 6 very pleasing victories. Emma Lauf came 18th, with 5 wins and a draw, Jackie Musakwa finished in 29th position with 4 wins, while Haleigh Knipe and Oluchi Jones finished in 37th and 38th respectively with 2 fighting wins each.

The tournament started at 9h05 promptly, and lasted for 2.5 hours. The Lichess platform's computer programme acted as arbiter, official time-keeper and score-keeper to boot. The programme paired players against each other on a strength vs. strength basis, which means that players who win are paired with other winners. Over the course of the morning, the strongest players emerge at the top, and are paired in matches against other strong players to determine who is the best. Matches were timed at 15/15 minutes.

We look forward to a long and happy association with the Catholic Schools Chess community, and value our connections with each and every school. We offer our sincere congratulations to all players who participated, especially the winners, and hope next year's event will be as exciting and rewarding as this year's.

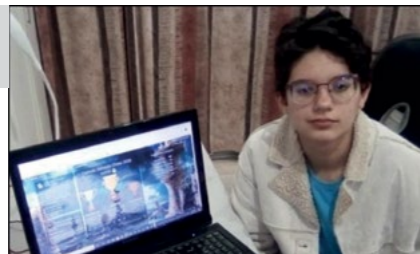
Sincerely,  
 Kyle Lauf  
 Chess Coordinator  
 Assumption Convent School



Screenshot of the online winners page



St Benedict's College Chess Team: Winners of the 2020 Catholic Schools Chess Tournament. Overall winner, Chirag Joshi is standing in the back row, 2nd from left.



Kassandra Muller of St Dominic's, Boksburg won the top girl award.



Assumption Convent School's Chess team, playing in the computer centre while wearing their face masks & keeping a safe social distance.

### FINAL INDIVIDUAL STANDINGS – TOP 10

	Name	School	Points
1	Chirag Joshi	St Benedicts	30
2	Liam Allison	De la Salle Holy Cross	25
3	David Manley	St Dominics Priory	25
4	Vuyo Angura	St Benedict's	19
5	Kassandra Muller	St Dominic's	18
6	Dylan Spies	Veritas	17
7	Milan Kathan	St Benedict's	17
8	Cullam Ashton	Veritas	16
9	Samu Phenyane	St Dominic's	16
10	Grant Nel	St Benedict's	15

# BOOK REVIEW

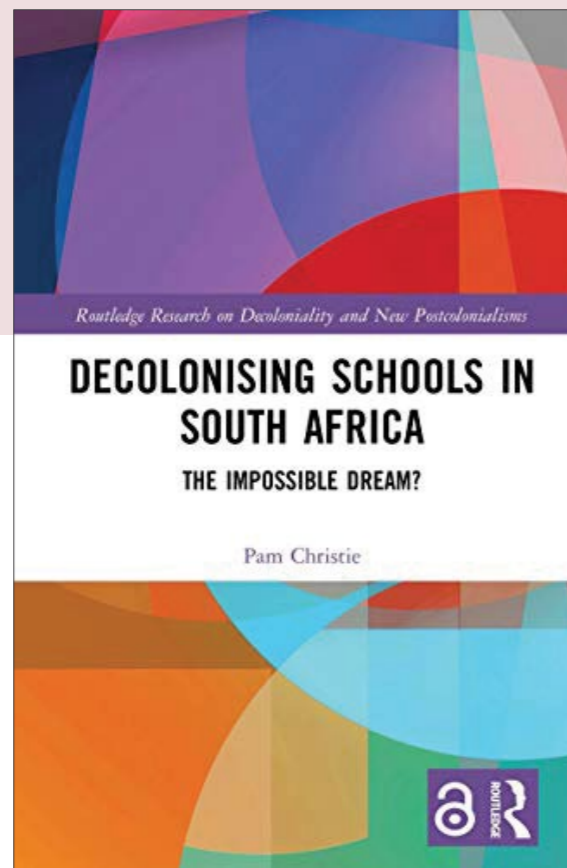
Pam Christie (2020)

**Decolonising Schools in South Africa.**

**The Impossible Dream?**

Published by Routledge, London.

By Mark Potterton



Pam Christie has published pioneering work on South African education for the past forty years. In the Catholic school context Christie's work on the open school's movement was ground-breaking and provided an account of the experience of racial mixing which was unique at the time. One of the things she showed was that by admitting black pupils to 'white' schools it did not necessarily bring a greater understanding of racial oppression and that many still denied the existence of racial differences within the schools.

apartheid. Thorough on the ground research, Christie describes a "decolonial moment" for South African schools.

Schooling in the semi-desert Karoo town of Carnarvon provides the backdrop for Decolonising Schools in South Africa, a new book by this veteran scholar. From the vantage point of this marginal town, Christie throws light on the changes that have ensued in this place and the schools there from colonial times to period after

apartheid. Thorough on the ground research, Christie describes a "decolonial moment" for South African schools.

"In magnifying one place on a very large canvas of schools," writes Christie, "the intention is to provide insights into the multiple ways in which inequalities in schooling take shape, endure, and shift – insights that are not easily identified by the broad histories and policy analyses of education alongside which this book is written"

This thorough study of education and schooling in the town of Carnarvon, both inside and outside of the classroom over this critical time in South Africa's history, reflects Christie's "longstanding commitment to working for social justice in education." Christie explores the story of colonial education in a specific context and where the attempts to decolonise education in this town have failed.

Christie observes that: "Schools, are emblems of modernity, and though they are flawed institutions, their social mandate is important to provide systematic teaching and learning for young people in ways that prepare them to contribute to a shared world and, hopefully, change it for the better."

Drawing on her visits to hundreds of schools in South Africa and Australia over many years, Christie has been fascinated by the differences and the similarities between schools.

"There is a 'sameness' to schools, such that it would be hard for me to come upon a school and not recognise it for what it is – even if there are no buildings, or if classes are conducted under trees. At the same time, despite their sameness, schools are very different places, and each has its own distinctive vitality or tonality." In her work around schools achieving good results in poorer contexts she showed how their daily rhythms and expectations were different to other schools. Catholic schools in these contexts had higher expectations both in behaviour and in achievement for both their teachers and pupils.

In this study Christie observes that the differences between schools express the profound inequalities present in our broader society, and that there is general agreement among sociologists of education that schools, and classrooms enact inequality. In looking

*"Schools, are emblems of modernity, and though they are flawed institutions, their social mandate is important to provide systematic teaching and learning for young people in ways that prepare them to contribute to a shared world and, hopefully, change it for the better."*

at the senior certificate results she comments on the poor Matric percentage pass rates in district and the declining grade averages in the schools. She records how most primary school teachers complain about the current school curriculum, and how they have almost no discretionary space in terms of pace and content coverage.

“By now, there is a powerful accumulation of research showing that inequalities in schooling follow predictable patterns of social class, race, gender, region, and language. Research also shows the stubborn endurance of inequalities in the face of multiple attempts to shift them.”

In the initial chapters, Christie relies on historical sources, “to show the impact of colonial expansion into the semiarid, sparsely peopled land in the 1800s,” she writes, “and to show how patterns of possession and dispossession took racialised forms that hardened over time.”

Christie found that social relations established in Carnarvon during colonial times persist today and “have salience in the current ownership of land and economic resources, as well as in the town’s institutions,” she writes. “The struggle over the control of these institutions – in particular the schools – has been a central dynamic in the social relations of the town, exemplifying the intersectional relationships of lingering inequalities characteristic of coloniality”. These inequalities are still evident in places where township Catholic schools are located in relative close proximity to suburban Catholic schools; and tell of our inability to share resources even within a faith community.

In the second part of the book Christie focuses on the post-apartheid period and examines the struggle over the schools in post-apartheid education restructuring. Christie uses the vantage point of this specific place to show the compromised nature of the 1994 political settlement and the limited extent of redistribution in schooling and more broadly.

The fieldwork research of this study combined the study of documents, systematic observations, and formal interviews, with views and information that Christie gathered more informally from the people and the place. Christie explains that she was at pains “to leave an ‘audit trail’ as a form of research accountability,” and “to provide a trustworthy account that contributes to scholarship.”

But, as accomplished a researcher as Christie is, she admits that the project brought her great challenges: “I had anticipated that, armed with my research design and university ethical clearance, I would be able to investigate schooling arrangements, how these related to the comings and goings of daily life of the town, and what schooling offered for the future of young people living in this place. I had also hoped that it would be possible to throw some light on the links between the ‘big science’ of the SKA and improvements for local people, particularly in schooling. However, I had misread the complexity of what I was to find.”

According to Christie: “There are no blueprints for a decolonial schooling system. What is required is to work beyond the inevitabilities of current inequalities towards a different imaginary and different aspirations for schooling, as well as for education beyond schooling.”

Christie echoes the conclusions from her previous book, and calls for an ethical stance of reciprocal, collective responsibility and repair. She calls for the affirmation of human dignity and equal sharing in one world. She believes in the collective work of social and economic change and calls for political commitment to bring about this change. Christie argues that “beyond victimhood and guilt, beyond blame and recrimination, lie the possibilities of building the all-world that we share with others, human and more-than-human, and the earth itself.”

Bringing together her years of field experience and her deep knowledge of educational sociology to understand the complexities of school change in South Africa, Christie has written a seminal work that deals with decolonisation not just in theory, but in the context of a specific place. Christie demonstrates that the work of decolonisation is far more complex than anyone might think it is.

*“There are no blueprints for a decolonial schooling system. What is required is to work beyond the inevitabilities of current inequalities towards a different imaginary and different aspirations for schooling, as well as for education beyond schooling.”*



# Combating Compassion Fatigue in Schools

Gloria Marsay (PhD)

## *Here's what we know*

Literature abounds with evidence that all caregivers are at risk for developing Compassion Fatigue because of the nature of their work. Early and sustained support can turn Burnout, Traumatic Stress and Compassion Fatigue into Post-Traumatic Growth.

Compassion Fatigue (CF) is a form of empathic concern or secondary traumatic stress that affects those who offer care to others. The onset of Compassion Fatigue is often rapid, and symptoms affect the whole person: body, mind, emotions, spirit. Compassion Fatigue is often exacerbated by the caregiver's own experience of trauma. Those who are most negatively

affected by working with trauma are those who usually have past symptomatology. In the case of educators and care workers during this Covid 19 pandemic, it could be that CF arises from their own unresolved personal traumatic experiences of ill-health. Hence, the educator's own personal psychological and emotional problems need to be addressed and resolved before they can effectively assist others.

Compassion Fatigue holds the power to affect both the individual, and the organization. There is evidence that leaving Compassion Fatigue unacknowledged and untreated, results in increased rates of absen-

COMPASSION



teism, low levels of efficiency, substance abuse, high attrition rates, reduced service quality. All these difficulties have an impact on the quality of care. The cost of ignoring the effects of Compassion Fatigue on educators and caregivers working in schools is high. The organisation symptoms serve to magnify and escalate the individual symptoms, thus creating a vicious cycle. When Compassion Fatigue among employees hits critical mass, the organisation itself suffers. Thus, it would be prudent to assist educators and institutions of learning to become aware of the impact of this kind of work and find effective ways to ameliorate the negative consequence.

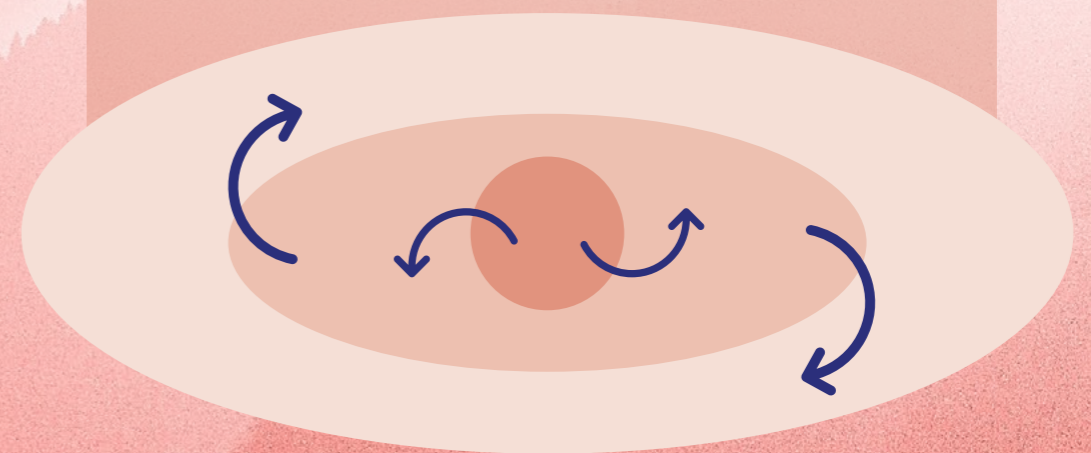
All educators and caregivers at schools would benefit personally and professionally from being made aware of the impact of CF and by learning effective skills and develop holistic strategies to protect themselves and to deal with the difficulties they encounter. One way of caring for educators as caregivers and improving their plight, is to provide sustained personal and professional support.

*Compassion Fatigue (CF) is a form of empathic concern or secondary traumatic stress that affects those who offer care to others.*

## *Here's what we can do*

There is a need for contextualized programmes that meet the needs of the educators in context. Kaethe Weingarten's Compassionate Witnessing approach is a technique worth considering, when working with teams. This technique is designed to strengthen the self of each educator within the safety of a supportive team structure. Compassionate Witnessing is founded on the ability to recognize and express a common bond with another. This approach lends itself to being molded to suit the needs of the people in context. The technique does not require complex resources and is time effective. The technique can be used from simple every day to the extraordinary situations of witnessing. Compassionate Witnessing creates a synergy of recognition, as well as support and action that is affirming, restorative and energizing. It helps the educator to find ways to listen and act that make a difference, ameliorating the impact of interpersonal and societal common shock. The impact of adversity is diluted by sharing the experience of the impact with supportive team members who can understand and show empathetic concern to each other. Perhaps this technique could be used in school environments in this time of crisis to ameliorate the onset of Compassion Fatigue in a cost and time effective way?

### *Compassionate Witnessing*





# Getting to the HEART of RE

Paul Faller

These days, the religious educator faces many challenges, not least among which is the disinterest of the young in a world where religion often makes little sense to them. But, if your students see that you love your subject, things will change: you will gain their keen attention.

But how will they see it? To love is to know in the deepest sense. The depth of knowledge we have in our subject, the enthusiasm and confidence we display in our willingness to share it, and the competence we exercise in opening doors and windows to let our students in to its mysteries (Yes, all subjects have their mysteries) – these and other professional virtues will demonstrate our love.

Do you love RE? Do you want to fall in love with it? Here is an opportunity to get to know it better. The Catholic Institute of Education has collaborated with TEEC (Theological Education by Extension College) – a registered Higher Education provider specialising in distance education – to develop an Advanced Certificate in Religious Education at NQF Level 6. This programme will give you, the religious educator, an opportunity for personal and professional development that is relevant, accessible and financially competitive.

The programme requires the completion of 8 courses over four semesters (two years). The first four courses are compulsory while the remaining four are electives chosen out of a pool of eight possibilities. In the core component you will gain a wider and deeper knowledge of Scripture, acquire critical theological skills for the classroom, and become familiar with current religious education theory and practice including the essential ability to manage a multireligious student body.

Included among the elective courses are focuses on religion and culture, social justice, morality, liturgy, spirituality, christology, the history of Christianity, and the relationship between science and religion.

Registration for the Certificate is now open for the first two courses – ‘Revelation, Scripture & Tradition’, and ‘Human Existence, God & Human Destiny’. Go to the website of TEEC (<http://www.tee.co.za/>) for further information and for registration purposes.



