Roots & Wings

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CONTENTS

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the second edition of *Roots & Wings* for 2019. This publication, sent electronically free of charge to members of the Professional Society, will appear quarterly. It will contain regular features as indicated in the Contents table alongside.

Members are encouraged to send material for future editions. What might you send? Here are some examples:

- Lesson ideas or plans
- Reviews of useful materials such as books or websites
- News from your school's RE Department
- Short articles of interest to religious educators
- Adverts for RE posts in your school

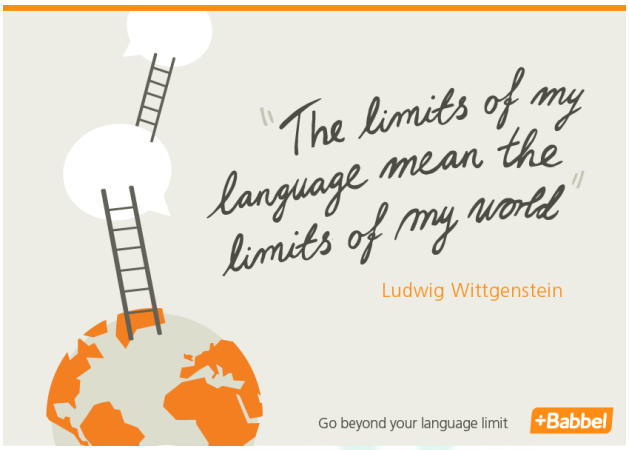
REMINDER

It is not necessary for CPTD purposes to submit your responses to the chosen article 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.

REFLECTION

Language, Symbols, and Self-Understanding

(Ron Rolheiser)



A reporter once asked two men at the construction site where a church was being built what each did for a living. The first man replied: "I'm a bricklayer." The second said: "I'm building a cathedral!" How we name an experience largely determines its meaning.

There are various languages with a language and some speak more deeply than others.

Thirty years ago, the American Educator, Allan Bloom, wrote a book entitled, *The Closing of the American Mind*. This was his thesis: Our language today is becoming ever-more empirical, one-dimensional, and devoid of depth. This, he submits, is closing our minds by trivializing our experiences.

Twenty years earlier, in rather provocative essay, *The Triumph of the Therapeutic*, Philip Rieff had already suggested the same thing. For Rieff, we live our lives under a certain "symbolic hedge", that is, within a language and set of concepts by which we interpret our experience. And that hedge can be high or low. We can understand our experience within a language and set of concepts that has us believe that things are very meaningful or that they are quite shallow and not very meaningful at all. Experience is rich or shallow, depending upon the language within which we interpret it.

For example: Imagine a man with a backache who sees his doctor. The doctor tells him that he's suffering from *arthritis*. This brings some calm. He now knows what ails him. But he isn't satisfied and sees a psychologist. The psychologist tells him that his symptoms are not just physical but that he's also suffering from *mid-life crisis*. This affords him a richer understanding of his pain. But he's still dissatisfied and sees a spiritual director. The spiritual director, while not denying him *arthritis* and *mid-life crisis*, tells him that this pain is really his *Gethsemane*, his cross to bear. Notice all three diagnoses speak of the same pain but that each places it under a different symbolic hedge.

The work of persons such as Carl Jung, James Hillman, and Thomas Moore have helped us understand more explicitly how there is a language which more deeply touches the soul.

For instance: We see the language of soul, among other places, in some of our great myths and fairy tales, many of them centuries old. Their seeming simplicity masks a disarming depth. To offer just one example, take the story of *Cinderella:* The first thing to notice is that the name, *Cinderella*, is not an actual name but a composite of two words: *Cinder*, meaning ashes; and *Puella*, meaning young girl. This is not a simple fairy tale about a lonely, beaten-down, young girl. It's a myth that highlights a universal, paradoxical, paschal dynamic which we experience in our lives, where, before you are ready to wear the glass slipper, be the belle of the ball, marry the prince, and live happily ever after, you must first spend some prerequisite time sitting in the ashes, suffering humiliation, and being purified by that time in the dust.

Notice how this story speaks in its own way of what in Christian spirituality we call "lent", a season of penance, wherein we mark ourselves with ashes in order to enter an ascetical space

in order to prepare ourselves for the kind of joy which (for reasons we only know intuitively) can only be had after a time of renunciation and sublimation. *Cinderella* is a story that shines a certain light into the depth of our souls. Many of our famous myths do that.

However no myth shines a light into the soul more deeply than does scripture. Its language and symbols name our experience in a way that helps us grasp the genuine depth inside our own experiences.

Thus, there are two ways of understanding ourselves: We can *be confused* or we can *be inside the belly of the whale.* We can *be helpless before an addiction* or we can *be possessed by a demon.* We can *vacillate between joy and depression* or we can *alternate between being with Jesus 'in Galilee' or with him 'in Jerusalem'.* We can *be paralyzed as we stand before globalization* or we can *be standing with Jesus on the borders of Samaria in a new conversation with a pagan woman.* We can *be struggling with fidelity in keeping our commitments* or we can *be standing with Joshua before God, receiving instructions to kill off the Canaanites so as to sustain ourselves in the Promised Land.* We can *be suffering from arthritis* or we can *be sweating blood in the garden of Gethsemane.* The language we use to understand an experience defines what the experience means to us.

In the end, we can *have a job* or we can *have a vocation*; we can *be lost* or we can *be spending our 40 days in the desert*; we can *be bitterly frustrated* or we can *be pondering with Mary*; or we can be *slaving away for a paycheck* or we can be *building a cathedral.* Meaning depends a lot

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REFLECTION

What pope's document on youth says

(Cindy Wooden - The Southern Cross, April 10 to April 16, 2019)

The life of a young person and the vocation to which God calls each one is "holy ground" that pastors and parents must respect, nurture and encourage, Pope Francis wrote in a new apostolic exhortation.

Christus Vivit ("Christ Lives"), the pope's reflections on the 2018 Synod of Bishops on young people, the faith and vocational discernment, is a combination letter to young people about their place in the Church and a plea to older members of the Church not to stifle the enthusiasm of the young, but to offer gentle guidance when needed.

In the document, Pope Francis talked about how the sex abuse crisis, a history of sexism, and an overly narrow focus on just a handful of moral issues can keep young people away from the Church.

But he also said many young people want to know and understand the teachings of the Church and, despite what many people think, they long for and need times of silent reflection and opportunities to serve their communities.

"A Church always on the defensive, which loses her humility and stops listening to others, which leaves no room for questions, loses her youth and turns into a museum," Pope Francis wrote. "How, then, will she be able to respond to the dreams of young people?"

Young people have a natural desire to improve the life of the Church and the world around them, the pope said. If older people in the Church will let the young people try, it will keep the Church youthful too.

"Let us ask the Lord to free the Church from those who would make her grow old, encase her in the past, hold her back or keep her at a standstill," Pope Francis wrote.

"But let us also ask him to free her from another temptation: that of thinking she is young because she accepts everything the world offers her, thinking that she is renewed because she sets her message aside and acts like everybody else."

The core of the pope's message to young people was that they remember they are loved by God and saved by Jesus, who continues to live and act in the world and in their lives.

"His love is so real, so true, so concrete, that it invites us to a relationship of openness and fruitful dialogue," even when one is angry with God. "He does not get upset if you share your questions with him. He is concerned when you *don't* talk to him, when you are not open to dialogue with him."

Drawing on the final documents from the synod and from a pre-synod gathering of young people in Rome, Pope Francis urged parishes and dioceses to rethink their young and young adult programmes and to make changes based on what young people themselves say they want and need.

"Young people need to be approached with the grammar of love, not by being preached at," he said. "The language that young people understand is spoken by those who radiate life, by those who are there for them and with them. And those who, for all their limitations and weaknesses, try to live their faith with integrity."

Directly addressing young people, he said: "Take risks, even if it means making mistakes. Don't go through life anaesthetised or approach the world like tourists. Make a ruckus!"

And, he told them, reach out to other young people, do not be afraid to mention Jesus and to invite friends to church or a Church-sponsored activity.

"With the same love that Christ pours out on us," the pope said, "we can love him in turn and share his love with others in the hope that they too will take their place in the community of friendship he established."

Youth ministry, he said, cannot be elitist or focused only on the teens and young adults already active in the Church's life must be "a process that is gradual, respectful, patient, hopeful, tireless and compassionate", as Jesus was when he walked with the disciples on the road to Emmaus.

Parents, pastors and spiritual guides must have "the ability to discern pathways where others only see walls, to recognise potential where others see only peril. That is how God the Father sees things; he knows how to cherish and nurture the seeds of goodness sown in the hearts of the young," Pope Francis said in *Vivit Christus*.

"Each young person's heart should thus be considered 'holy ground', a bearer of seeds of divine life, before which we must 'take off our shoes' in order to draw near and enter more deeply into the mystery."

A long section of the document is focused on discerning one's vocation, which, he said, is always a call to serve God and others, in a unique way.

Discovering one's vocation, he said, "has to do with finding our true selves in the light of God and letting our lives flourish and bear fruit".

For most young people that will mean marrying, forming a family and working, Pope Francis said.

"Within the vocation to marriage we should acknowledge and appreciate that 'sexuality, sex, is a gift from God. It is not taboo. It is a gift from God, a gift the Lord gives us,'" he wrote.

Sexuality "has two purposes: to love and to generate life. It is passion, passionate love. True love is passionate.

"Love between a man and a woman, when it is passionate, always leads to giving life. Always. To give life with body and soul."

Pope Francis also encouraged young people not to dismiss out of hand the fact that God may be calling them to the priesthood or religious life.

God's call to each person is individual, made-to-measure just for him or her, the pope said, so discovering that call can be done only with calm, silence, prayer and the wise help of someone who truly knows how to listen and ask the right questions.

A vocation, the pope said, is a gift that "will help you live to the full and become someone who benefits others, someone who leaves a mark in life; it will surely be a gift that will bring you more joy and excitement than anything else in this world.

"Not because that gift will be rare or extraordinary, but because it will perfectly fit you. It will be a perfect fit for your entire life."

TALKING ABOUT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (CPTD)

Current Thinking about Religious Education in Catholic Schools (Part 2)

(Paul Faller – Catholic Institute of Education)

AIMS

Hyde (2017) refers to the well-known distinction made by Gabriel Moran between 'teaching people religion' and 'teaching people to be religious in a particular way'. In the Catholic school this translates into "the classroom teaching and learning of religion and the religious life and Catholic Christian ethos of the school community" (p. 287). This distinction leads to a tension which many religious educators find difficult to hold, and the classroom teaching then collapses into a catechetical rather than an educational mode. Crawford and Rossiter (1988, p. 69) remind us however that the classroom is a zone of obligatory attendance and that overt catechetical intentions can impinge on the religious freedom of students.

This does not suggest that Religious Education in the Catholic school be confined to 'teaching people religion' in the above sense only. Nor does it suggest that classroom moments with a catechetical potential should be avoided. In fact, Crawford and Rossiter (2006) argue that "classroom religious education in the church-related school should be able to help confirm and challenge the faith of the youth who are actively involved in the Church and at the same time help foster the spiritual development of those who are ambivalent about Church membership" (p. 403) or, I would add, about religion in general.

Setting aims for Religious Education, therefore, needs to negotiate this tension, especially given the many different religious identities noted above. The General Directory for Catechesis (1998), according to Madden (2017, p. 228), identifies some of the outcomes possible within one group of students:

- Students become more deeply rooted in their own tradition (catechesis).
- Students discover the Christian tradition (evangelisation) or rediscover the Christian tradition (re-evangelisation).
- Students of other religions learn to become more authentically rooted in their own religion and partners in dialogue (interreligious learning).
- Students learn the Christian tradition as an important cultural and moral value in Western society (pre-evangelisation).

McGrath (2017) makes the same observation. Since students come to Religious Education with diverse religious, cultural and personal profiles, "religious education variously is capable of being primary or first proclamation, or new evangelisation, or catechesis, or ecumenical and interfaith dialogue" (p. 187).

Given this complexity it would seem practical to identify the principal responsibilities of Religious Education to its students. Crawford and Rossiter (2006) identify these as "provision of access to their religious traditions – to which they have a right; and help in learning how to explore spiritual-moral issues that are prominent in the culture and that have a bearing on their personal development" (p. 402). This would entail "an educational exploration of religion and not necessarily a religious experience as such" (Rossiter, 2017, p. 17).

How we provide access to 'their religious traditions' raises the question of a suitable methodology in a multireligious classroom and this we shall discuss later. Grajczonek (2017), however, provides a more than useful starting point as we noted above. While she is writing about the early years, the principle she advocates can be applied across the school. She holds that Religious Education "should begin with, and seek to develop, their spirituality ahead of a more formal religious education" (p. 113). This accords with the approach of Gallagher and O'Leary we discussed earlier. Cleary and Moffat (2017) agree. Instead of imposing "the language and norms of the culture and religion a child has been born into" (p. 309), the religious educator should rather draw forth and engage the child's inherent spirituality. The common cry today of 'spiritual but not religious' could be taken more seriously by religious educators, but modified to become 'spiritual before religious' as a fundamental aim.

Gallagher (1997) notes that spirituality has

become "a surprisingly central word in today's culture. It is evidence of a certain desperation for inner roots, or more positively, of a rediscovery of non-materialistic values - of silence and wonder, of qualities of heart-listening, of capacities for contemplative depth, ultimately a new hunger for genuine languages of personal prayer. Youth ministry has found that skills of stillness can be taught and that many young people can only arrive at some maturity of faith decision if they learn to listen to the Spirit in these quieter ways" (p. 127-8).

In what sense, one might ask, is this Catholic Religious Education? Rymarz & Belmonte (2017) speak of "the discipline as it is conveyed through the prism of Catholic beliefs, values and worldview" (p. 7) This does not mean that the primary aim should be to instil Catholic beliefs, values and world views but that the strands of the curriculum be seen in their light. The Catholic tradition is what the school has best to offer students for engagement with the religious dimension of human experience.

To what extent should Religious Education aim at personal change in the students? For many, perhaps most religious educators, this would be the first desired outcome of their endeavours. Crawford and Rossiter (2006) sound a cautionary note however. Since "personal change is influenced by many factors outside the classroom teaching-learning process" and to be authentic "it has to come freely from within the individual" (p. 5), it is unlikely to happen in the classroom. It is, therefore, more appropriate, they argue, to aim at *disposing* students towards personal change by "helping them learn how to become well informed and to think critically - educating them to learn better from their own experience" (2006, p. 19).

How might the aims for Religious Education in the Catholic school be summarised? A recent draft document from Catholic Education Melbourne (2017, p. 5) gives the following list which accords closely with the discussion above. "Religious Education in a Catholic school aims to develop:

- appreciation and deep understanding of the richness of the Catholic Tradition
- religious self-understanding and spiritual awareness
- openness to religious questions and to a religious interpretation of the world
- awareness of the diversity of voices in society and within the school
- discernment and participation informed by the Catholic Tradition."

CURRICULUM

A curriculum that is static is hardly able to meet the needs of students in an ever-changing world. The Congregation for Catholic Education (2013) reminds us that "developing the curriculum is one of the school's most demanding tasks," but a necessary one since "the curriculum is how the school community makes explicit its goals and objectives, the content of its teaching and the means for communicating it effectively" (para. 64).

What kind of curriculum will satisfy the approach and aims set out above? The discussion already gives some clear pointers. For a start we should recall the common good principles sketched above in drawing attention to the multireligious composition of the student body. In short, these principles point to inclusivity and equity. The curriculum therefore should be equally relevant, meaningful and accessible to all regardless of difference.

Content and process are the two wings of curriculum. For the sake of discussion, while the two cannot be separated, we will focus first on the former, leaving the latter to the following section.

Curriculum for Religious Education in the contemporary world needs to be grounded in two distinct yet related realities. Norma Everist (2000), discussing the implications of diversity and change for Religious Education, maintains that students need a firm grounding in their inherited traditions "so that they are able to deal with diversity within and among cultures" (p. 56-7, 67). Phan (2004, p. 52) points out that one cannot "cross over" into another religious tradition and "come back" to one's own unless one is familiar and comfortable within one's home tradition. Within these traditions, Everist adds, students will need 'arenas' discovered or created

by the religious educator to meet "on new and common ground" (p. 57).

Grounding in the tradition is surely not the primary task of the Catholic school of today, especially given the many different religious identities found among its student body. One would hope that the socialisation into the tradition and the catechetical formation would be effected by each student's family and faith community respectively. However, since we know that this ideal is seldom met, with foresight and careful planning and taking into account the actual religious composition of the class in question, a greater depth of knowledge and understanding of the different traditions represented in the class can be facilitated.

In the religious school – in our case Catholic – the sponsoring tradition will feature prominently. The tradition will not be imposed, however, but will rather, as Madden (2017) suggests, humbly invite students "into a faith possibility that is open, dialogic, critical and creative" (p. 225).

Attention will be paid to the tradition's various aspects such as scripture, theology, doctrine and liturgy. Given the context we described above, and the approach favoured by Gallagher and O'Leary to develop the pre-religious consciousness, a special place will be given to spirituality which "in its various guises (e.g. Catholic, ecumenical, interfaith, ecological)," as Mudge (2017) notes, "is an essential glue and lingua franca that holds all aspects of Catholic education together" (p. 142). Everist (2000) agrees since Religious Education, she says, "needs to address the issues of time urgency, frenzy and fatigue, and to study the meaning of Sabbath. Spiritual disciplines that promote silence, stillness and growth in faith need to be central to curriculum" (p. 62).

The second reality in which the curriculum needs to be grounded is the students' experience. For this reason, Crawford and Rossiter (2006, p. 386, 395-6) advocate an issues-oriented approach which will satisfy both the students' need for relevance and the search for common ground. The importance of this is borne out by empirical research on German youth carried out by Karl Nipkow in the 1990s. He found "that if the teaching of religion did not focus in some way on what young people perceived to be the main spiritual and moral issues of the day, then they tended to regard descriptive content as religious paraphernalia, more concerned with institutional maintenance than with people's search for meaning and values" (Crawford & Rossiter, 2006, p. 386).

Crawford & Rossiter (2006, p. 395-6) provide examples of issue-oriented content from fields such as global society, theology, psychological spirituality, science and religion and world religions. Whether the chosen issues have relevance for students will depend on whether it touches their emotions and is perceived to have some personal significance. While not discounting the possibility of more traditional topics to have such relevance, especially if taught in a problem posing way, they advise that "it would be desirable to include an appropriate amount of issue-related content in the religion curriculum, giving it a prominent place alongside traditional religious topics" (2006, p. 380).

We end this section with a note about language. Barbara Fleischer (2000) writes: "Religious education in the twenty-first century has the major task of conveying the relevance and credibility of religious discourse and a religious worldview for a generation that is scientifically sophisticated, preoccupied with technological developments, increasingly indifferent to dogmatic formulations, and yet hungry for authentic spirituality" (p. 214).

Just as the curriculum content needs to be grounded in personal experience, so too the language in which the content is mediated. If the language is inaccessible to a secular mind-set and does not establish connections with the students' experience, the topics will be judged as irrelevant, especially since formal religion "is no longer regarded by many young people as a principal and relevant source for their spirituality and identity" (Crawford & Rossiter, 2006, p. 386). In an 'age of disbelief', says Robert Pazmiño (2000) religious educators must "connect spiritual realities to everyday life" (p. 77) so that they "discover the connections between their personal stories and the communal and faith stories" (p. 86).

Writing in the same vein, Tony Brennan (2017) calls for a "language which speaks to the heart of young people." Rather than employing "a self-referential language of 'Catholic identity',"

religious educators should employ a language "that aids dialogue between a plausible Catholicity and modern culture" (p. 352).

METHODOLOGY

We noted when sketching the context at the beginning of this paper that the future of Religious Education, following the thought of Schillebeeckx, lies not in a monologue but in an inter-religious dialogue. Contemporary writers such as Berling (2004), Boys & Lee (2008), Hermans (2003) and Lane (2008) advocate a process they call inter-religious education. Boys & Lee (2008) describe this approach as "a form of dialogue that emphasises study in the presence of the religious other and an encounter with the tradition that the other embodies" (p. 94). Such an encounter might mean adherents of different religions taking each other's point of view as their point of departure and destination in a process that Hermans (2003) calls a parallel dialogue (p. 349). The Congregation for Catholic Education (2013) supports this approach, albeit from the broader perspective of culture: "It is a question, rather, of helping people to revisit their own cultures, with the cultures of others as their starting-point: in other words, helping people to reflect on themselves within a perspective of "openness to humanity" para. 63).

This approach can clearly be extended to include those whose worldview is not a religious one. And this should be welcomed, since "faith formation… will involve a dynamic, respectful and searching dialogue between belief and unbelief… between theism and atheism… and between faith and doubt" (Lane 2013, p. 46). Encouragement for such an approach comes from the Congregation for Catholic Education (2013, para. 8):

> *In general, religion presents itself as the meaningful answer to the fundamental questions posed by men and women: "Men expect from the various religions answers to the unsolved riddles of the human condition, which today, even as in former times, deeply stir the hearts of men." This characteristic of religions demands that they dialogue not only among themselves, but also with the various forms of atheistic, or non-religious, interpretations of the human person and history, since these latter are also faced with the same questions about meaning.*

How will this approach look in the multireligious Catholic school? Tony Brennan (2017, p. 353), writing in the Australian context, offers the following guidelines. Religious Education lessons, he says, will

- be grounded in the freedom of religion of each learner,
- listen in deeply to their story and to the questions learners have on their spiritual path,
- draw authoritatively from scripture and tradition in a way that proclaims without proselytising,
- religiously educate learners in an inclusive Catholicity inspired by Jesus' Kingdom teachings, and
- give learners every opportunity to engage their learning in real world circumstances.

What seems to be missing here is reference to voices other than the Catholic one. Especially in contexts where the school may have few Catholic students, or even none, these guidelines would need to be suitably nuanced. Paul Sharkey (2017) describes the Dialogue School which "creates the conditions where all voices are respected and invited to join a conversation that is systematically and intentionally engaged with Catholic beliefs" (p. 71). If all voices are respected this would mean, in the inter-religious paradigm, that the Catholic voice or voices are in dialogue with other Christian voices, and with the voices of other religious and non-religious traditions. For genuine dialogue to take place the process needs to be open to learning from these other voices.

Included in these voices will be those of the students themselves. Crawford and Rossiter (2006, p. 17) call for "an open, inquiring, student-centred learning process" and not an approach "that remotely resembles an exhortation from authority [which] runs the risk of being dismissed as irrelevant." Student, they remind us, have "an innate resistance to being told what to do in their own lives!"

The freedom of religion of every student thus will mean an invitational approach. Students should never "be pressured psychologically to contribute at a personal level" (Crawford & Rossiter, 2006, p. 392). However such contributions should be welcomed since they can help students to learn from each other.

On the other hand, an inter-religious approach will make certain demands on the students. For them, writes Rina Madden (2017), "a disposition of openness to encounter is vital to engagement in religious education" (p. 234). She names various aspects of encounter that will be required:

- Encounter with diverse views and cultures that shake and shift perspective.
- Encounter with creation that inspires awe and wonder.
- Encounter with the Word of God whose Spirit moves and transforms.
- Encounter with a faith community which celebrates and lives out the ongoing presence of Christ in the world.
- Encounter with the other who calls for a response of love and compassion.

Inter-religious education will also make new demands on the teacher who, as the 'leading learner' (Groome 1980, p. 223), should be open to encounter and prepared to add her voice when appropriate. The teacher as participants in shared dialogue, says Rina Madden (2017), needs to model certain dispositions, such as "being comfortable with sitting with silence and ambiguity; listening with respect; embracing difference and challenge; making space for all contributions and balancing divergent thinking with staying on track" (p. 227). Madden also points out that this openness also includes vulnerability. The process asks the teacher "to share of themselves, even as an unfinished identity 'under construction'" (p. 232).

While the teacher is the leading learner, he also carries the authority of the tradition. He will need clearly to distinguish between his personal voice and that of the religious tradition, and enable his students to be aware of the difference. He will propose the power and meaning of the Gospel confidently in the midst of plurality without seeking to deny or suppress diverse voices including his own (Sharkey, 2017, p. 73).

SUMMARY

It will be useful at this point to provide a summary of current thinking about Religious Education as reflected in the literature.

Religious Education in the Catholic school in the third millennium will ideally manifest the following eight features:

1. An awareness of and sensitivity to the globalised, secular and postmodern world with its characteristic individualisation, detraditionalisation and pluralisation;
2. An understanding and acknowledgement of the spirituality of contemporary youth;
3. An equitable approach that recognises the dignity of every individual in a multireligious student body and their right to freedom of religious choice;
4. An approach that seeks to develop pre-religious consciousness in the first place, creating a spiritual foundation for religious engagement;
5. An approach that hold the tension between learning about religion and learning to be religious, offering the Catholic tradition as a resource for personal growth in dialogue with other traditions, especially those represented in the particular classroom;
6. A curriculum that gives fair weight to issues of personal relevance to students, including local and global concerns;
7. A methodology of interreligious dialogue that invites all voices to be heard; and
8. A language that is accessible to contemporary youth.

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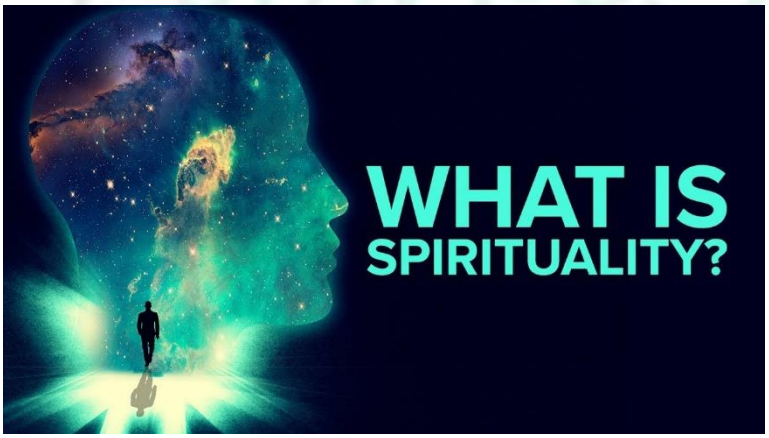
CURRICULUM FOCUS

Spirituality

Spirituality has to do with our experiencing of God and with the transformation of our consciousness and our lives as outcomes of that experience.

- Richard O'Brien, *Catholicism*



Spiritual Education is the cultivation of the person's spiritual faculties and powers, the development of the inborn capacity for the transcendent, helping the person to discover and nourish the inner-life dimension.

Every human being has these faculties and powers, this capacity and dimension, and their development is foundation-work in any kind of Religious Education, Christian or otherwise. Within the Christian - and specifically Catholic - tradition, where Christ is seen as the enlightener of these faculties, sought as the object of these powers, experienced as the filler of this

dimension, Spiritual Education goes further because it has a direction-giving goal... "1 have come", said Jesus, "that they may have life and have it to the full'. In technical terms Spiritual Education involves both pre-evangelisation and evangelisation.

Spiritual Education is about the endeavour to become **alive** to living. For any act to be fully human and holy, one needs to be fully present to what one is doing - to be mindfully aware... this implies learning the art of doing-just-one-thing-at-a-time. Spiritual Education is about learning to see fully, to see with the inner eye: "It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye" (*The Little Prince*). It is the ministry of helping to make visible, training the eye to see things as they really are, to see the real connections. It is about moving from opaqueness to transparency.

Catholic Spiritual Education strives to bring the person to the experiential realisation of God's existence, presence, and loving concern for each human being, and to an alertness to the Lord's action and voice in our lives. It aims to awaken faith in the Catholic vision of the fundamental goodness of God's creation and design. Where Theological Education concentrates on knowledge about God and understanding of God's plan, Spiritual Education provides the necessary complement of experience of God and wonder at God's plan (See Job 42 : 5-6 "1 knew you then only by hearsay; but now, having seen you with my own eyes..."). This section of the Curriculum is the foundation on which Prayer Education and Sacramental/Liturgical Education can be built - rather like experience of friendship is foundational for marriage.

In a word, Spiritual Education is a learning to recognise to re-cognise, to get to know everything anew.

(CORD)

CLASSROOM PRACTICE

Spiritual Education in Practice

In the School

- **Staff and Parents**: Ongoing Spiritual Education of the Staff (and, ideally, parents) is the fundamental support for this area of the Curriculum. What about an annual Staff Retreat, for instance? Or a Staff-and-parents Retreat?
- **Space**: Try to provide an R.E. Room - even a makeshift one: it's especially important for an area like Spiritual Education.
- **Religious Observances**: The school's special observance of the Liturgical seasons and the months of March (St Joseph), May (Our Lady), June (the Sacred Heart), October (the Rosary), and November (the Holy Souls) is quietly influential.
- **Places of Quiet**: Try to provide on the school grounds places of quiet to which students and teachers can withdraw for times of reflection; advertise and encourage this.
- **Outdoor Activities**: Let the ideals of Spiritual Education be part of the conscious aims of hikes, camps, and excursions to the countryside, mountains, sea, etc.
- **Physical Environment**: Any attention that is paid to creating a more beautiful physical environment for the school, can be considered a contribution to Spiritual Education.
- **Spiritual Direction**: Try to make arrangements for offering spiritual direction to students: aim at minimising students' inhibition by getting a suitable director and a suitable place and by setting a suitable and well-advertised time of availability.
- **Library**: Ensure that the school has a reasonably good spiritual reading library (or section of the main library) - quality, not quantity, will make it good.
- **School Assemblies**: Keep in mind that School Assemblies can make a contribution to students' awareness and spiritual sensitivity, can encourage the good habits that the Spiritual Education course tries to establish, and can promote the traditions taught in the First Year of the course.

In the Classroom

- **Don't talk much**: The emphasis in Spiritual Education is on Experience, Exploration, Experiments, Exposure, Expression, so the style of teaching called for is very different from that used in an 'input' course like Theological Education. In general, keep your talking to a minimum, and give the time and focus to the exercises themselves.
- **Space the experiences**: Don't offer too much of a particular kind of experience at any time. If you're going to conduct, say, five object meditations (in Third Year), it may be best to leave two months between them so that they're well-spaced over the year. On the other hand, if the class wants more of something, ride the wave of their enthusiasm by responding promptly.
- **Don't 'drag out' an exercise**: Some of the meditations and other exercises can be fruitfully conducted in just ten minutes.
- **Create the right atmosphere**: The quality and tone of the sessions will correspond to the atmosphere you create, both physically (gentle light is best, and if you can avoid a standard classroom, do) and personally (try to set up the exercises in a totally unthreatening way – encourage, but leave students appropriately free). A practical point: hang a "Please do not disturb!" sign on the classroom door.
- **Participate**: Wherever possible, do the exercises yourself, together with the students, so that you too can share your 'live' experience with them.
- **Approach the process with confidence**: Spiritual Education is essentially the work of the Holy Spirit. Your job is to create frameworks, or space, for this. The exercises recommended here are, for the most part, written up in clear practical ready-to-use style, either in these pages or in the reference books. Naturally, if you are clear in your mind about what Spiritual Education means, you can develop these exercises further, or revamp them, according to your own spiritual experience and wisdom, but even if you are 'a complete beginner' you are starting with the benefit of other teachers' experience. Note that the introductions and commentaries in Betsy Caprio's book Experiments in Growth and De Mello's Sadhana provide lots of practical insight.

(CORD)

ARTISTS' CORNER

He Qi

Holy Spirit Coming

He Qi's relationship with art started when he was sent out to work in the fields during the Cultural Revolution in China. He wasn't much for working the fields so he thought if he could paint Mao's portrait may be he could skip working outdoors. Through the supervision of Professor Nu Sibai he was able to paint both Chairman Mao and learn about Renaissance painters. He finished his dissertation at Hamburg Art Institute and became the first Chinese to earn a Ph. D. in religious arts after the Cultural Revolution.

His works are inspired by both Christian religious text and Chinese folk arts, like paper cut and weaving. In 2005 was invited to take up a residency in the Overseas Ministries Studies Center (OMSC) where he spent a year and produced numerous works and a book entitled "Look towards the Heavens." He Qi has been a long time member of the Asian Christian Arts Association and his works have been featured in the association's publication- Image magazine.

www.asianchristianart.org

One can better understand the art of He Qi when it is seen as a reinterpretation of sacred art within an ancient Chinese art idiom. Chinese religious art, being an expression of Buddhism, was historically typified as a tranquil and utopian portrayal of nature, often painted with black ink and water. He Qi is especially influenced by the simple and beautiful artwork of the people in rural China. Within that framework, he seeks to redefine the relationship between people and spirituality with bold colors, embellished shapes and thick strokes. His work is a blend of Chinese folk art and traditional painting technique with the iconography of the Western Middle Ages and Modern Art.

https://www.omsc.org/artist-he-qi

Baptism of Jesus

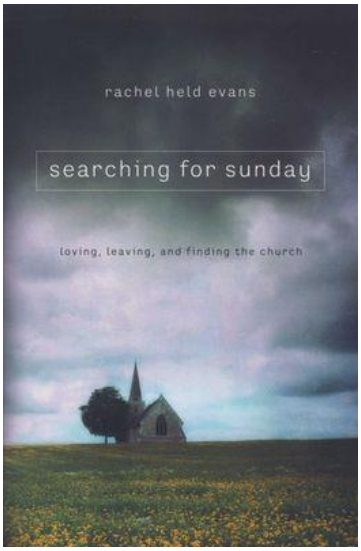
Hear what the Spirit is saying

Supper at Emmaus

REVIEW

Searching for Sunday

(Rachel Held Evans. 2015. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 250 pages)



ISBN-13: 978-0-7180-2212-9

No community should botch its deaths. Mircea Eliade wrote those words and they're a warning: If we do not properly celebrate the life of someone who has left us we do an injustice to that person and cheat ourselves of some of the gift that he or she left behind.

With this in mind, I want to underscore the loss that we, the Christian community, irrespective of denomination, suffered with the death of Rachel Held Evans who died, at age 37, on May the 4th.

Who was Rachel Held Evans? She defies simple definition, beyond saying that she was a young religious writer who wrote with a depth and balance beyond her years as she chronicled her struggles to move from the deep, sincere, childlike faith she was raised in to eventually arrive at a

questioning, but more mature, faith that was now willing to face all the hard questions within faith, religion, and church. And in this journey, she was beset with opposition from within (it's hard to courageously scrutinize your own roots) and from without (churches generally don't like being pressed by hard questions, especially from their own young). But the journey she made and articulates (with rare honesty and wit) is a journey that, in some way, all of us, young and old, have to make to come to a faith that can stand up to the hard questions coming from our world and the even harder ones coming from inside of us.

Carl Rogers once famously said: "What is most personal is also most universal." The journey Rachel Held Evans traces out from her own life is, I submit, by and large, the universal one today, that is, the naïve faith of our childhood inevitably meets challenges, questions, and ridicule in adulthood and that demands of us a response beyond the Sunday School and catechism of our youth. Not least among these questions and challenges is the one of church, of justifying belonging to one, given the propensity within our churches for infidelity, narrowness, judgmental attitudes, reluctance to face doubt, and the perennial temptation to wed the Gospels to their favoured political ideology.

Rachel Held Evans struggled to make the journey from the naiveté of childhood, with all its innocence and magic, where one can believe in Santa and the Easter Bunny and take biblical stories literally, to what Paul Ricouer calls "second naiveté", where, through a painful interplay between doubt and faith, one has been able to work through the conscriptive sophistication that comes with adulthood so as to reground the innocence and magic (and faith) of childhood on a foundation that has already taken seriously the doubt and disillusionment that beset us in the face of adulthood.

The Irish philosopher, John Moriarty, whose religious story plays out along similar lines as Rachel's, coins an interesting expression to describe what happened to him. At one point in his religious journey, he tells us, "I fell out of my story". The Roman Catholicism he had been raised into was no longer the story out of which he could live his life. Eventually, after sorting through some hard questions and realizing that the faith of his youth was, in the end, his "mother tongue", he found his way back into his religious story.

Rachel Held Evans' story is similar. Raised in the Southern USA Bible Belt inside a robust Evangelical Christianity she too, as she faced the questions of her own adulthood, fell out of her story and, like Moriarty, eventually found her way back into it, at least in essence.

In the end, she found her way back to a mature faith (which now can handle doubt), found a church (Episcopalian) within which she could worship, and, in effect, found her way back to her mother tongue. The church and faith of her youth, she writes, remain in her life like an old boyfriend. … Where, while not together anymore in the old way, you still end up checking *Facebook* each day to see what's happening in his life.

Many Roman Catholics and mainline Protestants, I suspect, may not be very familiar with Rachel Held Evans or have read her works. She wrote four best-selling books, *Inspired*, *Searching for Sunday*, *A Year of Biblical Womanhood*, and *Faith Unraveled*. The purpose of this column is therefore pretty straightforward: *Read her!* Even more important, *plant her books in the path of anyone struggling with faith or church*: loved ones, children, spouses, family members, friends, colleagues.

Rachel Held Evans arose out of an Evangelical ecclesial tradition and out of the particular approach to Christian discipleship that generally flows from there. She and I come from very different ecclesial worlds. But, as Roman Catholic priest, solidly committed to the tradition I was raised in, and as a theologian and spiritual writer for more than 40 years, reading this young woman, I haven't found a single line with which to disagree. She's trusted food for the soul. She's also a special person that we lost far too soon.

(Ron Rolheiser – 10 June 2019)

NEWS

Franciscan monk wins $1 million dollar teaching prize

A science teacher from rural Kenya, who gives away most of his salary to support poor students, has won one of the world's richest teaching awards.

Franciscan monk Peter Tabichi was awarded the $1 million ($1.4 million) prize in recognition of his work in a deprived school that struggles with crowded classes and few resources.

"I feel great. I can't believe it. I feel so happy to be among the best teachers in the world, being the best in the world," he said after the award ceremony.

Mr Tabichi teaches at Keriko Mixed Day Secondary School in Pwani Village, where 95 per cent of his students live in poverty and 30 per cent are orphans or from single-parent families.

"The school is in a very remote area — most of the students come from very poor families, even affording breakfast is hard," he said in a statement released by the Global Teacher Prize.

Social issues such as drug abuse, teenage pregnancies and early marriage all contribute to high dropout rates from the classes crammed with as many as 80 students, he said.

He said he planned to use the prize money to improve the school and feed the poor.

Mr Tabichi said despite the challenges his students faced, with hard work their skills were improving.

"I'm immensely proud of my students," he said.

"We lack facilities that many schools take for granted, so as a teacher I just want to have a positive impact, not only on my country but on the whole of Africa."

Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta said in a statement Mr Tabichi's story was "the story of Africa" and one of hope for future generations.

Mr Tabichi was selected out of out 10,000 applicants.

The Global Teacher Prize is awarded by the Varkey Foundation, whose founder, Sunny Varkey, established the for-profit GEMS Education Company that runs 55 schools in the United Arab Emirates, Egypt and Qatar.

Now in its fifth year, the prize is the largest of its kind, and has become one of the most coveted and prestigious awards for teachers.

Past winners have included a British art teacher working with ethnically diverse children, a Canadian teacher working with indigenous students in an Arctic region with high suicide rates, and a Palestinian teacher helping West Bank refugee children traumatised by violence.

ABC/AP

Spiritual retreat with South Sudan leaders in Vatican: time to choose life

(Giada Aquilino, Vatican News)

A Spiritual Retreat involving civil and ecclesiastical authorities of South Sudan is held in the Vatican, and is opened by the Cardinal Secretary of State Pietro Parolin. Reflections include a meditation centered on the national anthem of Africa's youngest country.

A time of grace dedicated to reflection and prayer, to ask God "for a future of peace and prosperity for the people of South Sudan".

In the words of the Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, this is the meaning of the spiritual retreat currently underway in the Vatican, at the Casa Santa Marta.

The retreat brings together the highest civil and ecclesiastical authorities of this young African country, which gained its independence from Sudan in 2011.

Opening the meeting on Wednesday afternoon, the Cardinal brought the Pope's welcome greeting to those present. Pope Francis will meet the participants on Thursday afternoon, at the end of the retreat. This two-day visit to the Vatican was approved by the Pope following a proposal presented by the Archbishop of Canterbury and Primate of the Anglican Community, Justin Welby, who thought it could be a "spiritual, ecumenical and diplomatic" initiative, said Cardinal Parolin.

Respect and trust

The Vatican Secretary of State described the retreat as an "opportunity" for encounter and reconciliation in the spirit of "respect and trust" for those who "at this moment have the special mission and responsibility to work for the development" of South Sudan. In 2013, the country plunged into a bloody civil war, which left at least 400,000 people dead.

Taking part in the retreat in the Vatican are members of the Presidency of the Republic of South Sudan who, according to the Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan signed last September in Addis Ababa, include: Salva Kiir Mayardit, President of the Republic; the Vice-Presidents designate Riek Machar Teny Dhurgon, Taban Deng Gai, and Rebecca Nyandeng De Mabio, widow of the Sudanese leader, John Garang. Also participating are members of the Council of Churches of South Sudan. The preachers at the retreat are Archbishop John Baptist Odama of Gulu, Uganda, and Jesuit Father Agbonkhianmeghe Orobator, President of the Conference of Major Superiors of Africa and Madagascar.

The Pope's concern

While still on his way to Rome, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, sent his greetings and thanks to the Holy Father for his hospitality "in his home" to the participants, underlining Pope Francis' concern for South Sudan, and hoping that the Holy Spirit would "rest" on all the leaders of the country, whether present at the retreat or not.

The Archbishop of Canterbury also recalled the commitment of Archbishop Paul Gallagher, Vatican Secretary for Relations with States, who visited South Sudan at the end of March.

Meeting God

In his remarks at the retreat, Jesuit Father Agbonkhianmeghe Orobator dwelt on the true meaning of a spiritual retreat, understood as a time "to meet God" or, even better, as a time "for God to meet us".

The Lord, he explained, "will speak to us here", not by "cell phones", or "through Twitter or Facebook or Instagram", but in a retreat of healing, purification and mission as "artisans of peace". The invitation is to speak "to one another" from the depths of our hearts, enlightened by the Spirit, never forgetting the 13 million inhabitants of South Sudan, so that the

peace agreement may be signed, above all, "in our hearts".

Meditation on the national anthem

The President of the Conference of Major Superiors of Africa and Madagascar, in the second part of the Wednesday afternoon session, extended his reflection to the South Sudanese national anthem, "South Sudan Oyee!". He urged those present to listen to the anthem during the retreat. In it, he explained, God is mentioned twice, at the beginning and at the end.

The people of South Sudan, said Fr Orobator, are people "of faith", who with "one voice" pray, glorify and express trust in the Lord, in "peace and harmony". The country's greatest resource and wealth, he added, is not in its land, water or oil: it is its people. He recalled the day of independence from Khartoum, on the 9th of July 2011: in all South Sudanese people, of every ethnicity, there was joy, euphoria, jubilation because the nation "was born", with hopes for peace, justice, prosperity, freedom, he said.
Yet in the country today there are "7 million people", "almost half of the entire population", who are reduced to extreme hunger, schools are being abandoned because of inter-community violence and between clans; 4 million people have been forced to leave their homes, taking refuge in refugee camps.

Fr Orobator concluded with an invitation to recover the "dream" of the national anthem, going beyond "hostility" and "misunderstanding", choosing between war and peace: choosing "life", for a reconciliation that is not only "personal", but "national".

These are the words of the National Anthem of South Sudan, on which participants at the retreat were called to meditate:

Oh God
We praise and glorify You
For Your grace on South Sudan,
Land of great abundance
Uphold us united in peace and harmony.
Oh Motherland
We rise raising flag with the guiding star
And singing songs of freedom with joy;
For justice, liberty and prosperity
Shall forever more reign!
Oh great patriots
Let us stand up in silence and respect,
Saluting our martyrs whose blood
Cemented our national foundation,
We vow to protect our nation.
Oh God, bless South Sudan!

UPCOMING EVENTS

SPIRITED ARTS

Join hundreds of schools taking part in this year's Spirited Arts and Poetry competitions!

This year we are running two competitions that your school can get involved in. Get creative with your pupils, and raise the profile of Religious Education in your school by exploring our competition themes;

Pilgrimages and journeys

Questions, questions

Where is God?

Window on the soul

Mystery of life

You can choose to enter just one competition or both; or even let your pupils decide individually how they wish to interpret and respond to the themes. Winning entries will demonstrate excellent learning in RE, as well as original and well-presented artwork, or well-constructed poetry.

The competitions are a great opportunity for cross-curricular learning and collaborating with other subject leaders/departments. Previous entrants have incorporated the competition into lessons as part of a wider scheme of work, or set as a homework project or end of term activity.

Both competitions are now open! Deadline for entries is 31 July 2019!

Spirited Arts

Now in its 16th year, our annual RE art competition has attracted over 320,000 participants (averaging 20,000 per year!), with 2,000 entries being sent in to NATRE each year for judging. Hundreds of UK schools get involved, and we get entries coming from as far afield as Cyprus and Australia, Indonesia and South Africa.

Visit our website to find out more about entering and view galleries of past winners and highly commended entries!

https://www.natre.org.uk/about-natre/projects/spirited-arts/spirited-arts-gallery/2018/?utm_source=emailmarketing&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=may_19_spirited_arts_and_poetry_2019&utm_content=2019-06-12

Spirited Poetry

We have run the competition on three previous occasions and received thousands of exciting entries for a contest that showed the ways RE and poetry can connect. There was even a book about it!

Read past entries and find out more on our website.

https://www.natre.org.uk/about-natre/projects/spirited-arts/spirited-poetry-2019/spirited-poetry-collection/2011/?utm_source=emailmarketing&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=may_19_spirited_arts_and_poetry_2019&utm_content=2019-06-12

How to take part

You can submit up to 10 entries for each competition. Many schools have their own round of judging first - some ask parents and members of the community to help select the final 10.

With your final entries selected, complete our online submission form(s) with your school and entrant's information. There is one for Spirited Arts, and one for Spirited Poetry. We use the information you input to notify you of winners and send out prizes so please ensure the details you enter are correct!

Finally, package up your entries and send them in to us! Entries must reach us by the deadline on 31 July 2019!

We'll judge the competitions over summer, and announce winners as early as we can in Autumn 2019. Winning pupils will have their work displayed on our website and receive an Amazon voucher. Their schools will also receive an RE Today publication, or a voucher for resources/membership/CPD.

Best of luck - we can't wait to see what your pupils come up with!

You can find full details of how to enter along with terms and conditions on our website.

https://www.natre.org.uk/

NATRE, 5–6 Imperial Court, 12 Sovereign Road, Birmingham B30 3FH

Laurence Freeman 2019

Laurence Freeman OSB was born in London in 1951. He was educated by the Benedictines and studied English Literature at Oxford University. After working at the United Nations, in merchant banking and journalism, he entered Ealing Abbey as a Benedictine monk.

His teacher and spiritual guide was Dom John Main. After studying with Fr. John during his novitiate and helping with the establishment of the first Christian Meditation Centre in London, Fr Laurence accompanied him to Canada where they formed a new kind of Benedictine Community, teaching and practising meditation. From here began the expansion of his teaching Christian Meditation around the world. Fr Laurence was ordained in 1980.

After John Main's death in 1982, Fr. Laurence succeeded him and when the World Community for Christian Meditation (WCCM) was formed in 1991, with its international Office in London, he became its spiritual guide.

Laurence Freeman is a Benedictine monk of the Olivetan Congregation and he serves and has built up community of meditation groups and centres throughout the world in over 120 countries.

Among other events, Fr Laurence will be offering seminars for teachers in **Cape Town**, **Durban**, and **Johannesburg**.

Seminars for Teachers

A Gift for Life: Introducing Christian Meditation to the Young

Drawing on the WCCM experience of teaching meditation around the world and the research it has delivered, Laurence Freeman will show how natural and welcome meditation is to the young. The question (he says) is not 'why should we teach meditation in schools?', but 'why on earth don't we?'

CAPE TOWN - FRIDAY 6 SEPTEMBER

12:30	Our Lady Help of Christians, 312 Imam Haron Rd, Lansdowne

DURBAN – TUESDAY 10 SEPTEMBER

12:00	Glenmore Pastoral Centre, 10 Donlene Crescent, Glenmore

JOHANNESBURG – THURSDAY 12 SEPTEMBER

12:30	Holy Family College, 40 Oxford Rd, Parktown

Contact your local Catholic Schools Office for further details.

CAPE TOWN (021 761 6541)
DURBAN (031 700 8090)
JOHANNESBURG (011 447 9219)

To qualify for CPTD points, answer the following questions.

Current Thinking about Religious Education in Catholic Schools (Part 2)

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

	STATEMENT	TRUE	FALSE
1	In the classroom overt catechetical intentions can impinge on the religious freedom of students.		
2	The principal responsibilities of Religious Education to its students would entail an educational exploration of religion and not necessarily a religious experience as such.		
3	Religious Education should not begin with the learners' spirituality ahead of a more formal religious education.		
4	Students need a firm grounding in their inherited traditions so that they are able to deal with diversity within and among cultures.		
5	Spirituality is an essential glue and lingua franca that holds all aspects of Catholic education together.		
6	If the language used in Religious Education is accessible to a secular mind-set, the topics will be judged as irrelevant.		
7	Inter-religious education is a form of dialogue that emphasises study in the presence of the religious other and an encounter with the tradition that the other embodies.		
8	An inter-religious approach will demand of the students a disposition of openness to encounter.		
9	In inter-religious education the teacher should not add her own voice to the discussion.		
10	The teacher will propose the power and meaning of the Gospel confidently in the midst of plurality without seeking to deny or suppress diverse voices including his own.		

Catholic Institute of Education
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