

Catholic school 2000



Running Head: CATHOLIC SCHOOL 2000 Catholic School 2000 Catholic Schools 2000: A Longitudinal Study of Year 12 Students in Catholic Schools 1972-1982-1990-1998. By Dr Marcellin Flynn And Dr Magdalena Mok

“ All three, the School, Family and Church, must constitute one temple of Christian Education, unless the school is to fail entirely in its purpose and become a pest for the ruin of the young”

From: The Christian Education of Youth: Encyclical Letter of Pope Pius XI titled: Divini Illius Magistri (1929)

Pope Pius XI had written this over 80 years ago and Catholic schools in Australia as well as around the globe have been given this edict to incorporate faith and education as a totality. There have been numerous church document that followed and the authors have taken excerpts from those published since the Second Vatican Council (1961-1965). The first referred to is The Declaration on Christian Education (1965) and holds Catholic education to the same bar as any other school. However there is an added caveat regarding, “...the special function of the Catholic school to develop in the school community an atmosphere animated by a spirit of liberty and charity based on the Gospel.” (Flynn & Mok, 2000, p. 21) This formally states that Catholic schools must enrich the student lives in a religious as well as academic capacity.

The authors go on to quote from several other documents, most of which have the same intention regarding the leadership role that Catholic schools must take in their educational focus of religious faith. They also cite a passage from the a statement from the Australian Bishops’ Conference published in 1975:

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The present document is offered as a contribution to the process by which the people of God in the Australian Church will search for the most authentic way to live the faith and the most effective means of passing it on to future generations. (Flynn & Mok, 2000, p. 22)

The leadership is clear here that the emphasis is on the importance of promoting and continuation of religious faith as the primary focus of Catholic schools.

The second part of their article focuses on more recent documents further defining and delineating the role of the Catholic School, this is titled, “ The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium.” (Flynn & Mok, 2000, p. 23) In general these more recent documents slightly softened the role of religion and represent the schools as part of the cultural inheritance of society as well. For instance in the Church document, ‘ Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith’ (1982), the mission of Catholic schools is clear that they are to add to the culture around them and not dictate religious fervour. While still focusing on the gospels, “ It strives to relate all human culture to the good news of salvation.” (Flynn & Mok, 2000, p. 23) Mission is an apt conceptualisation of the Catholic schools leadership roles, they are most akin to missionaries with an evangelical purpose to help and to serve the community as well as to open them to their faith. As stated it is an integration or synthesis of culture and faith. (Flynn & Mok, 2000, p. 26)

The third part of their article, ‘ Australian Catholic Schools: Why we have them and what they aim to achieve’ (Flynn & Mok, 2000, p. 29) it reiterates the prior commitment to faith with the following quote summing up the newer contextual commitments:

Catholic schools seek to contribute to the creation of an Australian

community that is highly educated, skilled and cultured, with an ability to promote and embrace a critical analysis of social issues, the expansion of knowledge and the pursuit of truth... Catholic schools emphasise the contribution of education to the common good of the Australian community. (Flynn & Mok, 2000, p. 30)

They further elaborate that Catholic Schools in Australia shape the youths of this country to become, “ highly skilled, informed, tolerant. open and just... by emphasising the common good, the development of Australia and the building and improvement of a socially just Australian society that is multicultural and multi-faith in character.” (Flynn & Mok, 2000, p. 30)

They then go on to give an overview of the History of Catholic Schools in Australia and sum up with a section on Education for Wisdom:

When faithful to its own foundations, Catholic education integrates total human development — mind and will, body and soul, intellect and character, the personal and the communal. We could approach this characteristic from many angles, because there are many aspects to it. Here I take the perspective of education for wisdom. (Flynn & Mok, 2000, p. 46)

This new vision of tolerance is of critical importance if the Catholic Schools are to grow and prosper unfettered in the multi-dimensional society of the new millennium and continue their leadership dynamics.

Question: The focus of the Catholic School’s mission has changed over time.

What part did inspired Vision or Insight play in this evolution of change?

References

Flynn, Marcellin and Mok, Magdalena (2000) “ Catholic Schools 2000: A Longitudinal Study of Year 12 Students in Catholic Schools 1972-1982-1990-1998.” Australian Catholic University Ltd.

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