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# JUSTICE EDUCATION AS A SCHOOLWIDE EFFORT: EFFECTIVE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

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*This essay describes and analyzes one successful justice education program flowing from community service, and demonstrates how such a program in a Catholic school responds to several important “calls” to Catholic educators. These “calls” are issued by (a) the needs of the learners and the signs of the times, (b) official documents of the Church about the mission of the Catholic school and the faith growth of youth, and (c) a creative reading of history and contemporary expression of religious education that involves cooperation among all teachers and all subject areas in the school.*

*The essay begins with a description of the justice education program at St. Pius XIII School, comprised of Grades 7 through 12. [The school is a fictional construct; it does not exist as one entity, but is the amalgam of the experiences of good practices in several schools.] Following the description is a treatment of each of the “calls” to which this effective justice education program responds.*

## A SCHOOL SCENE: THE PRACTICE OF JUSTICE EDUCATION AT ST. PIUS

**S**t. Pius XIII School, comprised of Grades 7 through 12, is a vibrant school on the west side of a major city in the United States. Its students come from middle class neighborhoods on the west side; some travel from nearby suburbs. Many of the students plan to attend college, and 68% of them are Catholic.

The justice education program at St. Pius offers a model that other area schools want to study and emulate. The program begins in community service and moves from the experience in the community to integration of the experience throughout the curriculum of the school. The students engage in community service for a set number of hours each month. The coordination of community placements for the program occurs through the justice educa-

tion coordinator, who works closely with the Office of Campus Ministry. A striking feature of the program, and a source of pride to the people of St. Pius, is the link between community service activities and the entire curriculum.

The faculty meets monthly to stay on the course that they set 2 summers ago, when they initially designed their curriculum to integrate justice concerns. The department chairs and selected faculty met over the course of 3 weeks, and they created the initial design by specifically addressing principles of Catholic social teaching, with an emphasis on economic justice. With the encouragement of the school's administrators and the financial support of the board of trustees, they invested time exploring the links between principles of Catholic social teaching and their respective subject matter and course outlines. Eventually, they invited the entire faculty to take up the challenge of integrating justice education. The faculty continues to refine the plan through periodic day-long faculty meetings.

The creativity at St. Pius began partly out of frustration. The faculty had long held to the value of involving the students in community service placements, but the students had little follow-up to the community service experiences, and the meaning of the service received little attention. The campus minister attempted to offer some reflection sessions on community service, but these sessions were either voluntary or they were connected with one discreet elective course on service and justice, offered through the Religious Studies Department. Apart from the sessions and the course in religious studies, the students were left on their own to make the connections between community service and the deeper questions about justice that service occasioned in them. The faculty wanted to do better than this.

While the religious studies teachers and campus ministers possessed some knowledge of Catholic social teaching, it became clear in the planning stages that faculty development was also needed, so that teachers from all subject areas might know and understand Catholic social teaching, especially about addressing economic justice. Their knowledge made the teachers more confident and ready to integrate Catholic social teaching into all areas of the curriculum. Most importantly, the faculty adopted a local soup kitchen and summer tutoring program as specific sites for their own community service. In this way, they too encountered some of the people whom their students might eventually meet, and they considered the processes of their own learning (anticipating their students' learning) as they returned from community service to their school.

## **FROM PRACTICE TO REFLECTION**

It is a cardinal principle of pastoral theology that effective practice accompanies and is enhanced by serious reflection (Whitehead & Whitehead,

1980). Understanding their work as a ministry, the faculty and eventually the students of St. Pius tried to do this by attending to the sources for validating Christian service in Scripture and the tradition of the Church, including the contemporary experience of the students and their teachers at St. Pius. In that first summer of curriculum design, the faculty began with their experience and then moved back to campus, in order to consider the Scripture and the tradition of the Church, with the insights and sources from their own academic subject matter functioning as interpretive guides to that experience. In acting and then reflecting on their community service and the analysis that followed, the faculty learned by doing. They worked like pastoral theologians; they engaged in a method of theological reflection that they would eventually use with the students. Looking back on how far they have come, the faculty views the justice education program as valuable for many reasons, but they are especially clear on three “calls” to which the justice education program at St. Pius effectively responds:

- The justice education program is pastorally effective. It responds to the call by young people to attend to their needs, questions, and interests.
- The program is a faithful response to the call that has been articulated by Church leadership through documents of the Catholic Church. An analysis of these documents reveals a progression of thought toward integrating service and justice education.
- The justice education program represents a creative and contemporary response to the Church’s call for justice education by a faculty that regards the religious development of their students to be the responsibility of the entire faculty, not just the religious studies faculty.

Let us consider the justice education program in each of these three aspects.

## **RESPONDING TO THE NEEDS OF THE LEARNERS**

Since Vatican II, Catholic schools, as an expression of the Catholic Church in the contemporary world, have been called to pay attention to the signs of the times. “Signs of the times” is a phrase that resonates throughout the text of the Vatican II (1987a) document *Gaudium et Spes* on the Church in the modern world. That document begins by asserting:

The joy and hope, the fear and anguish of the [people] of our time, especially of those who are poor or afflicted in any way, are the joy and hope, the fear and anguish of the followers of Christ as well. (§1)

The signs of the times call Catholics to renewed attention to promote justice

in society; one such sign is found in studies about the interests and commitments of teenagers in America. Reading the signs of the times is a contemporary experience, but it also bears implications for the future. A sociological study entitled *The Next American Spirituality: Finding God in the Twenty-first Century* (Gallup & Jones, 2000) recently announced interesting trends, with clear implications for those who teach children and teenagers in the United States. The authors offer conclusions about the joys and hopes of the generation born between the years 1982 and 2003. This millennial generation includes more children and youth in school than any other cohort in U.S. history. Attendance figures for schools will continue to grow steadily through 2008. The authors report that surveys consistently show "that teens have a keen interest in helping people who are less fortunate than they are, especially in their own communities" (Gallup & Jones, 2000, p. 113). Children and youth are willing to work for a peaceful and healthy world. Nearly half of all young people in secondary school volunteer in some capacity and a majority of those who volunteer would like to see such programs become mandatory for their peers who do not. They want to work for the improvement of others' lives, and they know that economics plays a crucial role in the quality of life of others as well as themselves.

While Gallup and Jones offer only one illustration of a trend, the practical wisdom of educators also finds expression in the growing number of service programs in public and private schools. Service, according to the St. Pius faculty, is not an end in itself, nor is it a practice that necessarily leads to deeper insight in the young person, unless there is some follow-up or analysis of that service. At St. Pius, the faculty understands service programs as an important step toward promoting the students' growth in faith. In their faculty meetings throughout the school year, the St. Pius faculty members were particularly attentive to the students' experience of faith and its development. In their study and reflection, they focused on one theorist of faith development as a starting point for reflecting on their students' lives and questions. They were eager to discern the patterns of growth in their students in pre-adolescence, as the students move from what Fowler (1991) termed "mythical literal" faith to "synthetic conventional" faith. Fowler's terms denote stages of cognitive faith development, in which the young learner admits multiple perspectives on the meaning of religious stories and symbols. Fowler (1981) approaches faith development as a structuralist, attending to the underlying structures or operations of thought. As the young person matures, he or she begins to imagine and question the meanings of symbols in new ways. According to Fowler (1991), the move from stage two (mythical literal faith) to stage three (synthetic conventional faith) often occurs in pre- or early adolescence, though this is not universal. The move frequently is marked by a fundamental search for the best authority who can

answer religious questions, and is complicated by the person's newfound ability to consider multiple perspectives on a given question or issue.

The mythical literal faith of childhood no longer seems adequate to the growing teen or pre-teen, as new information accompanies the natural growth in cognitive capacity for complex thinking. The mythical literal faith (stage two) is marked by certitude and a literal apprehension of the faith stories found in the Bible. But at some point certitude begins to crumble and give way to confusion in the face of multiple ways to interpret stories. Confusion fuels a desire to find out what and who is right (Fowler, 1991).

In the stage called synthetic conventional faith, Fowler (1991) describes the work of the adolescent in discerning the proper authority and veracity of faith claims. In this stage, as in the earlier stages, the locus of authority continues to reside outside the self. The seeker searches for the right answers to questions by considering all the conventional wisdom that can be found, wanting to sift through various perspectives and messages of others in order to get the right one. Like panning for gold, the young person wants to be enriched from outside the self, finding that which will satisfy in the payoff of an answer – the right answer – usually an unreflective synthesis of the answers that others supply. The challenge, of course, is that the young person must leave that place of certitude and comfort found in earlier stages of faith. Students in late childhood and early adolescence routinely complain that they already know the material covered in religious studies courses. The service activities of the students at St. Pius promote their critical thinking about the core message of Christian faith and provide new entry points to consider the subject matter in their religious studies courses from multiple perspectives.

The challenge of the signs of the times in working with students in Grades 7 through 12 is to offer to young people another avenue into the core of the Gospel, through a route not normally familiar to young people – encountering the materially poor through Christian service. By so doing, the faculty at St. Pius was of one mind in wanting to promote the healthy faith development of their students. By contributing to their confusion and discomfort, in the way Jesus embraced the poor as friends and confused some of the disciples, the faculty hoped to introduce new ways to promote the learners' insights and growth. Faith development theorists, including but not limited to Fowler (1991), conclude that a healthy experience for the students of this age group is to find multiple ways to understand the truth of the Gospel, in their effort to synthesize a variety of fresh perspectives that spark new questions, and thereby contribute to maturity. The faculty at St. Pius believes that introducing students to the realities of economic need is a way into the truth of the Gospel, and it is an avenue to growth. Community service functions as the first step to students' reflection on Jesus' commitment to

the poor, the Catholic Church's social justice tradition, and the possibilities for transforming society.

## **GROUNDING IN THE MISSION OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION**

Magisterial texts furnish a route into the collective wisdom of the Church's leaders and practitioners, as the people and the texts that they produce treat the potential for Christian service to lead to justice education. The faculty at St. Pius studied several Church documents with a focus on religious education. They eventually concluded that all subject areas in the school could work together to contribute to the total religious education of their students. A brief treatment of the following selected documents reveals that Church documents locate justice education in the context of the school as an expression of authentic and complete religious education.

The faculty began their study of documents by revisiting the watershed event of the Second Vatican Council. The council, meeting in four sessions from 1962 to 1965, produced 16 documents in all. On October 28, 1965, during the fourth session, the council fathers at Vatican II (1987b) promulgated the *Declaration on Christian Education* with the official title *Gravissimum Educationis*. The document addresses education in a variety of contexts, including the Catholic school. The general characteristic that the Catholic school shares with all other schools is its pursuit of cultural goals and the natural development of youth. But the distinctive feature of the Catholic school, in contrast to other schools, is the attempt to generate community based in the Gospel, and "to relate all human culture to the good news of salvation. This in turn may help the students to understand the world, life and themselves in light of the gospel" (1987b, §6).

As part of the legacy of Vatican II, bishops were to return to their respective nations to specify the principles set forth in Vatican II, including those contained in *Gravissimum Educationis* (Vatican Council II, 1987b, §1). The bishops of the United States formed the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB), with headquarters in Washington, DC. The NCCB developed a committee structure that addressed a variety of pastoral issues, including both Catholic education and religious education/catechesis.

In 1972, the NCCB issued a pastoral letter devoted to Catholic education, entitled *To Teach as Jesus Did*. In that document, the bishops consider education broadly understood, treating briefly and sweepingly parishes and schooling of every level from elementary through university education as part of the Church's educational mission. The focus of the document, however, is placed on Catholic elementary and secondary schools, as these schools are termed "the best expression of the educational ministry to youth" (§14). The authors analyze the educational mission of the schools in their

“three interlocking dimensions” (§14): message (*didache*), community (*koinonia*), and service (*diakonia*), noting that these three are separable for analysis, but they work together and come to expression in various ways, depending upon the school. Two of the three dimensions are rooted in experience – the experience of community and the experiential learning that takes place through acts of service. Service and community are interrelated in that service “corrects” (§29) any tendency on the part of community participants to imagine that the experience of Christian community is an end in itself. For the writers of *To Teach as Jesus Did*, the Church is a “servant community in which those who hunger are to be filled, the ignorant are to be taught, the homeless to receive shelter, the sick cared for, the distressed consoled, the oppressed set free” (§28). A school has the mission to reflect this understanding of the servant Church.

*The Religious Dimension of Education in the Catholic School* (1988) is a document for the worldwide Church that was issued by the Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education (CCE). The document acknowledges the practical wisdom of Catholic educators, a wisdom also validated by theorists of faith development, when it describes the religious search of their students:

Some young people are searching for a deeper understanding of religion...Others have already passed through the crisis of indifference and are now ready to commit themselves – or recommit themselves – to a Christian way of life. (§18)

The document reiterates and advances the argument set forth in *To Teach as Jesus Did* by recognizing that young people are motivated to serve not only by generosity but because they are “deeply disturbed by the injustice which divides the free and the rich from the poor and the oppressed” (CCE, 1988, §20). Students “wonder whether the purpose of life is really to possess many ‘things’ or whether there may not be something far more valuable” (§20) in life. In this document, we see references to service alongside references to justice, and the accompanying recognition that service in the promotion of justice involves more than charity to satisfy immediate needs. Rather, the act of service awakens the servant to the deeper and broader questions, prompting reflection as well as generous action.

The final document considered by the St. Pius faculty was *Renewing the Vision* (NCCB, 1997). This document seeks to articulate a comprehensive approach to youth ministry; its writers proffer that ministry to youth is a holistic activity, promoting the total development of youth in all aspects of their faith. Interestingly, the document names service and justice among the essential components of comprehensive ministry to youth, to which religious education programs and Catholic schools contribute. The faculty found this

document most helpful of all, as it offers a direction for service education that closely links the experience of service with the promotion of justice. In fact, the writers of *Renewing the Vision* make service and justice inseparable partners as one element in ministering to youth:

Our efforts to feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, comfort the sorrowing, console the bereaved, welcome the stranger, and serve the poor and vulnerable must be accompanied by concrete efforts to address the causes of human suffering and injustice. We believe advocacy and action to carry out our principles and constructive dialogue about how best to do this both strengthen our Church and enrich our society. We are called to transform our hearts and our social structures, to renew the face of the earth. (§38)

To summarize: The faculty at St. Pius learned that the claims made by the writers of *Renewing the Vision* (NCCB, 1997), namely, that service and justice are inextricably bound, represents something rather new in Church documents that address the education of youth. Documents written prior to *Renewing the Vision* establish the conditions for community service by articulating the mission of the Catholic school vis-à-vis the society in which it lives, and the mission of the school to build a community that is not an end in itself. A progressive reading of the documents reveals a growing acknowledgement that an encounter with the world in its economic disparities gives rise to deeper questions.

## **REPRESENTING A CREATIVE AND CONTEMPORARY RESPONSE TO THE CHURCH'S CALL FOR JUSTICE EDUCATION**

The history of Catholic educators' efforts to foster youth development leaves us challenged but wiser about what might actually be effective when we consider the place of service and justice in fostering mature faith for students in the present and for the future of the Church. A review of three "moments" in the history of religious education can teach us much about effective practices, as well as identify areas for improvement, in religious education for justice. The faculty at St. Pius reviewed these moments, and they gained insight from the evolving story of the place of justice education in the history of religious education. They came to the conclusion that in the three moments in the history of religious education treated below, the place of service in the curriculum underwent great change.

### **Service as Obligation/Virtue**

Catholic school-based religious education in the early 20th century focused

on the learning of doctrine in a way that would be clear and coherent, and in a way that allowed charity and service to be viewed as the outcome of that learning. Early 20th century religious educators espoused the “text explanatory” method of religious education that focused on a catechism text, on clarity about the text and on memorizing the passages from that text. This method also carried forward assumptions that the content of Christian faith can be understood in a classroom, and the real matter to be learned was doctrine. The genre of the theological manual – a text used by seminarians from the time of the Council of Trent until the time of Vatican II – had guided the compilation of many catechisms, so that the order of presentation of doctrine, as well as its style, left little alternative than to imagine the core of the Christian life as the clear grasp of the content between the pages. In short, this content was to be explained by the teacher and memorized by the student (Jungmann, 1959). Here we see the hallmark of this moment and its method: the focus was on content, specifically understood as that which is contained in the text.

In the text explanatory schema, religious instruction preceded acts of charity, presenting acts of charity in the lesson as the desired expression of a virtuous inner life. But any service activity would have been presented in the text, and viewed in the minds of those ministering to the young, as a virtuous outcome of effective instruction in the content of Christian belief, not as a core element of the content itself. Works of charity would be understood not as religious education in themselves, but as the outcome of effective religious education, that is, the learning of doctrine according to the words of a catechism.

With respect to charitable works and acts of service, this moment in Catholic school-based religious education might be called the era of societies and sodalities. During this time, works of charity and prayer were part of the co-curricular activities of the school, providing an outlet for charitable works and a group of peers in that work, but with great emphasis on the piety and prayer life of the layperson at this time. Devotions to Mary and the saints were the hallmark of the prayers around which members of societies and sodalities gathered. In sum, religious instruction in schools portrayed charitable works of service either as a virtue or a co-curricular activity that flowed from knowing the doctrine and practices of the Church (Harris, 1989).

### **Service as Grateful Response**

A second moment in the history of religious education came with the kerygmatic renewal in catechetics, with its emphasis on a more expanded content for religious education, and the belief that the learner could feel as well as think through the clarity and beauty of the message of salvation. The propo-

nents of the kerygmatic renewal proffered that the kerygma (or proclamation of the good news) represented a content that had not been wholly forgotten, but had been de-emphasized, in catechism education. This era was marked by renewed attention to the liturgy and the Bible as sources for young persons' knowledge and spiritual growth. Jungmann, an Austrian Jesuit and professor of pastoral theology at the University of Innsbruck, wrote a work in 1936 that advocated a re-appropriation of the Bible and the liturgical life as essential content for religious education (Jungmann, 1936). Jungmann was concerned to balance what he saw as a hyper-emphasis on the doctrinal content found in the catechisms of the day. He promoted a more unitary content based in the history of salvation as celebrated in the liturgy (including the liturgy of the hours) and written in the Scriptures (Hofinger, 1976). In the kerygmatic schema, effective education of youth would lead them to a great sense of gratitude for the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ. At first, Jungmann's proposal was considered strange, but eventually his proposal found followers.

The kerygmatic renewal was well promoted in the United States by Hofinger, a Jesuit who studied under Jungmann. Hofinger completed his doctoral dissertation on qualities found in catechisms in Austria. He wrote and lectured widely in the United States and taught Catholic schoolteachers in summer programs at the University of Notre Dame, among other programs (Hofinger, 1984). Hofinger's ideas on effective religious education practices, like those of his mentor, Jungmann, focused on the renewal of content. For Hofinger, the kerygma, the core message of salvation, quickened the learner's awareness of God and promoted the learner's affective response. In fact, some of Hofinger's published works identify the awareness and affective response as the goal of each individual lesson in school or in religious instruction sessions. For example, *Art of Teaching Christian Doctrine* (Hofinger, 1961) contains 30 sample lessons; more than half of them identify the aim of the lesson to be a response in gratitude or joy for the love of God in Christ.

The kerygmatic approach had a positive effect on religious education in Catholic elementary and secondary schools in the United States. It caused many Catholic schoolteachers to use the Bible (or Bible history) and to present liturgy as an essential part of the content of Christian faith. This signaled an advance over the hyper-emphasis on learning doctrinal formulas that characterized the earlier historical moment. But the place of service and justice still remained at the margins. Service, described by Jungmann and Hofinger as works of charity, was regarded as a desired, but not essential, outcome of the successful communication of content of Christian faith, rather than a part of the content itself.

## Service as Core Content and Partner to Justice

In the era following Vatican Council II, some schools began to require service placement for their older students, focusing on the value of the experience itself. Perhaps this flowed from the post-conciliar emphasis, rooted in *Gaudium et Spes* (Vatican Council II, 1987a), on the Church in the world and the bridging of the gap between Catholics and society. It also signaled a renewal that was occurring inside religious congregations, whose members were the teachers and whose congregations often were the founders or sponsors of Catholic schools in the United States. Religious congregations of men and women considered the teachings of Vatican II to be a call to engage society more directly through a variety of works beyond education, and to re-imagine schools as a vehicle for engagement with society (Johnson, 2003). In addition, a theology of revelation that emerged from Vatican II had profound effects on the ways in which people regarded experience as a locus of revelation. The service experience had value in itself, as it pushed students to encounter the world and worlds that they did not know. But the challenge that many schools faced is the one that the St. Pius faculty also faced: how to address the service experience in a meaningful way, not as an extra but as a part of the curriculum.

Religious studies teachers found themselves attempting to address the experience through reflection on the Scripture and the tradition as they call people to practice justice. Students learned that the prophet Amos issued strong words against those who abused the poor or practiced racism and slave trading. They read that Isaiah railed against the mistreatment of the foreigner, orphan, and widow. New Testament courses helped students to consider Jesus' treatment of the poor and his care for those whom society discounted. Students considered the parables of Jesus as invitations to think differently about the workings of the world. They considered that the parables are metaphors that force hearers to reconsider the conventional thinking that our society often follows. Students in elective courses on social justice studied Catholic social teaching, but their teachers could not give much attention to the prior economic, political, or historical factors that cause injustice.

This third moment in the history of religious education ushered in an important shift: service activities occurred before or simultaneously with classroom learning, making service activities the stuff of reflection in the classroom. The placement of service before reflection effected a change from the two previous eras, when service occurred after (if at all) and separate from the content of religious education. In this third moment in the history of religious education, practitioners began to regard service as an essential component of, rather than an embellishment to, the curriculum. Groome, a religious education theorist, helped to promote this shift in churches and schools in the United States.

Groome was initially influenced by the learning theory of Paulo Freire, who had served as Brazil's minister of education in the 1960s. Long before he was forced to leave Brazil and subsequently became a professor at Harvard, Freire and his colleagues developed a method of literacy education for the people of Brazil. Unique to the method was its encouragement to have students reflect on the unjust conditions of society, conditions of which the students were the victims. Freire's emphasis on conscientization, coming to awareness of injustice prior to reflection upon it, became the hallmark of the method outlined in his works *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) and *Education for Critical Consciousness* (1973).

In *Christian Religious Education: Sharing our Story and Vision* (1980), Groome demonstrated that Freire's method, with modifications and revisions, had great potential to enrich religious education in the first world context. It could not only help those who are society's victims, but all people who are unaware of the tacit contribution to injustice that many first world ways of living can spawn. Groome developed a series of steps called a "shared praxis approach," appropriating some principles from Freire and developing his own creative method of praxis grounded in the work of Aristotle. Aristotle (1982) proffered that among the three "ways of being" – *theoria*, *poesis*, and *praxis* – *praxis* connotes a way of living that is constituted by twin moments of engagement and reflection, with each needing the other to be complete and thereby enrich the intended purpose of renewed praxis. Furnishing a synthesis of Freire and Aristotle and providing a creative component of his own making, Groome conceived a circular movement for religious education for justice. He described praxis as action/reflection, leading to insight and renewed action (Groome, 1991). Groome's work has enriched various forms of religious education for adults and children in the United States and other first world settings, and his approach offers great promise for the third moment in religious education for the promotion of justice.

## **THE NEXT STEP**

The faculty at St. Pius studied theories of faith development, reviewed ecclesial documents from Rome and the U.S. bishops, and considered the three moments in the history of religious education. They came to conclude that the role of service and justice has undergone an expansion and a repositioning in religious education. In the first moment, works of charity flowed from knowing the content and apprehending the obligations of becoming a virtuous Christian. In the second moment, proponents of the kerygmatic renewal claimed that a clear presentation of salvation history ought to elicit an affective response in gratitude and a resolve to serve others, borne of joy and grat-

itude for salvation in Christ. In the third moment, a shift in sequence placed the service activities before or simultaneously with reflection, in order to foster a link between action and reflection. In addition, a review of the history of the three moments in 20th century religious education efforts reveals a pattern of development in the thought of theorists and practitioners; service ceases to be regarded as a co-curricular activity and takes its place among the content elements of religious education. In the third and final moment, service does not stand alone, but leads to critical analysis of justice issues.

At St. Pius, the faculty study of the development of the place of service, and the eventual move to undertake justice education, enriched the teachers' perspectives and helped them to expand their pedagogy. The next step for their work was to integrate a version of shared praxis into the whole of their curriculum, in a way that involves all the disciplines and areas of study, not only religious studies. They recognized that their own summer involvement in service placements, and their return to the campus to craft curriculum, expressed one variation on a shared praxis approach. Therefore they set out to engage in a shared praxis approach that would give rise to insight through engagement in community service and reflection on Catholic social teaching. The subtleties of Catholic social teaching require knowledge of more than religious studies, and the pursuit of understanding its principles carries implications for history and geography, literature and the arts, economics, political science, and international law, to name a few. Whatever their subject matter, the faculty was converted by their summer experience to a new way of thinking about their field of study and the contribution it could make to the overall religious education of their students in the Catholic school. They took to heart these words from *Renewing the Vision*:

The ministry of justice and service nurtures in young people a social consciousness and a commitment to a life of justice and service rooted in their faith in Jesus Christ, in the Scriptures, and in Catholic social teaching; empowers young people to work for justice by concrete efforts to address the causes of human suffering; and infuses the concepts of justice, peace, and human dignity into all ministry efforts. (NCCB, 1997, §38)

Today, the teachers and administrators at St. Pius firmly believe that they are enriching their courses by infusing concepts of justice, peace, and human dignity into all areas of their teaching. The Religious Studies Department continues to offer courses on justice, but these courses are coordinated with the justice education efforts of the other departments. Creative expressions of integration of justice themes in other subject areas include the following partial list:

- Modern language teachers are using stories from the urban authors from their own city as well as from third world cultures as sources for teaching reading and writing skills to St. Pius students. They encourage their students to tell these stories in their service placements, in teaching others language or writing skills in their role as tutors to children.
- The English department adopts one principle of Catholic social teaching, such as placing the dignity of the human being before economic gain, or property as a right but not an absolute right. English teachers assign literature that displays the presence or absence of that principle at work in the literature. Students are encouraged to write essays and journal entries about the link between these stories and their experiences in community service.
- A math teacher uses examples and statistics from the world bank and international economic debt to teach various concepts of proportions, projections, and percents. The teacher also uses the local statistics on the number of people who can or cannot afford decent housing in the city where the school is located and encourages the students to form questions and problems from their service placement experience.
- The school liturgies and the small group prayer in homeroom and religious studies classes focus on the needs of the people whom the students serve.
- The coaches and the full-time athletic staff have committed themselves to building team spirit without using metaphors that promote violence and exaggerated competition.
- Science classes, depending on the specific science, include a component on the relationship between economics and environmental concerns, or the relationship between nutrition and wealth, or the effect of industrial pollutants on poor urban dwellers. Students seek to impart some awareness to those whom they serve in after-school tutoring programs, soup kitchens, and food pantries.

This is a partial list, drawn from the experience of the teachers who continue to seek ways to teach their subject matter with a view to justice and to integrating the students' experience of community service in the classroom. It offers a picture of one school's attempt to take seriously the call that they heard in reflecting on their students' needs, the collective wisdom found in the Church's documents on religious education, and their own reading of a century's worth of efforts to lead disciples to serve others and so promote justice in education.

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