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EDITORIAL

With the arrival of 2018, we hope your roots have sunk deeper in your practice of Religious Education and that your wings are giving you greater lift.

Welcome to the first issue of *Roots & Wings* for 2018 which contains a new feature. In each edition this year we feature a key document from Vatican II and its implications for school liturgy. The inspiration for this comes from a recently published book, *A Liturgical Companion to the Documents of the Second Vatican Council*.

We remind you again of an article chosen for CPTD points. Readers will qualify for points by answering and submitting the questions on the article that appear at the end of this magazine.

NOTES

- *It is not necessary to submit your responses to the articles to CIE since this exercise falls under the category of Teacher initiated activities also called Type 1 activities: Activities initiated personally by an educator to address his/her identified needs. For example, enrolling for an ACE programme, writing an article for an educational publication, attending a workshop, material development, participating in professional learning communities, engaging in action research in your own classroom.*
- *We have not yet received official endorsement from SACE but hope that it will be soon forthcoming.*

Again we offer a variety of articles, newsbytes and resources as an invitation to reflect on classroom practice and to try out new approaches.

PAUL FALLER

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REFLECTION

Missionaries within Secularity

(Daniel O'Leary. 2008. *Begin with the Heart: Recovering a Sacramental Vision*. Dublin: Columba Press, p. 157-158)

The Jesuits are not the only ones to relish the current encounter with religions and cultures in a postmodern era. A few years ago the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI) sponsored a symposium at St Paul University, Ottawa, to look at the complexities of being missionary within the culture of post-modernism. They invited a mixed group of experienced people to reach some 'missiological principles' for the future. Among them were John Shea, Richard Rohr and Ronald Rolheiser. Here are 10 of their reflections:

- We are at a new place today in terms of the faith. Adaptation of what worked in the past may not be enough. We need to re-inflate the romantic imagination within Christianity.
- Secularity is not the enemy. Secularity is our own child, sprung from Judeo-Christian roots. Like any adolescent child, it's not bad, just unfinished. The 'soil' of secularity is defined by Jesus in the parable of the Sower. The fact that some ground is hostile or indifferent is no excuse for stopping sowing.
- Spirituality is people's birthright. The secular culture hungers for spirituality, but is largely spiritually illiterate. People go where they get fed.
- We must seek to recover the heart of our tradition, beyond its encrusted accretions, and then add our own passion to that heart. We must work at finding our own faith-voice and then speak in an invitational way. Part of this must be a profound asceticism of listening.
- A place of contact with the postmodern world could be the fertile image of Christ as the *kenosis* of God. In his self-emptying, he reveals a God without pretence, a God of pure invitation, non-violence and vulnerability', a God who accepts the provisionality of everything. Jesus' essential message is a universal message.
- Given this self-emptying God, we might remember that sharing the mission of Christ does not always mean using religious language. It is a time for finding other, more effective forms of transmission.
- As a faith community we are in exile from the power, possessiveness and prestige of the past. But all transformation happens in exile because only then can God get at us. We need to stay with the pain, the exile, the *kenosis*, and hold the tension long enough until it changes us.
- There are four aspects of the church that people still do accept: the church as an agency to serve the poor, the church as delivering the rites of passage, the church as a voice within ethical discourse, and the church as a 'beautiful heritage'. We are more than those dimensions. But, as well as a new language, do we need new 'missiological' structures, new 'ecclesial houses', beyond the parish, to supplement current pastoral possibilities?
- Part of evangelisation is the movement to eliminate poverty. If we want to work at home and abroad for this to happen, we must free ourselves from too much reliance on dogma, and rely more on human solidarity.
- We need to accept the broad solid human foundations for moral progress within our culture, and widen the pool of sincere people who form one body, to work for a better world. Excessive stress on religious and denominational identification can narrow that



body. Inter-religious dialogue must lead back to a common humanity. We need to commit ourselves not just to the baptised but to all people of sincerity and good will.

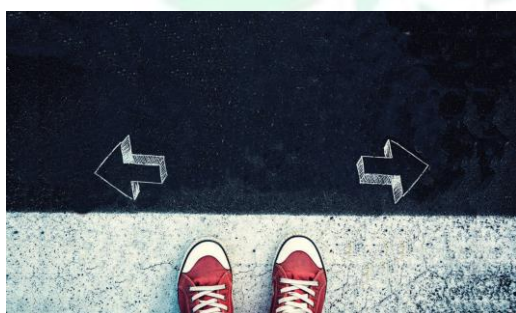
(Compiled by Ronald Rolheiser)

‘In brief,’ Dermot Lane writes, ‘Christian faith will have to present itself as intrinsic to the human condition and not outside it, as apologetic and not authoritarian, as ecumenical and not sectarian, as inter-religious and not exclusive, as affectively reasonable and not coldly rational. Such qualities and characteristics of Christian faith are an intrinsic part of the dynamism of the mystery of Jesus Christ as the eternal Word and Wisdom of God made flesh in history.’

REFLECTION

Crafting Conscience in Your Child: 10 Things Parents Can Do

(Thomas Groome)



While parents are readily recognized as primary in forming the superego, they can also be most effective in forming the conscience of their children. Though abstract moral reasoning is not developmentally possible before the teenage years (Piaget, Kohlberg, etc.), yet parents can encourage concrete moral reasoning in children from an early age that can help to form their conscience. For example, the general principles of social justice are likely beyond their reach, yet they can learn how and why to be fair to siblings and friends and be encouraged to play fair. Here are 10 practical things parents can do to form their children in a Christian conscience.

1. Help them do moral reasoning for themselves: While conscience has an affective component (feeling comfort or discomfort), unlike the superego it is primarily an ability to make reasoned moral decisions. So help your child to understand and practice the reasoning involved in making good decisions. This means encouraging them to consider the concrete circumstances involved, the likely consequences of a particular action, the moral teachings of Christian faith (can be as simple as “what would Jesus do?”), and then to draw upon their own innate sense

of right and wrong to come to a practical decision.

2. Affirm their innate goodness: Children tend to live up—or down to—the self-image we project onto them. A Catholic theology of the person favours our innate goodness rather than inherent sinfulness; even doing bad things does not make one a bad person. So, better to say to a child, “You are not a liar, so why are you lying?” or “You are not a thief, so why did you steal?” To declare them a liar or thief—as if inherently so—is likely to encourage them in such behaviour.



3. Draw out their story: When your child faces a moral dilemma, talk it out with them. First, hear their own story about it, how they see the issue, its concrete circumstances, and potential consequences. This will entail asking them good reflective questions that draw upon their own inner moral sense; encouraging them to use this capacity will develop it. As such a conversation unfolds and as appropriate, share your own sense of what is right or wrong in this regard, the teachings of Christian faith on the issue, and the reasons for this teaching. Then, rather than a fiat or directive by you as parent, invite them to see for themselves what is the best thing to do and to make their own decision—unless they choose one harmful or unfair to themselves or others. Then have them take responsibility for the decisions they make and the consequences.

4. Share how your own conscience works: An invaluable source of conscience formation for your children is your own example as you put your conscience to work in the affairs of daily life. They will learn from your example. Add to its good effect by taking time—at least occasionally—to explain why you act so, your moral reasoning and faith-based rationale for the decisions you make.

5. Try democratic family conversation: When there are moral issues involved for the whole family, encourage all the members to speak their word of conscience and let them be heard. Try to reach consensus. Should you need to make a different decision as parent, explain your rationale.

6. Practice compassion and justice within and outside of the family: Doing works of compassion for those in need, both inside and outside of the family, is most likely to form this disposition in your children. The same can be said of doing acts of justice as a family together. Take teachable moments, as well, for conversations that reflect on the need to reform cultural mores

and social structures that are unjust and oppressive.

7. Let the whole ethos of the home reflect social responsibility: This can include a myriad of practices like truth telling, showing empathy, respecting one another's person and property, avoiding language patterns that reflect bias of any kind (based on race, gender, ethnicity, economics), good listening to each other, following the rules in family games, reducing, reusing, and recycling, energy efficiency, not wasting food or water, celebrating one another's gifts, etc.

8. Favour restorative justice: When there needs to be "consequences" for poor decisions, imagine ways to practice restorative justice. This means to offset the consequences of a poor decision by doing the contrary. For example, doing something mean can be corrected by a loving deed in restitution, and if possible for the person wronged.

9. Remember mercy and forgiveness: Remind your child that when he/she does something wrong, there is always the ready offer of forgiveness from you and from God. As Jesus said, quoting the prophet Hosea, "It is mercy I desire, not sacrifice" (Mt 9:13). You might even take such a teachable moment to remind them of the rich Catholic tradition of a sacrament of reconciliation. They may not need it often, but they will likely need it sometime!

10. When needed, apologize yourself: When you do something wrong and contrary to your conscience which negatively affects your family, admit your fault rather than covering for it. If you do something wrong against your child, be sure to apologize directly and ask for mercy. All parents make mistakes or poor moral judgments at times; you help to form their conscience when you say to a child, in one way or another, "I did wrong, I am sorry, please forgive me." ■



THINKING ABOUT RE

A Four-Step Solution

(Gabriel Moran. 1981. *Interplay: A Theory of Religion and Education*, p. 145-147)

The process of religious education can be outlined in the following four steps:

1. The starting place is the gifts of life in any community. Community does not have to be invented although it may need shaping. We are all born into families, and we develop within networks of neighbours, friends, ethnic groupings, and work associates. Every community has a set of ordinary affairs, its rituals, codes, and daily tasks. Religious education depends for its beginning on the feeling of gratitude for the gifts of ordinary life. Each morning is a miracle of grace: the sun, the air, the flowers, the food, and a thousand other gifts.

Any human being who reflects for a moment knows that humans did not invent the world nor are they in charge of the universe. The attitude of receptiveness to gifts is found in all children. If adults seem to lack this attitude, it is because they have forgotten what they once knew. I think that all of the great religions have this attitude at their centre; certainly Jewish and Christian traditions do. "Give us this day our daily bread." "Give thanks to the Lord for all his gifts."

2. The ordinary life is limited. We go through daily and habitual routines dimly conscious that there is more to life. Occasionally someone or some event jolts our awareness. Every person in the community is capable of recognising that there are things which are out of the ordinary. Probably the most obvious example of the non-ordinary is death.

Some people in a community are especially aware that ordinary life is merely ordinary. They do not repudiate the ordinary affairs of humans but they sense the limits of what most people most of the time take for granted. In particular, the ordinary distribution of the world's goods seems to be very unfair. The ordering of the ordinary world is not the only order there could be. The humans' share in arranging the way that things are is seriously flawed.

3. Religion teachers are those who have some vision of the non-ordinary but who do not flee from the ordinary. They refuse to accept the limits of the ordinary world as the final limits of the universe. Far from hating the joys and pleasures of this world, they look for a way to deepen those joys and spread them to others.

The language for carrying out this process should be simple, poetic, and paradoxical. In the deeper appreciation of life's gifts and in the stories of a people's past, symbolic representations of a universal truth are found. One cannot completely convert the vision and its symbols into discursive statements. Great religious teachers play with language, often bending it back on itself in the form of double negatives. "I teach ill and the ending of ill," says the Buddha. Or in another formula: "Zen is the thorn for removing the thorn of our egos." Christian tradition is equally laden with negative words in both its doctrinal and ascetical histories. Terms which are negative in form (e.g., infinite) are often double negatives in meaning.

4. The claim made by a religious educator is neither "let's have a discussion in which all possibilities are open" nor "let me tell you the way things should be." Rather the claim is: "I and mine are not wrong; we have in our past and present an experience of something



real and valuable. Join with us as we struggle against our biases and work to reduce the world's sufferings." A religion teacher tries to provide language, imagery, and practices to free people from illusion and strengthen their resistance to evil. In destroying what destroys our community existence, we affirm a life together in justice and peace.

Humans never escape from limits. Even virtue must have its limits, as Montesquieu wisely noted. The great teacher pushes back the frontiers of our ordinary and unjust world only by imposing stronger discipline and new order. The task is liberation from specific oppressions; we must do nothing less, and we should attempt nothing more. We cannot create a better world than God's, and we should be hesitant to attribute what is wrong to God's intention. Our task is patiently and realistically to move in the right direction. In Thomas More's words: "What you can't put right you must try to make as little wrong as possible. For things will never be perfect until human beings are perfect - which I don't expect them to be for quite a number of years."

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Let's get creative about climate change!



CLASSROOM PRACTICE

Teaching and learning methodologies for religious education

CONCEPT FORMATION AND CASE STUDY

SUMMARY

Stories/accounts/texts are presented to students who analyse the main components and processes to initiate consideration of an issue or raise awareness of the different aspects of a concept.

PROCEDURE

1. Present examples using different forms of expression.
2. Differentiate the specific objects or events in each example and identify the critical attributes.
3. Identify the common properties in the examples.
4. Label the concept.
5. Obtain further examples of the concept using different forms of expression.

FORMS OF EXPRESSION

Literary Expression: Writing poems/songs/stories can be creative and energising. These methods can be used for evaluation, for exploring hopes and dreams, or for creative expression. Stories can be worked through in groups and a variety of possible endings suggested for different scenarios.

Dramatic Expression: Drama/mime/dance can be introduced to groups in short exercises, such as body sculpture (where members adopt a pose to express their understanding of a reading, feeling or attitude). Try exercise routines to music. These methods shift the energy within a group and can be useful in breaking down barriers and boundaries that limit the group's cohesion or development.

Visual Expression

- Drawing releases creativity and allows students to express themselves other than in words. Ask students to describe their drawings to other group members. Use this to explore hopes, expectations, fears, present situation, fantasies and evaluation.
- Photo Speak using a collection of photographs from which students can pick an image which for them represents a concept etc.
- Collages made out of magazines and newspapers, which represent students' images, can facilitate personal and group exploration or evaluation.
- Graffiti boards are blank sheets of paper, card or board on which students can write comments on group issues. These can be useful to allow students to express themselves in a concise way. They can use cartoons or drawings or words which when brought back into the larger group can generate discussion.
- Quilts are collective or individual visual representations of events, feelings or stories made up from materials, sewing stitches and sometimes patches of cloth. Paper can also be used. Students can come together to create a quilt using the time to discuss, analyse and share experiences while being creative and active.



ARTICLE (CPTD)

Cultivating the Virtue of Teacher Presence in Transformative Education: Inspirations from the Spiritual Writings of John Baptist De La Salle

(Alfred Pang Kah Meng, Boston College, School of Theology and Ministry)

Abstract

This paper highlights the importance of teacher presence in transformative learning, particularly in the context of schooling for young people. Specifically, it retrieves the prophetic mysticism in the spiritual writings of John Baptist De La Salle in the 17th century, and considers its contemporary relevance as a spiritual foundation for teacher presence, nurturing an ethical vision of teaching in light of Christian faith. Through the lens of Lasallian spirituality, I discuss how Robert Starratt's triple articulation of presence as affirming, enabling, and critical may be spiritually deepened through cultivating an awareness of God as (a) present in the young, as (b) providential presence for the young, and as (c) just presence with the poor accordingly.

Introduction

"Let us remember we are in the Holy Presence of God" - this was a maxim that we began with every morning at assembly prayer in the Lasallian secondary school in Singapore where I was educated. Another maxim that the school adopted as a theme during my junior year, and it has since then become a popular philosophy that informs my educational practice, was "Learning how to learn." As I reflect on the possible connections between these two maxims, an aspect of Lasallian schooling that strikes me as memorable has been my experience of teachers who embodied a certain presence as they carried out their professional commitments. How might this sense of teacher presence be characterized, and in what ways is this connected to the Lasallian tradition of Catholic schooling? This paper as such considers how Lasallian spirituality attends to the cultivation of teacher presence in companioning young people today to 'learn how to learn,' which, to me, serves as a shorthand for transformative learning.

This paper will do two things. First, it explains the core dynamics of transformative learning (TL) but with a focus to situate the importance of teacher presence, particularly in the context of schooling for young people, where the role of teachers is perhaps more pronounced as companioning adolescents to grow into a habit of reflecting critically and acting responsibly. It is in light of teachers' accompaniment with young people that I highlight the importance of what Robert Starratt (2012: 121) calls "the virtue of presence."¹ Second, this paper re-frames this "virtue of presence" through the lens of Lasallian spirituality, drawing on John Baptist De La Salle's *Meditations for the Time of Retreat* and the *Meditations for Sundays and Feasts*.² Though written in the 17th century, his spiritual writings, I argue, continue

¹ Robert J. Starratt, *Cultivating an Ethical School* (New York and London: Routledge, 2012), 121.

² These sources are published in a single anthology as John Baptist De La Salle, *Meditations by John Baptist de La Salle*, trans. Richard Arandez, FSC, and Augustine Loes, FSC, ed. Augustine Loes, FSC, and Francis Huether, FSC (Landover, Md.: Lasallian Publications, 1994). Specific references to



to be relevant to teachers today because of their emphasis on a critical contemplative stance toward education, which in turn cultivates the prophetic dimension of teacher presence.

“Learning how to learn”: Dynamics of Transformative Learning (TL) and the Importance of Teacher Presence

Through the theoretical lens of transformative learning, learning how to learn is first recognizing the educational process as engaging a complex dynamic of meaning making. Jack Mezirow, who introduced the concept of transformative learning in adult education, speaks of meaning making in terms of a re-visioning and enlargement of one’s “frame of reference”, which is “the structure of assumptions and expectations through which we filter sense impressions.”³ The presumption here is that “how we see the world is a result of our perceptions of our experiences,”⁴ and so the process of transformative learning aims to make explicit for ourselves the multiple lens with which we interpret and order the meaning of our lives. Learning is value-laden. A central element in transformative learning, then, is critical reflection that challenges learners to name and assess the validity of those values, beliefs, and assumptions that are taken-for-granted in their frames of reference, “making them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective ... to guide action.”⁵ According to Mezirow, critical reflection in transformative learning is facilitated by discourse, which is “the process in which we have an active dialogue with others to better understand the meaning of an experience.”⁶ Seen in this light, learning how to learn calls for a sense of community and demands a dialogical spirit of collaboration between teachers and students as learners on a journey.

This journey is a movement toward self-actualization, which presumes the freedom and autonomy of human beings to make personal choices.⁷ “Transformation Theory’s focus is on how we learn to negotiate and act on our own purposes, values, feelings, and meanings rather than those we have uncritically assimilated from others – to gain greater control over our lives as socially responsible, clear-thinking decision makers.”⁸ The accent is placed here on recognizing and growing into “a sense of responsible agency” in the context of relationships that are always situated within wider patterns of power shaped by culture, socioeconomic structures and ideologies.⁹ Theorists and practitioners after Mezirow have taken up this social dimension of transformative learning and highlighted its emancipatory potential. Stephen Brookfield goes as far to argue that reflection is distinctively critical in fostering

De La Salle’s are hereafter cited in text as *M*, followed by the meditation number and section standardized in the anthology.

³ Jack Mezirow, “Learning to Think Like an Adult: Core Concepts of Transformation Theory,” in *Learning as Transformation: Critical Perspectives on a Theory in Progress*, ed. Jack Mezirow & Associates (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 16.

⁴ Patricia Cranton and Edward W. Taylor, “Transformative Learning Theory: Seeking a More Unified Theory,” in *The Handbook of Transformative Learning: Theory, Research, and Practice*, ed. Edward W. Taylor, Patricia Cranton & Associates (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012), 5.

⁵ Mezirow, “Learning to Think Like an Adult: Core Concepts of Transformation Theory,” 7-8.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁷ Cranton and Taylor, “Transformative Learning Theory: Seeking a More Unified Theory,” 6.

⁸ Mezirow, “Learning to Think Like an Adult,” 8.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 8.



transformative learning only when it engages in “ideology critique.”¹⁰ By this, he means challenging hegemonic practices in order to uncover and imagine alternative ways of being that are otherwise silenced and marginalized.¹¹ Laurent A. Parks Daloz emphasizes the connection between transformative learning and social responsibility that builds on a “capacity to identify one’s own sense of self with the well-being of all life.”¹² In particular, he calls for “a constructive engagement with otherness.”¹³ What he means by this is that we learn to perceive our encounters with difference not as threat, but as opportunities for ongoing dialogue to seek understanding and build bridges for the “common good.”¹⁴ From this emancipatory dimension of transformative learning, learning how to learn is developing a critical awareness of our mutual responsibility towards one another, fostering a raised consciousness that informs our convictions to work toward social change.

The literature on TL underscores the ethical nature of learning. That is, the good of learning is not simply the transmission of knowledge from somewhere ‘out there.’ Rather, the good is found in the critical ‘sorting-out’ and interiorization of what is known so as to know and enact one’s situated position as agent within the social world s/he inhabits with others. The realization of agency paradoxically stems from our recognition as vulnerable inter-dependent social beings bound in responsive relations of co-creative responsibility. This ethical nature of learning necessarily implicates teaching as an intrinsically ethical practice.¹⁵ Yet, the role of educators (and school teachers in particular) seems to be sidelined in the literature on TL following Mezirow, perhaps because Mezirow first developed his theory on transformative learning for adult education.¹⁶ Contrary to Mezirow, I see TL as an ongoing process throughout life. Given my interest in this paper on teaching young people in schools, a more significant issue would be the distinctive place of adolescence in relation to the process of transformative learning. The question, then, is how we ought to begin to introduce the process of transformative learning for adolescents. What would help young people learn *about* learning how to learn in the context of schooling?

In light of this question, I suggest that teachers play a more pronounced role in schools as companioning adults who support and challenge young people to recognize and navigate the social and cultural world of values in which they find themselves, encouraging them to

¹⁰ Stephen D. Brookfield, “Transformative Learning as Ideology Critique,” in *Learning as Transformation: Critical Perspectives on a Theory in Progress*, ed. Jack Mezirow & Associates (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 128.

¹¹ Ibid., 138.

¹² Laurent A. Parks Daloz, “Transformative Learning for the Common Good,” in *Learning as Transformation: Critical Perspectives on a Theory in Progress*, ed. Jack Mezirow & Associates (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 105.

¹³ Ibid., 110.

¹⁴ Ibid., 109-112.

¹⁵ Starratt, *Cultivating an Ethical School*, 108.

¹⁶ Mezirow, “Learning to Think Like an Adult,” 26. Mezirow writes, “Although adolescents may learn to become critically reflective of the assumptions of others, becoming critically reflective of one’s own assumptions appears to be much more likely to occur in adults.” It is beyond the scope of this paper to evaluate critically his methodological move to delimit critical self-reflection as a distinctively adult capacity. For a view that broadens TL to include the whole life span, see Robert Kegan, “What Form” Transforms? – A Constructivist-Developmental Approach to Transformative Learning,” in *Learning as Transformation: Critical Perspectives on a Theory in Progress*, ed. Jack Mezirow & Associates (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000).



ask questions and to be attentive to the impact of their actions on others. The quality of teacher presence is integral to their work of accompaniment such that the school is not only an agent of socialization, but also a social ethical force that positions young people to see that their lives do in fact matter for the transformation of their everyday realities. Starratt speaks about presence as a virtue that facilitates teaching as an ethical practice.¹⁷ According to him, there are three senses to this “virtue of presence”¹⁸ – *affirming presence*, *enabling presence*, and *critical presence*:

Affirming presence accepts the person or the event as it is, in its ambiguity, its particularity, its multidimensionality. Enabling presence is open to the possibilities of the person or event to contain or reveal something special, something of deep value and significance. Critical presence expects to find both negative and positive features in persons and events. People and events and circumstances reveal unequal relationships of power and reciprocity. Critical presence brings to light what is tacit, assumed, or presumed in situations that reflect human constructions and beliefs.¹⁹

Starratt’s discussion on presence, however, is narrowly framed as the learner’s dialogical engagement with study material.²⁰ To the extent that teaching is “virtuous practice,”²¹ his notion of presence can and ought to be extended to include the teacher’s way of being with students in the learning process. In the next section, I reframe Starratt’s three senses of presence – affirming, enabling, and critical – through the lens of Lasallian spirituality, which serves to nourish an ethical vision of teaching in light of faith.

“Let us remember we are in the Holy Presence of God”: Lasallian Spirituality and the Cultivation of Teacher Presence

A French priest and theologian, John Baptist De La Salle founded the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in 1680. In 1950, fifty years after his canonization, he was declared the patron saint of all teachers of youth. De La Salle’s writings articulated an educational mission that demonstrated a preferential option not only for the poor, but *also* for children (more specifically boys) through gratuitous schools in France.²² In this section, I offer a reading of De La Salle’s spiritual writings with a focus on how they contribute to a contemporary Christian spirituality for educators in cultivating what Starratt has described as the “virtue of presence” that inspires not only the process of transformative learning, but also creates an environment that facilitates a habit of learning how to learn.

¹⁷ Starratt, *Cultivating an Ethical School*, 121. Starratt identifies three virtues integral to the ethical work of teaching and learning: “the virtue of presence, the virtue of authenticity, and the virtue of responsibility.” This paper focuses on presence.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 121.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 122.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 121.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 114.

²² For a historical biography of De La Salle’s faith journey in establishing the work of the Christian Brothers in France, see Luke Salm, FSC, *The Work is Yours: The Life of Saint John Baptist de La Salle* (Romeoville, Illinois: Christian Brothers Publications, 1989). Salm writes, “For De La Salle and the Brothers gratuity of instruction was a fundamental principle. This not only provided a quality education for the poor, but also guaranteed that no distinction would be made in the school between those who could afford to pay and those who could not.” (p. 57)



My analysis will draw on two sources: *Meditations for the Time of Retreat* and the *Meditations for Sundays and Feasts*. Written sometime after 1707 and before De La Salle's death in 1719, *Meditations for the Time of Retreat* is a centerpiece in Lasallian spirituality in that its sixteen pieces encapsulate De La Salle's faith journey with an intent to have the Brothers and, by extension, lay Christian educators, reflect and "discover their spiritual, charismatic identity in the roots of their calling."²³ Similarly, *Meditations for Sundays and Feasts*, though originally published and distributed among the Brothers after De La Salle's death, offer for us today a spiritual vision that integrates practical directives for educators, highlighting in particular their ethical commitments to the poor and the young.²⁴

What I want to highlight is the critical contemplative stance toward pedagogy in Lasallian spirituality. For De La Salle, spirituality is not an add-on or mere enhancer to the art of education. Rather, teaching *is* spiritual; it is "divine work," according to Lasallian scholar George Van Grieken.²⁵ This does not mean that teachers are to lord over their students as demigods.

Rather, as "cooperators with Jesus Christ" (M.195), they are to be mindful of the power they have been given not to hurt but to heal, as well as to be attentive to the activity of God's Spirit in the educational process. Theologian and Lasallian scholar Michel Sauvage has described this critical contemplative stance in De La Salle's writings as "mystical realism."²⁶ As he explains, De La Salle's source of spirituality is in "the lived experience of God, but an experience that is reinterpreted, reconstructed and relocated in the context of the history of salvation."²⁷ Sauvage outlines a four-fold rhythm to this mystical realism:

1. Consider the concrete teaching situation.
2. Contemplate the element of mystery involved within it.
3. Make a renewed commitment to transform the present reality.
4. Be open to the transcendent and freely given Ultimate.²⁸

In practice, this four-fold rhythm is more iterative and cyclical rather than linear. What is worth retrieving here in De La Salle's writings is a prophetic mysticism that spiritually grounds the virtuous practice of teacher presence for transformative educational praxis. Lasallian spirituality calls teachers to remember that God is relationally encountered as Presence in the everyday of educational activity as co-creatorship with God's Spirit, walking with the young on the journey of discipleship.²⁹

At the heart of Lasallian spirituality, then is an awareness of the connectedness between God, teachers, and students in the school as a faith community wherein the process of trans-

²³ Miguel Campos, FSC, "Introduction to *Meditations for the Time of Retreat*," in *Meditations by John Baptist de La Salle*, trans. Richard Arnandez, FSC, and Augustine Loes, FSC, ed. Augustine Loes, FSC, and Francis Huether, FSC (Landover, Md.: Lasallian Publications, 1994), 415.

²⁴ Carl Koch, Jeffrey Calligan, FSC, and Jeffrey Gros, FSC, ed., *John Baptist de la Salle: The Spirituality of Christian Education* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2004), 28.

²⁵ George Van Grieken, FSC., "Soul for Soul – the Vocation of the Child in Lasallian Pedagogy," in *The Vocation of the Child*, ed. Patrick McKinley Brennan (Grand Rapids, Michigan and Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008), 379.

²⁶ Michel Sauvage, FSC, *The Gospel Journey of John Baptist De La Salle (1651-1719)*, trans. Luke Salm, FSC. Lecture at the Center of St. Louis of France in Rome on December 11, 1984: 5.

²⁷ Ibid., 7.

²⁸ Ibid., 5.

²⁹ De La Salle frequently refers to children as "disciples" in his *Meditations* (e.g. M 195.1, 196.1, 198.2)



formative learning happens. It is in being mindful of and living into this connectedness that teachers cultivate an educational presence, which in turn reflects God's presence in schooling.

Starratt's triple articulation of presence as affirming, enabling, and critical may be spiritually deepened through cultivating an awareness of God as (a) present in the young, as (b) providential presence for the young, and as (c) just presence with the poor and socially marginalized accordingly.

a) Affirming Presence through an Awareness of God as Present in the Young

Through the lens of Lasallian spirituality, affirming presence is cultivated through an awareness of the human dignity of the young as created in the image and likeness of God. A dominant metaphor in De La Salle's writings is that of "touching hearts," which characterizes the fundamentally relational nature of education. In his meditation on Saint Peter as a model of faith for educators, De La Salle wrote:

Do you have a faith that is such that it is able to touch the hearts of your students and inspire them with the Christian spirit? This is the greatest miracle you could perform and the one that God asks of you, for this is the purpose of your work. (*M* 139.3)

The young, then, are also "a letter which Jesus Christ dictates to you, which you write each day in their hearts, not with ink, but by the Spirit of the living God, who acts in you and by you through the power of Jesus Christ" (*M* 195.2). From the standpoint of this relational pedagogy of the heart, transformation takes place from within and between persons who come to see each other in their complex wholeness. As such, affirming presence orients an educator to pay personal attention to each young person as a unique child of God, and in doing so creates the conditions for the classroom to be a trustworthy space for transformative learning. Such a trustworthy space that allows for the vulnerability of learners also demands discipline.

In encouraging teachers to seek out metaphors of "respectful discipline" that allows for an authentic manner of relating with students, Rachel Kessler writes: "Knowing that their vulnerability will be respected and protected, both teachers and students can begin to open their hearts, to connect deeply with themselves and one another, and risk bringing their full humanity to the classroom."³⁰ Lasallian spirituality is helpful in this regard as it grounds discipline within an ethic of care that recognizes the dignity of the young. While some may find De La Salle's language of reproofs and corrections to be austere and paternalistic, this would be to overlook his insistence on guiding the young with "gentleness," "patience" and "prudence" (*M* 203.2). De La Salle asserts that "[t]he first thing to which we must pay attention is not to undertake reproofs and corrections except under the guidance of the Spirit of God" (*M* 204.1). He further emphasizes, "We must reprove and correct with justice, by helping the children to recognize the wrong they have done, and what correction the fault they have committed deserves, and we must try to have them accept it" (*M* 204.1). As Van Grieken notes of De La Salle's approach to discipline, "Instead of putting the burden on the

³⁰ Rachel Kessler, "Soul of Students, Soul of Teachers: Welcoming the Inner Life to School," in *Schools with Spirit: Nurturing the Inner Lives of Children and Teachers*, ed. Linda Lantieri (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001), 121.



children, it is the teachers who must look at how they make themselves or their actions unbearable to those entrusted to their care.”³¹

Underscored, then, are the principles of justice, charity and kindness that affirm young people as being “endowed with reason and must not be corrected like animals, but like reasonable persons” (M 204.1). Lasallian spirituality cultivates an affirming presence that holds in tension the vulnerability of young people with their capacity for moral agency.

b) Enabling Presence through an Awareness of God as Providential Presence for the Young

Enabling presence is being open and tending to the surprising possibilities that young people bring. Lasallian spirituality frames the enabling presence of educators within a dual dynamic of faith and zeal in light of God’s providence. Now, when we speak about Lasallian spirituality, we cannot separate it from De La Salle’s profound experience of God as Providence, not in the abstract but as a life force working concretely within and with him. As De La Salle wrote upon retrospection of his work in Christian education:

It was undoubtedly for this reason that God, Who guides all things with wisdom and serenity, Whose way it is not to force the inclinations of persons, willed to commit me entirely to the development of the schools. He [sic] did this in an imperceptible way and over a long period of time so that one commitment led to another in a way that I did not foresee in the beginning.³²

It was this trust in divine providence that sustained De La Salle’s educational mission. His experience of a God who guided him gently and with wisdom had also shaped his vision of educators as trustworthy guides and mentors, walking the way of transformation with the young as a gradual process, in faith and zeal. In the Lasallian tradition, then, faith disposes teachers to trust in a God who generously provides. Such is a faith that orients educators to contemplate on the wideness of God’s goodness, and to bring it forth in the students they encounter in concrete experience. Zeal is the lived expression of faith that compels educators to embody God’s love for all in ways that the young can recognize and practice. As Van Grieken puts it, “Without zeal, faith had no substance, and without faith, zeal had no purpose.”³³ The accent here is on role modeling. As De La Salle notes, “Your zeal for the children you instruct would not go very far and would not have much result or success if it limited itself only to words. To make it effective it is necessary that your example support your instructions, and this is one of the main signs of your zeal” (M 202.3). What this means for initiating young people into the journey of transformative learning is that educators ought to walk through it themselves by modeling “qualities of intellectual curiosity, tolerance for ambiguity, and intellectual and social humility.”³⁴ Lasallian spirituality thus frames the enabling presence of teachers as witnessing to a spirit of faith and zeal that challenges educators to become simultaneously learners with their students, and model an openness of heart that is essential for critical reflection.

³¹ Van Grieken, F.S.C., “Soul for Soul – the Vocation of the Child in Lasallian Pedagogy,” 367.

³² Jean-Baptiste Blain, *The Life of John Baptist de La Salle*, cited in Van Grieken, FSC., *Touching the Hearts of Students*, 23-24. Emphasis mine.

³³ George Van Grieken, FSC., *Touching the Hearts of Students: Characteristics of Lasallian Schools* (Landover, MD: Christian Brothers Publications, 1999), 74.

³⁴ Nadira K. Charaniya, “Cultural-Spiritual Perspective of Transformative Learning,” in *The Handbook of Transformative Learning: Theory, Research, and Practice*, ed. Edward W. Taylor, Patricia Cranton & Associates (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012), 240.



c) Critical Presence through an Awareness of God's Just Presence with the Poor and Socially Marginalized

Critical presence is engagement with social realities in all their contradictions with a mindfulness of how power shapes relationships. Lasallian spirituality cultivates an educator's critical presence with a social sensitivity that is mission-oriented toward educating the poor.³⁵ A recurrent theme in De La Salle's writings is a concern for the social abandonment of the young due to poverty:

Consider that it is a practice only too common for the working class and the poor to allow their children to live on their own, roaming all over like vagabonds as long as they are not able to put them to some work; these parents have no concern to send their children to school because their poverty does not allow them to pay teachers, or else, obliged to look for work outside their homes, they have to abandon their children to themselves [...] God has had the goodness to remedy so great a misfortune by the establishment of the Christian Schools. (M 194.1)

Underscored here is the prophetic dimension of Lasallian spirituality that works toward educational justice, revealing God's solidarity with the poor and socially marginalized. The Christian Schools, for De La Salle, had been established out of God's Providence for the poor. As he also writes in his meditation on the Feast of the Epiphany:

Recognize Jesus beneath the poor rags of the children whom you have to instruct. Adore him in them. Love poverty and honor the poor after the example of the Magi, for poverty should be dear to you who are responsible for the instruction of the poor. May faith lead you to do this with affection and zeal, because the children are the members of Jesus Christ. In this way this divine Savior will be pleased with you, and you will find him, because he always loved the poor and poverty. (M 96.3)

What is expressed here is not only a preferential option for the poor, but also for the young who belong to God through Christ.

The mission-oriented nature of Lasallian spirituality is further embedded in its language of reconciliation to characterize the task of education. De La Salle frequently speaks of teachers as "ambassadors and ministers of Jesus Christ" (M 195.2). The genius of De La Salle lies in his creative adaption of Pauline language to articulate a Christian spirituality for teachers:

Since God according to the expression of the same Apostle [Paul], has made you his ministers in order to reconcile them to him and he has entrusted to you for this purpose the word of reconciliation for them, exhort them, then, as if God were exhorting them through you, for you have been destined to cultivate these young plants by announcing to them the truths of the Gospel, and to procure for them the means of salvation appropriate to their development. (M 193.3)

There is a tendency to privatize this language of reconciliation to an individual's relationship with God. However, in its commitment toward social justice, Lasallian spirituality opens up a space for the meaning of reconciliation to be imagined socially, such that care for the young is also paying critical attention to communal structures that oppress or liberate them.

³⁵ Koch et al., ed., *John Baptist de la Salle: The Spirituality of Christian Education*, 32.



Seen through the lens of Lasallian spirituality, the educator is being critically present when s/he engages in the work of social transformation by tending to the wounds of young people inflicted socially at the intersection of exclusionary structures such as classism, racism, sexism, homo- and trans-phobia. If transformative learning aims to cultivate the agency of young people, critical presence demands that educators be vigilant of how they might be complicit in perpetuating institutional structures in their curriculum and pedagogical practices that unjustly obscure and diminish the humanity of the young. Lasallian spirituality therefore cultivates an ethical vision of schooling that is concerned with the well-being of young people not only as individuals, but also as creative beings whose human flourishing as agents is situated and communally negotiated within a configuration of structural relations that involves power. Critical presence, then, obliges teachers to reflect on how they are using power responsibly to engage youth participation in resisting and transforming structures that keep communities in dehumanizing situations of impoverishment. From the perspective of faith, this mandate is rooted in and sustained by a spiritual awareness of God's just and creative presence with the poor and socially marginalized.

Conclusion

In reviewing the dynamics of transformative learning, I have highlighted the importance of teacher presence, particularly in relation to young people in schools. Teacher presence, as Kessler understands it, is a "way of being in the world of the classroom ... [which] will ultimately determine how safe and open students will feel when we invite them to explore deep matters."³⁶ In other words, with regard to transformative learning, the quality of teacher presence plays an important part in creating a trustworthy environment conducive for young people to begin to grow in a habit of critical reflection. Starratt reframes presence as a virtue integral to teaching as an ethical practice that shapes individuals as relational beings who belong in communities. Where this paper hopes to make a contribution is to interpret this virtue of teacher presence through the lens of Lasallian spirituality. The spiritual writings of John Baptist De La Salle offer a critical contemplative stance to education, which, I suggest, is productive for nourishing and deepening an ethical vision of teaching. What is particularly evocative in De La Salle's works that ought to be reclaimed for contemporary educators is his practice of prophetic mysticism in education. He writes:

You must, then, devote yourself very much to prayer in order to succeed in your ministry. You must constantly represent the needs of your disciples to Jesus Christ, explaining to him the difficulties you have experienced in guiding them. Jesus Christ, seeing that you regard him as the one who can do everything in your work and yourself as an instrument that ought to be moved only by him, will not fail to grant you what you ask of him. (M.196.1)

De La Salle's point here is not only highlighting the importance of prayer as sustenance in the ministry of teaching. In my view, he is articulating a more radical view of teaching as prayer; that is, the teacher embodies a contemplative presence that incarnates the life of God's Spirit.

So let us remember we are in the Holy Presence of God. Being present to the young also calls us to be present before a generous God who invites, inspires, and transforms us from within. It is to remember there is nothing outside of God's being-in-relation with us through Christ

³⁶ Kessler, "Soul of Students, Soul of Teachers," 118.



and in the power of the Spirit. Ultimately, Lasallian spirituality frames the virtue of teacher presence as witness to the Gospel that celebrates the radical outreach of God's inclusive love through the incarnation of Christ, who first came to us as a child. This Gospel is announced to all, and its privileged hearers the poor and the young.

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FEATURE: VATICAN II

Dignitatis humanae

DECLARATION ON RELIGIOUS FREEDOM
ON THE RIGHT OF THE PERSON AND OF COMMUNITIES
TO SOCIAL AND CIVIL FREEDOM IN MATTERS RELIGIOUS
PROMULGATED BY HIS HOLINESS POPE PAUL VI ON DECEMBER 7, 1965

THE DOCUMENT

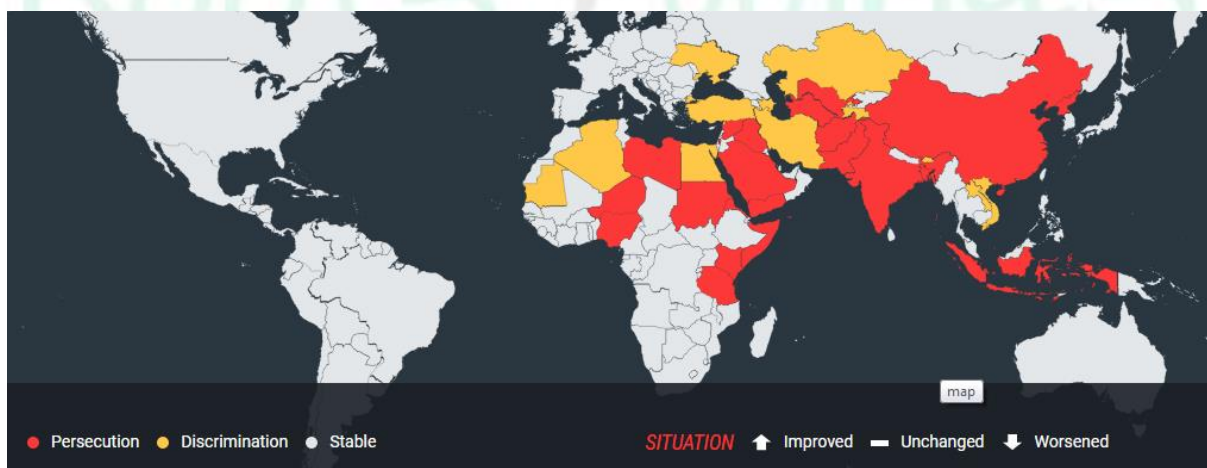
The opening paragraphs of *Dignitatis humanae* name the two key principles that ground the document's argument for religious freedom. They are the dignity of the human person and the inviolability of human conscience.

A sense of the dignity of the human person has been impressing itself more and more deeply on the consciousness of contemporary man(sic), and the demand is increasingly made that men should act on their own judgment, enjoying and making use of a responsible freedom, not driven by coercion but motivated by a sense of duty (par. 1).

It is in accordance with their dignity as persons—that is, beings endowed with reason and free will and therefore privileged to bear personal responsibility—that all men should be at once impelled by nature and also bound by a moral obligation to seek the truth, especially religious truth. They are also bound to adhere to the truth, once it is known, and to order their whole lives in accord with the demands of truth (par. 2).

Thus, from the right to religious liberty flows the responsibility to exercise this freedom which the document states must be a civil right enshrined by the constitutional law of all countries.

This Vatican Council declares that the human person has a right to religious freedom. This freedom means that all men are to be immune from coercion on the part of individuals or of social groups and of any human power, in such wise that no one is to be forced to act in a manner contrary to his own beliefs, whether privately or publicly, whether alone or in association with others, within due limits (par. 2).



Aid to the Church in Need - Religious Freedom Report 2016

<http://religious-freedom-report.org/>



THE LITURGY

The dignity of the human person stems from the person being created in the image of God. This the liturgy celebrates this in many ways, recounting the love story between God and humanity and in foreshadowing the Kingdom of God where the unity of humankind is (or should be) expressed without division. In writing to the Galatians, Paul reminds us that "there is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus" (3:28).

THE SCHOOL EUCHARIST



intact."³⁷

The Catholic School is a community that invites all to participate, but it faces a dilemma when it comes to worship, especially if such worship takes the form of the Eucharist. For then, at the point of expressing unity in Christ, the community is divided into Church and not-Church. Pope John Paul II's encyclical letter, *The Church and Eucharist*, explains why this is so when it underlines the ecclesial nature of eucharistic communion: "The Eucharist, as the supreme sacramental manifestation of communion in the Church, demands to be celebrated in a context where the outward bonds of communion are also

While this is understood, is there no alternative? How can we include the whole school community in its most meaningful symbolic act? How do we give expression to the voice of Jesus when he says, "Let the children come to me; do not try to stop them; for the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to such as these"?³⁸ How might we capture our common aspiration to unity? When the same encyclical says that the Eucharist "creates communion and fosters communion"³⁹, how might this be applied to the Catholic School's eucharistic practice? In another place, the encyclical provides a clue: "It is not possible to give communion to a person who is not baptised or to one who rejects the full truth of the faith regarding the eucharistic mystery."⁴⁰ A positive rendering of this statement indicates what *is* possible. Can the Catholic School not invite all baptised believers to participate in the eucharistic meal?

Good practice, I suggest, would need to hold the tension between ecclesiastical norms and pastoral sensitivity. I would not advocate the open invitation as a matter of course, say at weekly school Masses, but certainly at special occasions decided by the school in consultation with the local bishop, and with his approval. Might we approach the Bishops' Conference to provide some overall direction in this regard for South African Catholic Schools?

We are left to consider the inclusion of members of other faiths. It is true that, according to our policy, "we strive to reach an agreement about participation in ... liturgical worship"⁴¹. Yet, agreement is not one-sided, its terms not dispassionately imposed. Have we ever elicited from these students suggestions as to how they might feel more included? Are we aware of their experience of the Eucharist? We need to do some work in this area.

³⁷ *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, paragraph 38

³⁸ Matthew 19:14

³⁹ *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, paragraph 40

⁴⁰ *ibid*, paragraph 38

⁴¹ *Fostering Hope*, p 10

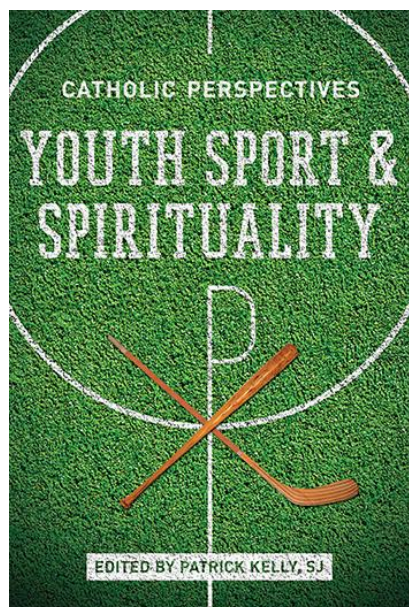


BOOK REVIEW

Youth, Sport and Spirituality

(Edited by Patrick Kelly, SJ)

ISBN: 978-0-268-02403-1, 320 pages, Publication Year: 2015



Unsportsmanlike behavior by student athletes or parents at youth sporting events happens with regularity these days. Much recent research reveals that young people are dropping out of sport at alarming rates due to the often toxic elements in the culture of youth sports. The timely, innovative essays in *Youth Sport and Spirituality* present a wide-ranging overview that draws on resources from Catholic spiritual and theological traditions to address problems such as these, as well as opportunities in youth sport in the United States.

The book consists of two sections. In the first, prominent scholars in philosophy, psychology, theology, and spirituality reflect on how youth sport contributes to the integral development of the person and his or her grasp of spiritual values. The second half of the book consists of chapters written by coaches, athletic directors, and specialists working with youth coaches. These practitioners

share how their approaches to working with youth in sport contribute to the integral development of their players and their openness to transcendent values. The essays examine coaching as ministry, youth sport and moral development, and how parents can act as partners in youth sports, among other topics. The book will interest coaches, athletic directors, and youth ministers in Catholic elementary and high schools in parish settings, as well as undergraduate and graduate students in education who are preparing to teach in Catholic schools.

"This is a much-needed and very important book. As the first book of this kind in the English speaking world it will be welcomed by a range of individuals involved in sport. The book's unique contribution is that it is the first time academics, coaches, and others have explicitly drawn on Catholic accounts from a range of disciplines to inform ideas on youth sport. We already have some excellent work on this topic informed by ideas from secular accounts and those of other Christian denominations; a Catholic perspective will be of great interest to those of that faith and of great importance to others who have little awareness of or do not fully understand this view." — Mark Stephen Nesti, Liverpool John Moores University

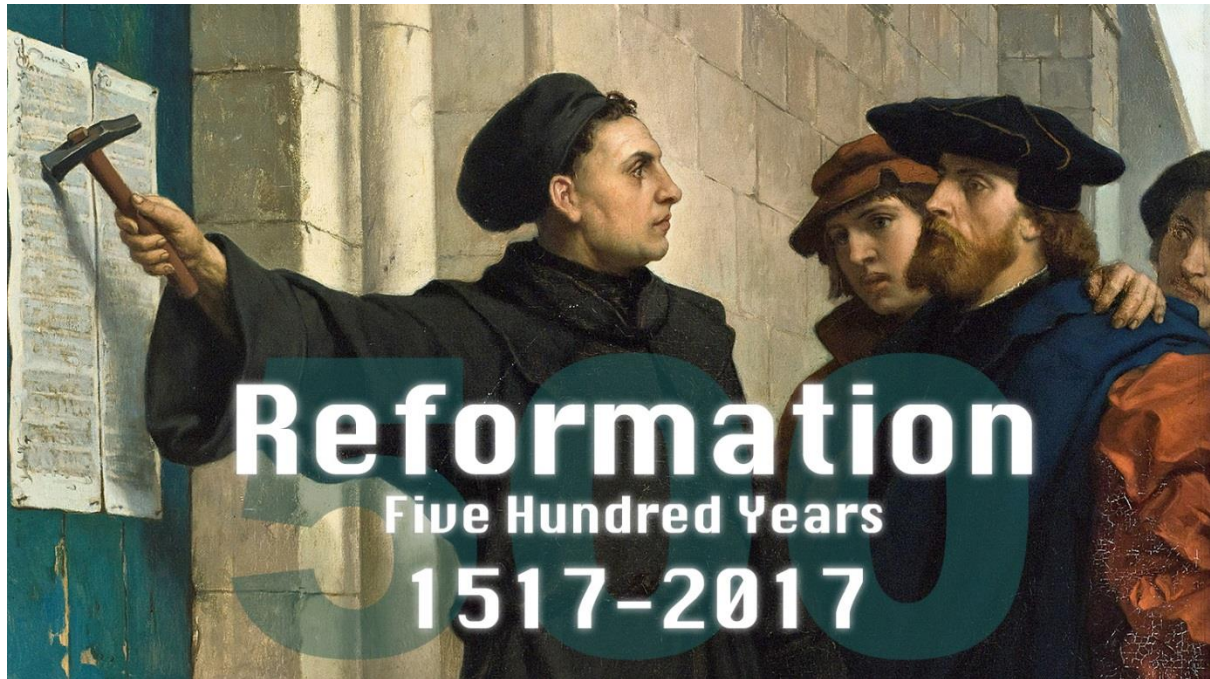
"Fr. Patrick Kelly offers a prophetic voice reminding us that balance, ethical values, and joy be at the heart of youth sports. Offering both academic and practical inspiration, this book calls all athletes, coaches, and parents to integrate competition with character, winning with wisdom, fitness with fun, and sports with spirituality." — Mike Hughes, Athletic Director, Jesuit High School



NEWS

A Pope Confronts the Reformation

(Ray Waddle, Reflections: Yale Divinity School, Fall 2017)



Pope Francis has used a remarkable series of public gatherings to speak about the Reformation anniversary, counting the costs of the catastrophic break with Protestants but also regarding it as a prelude to future Christian unity someday, somehow.

"We must look with love and honesty at our past, recognizing error and seeking forgiveness, for God alone is our judge," he said last year in Lund, Sweden, at a gathering of the Lutheran World Federation.

At different venues, Francis has faulted both sides for the conflict, praised Protestant contributions to theology, spelled out key difference that remain, and stressed common Catholic-Protestant ties such as baptism and the call to share the gospel with the world.

The rupture in the Western church happened when an ancient yearning for Christian unity, "the primordial intuition of God's people," was frustrated by powerful forces religious and secular. At pivotal moments, he says, fear trumped faith on all sides.

"Certainly, there was a sincere will on the part of both sides to profess and uphold the true faith, but at the same time we realize that we closed in on ourselves out of fear or bias with regard to the faith which others profess with a different accent and language," he said at Lund.

He credited the Reformation for giving greater centrality to sacred Scripture. Luther's agonized quest for redemption clarified an important truth.

"The spiritual experience of Martin Luther challenges us to remember that apart from God we can do nothing. 'How can I get a propitious God?' This is the question that haunted Luther. In effect, the question of a just relationship with God is the decisive question for our lives."



At a scholars' gathering this year in Rome, Francis said sustained dialogue provides a "purification of memory" that burns away old resentments and distortions in order to tell history afresh.

"An attentive and rigorous study, free of prejudice and polemics, enables the churches, now in dialogue, to discern and receive all that was positive and legitimate in the Reformation, while distancing themselves from errors, extremes and failures, and acknowledging the sins that led to the division," the pope told the Pontifical Committee for Historical Sciences.

Roman Catholic representatives have been in separate dialogue with Protestant denominations for decades, including Methodist, United Church of Christ, Presbyterian, Lutheran, and Anglican.

Serious obstacles to unity remain with various Protestant bodies – whether over the ordination of women, the ordination of LGBTQ individuals, same-sex marriage, the nature of church authority, shared eucharist, or the power of the papacy.

"While, like our predecessors, we ourselves do not yet see solutions to the obstacles before us, we are undeterred," the pope said last year in a joint statement with Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby.

"Wider and deeper than our differences are the faith that we share and our common joy in the gospel. Christ prayed that his disciples may all be one, 'so that the world might believe' (John 17: 21)."

Francis and Welby said Christians must act together to end environmental destruction, defend human dignity, and advocate for education, healthcare, food, clean water, and other acts of mercy.

"As disciples of Christ we hold human persons to be sacred, and as apostles of Christ we must be their advocates."

A Brief Timeline of Reformation History

- 1517 – Luther circulates 95 Theses on Christian faith and church abuses
- 1521 – Luther is excommunicated by Pope Leo X
- 1526 – William Tyndale translates the New Testament into English
- 1534 – Henry VIII becomes head of the church in England
- 1536 – John Calvin publishes the Institutes of the Christian Religion
- 1545 – The Council of Trent begins, marking the Catholic Counter-Reformation
- 1611 – The King James Version of the Bible is produced
- 1618 – The Thirty Years' War ignites
- 1620 – The first English Puritans land in the New World
- 1667 – The first version of Milton's Paradise Lost is published
- 1720 – Jonathan Edwards graduates from Yale
- 1727 – Bach's St. Matthew Passion is first performed
- 1738 – John and Charles Wesley are converted in England
- 1730s-40s – The First Great Awakening revival moves through the American colonies



Sixth Buddhist-Christian Colloquium

Statement of Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue at end of Nov. 13-16, 2017, meeting

The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue of the Holy See, in cooperation with the Chinese Regional Bishops Conference (CRBC), and Ling Jiou Mountain Buddhist Society, organized the Sixth Buddhist-Christian Colloquium from 13-15 November 2017 at Ling Jiou Buddhist Monastery, and, on the following day, the Closing Ceremony at the Museum of World Religions, Taipei. The general theme was Buddhists and Christians Walking Together on the Path of Nonviolence. The Tzu Chi Foundation, Fo Guang Shan and the Buddhist Association of New Taipei City were also actively involved in organizing this Colloquium.



More than eighty men and women, Buddhist and Christian, representing eighteen countries, attended the Colloquium, among them both academics and practitioners of inter-religious engagement. Participants also included members from the Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences (FABC), the World Council of Churches (WCC), and Monastic Interreligious Dialogue.

The participants noted that in the course of the years, Christian-Buddhist dialogue has made a valuable contribution to improving mutual understanding and mutual knowledge, as well as strengthening relationships and cooperation aimed at promoting a culture of peace and nonviolence on the basis of shared values. The participants also acknowledged that the 21st century has been marked by conflicts that also involve ethnic, cultural, and religious affiliations and identifications. In many regions of the world, cultural diversity has become a social and political issue. Many people have been deprived of equal protection and rights, and are treated as second-class citizens within their own countries.

While acknowledging and appreciating various initiatives at the local, national, regional, and international levels aimed at promoting a culture of encounter and respect, the participants emphasized that much remains to be done to build together a culture of peace with justice for all human beings and to preserve and enhance the welfare of the environment, our common home. The participants stressed that they met at a critical time, when violence has already wreaked havoc in many of their countries, leaving people in desperate need of healing, justice, forgiveness, and reconciliation. They also observed that violence and conflicts today cross borders, and thus local problems become national, regional, and at times, even global ones.

The participants were unanimously agreed that there is no time to lose, since the situation is so serious. Consequently, they noted that on the basis of their respective religious convictions they need to bring new hope to a shattered world by speaking of the love of Jesus and the compassion of the Buddha. This task includes speaking out in defense of the powerless and voiceless, standing up for justice, mending broken hearts and polarized societies, distancing themselves from sectarianism, and halting the building of walls that separate reli-



gions and cultures. At this crucial moment, encouraged by the positive outcome of the Colloquium, the participants, as followers of Buddha and believers in Jesus, were agreed on:

Recognizing that the Sixth Buddhist-Christian Colloquium has been an important milestone in fostering a culture of peace and nonviolence in a culture of indifference.

Stressing the importance of hearing the cry of the victims of violence in its multiple forms – self-directed, interpersonal, and collective and also decrying and curbing the threats of unbridled nationalism, sexism, racism, casteism, ethnicism, and religious and secular fundamentalism.

Eradicating poverty, injustice, inequality, exploitation, and discrimination, which are often the underlying causes of violence and conflicts.

Recognizing the positive influence of the media in encouraging nonviolent actions for global peace and warning the public of the negative impact of fake news, which can provoke estrangement, division, prejudice and violence between people of different cultures and religions.

Encouraging concrete actions at the national, regional, and global levels aimed at restoring polarized societies through justice, reconciliation, and forgiveness, as well as advancing the equality and dignity of women in order to prevent violence and discrimination against them, especially the scourge of domestic violence.

Developing safe, stable, nurturing and caring relationships between children and their parents, relatives, teachers, elders, orphans and others, in order to form wholesome individuals and inclusive societies, and reaffirming the importance of education, especially by creating academic institutions focused on training new generations of young women and men to love peace in various settings.

Promoting hospitality by recognizing that we and the other share a common humanity, regardless of ethnic, religious, cultural, or socioeconomic differences, so as to avert and minimize verbal, physical, sexual, and psychological abuse.

Recognizing that the eco-crisis is an ego-crisis and promoting eco-spirituality for safeguarding the environment, our common home, and emphasizing the interconnectedness and interdependence of all life forms as central to living communities.

Promoting prayer, silence, and meditation to cultivate inner freedom, purity of heart, compassion, forgiveness, healing and the gift of self as essential conditions for the inner peace of the individual as well as for social peace.

Acknowledging the important role that faith-based organizations, people of goodwill, civil society, governmental organizations, and centers of education can play in fostering interfaith and intercultural dialogue.

The participants express their gratitude to the Conference Committee for creating a pleasant atmosphere and for the warm hospitality that characterized this Colloquium. They also thank the Authorities of the Republic of China (Taiwan) and local Christian and Buddhist followers for their generous support in making the Sixth Buddhist-Christian dialogue a success.

<https://zenit.org/articles/sixth-buddhist-christian-colloquium-report/>



Interfaith Climate Statement

Declaration of the Health of People, Health of Planet and Our Responsibility Climate Change, Air Pollution and Health Workshop



This declaration is based on the data and concepts presented at the workshop:

Health of People, Health of Planet and Our Responsibility, Climate Change, Air Pollution and Health

Organized by the Pontifical Academy of Sciences

Casina Pio IV, Vatican City, 2-4 November 2017, Casina Pio IV

Statement of the Problem

With unchecked climate change and air pollution, the very fabric of life on Earth, including that of humans, is at grave risk. We propose scalable solutions to avoid such catastrophic changes. There is less than a decade to put these solutions in place to preserve our quality of life for generations to come. The time to act is now.

We human beings are creating a new and dangerous phase of Earth's history that has been termed the Anthropocene. The term refers to the immense effects of human activity on all aspects of the Earth's physical systems and on life on the planet. We are dangerously warming the planet, leaving behind the climate in which civilization developed. With accelerating climate change, we put ourselves at grave risk of massive crop failures, new and re-emerging infectious diseases, heat extremes, droughts, mega-storms, floods and sharply rising sea levels. The economic activities that contribute to global warming are also wreaking other profound damages, including air and water pollution, deforestation, and massive land degradation, causing a rate of species extinction unprecedented for the past 65 million years, and a dire threat to human health through increases in heart disease, stroke, pulmonary disease, mental health, infections and cancer. Climate change threatens to exacerbate the current unprecedented flow of displacement of people and add to human misery by stoking violence and conflict.

The poorest of the planet, who are still relying on 19th century technologies to meet basic needs such as cooking and heating, are bearing a heavy brunt of the damages caused by the economic activities of the rich. The rich too are bearing heavy costs of increased flooding, mega-storms, heat extremes, droughts and major forest fires. Climate change and air pollution strike down the rich and poor alike.



Principal Findings

Burning of fossil fuels and solid biomass release hazardous chemicals to the air.

Climate change caused by fossil fuels and other human activities poses an existential threat to Homo sapiens and contributes to mass extinction of species. In addition, air pollution caused by the same activities is a major cause of premature death globally.

Supporting data are summarized in the attached background section. Climate change and air pollution are closely interlinked because emissions of air pollutants and climate-altering greenhouse gases and other pollutants arise largely from humanity's use of fossil fuels and biomass fuels, with additional contributions from agriculture and land-use change. This interlinkage multiplies the costs arising from our current dangerous trajectory, yet it can also amplify the benefits of a rapid transition to sustainable energy and land use. An integrated plan to drastically reduce climate change and air pollution is essential.

Regions that have reduced air pollution have achieved marked improvements in human health as a result.

We have already emitted enough pollutants to warm the climate to dangerous levels (warming by 1.5°C or more). The warming as well as the droughts caused by climate change, combined with the unsustainable use of aquifers and surface water, pose grave threats to availability of fresh water and food security. By moving rapidly to a zero-carbon energy system – replacing coal, oil and gas with wind, solar, geothermal and other zero-carbon energy sources, drastically reducing emissions of all other climate altering pollutants and by adopting sustainable land use practices, humanity can prevent catastrophic climate change, while cutting the huge disease burden caused by air pollution and climate change.

We advocate a mitigation approach that factors in the low probability-high impact warming projections such as the one in twenty chances of a 6°C warming by 2100.

Proposed Solutions

We declare that governments and other stakeholders should urgently undertake the scalable and practical solutions listed below:

1. Health must be central to policies that stabilize climate change below dangerous levels, drive zero-carbon as well as zero-air pollution and prevent ecosystem disruptions.
2. All nations should implement with urgency the global commitments made in Agenda 2030 (including the Sustainable Development Goals) and the Paris Climate Agreement.
3. Decarbonize the energy system as early as possible and no later than mid-century, shifting from coal, oil and gas to wind, solar, geothermal and other zero-carbon energy sources;
4. The rich not only expeditiously shift to safe energy and land use practices, but also provide financing to the poor for the costs of adapting to climate change;
5. Rapidly reduce hazardous air pollutants, including the short-lived climate pollutants methane, ozone, black carbon, and hydro fluorocarbons;
6. End deforestation and degradation and restore degraded lands to protect biodiversity, reduce carbon emissions and to absorb atmospheric carbon into natural sinks;



7. In order to accelerate decarbonization there should be effective carbon pricing informed by estimates of the social cost of carbon, including the health effects of air pollution;
8. Promote research and development of technologies to remove carbon dioxide directly from the atmosphere for deployment if necessary;
9. Forge collaboration between health and climate sciences to create a powerful alliance for sustainability;
10. Promote behavioral changes beneficial for human health and protective of the environment such as increased consumption of plant-based diets;
11. Educate and empower the young to become the leaders of sustainable development;
12. Promote an alliance with society that brings together scientists, policy makers, healthcare providers, faith/spiritual leaders, communities and foundations to foster the societal transformation necessary to achieve our goals in the spirit of Pope Francis's encyclical *Laudato Si'*.

To implement these 12 solutions, we call on health professionals to: engage, educate and advocate for climate mitigation and undertake preventive public health actions vis-à-vis air pollution and climate change; inform the public of the high health risks of air pollution and climate change. The health sector should assume its obligation in shaping a healthy future. We call for a substantial improvement in energy efficiency; and electrification of the global vehicle fleet and all other downstream uses of fossil fuels. Ensure clean energy benefits also protect society's most vulnerable communities. There are numerous living laboratories including tens of cities, many universities, Chile, California and Sweden, who have embarked on a pathway to cut both air pollution and climate change. These thriving models have already created 8 million jobs in a low carbon economy, enhanced the wellbeing of their citizens and shown that such measures can both sustain economic growth and deliver tangible health benefits for their citizens.

UPCOMING EVENTS

National Arts Festival: Spiritfest



Christian Meditation



When you can find a truth that Hindus and Christians, Buddhists and Taoists and Sufis in Islam all agree on, then you have probably found something that is profoundly important: something that tells you about universal truth and ultimate meaning, something that touches the very core of the human condition (Ken Wilber).

Explore the tradition that comes to us through the centuries from the Desert Fathers and Mothers.

MONDAY 2 – FRIDAY 6 JULY (16:00-17:00)

VENUE (Commemoration Hall)

Each session will have an individual flavour but cover the same ground.

For a full programme of events go to

<http://grahamstowncathedral.org/spiritfest/>





To qualify for CPTD points, answer the following questions.

CPTD ARTICLE: Cultivating the Virtue of Teacher Presence in Transformative Education

TRUE/FALSE (Tick the correct box) According to the author of this article or those quoted

	STATEMENT	TRUE	FALSE
1	Robert Starratt calls for presence that is affirming, enabling, and critical.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Learning how to learn calls for a sense of community and demands a dialogical spirit of collaboration between teachers and students as learners on a journey.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Laurent A. Parks Daloz says there is no connection between transformative learning and social responsibility.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	The author suggests that teachers play a more pronounced role in schools as companioning adults, encouraging young people to ask questions and to be attentive to the impact of their actions on others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	The author suggests that Starratt's notion of presence ought to be extended to include the teacher's way of being with students in the learning process.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	Teachers are to be attentive to the activity of God's Spirit in the educational process.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	According to De La Salle, touching the hearts of your students and inspire them with the Christian spirit is not the greatest miracle you could perform.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	A trustworthy space that allows for the vulnerability of learners does not demand discipline.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	Trust in divine providence that sustained De La Salle's educational mission.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	Critical presence obliges teachers to reflect on how they are using power responsibly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Professional Society of Religious Educators



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