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Building the Kingdom: School Leaders as Architects of Catholic Culture

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BUILDING THE KINGDOM: SCHOOL LEADERS AS ARCHITECTS OF CATHOLIC CULTURE

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This essay synthesizes the research on organizational culture and applies that research to the Catholic school setting. Using an architectural metaphor, the author offers a framework and design for school leaders as cultural architects to use in building Catholic culture in their schools.

Preserving and enhancing Catholic identity is a major challenge for Catholic educational leaders. In the past, Catholic identity was seldom at issue because Catholic culture was transmitted, almost through osmosis, by women and men religious who staffed the schools. Today, Catholic schools are staffed, by and large, by a corps of lay teachers who come from diverse backgrounds. Conscious transmission must replace osmosis. Therefore, there must be more intentionality on the part of the leader when it comes to transmitting Catholic culture. However, a sizable majority of Catholic schools are led by lay leaders who have not had the benefit of formal religious training. When it comes to transmitting Catholic culture, many have probably uttered, in moments of exasperation, to themselves or colleagues, "I wish they had taught me how to do this in graduate school."

This essay's title and thesis find their genesis in scripture: "Like a skilled master builder I build the foundations of faith and others build on what I have laid" (1 Cor 3:10). In speaking about his role as a Christian leader, St. Paul refers to himself as a master builder, or architect. Like St. Paul, today's Catholic educational leaders must be the architects for building the kingdom of God in their schools. In recognition of this, Sergiovanni (1995) maintains that school leaders must not only attend to managerial and educational

dimensions of leadership but to symbolic and cultural dimensions as well. To help Catholic educational leaders in their role as cultural architects, this essay 1) synthesizes the research on organizational culture and applies the concepts to the Catholic school setting, and 2) offers an architectural design for building a Catholic culture in the schools.

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

THE MEANING AND EVOLUTION OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

The study of culture originated with anthropologists in their efforts to examine early as well as contemporary groups of people, especially in relation to others. Culture studies examine what groups value and how they interact with each other. Anthropologist Margaret Mead helped to popularize culture studies with her captivating, controversial, and now classic studies of Samoans and other peoples of the South Seas.

In the mid-1900s, theorists began to apply the principles developed in anthropology to the study of organizations. Although other theorists preceded him, Edgar Schein is considered the pioneer in organizational culture. The definition of organizational culture ranges from what Schein (1992) refers to as a pattern of basic assumptions (p. 12) to what Bower (1966) describes as the way we do things around here (p. 22). Organizational culture helps define individuals and provides them with a framework for thinking and feeling, a code for relating to each other, and a lens for interpreting events and their world. Organizational culture is the glue that provides continuity and stability and thus binds a people together. In essence, organizational culture is a group's soul and its way of life.

In the early 1980s, the theories and concepts of organizational culture were popularized and adapted to the corporate world. In part, this was a response to increased global competition. Peters and Waterman's bestseller, *In Search of Excellence* (1982), illustrates how a strong corporate culture could contribute to productivity and success. Considered by some to be a seminal work, *Corporate Culture* (1982), by Deal and Kennedy, suggests four common elements of strong corporate cultures: shared values, heroes, rites and rituals, and a communications network.

Research dealing with organizational culture as applied to schools has evolved in large part from studies of school effectiveness. Late in the 1970s, educational theorists began researching the indicators of effective schools. Interest in this topic snowballed, especially following the publication of *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). Through the years, theorists have attempted to compile a definitive list of

characteristics that indicate school effectiveness. What is significant about effective schools research is that study after study assigned primary importance to school culture, or what Rutter and his colleagues (1979) call ethos, for determining school effectiveness (Brookover, Brady, Flood, Schweitzer, & Wisenbaker, 1979; Grant, 1981, 1982, 1985; Lightfoot, 1983; Purkey & Smith, 1982, 1983; Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, Ouston, & Smith, 1979). To drive home its singular importance, Purkey and Smith (1983) declared, "...an effective school is distinguished by its culture..." (p. 68).

Interestingly, Deal, one of the authors who popularized the concept of culture in the business world, helped popularize the concept in the educational arena as well (Deal, 1985, 1991; Deal & Peterson, 1990). Deal and Peterson (1990) define school culture as "the character of a school as it reflects deep patterns of values, beliefs, and traditions that have been formed over the course of history" (p. 7).

For practitioners who might be in the habit of thinking about school atmosphere in terms of "climate," the question might become: Is school climate the same as school culture? A survey of the literature reveals that, while these terms are often used interchangeably and considered loosely synonymous, there may be subtle differences surrounding the question of which is the prerequisite. Anderson (1982) would argue that climate is the more all-encompassing concept. To her, culture refers to values and behaviors, whereas climate includes these phenomena along with such factors as the size and makeup, the school population, and the physical layout and features of the building and campus. In contrast, Sergiovanni (1987), would argue that culture is a shared system of values that influences how members of a group act and feel and interpret the world. It is deeply rooted beneath the surface. Climate, on the other hand, is more superficial. It relates to the atmosphere of the school that is dictated in large part by how members view an organization. Using synonyms, Figure 1 illustrates the differences between school culture and climate.

Figure 1
School Culture and School Climate

School Culture	School Climate
character	personality
ethos	morale
core values	attitudes
underground	atmosphere
soul	spirit
way of life	daily routine

CATHOLIC SCHOOL CULTURE

Since the 1970s, Australian Marist Brother Marcellin Flynn has conducted three major studies to assess the effectiveness of Australian Catholic schools in terms of religious and academic outcomes. All three studies (1975, 1985, 1993) concluded that Catholic schools have an influence independent of the home. *The Culture of Catholic Schools* (Flynn, 1993) applied the concept of culture to Catholic schools and attributed the effectiveness of Catholic schools to their distinctive culture. Flynn concludes:

> On almost all of the six outcome measures of Catholic schools used in this study—both religious and academic—the culture of the schools, as indicated by students' attitudes toward school and their experience of school life, plays an important role. Catholic schools do indeed make an important difference! (p. 393)

As with other organizational settings, Catholic school culture is the sum total of a school's belief system and patterns of behavior—its creed and code—that is tantamount to a way of life. Catholic school culture is described using all-encompassing terms such as "way of life" because Catholic education is intended to form the whole person. If this is the case, then, the Catholic school way of life should be as distinct in educational terms as the American way of life is distinct in terms of nationality, especially if Catholic education is rooted in Christ, who is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life" (Jn 14:6). It would seem that "Catholic school culture" is really "Catholic school life."

The question becomes, then: What is distinctive about Catholic school identity and culture, or the Catholic school way of life? Broadly speaking, Catholic school identity, culture, and life include academic excellence. After all, Catholic schools are schools first before they are anything else. In essence, Catholic schools must be good schools before they can be good Catholic schools. In the case of Catholic schools, A+ means academics plus things religious. The importance of academic excellence was affirmed by the National Congress on Catholic Schools for the 21st Century. In the Executive Summary (1992), one of the belief statements about Catholic identity of schools reads: "The commitment to academic excellence, which fosters the intellectual development of faculty and students, is an integral part of the mission of the Catholic school" (p. 17).

Based on the above belief statement as well as the studies by Flynn, one can deduce that Catholic identity and culture encompass more than religious mission alone. In their studies heralding the effectiveness of Catholic schools, Coleman and his colleagues (1982, 1987) reported educational differences between public and Catholic high schools. Their research concluded that Catholic high schools are highly college preparatory, require more

academic courses for graduation, and assign more homework. Bryk, Lee, and Holland (1993) endeavored to further pinpoint and study distinctive features of Catholic schools in relation to school effectiveness. Among the distinctive features they reported in *Catholic Schools and the Common Good* was the emphasis on core curriculum in Catholic schools. Whether in college preparatory, vocational, or general programs, students in Catholic schools take a larger core of academic subjects than their public school counterparts. One might conclude, then, that Catholic schools which are mediocre academically are not authentically Catholic.

As important as academic excellence is, participation in the evangelizing mission of the Church, "Go and teach: (Mt 28:19), cuts to the core of the Catholic school's reason for being. Simply put, religious mission is the Catholic school's purpose. An examination of Church documents on the religious identity, aims, and culture of Catholic schools elucidates unifying themes. Textual evidence of these themes in the documents includes: "Gospel spirit of freedom and charity" (Vatican Council, II, 1966, p. 646), "integration of religious truth and values with life" (Connell, 1996, p. 107), "synthesis of faith and culture, faith and life" (Flannery, 1982, p. 614), "the illumination of all knowledge with the light of faith" (Connell, 1996, p. 486), and "community of faith" (Flannery, 1982, p. 646). Clearly, when Church documents speak of the distinguishing features of the Catholic school, they are referring to religious mission. However, it is just as clear that their view of religious mission is not predicated solely on formal classroom religious instruction. Without doubt, the Church considers religious mission to be much broader. The documents speak of religious mission using strong, all-encompassing terms like permeation, synthesis, integration, and illumination. Could one say, then, that according to Church documents, a Catholic school is authentically Catholic to the degree that it exhibits a "Gospel culture"?

In the final analysis, whether defined broadly to include academic dimensions or narrowly in terms of religious mission, Catholic school identity, culture, and way of life are functions of the entire school enterprise. As Church documents imply, these terms are all encompassing and not limited to classroom instruction. It would seem that what goes on outside the classroom is as important as what goes on inside the classroom. In terms of religious formation, Flynn (1975) makes this assertion in his earliest study:

> The evidence of this study strongly suggests that the living community of persons which makes up the school's informal Christian environment may well be a far more powerful religious influence than that of the formal religious education classes (p. 190).

Evidence suggests that how students feel about God and the Church upon graduation has less to do with religion class than it does with how the school operates as a whole. It might be said that the informal curriculum is the pre-evangelization necessary before religious instruction can take root. For Catholic school students, the school culture, or way of life, speaks louder than religious instruction. Those who reject or feel rejected by the culture will most likely reject the message. What this means is that a positive, caring, supportive school environment is the prerequisite for religious instruction to take hold. If this is indeed the case, it places a premium on a school's culture, or way of life, in the faith development of students.
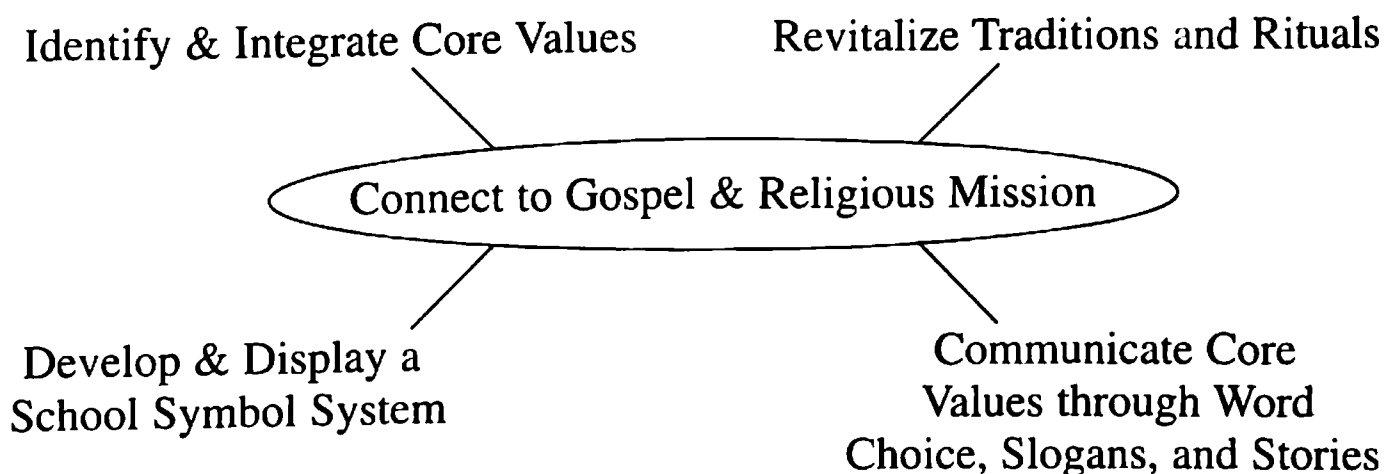
CULTURAL ARCHITECTURE, DESIGN, AND IMPLEMENTATION

The phrase "building the kingdom," which serves as a metaphor for strengthening Catholic school culture, implies an action orientation. The school leader, as cultural architect, is the master builder, the key player in the design and implementation of school culture. In other words, if the cultural dimension of schooling is indeed as important as the research indicates, and if building the kingdom is the purpose of Catholic schools, then school leaders as cultural architects must consciously, intentionally, deliberately, and systematically attend to the religious culture of their schools. As with other aspects of education, if the leader is not active in the shaping of school culture, the shaping probably will not happen.

Theorists suggest that as different as cultures might be, all strong cultures have common architecture. Four of the cited building blocks of cultural architecture are core values, language, symbols, and traditions (Deal & Peterson, 1990; Flynn, 1993; Schein, 1992; Trice & Beyer, 1993). Figure 2 shows a cultural design made up of these building blocks that Catholic school leaders can use as a framework for building school culture that is authentic Gospel culture.

Figure 2
An Architectural Design for Building Catholic Culture in Schools

Identify & Integrate Core Values   Revitalize Traditions and Rituals

Connect to Gospel & Religious Mission

Develop & Display a   Communicate Core
School Symbol System   Values through Word
                                            Choice, Slogans, and Stories

IDENTIFY AND INTEGRATE CORE VALUES...
AND CONNECT TO THE GOSPEL

Core values refer to the cherished, universally accepted ideals which a group holds in common and which provide meaning and identity. They are what a group stands for and aspires to. In architectural terms, core values are the foundation which undergirds culture. For Americans, freedom and equality would be considered cherished ideals. In the business world, product quality and customer service would be examples of shared values. In the opening scene of *Dead Poets' Society*, students paraded banners into the opening-of-school assembly inscribed with the "four pillars" of Welton Academy: Tradition, Excellence, Discipline, and Honor.

Identifying Core Values

Several sources can help the Catholic school leader identify Catholic school core beliefs and values. A "Whitman's Sampler" of possible sources follows.

- CHURCH DOCUMENTS. The primary source for Catholic school core values is Church documents that focus on Catholic education. For example, the U. S. Bishops' pastoral letter *To Teach as Jesus Did* (1972) identifies three Catholic core values—message, community, and service—in relation to American Catholic schools. Other Church documents that focus on Catholic education include *The Catholic School* (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977) and *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* (Congregation for Catholic Education,1988).

- SCHOLARSHIP. Catholic theologian Groome pinpoints and applies eight core values of Catholicism to Catholic schools in a comprehensive volume entitled *Educating for Life* (1998). The core convictions he treats in detail are human goodness and dignity, sacramental view of life, relationship and community, holistic spirituality, tradition, faith and reason, justice, and inclusive worldview. *Vision and Values in the Catholic School* (National Catholic Educational Association, 1981), a program designed to help schools infuse values, highlights eight Gospel values: community, faith, hope, reconciliation, courage, service, justice, and love. For each Gospel value, related values are listed as well as practical examples of school life and curriculum that would exemplify that value. The National Congress on Catholic Schools for the 21st Century, which convened in the early 1990s, published an Executive Summary (1992) that lists seven belief statements regarding the Catholic identity of Catholic schools. Embedded within these statements are core values such as witness, community, worship, service, human dignity, spiritual formation, and tradition. Interestingly, as stated earlier, academic excellence is included as an essential element of Catholic identity.

- RELIGIOUS CHARISMS. For religious community-sponsored schools, core beliefs and values often reflect the charism of the sponsoring religious community and its founder/ress. The charism often puts its "spin" on Catholic values, providing Catholic values "with a twist." Contrasting the core values of

three school networks sponsored by different communities of women religious illustrates these distinctive nuances. Schools sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy, for example, emphasize compassionate presence as one of their shared values. Religious of the Sacred Heart schools list wise freedom as one of their educational convictions. Education for leadership is a core commitment of Ursuline schools. Marianist educational traditions emphasize hospitality.

An examination of core values and their sources leads to the query: How do you identify the core values in your school? In theory, the first place to look for a school's purpose and goals, its cherished ideals and non-negotiables, is the mission statement—the school's keystone document. In reality, answers to the following questions will tell the real story about what a school holds sacred:

What do students say the school values?
How does the school spend its money?
Who/what is rewarded?
What criteria are used to evaluate teachers?
What is talked about over the PA?

As cultural architect, the school leader must ensure that the answers to these questions are aligned with what Church documents, scholars, school organizations, and religious community charism indicate they should be.

Integrating Core Values

As the questions above suggest, it is one thing for core values to be listed in a mission statement; it is quite another for them to be a lived reality in the classroom, on the playing field, and in the boardroom. As cultural architect, the school leader undertakes the duty of ensuring that infusion, permeation, and integration of identified core values occur throughout the school enterprise, pervading its way of life. Taking an academic and cross-curricular approach to core values integration, one Catholic high school which places an emphasis on service infuses service learning activities into courses throughout the curriculum.

To assist in mission integration, the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) has developed some invaluable resources for school leaders. To read about Catholic schools whose approaches to mission integration are considered exemplary, obtain *Conversations in Excellence: Integrating Mission* (Haney & O'Keefe, 1997). For an outstanding curriculum design process that greatly facilitates the integration of mission and core values throughout the school's curriculum, obtain *Creating a Curriculum That Works* (Ozar, 1994). For institutional self-evaluation and planning with regard to mission, identity, and culture, two new programs have recently become available. A six-module package entitled *As We Teach and Learn:*

Recognizing Our Catholic Identity (Ristau & Haney, 1997) has been designed to help schools "convert belief statements into direction and action" (p. vi). *Validating the Vision* (Taymans, 1998) has been designed to provide Catholic secondary schools with a self-study protocol that is aligned with regional accreditation processes.

As we conclude this discussion, there are two final points to consider. At first blush, it is easy to become overwhelmed if the school leader as cultural architect attempts to integrate every Catholic core value into school life. Some schools concentrate on just a few broad values such as respect, community, or service because each can be used as an overarching value that encompasses others. Secondly, many of the core values that are espoused in Catholic schools are espoused in public schools as well. If, however, Christ is the cornerstone (Mt 21:42-43) of the Catholic school core values foundation, then it is incumbent upon the Catholic school leader to connect a school's motivation and inspiration to Christ and the Gospels. For example, while service is a civic virtue, Catholic school motivation and inspiration for service springs from Christ's example and teachings, such as Jesus washing his disciples' feet (Jn 13:1-15).

DEVELOP AND DISPLAY A SCHOOL SYMBOL SYSTEM... AND CONNECT TO THE GOSPEL

Symbols are things that signify other things. In the cultural context, symbols are images and people that represent core values or another aspect of a culture. McDonald's Golden Arches, for instance, are a corporate symbol recognized around the world. In India, where the Big Mac is made of lamb and is called a Maharaja Mac, the Golden Arches are still the corporate symbol. Humans are very visual beings; therefore, physical images exert considerable power. Because symbols often depict the values people hold dear, it is not uncommon for symbols to elicit various emotional responses. For Americans, the Stars and Stripes and Statue of Liberty commonly stir up feelings of patriotism.

Develop a School Symbol System

School symbols represent the school's core values. Strong school cultures have a well-developed symbol system. Having almost a mystical power, these school symbols stand for something in which people believe and thus build loyalty to the institution. A school sticker on the rear window of a car reveals something about the owner's/driver's values and associations. Graduates, especially, often show a strong sentimental attachment to the symbols of their alma mater. Many school symbols represent aspects of its culture: logos, emblems, coats-of-arm, seals, class rings, school colors, mascots, campus landmarks, etc.

Things as small-scale as school stationery and as large-scale as school architecture can have symbolic meaning as well. In a world where image is important, the design of school stationery, or even its grade of paper, conveys a particular image. Stationery might convey tradition, innovation, strength, or sloppiness. School architecture conveys what a school or its founder values——as in the case of Jefferson situating the library as the central focus of the University of Virginia. Furthermore, school architecture and campus landmarks have compelling associative power, especially for graduates of the institution. Campus gates, the school facade, bell/clock tower, school sign, or shrine are especially popular to loyal alumni and others who feel a strong bond with the school. These campus landmarks have a certain transporting quality in the sense that they help people conjure up fond memories of their school days that include friendship, pranks, championships, significant learnings, and defining moments.

Display a School Symbol System

Human beings display what they value. A home will invariably have pictures of family and loved ones on the walls. In an office, an individual might showcase educational degrees and other significant awards and accomplishments. In like fashion, a person can tell a lot about a school by what is displayed throughout the school. One school might highlight its athletic prowess with a display of championship trophies. Another school might feature student work around the building to draw attention to student achievement. Whatever the display, its purpose is to signal what the school holds sacred and to evoke a sense of pride throughout the school community.

Incorporate and Display Religious Symbolism

The recent controversy at Georgetown University surrounding the request to the administration by some students to install crucifixes in every classroom drives home the evocative significance of religious symbolism. After a healthy campus debate about whether there is a need for visible reminders of Catholic identity and culture, the University administration decided to place crosses and crucifixes in all classroom buildings, save one which will display a variety of religious symbols from the several faiths represented at Georgetown.

This incident at Georgetown supports the view of some Catholic scholars that, unlike most Protestants, Catholics experience faith and religion through analogy, metaphor, and the five senses (Greeley, 1990; McBrien, 1994; Tracy, 1981). The popular term given to the unique way Catholics encounter God and experience faith is "Catholic imagination." For Catholics, symbols and rituals feed their religious imagination.

As architects of Catholic culture, it follows that school leaders attend to the images of faith, making sure that school symbols and imagery capture the

Catholic imagination. Stated differently, it is incumbent upon the school leader to ensure that the school symbol system enables people to make a direct connection between the school and its religious identity. Key school imagery, like the emblem or coat-of-arms, should contain religious symbolism. For example, one Catholic high school chose the eagle as the school mascot based on the Scripture passage, "...And He will raise you up on eagles' wings" (Ex 19:4).

As reflections of core values, school images and religious artifacts should be displayed everywhere. The school emblem or other representative image should appear on all school stationery, documents, and publications. For instance, besides putting the school emblem on award plaques, one school inscribes appropriate and relevant Scripture quotes. A mental tour of the campus using the mind's eye should reveal religious artifacts such as crucifixes, statues, and pictures displayed throughout the school and on the campus grounds. One school posts the mission statement in every classroom. Another school recently placed a statue of its patron saint on school grounds and renamed campus buildings, special rooms, and courtyards after saints and other Catholic heroes. Yet another school commissioned professional drawings of the religious features of the school facade and campus landmarks for use on school stationery and reproductive prints. Still another school had crosses engraved on a new classroom wing addition.

ESTABLISH TRADITIONS/RITUALS... AND CONNECT TO THE GOSPEL

In the opening scene of the popular musical *Fiddler on the Roof*, the narrator declares that what keeps balance in a person's life is "Tradition!" He muses, "Without traditions our lives would be as shaky as a fiddler on the roof." Traditions, ceremonies, customs, and rituals are important. They provide meaning to human existence. In the following discussion, the word ritual serves as the rubric for customs and traditions and is divided into routine rituals and ceremonial rituals.

Connect Routine School Rituals to the Gospel

Routine rituals are common and repetitive occurrences that serve as small cultural reminders. Most people have a morning ritual they follow daily. For some, the ritual begins with a cup of coffee. For others, the morning ritual means a good run.

In like fashion, all schools have routine rituals that provide order and continuity. Common rituals include morning announcements over the PA, taking attendance, and reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. Seasonally, schools conduct other well-known rituals: the fire drill and tornado drill.

School rituals should reflect core values. Schools that value the individuality of students might announce student birthdays daily over the PA.

Schools that value student responsibility and participation might have students, instead of administrators, read the daily announcements over the PA. Schools that place a premium on community might begin each day with a morning assembly.

For Catholic schools, St. Paul's exhortation to the people of Ephesus, "Pray always" (Eph 6:18), is still good advice. If routine rituals serve as small cultural reminders, then it makes sense to make prayer as common a ritual in Catholic schools as taking attendance. From a Catholic educational point of view, what better way to focus students and set a tone than through prayer?

From the religious mission point of view, what better way to remind students of God's presence in their lives and provide students with a "constant reference to the Gospel and a frequent encounter with Christ" (Flannery, 1982, p. 618) than through prayer? Hopefully, this practice of praying throughout the day, connecting daily life and spirituality with ease, will remain routine so that Catholic school graduates will continue to "pray always" long after graduation.

If prayer can be considered the essential ritual of the Catholic school, then everything at a Catholic school should begin with prayer: classes, meetings, assemblies, public events, etc. The beauty of prayer is that there is no one right type of prayer or way of praying. Some schools have the tradition of reciting a specific prayer that has meaning to that school community. At one Jesuit school students recite St. Ignatius' "Prayer for Generosity" many times during their years there. It is the first prayer students say at freshman orientation and its the last prayer they say at graduation.

Connect Ceremonial Rituals to the Gospel

Ceremonial rituals are special events at which core values are showcased and celebrated. Ceremonies are filled with pageantry and drama. The British are known worldwide for their pomp and ceremony. Something as simple and routine as the changing of the guard at Buckingham Palace draws crowds of spectators each day. All national, ethnic, religious, and organizational cultures use ceremony to instill pride and deepen commitment. Even secular ceremonies like a presidential inauguration or a corporate annual meeting can have an almost sacred quality.

School ceremonies are special events at which core values are put on display and celebrated. They may take the form of a pep rally, ring ceremony, sports banquet, academic awards convocation, talent show, or school play. In any school, the ceremonies should reflect the sources of school pride. Without doubt, the school graduation is the premier public event at which everything the school treasures occupies center stage and during which the school can shine the spotlight on its best. Rich in symbolism and pageantry, a well-orchestrated graduation can satisfy the human need for drama and

build commitment and loyalty to the institution and what is stands for. Done right, these occasions lift the soul and tug at the heartstrings.

Secular ceremonies with religious accents should be part and parcel of the Catholic school way of life. That is to say, since school ceremonies are indicative of what the school cherishes, it is essential for Catholic schools to connect their ceremonies with their religious mission. The degree to which school ceremonies are tied to religious culture and themes speaks volumes about what a Catholic school does or does not value.

For example, given the preeminence of the graduation ceremony, it follows logically that the religious identity of a Catholic school should play a prominent role in this public drama. Some Catholic schools incorporate the graduation ceremony within the context of a Eucharistic Liturgy. The majority of schools, however, have both a religious service, sometimes called a Baccalaureate Mass, and a separate graduation ceremony. If the latter is the case, it is the duty of the school leader as cultural architect to ensure that the school's Catholic identity and culture ring through loud and clear in the graduation ceremony, which most consider, rightly or wrongly, the main commencement event.

To illustrate, some schools choose student speakers based on their ability to represent the mission of the school as it has been experienced by the graduating class. In addition to academic awards, many schools bestow awards on graduating students whose lives exemplify core school values that are Gospel- and mission-related. At some schools, these represent the top awards. Some schools present to each a religious symbol. Those schools with a patron saint or namesake often present a picture or some other remembrance of this Catholic hero who has special significance for their school community.

COMMUNICATE CORE VALUES THROUGH WORD CHOICE, SLOGANS, AND STORIES... AND CONNECT TO THE GOSPEL

Language refers to the methods or codes which the members of a group use to communicate meaning. Current civic debates about Ebonics and politically correct language and ecclesial debates about inclusive language bespeak the cultural significance and volatility of language.

Language empowers group members to the degree that it increases understanding within the group. Trying to navigate in a country where one does not speak the native tongue or trying to discuss a computer problem when one is not computer literate are situations which drive home the overwhelming sense of powerlessness and frustration people feel when they do not know the language. On the lighter side, each generation has its own code for relaying meaning. Terms like "far out," "groovy," "bad," "cool," and "cat's meow" are synonyms—but for different generations.

Language is also powerful in the way it helps to shape people's attitudes. Karl Marx's well-known reference to religion as the "opiate of the masses" is a prime example of crafting language to change people's perceptions. In the Catholic sphere, Vatican II's introduction of "People of God" helped change the way the Church perceived itself from institution to community. Furthermore, various interest groups in the United States actively promote nomenclature that presents a positive image of various groups. People who were once called Negroes are now referred to as African Americans. "Physically challenged" is now a more acceptable term than "physically handicapped." Being politically correct in terminology now appears to be a cultural value in the United States. In light of these examples, the lesson to be learned is this: to change the way people feel about something, begin by changing the language. Is it any wonder, then, that a school looking to change its image often begins by changing its name?

Recognizing the power of language, the Catholic school leader as cultural architect has the challenge and opportunity to intentionally connect school vocabulary and language forms, such as slogans and stories, to the Gospel and religious mission.

Word Choice

Simple changes in school terminology that make a subtle or obvious connection to the Gospel and religious mission can alter perception and understanding of school image and reality. What's in a name? Some schools with names that have a secular ring have inserted the word "Catholic" in their official title. A simple tweaking of terminology through word choice can sharpen the distinction between the religious mission of Catholic schools and the mission of their public and other private counterparts. For instance, using "faith community" as a metaphor for the school instead of "community" makes the Catholic school's religious purpose more evident. In like fashion, referring to "Christian service" as a core value instead of "community service" clarifies the inspiration for service in a Catholic school as stemming from a Gospel mandate in addition to a civic virtue.

Slogans

With the advent of 30-second commercial advertising and MTV, humans are attuned to and persuaded by snippets or bites of information. Like others, schools now try to capture their essence in a catchy phrase. For Catholic schools, slogans should incorporate religious mission. Slogans like "A Tradition of Academic Excellence" and "Quality Education Since 1935" shortchange Catholic schools. Even the slogan "Education Based on Values" could be considered too loose a connection to Catholic identity and culture. Again, although perhaps not ideal, a simple tweaking of the above slogans would make the connection to religious mission more obvious. The slogans

might be revised to read: "A Tradition of Academic Excellence and Faith Formation," "Quality Catholic Education since 1935," and "An Education Based on Gospel Values."

Stories

Stories about people and events could be considered the touchstones of culture. Stories can communicate a lesson or message in an entertaining way. Because stories tend to be about real people and real situations to which the listeners can relate and with whom they can identify, the message or lesson is easier to remember. Is it no wonder, then, that Jesus used parables to convey the Gospel message?

Similarly, school leaders might more effectively build school culture through stories rather than by mandates and memos. The school leader should be one of the school's chief storytellers, conveying what is important and teaching lessons about core values. For Catholic educational leaders, the key is to tell stories that illustrate instances of lived reality where Gospel values and religious mission are concerned. Since the school leader is not the only educator in the building with a story to tell, leaders might consider setting aside a portion of each faculty meeting for the sharing of stories.

A leader's bank of anecdotes might include stories about turning points in the school's history that speak to religious heritage and legacy. Stories might also center around school heroes such as school founders, legendary teachers, and past and present students who embody the ideals of the school. For example, one Catholic school leader tells a story about a cross country meet that illustrates the school's core religious values of respecting diversity and embracing the marginalized. One team member established a new record that day; another team member with cerebral palsy simply finished the race that day. Both received thunderous applause as they crossed the finish line as a testament of the school faith community's respect for and celebration of using diverse God-given gifts and talents fully.

CONCLUSION

The principles of organizational culture as applied to Catholic schools make crystal clear the need for Catholic school leaders to attend to the cultural dimension of their schools. In Biblical as well as metaphorical terms, school leaders are what St. Paul might call architects of Catholic culture. Without the continuity once provided by religious communities, school leaders must be more intentional, deliberate, systematic, and active in this endeavor as the title "Building the Kingdom" suggests.

Besides synthesizing the literature regarding organizational culture, this paper offers an architectural design for the building of Catholic culture in schools. The design is not prescriptive; rather, it provides a framework that

accommodates each school's cultural nuances. Incorporating four recognized building blocks of strong cultures, the plan is as follows: Identify and integrate core values...and connect to the Gospel, develop and display a school symbol system...and connect to the Gospel, establish traditions/rituals...and connect to the Gospel, and communicate core values through word choice, slogans, and stories...and connect to the Gospel. The latter part of each design element signifies the distinctiveness of Catholic school culture, or way of life, as Gospel culture. When all is said and done, authentic Catholic schools are Gospel cultures, faith communities that connect what they do to the Gospel. Moreover, the design plan phraseology also emphasizes the school leader's imperative to connect everything to the Gospel and religious mission.

Although this paper highlights the school leader's pivotal role as cultural architect, it does not mean to imply that school leaders can build culture by themselves. Coleman and Hoffer's (1987) research clearly indicates that the effectiveness of Catholic schools stems not only from cultural cohesiveness regarding core values, but also from the web of support that comes from an active, involved network of adults which serves as an added resource called social capital. In the final analysis, Catholic school leaders' success in building the kingdom will depend on their ability to capture the school community's Catholic imagination and to engage other people in the building process.

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