



The Character of Catholic Schools

CATHOLIC EDUCATION CONFERENCE 2015

16 March 2015 • St Gabriel's Secondary School

CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS



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CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

Archbishop William Goh, in his homily at the opening Mass, stressed that in a rapidly changing world where values are being eroded, Catholic educators cooperate with the grace of God by laying a foundation for the transformation of minds and changing lives. He reminded the participants that we cannot short-change the young by only imparting academic education. He said that education without moral values destroys lives, and that they may be successful, rich and powerful, but their hearts and souls are empty. Catholic educators are called to form future leaders of honesty, leaders with values of the Gospel who understand the meaning of life and who are compassionate. What distinguishes Catholic schools from secular schools are the values centred in Christ, His message and person. If Catholic educators do not give them Jesus, they have done an injustice to our children. A Catholic school must promote Jesus. We must not be afraid to speak explicitly about Jesus. If we lack courage in proclaiming Christ, we are short-changing the parents and their children. A Catholic school is a community where the love of Christ is experienced and others will believe because they experience love through this community.

Fr Edward Seah presented what has been done after the last Conference in 2013 based on the seven areas for improvement: a) updating of the directory of Catholic educators, b) formation of chaplaincy teams, c) strengthening of parish-school partnerships, d) encouraging greater laity involvement of the alumni and parents, e) conducting formation and induction programmes, f) supporting the Catholic ethos self-assessment framework, and g) the implementation of the CME and RE programmes in Catholic schools.

Fr Christopher Gleeson, SJ highlighted that character is what we are "when no one sees but God." Another way of describing 'character' is a song-line. Catholic school's most important song-line is Jesus. They should be places where the song of Jesus is heard and loved. Moral virtues are honed through practice and faith is not a landscape to be seen, but eyes for seeing. Our Catholic identity is a verb, not a brand, but a way of acting and doing things. Like love, it is an ongoing process of becoming in a particular cultural context. It's not something static that we achieve once and for all. Jesus is the master story-teller. He uses parables to form people. He expected his disciples to chew on the parables for a while, to unlock the flavour, leading them to discover the answers themselves. So, evangelisation brings the gospel to where people are, not where we want them to be. The Church grows by witness and not by proselytising. We need to be attractive, to walk at the periphery so as to be in touch with reality. The identity of Catholic schools is all about universality, openness to all. How deeply do we respond to our students' needs? How deeply do we help our students see the real beyond the virtual? How deeply do we invite our students to think? How deeply do we form our students' inner persons?

Four types of Catholic schools were presented: monologue schools, colourless schools, colourful schools and dialogue schools. A good Catholic education helps people to see with "incarnation eyes"; to see God's signature in everything and in everyone. Catholic schools seek to offer an integral education. It is an education for excellence in humanity, that is, forming better human beings, people with a heart, with compassion and understanding. Our life is a journey and we are in transition. We are in education for transformation and Christ offers us a vision full of humanity, full of care and concern for others.



Richard Rohr's principle, "you can only lead others as far as you yourself have gone", is an important reminder for teachers in the way they lead the young people in their care. Teachers lead others to the depths to which they have been led; they can only transform people to the degree they have been transformed. Education is about transformation of hearts and mind.

Pope Francis said that "to educate well we need to step out of ourselves and be among young people, to accompany them in the stages of their growth, placing ourselves at their sides". This refers to the story on the road to Emmaus where we can learn from the six stages in Jesus' accompaniment with two disciples. 1) Walking with the disciples; 2) Listening with reverence to a story; 3) Storytelling to offer a deeper vision; 4) Disposing, not imposing; 5) Blessing is healing; 6) Community-building where relationships become important.

Breakout Session

The participants were assigned to different groups for the breakout session. A total of 26 groups were formed to share and discuss the questions which serve to elucidate and contextualise what Fr Gleeson has shared in his talks.

Four pre-selected groups presented their outputs:

Representative from Pre-schools (Francis Mahendran)

There are daily assembly prayers. Values and Catholic teaching are integrated into the curriculum and some even practice meditation. Kindergartens are 'dialogue' schools and this promotes universality. Parent-school partnerships are being worked on for better collaboration. However, there is high turnover rate of staff which results in inconsistency in the rolling out of values programme. Some teachers forget to show compassion as they get into the daily routine and parish kindergartens do not seem to get enough support from parish priests.

Representative from Primary schools (Aaron Soon)

School values are used as central themes during the year and Values education lessons include stories from parables. External rituals such as prayers and Masses are present in school life. Strong parent support groups in schools provide

the much needed community support (e.g. religious education, prayers) to enhance Catholic identity of the school. At St Gabriel's Primary School, Catholic boys attend classes where the MOE curriculum merged with biblical values is taught while the non-Catholic boys attend classes where the MOE curriculum merged with the Founder's values is spoken about. There is a need to have more Catholic vendors like the Redemptorist Mission Team to organize retreats/talks based on the MOE and Catholic curriculum.

However, Catholic teachers are apologetic about their faith, hence faith is not explicitly shared. There is a dichotomy between MOE syllabus and Catholic curriculum. Only one school managed to try to merge the two curricula. Lacking a critical mass for personal witnessing at school level also makes it difficult to execute a school's Catholic programme. Some schools lack a chaplaincy team.

Representative from Secondary schools (Denis Leong)

Most Catholic schools have maintained the Catholic ethos. Some schools have allocated time for teachers to listen to students at least once a semester and schools do listen to the students at the periphery. There is a large spread of religious programmes, strong values education programme and elements of hospitality present. However, some teachers lack the time and energy to be the person of Jesus, class sizes may be too large and sometimes the image projected by the Catholic staff are not aligned to the values of the school. The level of competency must be raised so that the teachers can teach religious education. Not all teachers subscribe to values and there is a need for a clear direction by the Archbishop for the Catholic schools.

Representative from Tertiary/CJC/Polytechnics (Eugene Yeow)

The identity of the Catholic school is seen in practices like Masses, prayers and reflections. The programmes in school are inclusive and embrace all in the community. Teachers do share faith stories and promote values with their students. However, there are teachers who cannot give what they do not have. For some, there is a lack of expression or personal belief of who Christ is in the lives of the teachers. There is an emphasis on community building but the journey with the students tends to be confined to the classroom. Since the paymaster is not the diocese, the teachers and school leaders would prefer to remain within the boundaries set by the Ministry of Education. In addition, teachers may find it difficult to balance the need to have good grades with time for character formation. The teacher is in the frontline of the faith and needs a faith community in the school for support. There is a need to have a common understanding of a Catholic school on the level of the diocese rather than different versions of it depending on the sponsoring authority. There is a need for a dialogue between the Church and the Ministry of Education on how flexible we can be to express our faith.

Closing Address by Prof Tan Chang Han

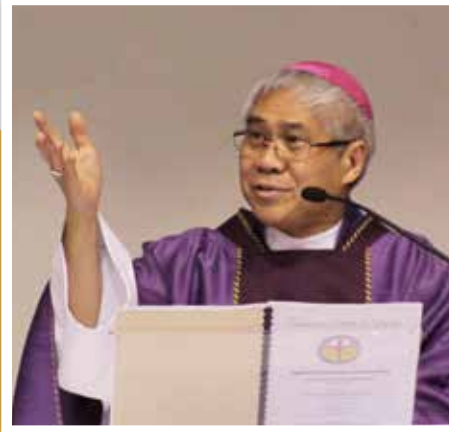
Catholic education must start with wanting to develop the students with gospel values so that they can become people for others and serve others. A good education empowers the students to have the knowledge, skills and the tools to help others. These students will have an enlightened self-interest to become holistic persons who care for others. Therefore our Catholic identity is a verb. It is to be universal and deep, not superficial. Catholic education offers a vision beyond the economic/academic.

Our Catholic identity calls for our schools to be places of prayer and the proclamation of Jesus Christ in an unoffensive, inclusive and loving way. Christian values can be transmitted in a "tactical" way. On the way into the hall, there is a poster on care for the environment. As a Catholic school, we believe in preserving the environment. We can tell our students that the world is created by a loving God and we should be the stewards of creation. In addition, the Charities Week campaign is not merely the collecting of money to fill the envelopes. The amount in the envelopes is not important. What is important is that the students can reflect about others who are in need just as Christ thought about us who are in need.

I was not a Catholic when I was a student in SJI but the messages that I received in school were a comfort to me, like "the Peace of God which surpasses all human understanding."

ACCS will gather and distil all the thoughts and feedback received today and there are three practical steps that we will take, namely.

- Greater consensus on the essential elements of Catholic ethos, that is, the baseline that all Catholic schools should have. We will have a consultation with the SMCs and the school leadership.
- More formation programmes for Catholic teachers to live their faith better in the work place.
- The Church will have to dialogue with the MOE as Catholic values will reinforce values education. Catholic ethos is not an add-on. Our starting point is different; we give a deeper and more profound understanding of values education.



Archbishop William Goh:
**HOMILY OF
THE ARCHBISHOP**

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, in the first reading which we have just heard, the prophet speaks about a new heaven and a new earth. Indeed, my dear brothers and sisters, the truth is that the world is changing rapidly, as a result of science and technology, and mass communication. But is the world being made anew in the real sense of the word?

We are living in bewildering times. Why do I say this? Simply because the traditional values that we hold so strongly, steadfastly, these values are being eroded away. When we started, all our Catholic schools had strong moral religious values that have seen us through all this while. And perhaps the current generation of leaders we have, whether in the corporate world, in civic life or in government, have benefited from Christian or Catholic education.

But, my dear friends, the tide is changing. Because of secularisation and the combined effects of relativism, materialism, and individualism in a negative sense, all these values that we hold are being challenged. Values of filial piety, values of marriage, values of the family, values of obedience – all these are put in question today. And that is the reason why I say: this is a very critical and also a most confusing period of human history. For more than two thousand years, life was much simpler, things were much clearer, sometimes perhaps too neat: things were either right or wrong. There were no grey areas.

But now everything is grey. Just ask the young people about all those traditional values. What is their response? "It's up to you."

You know, my dear brothers and sisters, this new heaven and this new earth that the prophet speaks about, is it real? A world where there is no more mourning, no more grieving; a world where there is peace and harmony; a world that can help you to live until a hundred. In Singapore it reaches eighty, twenty more years to go and you reach the Biblical promise, work harder.

But what is the central message of today's scripture reading? The truth is that the first reading, the responsorial psalm and the Gospel, all have the same message: new life, new heaven, new earth can only come from God. They cannot come from men. Only God can give us life. Only God can create a new heaven, a new earth. The responsorial psalm said: only God can rescue us from death.

So, don't think that humanity is so powerful that it can bring, on its own effort, a new heaven and a new earth. And this is the lie that is propagated by the world. Secularism, humanism, they say the same thing: "We can do it. We don't need God." This is what they're saying: "We can do it through science and technology."

You know, my dear brothers and sisters, science and technology, they are wonderful gifts from the Lord. But science and technology cannot change hearts. Science and technology cannot change lives. They can make your life comfortable; that is true. But they cannot give you life. No one is happy simply because he has sufficient physical, material things in life. No one is complete without love.

Today we are not too sure what love is anymore because we don't believe that love is everlasting. We promote divorce, we promote same sex unions, we promote cohabitation. What is love? Love means we are together, that's all. If I don't like you, tomorrow we say "it's over". Is this love? A love that cannot last, it is worth loving? Whoever wants to love temporarily?

No one ever said to his wife: "I will love you for about three years. After that we will divorce."

If you ever said that to your wife, she would say: "Better we don't get married, then".

AS EDUCATORS YOU ARE TO TRANSFORM MINDS AND CHANGE LIVES. YOU ARE TO PLANT THE RIGHT VALUES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE. YOUR TASK IS TO GIVE LIFE. MORE THAN JUST PHYSICAL OR MATERIAL LIFE, YOUR TASK IS TO GIVE THE FULLNESS OF LIFE.

Every lover says: "We want to love forever."

But do they believe that love is forever? And that is why today there are young people who no longer believe in marriage and family. Because they see divorces, infidelity everywhere. It's something so common as if it is normal. They are also influenced by what they watch on TV, in the movies. Sleeping around is something so 'natural', 'nothing wrong with that'. Ask the young people:

"Is it alright to sleep with your boyfriend, girlfriend?"

And they may say: "Of course, so long as there is mutual consent"

Even without love it's alright – so long as there is mutual consent.

My dear brothers and sisters, when science and technology do not grow in tandem with the moral and the spiritual life of the human person, when there is this dichotomy, it is tragic. It will lead to the destruction of humanity.

As you can see in the proliferation of armoury, weapon, nuclear power, we can see how power can manipulate people. Bioscience, or for that matter, cloning, euthanasia and all sorts will lead to the destruction of humanity. Genetics is beautiful but today we are talking about the survival or the fittest, we will eliminate anyone who does not have good genes. I think eighty per cent of us would not have been here if we had gone according to modern times, because most of us have got bad genes.

Euthanasia is promoted simply because we don't believe in love any more. Who wants to care for the elderly? "We have our lives to live!" We say. "Those of you who are elderly, if you cannot contribute, cannot look after my children, it is your obligation to die. You take up space. And you're making my life difficult. I can't spend time looking after you".

Recently I spoke to an elderly lady, ninety years old, and she told me: "You know Father, every day I look at these four walls. In those days when I was strong I could still bring my dog out for a walk. But now I cannot walk. That's why I can understand why elderly people want to die." Because they are not loved. If you were loved, do you think you would want to die? No. Nobody wants euthanasia if there is love. Because they are not loved. Everybody is busy. Children are busy and when you are elderly and cannot walk any more, you just face the four walls. That is your life.

And so, my dear brothers and sisters, how then can we bring about the new heaven and the new earth? How can we care for the future of humanity? And I keep saying this and we must remember this: I'm not the bishop for three hundred thousand Catholics in Singapore. I'm bishop for the Catholics and even beyond. The same thing for you as Catholics. We don't exist for Catholics only. The Church is missionary. The Church exists for mission, for evangelisation. The Church does not exist for herself. That is why the nature of the Church is missionary. If the Church were not missionary, we would have disowned our identity. That's why the holiest of all the tasks of the Church is mission. There is no other. So, to bring about this new heaven and new earth we need to cooperate with the grace of God.

The work of educators, as far as I'm concerned, is the most important work. You are laying the foundations. And this is true even for the bishop. That is why the primary duty of the bishop is to teach, before he governs, before he ministers. The bishop's chief duty is to preach and to teach. When I find the opportunity, I will teach because teaching forms minds. You cannot minister, you cannot govern if people are not converted.

You are educators. As educators you are to transform minds and change lives. You are to plant the right values for young people. Your task is to give life. More than just physical or material life, your task is to give the fullness of life.

In today's Gospel, we have Jesus healing the young boy. He is the life giver. And today we need to reach out to the young people by asking ourselves: Are we sincere in giving them the fullness of life? Just because we give them a good academic

education, we may think we have done our job, but what's the use of a good education if values are not imparted? We are short-changing them.

When they became successful they will only work for themselves. Are they going to work for humanity? Are they going to give themselves to society or just be interested in enriching themselves? They may use their ingenuity and their talents for the wrong things, like to manipulate people. Will they be happy? Eventually they will not be happy. They can be successful, rich, and powerful. But their hearts will be empty.

And that is why, as educators, we are called to cooperate with the grace of God. We are called to form the future leaders of society.

The future of our society is in your hands. Many of us are short-sighted: our focus may only be on helping students get good grades. And we are quite happy with it. But who will transform the world? Who will transform society; the leaders of tomorrow?

What kind of leaders are we going to give to society? That, for me, is the question. Are these leaders who are going to govern Singapore imbued with integrity, with the values of the Gospel, who are virtuous, who understand the meaning of life, who are compassionate? What sort of leaders do you want to run the country?

As we celebrate our fiftieth anniversary, we must give credit to the government for giving us some universal values. Without these values, there will be among other things, corruption at every level. We need to impart Catholic values, which are universal values. We need to cultivate our young people in the values of the Gospel. That is the greatest gift we can give to anyone, to live a life of integrity, a life of service, a life of commitment to society. It is in giving that you live. That is why my motto as a bishop is: ut vivat (that they may live).

I am totally convinced that the only way to live is to die for humanity and to die for God. There is no other way to live. And that is the message I bring across to anyone I meet because Jesus says "I come to give you life, life abundantly."

To understand better your involvement as educators in transforming society with the values of the Gospel, I invite you to read Gaudium et Spes, Constitutions of the Church number thirty-nine. When you read it you will understand the involvement of the Church in society.

Now, the next question I want to pose is this: "What is the foundation of Catholic values? How do we impart values to our young people? Are the values we are imparting to our young people just secular values?"

What distinguishes us from non-Christian schools? Our values, ultimately! And not simply ethical values. No. They are the values founded in Christ. Christ is the centre of all that we do because in Christ Jesus, His message and His person are identified. Depart from Christ, our fundamental values would be inadequate. They're not wrong but inadequate. And this is where the relationship between faith and reason comes in. The task of the Church in her service to the world is to purify reason with faith. Reason, to some extent, can arrive at the truth [and be loved], but very often reason is confused and blurred by selfish motives, consciously or unconsciously.

If in providing values to our young people, we don't give them Jesus, then, what are we doing? We are short-changing them because we don't give them the source of these values. It will be like giving fish to people who are poor but not teaching them how to fish. Ultimately, the mission of the Church is to lead everyone to Jesus, so that they will have the fullness of truth, of life and of love. So, a Catholic school that does not proclaim Christ explicitly would have fallen short as a Catholic school.

How then do we impart values? What is the pedagogy of imparting values and faith to our young people? Now I must first speak about the reality of the situation in Singapore. I have four or five points to make. You might agree or disagree with me. I speak from my heart. I don't like to say nice things only.

Number one: in Singapore, most of our Catholic schools have less than forty percent Catholic students. Many of our teachers, teaching in Catholic schools, are also not Catholic.

Number two: in terms of the position of the schools, unlike in the past, we do not have a strong presence of religious in our



Catholic schools. We still have some presence, but very few, and so the icon of the sacred is lost. Who sets the direction and policies of the school? Most of the schools are run by School Management Committees, made up of alumni, parents, school leaders and religious.

The third thing is the question of who is the pay master? As the maxim goes, he who pays the piper, calls the tune. The bishop is not the paymaster, so we are constrained by what our schools can do.

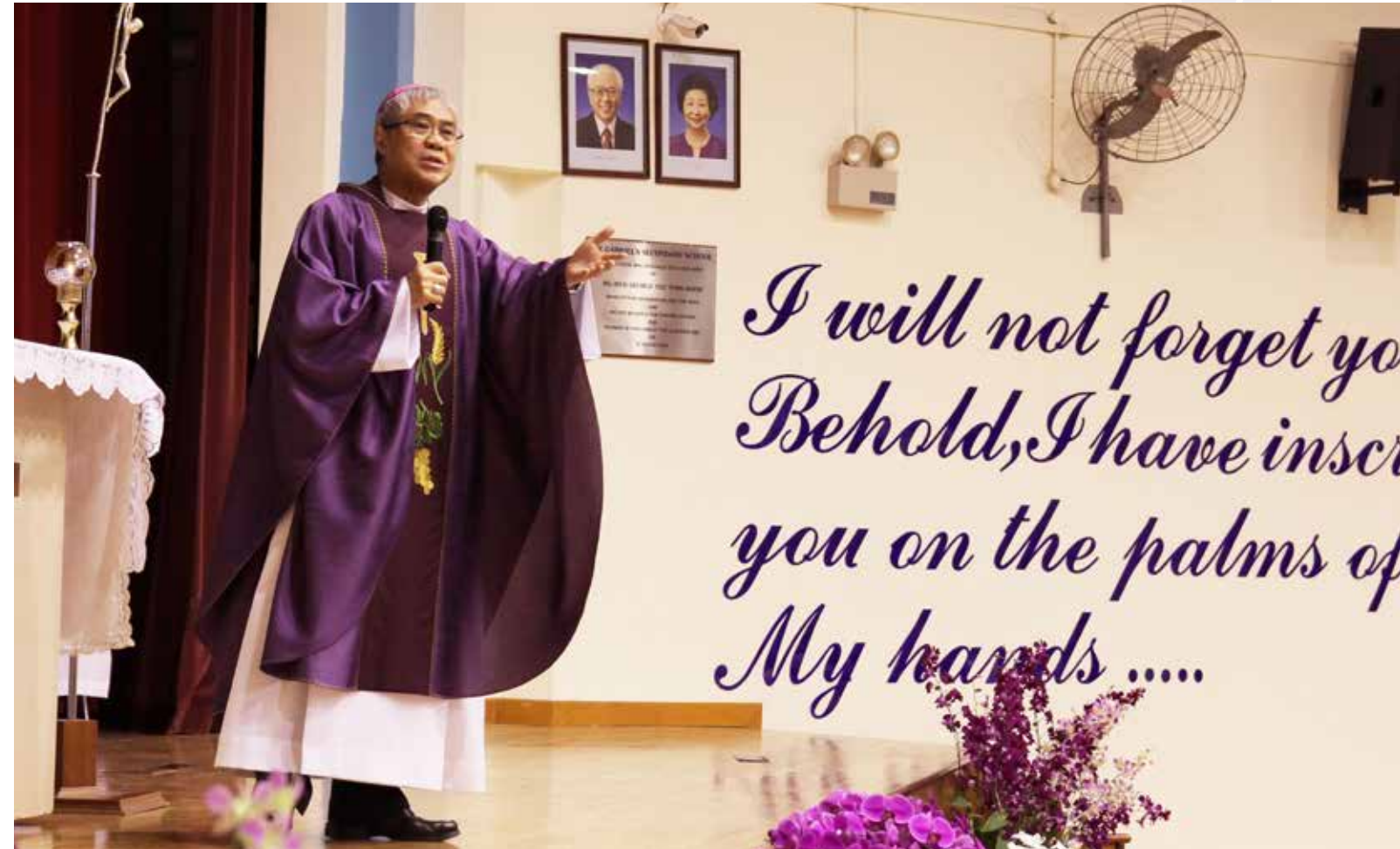
Fourth thing is that all our Catholic schools today are run by different sponsoring authorities and so they run their schools according to their own vision and direction. It doesn't mean it is not good because every Catholic school must have a character. We are not against that. But there may be a lack of concerted effort to move together as Church. How do we bring all these together? At the end of the day we must have a common mission: we want to give the best to our students. ACCS is a beautiful instrument, but at the moment it lacks the capacity to coordinate more effectively, to steer all the schools in working together in unison, hence it has become more like a resources centre, doing things like organising this seminar. So the bishop's role has been reduced to a ceremonial one, without any real influence, unlike the Methodist schools here, where the bishop owns the schools and hence he steers the direction.

In this kind of situation, what do we do? How do we respond? I like to take a page from Pope Emeritus Benedict. He spoke about the courtyard of the gentiles. This is a beautiful way of applying the new evangelisation to schools. What is this courtyard of the gentiles? The courtyard of the gentiles refers to the Jerusalem Temple, where there is the Holy of Holies – only the priests can enter – then we have the courtyard for the Jews themselves, and then we have the outer courtyard. Non-Jews who want to seek God would stay in the outer courtyard since they are not Jews. I liken our Catholic schools to the courtyard of the gentiles; a place where non-Catholic students and teachers gather. They may not be convinced that Jesus is the Christ. It's alright. But the fact that parents send their children to Catholic schools implies that they are open to the values of the school, the teachings of the school, and want their child to be educated in Catholic values. That's why we must not be afraid to be more explicit in terms of proclaiming the Gospel values, or speaking about Christ. If we are lacking courage in presenting our Catholic values and Christ Himself, then we are not being faithful to them. In fact, we are also short changing the parents, because they thought they were sending their children to a Catholic school, with Catholic values.

Now I want to bring out two new terms for you. There are two words here I want you to reflect on: Kerygma and Didache. These are Greek words. What is the Kerygma? Kerygma is the encounter with Jesus, the crucified and risen Lord. The Kerygma is the proclamation of the passion, death and resurrection of the Lord. That Jesus is my Lord, my Saviour. What is the Didache? Didache means on-going formation, in terms of doctrine, in terms of morality. The Church begins with Kerygma, not with Didache. That means that the beginning of a Christian life is always Kerygma. Today in the Gospel Jesus says: "You want to see signs and portents otherwise you don't believe." That is true. Unless we see Jesus as the risen Lord, how can we believe? Everybody needs a deep encounter with the risen Lord in order to have a radical transformation of life. That's why Pope Benedict in his apostolic letter "God is love" says [that] it is not because of a lofty choice or ethical choice that you become a Christian; rather, it is an encounter with an event, that event is Jesus himself that changes your whole orientation in life. Isn't it true? Some of us may feel our life has no meaning. It's like dragging of feet. Then suddenly you fall in love and you're on a cloud, so happy. Now you find meaning. You begin living for somebody or living for love. That's why I say: if you're not living for love, life has no meaning. Those people who live for their work only may seem grumpy and even make life difficult for others, because they can become very ambitious. They measure their happiness in terms of success in work or what the world thinks of them. But inside, they are very lonely people. They may not have capacity for relationship. Didache works only for those who have found the Lord and are undergoing formation.

It is alright to begin with the Didache. In most of the Catholic schools, you are trying to impart values, put a little crucifix here and there, and sometimes even the Bishop's photo and of the Holy Father to let people know that this is a Catholic school. We may have some prayer sessions, or talks about values. So, this is called Didache. Let me ask you a question. Can your life be changed just by knowing the values? We all know the right things, that's what St Paul says in Romans chapter seven: to know the law doesn't mean that you can do the law. You can have ethics as well. Ethics doesn't work. Just because you know what is right and wrong may not mean that you are convinced and will live it. We don't die for an ideology, we die for a person. If I love you, I would die for you. So, Didache is good as a preparation. But the laws alone, knowing what is right and wrong, might not change you. Yes, it would influence your life to some extent, but it doesn't mean that you would be able to do what is right. What changes us? It is love. That is why, if the Catholic schools remain on this level, it is inadequate. Of course, at the end of the day, it is through your values, and most of all, through your witnessing that people are inspired to change.

As educators we don't educate in terms of preaching, but through our way of life, really. It's the ambience that you create in



school, first by the teachers and the principals. If they're religious, better still. It's the way of life. That's why Catholic schools are not an institution producing students for grades, but a community. A community that experiences the love of Christ constantly in their lives, and then, when you proclaim the Gospel, they say: "WOW, I experienced the love of this teacher." Our young people like to have mentors. They look up to us. They say: "That teacher is so kind, so forgiving, so understanding."

My dear brothers and sisters, if no one has ever asked you about your faith, it may mean that you are a poor example. But what about those who are Catholic? For those students who are Catholic, you must give them the Kerygma, because many of our Catholics never experience God. And since they're already Catholic, you must strengthen their spiritual life. What will happen when they receive the Kerygma? The doctrine, in terms of knowledge of the faith and morality, would be lived out and be embedded in their hearts. They will be the salt and light of the school. When Catholic teachers are like salt and light of the school, they will gradually bring about this connection between life and faith. What we say and believe is how we live. And the faith is not just taught, but lived and celebrated in liturgy. Then, others who see this will say: "I also want to know Jesus".

My dear brothers and sisters, let me conclude by saying this: I thank you for coming to this conference. I thank you because you are so important, not only to the Church, but really, to humanity. It's not easy to be a teacher. There are a lot of challenges. It's not easy to be a principal. But, precisely, this is where, we, and especially those who are Catholic teachers, Catholics principals must support each other in the faith and encourage each other. As Catholic schools, as ACCS, we need to strengthen this bond among ourselves so that you can truly bring life. This is my prayer for the Church, my prayer for all of you, because, as I said, I love humanity, I love God. Every young person is important to me. Thank you.

Fr Edward Seah:

UPDATE FROM ACCS



Key Areas for Improvement	Issues Raised during CEC 2013	What has been done
Directory of Catholic Educators	The proportion of Catholic teachers in a school is small and their numbers insufficient to witness to the faith and to conduct 'Catholic' activities.	ACCS commenced compiling the names of Catholic educators since the last conference. Presently we have 255 names of Catholic educators in Catholic Schools and 116 names of Catholic educators in non-Catholic schools. ACCS continues to update its directory.
Chaplaincy Teams - clergy, religious, and laity	The physical presence of clergy and religious has diminished considerably over the years in our schools. A chaplaincy team consisting of clergy, religious and lay persons would sustain the Catholic character of the school.	There are many priests and religious already active in schools. ACCS has compiled list of chaplains from the schools. 14 schools have priests as chaplains. ACCS has also been encouraging schools to consider forming a chaplaincy team. 15 schools have a religious Brother or Sister. 112 teachers and 25 parent volunteers 31 schools have Chaplaincy Team while 4 have none.
Parish-School partnerships	Catholic schools are part of the Church, and thus come within the ambit of the parish pastoral ministry. The present level of interaction between school and parish is low.	There are schools and parishes working together in different ways. ACCS helped in recruiting adult advisors from the parishes to support Catholic organisations in schools. ACCS encourages newly appointed principals to meet the parish priests and consider possible collaborations.
Greater laity involvement	Parents and school alumni can contribute to sustaining the Catholic ethos and school spirit and to the successful functioning of the schools.	Many schools have parent volunteers and parent support groups. A good number of laity are also involved in School Chaplaincy Teams.

Key Areas for Improvement	Issues Raised during CEC 2013	What has been done
Formation and Induction programmes	The Catholic school must have a distinctive character and ethos to distinguish it from secular schools. All persons working in Catholic schools must understand the mission and goals of Catholic schools. All persons involved need to be inducted into the Catholic schools system.	Induction/Reflective Review Newly appointed Principals: 50% Newly appointed Vice-Principals: 40% Regular meetings and sessions were held for the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Commissioners, Supervisors and Major SuperiorsPrincipalsCoordinators of Religious EducationSchool SMCs
Catholic Ethos self-assessment framework implementation	There is weak understanding of what makes a school Catholic. Schools have to consciously examine all aspects of the educational experience they provide, to appraise the extent to which they meet the explicit standards set out in the document, Catholic Identity and Ethos of Catholic Schools.	A 21-member Catholic Ethos Working Group was formed to look into the issues related to Catholic Ethos. The theme "Character of Catholic Schools" was eventually chosen for this 2015 Catholic Education Conference.
Implementation of CME and RE programmes in Catholic Schools	An integral part of Catholic education is the moral and spiritual formation of young persons. The CME and RE programmes are thus essential components of the educational experience. The implementation of CME and RE varies considerably across the schools.	Clear framework has been provided by ACCS for CMECS and for RE. Resources are uploaded to our website and sent to all schools. RE material and CMECS material are all available without charge. RE has been delivered in a few schools in different ways. Training is also provided together with any resources given. In the Primary Schools, the "Walking with Jesus" Bible series is still implemented and training is regularly provided. Resources are made available on the ACCS website. Pre- School <ul style="list-style-type: none">Catholic Preschool Principals were attached to Brisbane Catholic Schools for an immersion programme.Character Education Workshop Conducted by Dr Carter and Marilyn (ACCS) in 2014Religious Education Access Program (REAP)ACCS works with parishes of Serangoon District to offer Scholarship for pre-school teachers.



Fr Christopher Gleeson, SJ:

KEYNOTE ADDRESS 1

NOTE: There is a prepared Text written for this presentation available from the ACCS office. Because of its focus on the slide presentation, this transcript differs somewhat from the written text. Readers would do well to have both texts in front of them.

Thank you everybody,

This is novelty for me, sitting down, I feel like the king of Arabia, but anyway, we'll try and, if I get restless, I'll get up and walk around. As a Jesuit, I'm an obedient man – you might find that surprising – but I'm obedient and that's what the committee wants me to do, to sit down.

Whenever I'm introduced as generously as Genevieve has done, I recall the story of a little ten-year-old boy in one of our primary schools in Melbourne, at [Xavier] College, who had just started at the school in what we call grade five, and he came home at the end of the first week and his mother was very keen to find out how he was getting on. So he talked about basketball and he talked about his friends and his cricket. She said: "But what about your teachers?"

He said: "Oh, I've got two teachers: I've got a Jesuit in the morning and a human being in the afternoon." [audience laughs]

I'm going to take off my watch. Brandon is giving me signs of ten minutes to go and five minutes to go. We didn't have that when I was a baby Jesuit. The old Jesuit retreat directors would take off their watches and then disregard them till the next hour. But I will, I'll try and keep an eye on it, Brandon.

You don't need to take any notes, just sit back and – hopefully – enjoy. I've prepared a text and I'll certainly give that to Katherine and the committee, so that you'll have it available to you, if you want it. But thank you, first of all, for the invitation to be here. I love the journal and I was very interested to hear what the Archbishop said this morning and I thought: "My God, I think I should go home now!" [audience laughs]. He's stolen a lot of my thunder [audience laughs]. But it's not easy, actually, I've put a lot of work into this, I hope you'll find it valuable, but it's not easy to say something fresh and perhaps, even mildly inspirational, on the much visited theme of the character of Catholic schools. It's quite a thick speech which reminds me of a cartoon that one of my staff in Sydney sent me [cartoon is shown, audience laughs]. That obviously doesn't apply to you.

If there is anything of inspiration in this talk, a lot of it will come from people like Pope Francis, and you've got a liberal supply

of quotations in your journal, he's been an amazing influence on our Church and on our world, really, in the last two years. The writers of the Vatican document "Education today and tomorrow – a renewing passion" and if you haven't read it, it's an excellent document coming out of Rome.

I'd like to reflect briefly on that word: character, because a lot of material has been written over the years, well before Jesus. Aristotle was teaching that moral virtues, like crafts, are acquired by practice and habit, we become builders by building and lyre players by playing the lyre. We become virtuous and strong of character by doing virtuous acts. In the thirteenth century, that great Dominican theologian, Thomas Aquinas, said that most of what we do primarily affects us. If done poorly, it worsens us. For example, a good run makes the runner run better, a poised dance makes the dancer dance better. In effect, we become what we do.

The archbishop spoke a lot about values this morning, and rightly so, but virtues too, are values in action, aren't they? Some say sport develops character, we used to argue about that one in school, others say sport reveals character. I like Os Guinness' definition in his book *When no one sees*: the importance of character in an age of image.

"Character is what we are when no one sees but God." What a great definition. I'm reminded also of the story of some children lining up for lunch in the cafeteria of a Catholic primary school, and at the head of the table was a large pile of apples. The supervising nun made a note and posted it on the apple tray: "Take only one. God is watching," she said. [Audience laughs]. Moving further along the lunch line, at the other end of the table was a large pile of chocolate chip biscuits. A child had written a note: "Take all you want. God is watching the apples." [Audience laughs]

So character, I think, lies deeper than our values and far deeper than our philosophy. Our character is the deepest expression of what constitutes us as unique individuals. Character is our personal seal, our indelible imprint. I love those words of the Song of Songs in chapter eight, which are often read in marriages: "set me like a seal upon your heart, like a seal upon your arm, for love is as strong as death." That's what character is about.

In Australia we have another way perhaps of describing character and it comes from the theme of Songlines, which are song tracks, as Bruce Chatwin describes in his novel 'Songlines', "Each totemic ancestor, while travelling through the country, was thought to have scattered a trail of words and musical notes along the lines of his footprints, and these Dreaming-tracks lay over the land as 'ways' of communication between the most far-flung tribes. 'A Song', Arkady said, 'was both map and direction finder. Providing you knew the song, you could always find your way across the country.' Isn't that beautiful? And I think that's what we are trying to do in schools, in Catholic schools, to provide Songlines, maps, direction finders.

We had a lovely lady in charge of Catholic education in the Diocese of Parramatta, her name was Dr Ann Clark – she was actually on our Riverview school council in Sydney too. When she died in 1997 and her great friend, Bishop Geoffrey Robinson, preached the homily about her, he said some beautiful words about her. He said: "From the time she was a little girl, she heard and loved the song of Jesus. This is our most important 'songline' in Catholic education, of course, our constant reference point in the Word, Jesus himself." The bishop came back to that again and again: that's our 'songline'. "In the beginning was the Word." Like the apostles, when we are lost and know not where to turn to, we can say: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life." Jesus, our lighthouse and our 'songline'.

So, what more can we say about our seal, about our indelible imprint, our 'songline' in Catholic education? I'm going to try and say that there are several pathways to ensure that we are walking along the correct 'songline'. In attempting to describe these different pathways, I want to focus not on the 'what' of Catholic education, but the 'how'. Let's focus on the 'how' of Catholic education rather than the 'what'. In the past, Christianity has been very strong on the 'what' but very weak on the 'how'. The Catholic catechism says it beautifully: "We do not believe in formulas, but in those realities they express, which faith allows us to touch. In other words, our Catholic faith is a way of seeing the world." And I will keep coming back to that.

As Clodovis Boss said, "Faith is not a landscape to be seen, but eyes for seeing. It is not a world, but a gaze upon the world. It is not a book to read, but a grammar for reading – for reading all books."

One of my Jesuits education colleagues in Australia has made the same point. He said: "Catholic identity is a verb. It is not a brand, but a way of acting and doing." Isn't that a good way of describing Catholic identity? As the bishop was talking this morning about love, I like to say that too in a lot of marriages that I celebrate, love is a verb, it's a doing word, it's marathon of the heart. That's what Catholic identity is too: it's a marathon, it's not an emotional sprint.

An Australian – I'm talking a lot about Australia at the moment – an Australian social anthropologist, Gerald Arbuckle, who

FAITH IS NOT A LANDSCAPE TO BE SEEN, BUT EYES FOR SEEING. IT IS NOT A WORLD, BUT A GAZE UPON THE WORLD. IT IS NOT A BOOK TO READ, BUT A GRAMMAR FOR READING – FOR READING ALL BOOKS.

is a Marist priest, very influential in this area, he talks about Catholic identity as an on-going process of becoming in a particular cultural context. And the bishop, at least for me, painted that cultural context of Singapore very starkly this morning and very helpfully. But it's not something static. It's like Jesuit formation. You're never formed, you've got to wrestle with it and how you wrestle is who you are. You eventually get there. And Gerry Arbuckle argues, interestingly and, for me, very helpfully, that one of the best ways we can get at Catholic identity, that we can make things change in schools, is through storytelling. He quotes [Steven Denning] of the World Bank, he's writing about the difficulties of educational change. I'm glad they've got them, because we've got them in schools too. He said: "Why storytelling? Nothing else worked. Charts left listeners bemused, prose remained unread, dialogue was just too laborious and slow. Time after time, when faced with the task of persuading a group of managers in a large organisation to get enthusiasm about a major change, I found that storytelling was the only thing that worked." Interesting. What's our story, in our particular school? Gerry Arbuckle takes this argument one step further by demonstrating that Jesus is the master of storytelling, through the use of parables. I think it was Michael Heher, who's an American diocesan priest, who wrote a lovely book on "The Lost Art Of Walking On Water", how about that for a great title. He said that "Jesus expected his disciples to chew on parables." Now, the truth is something - and I think the Archbishop was referring to it this morning - that we pursue, we've never got it. Words are not adequate enough to capture it. And that's what parables do, when you think about it. You know, they provoke you, they stir you, they make you feel uncomfortable too from time to time, as they should. Good storytelling builds on the experience of one's listeners - obviously they hadn't listened very well in that factory. And this is a lovely way of describing it too: that parables are spring board stories, leading people to discover the answers for themselves.

A lovely book written in 1995 by Vincent Donovan who is a Holy Spirit Father, in South Africa, he talks about evangelisation as a process of bringing the Gospel to people where they are, not where you'd like them to be." A very challenging book this is. And, again, "when the Gospel reaches a people where they are, their response to that Gospel is the Church in a new place, and the song they will sing is that new, unsung song, that unwritten melody that haunts us all". This is the Church, in a new place today.

Pope John Paul II agrees with this and in one of his documents, *Redemptoris Missio*, talks about the new *areopagoi*. It's in your journal, Francis does too, that we need to bring the Gospel to where the people are converging in modern societies. Paul in Acts 17 goes to the *areopagos*, that's the central place for the Greeks. That's where we have to go.

"Two things must come together to lead us to that new place - the gospel and the sacred arena of people's lives." The sacred arena of people's lives - where are people at today? So, for me, our Catholic faith is a way of seeing the world.

There's actually a Jesuit bishop in Australia - we don't have many bishops in the Society, but, we've got one in Australia, a dear friend of mine, [Greg O'Kelly] - he sent me this recently about seeing [speaker shows slides, audience laughs]. Thank God you're laughing.

I think humour is a very important part of spirituality, you know. Wasn't it Nietzsche who said: "I'll believe in Christianity when



you Christians show me in your demeanour and your faces that you believe in the resurrection." How about that? So, again another bit of saying.

[Speaker shows slides] And two Jesuits meeting one another, Father General and Pope Francis. At the end of his first year, it would have been November 2013, the Pope turned up to the main congregational leaders from all around the world, and he was just going to have a cup of tea with them but it ended up in a conversation of a couple of hours and they asked the Pope this question: "If you were in our place, what would you do to respond to your call to go to the frontiers?"

And he had some very interesting responses: "The church is grown by witness, not by trying to convert people by proselytism." And he talks about "the witness of generosity, detachment sacrifice, the witness of self-forgetfulness in order to care for others."

"The Church must be attractive. Wake up the world. Be witnesses of a different way of doing things, of acting, of living." And, perhaps, the most interesting thing is, I have been thinking of this for quite a while: "Spend time walking on the periphery, in order really to become acquainted with the reality and life-experiences of people." That's a good question: where is the periphery for us in our Catholic schools in Singapore? Is it the front fence, the back fence? You'll be surprised. And this I what he said: "I'm convinced of one thing: the great changes in history were realised when reality was seen not from the centre but rather from the periphery. It is the most concrete way of imitating Jesus who went to all the peripheries."

The most recent book on Francis is called "The Great Reformer" by Austin Ivereigh - I think that's how you pronounce his name - a very fine book, well-researched, beautifully written. He quotes the Pope saying in Brazil, 2013, "The way we see is always affected by the way we direct our gaze." The question from the Latin American bishop was: "How are we going to look at reality in order to see it?" And the answer from the Pope was: "With the eyes of discipleship."

I remember back in the 1970s our General Father Pedro Arrupe was invited by our [scholastic centre], our Jesuit students, to come and give a talk, in Europe. Now, the only problem was that they only gave him two weeks' notice. And, for a man like that... I mean, his diary is all filled up at least a year ahead, so he couldn't go but he wrote them a beautiful letter, and he said:



"My hope for you, young men, is that you learn to see the world with the eyes of Christ." And I think that's what Francis is saying here, isn't he? With the eyes of discipleship. So, what distinguishes Jesus from all others is his ability to cross all kinds of borders in order to share the life of others and be in solidarity with them.

Back in 2010, when Mary McKillop became St Mary McKillop, a Josephite nun, wonderful educator in Australia, our former prime minister, who was deposed that year, went to Rome and he was accompanied by one of our Jesuits, Fr Frank Brennan, and, when he got there, "Look" — he said to Frank — "I'd like to meet Father General." And Frank said: "Oh, yes, that can be arranged, yes, certainly." So that's what he did. And he asked Father General: "What's the main priority facing the Jesuits today?"

And Father General said this: our number one priority is combating — what he called "the globalisation of superficiality." How about that? The globalisation of superficiality. And there are all sorts of forms of superficiality, of surface living. So we've got to help our young people to separate what's real from the plastic, separating the lasting from the ephemeral, and separating what is essential from indulgence, the fluff and the vacuous. I've pinched that from [J. Chesterton] but I think that it's very good.

I've got a friend who sends me these crazy cartoons: "Will Sir be lining his own pockets?" How about that? And some of you might be asking this question coming up: when is he going to finish? Are we there yet? [Slides — audience laughs]

I've noticed you've got a question this afternoon that picks that up, something about mirroring: "How does Fr Gleeson's sharing mirror what is happening or not happening in Singapore's Catholic Schools today?" I'm not sure that cartoon will help you much but it's there.

So, we're at the frontiers for our schools in 2015 and back in 2009 our General gave a wonderful talk on the 150th

anniversary of Jesuit education on the Philippines, and he talked about two frontiers: the frontier of depth — the opposite to superficiality, and the frontier of universality — which is what Catholic schools, Catholic identity is all about, universality, openness to all. And these are some of the things he said: "Jesus always responded in depth." What about in Mark chapter two, the story of the man being brought through the roof? I often wondered what the owner of that house thought about that, when he saw these chaps pulling back the roof and lowering their friend in front of Jesus. But Jesus goes on to respond to a deeper need: He forgives his sins. Jesus judged but never condemned. He offered healing, not blame.

I love these words of Ron Rolheiser, talking about the touch of Jesus, describing that as being a good definition of the Eucharist. In the Eucharist "we touch the hem of Christ's garment and are held to his heart. What happens there is something beyond words and understanding, though not beyond love."

Jesus always responded in depth. And, from our own Ignatian or Jesuit documents, Christ is the water of life, Christ's dialogue with the Samaritan woman took him 'beyond the river banks of what was culturally and religiously familiar'. He goes to the periphery. "He who knows about depth knows about God".

So, in order to help us get to understand more the frontier of depth, the general asked four questions in that talk and they are very good questions for Catholic educators.

1. How deeply do we respond to our students' needs, their deepest hunger for meaning and purpose?
2. How deeply do we help our students see? The real beyond the virtual? See people in real need and on the margins? (The men didn't see that man at the bottom of the garden)
3. How deeply do we invite our students to think? (versus fundamentalism and fanaticism)
4. And finally, how deeply do we form our students' inner persons?

When the pope was first interviewed in the middle of 2013, he was asked: "What element of Ignatian spirituality helps you live your ministry?"

He said: "Discernment. It's one of the things that worked inside St Ignatius. For him it is an instrument of struggle in order to know the Lord and follow him more closely."

So the test of our education as Jesuits (and, I put in brackets, Singapore education) is if we are able to produce people of discernment.

We can elaborate that, but that capacity to look at life in depth and choose the important things. You know, often decisions are made between three or four goods, aren't they? We can all make a decision rightly between good and evil but it's often three or four goods: what's going to have the greatest impact, the greatest long term value? That's what the sermon's about. I heard somebody say that last year, at a conference I was at in Rockhampton, Fr John Grace, the Vicar General.

"Would that our Australian shores were as welcoming as they are protected." Which is a question about universality and the frontier they're of. So, in picking that up, our General has asked four questions about universality:

1. Do our students, as a result of their time with us, end up with a broader sense of belonging and responsibility than their own families, classes, clans?
2. Can we break out of our narrow sense of belonging to this particular school?
3. Can we break out of our particular school system and serve those outside the Jesuit (read Catholic Education Office) system in Singapore (read other Jesuit Conference Asia Pacific Provinces and regions)?

Universality is another word for Catholicity. And, finally,

4. Can we break out of our concern for the Philippines (read Australia and Singapore) and start thinking of how more we can serve the wider world of Asia around us?

They're four great questions about the Catholic identity of our schools. Moving on a little bit and talking about Catholic education as helping young people and everyone involved to see — that's what Thomas Groome says and I like that. "But happy are your eyes because they see, your ears because they hear!" You know, we talk about it as the sacramental vision, we have a very sacramental tradition in the Catholic Church, which is wonderful. It's a big word but it really means "finding God in

all things and being found by God in all things. You know, being found by God in all things really means allowing God to tap us on the shoulders.

As the Archbishop was talking this morning, I was thinking of Karl Reinher's words: "God is present in the world long before our preaching and teaching". I used to think as a baby Jesuit priest, that I was going to bring God to the world. Sorry, Chris, no, you're quite wrong: God's already there, your task as a teacher and preacher is to enliven that presence in people. That's our task as teachers.

"God comes looking for us and we go looking for God through the ordinary and every day." That's what the sacramental vision's all about. The capacity to see God in the heart of all creation. I think that's at the heart, really, of Catholic education.

Daniel O'Leary – you've got to be an Irishman with a name like O'Leary, but he's a parish priest in the North of England, up in Yorkshire – he has a lovely way of saying it: "It's a graced way of parting the bales of our complicated lives and of perceiving God at the heart of all creation. This sacramental vision happens when we must love the world more, not less, that is how we save it. And in all our efforts nothing goes to waste." We might say 'through incarnational eyes'. What on earth does that mean? I think it means identifying "God's signature on everything around us, to see God's face behind every face, to discover the lover – God who comes to us disguised as our lives."

I heard an interview when I was in Brisbane a few years ago, on the radio, it was a man by the name Graham Long, he was being interviewed, and he was the pastor of a huge city church in Sydney, called "The Wayside Chapel". They have hundreds of people coming through their church every day, some getting a meal, some getting counsel, a lot of them very desperate and homeless people. He had an interesting life, he talked about himself as a lapsed atheist, which I thought was interesting, and he said: "My challenge, as a pastor in this church, is to see the beauty in every face, long after the owner of that face has given up in it." And, to me, that's a beautiful way of talking about love without conditions. To see God's face behind every face. "What the incarnation is saying is that henceforward God is exactly where we are – in this beautiful hall in St Gabriel's – and only there is He to be found." Karl Rahner said that. Painting of Christ in a famous hotel in Melbourne.

God is simply right where we are... Joan Chittister said, "The problem is we're always looking elsewhere." Isn't God clever, hiding Himself in the last possible place where we would look, namely, our hearts? We're always looking elsewhere, at least, I am. You might be wiser spiritual people than I am. But seeing can have its problems, as this graphic shows.

You know, part of seeing is and really teachers help you do that, is to stretch your imagination. one of our greater stories in Southern Australian was by a man, a very controversial man, by the name of Manning Clark. He wasn't a very happy man, he didn't have a happy education. But he said that, when he was at school, in Melbourne Grammar, there were two sorts of teachers: there were those who were life straighteners, they can straighten you, they taught for exams, they could not look beyond the textbook – and sadly, they were the majority – but there was a minority, two or three, he said, they were life enlargers. They are the great teachers, who can stretch your imagination. And I love these words of Thomas Moore: "We are condemned to live out what we cannot imagine." And another writer that I'm very fond of was a lady by the name of Kathleen Norris, a Presbyterian writer from America: "We have become afraid of the imagination, thereby settling for false certitudes and unable to embrace ambiguity and mystery."

I don't know if you have seen – actually, I'm sure you have seen – the film, "Dead Poets Society". I've been in some great arguments about that because I think that in the film, Robin Williams, or [John Keaty], the teacher, was very manipulative. But there's a lovely article written about that by, believe it or not, another Jesuit, this time an English Jesuit, Damian Howard, talking about Ignatian spirituality in the classroom. When I saw it I thought "yes, I can use that in Singapore."

"To be caught in amazement at the beauty, subtlety, symmetry of whatever of something we are studying is a key spiritual gift."

And coming out of the airport last night, Steven was talking (Steven Chin, here), he was talking about how he likes to teach Physics, not that he does much these days, because he's a principal, but he loves to teach Physics because you can get boys so involved in the teaching of that. That's what Damian Howard is about.

"Teachers are called upon to rise up to a major educational challenge, which is the recognition, respect and enhancement of diversity."

And you have that. Listening to the archbishop and listening to those who have been talking to me about the context here



in Singapore, you have that every day. That diversity, that cultural and religious diversity. So, your work is really missionary work, isn't it, and I admire you for it.

Pope Francis – "a master builder of cross-frontier relationships". Francis gave a talk, not long after he became a pope, to students and staff in Jesuit schools in Italy and Albania and this is what he said, and I think it's relevant to you people here in Singapore: "I have a special greeting to the Albanian college of Scutari which, after the long years of repression, reopened and welcomed Orthodox, Muslim students, as well as students from agnostic families. In this way a school becomes a place of dialogue and peaceful encounter promoting attitudes of respect, listening, friendship and a spirit of partnership." How about that? That's the Catholic way, that's the 'how' that we're on about.

"Consistent with the sacramental vision of life, Catholic schools seek to offer an integral education." (Vatican Document quoted above)

Again, I heard the Archbishop saying this morning that faith and reason have got to work as partners, you can't separate them. And, again, he used the words "a way of life" and again, a bell went off in my ear. For me Catholic identity, Catholic ethos, is a way of life. It's not a whole series of belief statements, it might be but it's much more than that, isn't it?

EXCELLENCE HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH SOCIAL, FINANCIAL OR PROFESSIONAL SUCCESS, IT'S AN EXCELLENCE IN HUMANITY. IT'S FORMING BETTER HUMAN BEINGS; PEOPLE WITH A HEART, WITH COMPASSION, WITH UNDERSTANDING.

Again, this is from the Vatican document. Catholic schools seek "to prevent a situation in which the life of faith is experienced or perceived as being separate from other activities in human life." They're all mixed up together. "Our Catholic tradition asks us to draw all components of our lives together." Crazy photo slides, if you can see them but I like them. At least I might be the only person who likes them, but I like them. That mix of faith and reason, that's what the integral component of Catholic education is all about. The Vatican document says: "Ours must not be a merely functional view of education."

Our General, Fr. Nicolas was out in Sydney in January 2012 and he had a number of questions which were put to him and one of the questions, that came from a young teacher, was a very interesting one:

"With all the emphasis on excellence of outcome, exam scores, etc., is there not a danger that the importance of the process of education will be diminished?"

I've had lot of arguments with teachers over the years with my contention that the relationship is more important than the content of any teaching communication. The relationship that we have with our students. Fr Nico had time to think about it and this is what his response was: "excellence has nothing to do with social, financial or professional success, it's an excellence in humanity. It's forming better human beings; people with a heart, with compassion, with understanding." How about that? An 'excellence in humanity'. "It's forming better human beings; people with a heart, with compassion, with understanding..."

On the slide displayed John's weather forecasting looks to be very useful; I don't know if you can read it. You can hang this outside the principals' office. If the stone is wet it's raining; if it's dry it's not raining; shadow on the ground, sunny — sounds useful, very helpful. If you can't see the stone, it's foggy; swinging stone, it's windy; stone jumping up and down, earthquake; stone gone, tornado. [audience laughs] Thank God you're laughing.

The General also spoke about failure, you know. He said: "I think maybe we can encourage service and I would say I would include failure in the process, as a normal event. I feel as a general talking, that the majority of humanity experiences failure in life: failure of communication with children, failure in marriage, failure in their job, failure in promotions that don't happen, etc. So, failure is very much part of life for the majority of humanity, there should be a way of incorporating failure also in celebrations. And I say we should celebrate failure for the Kingdom of God: when someone really goes so much out of himself that, in a sense he doesn't respond to the expectations of others, but thanks to his sacrifice, in a sense, others do much better."

And Pope Francis picks up that sense of failure in the talk to Italian and Albanian Jesuit schools in mid-2013 I mentioned before. One of the students told the Pope that he was trying hard to believe in God and be faithful but that he often struggled with doubt. So, Pope Francis said: "The journey of life is not easy, because it requires juggling the need to move forward with the

importance of taking time to reflect. If we go too quickly, we'll get tired and we won't be able to reach our destination. Yet, if we stop or take our time, we won't get there either. Life's journey is truly the art of looking at the horizon, reflecting on where I want to go, but also of putting up with the fatigue from the journey. Don't be afraid of failure. The problem with the journey of life and faith isn't falling; it's not getting back up."

And Jesus, of course, faced that. When you look at his life, as a young man, he was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman, he worked in a carpenter's shop until he was thirty, he never wrote a book, he never held an office, he never owned a home, he never had a family, he never went to University, he never did one of the things that usually accompany greatness. He had no credentials but Himself. Somebody went on to say: "Nineteen and nearly twenty centuries have come and gone and today he is the leader of the column of progress." This is an anonymous writer. I am far within the mark if I say that all the armies that have ever marched and all the kings who ever reigned put together have not affected the lives of men upon this earth as has that one solitary life."

We've looked at the seal of Catholic education, its sacramental vision, its integral and universal education. But the Vatican document also talks about the climate in our schools and I think that's when they're talking about hospitality. St Benedict used to counsel his monks to receive all the guests as Christ. Venit hospes — When a guest comes — Venit Christus — Christ comes. There's a story which originated in a Russian monastery and has an older monk telling a younger monk: "I've finally learnt to accept people as they are. Whatever they are in the world, a prostitute, a Prime minister, it is all the same to me. But sometimes I see a stranger coming up the road and I say: Oh, Jesus Christ, is it you again?" [audience laughs]

So, it is no accident that we call the bread of the Eucharist that we celebrated this morning the 'host', because God shares himself in the most intimate way, in the most hospitable way, at the Eucharist.

Our much-quoted 2014 Vatican document maintains that "Catholic Schools and Universities educate people first and foremost through the living context, that is, the climate that both students and teachers establish in the environment where teaching and learning activities take place."

Hospitality really is an indelible part of Catholic schooling. I've enjoyed the hospitality of Singapore for this last half a day, wonderful, but just a few sayings about hospitality, if I could share them with you:

"Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that, some have entertained angels without knowing it." I saw in a song recently, in some music, which describes Heaven as a place where angels learn to fly. Isn't that great? There are a lot of angels in this audience.

"A city which forgets how to care for the stranger has forgotten how to care for itself." That could well apply to Australia.

"A hero is one who turns strangers into friends." Words used by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, about a great friend of his, namely Cardinal Archbishop Basil Hume of Westminster. "A hero is one who turns strangers into friends." I love that.

"Hospitality - the fine art of having an open soul and a listening mind."

Hospitality is not just about welcoming the stranger. It is that, but it's also about opening our hearts and minds to change. Cardinal Newman said once: to grow is to change and to become perfect is to change many times. Australia is not looking too good there.

"Hospitality is the ability to make another person comfortable in strange space: ours."

The Jesuits have just started — actually it's been going for two years now — a school in Dili, in East Timor.

"To welcome the other means the willingness to enter the world of the other, to let the other tell his or her story."

And Brendon Byrne, one of our Australian Jesuits — world class New Testament scholar, wrote a little book about the Gospel of Luke called "the Hospitality of God" and he was arguing in that book that the term 'salvation' is not as helpful talking more about the hospitality of God, and we've enjoyed that at the Eucharist this morning.

"Receive the guest as Christ."

"To be a true host we must be open to the dignity of each and every person, we must welcome ideas and initiatives as well as people."

And... I'm not sure why I've put that one... oh, yes... because humour welcomes: "I've reached an age where my train of thought often leaves the station without me."

One of our top Jesuit educators in Perth, Australia, took a Geography class to the city once and on the Claremont station he blew his whistle: all the boys got on the train, but he forgot to do so and they went to the city without him.



The Vatican document also talks about the circular character of communication. I think that's very important. Rather than top down or even bottom up, good communication is circular; it is real listening.

"Jesus had now finished what he wanted to say and his teaching made a deep impression on the people because he taught them with authority." Authority comes from a Latin word *augere*, to 'nurture' – I heard the word 'nurture' this morning in the Eucharist – that's what good authority does. It makes things grow. Four types of school. There's a lot of work being done in Louvain University, talking about four different types of Catholic schools. You can see there on the screen that there's a 'monologue school', which has a high Christian identity with minimal interaction with other worldviews (that wouldn't be your school); the 'colourless school', which operates in a neutral sphere, where people are afraid to choose their own philosophy of life (wouldn't happen in your school); the 'colourful school', where there is strong support for plurality, but where the Catholic religion is replaced by a variety of worldviews; and finally, the 'dialogue school', which is the preferred school, for the researchers in Louvain, which explicitly chooses to be inspired by its Christian tradition while accepting the presence of other traditions. In the latter school there is a preferential option for the Christian tradition which keeps re-evaluating what it means to be a Christian in the midst of a plurality of other options. This option is the one we try to aim for, in our Catholic tradition

Surprisingly, that Vatican document I've been talking about doesn't have a great deal to say about social justice and Catholic schools are really known for that, aren't they: for a faith that does justice? Pope Francis calls us to build what he calls in *Evangelii Gaudium* a 'Samaritan church' and he says 'we need to be people of nearness and proximity' – that is the challenge in social justice, according to Pope Francis. Get alongside people – we'll say more about that this afternoon after lunch, if you come back that is, you might not come back, you might go home or something.

That nearness and proximity I like in this little slide here, a saying from Seneca: "Wherever there is a human being, there is an opportunity for kindness." The archbishop spoke a lot about the challenges of our current context, technologically etc., but I think there is good news about the contemporary world. You can talk about the technological evolution, multitasking, I like that [shows slide, audience laughs].

One of my Jesuit friends says 'the airport is the new cathedral'. Another friend of mine who lives in central Queensland, a wonderful Catholic educator, says: "If you want to see love, go to an airport," you know, there are a lot of good things going on. When I was coming back from New Zealand, recently, I thought I should buy alcohol for the community. They're not drinkers, which really meant buying alcohol for myself. But I took it home nonetheless and offered to share it, but that wasn't taken up. But the girl said to me, at the counter, when I paid, "Sir, are you in transition?"

And I said: "Yes, aren't we all?"

She was totally perplexed by that comment. But we are in transition. That's me [shows slide] at another stage in life, 1991, then 2010, then I put 2015. But it is an age of transition and it is the age of the backpacker, isn't it? I was speaking to somebody at morning teatime. She was planning to go soon to Sevenhill, that's the slide picture of one of the roads taking to Sevenhill. Sevenhill is the cradle of the Jesuits in Australia, where we have a wonderful silent retreat centre. Pope Francis picks it up and says: "Our life is journey, and when we stop moving, things go wrong."

Religion's about connection. I could go on about that but I better start moving otherwise Brandon would scowl at me. Listening to an interview: "Religion to me has always been the wound, not the bandage." Dennis Potter, a playwright said that in a radio interview. "Christianity is at its worst" – Kathleen Norris claims – "when it becomes defensive... enshrining orthodoxy in words has caused more trouble, more pain, more evil in the world than it was worth."

Fundamentalism is a terrible thing, and religious fundamentalism in our world – we're faced with it every day now – is a horrendous evil. [Audience laughs about the slide] Those two chaps in the slide are not fanatics, thankfully, and Michael Leunig, a great cartoonist in Australia, has composed this lovely prayer: "We pray for balance and exchange. Balance us like trees... so must the inner life be equal to the outer life." [Slide] This is a worrying group. The easy answers of fundamentalism "are more about control than grace."

Catholic tradition is counter-cultural but it's also pro-cultural. The incarnation has taught us to be pro-cultural to value the things in our culture.

"The world is charged with the grandeur of God." (Gerard Manly Hopkins) said that. I love this particular slide: "Let us discover or rediscover our musical sense." Because it picks up some words which our General offered to Jesuit Universities in Japan: "I suggest that mission today in Japan and Asia must first of all work toward helping people discover or rediscover this musical sense, this religious sensibility, this awareness and appreciation of dimensions of reality that are deeper than instrumentalist or materialist conceptions that life allows us." This is the General: "We are not in education for proseylitism (as Pope Francis has said also) but transformation: we want to form a new kind of humanity that is musical, that retains this sensitivity to beauty, to the suffering of others, to compassion. We offer a Christian education because we are convinced that Christ offers horizons beyond the limit of the interests of economy or material production. That Christ offers a vision of a fuller humanity that takes the person outside himself or herself in care and concern for others." That's our Father General. One more slide. Let us strive therefore in producing in our schools an excellence in humanity. May the Good Lord bless all of us in our efforts to develop an excellence of humanity in our schools, that is more musical. Thank you very much.

Fr Christopher Gleeson, SJ:

KEY ADDRESS 2

NOTE: Unlike the first session for the Keynote Address, Father Gleeson did not have a written text for this part two presentation. He spoke with the slides of his PowerPoint presentation

I'm going to stand because otherwise I might go to sleep in my own presentation. One of our Jesuits in Australia did that when he was preaching once, he went to sleep during his own homily. That would be terrible. And, as Katherine Manalang has pointed out to me, I've got more slides in this presentation than I had in the first one and I've only got half the time. But that doesn't matter, we can stop and, if you want, you can get the presentation later.

[In response to technical issues] I might have to sing! I have a nephew, Simon Gleeson is his name, who's been playing the part of Jean Valjean in Les Miserables in Melbourne, in Perth and in Sydney, which started on Friday night. Jean Valjean has this beautiful line in the second act, where he sings: "To love another person is to see the face of God." Isn't that a beautiful line?

Spirituality is a slippery term: all sorts of people use, even businesses use it these days, in the corporate world. But I love this definition from Ronald Rolheiser: "Spirituality is the fire that burns within us." And what about the fire that burns within the Archbishop? Boy oh boy, he's a passionate man. And Ronald Rolheiser says "Passion is God's fire in us". I'm talking at CJC – think I am, unless they've given me the sack – on Friday morning and that's one of the things in that Holy Spirit school that I want to talk about: passion is God's fire in us. Richard Rohr is an American Franciscan priest, I think we have a Franciscan chaplain in the congregation somewhere today. In doing all sorts of staff formation, I always come back to this thesis, the Rohr principle: you can only lead others as far as you yourself have gone. So your own depth, your own spirituality as a teacher is critical, essential to the way you lead the young people in your care. If you've got no spirituality, if there is no depth in your life, then you're not going to lead them very far, are you? Hence the importance of days like today. Putting it more simply, you lead others to the depths to which you have been led, you can only transform people to the degree you have been transformed. And education is about transformation of hearts and minds.

This is a very challenging line: what we don't change in ourselves, what we don't transform in ourselves, we transmit. We can easily impose our agenda on other people. And our agenda, our curriculum, as the archbishop was saying this morning, is Jesus, our 'songline'. He mentioned the word pedagogy, which I was happy to hear him say, because etymologically, of course, pedagogy is about accompaniment, leading a child. Pope Francis talks about that all the time. And the road to Emmaus, as we are going to see, is about accompaniment. "Education is not a job but an attitude, it is a way of being." You have got that in your journal actually. And this is him again: "To educate well we need to step out of ourselves and be among young people to accompany them in the stages of their growth, placing ourselves at their sides." Surely that's what the road to Emmaus is all about.

One of the great educators in my country has been this man, Hedley Beare, years ahead of his time. "Our role is to be the guide on the side more than the sage on the stage". Guess where I am at the moment. [Audience laughs]

As you know, in Luke chapter 24 there are six stages in Jesus' accompaniment. Six stages in the Emmaus companionship: first, of course Jesus is walking with those two disciples, disoriented, slow learners, disillusioned.

And then, listening to their story: that's what Jesus does, he listens carefully to their story and like a good teacher he paints a bigger picture for them. "Hey chaps, Good Friday and Easter Sunday are about salvation history, that's what it means," that's what a good teacher does. And for the fourth stage, there is just one sentence in that Gospel where he motions to go on and they

say "No, come and have a meal with us." As a good teacher he doesn't impose himself but he disposes. He blesses the bread: good teachers have blessing as part of their ministry as well. Not necessarily with the big gesture but just by their affirmation and encouragement. And sourcing things: that's what a blessing is. It's all in God and our life is a journey from God to God, isn't it.

And finally, community building: "Were not our hearts burning within us, as he spoke to us on the road?" It's that passion again. And they go back with that story and build up the community.

That's the initial stage of walking with the distraught disciples, as one of our Australian Jesuits, Quyen Vu, with his little group of students in Dili, East Timor. And the Pope says: "In accompanying young people we need a new language, a new way of saying things. Today God asks this of us: to leave the nest which encloses us in order to be sent a new language."

I think I saw that chap today. Can you see that? Is that picture too dark for you? Can you see it? [lighting issues resolved]

Mary, the constantly faithful companion. I love the bare bottom of the baby Jesus there. That's a statue in our grounds in Xavier College in Melbourne.

As a companion you've got to get amongst them, be alongside young people. "If the times are bad, then let us be better." We were talking at lunch today about some of the evil things in our world, the IS. "If the times are bad, then let us be better. Then, the times will be better. For we are the times." St Augustine said that a very long time ago. Teachers are crucially important people, the great shapers in our world, as Jonathan Sachs says.

I'm sure you Latin scholars would know that the word 'companion' comes from two Latin words: cum, meaning 'with' and panis meaning 'bread'. So a companion is one who breaks bread with another. And that's what we did this morning, in building up our companionship as teachers at the Eucharist. Companions nourish the heart, mind, soul and body. And the frangipani comes from the same Latin word, to break bread. Have you got that flower in Singapore, the frangipani? Lovely, isn't it? To break bread.

And it is easy to miss that action in the Eucharist, you know, when the priest breaks the bread – it's such a subtle action – we miss it and yet it's so important. The Irish say 'we live in the shelter of each other'. An Irish blessing. I think I've heard an Irish accent. Are there any Irish in the hall today? Don't be shy, I love the Irish. Oh, come on, there's got to be someone, I thought I heard some Irish accent at lunch.

"None of us is as strong as all of us". We talk about pastoral care in our schools and that word 'care', very importantly, might have little to do with 'cure'. Care is attention to. I think often we are too worried about racing for a solution and trying to cure something rather than really caring for that person. "It's about learning to befriend problems". Thomas Moore said that again: "Honour the symptom and let it guide us in close care of the soul." Honour the symptom: you don't need to rush to solve all the problems. Jesus walks with these chaps, first. "Care is a participation in the pain of another. Cure without care is meaningless." Van Breemen wrote that a long time ago.

So, that's the first stage, of just walking with people. And now Jesus listens with reverence to what they have to say. Hearing people out before rushing in with the truth. Isn't that true that if you listen to somebody's story, it's an act of healing in itself? Because a person's story is sacred ground, it's sacred territory, isn't it? And to listen to that, really hear it, hear the words behind the words, is a great act of healing. And teachers, you do that all the time.

I love this, I used these words in a homily in Brisbane and one of the parishioners made me a note book cover with these words on it. "You have to listen to the river if you want to catch a trout." There are all forms of listening, aren't they? We listened to the lovey singing and guitar playing before but listening to a person's culture is very important. The teacher as a horse whisperer, you might have read the book or seen the film, Robert Redford was in it, wasn't he? Teachers are those people who can really tease out students' deep yearnings.

"With great respect for people's experiences, their culture, and you have a great diversity of cultures in your country, in your city, we help them to listen to themselves and discover their own deeper desires."



In Ignatian spirituality, deep desires are critical for getting in touch, we believe, with God's voice for us. God expresses himself in our passions, our deep desires. So, often, when you're starting a spiritual relationship with somebody, one of the first questions you ask is: what are the things that give you life, who are the people that give you life, what are you passionate about?

In Australia we wear blazers – that's a sporting blazer on screen and that's a father and a son from a school where I was a Principal for a long time, at Riverview. "Never cut off talking, keep listening, that's what I do." Those words come from a wonderful book by Jonathan Smith, 'The learning game', I used to give it to teachers new to the school.

Joan Chittister – I love Joan, I'm not sure all of our bishops in Australia love Joan – but she's a wonderful writer: "So many people have never been heard in their whole lives".

"What we don't name we enable". There are often things that are left simmering in our lives and as soon as you name them and can put them on the table, you disempower them.

"I have a theory that only what touches the heart remains in the mind". I think these words of Joan Chittister are an important educational maxim. I can remember being met at a wedding reception, a few years ago, by a young man to whom I taught Japanese history in Year 10, and he had a glass of red wine in his hand, so did I, and we were chatting and he said: "Father, I don't remember much about the Japanese history you taught us," and that was very deflating, I thought I was a good history teacher. "No, no – he said – I don't remember much, but I do remember that you came and visited me in hospital when I had a breakdown."

"Only what touches the heart is really lodged in the mind." Think about that for your own teaching, as well.

It's a slippery business trying to get hold of the meaning of spirituality as capacity to listen. "Listeners – those who hear the pain behind the pain... come few and far between," Joan Chittister says.

So spirituality is about listening and you good listeners in a school, whatever religion you are, whatever culture you come from, you're sharing your spirituality with your students through listening.

"To have a tender moment is to pray." I wonder if you've had a tender moment today. I've had a number, people I've met, things they've said to me. And I love this: "prayer is a matter of picking up the tender moment and letting its grace soften us," or make us 'mellow', that lovely old English word 'mellow' and 'grateful'. Prayer is as simple as that, picking up the tender moment. Now anybody can do that, no matter what their religion or lack of. Some of these South Sudanese photos come from Brother Bill Firman, a De LaSalle brother, a dear friend of mine.

"What constitutes a tender moment? Anything in life that helps make us aware of our deep connectedness with each other, of our common struggle, our common wound, our common sin and our common need for help..." that's another way of describing spirituality.

"God is winking at us during the day." That's a photo of myself going off to hear confession [audience laughs]. Very useful piece of furniture that.

In talking about listening – and I'm not going to be able to finish this presentation really – but in our Ignatian spirituality what we call the Examen is a prayer that we're meant to pray even if we haven't got the time to pray formally in a day, just to do the examen, which is a matter of rewinding our day we can do it formally in five parts by thanking God – Ignatius said that the worst sin in life is ingratitude – asking for insight, looking at/pondering my day, asking forgiveness and looking to improve tomorrow. That's the formal way of praying the Examen, but it can be just a matter of tuning in: why am I unpeaceful at the moment? Why am I tense? Where was I loving today? Where was I not at peace today? What event or person touched my heart today?

That's listening to ourselves, and at our Jesuit day school situated just near the Sydney harbour bridge, they've got a little card that they give all their students for their desks, for their pockets. It has five questions on it and it's the Examen composed by the students themselves:

- What was the best thing I heard today?
- What was the best thing I saw?
- What was the best thing someone did for me?
- What was the best thing I did for someone else?
- What can I do to improve tomorrow?
- Thank you God.

Isn't that a lovely way of rewinding the day? And that's a very integral part of listening to ourselves. Same thing: "In learning to listen we must learn also to listen to ourselves".

"Discernment is the art of looking into our hearts and minds to see what parts of our life leads to God and which parts lead away from God."



You've heard the story of the two wolves? It's a good story, let me tell you very quickly:

A Grandfather, native American, was sitting around the fire one night with his grandson and he said: 'Grandson, in every human being there are two wolves and they're fighting, they're inside us, and they're fighting with one another. One is good and the other not so good. The good wolf brings us love and peace and joy and hope and generosity, life-giving things, and they are the signs of the good spirit leading us to God. But that good wolf is at odds with the evil wolf or the evil spirit, which bring us anger and arrogance and lies and jealousy and you can throw in other things, like resentment, resentment is a terrible disease, and they are leading us away from God'. And the little grandson, sitting there by the fire, is thinking and he says: 'Grandfather, which wolf wins?' Grandfather says: "The one you feed". Which wolf wins in us? The wolf you feed. Attitude is so important.

There is another story about a man who came home one night and got out of his car in the drive and found a python on his front lawn. This was a big worry for him, so he went to open the boot of his car, attacked the python with a machete and killed it and went to bed quite happy with himself. Next day he woke up, pulled the blinds up, looked out at the front lawn and found his garden hose in pieces all over the lawn. Moral of the story: don't make a decision in the dark.

And we do, don't we? From time to time. We write letters in anger. Dangerous these days with emails. As a baby Jesuit we were told "Ok, if you write a letter in anger, put it under the pillow or put it in your desk and look at it again in the morning." And a hundred percent of the times you will have changed it or not sent it at all. Never make a decision in the dark.

So, discernment can lead us away from God when I'm locked into my own view, quick to judge, rigid, moralising, that little word 'should', 'they ought to'. British Jesuit Fr Gerry Hughes used to talk about those people who had hardening of the 'oughteries': 'they ought to do this', you know. Self-centred.

Whereas those qualities that lead us towards God:

- Open to growth and change
- Taking time to listen and reflect
- Flexibility
- In touch with real desires
- In relationship
- Ready to offer a deeper vision: [end of audio]

(Time prevented Father Gleeson from developing the final three stages of accompaniment on the road to Emmaus-disposing not imposing, blessing, and community-building. Please refer to the full PowerPoint presentation contained in the attached DVD.)



BREAKOUT SESSION

Question 1:
How does Fr Gleeson's sharing mirror what is happening (or not happening) in Singapore's Catholic schools today?

Happening	Not happening
Inclusiveness	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Welcome all regardless of backgroundLa Salle map of faith, service and community is a song-tune that is happening in our schoolsTime allocated to listen to every childFocus on students on the periphery and special needsSee the face of God in each pupilPupils are the focusCater to children with different giftsMixed ability classrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Non-Catholics not welcomed in RME, masses or other Catholic activities"Walking with each other"- meeting students where they are needs to be done betterNot enough compassion for students
Values	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Teaching of Gospel values and students' character developmentSchool values emphasised as central themes for educationHolistic educationIntegration of Catholic ethos and curriculumCulture of care and compassionUsing stories and parables to transmit valuesCommunity buildingGiving affirmation especially to those who need it most	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Values not internalizedWrong values projected

Happening	Not happening
Religious activities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Moments for prayers / reflections; RE lessons; meditation; penitential service; mass celebrationGod-centrednessPhysical infrastructure (grotto, names of school blocks)Presence of religious BrothersSignature Catholic programmes to cater to student profile of the different Catholic schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Not enough opportunities / time for Catholic pupils to deepen faith in schoolPupils may find Catholic programmes not relevant or too abstractFormation and journey with the students on their understanding of the Catholic faithApologetic about faithConversations about Catholic practicesLack of a Catholic brand
Teachers	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Serve as role modelsBelieve that education is transformation of hearts and mindsCatholic teachers are encouraged to teach in Catholic schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Not enough role modelsNot enough Catholic teachersLack of support from teachers to sustain practices to promote Catholic faith; not all Catholic staff attend the prescribed programmesQuality of teaching has to be deeperProclamation of Christ not proclaimed explicitly and openlyHeavy workload causes a lack of time and energy to be like Jesus / encounter JesusHigh turnover rateFaith formation for staff
Leadership	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Strong support for Catholic identity and faith formation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Teachers and leaders seem to be neglected in formation programmesSupport from key personnel and supervisorsNot all principals are CatholicSchool leaders are cautiousDiscerned decision-making not visiblePrincipals coming together to share best practices
Secular state	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Multi-faith population makes assertion of a Catholic ethos challenging; Sensitivity of religious issuesNot enough emphasis on Catholic identityDialogue school nt possible because State is secular
Priority on academic excellence	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Task-orientedCatechism is lower priorityMasses after school hours (instead of during curriculum time)

Happening	Not happening
Infrastructure	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overly large class size means being unable to listen to all students• Religion is secondary• Lack of time
Church	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No proactive support from church
Parents	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of support from parents

Question 2:
What are some of the KEY characteristics that have been very successfully nurtured to identify our schools as Catholic?

Inclusiveness
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Catholic teaching is not compartmentalised but permeates all facets of the school• Dialogue school that promotes universality• Inclusive, caring culture• Everyone prays in his/her own way• Emphasis on helping the marginalised in our society
Values
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Values are reinforced during teachable moments• Emphasis on service and other-centredness• Values education / Religious education
Religious activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prayers; prayer leaders in classroom to start each lesson with prayer• Catholic feast days and practices (e.g. penitential service, mass, Catholic students' ministry, YCS, Legion of Mary)• Catechism / moral education• Values education (based on Founder)• Biblical values / teachings are merged into curriculum• History, heritage and charisma of school• Christ / God-centred mission and philosophy• Artefacts (e.g. statues)
Teachers
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Willing to go the extra mile for the students• Staff bonding and interaction• Staff and students look out for each other• Strong presence of the Religious• Good role models

Leadership
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Servant leadership
Parents
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parent support groups• Involvement of parents (e.g. rosary sessions)



Question 3:
What challenges do we face in operationalising what Fr Gleeson shared and discussed?

Students
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students come from different backgrounds
Teachers
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Need for more young Catholic teachers to continue leadership in our Catholic schools• Insufficient Catholic teachers• Teachers to be good listeners• Depth of relationship with Christ and others; lack of witnessing; misalignment of faith and reason• Teachers don't get the necessary input ("You cannot impart what you do not have")• Demanding curriculum / responsibilities; seen as additional workload• Dissonance between private and public lives of teachers
Infrastructure
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Time constraint (to witness, to serve, to prepare teaching resources)• Emphasis on academic excellence; RE not a priority• Merging of MOE and church curriculum• Lack of chaplaincy team and lack of support for them• Environment not supportive• Funding (suggest one resource person between affiliated schools to capitalise on economies of scale)• Balance between common space and Catholic spirituality• Complexities of staffing and deployment• Buy-in from the whole school on Catholic ethos• Limitations specified by MOE regarding overt display of religious practices• Continuity of Catholic education up to JC level <p>Are our Catholic schools able to stand up without being afraid to compromise on our vision of Catholic education?</p>
Parents
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of support from parents (e.g. parents request that their children not participate in religious activities)• Not enough parent volunteers

Question 4:
What challenges do we want to take up to help our schools realise their Catholic identity? What do we need to make this happen?



Religious climate
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Share list of Catholic vendors for talks, retreats and customised curriculum• Separate team to work on merging Catholic and MOE curriculum• Continue with school Catholic programmes• Activities (e.g. movies, Catholic Youth Rally, sharing of bible stories)• Strengthen formation of Catholic students
Teachers
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve teacher formation (e.g. retreat)• Consistency in practices by Catholic teachers\• One-to-one spiritual accompaniment for teachers• Stronger presence of the Religious
Leadership
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appoint more Catholic principals and teachers who can be good role models• Leaders to set the tone, lead by example• More experienced school leaders to share with newer school leaders• New definition of excellence
Infrastructure
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Balance of academic and spiritual• Catholic education to be an explicit priority• Create a Catholic brand• Use of the 10 Guiding Principles of the Social Teachings of the Church• Have conversations with other stake holders and religious bodies (e.g. MOE, Mufti)• Deliberately create a dialogue school; sharing of personal encounters / experiences• Chaplaincy team can be made up of lay people• Outsource Catholic activities
Parents
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strengthen home-school partnership• Demands from parents• Non-Catholic parents to be advised on school policies where Catholicism is concerned
Church
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Church can play greater role by reaching out to Catholic teachers• Funding from Church• Archbishop to give clear direction and focus• Support schools through dialogue, being present, perhaps even work with MOE

Prof Tan Cheng Han:
CONCLUSION



Good afternoon everybody,

First let me begin by thanking several important people. First, our volunteers who worked so very hard to put together a coherent and reflective programme for all of you. Second, to the Principal and staff of St Gabriel's for their very warm hospitality today, thank you very much. Everything has gone well so there is nothing to apologise over. And, of course, Fr Gleeson for spending so much of his time on his presentations, for coming out to Singapore and for agreeing to spend a few extra days here interacting with different segments of our educational community. Thank you very much, Fr Gleeson.

I always find it very difficult to do the closing at ACCS's Catholic Education Conference because I never know exactly what is going to happen in the course of the day. So, if there are any inadequacies in my closing, I beg your forgiveness. However, there is one silver lining: I always tend to keep to the time allocated to me so you won't have to endure me for more than twenty to twenty-five minutes.

I want to start off by saying that I work at a university, as you might have guessed by now, and each year in August, when the freshmen join us, the different departments will have a freshmen welcome ceremony. One speech generally goes along these lines: the speaker will talk about the many advantages of an education at the university, e.g. the pedagogy, the curricular offerings, the overseas exchanges, the internships, the extensive alumni network, etc. Then, the person will go on and say to the freshmen: "We hope that you'll benefit from this and that you will, at the end of three or four years, go out and do great things that we will be proud of. And, of course, to do great things you need to have integrity, honesty, decency. A good speech, very compelling.

But, to my mind, both incomplete and inadequate. Why do I say this? I say this because it arguably approaches education from the wrong front or with the wrong presumption or starting point. A Catholic education, in my view, has a different starting point: we start first and foremost with wanting to develop students with Gospel values, students who are not self-interested only. Of course, all of us are self-interested to a certain degree, but we want our students to have a vision that goes beyond themselves, we want students who are able to care for other people also, we want students who want to serve others. That's why I like what the former Jesuit Father General said about being men for others. I think that's a powerful statement: to become women and men for other people, to live not for ourselves, not only for those immediately around us but to live for other people also. That's a compelling philosophy, a powerful motivation that can lead to a very fulfilling life. And because this is our starting point, our starting point being to form people, because this is what we want to develop in our students, we give them a good education. So, a good education is not the starting point, rather it is a means as when we give our students a good education, we empower them to have the tools to help other people in future, to find themselves, to find where their talents lie, and to have the skills and the knowledge to be able to live their lives in useful service to men and women around them. We want them, in short, to do well academically so that they can better serve others. And, because we want them to serve others effectively, we develop them holistically.

I wear many hats because in addition to my work at the university, I am involved in a number of other fields as well. And you know what? When I look around and I see people who are successful in life, there is almost one universal trait that runs



through many of them – not all of them but many of them – these people have a vision beyond themselves. So, when we give our students a vision that goes beyond themselves, we are, in a sense, maximising their opportunities to do well later in life. And, in that way, also bring back glory to the school. It becomes a wonderful virtuous circle. This is what I would call enlightened self-interest when we develop our young boys and girls in a holistic manner. We also make them more capable of succeeding later in life, because people who truly succeed are those who also care about other people. And that makes perfect sense, because when you care about other people, you are less selfish, you are more prepared to go the extra mile, you're more prepared to be a team player, you don't feel that all the glory needs to come to you, you are happy to share it with others and others are, therefore, more than happy to work with you as well. When you, however, only focus on pure academics, you're creating a very narrowly focussed person, who will probably, never fulfil her or his fullest potential.

So, our education, in this sense, is not only a functional one as Fr. Gleeson has said. This is why our Catholic identity in our school is a verb: we are actively moulding young people to be Christ-like. And, to be Christ-like is to be deep and not superficial, to be universal – because, amongst other things, we care for other people also. And this is why relationships and community are important in our schools, and, like Christ, we offer our students a vision beyond the economic, beyond the material. So, Fr Gleeson, rest assured that I was listening to you and a lot of what you said makes a great deal of sense for our Catholic schools. The verb that is Catholic identity – Fr Gleeson speaks of it as a verb – calls for practical action on the part of our schools; it calls our schools to be places of prayer, places where we speak of the example of Jesus and explain to our students that it is his message of love for others that guides what we do. Catholic schools should not and do not proselytise but we must constantly hold Jesus up as the inspiration and example of what we want to achieve.

Our schools should also be places where the Christian perspective is made known, and actually this can be done with

relatively little effort on our part if we think carefully about it. For example, many schools will, at some time in the school year, do something that focusses on the need to preserve or be conscious of our environment. As I walked into the hall, I noticed one of the posters just outside it having an environmental theme. Why should the environment be important to us as a Catholic school? Perhaps like any secular school, we need to worry about the earth because without it humanity will perish. Our children, or our children's children, may not have such good lives if the environment continues to deteriorate. So just for self-interest we need to be mindful of the environment. Fair enough, that's certainly part of the perspective, and a legitimate one but, as a Catholic school, can't we go further? Can't we also say "as a Catholic school, on top of all of this, we also believe in preserving the environment because we believe that the world was created by a loving God, and we should therefore be stewards of this beautiful creation that God has left in our hands"? It is like preserving the heritage and the tradition that your parents hand down to you. We preserve them not only because they are right, but because we are stewards of what our parents have given to us. And that adds another dimension that could make it even more profound and real for our boys and girls.

Then, we have Charities' Weeks, which we are in the midst of now. I'm also on the board of Caritas Singapore and I chair the fundraising committee so it is in my self-interest that you all participate in Charities' Week. But, I would say, I don't care whether your school contributes one cent or one thousand dollars, but I would so love it, wearing my ACCS hat now, if the schools would take the envelopes, give them out to the students, and say: "Look, it doesn't matter whether you give anything, or whether you just give ten cents. But we're giving you the envelopes because we want you to reflect on how there are other people out there who are in need, who are much more in need than you. We want you to think about them as Jesus thought about us when He came down for us." So it's an opportunity to transmit the Christian value of being a good neighbour to those in need. Or we can use the seasons, e.g. the Easter season, to transmit a Christian value. When we go around the school, are there Gospel messages? Many passages in the Gospel resonate with young people. They can bring comfort to our students as they navigate the uncertainties of life. So these are all things that can be easily done, and clearly reflective of Catholic identity.

Our Catholicity must be integrated, embedded, in the ordinary things that we do. In doing so, we create a community and we bolster each other, as one of the earlier speakers spoke about.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank you for your collective reflections. The next step is for us, at ACCS, together with those of you involved in the planning of this conference, to distil all the thoughts with a view to determining what practical next steps to take. But I can highlight three that I think we will definitely be looking at.

First we should come to a greater consensus on what are the essential elements of Catholic ethos that we want to see in all our schools, ideally. A conversation has started already with members of the Catholic ethos working group. We have come up with a paper to outline what some people refer to as a baseline of the things we think all Catholic schools should try to have. We intend to consult the SMCs and the school leadership of all the Catholic schools to see if we can come to a broad consensus of what it is we want to see in every Catholic school.

Second, we also realise that we need to try to create more formation programmes for Catholic educators out there who want to live their faith better in the workplace. One principal said passionately to me: "You know, I wish I knew now what I did five years ago, when I first became a principal. When I first became a principal, I was grappling in the dark, not quite sure what to do. If only I knew then what I know now." I think the Church should play a bigger role in trying to provide this kind of formation.

Finally, I think once we work through all this and we have a consensus of where we want to go, then it would be necessary for the Church to engage in a broader dialogue with our stakeholders, because it is important for people to understand that when we speak of Catholic ethos, we are doing something that reinforces what is important to Singapore today, which is values – inculcating values in our children. That's what Catholic ethos is all about, except that Catholic ethos is much more profound, because it's fundamental to our schools, it's not an add-on. The reason why I contrasted the freshmen speech at the start of my conclusion and what our Catholic schools are all about is that our starting points are different. And because our Catholic starting point is different, what we can give to our students is so much deeper and so much more profound and in there lies the value, the true value, of a Catholic education.

Thank you very much for spending your time with us today, thank you.





Fr Christopher Gleeson, SJ:

POST-CONFERENCE REFLECTIONS

1. Firstly, the hospitality of all involved with organising the Conference was outstanding. Father Seah and Katherine Manalang were the soul of kindness, and I am most grateful to all my chauffeurs and good people who took me out for meals. Hospitality is one of the clearest signs of a strong community, and I found the Catholic community of Singapore to be marvellous hosts.
2. While I was prepared for the cultural and religious diversity of the Singapore Catholic school communities, I was surprised and somewhat challenged by the centralising controls exercised by the Education Ministry in terms of curriculum and staffing. I suppose this is understandable when one considers the 95% level of funding provided by the Government, but such centralised regulation does narrow the space available for innovative faith formation in Catholic schools.
3. In working with the Faith Formation people on Tuesday afternoon, it was clear to me that ongoing Staff Formation for our Chaplains and Chaplain volunteers is essential. Accordingly, I would recommend strongly the following:
 - That a capable communicator be appointed to establish and coordinate a network of Faith formators for Catholic schools in Singapore which would meet regularly for ongoing formation and to share resources being used in the schools
 - That this appointed person be given the opportunity to go to the Brisbane CEO, Queensland, to spend some time with Jill Gowdie who could help him/her establish the network and take them through the splendid online Staff Formation programme titled "Catching Fire". If for whatever reason this is not possible, invite Jill Gowdie to come to Singapore for a few days to share the rich Brisbane resources for Staff Formation.
 - That the appointed Network Coordinator, perhaps at the same time as visiting Jill Gowdie, might also explore the riches of the Kairos Senior Student Retreat programme in Australia with a view to bringing it back to Singapore. As explained at the Tuesday afternoon workshop, it is a student peer-led program, so it would be a huge advantage to bring three to four senior students as well.
 - That this same appointed Network Coordinator examine the best ways to offer School Board/Governors some formation – in the form of an Annual Retreat/Reflection Day for Chairs and Board members; prayers and reflection time for the opening of School Board meetings.

