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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

REVITALIZING THE CATHOLIC IDENTITY OF SCHOOLS:
ECCLESIAL LEADERS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH ON METHODS OF PROVIDING AN
OUTSTANDING CATHOLIC FORMATION AND EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

PROGRAM IN ADMINISTRATION AND SUPERVISION

BY

LINDA ANN ANDREJEK

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

MAY 2014

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are indeed many wonderful people whom I would like to publicly acknowledge and thank at the beginning of this important study on the revitalizing of the Catholic identity of schools across the country. First and foremost, however, I would like to acknowledge and thank God (the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) for loving me into existence and redeeming me. Additionally, I would like to thank the Blessed Virgin Mary, Who, as our tender and loving Heavenly Mother, has guided me throughout life and brought me closer to Her Divine Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ!

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This study is dedicated to the
Sacred Heart of Jesus in the Most Holy Eucharist and the Immaculate Heart of Mary –
in thanksgiving for Their Great Love for all of mankind
and to console Them for the lack of love They often receive from mankind in return.
May this study console Their Hearts and help alleviate the thirst of Jesus from the Cross,
His thirst for our love and for the salvation of souls!

In addition, this study is dedicated to my mother, Elisabeth Andrejek,
who helped me come to better know and love Jesus and Mary!

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine through available documents and select interviews: (1) The challenges that Catholic youth in today's society experience in living their Catholic Faith; (2) How well the Catholic schools are meeting these challenges; (3) What needs to be done to the development of catechesis and the revitalization of the Catholic identity of schools to meet these challenges; and (4) The implications for the leadership of Catholic schools.

Since recent polls have indicated that the percentage of U.S. Catholics who call themselves "strong" members of the Roman Catholic Church has never been lower than it was in 2012 (pewforum.org, 2013), a study of this kind was necessary in order to resolve this crisis. Additionally, in the Providence of God, the timing of this dissertation coincided with the fiftieth anniversary of the Second Vatican Council, convened by Pope John XXIII in 1963. This is noteworthy since one of the purposes of the Council was to authentically revitalize the Catholic Church in present-day society, while holding on to the "treasures of the past."

The findings of this study clearly indicated that there was indeed a need to revitalize the Catholic identity of schools by catechizing students in all of the Teachings of the Catholic Faith, faithfully handed down to us – which we must now faithfully

hand down to future generations. Research findings also indicated that schools need to re-introduce their students to all of the beautiful traditional devotions of the past in order to help foster in them a personal love relationship with Our Lord Jesus Christ, through the Blessed Virgin Mary, the spiritual Mother of all mankind. In this way, as the Council intended, Catholic schools can better fulfill their main mission of leading their students to union with our loving God – here on earth through faith – and for all eternity in the Glory of Heaven!

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background

The purpose of this study was to determine through available documents and select interviews:

1. The challenges that Catholic youth in today's society experience in living their Catholic Faith;
2. How well the Catholic schools are meeting these challenges;
3. What needs to be done in the development of catechesis and the revitalization of the Catholic identity of schools to meet these challenges;
4. The implication for the leadership of Catholic schools.

In this day and age in which young people are struggling to realize their purpose in life in the midst of a very secularized culture, the primary purpose of this study was to help Catholic schools across our country to better provide an effective Catholic formation and education for young people. Especially given the fact that Pope Emeritus, Benedict XVI, proclaimed the year of October, 2012 to the Solemnity of Christ the King on November 24, 2013 to be the "Year of Faith," (Porta Fidei, 2011), Benedict is helping to usher in the "New Evangelization" spoken of by his predecessor, Blessed John Paul II, when he stated in his Apostolic Letter entitled, *At the Beginning of the Third Millennium*,

“On the journey of life, we are accompanied by The Blessed Virgin Mary, to Whom I have entrusted the Third Millennium. During this year, I have often invoked Her as the Star of the New Evangelization” (Pope John Paul II, 2000). This “New Evangelization” primarily consists in the spreading of the teachings of the holy Catholic faith to others, commonly referred to as “catechesis” (Hardon, 1999).

Furthermore, since Catholic schools were established primarily for this purpose of catechesis or the passing on of the holy Catholic Faith to the young, the researcher believes that it is imperative for educators in Catholic institutions to reassess and evaluate the success they are having within this main purpose of their existence and mission.

By issuing Apostolic Letters such as the ones mentioned above, one can see that both of the recent Popes saw the danger of this present-day secularized society which makes it extremely difficult for young people to live virtuous and moral lives. To resolve this, they call upon all Catholic Christians to revitalize their Faith in order to help in this New Evangelization which the world so desperately needs. One way to accomplish this important goal is to equip young people with the knowledge of the teachings of the Catholic faith, so that they, in turn, may share this Good News with others. Cardinal Dolan, the President of the United States Council of Catholic Bishops, states,

Bishops today ask if it is not necessary to rebuild the Church through reform and renewal. They wonder if we need to start internally, and concentrate on pastoral issues such as widespread catechetical illiteracy, the collapse of marriage and family life, the restoration of a culture of life, genuine liturgical renewal, a return to the Sacrament of Penance, a national crusade to obey the

Third Commandment, and the promotion of an authentic renewal in the lives of our priests and religious. (Winters, 2009, p. 10)

By means of this study, then, the researcher hopes to contribute to the field of Catholic education by providing an analysis of qualitative data gained through interviews with select Ecclesial Leadership of the Catholic Church and (Arch)Diocesan Superintendents regarding their views on how to best reform catechesis and revitalize the Catholic identity of schools across the country. These findings, then, may aid in assisting the leadership in Catholic schools to revitalize the Catholic identity of their institutions; thereby, helping their students better internalize and appreciate the teachings and beauty of the holy Catholic faith. In this way, also, an attempt will be made to fulfill the bishops' requests to resolve the catechetical illiteracy that has become very widespread in this current day and age.

In order to help resolve this crisis of catechetical illiteracy, Pope John Paul II stated in his Apostolic Exhortation, *Catechesi Tradendae* (On Catechesis in Our Time), "At the heart of all catechesis we find, in essence, a Person, the Person of Jesus of Nazareth...the primary and essential object of catechesis is the Mystery of Christ...the definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch, but in communion, in intimacy, with Jesus Christ" (United States Catholic Conference, 1980). In addition, Archbishop Gomez of Los Angeles states, "Our Faith should make all the difference in our lives, and that should be the aim of all our Religious Education and catechesis – to

change people's lives by bringing them into contact with the love of Jesus Christ and the Truth of His Gospel" (The Tidings, 2013).

Given this instruction from one of the previous Popes, one can make the claim that, indeed, the primary and overarching mission of Catholic schools is to help fulfill this ultimate goal of bringing young people into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, The Eternal Son of The Father and born in time of the Blessed Virgin Mary (CCC 456) in order to save mankind from sin by His most merciful death and resurrection (CCC 458). "The Word became flesh so that thus we might know God's Love" (CCC 458). "In this the Love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent His Only Son into the world, so that we might live through Him" (1 John. 4:9). "For God so loved the world that He gave His Only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

Jesus Christ stated in the Gospel, "Go out to all the world and tell The Good News!" (Matthew 28: 19-20). Given this directive from Jesus Christ, the Catholic Church's mission is to help spread the Good News of salvation in Christ. A basic premise, however, is that one cannot give what one does not have. In addition, one cannot attain this supernatural goal of union with Christ, if one does not even know Him through the knowledge gained through catechetical instruction, as well as through the grace received from the Sacraments of the Church. Furthermore, in order to receive the grace of these important Sacraments most efficaciously, one needs to be catechized regarding their meaning, significance, and purpose.

For this reason, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states,

Whoever is called to 'teach Christ,' must first seek 'the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus'.... "From this loving knowledge of Christ springs the desire to proclaim Him, to 'evangelize,' and to lead others to the 'yes' of faith in Jesus Christ. But at the same time, the need to know this faith better makes itself felt. (CCC, Article 428)

In a Catholic News Agency online article titled, "Weakening of Catholic identity contributes to school enrollment decline," Marianne Medlin (2011) states that Dr. John J. Convey of the Catholic University of America believes that a weakening of Catholic identity is a primary factor in school closures. Medlin goes on to quote Convey as stating, "Many families today believe that a Catholic school is not strong enough in the 'value-added' component that would make it different from a public or charter school" (p. 3). On the other hand, he states, "Strong Catholic schools strengthen all other programs of evangelization, service, catechesis, and sanctification...the entire Church suffers when Catholic schools disappear" (p. 5).

Significance of the Study

Given the challenges of today, it is important to hear the perceptions of Catholic Church and school leaders on how to best meet these challenges as they pertain to the catechesis of the young and the Catholic identity of schools. The significance of this study was to help resolve a concern that the former President of the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops, the same Cardinal Timothy Dolan of New York quoted above, stated regarding the reform and renewal of catechetics in the Church. In an article titled, "*Return to the basics – The newly announced Archbishop of New York,*

Timothy Dolan, is all for reform and renewal in the Church, starting with catechetics,”

Michael Winters (2009) shares the concern that Cardinal Dolan has regarding the great need to reform catechesis at this time in order to resolve this crisis of Faith,

Bishops today ask if it is not now necessary to rebuild the Church, through reform and renewal. They wonder if we need to start internally, and concentrate on pastoral issues such as widespread catechetical illiteracy, the collapse of marriage and family life, the restoration of a ‘culture of life,’ genuine liturgical renewal, a return to the Sacrament of Penance, a national crusade to obey the Third Commandment, and the promotion of authentic renewal in the lives of our priests and Religious. (p. 10)

In addition, one can see the great need for this type of study when faced with the alarming statistics regarding the decline of Faith in the modern world. In a recent Gallup poll, it was determined that only approximately 45% of Catholics attend weekly Mass on Sundays (Saad, 2009). In addition, as noted in a recent online article from the Pew Research Center entitled, *Strong Catholic Identity at a Four-Decade Low in U.S.*,

The percentage of U.S. Catholics who consider themselves ‘strong’ members of the Roman Catholic Church has never been lower than it was in 2012, according to a Pew Research Center analysis of new data from the General Social Survey. About a quarter (27%) of American Catholics called themselves ‘strong’ Catholics last year, down more than 15 points since the mid-1980’s and among the lowest levels seen in the 38 years since strength of religious identity was first measured in the General Social Survey. (pewforum.org, 2013)

As Cardinal Dolan (2000) explained in his book, *Priests for the Third Millennium*, this crisis is not due to stubborn resistance to Church doctrine; rather, it is because some priests and other catechists of the Church have not effectively taught proper doctrine over the last few decades. The Cardinal goes on to state that the greatest

pastoral challenge that priests currently face is to rekindle in people a childlike and vibrant faith in the wonder of the True Presence of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist.

An interesting note regarding the importance placed upon catechesis at this particular time in history was the recent approval of the first Marian Apparition of the United States by Bishop David Ricken of Green Bay, Wisconsin in 2010. In this particular apparition, which took place in the mid-1800's, the Blessed Virgin Mary asked a young girl (Adele Brice) to catechize the young people who lived in the area in the Truths of their Catholic Faith. It is very noteworthy to see how it was just in recent years (Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, December 8, 2010) that the Bishop of the Diocese in which this apparition took place approved it. This suggests the need to focus our efforts on catechesis - especially in this day and age which has become so very secularized.

In addition, the researcher is grateful that, in the Providence of God, the timing of this dissertation happened to coincide with the fiftieth anniversary of the Second Vatican Council, convened by Pope John XXIII in 1963, as well as with the Canonizations of Pope John XXIII and Pope John Paul II to take place in May of 2014. In an article published in the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA) journal, *Momentum*, entitled "Appreciating the Gift of the Second Vatican Council" Msgr. Jeremiah McCarthy (2012) writes,

The gift of Vatican II lies, I think, in its marvelous fidelity to the deeply Catholic nature of the Church.... In response to the challenge of modernity, the Church responds with its fundamental instinct to integrate the new with the treasures of

the past.... The Council, far from being a threat to the life of the Church, in fact, testifies to the ongoing vitality of the Faith. (p. 11)

Purpose of the Study

The introduction to this dissertation established the background of the study, the rationale for the study and the research questions. Additionally presented were the significance and the purpose of this study. The researcher believes that this research will help share ideas of catechetical reform strategies with Catholic school leaders across the country. Through research conducted through interviews with select superintendents of (Arch)Diocesan schools, the researcher will highlight programs that have already been implemented to bring young people “back to the basics” of their holy Catholic faith. For instance, the superintendent of Catholic schools of the Diocese of Joliet, IL, Fr. John Belmonte, S.J., recently implemented a special Marian Year of Devotions in his diocese. This special year was devoted to introducing the students in his diocese to the beautiful Marian devotions such as the Rosary, May Crowning, etc., that have, unfortunately, been somewhat forgotten over the last 40 years in many parts of our country. These beautiful devotions, in turn, help to move the Catechetical knowledge that young people learn intellectually into the affective domain of their hearts, also.

Research Questions

In this study, the researcher will seek to explore the following research questions:

1. According to select Ecclesial Leadership of the Catholic Church and Superintendents, what are the challenges that Catholic youth in today's society experience regarding the living of their Catholic Faith?
2. According to select Ecclesial Leadership of the Catholic Church and Superintendents, how well are today's Catholic schools meeting these challenges?
3. According to select Ecclesial Leadership of the Catholic Church and Superintendents, what needs to be done in the development of catechesis and the revitalization of the Catholic identity of schools to best meet the challenges of today's Catholic youth?
4. Based upon these findings, what are the implications for the leadership of Catholic schools in order to revitalize the Catholic identity of their own institutions?

Methodology

This study utilized a mixed method, qualitative phenomenological approach, which combined the qualitative method of interviewing with documentary research in order to best study and resolve this problem.

The qualitative segment of this study consisted of interviewing select Ecclesial Leaders in the Catholic Church in order to determine their views on how to best reform catechesis and revitalize the Catholic identity of schools across the country. The Ecclesial Leaders which the researcher interviewed were the following: His Eminence

Cardinal Francis George, O.M.I., Archbishop of Chicago; His Excellency Bishop Daniel Jenky, C.S.C. of the Diocese of Peoria, IL; His Excellency Bishop William Callahan, O.F.M.Conv. of the Diocese of La Crosse, WI; His Excellency Bishop David Ricken of the Diocese of Green Bay, WI; and His Excellency Bishop Edward Rice, Auxiliary Bishop of St. Louis, MO.

The researcher also interviewed select superintendents to determine their perceptions on how to best revitalize the Catholic identity of schools across the country. Since (Arch)Diocesan superintendents are leaders who work directly with Catholic schools, their input regarding catechetical reform strategies and the revitalization of the Catholic identity of schools also served as valuable data for this study. The superintendents who were interviewed were as follows: Fr. John Belmonte, S.J., Ph.D., Superintendent of Catholic Schools for the Diocese of Joliet, IL; Dr. Sharon Weiss, Superintendent of Catholic Schools for the Diocese of Peoria, IL; and Mr. George Henry, Superintendent of Catholic Education for the Archdiocese of St. Louis, MO. In addition to interviewing the above-mentioned Superintendents, documents which their (Arch)Dioceses created pertaining to the Catholic identity of their schools were analyzed in order to obtain more information regarding the strategies which their (Arch)Dioceses implemented in this regard.

Definition of Terms

The definitions of important terms used in this study, taken mainly from the *Modern Catholic Dictionary* (Hardon, 1999), are as follows:

(Arch)Diocese – the territory over which a bishop exercises ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

Bishop – a successor of the Apostles who has received the fullness of Christ's priesthood.

Cardinal – a high official of the Roman Catholic Church ranking next to the Pope. He is a member of the Sacred College and is appointed by the Sovereign Pontiff to assist and advise him in the government of the Church.

Catechesis – an education of children, young people, and adults in the faith of the Church through the teaching of Christian doctrine in an organic and systematic way to make them disciples of Jesus Christ (CCC, Article 189). Additionally, it is an orderly and systematic initiation into the revelation that God has given of Himself to humanity in Christ Jesus, a Revelation stored in the depths of the Church's memory and in Sacred Scripture, and constantly communicated from one generation to the next by a living active tradition "At the heart of all catechesis we find, in essence, a Person, the Person of Jesus of Nazareth...the primary and essential object of catechesis is the Mystery of Christ...the definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch, but in communion, in intimacy, with Jesus Christ" (Pope John Paul, 1980).

Catechism of the Catholic Church – a popular manual of instruction in Christian doctrine.

Evangelization – zealous proclamation of the Gospel in order to bring others to Christ and His Church. In the words of Pope Paul VI, "Evangelizing means to bring the

Good News into all the strata of humanity, and through its influence, transforming humanity from within and making it new.”

Pope – the title of the visible head of the Catholic Church. He is called Pope because his authority is supreme and because it is to be exercised in a paternal way, after the example of Christ.

Qualitative Research – a systematic process by which we know more about something than we did before engaging in the process (Merriam, 2009). The term “qualitative research” is the designation used to describe all forms of social inquiry that rely primarily on qualitative data, that is, data in the form of words – as opposed to using quantitative data in the form of numbers (Schwandt, 2007).

Vatican Council II – convoked by Pope John XXIII from 1962-1965, mainly to more effectively preserve and present the sacred deposit of Christian doctrine. Its 16 documents reaffirmed the principles of Catholic faith and morality (Hardon, 1999).

Proposed Chapters

The proposed chapters contained in this dissertation consist of the following:

Chapter 1 – Introduction – The introduction to this dissertation established the purpose of the study, the rationale for the study, and the research questions.

Additionally presented was the significance of the study, the definition of terms, and the proposed chapters of the dissertation.

Chapter 2 – Related Literature Review – This chapter was divided into four main sections in order to best set the framework for the study. The first section titled,

“Catechetical Pillars” summarized the main Teachings of the Catholic Faith through the Four Pillars related in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994). These Pillars consist of the Creed, the Seven Sacraments, the Ten Commandments, and Prayer/Liturgy. The second section titled, “The Crisis of Faith” discussed the current crisis of faith in society, resulting in an even greater urgency to revitalize the Catholic identity of schools. The third section was titled, “The Need for the Reform of Catechetics,” which makes the case for reforming current catechetical practices. The fourth section was titled, “Current Catechetical Reform Strategies.” This particular section was divided into two main sub-sections, the first of which dealt with recommended catechetical reform strategies from the field that may or may not have already been implemented in schools. The second sub-section presented reform strategies that have already been implemented in various Catholic institutions across the country.

Chapter 3 – Methodology – This chapter discussed the methods by which the researcher conducted the study, as well as the participants in the study. A qualitative phenomenological approach which utilized a mixed methods format was utilized in this study. Interviews were conducted with select Ecclesial Leaders of the Catholic Church, as well as with select Superintendents of (Arch)Diocesan schools, regarding their views on how to best reform catechetics and revitalize the Catholic identity of schools across the country. Additionally, documentary research was utilized in this study through the analysis of data received from various documents given to the researcher by the interviewed Superintendents. These documents were created by (Arch)Dioceses to

revitalize the Catholic identity of their own educational institutions. The data received from these documents was then analyzed, based upon common themes related to revitalizing the Catholic identity of schools. The sub-headings of this chapter consisted of the following: the introduction to the chapter, the research questions, a discussion on the research design, sampling strategy, population of the study, participants of the study, data collection, data analysis, organizing and reporting the data, limitations to the study, and ethical considerations.

Chapter 4 – Presentation of Findings – In this chapter, the researcher presented the research findings from the interview data regarding the reform of catechesis and the revitalizing of the Catholic identity of schools collected from both select Ecclesial Leaders of the Catholic Church and (Arch)Diocesan superintendents. In addition, the findings from the documentary research conducted on select documents received from Superintendents regarding these topics were also discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 5 – Discussion and Conclusions – The goal of this final chapter was to discuss and analyze the data obtained from interviews and documentary research in order to answer the research questions. Additionally, this chapter presented implications for today's Catholic school leaders. Finally, this chapter discussed ideas for future longitudinal studies which may better assess the degree of effectiveness of the catechetical reform strategies presented in this study, as well as other studies related to this topic.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

In this literature review, the researcher synthesized information from many sources regarding the great need during current times to more effectively catechize young people in the Teachings of their Holy Catholic Faith. In order to contribute to the field of education, this particular study explored this important issue particularly as it pertained to the Catholic identity of the (Arch)Diocesan schools across the country.

In order to set the framework for this study, the researcher investigated the definition of the word “catechesis,” particularly in light of recent Papal documents. In his Apostolic Exhortation, *Catechesi Tradendae – On Catechesis in Our Time*, Pope John Paul II (1980) stated, “Authentic catechesis is always an orderly and systematic initiation into the revelation that God has given of Himself to humanity in Christ Jesus, a Revelation stored in the depths of the Church’s memory and in Sacred Scripture, and constantly communicated from one generation to the next by a living active tradition.”

In addition, he states in the same exhortation,

The aim of catechesis is to be the teaching and maturation stage... the period in which the Christian, having accepted by faith The Person of Jesus Christ as The One Lord and having given Him complete adherence by sincere conversion of heart, endeavors to know better this Jesus to Whom he has entrusted himself: to know His “mystery,” the Kingdom of God proclaimed by Him, the

requirements and promises contained in His Gospel message, and the paths that He has laid down for anyone who wishes to follow Him. (Pope John Paul, 1980)

An interesting note regarding the importance placed upon catechesis at this particular time in history is the recent approval of the first Marian Apparition of the United States by Bishop David Ricken of Green Bay, Wisconsin in 2010. In this particular apparition, which took place in the mid-1800's, the Blessed Virgin Mary asked a young girl (Adele Brice) to catechize the young people in the area in the Truths of their Catholic Faith. It is very noteworthy to see how it was just in recent years that the Bishop of the Diocese in which this apparition took place approved it. This may be an indication of the urgency of the need to focus our efforts on catechesis, especially in this day and age that has become so very secularized.

This literature review will be divided into four sections:

Catechetical Pillars

An explanation of the four pillars of the Catechism of the Catholic Church – the Creed, the Seven Sacraments, the Ten Commandments, and Prayer/Liturgy (Pope John Paul II, 1993) will be given in the first section of this related literature review. In this way, the reader(s) will become acquainted with the actual content of the Teachings of the Catholic Faith that students should be learning in the Catholic schools. As Pope John Paul II (1980) also stated in his exhortation, *Catecheis Tradendae*, “The special character of the Catholic school, the underlying reason for it, the reason why Catholic parents should prefer it, is precisely the quality of the Religious instruction integrated into the

education of the pupils ... they [*Catholic schools*] still have a grave duty to offer a religious training....” Because of the urgency of this message from Pope John Paul II, the first section of this literature review will be devoted to explaining the main beliefs of the Catholic faith, in order to better teach them to the students in Catholic schools across the country.

The Current Crisis of Faith

After the Teachings of the Catholic Faith are explained in the first section, literature will be shared pertaining to the current crisis of Faith affecting our society at this present time. In a recent article by Kate Ristow (2012) of the *Catechist* journal titled, “Cardinal Dolan: Catechist in Chief,” Cardinal Dolan stated “Today we face an enormous challenge: secularism, which is invading every aspect of life and developing a mentality in which God is absent from human life and awareness” (p. 30). In addition, the Congregation of the Clergy in the *General Directory for Catechesis* (1997) quotes one of the documents of the Second Vatican Council as stating: “Many, however, of our contemporaries ...either do not at all perceive, or else explication reject, this intimate and vital bond of man to God ”(*Gaudium & Spes*, p. 19). The *General Directory of Catechesis* goes on to state that, atheism, with its negation of God, must be regarded as one of the most serious problems of our time, “While it can take various forms, it often appears today under the guise of secularism...in many places this contributes to the rise of an ethical relativism which would remove any sure moral reference point from political and social life” (p. 20).

The Need for the Reform of Catechetics

The third section of this literature review will review the need for the reform of catechetics. As Cardinal Timothy Dolan, the former President of the United States Council of Catholic Bishops, as well as many other bishops state, we need to “return to the basics” in the teaching of the Catholic Faith to the young (Winters, 2009, p. 10). In addition, Cardinal Francis George, Archbishop of Chicago, in a recent Eternal Word Television Network (EWTN) interview with Raymond Arroyo regarding the Papal election of Pope Francis stated, “Reform of the Church starts by looking at Christ, not by adapting to the times” (Cardinal George, 2013). This observation helps to clarify the confusion that came about after the Second Vatican Council, wherein some Catholics thought that the council intended that the Church adapt to the times, while neglecting its fidelity to Christ’s Teachings as handed down through the Church. As Msgr. McCarthy (2012) stated in the quote regarding Vatican Council II referenced earlier in this study, “In response to the challenge of modernity, the Church responds with its fundamental instinct to integrate the new with the treasures of the past” (p. 11). This technique on how to most effectively implement reform in the Church ties in perfectly with the aim and goal of catechesis in general. As mentioned earlier, Pope John Paul II (1980) stated in *Catechesi Tradendae*, “At the heart of all catechesis we find, in essence, a Person, the Person of Jesus of Nazareth ...the definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch, but in communion, in intimacy with Jesus Christ.”

Taking this quote from *Catechesi Tradendae* a little further, Pope Benedict XVI (2007) wrote in his book, *An Invitation to Faith*, “It is necessary to enter into real friendship with Jesus in a personal relationship with Him and not to know Who Jesus is only from others or from books, but to live an ever deeper personal relationship with Jesus” (p. 29).

Current Catechetical Reform Strategies

The final section of this literature review will expound upon current Catechetical reform strategies that have proven successful in accomplishing the overarching purpose of catechesis in general, that of bringing young people into a deeper union with Jesus Christ, Who alone is the Way, the Truth, and the Life (Matthew 11:29; John 14:6). As Cardinal Timothy Dolan stated in the interview for the *Catechist* magazine mentioned earlier, “The most important factor in forming Catholics of all ages in faith, and especially the children, is to help them fall in love with Jesus and make Him the center of their lives, so that they will want to learn all about Him and, as disciples, share that knowledge through the Catholic Church with the world” (Ristow, 2012, p. 28).

Section One: Catechetical Pillars

The current crisis of Faith that the world is experiencing right now demonstrates that there is an urgent need for engaging in catechesis at this time in history (Pope Paul VI, 1975). On this note, this first section of the literature review will systematically outline the essentials of the Catholic Faith. These essential elements have come to be

known as the Pillars of the Catechism, and they consist of the Creed, the Seven Sacraments, the Ten Commandments, and Prayer/Liturgy (Pope John Paul, 1994).

To begin this explanation of the first pillar relating to the Creed of the Catholic Church, also known as the Profession of Faith, it becomes necessary to define the word “faith” to gain a better understanding of this first of the three Theological virtues. To help in this regard, Pope John Paul II gave this explanation regarding faith in the Catechism of the Catholic Church:

Before expounding upon the Church’s faith, as confessed in the Creed, celebrated in the Liturgy, and lived in observance of God’s Commandments and in prayer, we must first ask what ‘to believe’ means. Faith is man’s response to God, Who reveals Himself and gives Himself to man, at the same time bringing man a superabundant light as he searches for the ultimate meaning of his life. (Catechism of the Catholic Church, Section 26, 1994)

In addition, the Catechism of the Catholic Church goes on to state that the Divine Revelation given to mankind through the Eternal Word of the Father, Jesus Christ, (John 1) is complete and final, “God has revealed Himself fully by sending His Own Son, in Whom He has established His Covenant forever. The Son is His Father’s definitive Word; so there will be no further Revelation after Him” (CCC, Article 75).

Furthermore, the Catechism goes on to state that Sacred Scripture, as well as the Sacred Tradition of the Church, together make up a *single* sacred deposit of the Word of God, in which the pilgrim Church is able to contemplate God (CCC, Article 97). To further expound upon this important matter, Catholic Answers (2005) in *The Essential Catholic Survival Guide- Answers to Tough Questions About the Faith* states, “Sacred

Tradition consists of the Teaching that the Apostles passed on orally through their preaching. These Teachings largely (perhaps entirely) overlap with those contained in Scripture, but the mode of their transmission is different. They have been handed down and entrusted to the Church” (p. 59).

Catechetical Pillar #1: The Creed (Profession of Faith)

To begin this expository section on the central Teachings of the Holy Catholic Faith as outlined in the Creed, the researcher would first like to highlight the greatest Model of Faith in history, the Blessed Virgin Mary, who perfectly exemplified the true living out of the Faith throughout Her Life on earth. As the Catechism of the Catholic Church states:

The Virgin Mary most perfectly embodies the obedience of faith. By faith, Mary welcomes the tidings and promises brought by the angel Gabriel, believing that with God, “nothing will be impossible” (Luke 1:37) and so giving Her assent: “Behold, I am the Handmaid of the Lord, let it be done to me according to Your word” (Luke 1:38). Throughout Her life and until Her last ordeal, Mary’s faith never wavered. She never ceased to believe in the fulfillment of God’s word. And so the Church venerates in Mary the purest realization of faith. (Catechism of the Catholic Church, Articles 148-149)

In addition, a letter from the Congregation for Catholic Education titled *The Virgin Mary in Intellectual and Spiritual Formation* explains, “The Virgin was actively present in the life of the Church – at its beginning (the Mystery of the Incarnation), in its being set up (the mystery of Cana and of the Cross) and in its manifestation (the mystery of Pentecost); She is an ‘active presence’ throughout the Church’s history, being ‘at the center of the pilgrim Church’ (Redemptoris Mater, Pope John Paul II), performing a

multiple function: of cooperation in the birth of the faithful in the life of grace, of exemplarity in the following of Christ, of maternal mediation” (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988). In addition, the letter goes on to state, “The deed by which Christ entrusted the disciple to the Mother and the Mother to the disciple (John 19:25-27) has established the very closest relationship between Mary and the Church.

This faith, which the Blessed Virgin Mary so perfectly assented to as the Mother of God, consists of the following Truths which were revealed by God the Father through His Son, Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. They are best encapsulated in the following prayer called the Apostles’ Creed:

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and earth
 And in Jesus Christ, His Only Son, our Lord,
 Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit
 Born of the Virgin Mary
 Suffered under Pontius Pilate
 Was crucified, died, and was buried
 He descended into hell
 The third day He rose again from the dead,
 He ascended into Heaven
 And is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty
 From thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead
 I believe in the Holy Spirit
 The Holy Catholic Church
 The Communion of Saints
 The forgiveness of sins
 The resurrection of the body
 And life everlasting. Amen. (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1994)

In order to most effectively present the above-mentioned beliefs of the Church outlined in the Creed to the young in the context of catechesis, however, one would need to

ensure that the following Truths are defined and taught in order to ensure that the most essential elements of the Catholic Faith are understood:

Holy Trinity – Three Persons in One God – the Father, the Son (Who is Jesus Christ), and the Holy Spirit (CCC, Article 261).

The Incarnation – The Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, Jesus Christ, Who is the Eternal Son of the Father, became man after being conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Blessed Virgin Mary for our sakes some 2,000 years ago in order to save us from sin by dying on the Cross for us (CCC, Article 262). Blessed John Newman stated, the great principle of Catholicism is the Incarnation, the enfleshment of God (Barron, 2011).

Hypostatic Union – In Jesus Christ, the nature of God and the nature of man are united in one Divine Person. God *really* became man – “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us...” (John 1:14). The union of the two natures in the one Person of Jesus Christ is called the Hypostatic Union.

The Blessed Virgin Mary’s Important Role in Salvation History and Her Motherhood of All – Mary is the highest honor of our race since She was chosen to be the Mother of the Eternal Son of the Father, thereby making Her the Mother of God. She gave birth to Jesus Christ, while remaining a Virgin, and She was also conceived without original sin through a special grace that applied the Redemptive Sacrifice of Jesus to Her Soul in an anticipatory manner – since there is no time with God (CCC, Article 491). The Blessed Virgin Mary was also given to the entire human race as our

Mother when Jesus was dying on the Cross for us. “When Jesus saw His Mother and the disciple there whom He loved, He said to His Mother, ‘Woman, behold your son.’ Then He said to the disciple, ‘Behold your Mother’” (John 19:26-27). Mary’s importance is also represented in the earliest icons of the Church. As Dr. Scott Hahn (2001) states in his book, *Hail, Holy Queen – The Mother of God in the Word of God*,

In the earliest icons of Mary, She is almost always portrayed holding Her Infant Child – forever bearing Him to the world, as in the twelfth chapter of the Book of Revelation. A True Mother, She is usually portrayed pointing to Her Son, but looking out toward the viewers, Her other children. She mothers Her Infant – for an infant cannot hold Himself up – even as She mothers Her children in the world and draws us together to Him. (p. 28)

Paschal Mystery – the Crucifixion, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus which redeemed the world, made up for the original sin of Adam and Eve, and opened up the way for us to attain the Beatific Vision and eternal life with God in Heaven after death (CCC, 620).

Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus – Jesus’ rising from the dead on Easter Sunday, three days after His death on the Cross, along with His Ascension back into Heaven to the right hand of the Father forty days after Easter.

True Presence of Jesus in the Most Holy Eucharist through Transubstantiation – Having passed from this world back to the Father, Jesus leaves with His Church His True and Abiding Presence in the consecrated hosts in all the tabernacles of the world (the substance of which have truly changed into the Sacred Body of Jesus Christ at the words of consecration by the priest at Mass). “By the consecration, the transubstantiation of

the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ is brought about. Under the consecrated species of bread and wine, Christ Himself, living and glorious, is present in a true, real, and substantial manner: His Body and His Blood, with His Soul and Divinity” (CCC, Article 1413).

To re-emphasize this critical Belief of the Catholic Church, Canon Francis Ripley (2002) in his book, *This is the Faith*, states:

We have seen that Christ at the Last Supper took a piece of bread into His hands and said over it, ‘This is My Body.’ The Apostles saw no change, but it is of our Faith that at that moment the substance of bread gave way to the substance of Christ’s Body, while the appearances of bread remained. There was a change-over of substance – a trans-substantiation. (p. 257)

Establishment of the Catholic Church, Christ’s Mystical Body on Earth – Before ascending back to the right hand of the Father in Heaven, Jesus Christ instituted the Catholic Church when he said to St. Peter, the first Pope, “You are rock, and on this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against It. I give to you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven (Matthew 16: 18-19). To expound upon this teaching regarding the establishment of the Pope as the Vicar of Christ on earth, the book, *Survival Guide for Catholics – Answers to Tough Questions* states, “To be given the keys to the city... meant to be given free access to and authority over the city. The city to which Peter was given the keys was the Heavenly City itself” (Catholic Answers, 2005, p. 30).

In terms of the Church being called the Mystical Body of Christ on earth, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states, “Participation in the Holy Sacrifice (of the Mass) identifies us with His (Jesus’) Heart, sustains our strength along the pilgrimage of this life, makes us long for eternal life, and unites us even now to the Church in heaven, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and all the saints” (CCC, Article 1419).

In addition, within the Catholic Church are contained the means through which we receive sanctifying grace, which is a sharing in the Life of God, by means of the Seven Sacraments. A Sacrament is an outward sign of inward grace, instituted by Jesus Christ, through which grace is given to our souls (Ripley, 2002).

This teaching, now, leads us into the explanation of the next Catechetical Pillar, which will consist of a discussion on each of the Seven Sacraments. This pillar will be explored in more detail in the following section of this literature review after the final essential element of the Creed, the Last Things, is discussed below.

The Last Things – the Last Things consist of death, judgement, heaven, purgatory, and hell. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states, “Each man receives his eternal retribution in his immortal soul at the very moment of his death, in a particular judgement that refers his life to Christ; either entrance into the blessedness of heaven – through purification or immediately – or immediate and everlasting damnation” (CCC, Article 1022).

Regarding the place of purification, “The Church gives the name *Purgatory* to this final purification of the elect, which is entirely different from the punishment of the

damned (CCC, Article 1031). This teaching is also based on the practice of prayer for the dead, already mentioned in Sacred Scripture: “Therefore (Judas Maccabeus) made atonement for the dead, that they might be delivered from their sin” (2 Macc 12:46).

In closing this section on the first of the Catechetical Pillars, that of the Creed, the researcher feels the need to state that this attempt at delineating the essential Teachings of the Catholic Faith has simply given a faint glimpse of the beauty and richness of the main teachings of the Church. St. John the Apostle succinctly encapsulated this idea when he wrote at the end of his Gospel, “There are many other things that Jesus did, but if these were to be described individually, I do not think the whole world would contain the books that would be written” (John 21: 39).

Catechetical Pillar #2: The Seven Sacraments

Before exploring the beauty, meaning, and depth of each of the Sacraments, mention should be made of how the Sacraments and catechesis are closely bound together. As Pope John Paul II stated in *Catechesis Tradendae*, “Catechesis is intrinsically linked with the whole of liturgical and sacramental activity, for it is in the Sacraments, especially the Eucharist, that Christ Jesus works in fullness for the transformation of human beings” (Pope John Paul, 1980).

Again, in the same Apostolic Exhortation, Pope John Paul II stated,

Catechesis always has reference to the Sacraments. On one hand, the catechesis that prepares for the Sacraments is an eminent kind and every form of catechesis necessarily leads one to the Sacraments of Faith. On the other hand, authentic practice of the Sacraments is bound to have a catechetical aspect. In other words, sacramental life is impoverished and very soon turns into hollow

ritualism if it is not based on serious knowledge of the meaning of the Sacraments, and catechesis becomes intellectualized if it fails to come alive in Sacramental practice. (Pope John Paul, 1980)

Now that the extreme importance of the Sacraments in the area of catechesis has been discussed, an explanation of the Church's Teachings regarding each of the Sacraments will be presented below, while remembering the definition of the word "Sacrament" as mentioned above: an outward sign, instituted by Jesus Christ, by which grace is given to the soul.

Baptism – This Sacrament frees one from original sin and gives one rebirth as a son or daughter of God and members of Christ in His Mystical Body, the Church (CCC, Article 1213). Incorporated into Christ by Baptism, the person baptized is configured to Christ. Baptism seals the Christian with the indelible mark (character) of belonging to Christ (CCC, Article 1272). This Sacrament is absolutely essential in order to enter into eternal life, since Our Lord Jesus Christ commanded His Apostles, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20).

Reconciliation (also known as Penance or Confession) – The Sacrament whereby the sins, whether mortal or venial, which we have committed after Baptism, are forgiven by the absolution of a priest in Confession. This institution of this Sacrament, also, is represented in the Bible in the account of the appearance of the Risen Jesus to His Apostles on Easter Sunday evening:

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said, 'Peace be with you.' When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, Peace be with you. As the Father has sent Me, so I send you...Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you shall forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained. (John 20:19-23)

Holy Eucharist (Holy Communion) – This Sacrament is Truly the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ under the appearances of bread and wine. Transubstantiation (the change in the substance of the bread into the living Jesus) occurs at the very moment that the priest says the words, "This is My Body" over the host during the Consecration of the Mass. Likewise, the wine is changed into the Blood of Jesus when the priest says the words, "This is the chalice of My Blood" during the Consecration. Jesus Christ Himself, on the night before He died for the salvation of the world, took bread, blessed it, and said, "This is My Body" (Matthew 28:26). In like manner, He took the cup filled with wine, gave thanks, and gave it to them saying, "Drink from it, all of you, for This is My Blood of the covenant, which will be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins" (Matthew 28:27-28). He then gave His Power to consecrate bread and wine into His Own Body and Blood to His Apostles (the first priests) when He said, "Do this in remembrance of Me."

In addition, the Catechism of the Catholic Church states,

At the Last Supper, on the night He was betrayed, our Savior instituted the Eucharistic Sacrifice of His Body and Blood. This He did in order to perpetuate the Sacrifice of the Cross throughout the ages until He should come again, and so to entrust to His beloved Spouse, the Church, a memorial of His Death and Resurrection: a Sacrament of Love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a Paschal

Banquet 'in which Christ is consumed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us.' (CCC, Article 1323)

Along with this, Catholic Answers from *The Catholic Survival Guide – Answers to Tough Questions About the Catholic Faith* state:

Twelve times Jesus said He was the bread that came down from Heaven; four times He said they would have to 'eat My Flesh and drink My Blood' (John 6). John 6 was an extended promise that could not be more explicit! (Catholic Answers, 2005, p. 157)

Furthermore, the Catechism states, "The Eucharist is 'the source and summit of the Christian life'...for in the Blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely, Christ Himself" (CCC, Article 1324).

Confirmation – the Sacrament by which the members of the Church receive the Holy Spirit and His Seven Gifts of Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Knowledge, Piety, and the Fear of the Lord (fear of offending Him – not servile fear) as once granted to the Apostles on the day of Pentecost (CCC, Article 1302). It gives them the special strength of the Holy Spirit to spread and defend the Faith by word and action as true witnesses of Christ, to confess the Name of Christ boldly, and never to be ashamed of the Cross (CCC, Article 2044).

Holy Orders – The Sacrament instituted by Jesus Christ to provide His Church with bishops and priests, each receiving power and grace for the due fulfillment of the sacred duties belonging to the degree of priesthood conferred upon him (Ripley, 2002). The main duties and powers of the priest are to offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass - in which Jesus' Sacrifice on Calvary is made present again upon the altar (since there is no

time with God) through the Consecration of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Jesus - and to forgive sins through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The gift of the priesthood is so great that it prompted St. Francis of Assisi to once say, "If I saw a priest and an angel, I would bend my knee first to the priest and then to the angel" (Ripley, 2002, p. 319).

Holy Matrimony – The Sacrament of Matrimony was made by God Himself when He created Adam and Eve. "A man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cling to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). "Matrimony comes from two Latin words, 'matris' and 'munus,' meaning 'the duty of motherhood.' The very name indicates God's main purpose in instituting marriage.... He, the infinitely wise and good God, made marriage for the good of the man, the woman, and the children, and for the happiness of the family, the good of the state, and the well-being of the human race. Thus, to violate God's Laws in marriage can only result in injury to all those Whom God intended to benefit by His Laws" (Ripley, 2002, p. 338).

Anointing of the Sick – The Sacrament in which the sick are anointed with holy oil, accompanied with prayer in order to comfort and strengthen the soul, remit sin, and at times, even restore bodily health (Ripley, 2002). The Scriptural reference to this Sacrament is in the Book of St. James, where it is said, "Is anyone sick among you? Let him bring in the priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the Name of the Lord" (James 5:14).

Catechetical Pillar #3: The Ten Commandments

To begin this discussion on the Ten Commandments, the researcher would first like to expound upon the purpose of these important Laws of God by once again quoting the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, “The Ten Commandments are pre-eminently the words of God. They are handed on to us in the books of Exodus and Deuteronomy. Beginning with the Old Testament, the sacred books refer to the ‘ten words,’ but it is in the New Covenant in Jesus Christ that their full meaning will be revealed” (CCC, Article 2056).

To set the context for this discussion on the purpose and meaning of the Ten Commandments, it would be best to once again quote the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* regarding how Jesus calls us to obey not only the letter of the law, but also the spirit of the law:

Jesus acknowledged the Ten Commandments, but He also showed the power of the Spirit at work in their letter. He preached a ‘righteousness which exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees’...He unfolded all the demands of the Commandments: ‘You have heard that it was said to the men of old, ‘You shall not kill.’...But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgement.’ (Matthew 5:21-22). When someone asks Him, ‘Which Commandment in the Law is the greatest?’ Jesus replies, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the prophets. (CCC, Articles 2054-2055)

To synthesize the discussion on the important purpose of the Ten Commandments, the researcher will quote Pope Emeritus, Benedict XVI, who stated in his book, *An Invitation to Faith*, “At a closer look, the Commandments are the means

that the Lord gives us to protect our freedom, both from the internal conditioning of passions and from the external abuse of those with evil intentions. The ‘no’s’ of the Commandments are as many ‘yes’s’ to the growth of true freedom” (Pope Benedict XVI, 2007, p. 16).

Within the context of catechesis, however, each of the specific Ten Commandments do need to be taught, along with an explanation of each one. They are as follows:

I. I Am the Lord your God, you shall not have other gods besides Me.

- A. Daily prayer is required to fulfill this Commandment.
- B. Superstition, sorcery, fortune-telling is forbidden, since God alone is supreme.

II. You shall not take the Name of the Lord your God in vain.

- A. God’s Name must never be used in an unholy way.
- B. Swearing is forbidden.

III. Remember to keep Holy the Lord’s Day.

- A. Weekly Sunday Mass attendance is obligatory.
- B. Holy Day of Obligation Mass attendance is obligatory (i.e., Christmas; Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God on January 1; Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into Heaven on August 15; All Saints’ Day on November 1; and the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception on December 8). “On Sundays and other Holy Days of obligation, the faithful are bound to participate in the Mass” (CCC, Article 2192).
- C. Unnecessary servile work on Sunday is forbidden.

IV. Honor your father and your mother.

- A. Parents must be obeyed and respected.
- B. Parents must regard their children as children of God and respect them as human persons (CCC, Article 2222).

V. You shall not kill.

- A. Murder is forbidden.
 1. “The Fifth Commandment forbids direct and intentional killing as gravely sinful. The murderer and those who cooperate voluntarily in murder commit a sin that cries out to heaven for vengeance” (CCC, Article 2268).
- B. Abortion is forbidden.
 1. “Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception” (CCC, Article 2270).
 2. “Human life is sacred, because from its beginning, it involves the creative action of God God alone is the Lord of Life from the beginning to until its end: no one can, in any circumstance, claim for himself the right to destroy directly an innocent human being” (Evangelium Vitae – The Gospel of Life, Pope John Paul II, 1987).
 3. Every human life, from the moment of conception until death, is sacred because the human person has been willed for its own sake in the image and likeness of the living and Holy God (CCC, Article 2319).
- C. Contraception is forbidden.
 1. “The Church, as interpreted by its constant doctrine, teaches that each and every marriage act must remain open to the transmission of life” (Humanae Vitae, Paul VI, 1968). Conjugal love naturally tends to be fruitful. A child does not come from the outside as something added on to the mutual love of the spouses, but springs from the very heart of that mutual giving, as its fruit and fulfillment. It is therefore necessary that each and every marriage act remain ordered per se to the procreation of human life...the unitive significance and the procreative significance are both inherent to the marriage act (CCC, Article 2366). “God created man in His Own Image...male and female He created them. He blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and multiply” (CCC, Article 2331).
 2. Contraception offends against the openness to procreation required of marriage and also the inner truth of conjugal love (CCC, 2370).
- D. Euthanasia is forbidden.
 1. “Those whose lives are diminished or weakened deserve special respect...direct euthanasia is morally unacceptable (CCC, Articles 2276, 2277).
 2. “Euthanasia violates the Fifth Commandment of the Law of God” (CCC, Article 2277).
- E. Suicide is forbidden.

1. "Everyone is responsible for his life before God who has given it to him. It is God who remains the sovereign Master of his life. We are obliged to accept life gratefully and preserve it for His honor and the salvation of our souls. We are stewards, not owners, of the life God has entrusted to us. It is not ours to dispose of" (CCC, Article 2280).
2. "Suicide contradicts the natural inclination of the human being to preserve and perpetuate his life. It is gravely contrary to the just love of self and to love for the living God" (CCC, Article 2281).
3. "We should not despair of the eternal salvation of persons who have taken their own lives. By ways known to Him alone, God can provide the opportunity for salutary repentance. The Church prays for those who have taken their own lives" (CCC, Article 2283).

VI. You shall not commit adultery.

- A. "God is love and in Himself He lives a mystery of personal loving communion. Creating the human race in His Own Image...God inscribed in the humanity of man and woman the vocation, and thus the capacity and responsibility, of love and communion" (CCC, Article 2331).
- B. Since this Commandment safeguards the gift of sexual union that God has granted to a man and woman in the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony as a pledge of spiritual communion and a life-giving act, there are several occasions of sin that must be avoided when guarding this gift: adultery, lust, masturbation, fornication (carnal union between an unmarried man and an unmarried woman), pornography, prostitution, rape, and homosexual acts, since they are contrary to the natural law and close the sexual act to the gift of life. Basing itself on Sacred Scripture, which presents homosexual acts as acts of grave depravity, tradition has always declared that homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered (CCC, Article 2357). People with a homosexual tendency are still called to fulfill God's Will in their lives and, if they are Christians, to unite to the Sacrifice of the Lord's Cross the difficulties they may encounter from their condition, while being treated with respect, compassion, and sensitivity (CCC, Article 2358). Homosexual persons are called to chastity (CCC, Article 2359).

VII. You shall not steal.

- A. Forbids taking or keeping the goods of one's neighbor
- B. Promises must be kept and contracts strictly observed to the extent that the commitments made in them are morally just. All contracts must be agreed to and executed in good faith (CCC, 2410).

VIII. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

- A. Forbids misrepresenting the truth in our relations with others, rash judgement, detraction, calumny, and perjury
- B. Truth or truthfulness is the virtue which consists in showing oneself true in deeds and truthful in words, and in guarding against duplicity, dissimulation, and hypocrisy (CCC, 2468).

IX. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.

- A. Forbids lust or carnal concupiscence and urges the practice of purity of heart
- B. "Everyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matthew 5:28).

X. You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.

- A. Forbids avarice and envy
- B. "The Tenth Commandment forbids greed and the desire to amass earthly goods without limit" (CCC, 2536).

Catechetical Pillar #4: Liturgy and Prayer

Liturgy: The Liturgy of the Church involves the Divine Worship of the Church. As the Second Vatican Council stated, "The Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life" (Synod of Bishops, XI Ordinary General Assembly, 2001). In terms of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, young people must realize that it is the actual same Sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross on Calvary (that took place in history about 2,000 years ago) which actually takes place in time again on each altar that the Mass is offered on. As Canon Ripley (2002) writes in his book, *This is the Faith*:

There is no doubt that Christ was the Victim on the Cross. He, too, is the Victim in the Mass. Having ascended into Heaven, He retains the marks of His Hands, Feet, and Side. Consequently, in the Holy Eucharist, He is still a Victim, manifesting His victim state through His abasement in assuming the appearances

of bread and wine and through the mystic separation of His Body and Blood signified by the separate Consecration of the bread and wine and by the two species (bread and wine). Thus, the Sacrifice of the Cross and the Sacrifice of the Mass have each the same Priest and the same Victim, Jesus Christ, and both are offered by means of the same Body and Blood, visible on the Cross, but hidden on the altar. Therefore, Calvary and the Mass are essentially one and the same Sacrifice. (pp. 272-273)

In addition, Catholic Answers (2005) writes in *The Essential Catholic Survival Guide - Answers to Tough Questions About the Faith*, “The Mass is the renewal and perpetuation of the Sacrifice of the Cross in the sense that it offers Jesus anew to God...and thus commemorates the Sacrifice of the Cross, reenacts it mystically, and applies the fruits of Christ’s Death upon the Cross to individual human souls. All the efficacy of the Mass derives, therefore, from the Sacrifice of Calvary” (p. 164).

Prayer: In terms of prayer, there have been various descriptions of prayer by many mystic saints throughout history. St. Teresa of Avila described prayer as a loving conversation with the One Whom we know loves us. She goes on to state “I am not asking you to do anything more than look at Him...If you are joyful, look at Him risen...If you are experiencing trials or are sad, behold Him burdened with the Cross on His Back” (*Way of Perfection*, 2000, p. 112). In her autobiography, St. Therese of Lisieux called prayer a simple look turned toward heaven (*The Story of A Soul: The Autobiography of the Little Flower*, 2010). The Catechism of the Catholic Church defines prayer as the “raising of one’s mind and heart to God” (CCC, Article 2559). The fact that remains through these various descriptions of prayer is that it is the means by which man can communicate with God. As Fr. Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalene wrote in his book

entitled, *Divine Intimacy*, “The whole history of creation and redemption converges into this one purpose: the establishment of an intimate, friendly communion between man and God” (Fr. Gabriel, 1982, p.142). In fact, he goes on to say that, “The knowledge of the Mystery of Christ does not come from study, but from prayer, from prayer at the feet of Jesus, because He has said, ‘He who loves Me...I will love him and manifest Myself to him’” (John 14:21).

To guide in this lofty spiritual task (and gift), Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, as well as Holy Mother Church (Who speaks for Jesus), has given the basic prayers to aid mankind in the best way of speaking to God. These basic prayers are the ones that the Holy Father, Pope Francis, led the world in reciting when he first greeted the crowds after being elected Pope on March 13, 2013. They are the Our Father, the Hail Mary, and the Glory Be:

Our Father

Our Father, Who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy Name, Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen. (Luke 11: 1-4)

Hail Mary

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with Thee. Blessed art Thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of Thy womb, Jesus. (Luke 1: 28) Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Glory Be

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

The Holy Rosary

It would be noteworthy to state that a powerful prayer that integrates all of the above-mentioned prayers with meditation on the events in Our Lord's Life is the Holy Rosary. As Pope John Paul II stated in his Apostolic Letter, *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, "Simple, yet profound, the Rosary still remains, at the dawn of this third millennium, a prayer of great significance, destined to bring forth a harvest of holiness" (Pope John Paul, 2002). Each decade (consisting of one Our Father, ten Hail Mary's, and one Glory Be) is devoted to contemplating a different Mystery in the Life of Our Lord. In this way, the Rosary is actually a synthesis of the Gospels; therefore, making it a very powerful prayer. The Rosary consists of contemplating Christ through the eyes of Mary. Mary lived with Her eyes fixed on Christ, treasuring His every word.

In the Rosary, Mary constantly sets before the faithful the mysteries of Her Son, through whose meditation, we are enabled to enter into contact with the memories and contemplative gaze of Mary (Pope John Paul II, 2002). "Against the background of the words 'Ave Maria,' the principal events of the Life of Jesus Christ pass before the eyes of the soul. They take shape in the complete series of the Joyful, (Luminous), Sorrowful, and Glorious Mysteries, and they put us in loving communion with Jesus through – we might say – the Heart of His Mother" (Pope John Paul II, 2002).

The Mysteries of the Holy Rosary are as follows:

The Joyful Mysteries

1. **The Annunciation** – The Angel Gabriel was sent by God to a Virgin named Mary. The angel said "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with Thee, blessed art Thou among women. Do not fear, Mary, for You have found favor with God...The Holy Spirit will come upon You and the Power of the Most High will overshadow You...You will conceive and bear a Son and You shall call His Name, Jesus. Mary said, "Behold the Handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto Me according to Thy Word." (Luke 1:28, 38)
2. **The Visitation** – Mary set out proceeding in haste into the town of Judah where She greeted Elizabeth. Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and cried out, "Blessed art Thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of Thy womb!" (Luke 1: 39-45)
3. **The Nativity** – The birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ of the Virgin Mary in Bethlehem on Christmas approximately 2,000 years ago. (Luke 2:7)

4. **The Presentation of the Child Jesus in the Temple** – Mary and Joseph present the Child Jesus in the temple. (Luke 2:22)
5. **The Finding of the Child Jesus in the Temple** – Mary and Joseph find the Child Jesus teaching in the temple. (Luke 3: 41-52)

The Luminous Mysteries

1. **The Baptism of Jesus** – the beginning of Jesus’ public life, at which time He was baptized in the River Jordan by John the Baptist. He did not need Baptism, since He is God; He did this to show His acceptance of His Mission as God’s suffering Servant, since He allows Himself to be numbered among sinners; He is already “the Lamb of God Who takes away the sins of the world. Already, He is anticipating the ‘baptism’ of His bloody death.” (CCC, Article 536)
2. **Christ’s Manifestation at the Wedding Feast of Cana** – Jesus’ first public miracle which was brought about at the request of His Holy Mother, which shows the power of Mary’s mediation with Her Son. (John 2:1-11)
3. **Christ’s Proclamation of the Kingdom of God** – the public life of Jesus during which time He taught the people and performed miracles to show His Divinity.
4. **The Transfiguration** – Jesus’ transfiguration on Mt. Tabor before His Passion and Death in front of His Apostles Peter, James, and John (Matthew 17:1-8) to manifest His Divinity.
5. **The Institution of the Most Holy Eucharist** – the Last Supper in which Jesus gave us His Own Precious Body and Blood for the first time in Holy Communion as a means of remaining with us in this world even after His Resurrection and Ascension back to His Father in Heaven. (Matthew 28:26-28)

The Sorrowful Mysteries

1. **The Agony of Jesus in the Garden** – After giving us His Precious Body and Blood at the Last Supper and before His Death on the Cross, Jesus went to the garden to pray – “And His sweat became like drops of blood falling to the ground.” (Luke 22:44)
2. **The Scourging of Jesus at the Pillar** – Jesus was scourged mercilessly before His Crucifixion: “By His stripes we are healed.” (Isaiah 53:5)

3. **The Crowning of Jesus with Thorns** – Jesus was crowned with thorns after His scourging at the pillar. “Weaving a crown out of thorns, they placed it upon His Head, and a reed in His right Hand, and kneeling before Him, they mocked Him saying, ‘Hail, King of the Jews’ and they spat upon Him.” (Matthew 27:29-30)
4. **The Carrying of the Cross** – “So they took Jesus, and carrying the Cross Himself, He went out to what is called the Place of the skull, in Hebrew, Golgotha. There they crucified Him.” (John 19:17)
5. **The Crucifixion and Death of Jesus** – “He was pierced for our sins, crushed for our iniquity. On Him lies the punishment that brings us peace. By His Wounds we are healed.” (Isaiah 53:5)

The Glorious Mysteries

1. **The Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ from the Dead on Easter** – Early in the morning on the first day of the week, they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the Body of the Lord Jesus. Two men in dazzling garments appeared to them and said, “He is not here, for He has been raised.” (Luke 24: 1, 6)
2. **The Ascension of Jesus into Heaven** – Jesus ascends back to the right hand of His Father in Heaven forty days after Easter. “Then He led them out as far as Bethany, raised His hands, and blessed them. As He blessed them, He parted from them and was taken up to Heaven.” (John 25: 50-51)
3. **The Descent of the Holy Spirit on Mary and the Apostles** – The Father and the Son send the Holy Spirit upon the Church on Pentecost, “And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were. Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each of them.” (Acts 2: 1-3)
4. **The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Body and Soul into Heaven** – “When the course of Her earthly life was finished, Our Lady was taken up Body and Soul into Heaven.” (*Declaration of the Dogma of the Assumption*, Pope Pius XII, 1950)
5. **The Coronation of the Blessed Virgin Mary as Queen of Heaven and Earth** – After the Blessed Virgin Mary was assumed Body and Soul into Heaven, the Holy Trinity crowned Her as Queen of Heaven and earth, “A Great Sign

appeared in the sky – a Woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under Her feet, and on Her Head a crown of twelve stars.” (Revelation 12:1)

Section Two: The Current Crisis of Faith

To begin this section on the current crisis of Faith, the researcher will share a quote from Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI regarding one of the main causes of this crisis of Faith which society is now experiencing in his book titled, *An Invitation to Faith*:

Today, a particularly insidious obstacle to the task of educating is the massive presence in our society and culture of that relativism which, recognizing nothing as definitive, leaves as the ultimate criterion only the self with its desires. And under the semblance of freedom, it becomes a prison for each one, for it separates people from one another, locking each person into his own ego. With such a relativistic horizon, therefore, real education is not possible without the light of truth...A great effort is therefore asked of Catholics to increase dialogue with the contemporary culture in order to open it to the perennial values of Transcendence. (Pope Benedict XVI, 2007, p. 64)

Additionally, as the General Directory for Catechesis states, “There is in contemporary culture a persistent spread of religious indifference: Many however of our contemporaries...either do not perceive, or else explicitly reject, this intimate and vital bond of man to God” (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997). The Directory goes on to state that atheism must be regarded as one of the most serious problems of our time. “While it can take various forms, it often appears today under the guise of secularism, which consists in an excessively autonomous view of man and of the world according to which it is entirely self-explanatory without any reference to God.”

Furthermore, the Directory (1997) states that, in the moral situation of today, there is an evident obscuring of the ontological truth of the human person. This, in turn,

leads to the rise of an ethical relativism which would remove any sure moral reference point from political and social life.

The current crisis of faith is the reason that Pope Emeritus Benedict proclaimed a Year of Faith that began in October of 2012 and extended through the Solemnity of Christ the King in November of 2013. In his Apostolic Letter written to open the Year of Faith, *Porta Fidei*, Pope Benedict states the rationale for calling this special year of grace:

Whereas in the past, it was possible to recognize a unitary cultural matrix, broadly accepted in its appeal to the content of faith and the values inspired by it, today this no longer seems to be the case in large swathes of society, because of a profound crisis of faith that has affected many people...We must rediscover a taste for feeding ourselves on the word of God, faithfully handed down by the Church, and on the bread of life, offered as sustenance for His disciples. (Pope Benedict XVI, 2012)

What is particularly alarming regarding this crisis of Faith is the widespread and devastating consequences it has brought upon youth. According to several polling organizations, approximately four out of five Catholic youngsters fall away, defect to other denominations, embrace cults or succumb to unbelief. The same sources rank Catholic students lower in Religious knowledge than any other group... (Impastato, 2012, p. 20).

Section Three: The Need for the Reform of Catechetics

To set the tone for this third section of the literature review, that of the reforming of catechetics, the researcher will quote Cardinal Timothy Dolan's comment

regarding this topic which appeared in an article which appeared in 2009 titled, *Return to Basics*. Cardinal Dolan stated,

Bishops today ask if it is not now necessary to rebuild the Church, through reform and renewal. They wonder if we need to start internally, and concentrate on pastoral issues such as widespread catechetical illiteracy, the collapse of marriage and family life, the restoration of a 'culture of life,' genuine liturgical renewal, a return to the Sacrament of Penance, a national crusade to obey the Third Commandment, and the promotion of authentic renewal in the lives of our priests and Religious. (Winters, 2009, p. 10)

In addition, the above-mentioned article mentions that Cardinal Dolan's thought is that the Second Vatican Council be seen in continuity, not discontinuity, with the Church's past. In this way, the world will see that the valuable traditions that the Church has practiced for over 2,000 years are still essential elements of the Church's practice in our current day. As St. Paul says in his epistles, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever; do not be carried away by any strange teaching" (Hebrews 13:8).

To confirm Cardinal Dolan's thought shared above, Bishop Francis Schulte, one of the former Chairmen of the USCCB Committee on Education, reminds us of Fr. James DiGiacomo's concern regarding the importance of remaining true to the authentic Teachings of Jesus Christ in current society. In a document published by the National Catholic Educational Association (1990), he states that in an effort to adapt the message to the hearers and culture, there is always a grave danger of robbing it of its substance. He goes on to explain that if the Paschal Mystery of Jesus's Death and Resurrection is the core of our message, we should be hearing more about sin and repentance, of God's

challenging demands, about losing our life for Christ's sake, and about the tremendous responsibility of human freedom, along with its eternal consequences.

In another informative article regarding the reforming of catechetics in our time titled, *Cardinal Timothy Dolan: Catechist in Chief*, Kate Ristow (2012), the interviewer, asks Cardinal Dolan what he feels are the most important factors in forming children in faith today. Cardinal Dolan brings up an important point saying, "...It's not just about forming children. It's about forming entire families, entire parishes - enabling them to form lifelong relationships with Jesus Christ in His Church" (p. 28).

In the same article, Cardinal Dolan states, "So I would say that the most important factor in forming Catholics of all ages in faith, and especially the children, is to help them fall in love with Jesus...so that they will want to learn all about Him and, as disciples, share that knowledge through the Catholic Church with the world" (Ristow, 2012, p. 28). From this comment, we learn once again that the first step in catechesis and evangelization is to bring people into a relationship with Our Lord Jesus Christ by coming to know Him better, in order to love Him more. It is only after accomplishing this overarching goal of catechesis that young and old alike will attain a better understanding of the Teachings of the Church, since they will see them all as relating to the One Whom "they have seen with their eyes, and their hands have touched" (1 John 1:1) through the knowledge they have attained of Him through prayer.

This concept of bringing young people into a real relationship with Jesus Christ is reiterated by Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI in an address he gave to the bishops from

Region XIII of the United States during their ad limina visit in May of 2012. In speaking about the nature of the Catholic school, he stated,

First, as we know, the essential task of authentic education at every level is not simply that of passing on knowledge, essential as this is, but also of shaping hearts. There is a constant need to balance intellectual rigor in communicating effectively, attractively, and integrally, the richness of the Church's Faith with forming the young in the love of God, the praxis of the Christian moral and sacramental life and, not least, the cultivation of personal and liturgical prayer. (Pope Benedict XVI, 2012)

Cardinal Francis George, Archbishop of Chicago, also had a very relevant comment to share regarding the topic of reforming catechesis. He stated in a recent interview, "Reform begins by looking at Christ, not by adapting to the times" (Cardinal George, 2013). This observation truly clarifies the confusion that came about after the Second Vatican Council, wherein some Catholics thought that the council intended that the Church adapt to the times, while neglecting its fidelity to Christ's Teachings as handed down through the Church. As with all institutions, it is clear that true reform only comes about by being true to one's mission. In this case of the Church's mission, it is to be faithful to Her Bridegroom, Jesus Christ, and to be the Sacrament of His Presence in the world for all times.

Five Essential Characteristics of Catholic Schools

To aid us in this important endeavor of reforming catechetics, especially as it pertains to Catholic schools, the researcher will delineate the five essential characteristics of Catholic schools discussed by Archbishop J Michael Miller in the document, *The Holy See's Teaching on Catholic Schools* (2006). In this way, the reader(s)

will gain a better understanding of the standards and benchmarks that need to be met in the reforming of catechesis. Archbishop Miller states,

Like the Marks of the Church proclaimed in the Creed – One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic – so, too, does the Holy See identify the principal features of a school as Catholic: (1) a Catholic school should be inspired by a supernatural vision, (2) founded on Christian anthropology, (3) animated by communion and community, (4) imbued with a Catholic worldview throughout its curriculum, and (5) sustained by Gospel witness. These benchmarks help to answer the critical question: Is this a Catholic school according to the mind of the Church? (Miller, 2006)

In order to expound more fully on each of these above-mentioned characteristics, an explanation of each of them is found below:

Inspired By a Supernatural Vision – The Church sees education as a process that, in light of man’s transcendent destiny, forms the whole child and seeks to fix his or her eyes on Heaven. The specific purpose of a Catholic education is the formation of boys and girls who will be good citizens of this world, loving God and neighbor and enriching society with the leaven of the Gospel, and who will also be citizens of the world to come, thus fulfilling their destiny to become saints.

Founded on Christian Anthropology – Emphasis on the supernatural destiny of students brings with it a profound appreciation of the need to perfect children in all their dimensions as images of God. Catholic theology teaches that grace builds on nature. Because of this complementarity of the natural and the supernatural, Catholic educators should have a sound understanding of the human person that addresses the requirements of both the natural and the supernatural perfection of the children

entrusted to their care....It proposes Christ, Incarnate Son of God and Perfect Man, as both Model and Means; to imitate Him is, for all men and women, the inexhaustible source of personal and communal perfection. As Pope John Paul II would say, "It is only in the Mystery of the Word made flesh that the mystery of man becomes clear."

Animated by Communion and Community – "A third mark of catholicity is the emphasis on the school as a community – a community of persons and, more to the point, a genuine community of faith" (Miller, 2006). The Holy See describes the school as a community in four areas:

- The teamwork among all those involved – Elementary schools should try to create a community school climate that reproduces, as far as possible, the warm and intimate atmosphere of family life.
- The cooperation between educators and bishops – The catholicity of American schools also depends largely on the bonds of ecclesial communion between bishops and Catholic educators....Bishops must oversee the teaching within Catholic schools to ensure that the education provided therein is based on the principles of Catholic doctrine.
- The interaction of students with teachers – The Catholic philosophy of education has always paid special attention to the quality of interpersonal relations in the school community, especially those between teachers and students....Catholic schools safeguard the priority of the person, both student and teacher. They foster the proper friendship between them, since an

authentic formative process can only be initiated through a personal relationship.

- The school's physical environment – A school's physical environment is also an integral element that embodies the genuine community values of the Catholic tradition. If Catholic schools are to be true to their identity, they will suffuse their environment with a delight in the sacramental by expressing visibly the external signs of Catholic culture through images, symbols, icons, and other objects of traditional devotion. A chapel, classroom Crucifixes and statues, Liturgical celebrations, and other sacramental reminders of Catholic life should be evident.

Imbued With a Catholic Worldview Throughout Its Curriculum – The spirit of Catholicism should permeate the entire curriculum. Catholic education is directed towards developing every capability of every student: his or her intellectual, physical, psychological, moral, and religious capabilities (Miller, 2006). "The Catholic school would betray its purpose if it failed to found itself on the Person of Christ and His Teaching. It derives all the energy necessary for its educational work from Him" (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977). An important principle that derives from communicating a Catholic worldview to children is the notion that they should learn to transform culture in light of the Gospel (Miller, 2006).

Sustained by Gospel Witness – The final indicator of a school's authentic Catholicity is the vital witness of its teachers and administrators. It depends chiefly on

them whether the Catholic school achieves its purpose (Miller, 2006). “The central figure in the work of educating...is specifically the form of witness.... The witness never refers to himself but to something, or rather, to Someone greater than he, Whom he has encountered and Whose dependable goodness he has sampled. Thus, as Pope Emeritus Benedict stated, every educator finds an unequal model in Jesus Christ, the Father’s Great Witness, Who said nothing about Himself but spoke only as the Father had taught Him.

To further elaborate upon this last indicator regarding the witness of teachers and administrators in Catholic school settings, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states,

Whoever is called to ‘teach Christ,’ must first seek ‘the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus’ ... (CCC 428). From this loving knowledge of Christ springs the desire to proclaim Him, to ‘evangelize,’ and to lead others to the ‘yes’ of faith in Jesus Christ. But at the same time, the need to know this faith better makes itself felt. To this end, following the order of the Creed, Jesus’ principal titles – “Christ,” “Son of God,” and “Lord” will be presented. (CCC, 429)

Section Four: Current Catechetical Reform Strategies

Suggested Catechetical Reform Strategies

In beginning this section on current Catechetical reform strategies that have been effective, the researcher would like to set the tone by once again quoting Pope John Paul II in his Apostolic Exhortation, *Catechesi Tradendae*. He stated that,

Christians today must be forced to live in a world which largely ignores God...or which too often flounders in a debasing indifferentism. To offer a dialogue of salvation in which each person feels respected in his or her most basic dignity, the dignity of one who is seeking God, we need a catechesis which trains the

young people and adults of our communities to remain clear and consistent in their Faith, to affirm serenely their Christian and Catholic identity, to ‘see Him Who is invisible’ and to adhere so firmly to the absoluteness of God that they can be witnesses to Him in a materialistic civilization that denies Him. (Pope John Paul II, 1980)

To begin offering specific catechetical reform strategies, the researcher would first like to share a strategy which Pope Emeritus, Benedict XVI, implemented when he called for the “Year of Faith” to begin in October of 2012 and continue through the Solemnity of Christ the King on November 24, 2013. In his Apostolic Letter *Porta Fidei*, which ushered in this Year of Faith, His Holiness stated:

The door of Faith is always open for us, ushering us into the life of communion with God and offering entry into His Church. It is possible to cross that threshold when the word of God is proclaimed and the heart allows itself to be shaped by transforming grace. To enter through that door is to set out on a journey that lasts a lifetime. It begins with Baptism, through which we can address God as Father, and it ends with the passage through death to eternal life, fruit of the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus, Whose Will it was, by the gift of the Holy Spirit, to draw those who believe in Him into His own Glory. To profess faith in the Trinity – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – is to believe in one God Who is Love: the Father, Who in the fullness of time sent His Son for our salvation; Jesus Christ, Who in the mystery of His Death and Resurrection redeemed the world; the Holy Spirit, Who leads the Church across the centuries as we await the Lord’s glorious return. (Pope Benedict XVI, 2012)

This call for a Year of Faith is exactly the strategy by which he tried to concretely implement a spiritual renewal among Catholics across the world. As Marcello Pera stated in his introduction to Pope Benedict’s book, *Christianity and the Crisis of Cultures*: “What Pope Benedict XVI is offering now as an answer to the nihilistic secularism that pervades Europe and the West, is not politics, but a spiritual renewal, a renewal similar

to that of St. Benedict and the members of his Order who combined holiness and a love for the truth which ultimately helped save the culture of their time” (Pera, 2005).

Likewise, Pope Emeritus Benedict (2008) stated in an address to educational leaders in the United States at the Catholic University in America,

Education is integral to the mission of the Church to proclaim the Good News. First and foremost, every Catholic educational institution is a place to encounter the living God Who in Jesus Christ reveals His transforming Love and Truth. This relationship elicits a desire to grow in the knowledge and understanding of Christ and His Teaching. In this way, those who meet Him are drawn by the very power of the Gospel to lead a new life characterized by all that is beautiful, good, and true; a life of Christian witness nurtured and strengthened within the community of the Lord’s disciples.

In the same way, the current Catechetical reform strategies that are most effective are those that call young people back to the basic Teachings of the Catholic Faith in order to reinvigorate them through a personal union with Jesus Christ. As Pope John Paul II stated in his Apostolic Exhortation, *Catechesi Tradendae*,

The most valuable gift that the Church can offer to the bewildered and restless world of our time is to form within Christians who are confirmed in what is essential and who are humbly joyful in their Faith. Catechesis will teach this to them, and it will itself be the first to benefit from it. The man who wishes to understand himself thoroughly...must come to Christ with his unrest and uncertainty, and even his weakness and sinfulness, his life and death. He must, so to speak, enter into Christ with all his own self, he must ‘appropriate’ Christ and assimilate the whole of the reality of the Incarnation and Redemption in order to find himself. (Pope John Paul II, 1980)

Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI also spoke about this point in an address regarding the nature of Catholic schools which he gave to the bishops from Region XIII of the United States during their recent *ad limina* visit. He stated,

First, as we know, the essential task of authentic education at every level is not simply that of passing on knowledge, essential as this is, but also of shaping hearts. There is a constant need to balance intellectual rigor in communicating effectively, attractively, and integrally, the richness of the Church's Faith with forming the young in the love of God, the praxis of the Christian moral and sacramental life and, not least, the cultivation of personal and liturgical prayer. (Pope Benedict XVI, 2012)

In terms of specific guidelines by which to actualize the above-mentioned mission of Catholic schools, the Western Catholic Educational Association's Assessment Guide (2009) mentions the following descriptors as needing to be present in schools:

- A mission and philosophy which indicate the integration of the Roman Catholic Faith into all aspects of life.
- Regular opportunities for Prayer and the Sacraments.
- A Religion curriculum and instruction that is faithful to Roman Catholic Church teachings, and meets the requirements set forth by the USSCB.
- Ongoing formation of teachers for catechetical and instructional competence.
- Respect for parents as the primary educators of their children.

Before giving more examples of specific Catechetical reform strategies, the researcher will first share Cardinal Dolan's answer to a question regarding how catechists can put the New Evangelization into practice. He stated, "By extending to the children and to entire families real opportunities to enter into a loving relationship with the Person of Jesus" (Ristow, 2012, p. 30). Reiterating this point, Pope Benedict himself says in his Apostolic Letter, *Porta Fidei*, "During this time, we will need to keep our eyes

fixed upon Jesus Christ” (Pope Benedict XVI, 2012). In addition, in an article entitled, “What Makes the Catholic School Catholic” published in *Today’s Catholic Teacher* journal, Deacon Tony Abts (2010) states,

Evangelization happens when individuals experience the love of Jesus Christ. The effective Catholic school facilitates that experience by bringing students to Christ and Christ to students. Next, the students understand the experience, which is the heart of catechesis. Finally, the Catholic school in its unique ministry develops the knowledge, skills, understandings, and attitudes to transform human culture in light of the Gospel, thus educating for life. (p. 36)

To set the tone for this exposition on current catechetical reform strategies, the researcher will frame this discussion through the lens of the *National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools* document (2012) which Dr. Lorraine Ozar from the Center for Catholic Effectiveness at Loyola University Chicago developed. Dr. Ozar, along with her task force committee, has formulated four specific standards to aid schools in revitalizing their Catholic identity and to help in the current reform of catechesis in the schools. These standards are as follows:

Standard 1 – An excellent Catholic school is guided and driven by a clearly communicated mission that embraces a Catholic identity rooted in Gospel values, centered on the Eucharist, and committed to faith formation, academic excellence, and service.

Specific benchmarks by which to measure attainment of this standard include:

1. The governing body and the leader/leadership team ensure that the mission statement includes the commitment to Catholic identity.
2. The governing body and the leader/leadership team use the mission statement as the foundation and normative reference for all planning.

3. The school leader/leadership team regularly calls together the school's various constituencies (including but not limited to faculty and staff, parents, students, alumni(ae) to clarify, review, and renew the school's mission statement.
4. The mission statement is visible in public places and contained in official documents.
5. All constituents know and understand the mission.

Standard 2 – An excellent Catholic school adhering to mission provides a rigorous academic program for religious studies and catechesis in the Catholic faith, set within a total academic curriculum that integrates faith, culture, and life.

Specific benchmarks by which to measure attainment of this standard include:

1. Religious education curriculum and instruction meets the religious education requirements and standards of the (arch)diocese.
2. Religion classes are an integral part of the academic program in the assignment of teachers, amount of class time, and the selection of texts and other curricular materials.
3. Faculty who teach Religion meet (arch)diocesan requirements for academic and catechetical preparation and certification to provide effective Religion curriculum and instruction.
4. The school's Catholic identity requires excellence in academic and intellectual formation in all subjects, including Religious education.
5. Faculty use the lenses of Scripture and the Catholic intellectual tradition in all subjects to help students think critically and ethically about the world around them.
6. Catholic culture and faith are expressed through multiple and diverse forms of visual and performing arts, music, and architecture.
7. The theory and practice of the Church's social teachings are essential elements of the curriculum.

Standard 3 – An excellent Catholic school adhering to mission provides opportunities outside the classroom for student faith formation, participation in liturgical and communal prayer, and action in service of social justice.

Specific benchmarks by which to measure attainment of this standard include:

1. Every student is offered timely and regular opportunities to learn about and experience the nature and importance of prayer, the Eucharist, and liturgy.
2. Every student is offered timely, regular, and age-appropriate opportunities to reflect on their life experiences and faith through retreats and other spiritual experiences.
3. Every student participates in Christian service programs to promote the lived reality of action in service of social justice.
4. Every student experiences role models of faith and service for social justice among the administrators, faculty, and staff.

Standard 4 – An excellent Catholic school adhering to mission provides opportunities for adult faith formation and action in service of social justice.

Specific benchmarks by which to measure attainment of this standard include:

1. The leader/leadership team provides retreats and other spiritual experiences for the faculty and staff on a regular and timely basis.
2. The leader/leadership team and faculty assist parents/guardians in their role as the primary educators of their children in faith.
3. The leader/leadership team collaborates with other institutions (for example, Catholic Charities, Catholic higher education, Religious congregation-sponsored programs) to provide opportunities for parents/guardians to grow in the knowledge and practice of the Faith.
4. All adults in the school community are invited to participate in Christian service programs to promote the lived reality of action in service of social justice.
5. Every administrator, faculty, and staff member visibly supports the faith life of the school community.

In a recent study conducted by Marian Hobbie, John Convey, and Merylann Schuttloffel (2010) titled, "The Impact of Catholic School Identity and Organizational Leadership on the Vitality of Catholic Elementary Schools" which was published in *Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry and Practice*, results indicated that, "When added to organizational leadership, Catholic school identity is a significant predictor of every factor of school vitality and the only significant predictor of the subscale collective efficacy" (p. 15). They found that the emergence of the Catholic characteristics of a school as an important predictor supports the premise that the spiritual purpose is integral to the educational purposes of a Catholic school. Additionally, the researchers found that one of the most essential characteristics of a strong Catholic identity in a school is strong spiritual leadership within a vibrant faith community. They stress the importance of effectively forming school leadership in the Catholic Faith since the principal is the spiritual leader of the school and is responsible for the Catholic identity of his or her school.

To further this discussion, in a booklet published by the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) titled, *Leadership of and on Behalf of Catholic Schools*, Dr. Joseph F. Rogus (1992) wrote a report regarding the importance of Catholic school leadership preparation. In his report entitled, "Strengthening Preparation and Support for Leadership in Catholic Schools, Dr. Rogus writes that most Catholic school faculties are now composed of lay persons rather than religious, as in past years. He states, "The single most powerful factor calling for a renewed focus on strengthening the

preparation and support for persons in leadership roles is the increasing percentage of lay teachers and administrators who staff the schools.” Because of this drastic change in the make-up of the Catholic school staff, Dr. Rogus writes that one cannot assume anymore that the leadership and staff members are as well grounded in the study of Theology, Sacred Scripture, and Church Teachings as the Religious sisters who staffed the schools years ago. For this reason, unless Catholic schools are effective in developing this background among their teachers, they run the risk of losing their vibrant Catholic identity.

To resolve this problem, Rogus (1992) suggests the following goals for local Catholic school communities: (1) To recruit quality persons to the field of Catholic education and to increase our holding power with those persons once they join the field, (2) To strengthen the quality of leadership preparation for administrators in Catholic schools and to strengthen the quality of program preparation for teachers in Catholic schools, and (3) To improve the quality of support provided to in-service teachers and administrators.

The researcher would now like to enter into a discussion of some specific catechetical reform strategies which have been implemented to achieve the above-mentioned goals of leading our young people, along with their families, to a deeper union with Jesus Christ. A very effective strategy in the reforming of catechetics is to re-introduce the importance of memorization of basic Church teachings among our young people. In an article titled, *“Faith by Heart,”* David Impastato (2012) quotes Pope John

Paul II who spoke against “the memoryless catechesis” that was depriving young Christians of a spiritual compass, giving them neither guidance nor a place to call home. “In addition, the New Evangelization calls for ‘the new,’ not more of the same. Ironically, the new in this case is what the bishops have been calling for all along. In urging the use of the memory, they directly and concretely seek to overcome the scandal of religious illiteracy” (Impastato, 2012, p. 20). A way to implement this important strategy is to have a list of basic questions and answers for each grade level that are to be learned by heart. “A small portion of class time would be set aside during which questions and answers would be practiced out loud, always followed by discussion....Written or oral tests would hold students accountable” (p. 21).

In an article printed in a recent edition of *Momentum* (NCEA, 2012) entitled “Why Religious Education Assessment is Important in the New Evangelization and the Year of Faith,” Kathy Schmitt writes,

Assessment – a method of measuring knowledge and practice – can tell us in an objective way whether or not we are helping people establish saving relationships with Jesus and becoming committed, knowledgeable Catholic Christians. Assessment is helpful in two ways: it is an objective way to take stock of an individual’s faith knowledge and practice and it tells us the strengths and weaknesses of the religion education process being used. (p. 24)

Schmitt (2012) goes on to list several other reasons why teachers of Faith should conduct regular assessments attending their programs. They are as follows:

1. Assessment provides credibility.
2. Assessment provides reflective practice.

3. Objective data guides data-informed decisions.
4. Assessment shows that catechesis is important.

Another strategy was discussed by Claudette Session (2013) in an article titled, "Children and the Year of Faith" in a recent issue of *Today's Catholic Teacher*. Session suggests that teachers take their students to the Church or chapel to pray in front of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament on a regular basis. She writes, "Allow time for silent prayer and adoration. This is a hands-on way of teaching children from an early age about the Real Presence. Do not be afraid of the silence" (p. 32).

A different strategy involving family catechesis was discussed in an article entitled, "Catechesis Without Borders" by Marlene Sweeney (2006) which was published in the *Catechist* journal a few years back. This article states, "For too long, people have equated learning about our Faith with a school model....To expand others' perspectives, it will be necessary to engage adults in recognizing the value of ongoing catechesis" (p. 6). To accomplish this goal, Sweeney suggests that Parishes offer family retreats or multi-generational days of reflection, especially during special seasons of the Church year, such as Advent and/or Lent. In addition, she states that families should be given plenty of other opportunities to come together at the Parish in addition to the times they come to Sunday Mass.

On the note of involving the entire family in catechesis, a related catechetical reform strategy was suggested by Sr. Janet Schaeffler (2008) in another article from the *Catechist* journal titled "12 Ways to Partner with Parents." This article suggested, "Keep

parents fully informed about how you are sharing/teaching our Faith throughout the program. Also, offer information that will help parents continue to grow in their Faith” (p. 39). Some specific strategies to aid in this endeavor would be to distribute weekly newsletters, host parent conferences, and make home visits. In addition, a suggested plan would be to set a goal to make a phone call to five parents each month. In this way, the catechetical program would learn how to best support their Parish families in their lives of Faith.

A catechetical reform strategy linked to the Year of Faith was shared by Page McKean Zyromski (2012) as one of the “Field Ideas” in a recent edition of the *Catechist*. In an article titled, “Teaching Church in the Year of Faith,” Zyromski writes, “Let’s choose overarching themes and teaching practices to span the Year of Faith. For example, emphasize the Bible, the Creed, and the texts of the Second Vatican Council and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* by allowing your students to see you reading them. Record and show the solemn opening and different events of the year so children can get a sense of being part of something bigger than the Parish. Because the year is entrusted to Mary’s care, include prayer and activities that build an affectionate relationship with Her” (p. 46).

Another reform strategy shared by Zyromski (2012) which is related to the Year of Faith is one that shows the connection between this special year of grace and the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Second Vatican Council. Zyromski states, “Show the children a picture of Blessed John XXIII and explain how people called him ‘Good Pope John’ and

were surprised when he convened the Second Vatican Council. Show your students a copy of *The Documents of Vatican II* and explain how the Mass changed from Latin to national languages all over the world” (p.46).

An additional component of the reform of catechesis in the Catholic schools involves the actual school environment. In an article titled “Our Schools – Our Hope: Reflections on Catholic Identity from the 2011 Catholic Higher Education Collaborative Conference” published in the *Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry and Practice*, Sr. Barbara L. Monsegur (2012) quotes Tom Butler, assistant superintendent for the Diocese of Stockton, California as saying,

The Catholicity of a school is greater than the sum of its parts. Catholic identity is not measured in individual standards, but in the overall environment that exists. The reality of the community that is the Catholic school can best be summarized by looking at two areas: how well are we, the school staff living and modeling our Faith, and how well are we preparing our students for the future. (p. 168)

Additionally, related to the Catholic school environment, Sr. Barbara L. Monsegur writes the following in the above-mentioned article, “One of the indicators of the Catholic identity of a school is the widespread use of signs, sacramentals, traditions, and rituals of the Roman Catholic Church throughout the school” (p. 170). Furthermore, in speaking of the need for a Catholic environment to be present in a Catholic school, the Congregation for Catholic Education stated in its document entitled *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, “From the first moment that a student sets foot in a Catholic school, he or she ought to have the impression of

entering a new environment, one illumined by the light of Faith, and having its own unique characteristics” (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988).

Implemented Catechetical Reform Strategies

The researcher will now share information regarding data derived from some catechetical reform strategies that have already been implemented at various Catholic schools across the country. In the issue of *Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry and Practice* mentioned above, Karen Vogtner (2012) of St. John the Baptist School in Georgia shares a strategy that her school implemented titled, “Sharing Your Faith Story.” She states that her high family retention rate at her school is primarily due to the strong Catholic values that are evident at her school. She then attributes this to the fact that the entire school community lives their mission through prayer, worship, and service, particularly through a “Morning Assembly” that begins each day. As Mrs. Vogtner explains, “The prayer leader (principal, student, or faculty member) sets the tone for the day...Various forms of prayer are offered, including traditional prayers, the scriptural Rosary, and prayers that have significant meaning for faculty members such as a Christmas Novena, the Divine Mercy Chaplet, and the Memorare” (p. 176). This, in turn, keeps her entire school community bonded in a single purpose, thereby keeping her school enrollment stable.

Another current Catechetical reform strategy which has specifically focused on the spiritual formation of principals and teachers in Catholic schools is the Marian Catechist Apostolate which Cardinal Raymond Burke, one of the previous bishops of the

Diocese of La Crosse, brought into the diocese while he was the bishop. The mission of the Marian Catechist Apostolate is to form catechists, both doctrinally and spiritually, for the teaching of the Catholic Faith, culminating in one's Solemn Consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus through the Immaculate Heart of Mary (Hardon, 2000). This program is named the Marian Catechist Apostolate since, as Fr. John Hardon, S.J., the creator of this apostolate writes, "We say that Mary is the perfect Model of what every Catholic catechist should be....(She) was the perfect communicator of the revelation of Her Divine Son" (Marian Catechist Manual, 2000, p. 31). When Fr. Hardon wrote the Marian Catechist Manual, he did so with the understanding that the evangelization of society would require that catechists first be securely grounded in their own understanding of the Catholic Faith. They must know the Faith in order to love and to live it. As Cardinal Raymond Burke states in the Preface to the *Marian Catechist Manual*, "Marian Catechists devote themselves to growth in their own spiritual life and in their knowledge and practice of the Catholic Faith, so that they may hand on the Catholic Faith and its practice to others."

To achieve this goal, each principal in the La Crosse Diocese engages in a four-part doctrinal formation program which consists of the following courses: the Basic Catholic Catechism Course, the Advanced Catholic Catechism Course, the Masters of the Spiritual Life course, and the Commentary on the General Directory for Catechesis. In addition to this doctrinal knowledge, however, the Marian Catechist Apostolate emphasizes the spiritual formation of catechists. As Fr. Hardon (2000) would say, "We

cannot offer to others what we ourselves do not possess; we cannot lead others into communion with Christ unless we ourselves are in communion with Him.” Because of this, he insisted that the foremost preparation for each catechist be the development of a sound and vibrant spiritual life, a life marked by an intense love for the Holy Eucharist, a profound devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and an unswerving loyalty to the Holy Father as Successor of St. Peter.

Another catechetical reform strategy which many Catholic schools across the country already implement is the administration of the Assessment of Catechesis / Religious Education (ACRE) which the National Catholic Education Association created and recently revised. The first section of this assessment tool asks questions on cognitive areas such as doctrine, Scripture, and morality. The second section asks questions about behaviors and attitudes, including Mass attendance, personal beliefs, and habits of prayer. This comprehensive approach provides an assessment of an individual’s standing as a disciple, as well as an assessment of a catechetical program’s effectiveness at forming disciples. “These assessment tools offered by NCEA...help religious educators evaluate their catechetical programs in two main areas: faith knowledge and faith practice.... Additionally, the results from the two sections on faith knowledge and faith practice provide the data a religious educator needs to assess the health of a person’s life as a disciple” (Schmitt, 2012, p. 25). This tool has been effective since, as Schmitt states,

Knowing the faith helps us to know and love God more deeply. When we love God, we naturally want to share our faith with others. Catechesis is important because it is the necessary precursor to evangelizing – sharing faith – with others who do not yet know the Good News of Jesus. (p. 25)

It is very interesting to note that many of the catechetical reform strategies implemented in various (arch)dioceses across the country focus on school leadership at each parish. Many of these strategies are found in *A Nationwide Response to Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium* (2007) which was also published by the National Catholic Educational Association. As the reader(s) will notice, several of these strategies are aimed at forming both the principal and the pastor in fulfilling the mission of their Catholic schools, primarily in helping them to provide the most outstanding Catholic education and formation possible to their students. Some of the already implemented strategies listed under the document's section on "Strengthening the Catholic Identity and Mission of Catholic Schools" are as follows:

- Diocesan office met with each principal to review Religion/Catholic identity of schools (Baton Rouge)
- Used Diocesan conferences, such as principals' leadership gatherings, to highlight the topic of Catholic identity and strengthen faith leadership (Cleveland)
- Diocesan catechesis committee developed catechetical guidelines for Catholic schools and parish Religious Education programs (Duluth)
- Develop inter-diocesan teams to address Catholic identity with a focus on the vocation of teaching (Mid-Atlantic Catholic Schools Consortium Summit)

- All schools completed NCEA viability study, especially the component on mission effectiveness/Catholic identity; results were reviewed with pastors and principals and a plan developed for strengthening the Catholic identity of the schools (Camden)
- Developed a Catholic identity self-assessment tool for use in all parishes and schools on an annual basis to determine what is being accomplished with regard to worship, faith environment, religious instruction, and religious education personnel (Brooklyn)
- Introduced the hallmarks of Catholic education, and at each monthly faculty meeting, staff members studied, discussed, and implemented one hallmark (Santa Fe)
- Developed diocesan Religion standards for K-12 (Kansas City-St. Joseph)
- Developed a manual for an evangelizing Catholic school (St. Louis)
- All Catholic school teachers required by diocese to obtain a catechist certificate within four years of employment (Fresno) or within three years (Seattle)
- Administered annual assessment of religious knowledge in grades 3 to 12, including each semester in high school (Wichita)

It is also interesting to note that in a document published by the United States Council of Catholic Bishops entitled, *Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium (2005)*, it was suggested that programs be developed to assist the clergy and laity to appreciate, support, and promote the great value of Catholic schools in fulfilling the teaching ministry of the Church. Two years later in the NCEA publication mentioned above, *A Nationwide Response to Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium (2007)*, an entire section on programs for clergy and seminarians on Catholic schools

was offered. In this way, the future Pastors of the Catholic schools, who are actually the designated Canonical leaders of the schools, will also be formed in the importance of providing a Catholic school in their respective parishes. The programs discussed in this section are as follows:

- Bishop spoke about the importance of Catholic schools at deanery meetings, presbyteral council meetings and other events (Pueblo, Duluth)
- Catholic schools office hosted visits by fourth-year seminarians and in-service trainings for new priests and new pastors so they become familiar with the workings of the office and the role of the pastor in the Catholic school (Cleveland)
- Year-long diocesan reflection on Catholic education provided homilies and bulletin information to all parishes
- Provided a forum for clergy to share ideas and discuss challenges of pastoring a parish with a school (Philadelphia)
- Pastors Advisory Committee regularly met with superintendent to discuss Catholic school issues (Cleveland)
- Annual pastor-principal brunch with a noted speaker addressed a topic of high interest
- Priests received a copy of *Renewing Our Commitment* and were encouraged to use it in working with parish finance and other committees (Owensboro)

A different type of catechetical reform strategy involves the implementation of Catholic Book and Media Clubs for either teachers and/or students. As Daniel Thomas (2012) writes in his article titled, "How to Start a Catechist Book and Media Club," in the *Catechist* journal, "There certainly is a place for book and media clubs in the wider Parish, specifically for adults – a group that is open to all the Parish. My own Parish has

such a club....In a Parish, this kind of process would be a form of evangelization” (p. 22). Thomas goes on to say that he was himself a member of a Marianist sharing community that would “gather monthly to share a meal and use a book as a source of reflection” (p. 22).

Summary

This chapter examined the meaning of catechesis, the four catechetical pillars of the Catechism of the Catholic Church (i.e., the Creed, the Seven Sacraments, the Ten Commandments, and Liturgy / Prayer), the current crisis of faith, the need to reform catechetics, and current catechetical reform strategies. The final section of this chapter regarding current catechetical reform strategies was further broken down into two sub-sections: one regarding suggested catechetical reform strategies and one regarding catechetical reform strategies which have already been implemented.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the reader(s) with a concise and systematic explanation as to how this particular research study was conducted. As mentioned in the Introduction of this dissertation, the main purpose of this study was to contribute to the field of Catholic education by helping (Arch)Diocesan schools across the country revitalize the Catholic identities of their educational institutions.

Using a qualitative phenomenological approach in this study, the researcher interviewed select Ecclesial Leadership of the Catholic Church in order to obtain valuable data regarding their views on how to best reform catechesis and revitalize the Catholic identity of schools across the country. In addition, the researcher interviewed select (Arch)Diocesan Catholic school superintendents, in order to receive their views on reforming catechesis and revitalizing the Catholic identity of schools. Finally, the researcher made use of documentary research techniques in order to obtain valuable data regarding the revitalization of the Catholic identity of schools from documents provided by the Superintendents who were interviewed in this study.

Research Questions

To aid in the accomplishing of the above-mentioned goals, the following research questions were explored during the course of the study:

1. According to select Ecclesial Leadership of the Catholic Church and Superintendents, what are the challenges that Catholic youth in today's society experience regarding the living of their Catholic Faith?
2. According to select Ecclesial Leadership of the Catholic Church and Superintendents, how well are today's Catholic schools meeting these challenges?
3. According to select Ecclesial Leadership of the Catholic Church and Superintendents, what needs to be done in the development of catechesis and the Catholic identity of schools to best meet the challenges of today's Catholic youth?
4. Based upon these findings, what are the implications for the leadership of Catholic schools in order to revitalize the Catholic identity of their own institutions?

This particular chapter outlines the methodology that was used to conduct this important study regarding the revitalization of the Catholic identity of schools across the country. It includes the research design, procedures, descriptions of the sample population, interview protocols, plan for data analysis, ethical considerations, and a copy of the letter of consent for the research participants.

Research Design

The methodology the researcher used to address the research questions stated above was a mixed methods approach which combined both the qualitative phenomenological method of interviewing with documentary research. The researcher believed that this focus on a qualitative approach of interviewing would be the most effective method to use in order to best study and resolve the problem of revitalizing the Catholic identity of schools across the country. As Sharan Merriam (2009) explained in her book titled, *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*,

Having an interest in knowing more about one's practice, and indeed in improving one's practice, leads to asking researchable questions, some of which are best approached through a qualitative research design. In fact, I believe that research focused on discovery, insight, and understanding from the perspectives of those being studied offers the greatest promise of making a difference in people's lives. (p. 1)

In this way, the data received from responses to interview questions can serve as valuable information in helping to revitalize the Catholic identity of schools across the country. In addition, Rossman and Rallis (2003) state, "Qualitative researchers seek answers to their questions in the real world. They gather what they see, hear, and read from people and places and from events and activities. They do research in natural settings rather than in laboratories or through written surveys" (p. 4). For this reason, the researcher believed that the qualitative phenomenological approach was the best suited for conducting this study, as "Qualitative methods permit inquiry into selected issues in great depth with careful attention to detail, context, and nuance" (Patton,

2002, p. 27). In addition, qualitative research and interviews were chosen for this study as these methods provided the researcher with opportunities to understand individual perspectives, to probe and clarify, to deepen understanding, to generate descriptive data, to gather insights into participants' thinking, and to learn more about the context.

Furthermore, as this study sought to analyze how to best revitalize the Catholic identity of schools from the perspective of select Ecclesial leaders of the Catholic Church, the researcher used a phenomenological approach to the study. As Johnson and Christensen (2004) state, "Phenomenology refers to the description of one or more individuals' consciousness and experience of a phenomenon, such as the death of a loved one, viewing oneself as a teacher, the act of teaching, the experience of being a minority group member, or the experience of winning a soccer game" (p. 364). Furthermore, phenomenologists generally assume that there is some commonality in human experience, and they seek to understand this commonality. This commonality of experience is called an essence, or invariant structure, of the experience" (p. 365). This study, then, hoped to analyze some commonalities among the strategies the Ecclesial leaders offered during their interviews to aid in the reforming of catechesis and revitalizing of the Catholic identity of schools across the country. In this way, the common themes that emerged can help to serve as suggestions to assist schools across the country in revitalizing the Catholic identity of their own institutions.

In terms of the logistics of the interview process, the researcher audio taped the interviews in order to later transcribe them. Data was then clustered into thematic

categories in order to be analyzed. This qualitative approach lent itself to more effectively analyze whether there were indeed common themes in the answers which the Ecclesial Leaders and Superintendents gave to the interview questions.

Sampling Strategy

Population

Given that this study dealt with the reform of catechesis and the revitalization of the Catholic identity of schools across the country, the researcher focused on interviewing select Ecclesial Leaders of the Catholic Church, the Bishops. Since Bishops are responsible for ensuring the authentic teaching of the Catholic Faith in their (Arch)Dioceses, they are committed to revitalizing the Catholic identity of their (Arch)Diocesan schools. In addition, since they are the successors of the Apostles who were commissioned by Our Lord Jesus Christ when He said, "Go and teach all men the Gospel..." (Matthew 28: 19), the researcher believed that this study would be best served by interviewing the Shepherds of the Church in order to receive their insight regarding these issues.

In addition, since (Arch)Diocesan Superintendents are responsible for ensuring the Catholic identity of their schools, another sample population for this study was drawn from the pool of Superintendents of (Arch)Diocesan schools.

Sample

The sample of participants in a qualitative study is smaller than that of a quantitative study in order to obtain richer data that is more in-depth than what can be

acquired in a larger sample. “Qualitative methods permit inquiry into selected issues in great depth with careful attention to detail, context, and nuance” (Patton, 2002, p. 27). For this reason, the researcher used a non-probability type of purposive sampling instead of a probability type of random sampling. This strategy allowed more to be learned from a smaller sample rather than less to be learned from a larger sample. Using this method of purposive sampling, the researcher interviewed select Ecclesial Leaders of the Catholic Church who have shown involvement in the work of reforming catechesis in their respective (Arch)Dioceses. The researcher would like to point out that this is not to say that not all Ecclesial leaders work on catechesis in their (Arch)Dioceses – since they do. It is simply due to time and geographic constraints, however, that convenience sampling was utilized in this study. There are some Ecclesial leaders who were not available for interviewing during the time window which the researcher had indicated, while there were others who were located in distant parts of the country.

In terms of another group of sample participants, that of (Arch)Diocesan superintendents, the researcher selected three Midwest superintendents to interview regarding their views on how to reform catechesis and revitalize the Catholic identity of schools across the country. These superintendents were selected using purposive sampling, which allowed much to be learned from a smaller sample rather than less to be learned from a larger sample. Using purposive sampling, the researcher selected

these three superintendents since they recently implemented programs to revitalize the Catholic identity of their own respective (Arch)Diocesan schools.

Main Participants in Study

The researcher interviewed the following Ecclesial leaders and superintendents:

His Eminence, Cardinal Francis George, O.M.I. – Archbishop of Chicago, IL – The researcher interviewed Cardinal Francis George, O.M.I., Archbishop of Chicago, who served as President of the United States Council of Catholic Bishops from 2007-2010, immediately before Cardinal Timothy Dolan. Cardinal George is the first Chicago native to become Archbishop of Chicago. He is a member of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, a religious order that he entered on August 14, 1957. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1963, after which he went on to obtain his Doctor of Philosophy degree in 1970 and his Doctor of Sacred Theology degree in 1988. Installed in as Archbishop of Chicago in May of 1997, he arrived in Chicago after being Archbishop of Portland, Oregon and Bishop of Yakima, WA. He was created a Cardinal of the Catholic Church by Pope John Paul II in 1998. Since Cardinal George was instrumental in forming a committee in 2009 to review the Catholic identity of schools in the Archdiocese of Chicago and to evaluate the Religion curriculum and textbooks being used by Catholic high schools in the Archdiocese, he will also be a very valuable resource in sharing his insights on how to best revitalize the Catholic identity of schools across the country.

His Excellency Bishop Daniel Jenky, C.S.C. – Bishop of Peoria, IL – His Excellency Bishop Daniel Jenky was born in Chicago, IL, and he entered the Holy Cross Fathers in

1966. He made his profession as a member of the Congregation of the Holy Cross in 1973, the same year that he obtained his Master of Theology degree. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1974, and soon after that was named the Director of Campus Ministry at Notre Dame University and Rector of Sacred Heart Church (which became a Basilica under his tenure) in South Bend, IN. He was appointed the Religious Superior of the Holy Cross Priests and Brothers at Notre Dame in 1985. Bishop Jenky was made Auxiliary Bishop of Forth Wayne – South Bend in 1997, while being appointed the eighth Bishop of Peoria, IL by Pope John Paul II in January of 2002. During his tenure as Bishop of Peoria, Bishop Jenky has worked to increase the resources that support Catholic schools in his Diocese. In addition, he has taken a very active role in revitalizing the Catholic identity of his Diocesan schools.

His Excellency, Bishop William Callahan, O.F.M.Conv. – Bishop of La Crosse, WI – Bishop William Callahan of the Diocese of La Crosse, WI will also be interviewed for this study, since his Diocese has been implementing a very effective Catechetical reform strategy for several years now. This program is called the Marian Catechist Apostolate, which has been discussed in more detail in the literature review of my study. To recap, this program seeks to provide Faith formation to the actual administrators in each of the La Crosse Diocesan schools, so they are better equipped to share their internalized Catholic Faith with others in their schools. As the saying goes, “You cannot give what you don’t have,” the program of prayer, spiritual formation, and study which are the essential components of the Marian Catechist Apostolate, contribute greatly to the

revitalizing of the Catholic identity in schools in the Diocese of La Crosse. The program aids in the spiritual growth of each of the Diocesan Principals, in order to better allow them to share the depth of the Catholic Faith with those whom they serve in their schools. Bishop Callahan is a member of the Conventual Franciscan Friars, and he was named auxiliary bishop of Milwaukee on October 30, 2007. On June 11, 2010, Pope Emeritus Benedict named him the Tenth Bishop of the La Crosse Diocese.

His Excellency, Bishop David Ricken – Bishop of Green Bay, WI – The researcher interviewed Bishop David Ricken of the Diocese of Green Bay, WI, due to his commitment to catechesis. He served as the Chair of the Bishop Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis for the United States Council of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), so he would have valuable information regarding what the USCCB views as essential elements of catechetical reform. In addition, in 2010, he was the Bishop who approved the Apparitions of Our Lady of Good Help in Champion, WI, within his Diocese of Green Bay. These messages, given by the Blessed Virgin Mary to a young woman by the name of Adele Brice in the mid-1800's, focused primarily on the importance of catechizing the young in the teachings of their holy Catholic faith. Due to the content of these messages in this approved apparition of the Mother of God, the researcher believes that Bishop Ricken's responses to her interview questions will be very valuable to this study. Bishop Ricken was ordained to the episcopacy on January 2, 2000, and was appointed as Bishop of Green Bay on July 9, 2008.

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Additional Participants in Study

In addition to interviewing select Ecclesial Leaders of the Catholic Church, the researcher made use of purposeful sampling by interviewing select (Arch)Diocesan superintendents who have implemented programs to revitalize the Catholic identity of their own (Arch)Diocesan schools. These superintendents included Fr. John Belmonte, S.J., Ph.D., the Superintendent of Catholic Schools for the Diocese of Joliet, IL; Dr. Sharon Weiss, the Superintendent of Catholic Schools for the Diocese of Peoria; and Mr. George Henry, the Superintendent of Catholic Education for the Archdiocese of St. Louis.

To aid in the revitalizing of the Catholic identity of schools in the Diocese of Joliet, as mentioned in Chapter I of this study, Fr. John Belmonte recently implemented a special year of Marian devotions in his Diocese. Likewise, Dr. Sharon Weiss of the Diocese of Peoria implemented several effective catechetical reform strategies to continue the revitalizing of the Catholic identity of schools in her Diocese. Mr. George Henry, as Superintendent of Catholic Education in St. Louis, has consistently implemented a strong Catholic identity in his Archdiocese throughout his tenure there.

Fr. John Belmonte, S.J., Ph.D. – Superintendent of Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Joliet, IL – Fr. Belmonte is the Superintendent of Catholic Schools in Diocese of Joliet, who received his Ph.D. in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies from Loyola University Chicago in 2006. Before that, he received his baccalaureate in Sacred Theology from the Pontifical Gregorian in Rome. Fr. Belmonte joined the Society of Jesus in 1985, after receiving a B.A. in History from Marquette University in Milwaukee. Fr. Belmonte has initiated several new programs to revitalize the Catholic identity of schools in his Diocese.

Dr. Sharon Weiss – Superintendent of Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Peoria, IL – Dr. Sharon Weiss has been the Superintendent of Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Peoria since 2012. She has served in Catholic education for over 35 years in the roles of teacher, counselor, and principal before assuming the superintendent position. In 2009, Dr. Weiss was named one of the National Catholic Educational Association’s top 12 “Most Distinguished Principals” in the nation. Dr. Weiss has implemented several new

programs in her Diocese to aid in the revitalization of the Catholic identity of her schools.

Mr. George Henry – Superintendent of Catholic Education in the Archdiocese of St. Louis, MO – Mr. George Henry has been the Superintendent of Catholic Education for St. Louis since 1995, being the first lay superintendent of the Archdiocese. Before that, he was an Associate Superintendent of the Archdiocese for 17 years. Mr. Henry was instrumental in maintaining a strong Catholic identity in his Archdiocesan schools throughout his tenure in St. Louis. Most recently, he helped implement the “Alive in Christ” program initiated by His Excellency Archbishop Carlson to aid in the continual revitalization of the Catholic identity of schools in the Archdiocese.

As Sharan Merriam (2009) stated in her book, *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*, the best way to “improve one’s practice leads to asking researchable questions...from the perspectives of those being studied” (p. 1). Since the above-mentioned superintendents have direct and daily experience with the Catholic schools in their (Arch)Dioceses, they can relate rich data from their own experiences in how they have helped to revitalize the Catholic identity of the schools in their own (Arch)Dioceses.

Data Collection

The researcher collected data through qualitative methods such as open-ended interviews, document collection, a field log, and a reflexive journal. Five Ecclesial Leaders from the Catholic Church and three Superintendents of (Arch)Diocesan schools

were interviewed. Participants who met the criterion-based sampling characteristics were individually recruited for voluntary participation.

Gaining Access

Data collection was achieved by gaining access to informants who were recruited by the researcher through either direct meeting request or via phone conversation. The researcher asked four of the Ecclesial Leaders for interviews while meeting them at Church functions, while the superintendents were asked for their participation in the face-to-face interview process via phone conversation, at which time they were given more details of the study.

Open-Ended Interviews

The primary data collection method which was used in this study was the face-to-face interview using an interview protocol for the Ecclesial Leaders of the Catholic Church (see Appendix A), as well as an interview protocol for the Superintendents (see Appendix B). The interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes in length and were conducted at the participants' Diocesan Offices, except for two of the interviews, which were conducted as phone interviews. Each interview was audio taped and transcribed at a later time by the researcher. In addition, the researcher met with participants at mutually agreed times that were convenient for them and in a location that provided privacy. Before the formal interview began, the participants were given an informed consent form (see Appendix C) to read and sign. This form explained the purpose of the research, the scope of interviewee's participation (including the recording, transcription,

and member-check of the interview), as well as the interviewee's right to terminate participation in the study at any time.

Documents

Document collection was the secondary method of data collection used in this study. As Sharan Merriam (2009) states in her book, *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*, "Documents are, in fact, a ready-made source of data easily accessible to the imaginative and resourceful investigator.... Documents include just about anything in existence prior to the research at hand" (p. 139). Describing the advantages to using documents in research, Merriam goes on to say,

The data found in documents can be used in the same manner as data from interviews or observations. The data can furnish descriptive information, verify emerging hypotheses, advance new categories and hypotheses, offer historical understanding, track change and development, and so on.... Documentary data are 'objective' sources of data compared to other forms. (p. 155)

The researcher requested a copy of any documents which the three interviewed superintendents cited as being used to help in the revitalizing of the Catholic identity of their schools. These curricular documents were a valuable source of information, since they aided in outlining particular catechetical programs which were currently being implemented in their respective (Arch)Dioceses to revitalize the Catholic identity of their schools. In addition, the researcher obtained and analyzed a public document pertaining to the Catholic identity of schools and the reform of catechesis sent to her by His Eminence Cardinal George after his interview.

Field Log

The third method of data collection which the researcher utilized in this study was a field log which was used throughout the study. According to Rossman and Rallis (2003), the field log contains the researcher's commentary on the research itself (e.g. reaction to events, analytic insights, questions about meaning, etc.). This log also contained the contact information of participants, a file of participant correspondence, a calendar indicating dates, times, and locations of interviews, the interview protocol, and informed consent forms.

Reflexive Journal

The final method of data collection which the researcher used was a reflexive journal that was maintained throughout the data collection process. At the end of each interview, this journal was used to collect the researcher's thoughts regarding the interview process, participants' answers, and the researcher's feelings. Given the fact that the researcher herself has been a Catholic school principal for several years, the mission of Catholic education and the Catholic formation of youth is particularly near and dear to her heart. Because of this, the reflexive journal aided in controlling for any bias that surfaced during the study, since it served as the tool to record the researcher's own personal thoughts and feelings while collecting the data.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was a constant throughout the study. For instance, verbal information from the interviews was gathered, organized, and interpreted. Additionally,

the various documents which were shared by the interviewed superintendents were also analyzed for information regarding various catechetical reform strategies. As Rossman and Rallis (2003) state,

Analyzing and interpreting qualitative data is the process of deep immersion in the interview transcripts, field notes, and other materials you have collected; systematically organizing these materials into salient themes and patterns; bringing meaning so the themes tell a coherent story; and writing it all up so that others can read what you have learned. (p. 270)

The primary data collection method, however, was each interview itself. After each of these interviews was transcribed, the data was then coded into categories. "Coding is the process of marking segments of data with symbols, descriptive words, or category names" (Johnson & Christensen, 2004, p. 505). Coding allowed the researcher to organize the data so that it made sense, along with allowing the researcher to examine the data for common themes and patterns in order to more efficiently compare the data obtained from the different interviews conducted.

As Thomas Schwandt (2007) in his book, *The Sage Dictionary of Qualitative Inquiry* states, "Coding is a procedure that disaggregates the data, breaks them down into manageable segments, and identifies or names these segments....Coding requires constantly comparing and contrasting various successive segments of the data and subsequently categorizing them" (p. 32). As common themes emerged from the various interview data gathered, analysis was then made regarding possible strategies and interventions which the select Ecclesial Leaders of the Catholic Church and

Superintendents recommended in order to assist in the revitalization of the Catholic identity of the schools across the country.

At the end of each interview, a transcription was constructed from the audio taped recording and offered to each participant. The participants in the study received his/her transcription in order to validate their responses by means of a member check. As Sharan Merriam (2009) states in her book, *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*,

A second common strategy for ensuring for internal validity or credibility is member checks. Also called respondent validation, the idea here is that you solicit feedback on your emerging findings from some of the people that you interviewed. This is the single most important way of ruling out the possibility of misinterpreting the meaning of what participants say and do and the perspective they have on what is going on.... (p. 217)

In this way, the researcher received approval confirmation regarding the validity and accuracy of the transcription from each participant before including it in the study.

Document Analysis

In order to add to the richness of the sources of data used in this study, the researcher also analyzed documents which were provided by the select superintendents who were interviewed. As one of the questions in the interview protocol stated, "What documents did your (Arch)Diocese create to aid in the revitalizing of the Catholic identity of your schools? How would you assess the success of the programs delineated therein?" (see Appendix C). These documents formed the secondary data source for

analysis, which were then organized and coded in a similar fashion as the interview data.

Organizing and Reporting the Data

There are several options for organizing and reporting qualitative data. To aid in this particular study, however, the researcher used the thematic approach. As explained by Rossman and Rallis (2003), the thematic option involves the organizing of data according to themes, “Meaningful themes that have emerged from your data form the backbone – or structural framework – of your report” (pp. 344-345). Since there was only a limited time frame in which to conduct the interviews and the order in which the information was shared was irrelevant, presenting the themes which emerged from the data seemed to be the most effective method in organizing and reporting the data from this study.

Acceptable and Competent Practice

Every research project must be able to stand up to questions regarding the accuracy of what is being reported, the methodology used to generate findings, and the usefulness of the study. According to Rossman and Rallis (2003), one way to ensure the accuracy of the data is to draw from several data sources to inform the same question or issue. To meet this criterion in this study, data was drawn from the interviews with several Ecclesial Leaders of the Catholic Church and Superintendents, as well as from document analysis, the field log, and the researcher’s reflexive journal.

Limitations to the Study

Given the fact of geographical and time constraints, the major limitation to this study was the lack of time the researcher had to incorporate more schools throughout the country which have revitalized their Catholic identity into the study. This could, however, be the next step in a future study to expound upon effective Catechetical reform strategies. In this way, even more strategies can be shared among the (Arch)Diocesan schools of our country to more effectively revitalize the Catholic identity of their respective educational institutions. Another limitation to this study was the fact that it was unable to incorporate interviews of other members of the educational community, such as students, parents, teachers, and principals, in order to hear their perceptions regarding what should be done to best revitalize the Catholic identity of schools.

Ethical Considerations

There were several ethical considerations which were taken into account while the research was conducted. As Johnson and Christensen (2004) related, the researcher first obtained the informed consent of the participants in order to have them participate in the study. In addition, the participants knew that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice. Furthermore, the participants were protected from physical and mental discomfort. All of these considerations were actualized in this particular study.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF DATA AND FINDINGS

Introduction

To begin this chapter on the findings of this study regarding the revitalization of the Catholic identity of schools, the researcher would like to state that she was indeed humbled and privileged to have the opportunity to speak to the Ecclesial Leaders of the Catholic Church and Superintendents included in the study. She will indeed be eternally grateful for their assistance and support in this study.

As part of the introduction to this chapter, the researcher will provide the rationale for the unique formatting of this chapter. Due to the rich and descriptive accounts given by the participants in the study to the interview questions, the researcher decided to divide the findings gathered from the Ecclesial Leaders' responses into nine sections, pertaining to the nine interview questions answered. It should be noted that after the interview process, His Eminence Cardinal George sent the researcher a document titled, *Archdiocese of Chicago: Strategic Plan for Catholic Schools* as a means to supplement his responses. Relevant excerpts from this plan will be presented following his responses. In addition, the Superintendents' responses were divided into seven sections pertaining to the seven questions which they answered.

The researcher then presented and analyzed the data received from each of the participants into common themes, based upon their responses. This is not to say, however, that not all of the participants agree with these themes, since there is evidence in all of their (Arch)Dioceses that these themes are highlighted and implemented. However, since this analysis was focused only on the data received during the 45 minute interview and document analysis, it was very limited. This limitation is related to what the researcher mentioned in her literature review earlier in this study:

In closing this section on the first of the Catechetical Pillars, that of the Creed, the researcher feels the need to state that this attempt at delineating the essential Teachings of the Catholic Faith has simply given a faint glimpse of the beauty and richness of the main teachings of the Church. St. John the Apostle succinctly encapsulated this idea when he wrote at the end of his Gospel, 'There are many other things that Jesus did, but if these were to be described individually, I do not think the whole world would contain the books that would be written. (John 21: 39)

Additionally, before beginning to relate the findings gathered in the interviews, the researcher will highlight the specific Ecclesial Leaders and Superintendents who participated in this study. They were as follows:

Ecclesial Leaders

His Eminence Cardinal Francis George, O.M.I. – Archbishop of Chicago, IL – The researcher interviewed Cardinal Francis George, O.M.I., Archbishop of Chicago, who served as President of the United States Council of Catholic Bishops from 2007-2010, immediately before Cardinal Timothy Dolan. Cardinal George is the first Chicago native

to be appointed Archbishop of Chicago. He is a member of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, a religious order that he entered on August 14, 1957. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1963, after which he went on to obtain his Doctor of Philosophy degree in 1970 and his Doctor of Sacred Theology degree in 1988. Installed in as Archbishop of Chicago in May of 1997, he arrived in Chicago after being Archbishop of Portland, Oregon and Bishop of Yakima, WA. He was created a Cardinal of the Catholic Church by Pope John Paul II in 1998. Since Cardinal George was instrumental in forming a committee in 2009 to review the Catholic identity of schools in the Archdiocese of Chicago and to evaluate the Religion curriculum and textbooks being used by Catholic high schools in the Archdiocese, he will also be a very valuable resource in sharing his insights on how to best revitalize the Catholic identity of schools across the country.

His Excellency Bishop Daniel Jenky, C.S.C. – Bishop of Peoria, IL – His Excellency Bishop Daniel Jenky was born in Chicago, IL, and he entered the Holy Cross Fathers in 1966. He made his profession as a member of the Congregation of the Holy Cross in 1973, the same year that he obtained his Master of Theology degree. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1974, and soon after that was named the Director of Campus Ministry at Notre Dame University and Rector of Sacred Heart Church (which became a Basilica under his tenure) in South Bend, IN. He was appointed the Religious Superior of the Holy Cross Priests and Brothers at Notre Dame in 1985. Bishop Jenky was made Auxiliary Bishop of Forth Wayne – South Bend in 1997, while being appointed the eighth Bishop of Peoria, IL by Pope John Paul II in January of 2002. During his tenure as Bishop

of Peoria, Bishop Jenky has worked to increase the resources that support Catholic schools in his Diocese. In addition, he has taken a very active role in revitalizing the Catholic identity of his Diocesan schools.

His Excellency Bishop William Callahan, O.F.M.Conv. – Bishop of La Crosse, WI – Bishop William Callahan was also interviewed for this study, since his Diocese has been implementing a very effective Catechetical reform strategy for several years now. This program is called the Marian Catechist Apostolate, which has been discussed in more detail in the literature review of my study. To recap, this program seeks to provide Faith formation to the actual administrators in each of the La Crosse Diocesan schools, so they are better equipped to share their internalized Catholic Faith with others in their schools. As the saying goes, “You cannot give what you don’t have,” the program of prayer, spiritual formation, and study which are the essential components of the Marian Catechist Apostolate, contribute greatly to the revitalizing of the Catholic identity in schools in the Diocese of La Crosse. The program aids in the spiritual growth of each of the Diocesan Principals, in order to better allow them to share the depth of the Catholic Faith with those whom they serve in their schools. Bishop Callahan is a member of the Conventual Franciscan Friars, and he was named auxiliary bishop of Milwaukee on October 30, 2007. On June 11, 2010, Pope Emeritus Benedict named him the Tenth Bishop of the La Crosse Diocese.

Bishop David Ricken – Bishop of Green Bay, WI – The researcher interviewed Bishop David Ricken of the Diocese of Green Bay, WI, due to his commitment to

catechesis. He served as the Chair of the Bishop Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis for the United States Council of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), so he would have valuable information regarding what the USCCB views as essential elements of catechetical reform. In addition, in 2010, he was the Bishop who approved the Apparitions of Our Lady of Good Help in Champion, WI, within his Diocese of Green Bay. These messages, given by the Blessed Virgin Mary to a young woman by the name of Adele Brice in the mid-1800's, focused primarily on the importance of catechizing the young in the teachings of their holy Catholic faith. Due to the content of these messages in this approved apparition of the Mother of God, the researcher believes that Bishop Ricken's responses to her interview questions will be very valuable to this study. Bishop Ricken was ordained to the episcopacy on January 2, 2000, and was appointed as Bishop of Green Bay on July 9, 2008.

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in the Archdiocese of St. Louis. In addition, he is very active in working directly with schools in his Archdiocese to ensure that students are prepared well for the reception of the Sacraments.

Superintendents

Fr. John Belmonte, S.J., Ph.D. – Superintendent of Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Joliet, IL – Fr. Belmonte is the Superintendent of Catholic Schools in Diocese of Joliet, who received his Ph.D. in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies from Loyola University Chicago in 2006. Before that, he received his baccalaureate in Sacred Theology from the Pontifical Gregorian in Rome. Fr. Belmonte joined the Society of Jesus in 1985, after receiving a B.A. in History from Marquette University in Milwaukee. Fr. Belmonte has initiated several new programs to revitalize the Catholic identity of schools in his Diocese.

Dr. Sharon Weiss – Superintendent of Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Peoria, IL – Dr. Sharon Weiss has been the Superintendent of Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Peoria since 2012. She has served in Catholic education for over 35 years in the roles of teacher, counselor, and principal before assuming the superintendent position. In 2009, Dr. Weiss was named one of the National Catholic Educational Association’s top 12 “Most Distinguished Principals” in the nation. Dr. Weiss has implemented several new programs in her Diocese to aid in the revitalization of the Catholic identity of her schools.

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Interview Questions for Ecclesial Leaders

1. What do you believe is the mission of Catholic schools?
2. Has your (Arch)Diocese recently implemented any program to aid in the reform of catechesis and/or the revitalization of the Catholic identity of schools?
3. Do you believe there is a need to revitalize the Catholic identity of our schools across the country?
4. If so, why do you believe this need exists? If not, please discuss.
5. What do you view as the greatest needs in terms of revitalizing the Catholic identity of schools across the country?
6. What strategies would you suggest (or have you already implemented) to meet these needs? Please share one of these stories. What more would you suggest to meet these needs?

7. What do you believe is the role Catholic schools play in the New Evangelization proposed by Blessed John Paul, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, and Pope Francis?
8. What do you believe are the essentials in terms of Catechetical content which need to be focused on when transmitting the Catholic Faith to the young?
9. What do you believe is the role the administration of Sacraments and the use of Sacramentals play in the effective catechesis of the young and the revitalization of the Catholic identity of our schools?

Interview Questions for Superintendents

1. What do you believe is the mission of your (Arch)Diocesan schools?
2. What are your aspirations for the students of your schools?
3. What do you see as the greatest challenge our youth experience in current society regarding the living out of their Catholic Faith?
4. Has your (Arch)Diocese implemented any new programs to address the revitalizing of the Catholic identity of your schools over the past two years? If so, please tell the story of one of the new strategies that you implemented.
5. After implementation of the above-mentioned programs, have you noticed any increased commitment from your students regarding the practice of their Catholic Faith? If so, how would you describe the positive change?

6. How would you assess the Catholic identity of your (Arch)Diocesan schools at the present time?
7. What documents did your (Arch)Diocese use/create in order to aid in the revitalizing of the Catholic identity of your schools? How would you assess the success of the programs delineated therein?

Interview Findings – Quotes from Ecclesial Leaders

Question One

What do you believe is the mission of Catholic schools?

Cardinal George – “Catholic schools were founded to hand on the Catholic Faith.

They are also communities of Faith and life where it makes good sense to believe in God’s Self-Revelation.”

The mission of the Church in every generation is to introduce the world to its Savior. Introducing people to Jesus Christ leads people to discover not only Who Jesus is, but also to discover who they are in relation to Him...Directing people on this quest has led the Church in every age to conduct Catholic schools. (Cardinal George, Archdiocese of Chicago Board of Catholic Schools: Strategic Plan for Catholic Schools, 2013-2016, p. 3)

Bishop Jenky – “I think the core mission of Catholic schools is to evangelize and pass on the Faith. Our schools do a lot of things – they are excellent places to learn, they’re communities, we have sports – we actually have more freedom. Our schools exist to inculcate the Faith, though, and everything else is related to this.”

Bishop Callahan – “The mission of Catholic schools is to continue the mission of Jesus Christ, and that is the idea of leading souls to the Father. The mission is

evangelization – leading all souls back to authentic understanding of their relationship with God. And that’s the essential mission of the Church, and it is obviously the essential mission of Catholic education. Catholic schools, therefore, are probably one of the primary means which we have in the Church to fulfill our mission.”

Bishop Ricken – “As noted in Archbishop Miller’s book, *The Holy See’s Teaching on Catholic Schools*, the mission of Catholic schools is to evangelize, catechize, and educate our students, in that order, so that our students will come closer to God (the Father), closer to Jesus, closer to Our Blessed Mother.”

Bishop Rice – “Well, when I read this question, I took the recent Letter of Pope Francis – ‘The Joy of the Gospel’ that I’ve been reading. It talks about joy, joy, joy. I went back to the beginning to see why this was the case. – It’s joy because we’ve had an encounter with Jesus. In every institution, it’s about encountering Jesus, and then falling in love with Him. When you are in love with Someone, then that dictates everything – The Person of Jesus.”

Common Themes

- **Evangelization and Catechesis**– All of the Ecclesial Leaders focused their answers to this question as being the mission of Jesus Christ Himself – that of evangelizing and catechesis.
- **Personal Relationship with Jesus Christ** – Along with evangelization and catechesis, the Ecclesial Leaders focused their answers on leading others into

a personal love relationship with Jesus Christ Himself, Who then leads souls back to the Father.

Table 1

Graphic Presentation and Analysis of Responses Based Upon Common Themes (Question One)

Ecclesial Leader	Evangelization & Catechesis	Personal Relationship with Jesus Christ
Cardinal George	"Catholic schools were founded to hand on the Faith."	"...Introducing people to Jesus Christ leads people to discover not only Who Jesus is, but also to discover who they are in relation to Him."
Bishop Jenky	"The core mission of Catholic schools is to evangelize and pass on the Faith."	
Bishop Callahan	"The mission of Catholic schools is to continue the mission of Jesus Christ, and that is the idea of leading souls to the Father."	
Bishop Ricken	"The mission of our Catholic schools is to evangelize, catechize, and educate our students..."	"...so that our students will come closer to God (the Father), closer to Jesus, closer to Our Blessed Mother..."
Bishop Rice		"...It's about encountering Jesus, and then falling in love with Him...that dictates everything – the Person of Jesus."

Question Two

Has your (Arch)Diocese recently implemented any program to aid in the reform of catechesis and/or the revitalization of the Catholic identity of schools?

Cardinal George – "Yes, we follow the Bishops' program for renewal in catechesis – we follow the scope and sequence for catechesis. In our strategic plan for

our school system, there is a whole chapter on the revitalization of the Catholic identity of schools.”

Action Items in Archdiocese of Chicago Strategic Plan for Catholic Schools:

1. Enhance the Religion curriculum to foster students’ Faith formation and grounding in Catholic virtues.
2. Ensure strong Faith formation for teachers.
3. Engage in outreach to school families.

Bishop Jenky – “Our Religious Education program and our schools are now in greater conformity with what the National Conference of Catholic Bishops has asked for. Every year we try to upgrade our teachers’ guides, our goals for Catholic education – so it’s an ongoing process. There’s no silver bullet that solves everything. We have a new superintendent of schools who I’m very enthusiastic about – but I don’t think the task ever ends. Some years ago, we had a Year of the Rosary. It came from my experience of blessing lots and lots of Rosaries at Confirmation and all over, but I was relatively sure they then went in a drawer or sat on a bureau some place. What had been such a part of Catholic arsenal of prayer – I was worried was not part of the ordinary experience of grammar school and high school believers. So I asked that it become an ordinary part of preparation for First Confession and First Communion in an age-appropriate way. I think we need the whole Catholic ethos in our schools, and we know that there was – as we all know – a period that we let this go.”

Bishop Callahan – “Although there hasn’t been any specific new program, we’ve worked hard to press for the Catholic identity being the most important thing that we look at in terms of what goes on in our schools. I know that this is the highest priority that is expressed by the superintendent in all the schools, the presidents, and the individual principals in all the schools who rely on that being the first priority that we deal with. We’ve also streamlined the way our schools function, administratively and financially.”

Bishop Ricken – “Catholic education and Catholic catechesis has been a strong priority in this Diocese for many years. In our Diocese, the Apparitions to Adele Brice by Our Blessed Mother have been approved. The basic message (given by the Blessed Virgin Mary in these Apparitions) is to teach the children their prayers and to teach the children the basics of the Faith. Even today, we have 59 Catholic grade schools, six Catholic high schools, and two Catholic colleges, and I think this has been related directly to the blessings of Our Blessed Mother – that our Diocese has been exemplary in Catholic school education. In addition, our (Diocesan) Faith Integration Committee has identified nine principles of Faith integration (i.e., witness, prayer, mission, morality, spirituality, community, social justice, environment, and Scripture) to be touch points throughout the curriculum. Additionally, they have developed nine rubrics as a matrix for teachers and administrators to use as a measuring instrument or to be used in reflective practice to assist in integrating the Faith for our Catholic school students. To support that project, we have used those nine principles as an outline for our Catholic

school teachers, instructional assistants, and principals in a course we call Methods B – Faith Integration for Teachers. This course is one of six that comprise our Foundational Catechetical Certificate for Religious certification. Our Curriculum and Instruction Director uses this course with the Initial Educator training for teachers throughout their first year of teaching in our Catholic schools.

Bishop Rice – “Well, our own Archbishop’s number one priority is to revitalize the Catholic identity of schools. He started this initiative, “Alive in Christ” as the mission of our schools. There is a practical aspect – to fill our empty seats, but it is mainly to be strong about our Catholic identity. This is the umbrella – the mission advancement initiative.”

Common Themes

- Implementation of program initiated by National Conference of Catholic Bishops for renewal in catechesis
- Bringing back instruction in the “basics” of the Catholic Faith and the whole Catholic ethos through new initiatives implemented (e.g., “Year of the Rosary” and “Alive in Christ” program, etc.)
- Thorough formation for principals and teachers to be certified as catechists

Table 2

Graphic Presentation and Analysis of Responses Based Upon Common Themes (Question Two)

Bishop	USCCB Program for Renewal in Catechesis	Instruction Focused on the Basics of the Catholic Faith	Faith Formation for Principals and Teachers
Cardinal George	"...We follow the Bishops' program for renewal in catechesis."		"...Strong faith formation for teachers..."
Bishop Jenky	"Our Religious Education programs and schools are now in greater conformity with what the National Conference of Catholic Bishops has asked for..."	"Some years ago, we had the Year of the Rosary...I think we need the whole Catholic ethos in our schools...and we know that there was... a period that we let this go."	
Bishop Callahan			"We've worked hard to press for Catholic identity being the most important thing we look at... I know this is the highest priority for our...presidents and principals..."
Bishop Ricken		"In our Diocese, the Apparitions of Our Blessed Mother to Adele Brice have been approved. The basic message (of these Apparitions) is to teach the children their prayers and to teach the children the basics of the Faith."	"We have used those nine principles as an outline for our Catholic school teachers...principals in a course we call Methods B – Faith Integration for Teachers. This course is one of six that comprise our Foundational Catechetical Certificate for Religious certification."
Bishop Rice		"Our own Archbishop started this initiative – 'Alive in Christ' as the mission of our schools...it is mainly to be strong about our Catholic identity."	

Question Three

Do you believe there is a need to revitalize the Catholic identity of schools across the country?

Cardinal George – “Well, it seems there is always a need. The Bishops’ first concern is about catechesis, although Catholic identity is more than catechesis – it’s also about community. Catholic schools should be communities where students are loved and are therefore, free to learn. Students can raise questions about God and about our destiny which they can’t raise in a public school.”

Bishop Jenky – Absolutely, the statistics about how many parents of children who in a Catholic school go to Mass are pretty discouraging trends... When we have Mass for all the children in the Diocese who made their Holy Communion, I always do a half funny – half serious thing in the homily – saying, ‘You shouldn’t be throwing tantrums, you should always respect your parents, but you have a right to stamp your foot if your parents don’t take you to Mass on Sundays!’ But it really is a challenge when people list why they go to Catholic education. It isn’t as if the Faith is always at the highest level. I am proud that our schools do so well in standardized testing and a million other things, but the reason we do all this is to pass on the Faith. And of course, we have parents who themselves were not necessarily catechized in the Faith. There may be exceptions to that – maybe the majority aren’t like that – but I don’t know, it might be the majority.

Bishop Callahan – “I think that essentially what we are seeing is how the schools are constructed with the faculties, the administrators that we have, the staffs that we have. I think that we are looking at a sense of understanding what the schools need – what makes a Catholic school Catholic. I think we’re kind of confounded in how we do that, because so many of our people just simply expect us to be schools – they don’t necessarily understand what it means to be a Catholic school. So, therefore, trying to put forth the idea of what Catholic identity means in terms of a school really goes back to – if we are going to begin to work on Catholic identity, what we really need to begin with is our faculties, our staffs, all the people who are involved in the Catholic schools.”

Bishop Ricken – “I don’t know if ‘revitalize’ is the correct word, but I think it is vitally important that each and every one of our Catholic schools in the Diocese of Green Bay be on a constant vigil to see that Catholic identity lives on a day-to-day basis in staff-to-student model, at the minimum. We have to be intentional about our Catholic identity in our schools, and with that intentionality, we have to have and grow an inner pride about our Catholic Faith to go with it.”

Bishop Rice – “Yes, I think so – some (Arch)Dioceses are better than others...for instance, in the Diocese of Lincoln, Nebraska, all Religion classes are taught by a priest or Religious – this helps them have a strong Catholic identity there.”

Common Themes

- Necessity of Adult Faith Formation (Faculty, Parents, Staff)
- Building up of Catholic Faith Community

- Intentional and constant vigilance to ensure Catholic identity in schools

Table 3

Graphic Presentation and Analysis of Responses Based Upon Common Themes (Question Three)

Bishop	Necessity of Adult Faith Formation	Building of Catholic Faith Community	Intentional and Constant Vigilance Needed
Cardinal George		"...Catholic identity is more than catechesis – it's also about community."	
Bishop Jenky	"...We have parents themselves who weren't necessarily catechized in the Faith		
Bishop Callahan	"...If we are going to begin to work on Catholic identity, what we really need to begin with is our faculties, our staffs, all the people who are involved in the Catholic schools."		
Bishop Ricken			"...It is vitally important that each and every one of our Catholic schools in the Diocese of Green Bay be on a constant vigil to see that Catholic identity lives on a day-to-day basis in staff-to-student model...We have to be intentional about our Catholic identity in our schools."
Bishop Rice			"...For instance, in the Diocese of Lincoln, Nebraska, all Religion classes are taught by a priest or Religious – this helps them have a strong Catholic identity there."

Question Four

If so, why do you believe this need exists? If not, please discuss.

Cardinal George – “Catholic schools are part of our country and its culture, but the results aren’t always there of people living out their Faith in daily life. That is why there is always a need to revitalize the Catholic identity of schools.”

Bishop Jenky – “I do think we did a very poor job in passing on the substance of our Faith in the decades after the Council...I am not against affective experiences, making collages, looking at caterpillars, and all that. Some of that is all very good, but we didn’t pass on the doctrine of the Faith. No one learns how to play the tuba without learning scales, and young people need to be able to decide on whether or not they will believe by being given the basics, but we didn’t do that in some cases. I think we tried to be like everybody else, and that was the climate of American education....but in terms of passing on the Faith, I think it was particularly disastrous – but I think everybody recognizes that.”

Bishop Callahan – “We live in an age of secular relativist thinking and so many of our Catholic parents don’t understand the necessity of choosing to send their sons and daughters to Catholic schools...We haven’t changed that understanding of Catholic education; we still believe that Catholic people should choose Catholic schools for their children, but we don’t necessarily see this. So that’s one thing – we’re living in an age when Catholicism itself is misunderstood and misrepresented where our schools at times have become nothing more than schools where we are just running an ancillary

kind of school system – that we are not necessarily purposeful in terms of what we do. It really boils down to the fact of trying to evangelize before we even get the children in school. We've got a lot of work to do with parents, so I think that we really need to keep on trying our best efforts to put forth the best things we can do to build families...to help them understand the purposeful nature of establishing Catholic identity within their families, and then seeing to it that they support that identity being established and promoted in the Catholic school."

Bishop Ricken – "If there is a need, I believe it is rooted in the fact that the Catholic school mission priorities explained in Question #1 have been unintentionally inverted, in that we have spent more time educating our students, catechizing them, and far too less time evangelizing them. If one looks at the profile of staffing in our Catholic schools over the last 30 years, you will find a significant change from the presence of ordained priests, Religious Orders of Sisters and Brothers being replaced by the laity. While that unto itself isn't necessarily a bad thing; nevertheless, the overt and intentional mindset of evangelizing and catechizing students became less important and academics became more important. This was due in large part, I think, to the laity that replaced the people from the consecrated life. They were trained as secular teachers, however, so we were/are at the mercy of the Faith development of the teachers we hired to pass on the Faith." We've had this whole period since the Second Vatican Council when we've been promoting the laity, but we've not had the competent formational development in our laity to be able to carry on these ministries. So, I think

this explains why I believe the need exists – it's nobody's fault, but we do need to ramp up our intentional efforts in this regard.

Bishop Rice – “Going back to Pope Francis’s words, ‘Parishes are not obsolete – we need to be mission-driven – is our mission to meet Jesus?’ ...Maybe the way we’ve been doing Catholic education hasn’t been focused – it’s all about encountering Jesus.”

Common Themes

- Doctrine of the Faith wasn’t always passed on in its entire substance over the last few decades.
- Present culture is very secularized; therefore, more evangelization and catechesis is needed for young people to be firmly established in their Catholic Faith.
- Laity replaced the priests, brothers, and sisters who use to staff Catholic schools – more lay formation is needed to prepare them for the mission of evangelizing and catechizing the young.

Table 4

Graphic Presentation and Analysis of Responses Based Upon Common Themes (Question Four)

Bishop	Doctrine of Catholic Faith Was Not Always Passed on in Its Entire Substance	Secularization of Present Culture	Laity Replaced Teaching Priests & Religious
Cardinal George		"Catholic schools are part of our country and its culture, but the results aren't always there of people living out their Faith in daily life."	
Bishop Jenky	"I do think we did a very poor job in passing on the substance of our Faith in the decades after the Council..."		
Bishop Callahan	"We're living in an age when Catholicism itself is misunderstood and misrepresented...It really boils down to the fact of trying to evangelize before we even get the children in school."	"We live in an age of secular relativist thinking and so many of our Catholic parents don't understand the necessity of choosing to send their sons and daughters to Catholic schools..."	
Bishop Ricken	"...The overt and intentional mindset of evangelizing and catechizing students became less important and academics became more important."		"If one looks at the profile of staffing in our Catholic schools over the last 30 years, you will find a significant change from the presence of ordained priests, Religious Orders of Sisters and Brothers being replaced by the laity."
Bishop Rice	"...Maybe the way we've been doing Catholic education hasn't been focused – it's all about encountering Jesus."		

Question Five

What do you view as the greatest needs in terms of revitalizing the Catholic identity of schools across the country?

Cardinal George – “I think they (schools) have to be clearly based upon Faith – and its Truth and values.”

Taken from *Archdiocese of Chicago: Strategic Plan for Catholic Schools:*

Today’s environment presents many challenges for Catholic schools compared to the past. Creating a vibrant school today requires a broader and deeper set of skills than some principals, trained in a different era, are prepared for. In the past, parent demand was virtually ‘automatic’ because of stronger religious practice.... (p. 5)

Bishop Jenky – “I think the teachers and administration themselves have to come through their own conversion experience. We now in all our schools have an overwhelming majority of lay people. They have to assume a ministerial role, and they cannot give what they haven’t got – and if they don’t know Jesus Christ, and if He is not the Lord of their life, and if they are not people of prayer – if they are not ‘fired up’ about Catholic Christianity, they will not be effective witnesses. So the first thing is the continuing conversion – and in some cases, initial conversion to the Lord Jesus Christ, and that they have the Catholic Faith as at the heart of what they’re doing – and not just one of those things at the side of their mission as teachers.”

Bishop Callahan – “I guess I really wouldn’t go beyond the fact of parental involvement – ...Catholic schools exist so that they can tell the Good News of Jesus Christ. They have a mission – they are missionary in their scope...they have to teach

about Jesus Christ...and then secondly, they must have a sense of the reality of that knowledge, so that they go out and they tell other people about Jesus Christ. So we must instill in students a love of Jesus, a willingness to tell others about Jesus, and a willingness to serve Jesus in others and in the world in which we live.”

Bishop Ricken – “As to how we approach catechesis in the Catholic church, that is, recognizing that the parents are the primary educators of their children, we need to reassert our position on that. We have raised now two – maybe three – generations of people who have not been well catechized, because we got off track a little bit – everybody with the best of intentions – but it didn’t really help these young people. Let me give an example, I gave a retreat to my staff here last year, and I asked a question from the Baltimore Catechism, ‘Why did God make you?’ ‘To know, love, and serve God in this life, and to be happy with Him forever in the next.’ One of the younger people on my staff went with her hand over her head and said, ‘Where did you get that? I was never taught that!’ That’s an example of two to three generations of people who have not been well catechized. We want so very earnestly to be a catechetical partner with our families to invite these young adults who are with their children to learn together to really help them say, ‘This is an exciting thing to study, and I know my Faith!’ When they get ‘on fire’ with it, it’s incredible. The problem is only 33% of our Catholics are attending Sunday Mass in our Diocese. I think we are seeing a sense of the Catholic school being the faith builder of Catholic school students from that family, so I call this the ‘diamond in our own backyard.’ That’s what a Catholic school is. We go looking for

all these answers and solutions all around, but the diamond – the answer – is in our own backyard – and that’s the Catholic school – right next door to the Church. So we want to activate our families to get back to placing Sunday as the most important day of the week – worshipping God as the most important thing to do in a week, and to have the priorities correct and in right order. When our families are at a point where they have a preconceived expectation of the school supporting what they are already doing at home, the school’s Catholic identity will be enhanced as well. An outgrowth of that is to revitalize the sagging numbers of Sunday Mass attendance.”

Bishop Rice – “Well, I think we need to re-focus on the tried and the true of the past. My generation had it, and sometimes people think, ‘Do I really need that,’ but they have to realize that’s how they got to where they are now in their Faith. We kind of knocked out the Pillars (of the Catechism), but this is what got us to where we are today. We need to rediscover the richness of this all – the ‘old fashioned stuff.’”

Common Themes

- Importance of getting back to the basics in terms of passing on the substance of the Catholic Faith to the young.
- Importance of involving (and forming) parents in being partners with the Catholic schools in transmitting the Faith to their children, as well as formation of staff in being “fired up” about Catholic Christianity.

Table 5

Graphic Presentation and Analysis of Responses Based Upon Common Themes (Question Five)

Bishop	Importance of Getting "Back to the Basics"	Importance of Involving Parents & Formation of Staff in Becoming 'Fired Up' About Catholic Christianity
Cardinal George	"I think they (schools) have to be clearly based upon Faith – and its Truth and values."	"...In the past, parent demand was virtually 'automatic' because of stronger religious practice..." (p. 5).
Bishop Jenky		"I think the teachers and administration themselves have to come through their own conversion experience... if they are not 'fired up' about Catholic Christianity, they will not be effective witnesses. So the first thing is the continuing conversion – and in some cases, initial conversion to the Lord Jesus Christ, and that they have the Catholic Faith as at the heart of what they're doing – and not just one of those things at the side of their mission as teachers."
Bishop Callahan	"...So we must instill in students a love of Jesus..."	"I guess I really wouldn't go beyond the fact of parental involvement..."
Bishop Ricken	"We have raised now two – maybe three – generations of people who have not been well catechized, because we got off track a little bit..."	"...Recognizing that the parents are the primary educators of their children...we need to reassert our position on that."
Bishop Rice	"Well, I think we need to re-focus on the tried and the true of the past...We need to re-discover the richness of this all – the 'old-fashioned' stuff..."	

Question Six

What strategies would you suggest (or have you already implemented) to meet these needs? Please share one of these stories. What more would you suggest to meet these needs?

Cardinal George – “What we have done here is to make sure principals are well-prepared to be responsible for catechesis, as well as for building community in their schools. Catholic identity is not bound up just in catechesis, but in the developing of a community in the schools. The principals are ministers of the Archdiocese.”

Bishop Jenky – “I believe that all of us need in-service training on a regular basis. In this Diocese, we are blessed with many wonderful priests and lay people, and they do talk about why the Catholic schools exist. We have another great priest who always says there’s got to be a huge difference between being in a Catholic environment five days a week for the good part of the day and lucky if you get in a half-hour to 45 minutes when children show up for CCD. And we have to stop being ashamed of that and simply say it. I sometimes wonder if we shouldn’t identify teachers who are good at teaching Religion...I wonder if you have a great junior high teacher in Religion, if they shouldn’t serve more than one school....Everybody in the school – the ladies who serve in the cafeteria, the janitors, the coaches – everybody should have as their goal Catholic education and what it’s there for.”

Bishop Callahan – “From the Diocesan point of view, you are not just necessarily looking at revitalizing the schools, we have an obligation to revitalize all the aspects of

the teaching of the Church, so we need to do our best to support families. First and foremost, parents are educators of their children, so we need to be able to continually draw that home, and keep people aware of that, and do what we can do – from the very beginning – to initiate proper Sacramental programs... In La Crosse – there are good, solid Sacramental programs, and priests are really trying to work hard. They start with Marriage preparation, but in terms of dealing with children, they are dealing with Baptismal preparation. They're dealing with the Sacrament of Penance, they're trying to help people have an understanding of a relationship with Jesus and His Church... Sacramental preparation for the Sacrament of the Eucharist – it's a matter of teaching the Eucharist in relationship with Jesus, first and foremost, and then, how Jesus teaches us to relate to one another through Him. A solid preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation so children and families are aware of the fact that we are called on to make a commitment to Jesus through His Church. The strength to do that comes to us from Confirmation. A well thought out catechesis for the Sacraments is an important element of what a Catholic school should be doing.

Bishop Ricken – “In December, one of the directives I gave to our Superintendent of Catholic Schools is to find a way to measure and report out on the level of success we are experiencing (and validating) in integrating the Faith throughout the entire school and the entire curriculum of that school, so we are going to have a measurable instrument to tell us where we are. We don't know exactly where we are, but we're going to find out. I hope to have those results sometime this spring, and then

we will take that data, and we will re-examine our faith integration again and improve it even more.”

Bishop Rice – “Lay formation is important – lay formation for teachers and ongoing catechesis. On a practical side, we need revenue streams – a Catholic foundation – with an eye to raise money for Catholic education. But it cannot be business as usual. We have some evangelizing programs – we brought in the Catholics Come Home Program into the Archdiocese. We also began “Door-To-Door Evangelization” – a revitalization of the efforts of the Legion of Mary – wherein more and more Parishes have Parishioners go door to door to evangelize. The people themselves become more faithful in this way.”

Common Themes

- Importance of Faith formation and in-service training for lay teachers and administrators and importance of reaching out to everyone in school community
- Support of families and parents in being the primary educators of their children

Table 6

Graphic Presentation and Analysis of Responses Based Upon Common Themes (Question Six)

Bishop	Importance of Faith Formation for Staff Members & Reaching Out to Everyone in School Community	Support of Families
Cardinal George	“What we have done here is to make sure principals are well-prepared to be responsible for catechesis, as well as for building community in their schools.”	
Bishop Jenky	“I believe that all of us need in-service training on a regular basis...Everybody in the school – the ladies who serve in the cafeteria, the janitors, the coaches – everybody should have as their goal Catholic education and what it’s there for.”	
Bishop Callahan		“...We have an obligation to revitalize all the aspects of the teaching of the Church, so we need to do our best to support families.”
Bishop Ricken	“... To find a way to measure and report out on the level of success we are experiencing (and validating) in integrating the Faith throughout the entire school and the entire curriculum of that school...”	
Bishop Rice	“Lay formation is important – lay formation for teachers and ongoing catechesis.”	

Question Seven

What do you believe is the role Catholic schools play in the New Evangelization proposed by Blessed John Paul, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, and Pope Francis?

Cardinal George – “Catholic schools are designed to pass on the Faith in their neighborhoods, and therefore, to be sensitive to effective ways to preach the Gospel today.”

Taken from *Archdiocese of Chicago: Strategic Plan for Catholic Schools:*

(Catholic schools) remain an essential resource for the New Evangelization, and the significant contribution that they make to American society as a whole ought to be better appreciated and more generously supported. (Taken from address of Pope Benedict XVI)

Bishop Jenky – “I am convinced that our schools are one of the engines of evangelization, and I think that many priests...believe that you can kind of get to the parents through the children. By involving the parents in preparation for First Penance, First Communion and Confirmation – by having things that involve parents and grandparents – they can rediscover their Faith. I think a lot of our schools operate that way, but we need to do it even more. Schools are engines of evangelization, I believe, if they’re used properly....The great strength of Catholicism is affective. We don’t have either/or, we have both/and! For our schools, I would use ritual – we’re getting ready for Candlemas now – I cannot understand why any Parish in my Diocese that has a school doesn’t do a huge Mass for Candlemas. The lights – all the customs – bring the Christ Child back – it acts it all out – it’s ways people remember – I sometimes think that

the smell of candles, the smell of incense – it gets somewhere between the brain, the soul, and the body – so we should use all that. When I was at the University of Notre Dame, I remember that there were always people praying at the Grotto (of Our Blessed Mother). It's part of the culture there – you go by the Grotto, and you stop and pray. It should be part of what we offer – “affective Catholicism” – touch, taste, smell Catholic Christianity, and no apologies about Our Blessed Mother. She enhances our relationship with Christ – She is the principal Evangelist. The Second Vatican Council says that far from separating us from Christ, She enhances our relationship with the Lord. And clearly John Paul II uses the example that She is the Great Evangelist of Christianity – of Christ – centered life.”

Bishop Callahan – “I think we need to be able to understand that Catholic schools are the promoters of Catholic education. Catholic education is education of the whole person. It is an awareness of that person made in the Image and Likeness of God – that's the beginning part of what Catholic education does. Catholic schools try to help us to understand who we are made in the Image and Likeness of God from all the various vantage points of things there are to understand about being a human being.” Catholic schools teach us the various mechanics we need to be able to live in this world, but given the first and foremost reason - that we are first in relationship with God, and because of that relationship we have (with God) – we have a deeper texture and human grace with one another.”

Bishop Ricken – “If you look at these three Pontiffs, we have been so blessed by holy and visionary men. Blessed John Paul II, for example, is an expression of hope. He led us to the new millennium, he taught us how to live that virtue, and he constantly reached out to the world with the Gospel message. Pope Benedict, a theologian and a teacher, has taught us more about the particulars of the Faith – and through all of his writings, he’s shared with us so many treasures that we have in our own library. And then Pope Francis is showing us how to live out the New Evangelization by having a preferential option for the poor and by reaching out to the huge assembly of faithful that come to see him, for example, at World Youth Day. These three men have taught us Faith, Hope, and Charity, and these three virtues are the tools by which to engage our young people in the New Evangelization. They each show us in a different way how to introduce others to Jesus and to catechize them with the great patrimony of the Church’s teaching.”

Bishop Rice – “I would like to share a quote from Pope Francis, ‘I invite all Christians to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ.’ So if schools are not helping with that, then we need to do what we can to help them achieve this encounter. The Catholic schools are the best instruments we have to accomplish this. Pope Emeritus Benedict stated, “Do not abandon the school apostolate.”

Common Themes

- Catholic schools are engines/instruments of the New Evangelization
- They are instruments of evangelization not only to their students, but also to community members.
- New Evangelization consists of leading others to a personal relationship with Jesus and Mary through “affective Catholicism.”

Table 7

Graphic Presentation and Analysis of Responses Based Upon Common Themes (Question Seven)

Bishop	Schools are Engines of the New Evangelization	Schools are Instruments to Community Members	New Evangelization Consists of Leading Others to a Personal Relationship with Jesus Christ and the Blessed Virgin Mary through “Affective Catholicism”
Cardinal George	“...(Catholic schools) remain an essential resource for the New Evangelization...”	“Catholic schools are designed to pass on the Faith in their neighborhoods, and therefore, to be sensitive to effective ways to preach the Gospel today.”	
Bishop Jenky	“I am convinced that our schools are one of the engines of evangelization...”	“By involving the parents in preparation for First Penance, First Communion and Confirmation – by having things that involve parents and grandparents – they can rediscover their Faith.	The great strength of Catholicism is affective... I sometimes think that the smell of candles, the smell of incense – it gets somewhere between the brain, the soul, and the body – so we should use all that. It should be part of what we offer – touch, taste, smell Catholic Christianity, and no apologies about Our Blessed Mother. She

			enhances our relationship with Christ – She is the principal Evangelist. The Second Vatican Council says that far from separating us from Christ, She enhances our relationship with the Lord. And clearly John Paul II uses the example that She is the Great Evangelist of Christianity – of Christ – centered life.”
Bishop Callahan		“...and because of that relationship we have (with God) – we have a deeper texture and human grace with one another.”	“Catholic schools teach us the various mechanics we need to be able to live in this world, but given the first and foremost reason – that we are first in relationship with God...”
Bishop Ricken	“These three men have taught us Faith, Hope, and Charity, and these three virtues are the tools by which to engage our young people in the New Evangelization...”	“They each show us in a different way how to introduce others to Jesus and to catechize them with the great patrimony of the Church’s teaching.”	
Bishop Rice	“...The Catholic schools are the best instruments we have to accomplish this.”		“I would like to share a quote from Pope Francis, ‘I invite all Christians to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ.’ So if schools are not helping with that, then we need to do what we can to help them achieve this encounter.

Question Eight

What do you believe are the essentials in terms of Catechetical content which need to be focused on when transmitting the Catholic Faith to the young?

Cardinal George – “The essentials are set out in the Four Pillars of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, as you outlined in your study. They all make sense and hold together in light of Christ’s Resurrection from the dead.”

Taken from *Archdiocese of Chicago: Strategic Plan for Catholic Schools*:

...The Christian vision, presented in its breadth and integrity, proves immensely appealing to the imagination, idealism, and aspirations of the young, who have a right to encounter the Faith in all its beauty, its intellectual richness, and its radical demands. (Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI)

Bishop Jenky – “I believe they have to know the basics – who Jesus is, the Trinity...the Sacraments – so important, the Bible – age-appropriate, but right from the beginning to get to know that huge story of Faith that is there. And then as I already said, I think they need to be introduced to the lore of Catholic Christianity – the customs, the organizing traditions. With the customs, I’m trying to get going a Diocesan Prayer Book. Also, parents should bless their children when they put them to bed at night...”

Bishop Callahan – “I think the Church makes that very clear – we teach the Sacraments, we teach the Commandments, we teach a moral life. So I would say, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is essential, the Gospels are essential, a well-ordered moral understanding of the world based on those issues is essential. I’d say that if we follow those, we’ll probably do a good job.”

Bishop Ricken – “I would offer two things as being non-negotiable for our young Catholics: (1) the importance of attending Sunday Mass with an appreciation of the

Mass as the Source and Summit of our Faith, and (2) the importance of having and nurturing a prayer life. Those are the non-negotiables; actually, so much more is non-negotiable, but without those, you can't do anything. You've got to be connected to the faith community and to Sunday worship – and giving God His due.”

Bishop Rice – “I think we could use the Creed as the basis. We could also use teachable moments when we take the core of the Faith and make sure students understand. I live at a Parish, and I go into the second-grade class to help prepare them for the Sacraments. When I was Pastor, I started Eucharistic Adoration on First Fridays, and each class took a half-hour to pray in front of Our Lord. I taught them what a monstrance is – one girl asked if every school had Adoration every First Friday, and I said, “Only the good ones!” I was so pleased to see that she knew the terminology of ‘Adoration.’”

Common Themes

- The Four Pillars of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (i.e. Creed, Sacraments, Ten Commandments, Liturgy/Prayer) need to be focused on when transmitting the Catholic Faith to the young.
- The lore of Catholic Christianity – the customs and traditions, the importance of practicing the Faith through Sunday Mass attendance and prayer – are all essential when transmitting the Catholic Faith to the young

Table 8

Graphic Presentation and Analysis of Responses Based Upon Common Themes (Question Eight)

Bishop	Four Pillars of the Catechism	Lore of Catholic Christianity (Customs, Traditions, etc.)
Cardinal George	"The essentials are set out in the Four Pillars of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, as you outlined in your study. They all make sense and hold together in light of Christ's Resurrection from the dead."	
Bishop Jenky	"I believe they have to know the basics – who Jesus is, the Trinity...the Sacraments - so important, the Bible..."	"I think they need to be introduced to the lore of Catholic Christianity – the customs, the organizing traditions..."
Bishop Callahan	"I think the Church makes that very clear – we teach the Sacraments, we teach the Commandments, we teach a moral life. So I would say, the Catechism of the Catholic Church is essential, the Gospels are essential, a well-ordered moral understanding of the world based on those issues is essential."	
Bishop Ricken		"I would offer two things as being non-negotiable for our young Catholics: (1) the importance of attending Sunday Mass with an appreciation of the Mass as the Source and Summit of our Faith, and (2) the importance of having and nurturing a prayer life...You've got to be connected to the faith community and to Sunday worship – and giving God His due."
Bishop Rice	"I think we could use the Creed as the basis. We could also use teachable moments when we take the core of the Faith and make sure students understand."	"When I was Pastor, I started Eucharistic Adoration on First Fridays, and each class took a half-hour to pray in front of Our Lord."

Question Nine

What do you believe is the role the administration of Sacraments and the use of Sacramentals play in the effective catechesis of the young and the revitalization of the Catholic identity of our schools?

Cardinal George – “We are a Sacramental Church. In the Sacraments, we are not just taught by Christ – we are also touched by Christ. The Sacraments are the actions of the Risen Christ. Sacramentals are, in the same way, important in leading us to Christ.”

Taken from *Archdiocese of Chicago: Strategic Plan for Catholic Schools*:

...Each school, with the help of OCS (Office of Catholic Schools), will identify ways to better engage school parents who are Catholic to understand the new Religion curriculum, the importance of the Sacraments, and the need to reinforce the Faith in the family’s home life.... (Catholicity Action Plan #3)

Bishop Jenky – “The Sacraments, of course, are all works of Christ, instituted by Him. They all celebrate Catholic Incarnational Christianity – that we aren’t just minds, we aren’t just dis-embodied spirits – we are body and soul. It is just utterly important to celebrate the way Christ intended.”

I, along with some other Bishops across the country, insisted that the Blessed Sacrament be reserved in the center of the sanctuary, since all the preaching we can do about the Eucharist doesn’t do nearly the same as coming to the Church, genuflecting, blessing yourself with holy water, saying a prayer before Mass begins. That enacts what we say about the Real Presence. It has to do with how we relate to the Eucharist...some of the statistics say - out of the Mass going Catholics - only half believe in the Real

Presence, but why? Because we stopped treating the Eucharist as we believe – the honor of ‘latria’ – of the worship that we give only to God - must be given at all times to the Sacrament.

“And the Sacramentals are a part of that whole array of ways that tie us into a Sacramental structure - Blessed candles, holy water, relics of the saints, Scapulars, medals - all those things we cannot neglect.” When I was auxiliary bishop at Fort Wayne, we were trying in the Catholic schools to make sure we did all the customs - all the children received the Brown Scapular when they made their First Holy Communion.

Bishop Callahan – “Catechesis with regards to the Sacraments must always be done in the context of the family, and then we go into classroom participation, etc. There needs to be an understanding of the fact that the home, the family is the first place where these values are learned and put into practice, and I think that’s really important. Sacramentals are there for us to help us take advantage of God’s grace and to be aware of who we are in relationship with God in a very practical way. The Lives of the Saints are very important. It’s important to know that there are people who have gone before us who have endured the same kind of situations that we have endured... The Rosary – there’s no better way to go through the day than to truly meditate on the Life of Our Lord with Mary - so the Rosary teaches us that. The various kinds of ways in which we take Jesus with us, the various Sacramentals, medals that we may wear - just the various aspects of carrying the Rosary on our person every single day. Of course, it’s one of the principal means of the Knights of Columbus. They teach us, as Knights, to

carry the Rosary with us at all times. I find that to be a very significant part of my life and my witness. I remember even on the bus that I used to go to work on, I would say the Rosary.”

Bishop Ricken – “While one’s faith and faith development is an important and sacred aspect of natural life and without complicating that paradigm, I believe it is important for Catholics to feel that while the Sacraments and Sacramentals are special, they can also be ‘naturally special.’ That is, the mindset that one’s faith and the graces/Sacraments that accompany it (and by which one is blessed), have to be as natural a part of a Catholic’s everyday life as going to the grocery store. Not to demean the level on which the Sacraments and Sacramentals are meaningful to one’s faith life as being on the same plane of importance as procuring a gallon of milk, but speaking to the naturalness of using the Sacraments and Sacramentals in our faith lives, naturally and without second thought on the importance of this to the development of the soul.”

Bishop Rice – “The Sacramentals give a ‘heart’ to our Faith, that’s where we find a ‘hook,’ so to speak, that gives the heart its special connection to the Faith through the different devotions promoted by the Sacramentals. For instance, some schools pray the Angelus each day, and we encourage our students to pick a name of a Saint for their Confirmation. In terms of the Sacraments, highlighting especially the Eucharist and Confession, they make us stop and look at our lives – they make us reflect and know that when I walk away I can be better. Pope Francis talks about a complacent – a blunted conscience – Confession helps us to counter that.”

Common Themes

- Sacraments and Sacramentals are critical in bestowing grace to lead people into a closer union with Christ
- Proper homage must again be given to the True Presence of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist.

Table 9

Graphic Presentation and Analysis of Responses Based Upon Common Themes (Question Nine)

Bishop	Necessity of Sacraments & Sacramentals	Necessity of Proper Homage Given to True Presence of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist
Cardinal George	"We are a Sacramental Church. In the Sacraments, we are not just taught by Christ – we are also touched by Christ."	
Bishop Jenky	"The Sacraments, of course, are all works of Christ, instituted by Him. They all celebrate Catholic Incarnational Christianity – that we aren't just minds, we aren't just disembodied spirits – we are body and soul. It is just utterly important to celebrate the way Christ intended...And the Sacramentals are a part of that whole array of ways that tie us into a Sacramental structure - Blessed candles, holy water, relics of the saints, Scapulars, medals - all those things we cannot neglect... all the children received the Brown Scapular when they made their First Holy Communion.	" ...The honor of 'latria' – of the worship that we give only to God - must be given at all times to the Sacrament."
Bishop Callahan	"...Sacramentals are there for us to help us take advantage of God's grace and to be aware of who we are in relationship with God in a very practical way. The Lives of the Saints are very important. It's important to know that there are people who	

	have gone before us who have endured the same kind of situations that we have endured...The Rosary – there’s no better way to go through the day than to truly meditate on the Life of Our Lord with Mary - so the Rosary teaches us that.	
Bishop Ricken	“I believe it is important for Catholics to feel that while the Sacraments and Sacramentals are special, they can also be ‘naturally special’ - that is, the mindset that one’s faith and the graces/Sacraments that accompany it (and by which one is blessed), have to be as natural a part of a Catholic’s everyday life as going to the grocery store...”	
Bishop Rice	“The Sacramentals give a ‘heart’ to our Faith, that’s where we find a ‘hook,’ so to speak, that gives the heart its special connection to the Faith through the different devotions promoted by the Sacramentals.	“...In terms of the Sacraments, highlighting especially the Eucharist and Confession...”

Interview Findings – Quotes from Superintendents

Question One

What do you believe is the mission of your (Arch)Diocesan schools?

Fr. Belmonte, S. J. – “The mission statement of our Diocesan schools is the same as the mission of the Church - to bring Christ message to the world and to form disciples for His Church.” So the mission of the schools is the mission of the Church, and we work with the Diocesan Bishop on this. It’s Jesus’ mission, so without Christ’s mission, without the Church’s mission, there’s no need for the Catholic schools – so we are completely connected to the Church.”

Dr. Weiss – “Definitely, our mission should be about the formation of our students. It is a saving missions as you know, our schools were established as an evangelizing arm of the Church, so I do believe it is an evangelizing mission “Our mission is an evangelizing one in which Christ is known, loved, and served, and that is what I hope all our schools would impart to our students as they walk in and out their doors.”

Mr. Henry – “It’s very clear – God sent His Son on earth for a mission that is rooted in evangelizing – that is continued on in the Pope and the Bishops – so the Archdiocese shares in that mission of Catholic education and schools are one of the primary ways to fulfill this. We need evangelization and catechesis - Our students need to understand who Jesus is not only in their head, but also in their heart.”

Common Themes

- Mission of Catholic schools is to bring Christ into the world in order to be known, loved, and served.
- Carries on the mission of the Church.

Table 10

Graphic Presentation and Analysis of Responses Based Upon Common Themes (Question One)

Superintendent	Mission of Schools to Bring Christ Into the World	Carries on the Mission of the Church
Fr. Belmonte	"The mission statement of our Diocesan schools is the same as the mission of the Church - to bring Christ message to the world and to form disciples for His Church."	"...So the mission of the schools is the mission of the Church, and we work with the Diocesan Bishop on this. It's Jesus' mission, so without Christ's mission, without the Church's mission, there's no need for the Catholic schools..."
Dr. Weiss	"Our mission is an evangelizing one in which Christ is known, loved, and served..."	"Our schools were established as an evangelizing arm of the Church..."
Mr. Henry	"We need evangelization and catechesis - Our students need to understand who Jesus is not only in their head, but also in their heart."	"It's very clear – God sent His Son on earth for a mission that is rooted in evangelizing – that is continued on in the Pope and the Bishops –so the Archdiocese shares in that mission of Catholic education and schools are one of the primary ways to fulfill this."

Question Two

What are your aspirations for the students of your schools?

Fr. Belmonte, S. J. – “As I said, to form disciples for the Church and the world, that’s what our Bishop says - to form disciples for Christ and the Church. So we want to see our students incorporated more deeply into the Church...certainly K-8, we would move them toward the Sacrament of Confirmation, and 9 – 12 more deeply into incorporation into the church as adults and to help them discern their Christian vocation. If their vocation is to Christian family – great, if their vocation is to Priesthood or Religious life – great. We have to help them discern their own calling in the world

and the Church. Our aspirations are different from those of the public schools because we form disciples, and they form citizens.” We certainly would have some responsibility, like the public schools to form well-educated citizens for participation in common society, but our mission is much deeper and much broader.”

Dr. Weiss – “My aspirations include our evangelizing role as defined by the Church’s mission for Her schools. In support of the primary role of our parents as the child’s first educators, I see our role as a Catholic school - in cooperation with that role of the parents - it is a very difficult in today’s culture – so the school should do whatever possible to cooperate in the mission of the family – to keep it strong - to keep it faithful to God’s Word. Our schools should be defined by their Faith formation, as well as excellence in academics. I would hope that our teachers are helping our students go out into society, so they have to know their craft. They need to be at the cutting edge of what is best practice for their own teaching, and then, of course infusing that with the Teachings of our Church. Every student who is a graduate of a Catholic school should not only be instructed through strong curricular offerings, etc., but our students should also be equipped with a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ and His Church.”

Mr. Henry – “My aspirations for my students are that they are able to fulfill to the best of their abilities what we said in the answer to Question One...to provide an academic program integrated into Faith formation. The students entrusted to our care should acquire those beliefs to change their lives spiritually and academically.”

Common Themes

- Aspirations for all students to have a strong Faith formation
- That all students be provided with strong academic program in order to better fulfill their God-given mission in life

Table 11

Graphic Presentation and Analysis of Responses Based Upon Common Themes (Question Two)

Superintendent	Strong Faith Formation for Students	Strong Academic Program to Better Fulfill Their God-Given Mission in Life
Fr. Belmonte	"...To form disciples for Christ and the church so we want to see our students incorporated more deeply into the Church..."	"We certainly would have some responsibility, like the public schools to form well-educated citizens for participation in common society, but our mission is much deeper and much broader."
Dr. Weiss	"My aspirations include our evangelizing role as defined by the Church's mission for Her schools..."	"Our schools should be defined by their Faith formation, as well as excellence in academics."
Mr. Henry	"My aspirations for my students are that they are able to fulfill to the best of their abilities what we said in the answer to Question One...to provide an academic program integrated into Faith formation."	"The students entrusted to our care should acquire those beliefs to change their lives spiritually and academically."

Question Three

What do you see as the greatest challenge our youth experience in current society regarding the living out of their Catholic Faith?

Fr. Belmonte, S. J. – "Oh, how much time do we have... I guess I would just summarize it by one word - which is the secularization of our society – that we have

competing value systems. We've always had competing value systems as Cardinal George has said it in some interviews, so none of that is a surprise - going back even to the Roman empire, but one of the differences today is that the secularization of society is marked as a departure from the Catholic culture that our parents would have grown up in and clearly known. Our young people have to make conscious choices to be religious, to be Catholic, to be ethical, - much more so than their parents. So it makes it much more difficult for young people. The secular soup in which they swim is difficult to get perspective from, since it's all around them...So we have to help them make good choices, to choose the Gospel, to choose the Church and to follow God - to put God at the center of their lives rather than some of the other things society would have them select."

Dr. Weiss – "As well-intentioned as we are and as sincere as we are - this is a counter culture that we live in. The greatest challenge is the culture in which we live which is a culture that is directly opposed to the Gospel of Christ through its actions and beliefs...we try to prepare our students for that and teach them about their Faith so that they can have a defense for our Faith. I am definitely assured we are teaching the Faith in our schools, but when they go out and see these mixed messages, it's heavy on my heart, that when they leave our schools - I'm afraid that they may fall away from their Faith if they're not connected to a Parish or good Newman Center. We must teach our children to be courageous...to give a defense of their Faith in both the public and private arenas."

Mr. Henry – “The rise of secularism in our culture – students are faced with a lot of different challenges because some people don’t see the importance of God and Religion - some people say you can be ‘spiritual’ and not go to Church. In addition, the changes that are occurring in our family structure and units today are challenges for us. Much of what we can do in schools has to do with what families are doing or not doing at home.”

Common Themes

- The secularization of society
- Changes in family structure

Table 12

Graphic Presentation and Analysis of Responses Based Upon Common Themes (Question Three)

Superintendent	Secularization of Society	Change in Family Structure
Fr. Belmonte	“ I guess I would just summarize it by one word - which is the secularization of our society – that we have competing value systems.”	
Dr. Weiss	“The greatest challenge is the culture in which we live is a culture that is directly opposed to the Gospel of Christ through its actions and beliefs.”	
Mr. Henry	“The rise of secularism in our country...”	“In addition, the changes that are occurring in our family structure and units today are challenges for us.”

Question Four

Has your (Arch)Diocese implemented any new programs to address the revitalizing of the Catholic identity of your schools over the past two years? If so, please tell the story of one of the new strategies that you implemented.

Fr. Belmonte, S. J. – “We have a relatively long list, the ACRE test from NCEA, our Vocations Curriculum taught by our seminarians, our Three-Year Devotional Project in which we focused on devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus the first year, devotion to Our Blessed Mother during the second year, and devotion to the Saints the third year... a review of our Religion curriculum using software and going school to school to gather data about our Religion curriculum measured against the Four Pillars of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. We introduced a new teacher contract to clarify how one would assent to Church teaching in Catholic schools. We’re going through an accreditation process which will measure standards based against Catholic identity....last year we made it our focus to work on Sunday Mass attendance - helping 10-11 schools to increase Sunday Mass attendance. This year we will propose this to all our schools. If we don’t have Parishes with pews filled, we won’t have Catholic schools in the end, either. One of the things that Bishop Conlon said in a keynote address to our teachers is that we have to move away from Catholic identity - and wondering about Catholic identity - and focus now on our Catholic mission. So all of these things help to clarify what our mission is.”

Dr. Weiss – “The Meitler Study was initiated in 2007 under Bishop Jenky’s direction, but at that time, it wasn’t implemented consistently throughout the diocese. Therefore, Bishop Jenky shared his goals with me regarding the long-range planning in our schools, so my staff and I translated his vision into a new strategy. This new initiative focused on the following topics: 1) Catholic identity, 2) Academic excellence, 3) Value propositions for Catholic education, 4) Enrollment management, 5) Marketing and development, 6) Financial planning. These areas were all identified by our principals through a needs assessment survey that I sent to them when I was the new Superintendent. We have spent the last six months going on site to each Diocesan elementary and secondary school in our Diocese to present a five-hour workshop. Each school will then return to the Spalding Pastoral Center and present their school’s strategic plan with a common template that we created to the Office of Catholic Schools personnel. Our staff will summarize the results of the 44 strategic plans, and I will present the summary to Bishop Jenky at the end of May, 2014. We will call this initiative, ‘Faith in Our Future.’ In regards to a program from a few years back, the Year of the Rosary, a speaker came out to the schools to distribute Rosary kits. Schools prayed a decade of the Rosary after their weekly school Mass and throughout the week in their classrooms. We made sure that the designated months of Our Blessed Mother in May and October – we would do more things. It was very helpful.”

Mr. Henry – “We came up with a Catholic identity assessment, which our Archbishop initiated – to ensure the Catholic identity of schools. Every principal fills out

and sends a copy to the Office of Catholic Education and one to the Pastor. There are a lot of really strong things happening in our schools to ensure their Catholic identity – all children go to Mass at least once a week or maybe more. Our Archbishop asked us to take an apologetic approach (i.e., one in which they know how to explain it to others) in teaching our students their Faith - teaching children how to explain why we believe what we believe, so if someone asks you why you believe, you could explain why. We also use the Information Growth Survey and the ACRE assessment with our 5th and 6th graders each year. This shows the strengths and weaknesses of the Religion program. Our high schools implement the Bishops' Curriculum Framework – so that is gradually being done, too. In addition, we ensure that the 11% of our special needs population in our schools are included in a strong Faith formation program.”

Common Themes

- Importance of implementation of traditional devotions to aid in the revitalizing of the Catholic identity of schools
- Long-range planning

Table 13

Graphic Presentation and Analysis of Responses Based Upon Common Themes (Question Four)

Superintendent	Implementation of Traditional Devotions	Long-Range Planning
Fr. Belmonte	"Our Three-Year Devotional Project in which we focused on devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus the first year, devotion to Our Blessed Mother during the second year, and devotion to the Saints the third year."	"We're going through an accreditation process which will measure standards based against Catholic identity."
Dr. Weiss	"In regards to a program from a few years back, the Year of the Rosary, a speaker came out to the schools to distribute Rosary kits. Schools prayed a decade of the Rosary after their weekly school Mass and throughout the week in their classrooms. We made sure that the designated months of Our Blessed Mother in May and October – we would do more things."	"Therefore, Bishop Jenky shared his goals with me regarding the long-range planning in our schools, so my staff and I translated his vision into a new strategy..."
Mr. Henry	"Our Archbishop asked us to take an apologetic approach (i.e. one in which they know how to explain it to others) to teaching our students their Faith...teaching children how to explain why we believe what we believe, so if someone asks you why you believe, they could explain why."	"We also use the Information Growth Survey and the ACRE assessment with our 5th and 6th graders each year. This shows the strengths and weaknesses of the Religion program Our high schools implement the Bishops' Curriculum Framework – so that is gradually being done, too."

Question Five

After implementation of the above-mentioned programs, have you noticed any increased commitment from your students regarding the practice of their Catholic Faith? If so, how would you describe the positive change?

Fr. Belmonte, S. J. – “I don’t have quantitative data to support what the devotional project, the vocations project, but I have had some qualitative positive responses to these projects. We received some quantitative data from the ACRE test, so we are beginning to get some longitudinal data on this...The other thing I gave was the informational for growth survey to principals and new teachers. I did a catechetical review and plan for each school to assess catechesis at their own schools to comply their own analysis on catechesis at their schools – taking their ACRE results to align them to make a plan for catechesis in their schools, so we have that documentation as well. I don’t have any data yet to show that we moved the needle necessarily, with the exception of a couple schools that implemented the Sunday Mass Project, and that have seen Sunday Mass attendance increase.”

Dr. Weiss – “Absolutely, One of the things we did is implement the ‘Adopt-a-Seminarian’ program to help future priests see how important Catholic schools are – that our schools help bring families back to the Faith through their children attending Catholic schools. From my conversations with seminarians, we came up with the program of having each of our schools adopt a seminarian to pray for. It’s been a really nice relationship and exchange, and we’ve received very positive feedback. This helps promote vocations – to whatever vocation God is calling them. The NCEA heard about this program and asked us to write an article about it. The Office of Catholic Schools partnered with Catholic Charities and developed a series of service projects that uphold the dignity of each person. It has been a wonderful opportunity to observe our schools

sharing in this ...in addition, our high schools are taking a very active role in the sanctity of life through the various clubs and ministries that have been created in the schools to give a public witness of their commitment to the defense of human life – taking students to the March for Life in Washington, D.C. – so that’s been encouraging.”

Mr. Henry – “Our schools have always focused on having a strong Catholic identity, so it has always been here. Back in the time period when the Religious sisters were here – the whole formation was done by the Religious communities and their sisters. There is one thing we can point to now – the teachers are excited about the topic of our annual retreat on evangelization...Paul VI Institute is here (St. Louis), there are courses that teachers have to take, so it is up to the Catholic Education Office to help the principals to have this on an ongoing basis.”

Common Themes

- Positive qualitative feedback received from programs aimed at revitalizing Catholic identity of schools
- Too early to assess the longitudinal quantitative data

Table 14

Graphic Presentation and Analysis of Responses Based Upon Common Themes (Question Five)

Superintendent	Positive Qualitative Feedback	Too Early to Assess Longitudinal Data
Fr. Belmonte	"...I have had some qualitative positive responses to these projects (Three – Year Devotional Project) "	"We received some quantitative data from the ACRE test, so we are beginning to get some longitudinal data on this."
Dr. Weiss	"...From my conversations with seminarians, we came up with the program of having each of our schools adopt a seminarian to pray for. It's been a really nice relationship and exchange, and we've received very positive feedback..."	
Mr. Henry	"There is one thing we can point to now – the teachers are excited about the topic of our annual retreat on evangelization..."	

Question Six

How would you assess the Catholic identity of your (Arch)Diocesan schools at the present time?

Fr. Belmonte, S. J. – "Well, I think people are trying hard – I just think that the focus has not been particularly clear over the last forty years...It's sort of the difference between catechizing young people, as opposed to teaching salvation history and Religious studies. The swing of the pendulum seems to have gone in the direction of teaching salvation history as opposed to catechizing young people. Young people need to know their Catechism first. The others have value, but not until children have been catechized. Even some of the tools we are using have not been adapted. There was a

problem with the textbooks, for example, that have not focused on the essentials over the last few decades...so even some of the tools we have been using have not been adapted. That's part of the reason behind John Paul II's creation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. For the first time in 426 years since the Council of Trent, the Holy See created a new Catechism. It's not a coincidence that during the counter-reformation, you needed renewed and better tools to catechize people - and it's not an accident of history that during this period of history we need new and better tools to catechize people, so we should use them."

Dr. Weiss – "I would assess our Catholic identity as very strong at the present time. That has been a component from the Diocesan level down that has definitely been a very strong focus. We've been working on Catholic identity for as long as I've been a principal back in 2003. That has always been strong. Of course, the challenge is in taking what we learn...and making it into a lived reality in our thoughts, words, and deeds...In other words, we need to practice what we preach and be actively involved in witnessing our Faith – that is evangelization. I do have a concern from the superintendent's office though, about our high schools - we need to tighten up. I think the role of chaplain has been somewhat muddied... so I'm working to help our chaplains see how they fit into the high schools and what they can do to make their Catholic identity better."

Mr. Henry – "We have a very strong Catholic identity in our Archdiocese right now... and in our Catholic schools, we have always kept a strong Catholic identity - 25%

of the population of St. Louis is Catholic – the whole city has a Catholic culture - many parts of the city are named after Saints. The sisters came here in large numbers 200 years ago, and they created a culture here in St. Louis. Almost all influential members of the city (mayor, etc.) are Catholic.”

Common Themes

- The effort and desire are there to continue revitalizing the Catholic identity of schools.
- The challenge is to now continue this trend.

Table 15

Graphic Presentation and Analysis of Responses Based Upon Common Themes (Question Six)

Superintendent	Strong Effort and Desire to Revitalize Catholic Identity	Challenge is to Continue this Trend
Fr. Belmonte	“Well, I think people are trying hard... I just think that the focus has not been particularly clear over the last forty years.”	
Dr. Weiss	“I would assess our Catholic identity as very strong at the present time.”	“The challenge is in taking what we learn...and making it into a lived reality in our thoughts, words, and deeds...In other words, we need to practice what we preach and be actively involved in witnessing our Faith – that is evangelization.”
Mr. Henry	“We have a very strong Catholic identity in our Archdiocese right now... and in our Catholic schools, we have always kept a strong Catholic identity...”	

Question Seven

What documents did your (Arch)Diocese use/create in order to aid in the revitalizing of the Catholic identity of your schools? How would you assess the success of the programs delineated therein?

Fr. Belmonte, S.J. – “Well, the main document I use as superintendent is the strategic plan for schools which was started under Bishop Sartain – now Archbishop Sartain of Seattle. The first chapter focuses on Catholic identity of schools...we’ve created annual goals out of the strategic plan that schools are following along with...at our Catechetical Institute each year, we study a different section...I’ve also created a dashboard of Catholic identity (e.g. does the school have Mass once a week and prayers, how many vocations are coming out of the schools, etc.).”

Dr. Weiss – “We use *The Festival Letters* of Bishop Jenky, *The Code of Canon Law*, *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, *The Declaration on Christian Education*, *Vatican Council II*, *To Teach as Jesus Did*, *In Support of Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools*, *Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Schools in the Third Millennium*, and the studies published by the Alliance for Catholic Education, University of Notre Dame.”

Mr. Henry – “We use a binder we created, *The Evangelizing Catholic School* which lists seven characteristics of which need to be evident in our schools. We also use the “Elementary Religion Curriculum Standard” created by our schools office, as well as documents created by our Office of Catechesis entitled the “Catholic Identity

Assessment, the “Faith Formation Standards and Benchmarks (from our ‘Alive in Christ’ program), as well as our assessment for this initiative. Another document that is used at our high school level is the “Archdiocese of St. Louis Companion to Doctrinal Elements of a Curriculum Framework for the Development of Catechetical Materials for Young People of High School Age (USCCB).”

Common Themes

- Specific plans are in place in all (Arch)Dioceses in the form of documents created, etc. to deal with the revitalizing of the Catholic identity of their schools.
- Church documents are used to aid in this process.

Table 16

Graphic Presentation and Analysis of Responses Based Upon Common Themes (Question Seven)

Superintendent	Several Documents Recently Created by (Arch)Dioceses to Assist in Catholic Identity of Schools	Church Documents Also Used in this Endeavor
Fr. Belmonte	"The main document I use as superintendent is the strategic plan for schools which was started under Bishop Sartain. The first chapter focuses on Catholic identity of schools..."	
Dr. Weiss		"We use... the Catechism of the Catholic Church, To Teach as Jesus Did, Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Schools in the Third Millenium..."
Mr. Henry	"We use a binder we created, 'The Evangelizing Catholic School,' which lists seven characteristics of which need to be evident in our schools. We also use the 'Elementary Religion Curriculum Standard' created by our schools office, as well as documents created by our Office of Catechesis entitled, 'Catholic Identity Assessment,' and the 'Faith Formation Standards and Benchmarks.'"	

Document Analysis

Documentary Research Findings

To begin this section on the document analysis part of this study, the researcher listed the documents which were shared by the interviewed Superintendents in this study, after which the essential components of each document were presented. Following this presentation, a graphic analysis of the data was presented based upon the common themes related to revitalizing Catholic identity that were discovered in

these documents. A special note of thanks is extended to these participants for sharing these documents from their (Arch)Dioceses. In addition, a special note of gratitude is extended to Monsignor Unger of the Archdiocese of St. Louis for sharing several of these documents.

The documents analyzed for this section of the study were as follows:

- *Archdiocese of St. Louis Companion to Doctrinal Elements of a Curriculum Framework for the Development of Catechetical Materials for Young People of High School Age (USCCB)*
- *Catholic Identity Assessment*
- *Elementary Religion Curriculum Standard: Archdiocese of St. Louis*
- *The Evangelizing Catholic School – Archdiocese of St. Louis*
- *Guidelines for Diocese of Joliet Catholic Schools (from Strategic Plan)*
- *Strategic Plan Implementation Checklist for Schools (Diocese of Joliet)*
- *The Meitler Study (Strategic Plan for Diocese of Peoria)*
- *Meitler Study Follow-Up: Faith in Our Future – Building Excellence in Catholic Education 2013-2014 (Diocese of Peoria)*

Archdiocese of St. Louis Companion. This document outlined the core curriculum for Catholic high schools, Parish schools of Religion, and home-schooling throughout the United States. The core curriculum and elective courses for all high school programs were as follows:

Core Curriculum

- The Revelation of Jesus Christ in Scripture
- Who is Jesus Christ?
- The Mission of Jesus Christ (The Paschal Mystery)
- Jesus Christ’s Mission Continues in the Church
- Sacraments as Privileged Encounters with Jesus Christ
- Life in Jesus Christ

Elective Courses

- Sacred Scripture

- History of the Catholic Church
- Living as a Disciple of Jesus Christ in Society
- Responding to the Call of Jesus Christ
- Ecumenical and Interreligious Issues

Catholic Identity Assessment (Archdiocese of St. Louis). This document was sent to each principal at the beginning of the school year to ensure the implementation of the Mission Advancement Initiatives promulgated by Archbishop Carlson.

Student indicators:

- Entire school begins each day with prayer.
- Opportunities for prayer are integrated throughout the day.
- The Eucharist (Mass) is celebrated at least once a week
- Students are prepared for the Sacraments of Penance, Eucharist, and Confirmation.
- Students celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation at least during Advent and Lent.
- Students pray the Rosary during October and May.
- Students pray the Stations of the Cross once a week during Lent.
- Eighth-grade students have classes in apologetics.

Faculty Indicators:

- All Religion teachers are practicing Catholics and certified by the Catholic Education Center.
- All faculty members attend weekly Mass with students.
- Faculty prays together at least once a week.

Institutional Indicators:

- Sacred images are present in classrooms and throughout the school.
- The school uses textbooks approved by the USCCB or the Catholic Education Center.
- Chastity education is fully implemented for students and parents.
- Parents are required to sign the witness statement, "For Those Seeking to Enroll Their Children in a Catholic School or Parish School of Religion."

Elementary Religion Curriculum Standard: Archdiocese of St. Louis. Domains:

This document outlined the principal Truths of the Catholic Faith (identified as domains)

which need to be taught in all Catholic elementary schools of the Archdiocese of St. Louis, MO. These clearly aligned with the “basics” spoken about in the responses that the Ecclesial Leaders and Superintendents gave in the study. In addition, at the beginning of the document, it stated, “The Religion curriculum respects the family as the primary place for the development of faith and attempts to incorporate opportunities for the family to share the Faith.” The domains were as follows:

- Triune God
- Jesus
 - Second Person of the Blessed Trinity
 - Incarnation
 - Life of Jesus
 - Paschal Mystery
 - Presence of Jesus in the Sacraments (special emphasis on the Eucharist) and the Word (Sacred Scripture)
 - Jesus as Teacher
 - Messiah
 - Titles of Jesus (Lord, Son of God, Prince of Peace, Christ, Messiah, Savior, Sacred Heart)
 - Jesus and the Church
 - Mary, Mother of God
- Church
- Worship and Prayer
- Sacraments
- Scripture
- Doctrine
- Morality
- Bringing Forth the Kingdom of God
- Evangelization

The Evangelizing Catholic School (Archdiocese of St. Louis). This document listed seven characteristics of an evangelizing Catholic school. They were as follows:

- A community where all are welcome.

- One in which all leaders and teachers accept the mandate to evangelize through their witness.
- It must authentically and completely live and teach the Gospel message.
- It celebrates God's action and presence in the lives of people through Sacraments and prayer.
- It reaches out to students and families with various backgrounds and needs in order to bring God's Love into their lives.
- It is actively conscious of forming and transforming children and youth according to the social teachings of the Church.
- It makes known the Good News of Jesus to others and invites school families into the Faith community, especially those who are inactive or unchurched.

Guidelines for Diocese of Joliet Catholic Schools (Strategic Plan). The strategic plan for the Diocesan schools of Joliet listed several important descriptors for a vibrant Catholic school. Beforehand, however, it focused on its Catholic Schools Mission Statement, which was as follows:

“Jesus commissioned His apostles to teach and make disciples. Mindful of this twofold mandate, Catholic schools in the Diocese of Joliet provide formation in the Catholic Faith, as well as superior academic education to students of diverse backgrounds. Our Christ-centered education nurtures a personal relationship with Jesus and service to others. Our whole child approach integrates Catholic doctrine, prayer, Sacraments, and moral decision-making with academic achievement and physical health. Working in partnership with parents and Parish communities, Catholic schools prepare students for success in further education, a productive career, and life eternal with God.”

The strategic plan then went on to discuss the plans to be implemented for attainment of the goals in the following areas:

1. Catholic identity:
 - The school promotes a life-long relationship with Jesus Christ wherein students understand and practice the Catholic Faith and Tradition in its fullness...
 - The Sacraments, especially the weekly Eucharistic Liturgy, are the “source and summit” of Faith formation in Catholic schools....

- Religious signs and symbols are prominently displayed in classrooms, corridors, and common areas emphasizing the Catholic character of the schools.
 - All teachers of Religion in grades K-12 will be Catholics in good standing with the Catholic Church.
 - All principals will be Catholics in good standing with the Catholic Church, active participants in the life of their Parish and committed to the school's religious mission.
 - School leadership will identify ways to increase the involvement of parents in the faith formation of their children. Families will be encouraged to attend liturgy weekly (Sunday Mass) and actively participate in the life of their Parish.
 - The Principal, Pastor, and other appropriate Parish staff will craft a strategy to reach out to parents who are not actively engaged in their Faith...
2. Academic Excellence
 3. Leadership for Schools
 4. Marketing/Enrollment Management School leadership will promote awareness and understanding of the (school's) mission...
 5. Governance of Schools
 6. High Schools
 7. Facilities
 8. New Directions and Restructuring
 9. New Schools and Expansion

Strategic Plan Implementation Checklist for Schools (Diocese of Joliet). This helpful checklist, given to each school, included descriptors under each of the above named goals from the Diocese of Joliet's strategic plan. A summary of the descriptors under the Catholic identity goal were as follows:

Catholic Identity

- Our school prominently displays its mission statement.
- Our school displays Religious symbols, art work, Scripture verses and other visual representations of the Catholic Faith throughout the school environment as reminders of the school's identity and mission.
- Religion teachers actively participate in the Diocesan Catechetical Certification program...
- School follows Diocesan Faith Formation curriculum.

- School provides weekly opportunity for every child to attend Mass.
- School provides regular opportunities for faculty, students, and families to participate in the celebration and reception of the Sacraments of the Eucharist and Reconciliation, as well as in prayer services and activities that celebrate the Church's Liturgical Seasons.
- School administers the Diocesan Faith Formation Assessment annually.

The Meitler Study (Diocese of Peoria). The Meitler Study was the strategic plan implemented in Peoria, IL, which was created in 2007. It offered a comprehensive plan in ensuring the continuing excellence and availability of the Catholic schools in the Diocese. The main sections of the study were as follows:

1. Promotion of the value and advantage of Catholic schools (Observations regarding this section that were made in the study include):
 - The commitment of Pastors to schools is very strong. They are highly visible in the school on a consistent basis, visiting classrooms, interacting with students, teaching Religion classes, meeting with faculty, etc.
 - The schools provide many ways for students to experience, know, and live the Catholic Faith. Eucharistic celebrations, recitation of the Rosary, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Stations of the Cross, daily prayer, and prayer services are common practices.
 - Students are involved in service projects of outreach to the local community and on the national and international level.
 - The Assessment of Catholic Religious Education (ACRE) is administered annually for students in Grades 5, 8, and 11. Diocesan wide results indicate levels of knowledge of the Faith above the national norm
2. Recruitment and retention of students
3. Continuous improvement
4. Collaboration among schools
5. Increase lay leadership
6. Adoption of a new funding model
7. Location of schools needed to serve Diocese in the future
8. Effective use of technology

The goals for Catholic Identity listed in the Meitler Study were as follows:

1. Catholic schools will be recognized throughout the Diocese as an important ministry of Church and Parish and for the vital contribution they make to the future of the Church and society.
2. Each elementary and secondary school will continually strengthen its historically Catholic and Christ-centered mission, its Religious instructional program, and the way it fosters the faith development of its teachers, students, and parents.

Meitler Study Follow-Up: Faith in Our Future – Building Excellence in Catholic

Education 2013-2014 (Diocese of Peoria). This document was created in order to assist the Catholic schools in the Diocese of Peoria with the ongoing implementation of the Meitler Study which was initiated in 2007. This document contained a helpful outline to ensure that each school was following through with the findings of the Meitler Study in order to promote the Catholic identity and sustainability of the Diocesan schools of Peoria. The major goals of the study focused on Catholic identity, curriculum and instruction, enrollment management, marketing, development, fiscal management, and funding. It consisted of a time table for specific action items to be completed and presented to the Office of Catholic Schools to show implementation of the Meitler Study recommendations. The time table was as follows:

- Pre-Meeting homework for each school’s site team (sent out one month prior to Office of Catholic Schools on-site workshop day).
- Workshop on-site with school site team and Office of Catholic Schools team (September – February)
- School site teams continue strategic planning work.
- School site teams return to the Office of Catholic Schools to present their strategic plans (one hour meeting with 2 – 3 members of the school’s team in March or April)
- The Office of Catholic Schools team summarizes schools’ strategic plans and presents them to Bishop Jenky.

- The Office of Catholic Schools is hopeful for a Capital Campaign focused on Catholic schools and the resources needed for continued sustainability and viability.

This initiative also contained a list of Catholic Identity questions for reflection that were given to the strategic plan team at each of the Diocesan schools to assist them in assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the Catholic identity of their schools.

Some of the questions are as follows:

- Do teachers utilize the Diocesan Religion curriculum (or United States Bishops' High School Catechetical Framework)?
- Are all Religion teachers certified catechists?
- Do Religious Education and Sacramental Preparation programs provide for significant parental involvement?
- Is Religion class offered daily at each grade level? (Note: Mass is not considered a substitute for Religion class).
- Is each Eucharistic Liturgy (Sacred Mass) given the priority it deserves as the "Source and Summit of the Christian life" - reverence for the Real Presence (of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist, participation in prayers, etc.
- Is sacred artwork displayed prominently throughout the school building?
- How does the school encourage formation in virtues?
- How are students introduced to the various devotional practices of the Church (Eucharistic Adoration, Stations of the Cross, Marian Devotions, Angelus, Liturgy of the Hours, pilgrimages)

Common Themes Evident in Documents (Pertaining to Catholic Identity of Schools)

- A focus on Catechesis in the form of getting back to the "basics," and providing the traditional devotions once again for students
- A focus on providing opportunities for prayer, participation in the Liturgy (Mass) and Sacraments for students
- Importance of displaying Religious images in the school environment

- A focus on providing catechesis and Faith formation for adult members of the school community

Table 17

Graphic Presentation and Analysis of Documents Based Upon Common Themes (Documents)

Title of Document	Offering of "Basics" of the Faith in Catechesis & Traditional Devotions	Focus on Providing Opportunities for Prayer, Participation in the Liturgy (Mass) & Sacraments for Students	Importance of Religious Images Displayed in Schools	Focus on Providing Faith Formation for Adult Members of School Community
Archdiocese of St. Louis Companion	Core Courses: The Revelation of Jesus Christ in Scripture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Who is Jesus Christ? •The Mission of Jesus Christ (The Paschal Mystery) •Jesus Christ's Mission Continues in the Church •Sacraments as Privileged Encounters with Jesus Christ •Life in Jesus Christ 	Students will be able to utilize the various forms of prayer to develop intimacy and communion with Jesus." (Content Goal for "The Mission of Jesus Christ" course)		
Catholic Identity Assessment (Archdiocese of St. Louis)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Students are prepared for the Sacraments of Penance, Eucharist, and Confirmation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Opportunities for prayer are integrated throughout the day. The Eucharist (Mass) is celebrated at least once a week •Students pray the Rosary during October and May. •Students pray the Stations of the Cross once a week during Lent. Students celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation at 	Sacred images are present in classrooms and throughout the school.	All Religion teachers are practicing Catholics and certified by the Catholic Education Center. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •All faculty members attend weekly Mass with students. •Faculty prays together at least once a week.

		least during Advent and Lent.		
Elementary Religion Curriculum Standard (Archdiocese of St. Louis)	This document outlines the principal Truths of the Catholic Faith which need to be taught in all Catholic elementary schools of the Archdiocese of St. Louis, MO	Presence of Jesus in the Sacraments (special emphasis on the Eucharist)		...Religion curriculum respects the family as the primary place for the development of Faith... incorporates opportunities for the family to share the Faith.
The Evangelizing Catholic School (Archdiocese of St. Louis)		It celebrates God's action and presence in the lives of people through Sacraments and prayer.		One in which all leaders and teachers accept the mandate to evangelize through their witness.
Guidelines for Catholic Schools (Strategic Plan for Diocese of Joliet)	The school promotes a life-long relationship with Jesus Christ wherein students understand and practice the Catholic Faith and Tradition in its fullness...	The schools promote a personal life-long relationship with Jesus Christ - students understand and practice the Catholic Faith and tradition in its fullness. The Sacraments, especially the weekly Eucharistic Liturgy, are the "source and summit" of Faith formation in Catholic schools.	Religious signs and symbols are prominently displayed in classrooms, corridors, and common areas emphasizing the Catholic character of the schools.	"...Working in partnership with parents and Parish communities, Catholic schools prepare students for success in further education, a productive career, and life eternal with God."
Strategic Plan Implementation Checklist for Schools (Diocese)	Our school prominently displays its mission	School provides weekly opportunity for every child to	Our school displays Religious symbols, art work, Scripture	Religion teachers actively participate in the Diocesan

of Joliet)	statement. School administers the Diocesan Faith Formation Assessment annually.	attend Mass, regular opportunities for faculty, students, and families to participate in the celebration and reception of the Sacraments of the Eucharist and Reconciliation, as well as in prayer services...that celebrate the Church's Liturgical Seasons.	verses and other visual representations of the Catholic Faith throughout the school environment.	Catechetical Certification program...
The Meitler Study (Diocese of Peoria)	Each elementary and secondary school will continually strengthen its historically Catholic and Christ-centered mission, its Religious instructional program...	The schools provide many ways for students to experience, know, and live the Catholic Faith. Eucharistic celebrations, recitation of the Rosary, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Stations of the Cross, daily prayer, and prayer services are common practices.		Each elementary and secondary school will continually strengthen...the way it fosters the faith development of its teachers, students, and parents.
Meitler Study Follow-Up: Faith in Our Future – Building Excellence in Catholic Education 2013-2014 (Diocese of Peoria)	How are students introduced to the various devotional practices of the Church (Eucharistic Adoration, Stations of the Cross, Marian Devotions, Angelus, Liturgy of the Hours, pilgrimages, etc.	Is each Eucharistic Liturgy (Sacred Mass) given the priority it deserves as the “Source and Summit of the Christian life” - reverence for the Real Presence (of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist, participation in prayers, etc.	Is sacred artwork displayed prominently throughout the school building?	Do Religious Education programs and Sacramental Preparation programs provide for significant parent involvement? Are all Religion teachers certified catechists?

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

As mentioned in Chapter IV of this dissertation, the researcher was indeed privileged to obtain such rich data from the responses given by the five Ecclesial Leaders and three Superintendents who participated in the interview segment of this study. As can be seen in the presentation of this data, these responses were then presented and analyzed according to common themes. In addition, the data received from the document analysis segment of the study proved to confirm the common themes discovered in many of the interview responses.

In this final chapter of the dissertation, the researcher will make the connections between the analysis of the data received from both research methods used in this study and the research questions posed in the first chapter of this dissertation. Through the analysis of these connections, the researcher will present implications for today's Catholic school leaders regarding the revitalization of the Catholic identity of their educational institutions. Finally, this chapter will discuss ideas for further research studies which may better assess the degree of effectiveness of the catechetical reform strategies presented in this study, as well as explore other areas related to this important topic.

Overview of Research Project

As mentioned in Chapter I of this dissertation, the purpose of this study was to determine through available documents and select interviews:

1. The challenges that Catholic youth in today's society experience in living their Catholic Faith;
2. How well the Catholic schools are meeting these challenges;
3. What needs to be done in the development of catechesis and the revitalization of the Catholic identity of schools to meet these challenges;
4. The implication for the leadership of Catholic schools.

Research Questions

In order to explore the above-mentioned issues, the researcher posed the following research questions for this study:

1. According to select Ecclesial Leadership of the Catholic Church and Superintendents, what are the challenges that Catholic youth in today's society experience regarding the living of their Catholic Faith?
2. According to select Ecclesial Leadership of the Catholic Church and Superintendents, how well are today's Catholic schools meeting these challenges?
3. According to select Ecclesial Leadership and Superintendents, what needs to be done in the development of catechesis and the revitalization of the

Catholic identity of schools to best meet the challenges of today's Catholic youth?

4. Based upon these findings, what are the implications for the leadership of Catholic schools in order to revitalize the Catholic identity of their own institutions?

Discussion of Findings Pertaining to Research Questions

Research Question #1

According to select Ecclesial Leadership of the Catholic Church and Superintendents, what are the challenges that Catholic youth in today's society experience regarding the living of their Catholic Faith?

Rise of Secularism in Society. As can be noted in several remarks made by the Ecclesial Leaders and Superintendents interviewed in this study, the primary challenge that Catholic youth in today's society experience regarding the living of their Catholic Faith is the rise of secularism in our present-day society. In fact, over 85% of the eight participants interviewed in this study, in one way or another, mentioned the challenge of the rise of secularism in various sections of their answers to the interview questions.

In response to an interview question asking why there is a need to revitalize the Catholic identity of schools (if the participant believed there was a need), Bishop Callahan answered, "We live in an age of secular relativist thinking...we're living in an age when Catholicism itself is misunderstood and misrepresented..." In addition, Fr. Belmonte, Superintendent of Catholic Schools from the Diocese of Joliet, when asked

what he sees as the greatest challenge our youth experience in current society regarding the living out of their Catholic Faith, responded, ..."I guess I would just summarize it by one word – which is the secularization of our society – that we have competing value systems...but one of the differences today is that the secularization of society is marked as a departure from the Catholic culture that our parents would have grown up in and clearly known." He went on to say that this fact makes it much more difficult for young people since they "have to make conscious choices to be religious, to be Catholic, to be ethical." To emphasize how pervasive this secularized culture has become, Fr. Belmonte then stated, "The secular soup in which they swim is difficult to get perspective from, since it's all around them..." Similarly, Dr. Sharon Weiss, Superintendent of the Catholic schools in Peoria stated, "...This is a counter culture that we live in. The greatest challenge is the culture in which we live - which is a culture that is directly opposed to the Gospel of Christ through its actions and beliefs...when they (our students) go out and see these mixed messages, it's heavy upon my heart...I'm afraid they may fall away from their Faith if they're not connected to a good Parish or good Newman Center."

The danger of secularism was also discussed in several sources used in the literature review of this study. Most notably, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI (2007) identified relativism as one of the main causes of the crisis of Faith which society is now experiencing in his book titled, *An Invitation to Faith*:

Today, a particularly insidious obstacle to the task of educating is the massive presence in our society and culture of that relativism which, recognizing nothing as definitive, leaves as the ultimate criterion only the self with its desires. And under the semblance of freedom, it becomes a prison for each one, for it separates people from one another, locking each person into his own ego. With such a relativistic horizon, therefore, real education is not possible without the light of truth...A great effort is therefore asked of Catholics to increase dialogue with the contemporary culture in order to open it to the perennial values of Transcendence. (p. 64)

Additionally, the General Directory of Catechesis stated that atheism, with its negation of God, must be considered one of the most serious problems of our time. It went on to state, "While it can take various forms, it often appears today under the guise of secularism...in many places, this contributes to the rise of an ethical relativism which would remove any sure moral reference point from political and social life."

Similarly, in a recent interview of Cardinal Dolan published in the *Catechist* journal titled, "Cardinal Dolan: Catechist in Chief," His Eminence stated, "Today we face an enormous challenge: secularism, which is invading every aspect of life and developing a mentality in which God is absent from human life and awareness" (Ristow, 2012, p. 30).

Lack of Solid Catechetical Instruction Provided During Last Few Decades. The other main challenge that youth experience in today's society is related to the lack of substance in Catechetical instruction which has been handed down to them over the past few decades after Vatican Council II. In fact, 100% of the participants mentioned this as challenge in their responses to the interview questions. For instance, Bishop Jenky of Peoria stated, "I do think we did a very poor job in passing on the substance of the Faith in the decades after the Council..." In addition, Fr. Belmonte of the Diocese of

Joliet stated, “I just think that the focus has not been particularly clear over the last forty years. There was a problem with the textbooks, for example, that have not focused on the essentials over the last few decades...” Similarly, Bishop Ricken of Green Bay stated, “...The overt and intentional mindset of evangelizing and catechizing students became less important and academics became more important...” In a very interesting observation, Bishop Rice summarized the important purpose of solid catechesis very succinctly when he stated, “...Maybe the way we’ve been doing Catholic education hasn’t been focused – it’s all about encountering Jesus...and then falling in love with Him. When you are in love with Someone, then that dictates everything – the Person of Jesus.”

The above-mentioned quote from Bishop Rice leads perfectly into references from the literature review of this study pertaining to the importance of bringing back instruction in the basics of the Catholic Faith for the ultimate purpose of leading them into an authentic love relationship with Jesus Christ Himself. For example, in the above-mentioned interview with Cardinal Dolan published in the journal *Catechist*, His Eminence states,

So I would say that the most important factor in forming Catholics of all ages in faith, and especially the children, is to help them fall in love with Jesus...so that they will want to learn all about Him, and as disciples, share that knowledge through the Catholic Church with the world. (Ristow, 2012, p. 28)

To further emphasize this point, in the introduction to the *Archdiocese of Chicago: Strategic Plan for Catholic Schools*, Cardinal George states, “The mission of the

Church in every generation is to introduce the world to its Savior. Introducing people to Jesus Christ leads people to discover not only who Jesus is, but also to discover who they are in relation to Him.”

As mentioned in the literature review of this study, Fr. Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalene, O.C.D. (1982) wrote in his book titled, *Divine Intimacy*, “The whole history of creation and redemption converges into this one purpose: the establishment of an intimate, friendly communion between man and God” (p. 142). In fact, he goes on to say, “The knowledge of the Mystery of Christ does not come from study, but from prayer, from prayer at the feet of Jesus, because He has said, ‘He who loves Me...I will love him and manifest Myself to him’” (John 14:21). This wonderful manifestation of Jesus to the soul through prayer and the reception of grace through the Sacraments then empowers youth to joyfully overcome any challenges that they may encounter on their way through life to their True and Eternal Home of Heaven, their ultimate destiny!

To help students come to this level of a personal love relationship with Jesus Christ, however, they need to be catechized in the “basics” of their Catholic Faith. To emphasize this great need, in a recent article by Michael Winters (2009) titled, “Return to Basics,” Cardinal Dolan stated “Bishops today ask if it is not now necessary to rebuild the Church, through reform and renewal. They wonder if we need to start internally, and concentrate on pastoral issues such as widespread catechetical illiteracy...” (p. 10).

Bishop Ricken of Green Bay succinctly connected these two main themes discussed above – that of solid catechesis and the need to bring students into a deeper

union with Jesus, “As noted in Archbishop Miller’s book, *The Holy See’s Teaching on Catholic Schools*, the mission of Catholic schools is to evangelize, catechize, and educate our students, in that order, so that our students will come closer to God (the Father), closer to Jesus, closer to Our Blessed Mother.”

Conclusions and Recommendations

The challenge wrought by the widespread secularization of society, coupled with the lack of solid catechetical content which has been transmitted to the young over the last few decades, have put two huge obstacles in the way of young people in living out the beauty of their Catholic Faith. The secularization of society makes it hard enough, but if young people haven’t even received the knowledge of the Truths of their Catholic Faith - if they haven’t been given the opportunity to develop a love relationship with the Person of Jesus Christ - it almost goes without saying that they wouldn’t even know how to begin to live differently from the way the secularized culture teaches them to live. By saying this, the researcher does not, of course, condone living in a way contrary to Church teachings. She is merely trying to identify the problem, so that it can be resolved as we move forward with the important task of revitalizing the Catholic identity of our institutions. In this way, we can better catechize future generations, and hopefully be able to re-catechize the two to three generations who were not properly catechized over the last 40 years. As Bishop Ricken stated, “We have raised now two – maybe three – generations of people who have not been well catechized, because we

got off track a little bit – everybody with the best of intentions – but it didn't really help these young people.”

As Cardinal George stated in a recent EWTN (Eternal Word Television Network) interview, “Reform begins by looking at Christ, not by adapting to the times” (2013), the time has now come for all Catholic educational institutions to implement true reform. As everyone knows, true reform only comes about by being true to one's mission. In the case of the Church's mission (and the Catholic schools which She serves), it is to be faithful to Her Bridegroom, Jesus Christ, and the Teachings that He has handed down to us through His Holy Catholic Church. The Catholic Church is known as the “Bride of Christ” since,

The origin and growth of the Church are symbolized by the Blood and water which flowed from the open side of the Crucified Jesus. For it was from the side of Christ, as He slept the sleep of death upon the Cross that there came forth the ‘wondrous sacrament of the whole Church.’ As Eve was formed from the sleeping Adam's side, so the Church was born from the pierced Heart of Christ hanging dead on the Cross. (CCC, 766)

Regarding the mission of Catholic schools mentioned above, 100% of the interviewed participants in this study, in one way or another, re-echoed Cardinal George's response that “Catholic schools were founded to hand on the Catholic Faith.” For instance, Bishop Jenky stated, “The core mission of Catholic schools is to evangelize and pass on the Faith.” Similarly, Bishop Callahan stated, “The mission of Catholic schools is to continue the mission of Jesus Christ, and that is the idea of leading souls to the Father. Likewise, Bishop Ricken stated, “The mission of our Catholic schools is to

evangelize, catechize, and educate our students – in that order – so that our students will come closer to God (the Father), closer to Jesus, closer to Our Blessed Mother.”

If all Catholic educational institutions begin implementing these suggestions given by the Ecclesial Leaders of the Catholic Church and Superintendents offered in the study, we will indeed achieve the mission of Catholic schools. In this way, the youth living in the current secularized culture of today will be given the strength and wisdom needed to live holy lives even in the midst of the darkness so prevalent in today’s society. Catholic schools will then begin empowering them to become the Saints that God is calling them to become, in order to help enlighten others in coming to Jesus Christ, “The True Light that enlightens everyone who comes into the world” (John 1:9).

Research Question #2

According to select Ecclesial Leaders of the Catholic Church and Superintendents, how well are Catholic schools meeting these challenges?

To put the answer to this research question in perspective, the researcher would like to state that while approximately 85% of the participants interviewed in this study stated that there was a need to revitalize the Catholic identity of schools across the country in some way or another, the data received from this study displayed answers to this particular research question in ways that actually fell all across the spectrum. For instance, two of the eight interviewed leaders gave answers to indicate that their schools have been working diligently to preserve the Catholic identity of their educational institutions for many years already; thereby, helping their young people

more effectively meet the above-mentioned challenges. For example, His Excellency Bishop Rice, Auxiliary Bishop of St. Louis, stated, “When I was Pastor, I started Eucharistic Adoration on First Fridays, and each class took a half-hour to pray in front of Our Lord.” It can be concluded that this powerful practice which incorporated prayer in front of the True Presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist – the “Source and Summit of our Christian Faith,” as the Vatican II documents state, was very effective in helping the youth of Bishop Rice’s Archdiocese to meet the modern day challenges discussed in Research Question #1. To confirm this reality, Mr. George Henry, the Superintendent of Catholic Education for the Archdiocese of St. Louis, stated, “Our schools have always focused on having a strong Catholic identity, so it has always been here;” thereby, empowering the youth in that Archdiocese to better meet the challenges that face them.

On the other hand, the majority of the (Arch)Diocesan leaders stated that they felt there was currently a need to revitalize the Catholic identity of at least some areas of their educational institutions. For instance, although Dr. Weiss, the Superintendent of Peoria, stated that she would “assess the Catholic identity of her (elementary) schools as very strong at the present time,” she also stated, “I do have a concern from the Superintendent’s office, though, about our high schools – we need to tighten up...I think the role of the chaplain has been somewhat muddied...so I’m working to help our chaplains see how they fit into the high schools and what they can do to make their Catholic identity better.” To illustrate this point even further, as stated earlier, Bishop

Ricken of Green Bay stated, “We have raised two – maybe three – generations of people who have not been well catechized, because we got off track a bit...” Similarly, when asked if he believed that there was a need to revitalize the Catholic identity of schools, Bishop Jenky of Peoria answered, “Absolutely, the statistics about how many parents of children - who in a Catholic school go to Mass - are pretty discouraging trends.”

In addition, there were some responses which indicated that the answer to this question would be answered differently dependent upon which (Arch)Diocese one was talking about. For example, Bishop Rice of St. Louis stated, “...Some (Arch)Dioceses are better than others...for instance, in the Diocese of Lincoln, Nebraska, all Religion classes are taught by a priest or a Religious – this helps them have a strong Catholic identity,” thereby, helping the youth in that Diocese better face the challenges present in today’s society.

Conclusions and Recommendations

A common denominator in all the interview responses regarding this topic did indicate that there needs to be constant vigilance on the part of schools to ensure that their Catholic identity remains strong, whether it is already present in the (Arch)Diocese, or whether it is still something which needs to be more intentionally emphasized. Catholic identity is something that cannot just be taken for granted. In speaking of the need to remain vigilant and intentional regarding the Catholic identity of schools, Bishop Ricken of Green Bay stated, “...It is vitally important that each and every one of our Catholic schools in the Diocese of Green Bay be on a constant vigil to see that Catholic

identity lives on a day-to-day basis in staff-to-student model...We have to be intentional about our Catholic identity.”

It was interesting to note that the participants in the study who answered positively to the question regarding the current Catholic identity of their institutions all discussed the traditional devotions that have been kept up in their (Arch)Dioceses, but have unfortunately, gone by the wayside in some other places. For instance, Bishop Rice of St. Louis brought up the fact that he instituted First Friday Eucharistic Adoration at his parish in St. Louis. Dr. Weiss stated that her Diocese of Peoria implemented a “Year of the Rosary” a few years ago that was effective in spreading more devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary (Who always leads people closer to Her Son, Jesus) and the Rosary. As evidenced through the qualitative data gathered in this study, these “tried and true” devotions, as Bishop Rice called them, are indeed effective in maintaining the Catholic identity of schools; thereby, helping today’s youth better meet the challenges that this culture presents. Through the sanctifying grace given through the reception of the Sacraments and the deepening of their relationship with Jesus and Mary through prayer, today’s youth will become empowered to joyfully and peacefully meet and overcome these challenges, until they attain their ultimate destiny – eternal life with God in Heaven.

Research Question #3

According to select Ecclesial Leaders and Superintendents, what needs to be done in the development of catechesis and the revitalization of the Catholic identity of schools to best meet the challenges of today's Catholic youth?

Catechesis in the Basics of the Faith (Four Pillars of the Catechism). The responses made by both the interviewed Ecclesial Leaders and the Superintendents related to this topic were indeed very comprehensive and rich. In one way or another, once again, 100% of the interviewed participants stated that we need to begin offering (or continue offering – depending upon the Diocese) our young people instruction focused on the “basics” of the Catholic Faith.

Inter-weaving data from the document analysis here, the researcher also found that over 75% of the documents used in this study explicitly stated that schools should implement catechetical instruction in the basics of the Catholic Faith - commonly referred to as the “Pillars” of the Catechism. As mentioned in the literature review of this study, these Pillars consist of the Creed, the Sacraments, the Commandments, and Prayer/Liturgy. In a question regarding the essentials that need to be taught to the young, Cardinal George stated, “The essentials are set out in the Four Pillars of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, as you outlined in your study. They all make sense and hold together in light of Christ's Resurrection from the dead.” Additionally, in a document which His Eminence sent to the researcher after the interview, *Archdiocese of*

Chicago: Strategic Plan for Catholic Schools, a quote from Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI

aptly summarized this point:

...The Christian vision, presented in its breadth and integrity, proves immensely appealing to the imagination, idealism, and aspirations of the young, who have a right to encounter the Faith in all its beauty, its intellectual richness, and its radical demands. (p. 8)

In an effort to present the reader with some of the main essentials of the “Faith in all its beauty,” as Pope Emeritus Benedict referenced above, the researcher would like to highlight several of these essential Truths, outlined in the literature review of this study, which need to be transmitted to the young in Catholic schools:

Holy Trinity – Three Persons in One God - the Father, the Son (Who is Jesus Christ), and the Holy Spirit (CCC, Article 261).

The Incarnation – The Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, Jesus Christ, Who is the Eternal Son of the Father, became man after being conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Blessed Virgin Mary for our sakes some 2,000 years ago in order to save us from sin by dying on the Cross for us (CCC, Article 262). Blessed John Newman stated, the great principle of Catholicism is the Incarnation, the enfleshment of God (Barron, 2011).

Hypostatic Union – In Jesus Christ, the nature of God and the nature of man are united in one Divine Person. God really became man – “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us...” (John 1:14). The union of the two natures in the one Person of Jesus Christ is called the Hypostatic Union.

The Blessed Virgin Mary's Important Role in Salvation History and Her Motherhood of All – Mary is the highest honor of our race since She was chosen to be the Mother of the Eternal Son of the Father, thereby making Her the Mother of God. She gave birth to Jesus Christ, while remaining a Virgin, and was also conceived without original sin through a special grace that applied the Redemptive Sacrifice of Jesus to Her Soul in an anticipatory manner - since there is no time with God (CCC, Article 491). The Blessed Virgin Mary was also given to the entire human race as our Mother when Jesus was dying on the Cross for us. “When Jesus saw His Mother and the disciple there whom He loved, He said to His Mother, ‘Woman, behold your son.’ Then He said to the disciple, ‘Behold your Mother’” (John 19:26-27).

Paschal Mystery – the Crucifixion, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus which redeemed the world, made up for the original sin of Adam and Eve, and opened up the way for us to attain the Beatific Vision and eternal life with God in Heaven after death (CCC, 620).

Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus – Jesus’ rising from the dead on Easter three days after His death on the Cross for us, along with His Ascension back into Heaven to the right hand of the Father 40 days after Easter.

True Presence of Jesus in the Most Holy Eucharist through Transubstantiation – Having passed from this world back to the Father, Jesus leaves with His Church His True and Abiding Presence in the consecrated hosts in all the tabernacles of the world (the substance of which have truly changed into the Sacred Body of Jesus Christ at the words

of consecration by the priest at Mass). “By the consecration, the transubstantiation of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ is brought about. Under the consecrated species of bread and wine, Christ Himself, living and glorious, is present in a true, real, and substantial manner: His Body and His Blood, with His Soul and Divinity” (CCC, Article 1413).

Establishment of the Catholic Church, Christ’s Mystical Body on Earth – Before ascending back to the right hand of the Father in Heaven, Jesus Christ instituted the Catholic Church when he said to St. Peter, the first Pope, “You are rock, and on this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against It. I give to you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven (Matthew 16: 18-19). To expound upon this teaching regarding the establishment of the Pope as the Vicar of Christ on earth, the book, *Survival Guide for Catholics – Answers to Tough Questions* states, “To be given the keys to the city, meant to be given free access to and authority over the city. The city to which Peter was given the keys was the Heavenly City itself” (Catholic Answers, 2005, p. 30). In terms of the Church being called the Mystical Body of Christ on earth, the Catechism of the Catholic Church states, “Participation in the Holy Sacrifice identifies us with His Heart, sustains our strength along the pilgrimage of this life, makes us long for eternal life, and unites us even now to the Church in heaven, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and all the saints” (CCC, Article 1419). In addition, within the

Catholic Church are contained the means through which we receive sanctifying grace, which is a sharing in the Life of God, by means of the Seven Sacraments.

The Last Things – the Last Things consist of death, judgement, heaven, purgatory, and hell. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states, “Each man receives his eternal retribution in his immortal soul at the very moment of his death, in a particular judgement that refers his life to Christ; either entrance into the blessedness of heaven – through purification or immediately – or immediate and everlasting damnation” (CCC, Article 1022). Regarding the place of purification, “The Church gives the name Purgatory to this final purification of the elect, which is entirely different from the punishment of the damned (CCC, Article 1031).

Furthermore, Bishop Ricken from the Diocese of Green Bay stated that he would offer two things as being non-negotiable in terms of essentials to be transmitted to the young, “Number one – the importance of attending Sunday Mass with an appreciation of the Mass as the Source and Summit of our Faith, and number two – the importance of having and nurturing a prayer.” On this note of Sunday Mass attendance - as mentioned in the Commandments section of the literature review of this study - it is a requirement of the Third Commandment which states, “Remember to keep holy the Sabbath,” so students must be taught that it is actually a mortal sin to miss Mass on Sundays (unless, of course, they are gravely ill and cannot attend).

Importance of Re-Introducing Students to the Traditional Devotions of the Catholic Faith. In regards to the importance of re-introducing students to the

traditional devotions of the Catholic Faith, once again approximately 85% of the participants brought this concept up in one or more of their responses. For instance, Bishop Jenky gave a very descriptive response of the need to re-introduce our students to the traditional devotions of the Catholic Faith when he stated,

I think they (students) need to be introduced to the lore of Catholic Christianity...the customs, the organizing traditions...we need the whole Catholic ethos in our schools, and we know that there was – as we all know – a period that we let this go.” He went on to say “It should be part of what we offer – ‘affective Catholicism’ – touch, taste, smell Catholicism, and no apologies about Our Blessed Mother. She enhances our relationship with Christ – She is the principal Evangelist. The Second Vatican Council says that far from separating us from Christ, She enhances our relationship with the Lord.

To show how this thought was shared by other leaders in (Arch)Dioceses across the country, Fr. Belmonte from the Diocese of Joliet stated that he implemented the Three-Year Devotional Project in his schools in which “We focused on devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus the first year, devotion to Our Blessed Mother during the second year, and devotion to the Saints the third year.” Regarding the Sacred Heart of Jesus devotion, it began through Revelations given to St. Margaret Mary, a Religious sister in France in the 1600’s. Jesus appeared to her showing His Sacred Heart aflame with a burning love for all of humanity. Jesus said to her, “Behold this Heart which has so loved man, and been so little loved in return.” This devotion focuses on the great love Jesus has for all of mankind, symbolized by the image of His Heart held out to us (Larkin, 1956).

Similarly, Dr. Sharon Weiss of the Diocese of Peoria stated, “In regards to a program from a few years back, the Year of the Rosary, a speaker came out to the schools to distribute Rosary kits. Schools prayed a decade of the Rosary after their weekly school Mass and throughout the week in their classrooms. We made sure that in the designated months of Our Blessed Mother in May and October – we would do more things. It was very helpful.”

To explain the rationale for offering the beauty of these traditional Catholic devotions for students to experience, Mr. Henry, Superintendent of the Archdiocese of St. Louis stated, “Our students need to understand who Jesus is not only in their head, but also in their heart.” Bishop Jenky beautifully expounded upon this point when he stated, “The great strength of Catholicism is affective. We don’t have either/or, we have both/and! For our schools, I would use ritual...it acts it all out - its ways people remember. I sometimes think that the smell of candles, the smell of incense – it gets somewhere between the brain, the soul, and the body – so we should not lose all that.”

In regards to findings from the documentary research conducted in this study regarding this topic, the Meitler Study, the strategic plan for the Diocese of Peoria, stated, “The schools provide many ways for students to experience, know, and live the Catholic Faith. Eucharistic celebrations, recitation of the Rosary, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Stations of the Cross, daily prayer, and prayer services are common practices. Similarly, in the *Catholic Identity Assessment of the Archdiocese of St. Louis*, it

states that, “Students pray the Rosary during October and May,” and “Students pray the Stations of the Cross once a week during Lent.”

Devotion to Our Blessed Mother Mary and the Rosary. As mentioned in the literature review of this study, a letter from the Congregation for Catholic Education titled “The Virgin Mary in Intellectual and Spiritual Formation” explains, “The Virgin was actively present in the life of the Church – at its beginning (the Mystery of the Incarnation), in its being set up (the mystery of Cana and of the Cross) and in its manifestation (the mystery of Pentecost); She is an ‘active presence’ throughout the Church’s history, being ‘at the center of the pilgrim Church’ (Redemptoris Mater, Pope John Paul II), performing a multiple function: of cooperation in the birth of the faithful in the life of grace, of exemplarity in the following of Christ, of maternal mediation” (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988). In addition, the letter goes on to state, “The deed by which Christ entrusted the disciple to the Mother and the Mother to the disciple (John 19:25-27) has established the very closest relationship between Mary and the Church.

As mentioned in the literature review of this study, the Blessed Virgin Mary was given to the entire human race as our Mother when Jesus was dying on the Cross for us. “When Jesus saw His Mother and the disciple there whom He loved, He said to His Mother, ‘Woman, behold your son.’ Then He said to the disciple, ‘Behold your Mother’” (John 19:26-27). Since Catholic schools carry on the mission of the Church, they must

transmit to their students the importance of devotion to Mary, the Mother of God, the spiritual Mother of all mankind, and the Mother of the Church.

One of the best ways to accomplish this is to teach students (and provide opportunities for them) to pray the Rosary on a regular basis. As Bishop Jenky so beautifully mentioned earlier, and as Bishop Callahan reiterated, “There’s no better way to go through the day than to truly meditate on the Life of Our Lord with Mary – so the Rosary teaches us that...I remember even on the bus that I used to go to work on, I would say the Rosary.”

In addition, as Pope John Paul II (2002) stated in his Apostolic Letter, *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*,

Simple, yet profound, the Rosary still remains, at the dawn of this third millennium, a prayer of great significance, destined to bring forth a harvest of holiness. Each decade (consisting of one Our Father, ten Hail Mary’s, and one Glory Be) is devoted to contemplating a different Mystery in the Life of Our Lord. In this way, the Rosary is actually a synthesis of the Gospels, therefore, making it a very powerful prayer. The Rosary consists of contemplating Christ through the eyes of Mary. Mary lived with Her eyes fixed on Christ, treasuring His every word. In the Rosary, Mary constantly sets before the faithful the mysteries of Her Son, through whose meditation, we are enabled to enter into contact with the memories and contemplative gaze of Mary. Against the background of the words ‘Ave Maria,’ the principal events of the Life of Jesus Christ pass before the eyes of the soul. They take shape in the complete series of the Joyful, (Luminous), Sorrowful, and Glorious Mysteries, and they put us in loving communion with Jesus through – we might say – the Heart of His Mother.

As everyone knows, in order to come to love someone, you must first come to know them. The best way; therefore, to come to love Jesus Christ Himself, is to get to know Him better. What better way to get to know Him than by meditating on the

beautiful Events of His Life as made known to us in the Gospels – and summarized for us in the Mysteries of the Rosary. The Mysteries of the Rosary help us get to know Jesus better, in order to love Him more - since He is so extremely lovable! This reminds one of the remark made by St. Augustine in his autobiography titled, *The Confessions*, wherein he states that to fall in love with God is the greatest of all romances. And then again, “...You have made us for Yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You” (Lelen, 1997, p. 19). One must not forget to add that the effectiveness of the recitation of the Rosary comes through the powerful intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Who helps us see Jesus “through Her Eyes,” as Pope John Paul II (2002) taught us in his Apostolic Letter on the Rosary.

Another great advantage in teaching students how to pray the Rosary – while meditating deeply on the Mysteries in the Life of Jesus and Mary – is the fact that it helps young people see how they can model their own lives after the lives of Our Lord and Blessed Mother. For instance, while contemplating Mary’s “Yes” to God at the Annunciation, students will come to realize the great joy and power of saying “Yes” to God. For Mary’s “Yes,” opened the way for Jesus Christ, the long-awaited Savior, to come into this world in order to redeem us by His Most Merciful Death on the Cross. Additionally, Jesus’ and Mary’s “Yes” reversed the “No” of Adam and Eve; thereby, re-ordering the whole of creation back to its right alignment with God the Father, as Fr. Robert Barron would say in his *Catholicism Project* (Barron, 2011).

It is noteworthy to mention that, in all of the approved Marian Apparitions of the last century, the Blessed Virgin Mary has asked for the daily recitation of the Holy Rosary. Particularly at Fatima, Portugal in 1917 when Our Blessed Mother appeared to three young children, Mary's main request was for the daily recitation of the Holy Rosary and devotion to Her Immaculate Heart - which then leads one to the Sacred Heart of Jesus (Sharkey, 1976). As children of so great a Heavenly Mother, Catholic schools should teach their students to heed Mary's requests, made known to us through Her approved Apparitions.

Eucharistic Adoration and Benediction. In the spirit of re-introducing students to the beautiful customs and rich traditions of the Holy Catholic Faith, Adoration of Jesus in the Most Holy Eucharist - with Benediction, must again be provided for students on a regular basis. In this way, schools will be providing opportunities for their students and parents to enter into a real personal Love relationship with Jesus Christ Himself, as Bishop Rice mentioned earlier in this study. Given the fact that Jesus still physically remains with us here on earth disguised as a little host - in every tabernacle in every Catholic Church throughout the world - this should be no problem whatsoever! As Jesus stated before ascending into Heaven, "I will be with you all days, even until the end of the world" (Matt. 28:20). Our Lord keeps this promise in the Most Holy Eucharist, reserved in every tabernacle in every Catholic Church throughout the world. School leadership must, however, take advantage of this Great Gift of Jesus' enduring Physical Presence on earth and bring their students directly to Him by providing many

opportunities to adore Him in Eucharistic Adoration. As Bishop Rice stated in the interview, “When Pastor, I started Eucharistic Adoration on First Fridays (the day typically devoted to the Sacred Heart of Jesus), and each class took a half-hour to pray in front of Our Lord.” In addition, as quoted in the literature review of this study, Cardinal Dolan stated, “The greatest pastoral challenge we will face as parish priests is to rekindle in our people a childlike, vibrant faith in the wonder of the Eucharist.”

Frequent Reception of the Sacraments

Sacraments. In regards to the importance of preparing our students for the worthy reception of the Sacraments, 100% of the Ecclesial Leaders interviewed, as well as 100% of the documents analyzed clearly spoke about this need. For instance, Cardinal George stated, “We are a Sacramental Church. In the Sacraments, we are not just taught by Christ – we are also touched by Christ.” Bishop Jenky stated, “They (Sacraments) all celebrate Catholic Incarnational Christianity – that we aren’t just minds, we aren’t just dis-embodied spirits – we are body and soul. Bishop Ricken, in trying to show the importance of receiving the Sacraments often, stated, “I believe it is important for Catholics to feel that while the Sacraments and Sacramentals are special, they can also be ‘naturally special,’ that is, the mindset that one’s faith and the graces/ Sacraments that accompany it, have to be as natural a part of a Catholic’s everyday life as going to the grocery store.”

These responses quoted above certainly help to explain the important role the regular and worthy reception of the Sacraments should play in the lives of Catholic

school students. As defined in the literature review of this study, a Sacrament “is a sensible (visible) sign instituted by Jesus Christ, by which invisible grace and sanctification are communicated to the soul” (Hardon, 1999, p. 477). Since the Sacraments are the primary means by which grace (a sharing in the Life of God) is received by the soul, it would behoove all Catholic school leaders to provide plenty of opportunities for their students to “draw from the springs of grace” provided for us in the Sacraments by Jesus Christ Himself.

The connection between the need for schools to offer solid instruction in catechesis related to the Sacraments, as well as offering them frequent opportunities to receive the Sacraments is clearly shown in the Apostolic Exhortation, *Catechesi*

Tradendae of Pope John Paul II,

Catechesis always has reference to the Sacraments. On one hand, the catechesis that prepares for the Sacraments is an eminent kind and every form of catechesis necessarily leads one to the Sacraments of Faith. On the other hand, authentic practice of the Sacraments is bound to have a catechetical aspect. In other words, sacramental life is impoverished and very soon turns into hollow ritualism if it is not based on serious knowledge of the meaning of the Sacraments, and catechesis becomes intellectualized if it fails to come alive in Sacramental practice. (Pope John Paul, 1980)

Providing Students with Frequent Opportunities for Reception of Jesus in Holy Communion. Providing frequent opportunities for students to receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion in our schools cannot be overemphasized. Using sources quoted in the literature review of this study, as well as findings from the data received in the study, the researcher would like to further expound upon this importance since it is so critical

in helping students grow in holiness and grace. As Pope John Paul II stated in *Catechesis Tradendae*, “Catechesis is intrinsically linked with the whole of liturgical and sacramental activity, for it is in the Sacraments, especially the Eucharist, that Christ Jesus works in fullness for the transformation of human beings” (Pope John Paul, 1980).

In addition, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states,

At the Last Supper, on the night He was betrayed, our Savior instituted the Eucharistic Sacrifice of His Body and Blood. This He did in order to perpetuate the Sacrifice of the Cross throughout the ages until He should come again, and so to entrust to His beloved Spouse, the Church, a memorial of His Death and Resurrection: a Sacrament of Love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a Paschal Banquet ‘in which Christ is consumed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us.’ (CCC, Article 1323)

It must be made clear once again that the Holy Eucharist (also known as Holy Communion) is not simply one of the Sacraments – it is the True Physical Presence of Jesus Christ Himself – Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity - transcending time and space in order to remain here on earth to guide mankind on their journey to Heaven. Knowing this, all Catholic schools should make it a point to provide their students with as many opportunities as possible to receive the Loving Jesus who waits for them day and night in all the tabernacles of the world! Think of the strength they will then receive – not only to resist the negative influences in the world today – but also to help transform the world by the holiness of their lives which will come about by the frequent reception of Jesus in Holy Communion. As Pope John Paul II stated in *Catechesis Tradendae*, “Catechesis is intrinsically linked with the whole of liturgical and sacramental activity,

for it is in the Sacraments, especially the Eucharist, that Christ Jesus works in fullness for the transformation of human beings” (Pope John Paul, 1980).

Providing Students with Frequent Opportunities to Receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Likewise, the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) is also a very important Sacrament for students to receive often since the grace received from this Sacrament strengthens them to resist temptation and sin. As discussed in the literature review, Jesus Christ instituted this important Sacrament on the evening of His Resurrection from the dead on Easter Sunday,

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said, ‘Peace be with you.’ When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, Peace be with you. As the Father has sent Me, so I send you...Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you shall forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained. (John 20:19-23)

This discussion of temptation mentioned above brings up another one of the “basics” of our Catholic Faith which students need to be taught in order to have a complete understanding of the First Pillar of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, that of the Creed. As part of instruction on the section of the Creed which speaks about God being the Creator of Heaven and earth, students need to be taught about the entire realm of spiritual beings that God created before creating human beings. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states, “The existence of the spiritual, non-corporeal beings that Sacred Scripture usually calls Angels is a Truth of Faith” (CCC, 328).

Furthermore, referring to the reality of the fallen angels who tempt us (as opposed to the good angels who help us), the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states, “Behind the disobedient choice of our first parents (Adam and Eve) lurks a seductive voice, opposed to God, which makes them fall into death out of (the devil’s) envy (CCC, 391). The Catechism goes on to state, “Sacred Scripture speaks of a sin of these (fallen) angels. This ‘fall’ consists in the free choice of these created spirits, who radically and irrevocably rejected God and His Reign” (CCC, 392).

When speaking of temptation, therefore, it often involves a spiritual struggle in saying “No” to suggestions made by the devil. Although unpleasant, this discussion on the source of temptation is necessary in order to emphasize the importance of providing students with all the means necessary, especially through frequent reception of Holy Communion and Reconciliation, to resist sin and temptation. Before presenting the reality of the devil to students, however, emphasis should be placed upon the reality of the good angels who help us through life. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states, “The whole life of the Church benefits from the mysterious and powerful help of the angels” (CCC, 334). In fact, God gave each person a Guardian Angel to help them on their journey through this world to Heaven (CCC, 336). It is necessary; therefore, when instructing students in these matters to keep this balanced approach of emphasizing that they need not fear the devil – they just need to know he exists in order to be careful not to fall into his temptations. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states, “The power of satan is, nonetheless, not infinite (as is God’s); he is only a creature,

powerful from the fact that he is a pure spirit, but still a creature – he cannot prevent the building up of God’s Reign” (CCC, 395).

Evidence from Document Analysis Regarding the Need for Reception of

Sacraments. The findings from the document analysis also show the great emphasis the various (Arch)Diocesan school systems are putting on the reception of the Sacraments for their school children. In fact, 100% of the eight documents analyzed in this study speak to the need of providing regular opportunities for students to receive the Sacraments, especially Holy Communion and Reconciliation (Confession). For instance, the Strategic Plan Implementation Checklist for the Diocese of Joliet specifically states that the “School provides weekly opportunity for every child to attend Mass, (as well as) regular opportunities for faculty, students, and families to participate in the celebration and reception of the Sacraments of the Eucharist and Reconciliation...” Likewise, the Catholic Identity Assessment of the Archdiocese of St. Louis states, “The Eucharist (Mass) is celebrated at least once a week (in each school). Similarly, the Meitler Study (Strategic Plan) of the Diocese of Peoria states, “The schools provide many ways for students to experience, know, and live the Catholic Faith. Eucharistic celebrations, recitation of the Rosary, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Stations of the Cross, daily prayer, and prayer services are common practices.” In addition, the *Catholic Identity Assessment* from St. Louis states, “The Eucharist is celebrated at least once a week... Students celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation at least during Advent and Lent.”

Catechesis on and Distribution of Sacramentals

Regarding the use of Sacramentals in schools, approximately 75% of leaders interviewed in this study explicitly addressed the importance of promoting their use among the students in Catholic schools.

As stated in the *Modern Catholic Dictionary*,

The Sacramentals of the Church are objects or actions that the Church uses after the manner of Sacraments, in order to achieve through the merits of the faithful certain spiritual effects. They differ from Sacraments in not having been instituted by Christ to produce their effect in virtue of the ritual performed. Their efficacy depends not on the rite itself, as in the Sacraments, but on the influence of prayerful petition (Hardon, 1999).

The best known Sacramentals include the Rosary, the Brown Scapular, the Miraculous Medal of Our Blessed Mother, Crucifixes, holy water, medals, statues, blessed candles, etc. Bishop Rice stated, “The Sacramentals give a ‘heart’ to our Faith, that’s where we find a ‘hook,’ so to speak, that gives the heart its special connection to the Faith through the different devotions promoted by the Sacramentals.”

Additionally, Bishop Jenky stated,

...And the Sacramentals are a part of that whole array of ways that tie us into the Sacramental structure – blessed candles, holy water, relics of the saints, Scapulars, medals – all those things we cannot neglect...all the children received the Brown Scapular when they made their First Holy Communion.

Similarly, Bishop Callahan stated,

Sacramentals are there for us to help us take advantage of God’s grace and to be aware of who we are in relationship to God in a very practical way. The Lives of the Saints are very important. It’s important to know that there are people who have endured the same kind of situations that we have endured...The Rosary –

there's no better way to go through the day than to truly meditate on the Life of Our Lord with Mary – so the Rosary teaches us that.

Moral Teachings of the Catholic Church

Another theme that was explicitly brought up by at least 50% of the participants in the study was the need to catechize our young people in an age-appropriate way in the moral Teachings of the Church, especially at the high school and junior high grade levels. If young people are not firmly grounded in the Moral Teachings of the Catholic Church, they will not even have the knowledge of how to live in the current secularized culture which espouses practices that are diametrically opposed to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the Teachings of His Holy Catholic Church. As Fr. Belmonte, Superintendent of Catholic Schools in Joliet stated,

...We have competing value systems...We've always had competing value systems as Cardinal George has said in some interviews...but one of the differences today is that the secularization of society is marked as a departure from the Catholic culture that our parents would have grown up in and clearly known. Our young people have to make conscious choices to be religious, to be Catholic, to be ethical, much more so than their parents...The secular soup in which they swim is difficult to get perspective from, since it's all around them...So we have to help them make good choices, to choose the Gospel, to choose the Church, and to follow God...rather than some of the other things society would have them select.

Because of this, our Catholic educational institutions must clearly explain and emphasize to their students the beauty of the Church's moral teachings as discussed in the literature review of this study. As Bishop Callahan stated as part of his response to the essentials that need to be taught to Catholic youth, "...We teach the Sacraments, we teach the Commandments, we teach a moral life. So I would say, the Catechism of the

Catholic Church is essential, a well-ordered moral understanding of the world based on those issues is essential.” In addition, Dr. Sharon Weiss, shared that the high schools in her Diocese of Peoria have already begun “Taking a very active role in the sanctity of life through the various clubs and ministries that have been created in schools to give a public witness of their commitment to the defense of human life – taking students to the March for Life in Washington, D.C. – so that’s been encouraging.” Related to the topic of moral issues, Mr. George Henry, Superintendent of Catholic Education for the Archdiocese of St. Louis, stated, “...The changes that are occurring in our family structure and units today are challenges for us. Much of what we can do in schools has to do with what families are doing or not doing at home.”

In an effort to assist Catholic schools in helping their students in this regard, a summary of the major moral teachings of the Catholic Church which are currently the most misunderstood in today’s society will be discussed in order to shed some light on the true freedom one receives by following these teachings. As Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI so aptly explained in his book titled, *Invitation to Faith*, “The “no’s” of the Commandments are as many “yes’s” to the growth of true freedom” (p. 16).

Some of these moral Teachings of the Catholic Church which lead one to true freedom are as follows:

- The importance of respect for all human life from conception to natural death
- The necessity of remaining chaste until entering into the Sacrament of Marriage - unless one is not called to the married state. If this is the case, he/she is called to live chastely for the rest of his/her life

- The necessity of married couples being open to bringing new life into the world (and ultimately to Heaven)
- The importance of maintaining the family structure the way God intended - that of a life-long union between one man and one woman in the Sacrament of Marriage

The following citations from the literature review of this study further explain the rationale and the importance of these above-mentioned moral teachings of the Church:

Necessity of Respecting All Human Life from Conception to Natural Death

- “Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception” (CCC, Article 2270).
- “Human life is sacred, because from its beginning, it involves the creative action of God God alone is the Lord of Life from the beginning to until its end: no one can, in any circumstance, claim for himself the right to destroy directly an innocent human being (*Evangelium Vitae – The Gospel of Life*, Pope John Paul II, 1987).

Necessity of Practicing Chastity (Abstinence)

- Since this Commandment (Sixth Commandment – “You shall not commit adultery”) safeguards the gift of sexual union that God has granted to a man and woman in the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony as a pledge of spiritual communion and a life-giving act, there are several occasions of sin that must be avoided when guarding this gift: adultery, lust, masturbation, fornication (carnal union between an unmarried man and an unmarried woman), pornography, prostitution, rape, and homosexual acts, since they are contrary to the natural law and close the sexual act to the gift of life.
- Basing itself on Sacred Scripture, which presents homosexual acts as acts of grave depravity, tradition has always declared that homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered (CCC, Article 2357). People with a homosexual tendency are still called to fulfill God’s Will in their lives and, if they are Christians, to unite to the Sacrifice of the Lord’s Cross the difficulties they may encounter from their condition, while being treated with respect, compassion, and sensitivity (CCC, Article 2358). Homosexual persons are called to chastity (CCC, Article 2359).

Necessity of Married Couples Being Open to Bringing New Life into the World (and Ultimately to Heaven)

- The Church, as interpreted by its constant doctrine, teaches that each and every marriage act must remain open to the transmission of life (*Humanae Vitae*, Paul VI, 1968). Conjugal love naturally tends to be fruitful. A child does not come from the outside as something added on to the mutual love of the spouses, but springs from the very heart of that mutual giving, as its fruit and fulfillment. It is therefore necessary that each and every marriage act remain ordered per se to the procreation of human life...the unitive significance and the procreative significance are both inherent to the marriage act (CCC, Article 2366). “God created man in His Own Image...male and female He created them. He blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and multiply” (CCC, Article 2331).
- Contraception offends against the openness to procreation required of marriage and also the inner truth of conjugal love (CCC, 2370).

Necessity of Maintaining the Family Structure the Way God Intended

- The Sacrament of Matrimony was made by God Himself when He created Adam and Eve. “A man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cling to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh” (Genesis 2:24). The word “matrimony” comes from two Latin words, “matris” and “munus,” which is translated to mean “the duty of motherhood.” The very name indicates God’s main purpose in instituting this Sacrament (Ripley, 2002).
- God, Who is infinite Goodness, made marriage for the good of the man, the woman, and the children, as well as for the happiness of the family, the good of the state, and the well-being of the human race. Thus, to violate God’s Laws in marriage can only result in injury to all those Whom God intended to benefit by His Laws (Ripley, 2002).

Continuous Faith Formation for Staff and Parents

Another common theme which was found in the responses of the interviewed leaders related to the need for providing principals, teachers, and parents ongoing Faith formation. In fact, more than 85% of participants interviewed stated that there was indeed a need for schools to offer ongoing faith formation for both staff members and parents. For instance, Bishop Jenky of Peoria stated,

I think the teachers and administration themselves have to come through their own conversion experience...They cannot give what they haven't got – and if they don't know Jesus Christ, and if He is not the Lord of their life, and if they are not people of prayer – if they are not 'fired up' about Catholic Christianity, they will not be effective witnesses. So the first thing is the continuing conversion – and, in some cases – initial conversion to the Lord Jesus Christ, and that they have the Catholic Faith as at the heart of what they're doing – and not just one of those things at the side of their mission as teachers...And of course, we have parents who themselves were not necessarily catechized in the Faith. There may be exceptions to that – maybe the majority aren't like that – but I don't know, it might be the majority.

Similarly, Bishop Ricken explained,

If one looks at the profile of staffing in our Catholic schools over the last 30 years, you will find a significant change from the presence of ordained priests, Religious Orders of Sisters and Brothers being replaced by the laity. While that unto itself isn't necessarily a bad thing; nevertheless, the overt and intentional mindset of evangelizing and catechizing students became less important and academics became more important. This was due in large part, I think, to the laity that replaced the people from the consecrated life. They were trained as secular teachers, however, we were/are at the mercy of the Faith development of the teachers we hired to pass on the Faith.

Bishop Callahan repeats the same theme when he says, "It really boils down to the fact of trying to evangelize before we even get the children in school. We've got a lot of work to do with parents, so I think that we really need to keep trying our best efforts to put forth the best things we can do to build families...." Additionally, in the *Archdiocese of Chicago: Strategic Plan for Catholic Schools*, one of the action items speaks to the need of ensuring strong faith formation for teachers.

On the note of documents analyzed in this study, the findings pointed to the need for ongoing faith formation for adult members of the school community.

Approximately 75% of the documents analyzed for this study explicitly stated the

importance of schools providing faith formation for teachers, principals, and parents on an ongoing basis. For example, the *Catholic Identity Assessment of the Archdiocese of St. Louis* states, "All Religion teachers are practicing Catholics and certified by the Catholic Education Center...All faculty members attend weekly Mass with students.... Faculty prays together at least once a week." In addition, the *Strategic Plan Implementation Checklist for Schools of the Diocese of Joliet* states, "Religion teachers actively participate in the Diocesan Catechetical Certification program..." Similarly, the *Meitler Study (Strategic Plan for the Diocese of Peoria)* states, "Each elementary and secondary school will continually strengthen...the way it fosters the faith development of its teachers, students, and parents."

Importance of Displaying Religious Images in Schools

An additional recommendation to aid in the revitalizing of the Catholic identity of schools, as analyzed through the data received from the documents used in this study, was the necessity of having religious images, statues, and sacred artwork displayed in prominent places in the schools. As 50% of the analyzed documents explicitly state - while others imply it by means of emphasizing a Catholic environment in the schools - statues and sacred artwork should be exhibited in classrooms and corridors of the school building. This truly does help create a more vibrant Catholic identity, since every time the students see these Religious images; it helps them to raise their minds and hearts to God and the consideration of their ultimate destiny in life. To quote some documents regarding this importance, the *Catholic Identity Assessment of*

the Archdiocese of St. Louis states, “Sacred images are present in classrooms and throughout the school.” Additionally, the *Guidelines for Catholic Schools (Strategic Plan for the Diocese of Joliet)* states, “Religious signs and symbols are prominently displayed in classrooms, corridors, and common areas emphasizing the Catholic character of the schools.” Similarly, the *Meitler Study Follow-Up: Faith in our Future* document from the Diocese of Peoria similarly asks schools the question, “Is sacred artwork displayed prominently throughout the school building?” The researcher believes that the implementation of this suggestion greatly aids in the “intentional” efforts that several Ecclesial Leaders mentioned need to be taken by schools in order to ensure their Catholic identity.

Conclusions and Recommendations (in the Form of a Template for Use in Schools)

As mentioned in the discussion on the findings to answer Research Question #3, several common themes have emerged from the data collected and analyzed in this study to recommend that schools implement in order to revitalize the Catholic identity of their own institutions and reform catechesis. In order to summarize these common themes in the form of a user-friendly checklist that all schools can use as a template, the researcher will list these recommendations in the manner presented below:

Recommendations for School Leaders Regarding the Revitalizing of Catholic Identity of Schools.

1. Catechizing in the “basics of the Catholic Faith” (e.g., Pillars of the Catechism: Creed, Sacraments, Commandments, and Prayer/Liturgy).

2. Re-Introducing Traditional Devotions of the Catholic Faith to students
 - A. Implementation of Marian Devotions in the Schools (May Crowning of Our Blessed Mother in May, Candlelight Rosary Processions, Recitation of the Angelus at noontime, etc.) to enkindle in children a devoted love for their Blessed Mother Mary.
 - B. Offering Frequent Opportunities for Students to Pray the Holy Rosary, while Meditating on the Joyful, Luminous, Sorrowful, and Glorious Mysteries.
 - C. Offering Frequent Eucharistic Adoration of Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament and Benediction (at least on First Fridays, as Bishop Rice mentioned).
3. Offering Regular Opportunities for Students to Receive the Sacraments, especially Holy Communion and Reconciliation.
4. Catechesis on (and distribution of) the Sacramentals of the Church to Students – As Bishop Jenky shared his story regarding the distribution of Scapulars to First Holy Communicants, all students should be enrolled in the Brown Scapular of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel at their First Holy Communion. The origin of the Brown Scapular dates back to 1251, when the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to St. Simon Stock in Aylesford, England, presenting him with the Brown Scapular. Mary said, “Whosoever dies wearing this Scapular shall

not suffer eternal fire.” The Scapular represents Mary’s Mantle of protection around the soul (Cruz, 2013).

5. Offering of Solid Catechesis (in an age-appropriate manner) in the Moral Teachings of the Church.
6. Offering of Continuous Catechesis in the Pillars of the Catholic Faith (i.e. Creed, Seven Sacraments, Ten Commandments, and Prayer/Liturgy), as well as Faith Formation for Staff and Parents.
7. Ensuring that Schools Display Crucifixes, Statues of the Blessed Virgin Mary, other Religious Images, and Sacred Artwork throughout the School.

Research Question #4

Based upon these findings, what are the implications for the leadership of Catholic schools in order to revitalize the Catholic identity of their own institutions?

Based upon these findings, the implications for the leadership of Catholic schools are twofold. First, this study clearly outlines the desires of several of the Ecclesial Leaders of the Catholic Church to revitalize the Catholic identity of schools across the country. Given this knowledge, the researcher’s hope and prayer is that all Catholic schools across the country - whether they are elementary schools, high schools, or universities – heed the requests of our Bishops – who are the successors of the Apostles - and seriously undertake the revitalizing of their own institution’s Catholic identity according to the recommendations presented in this study.

The second implication deals with the timeliness of this matter. As this study pointed out the serious challenges that youth experience in living out their Catholic Faith in this current secularized society, time is of the essence in terms of implementing the findings and recommendations of this study. No more time can be wasted in neglecting to intentionally revitalize the Catholic identity of the educational institutions across the country. We cannot afford to lose another generation of Catholics who will leave our Catholic schools without having been provided with the most outstanding Catholic formation and education in the Catholic Faith possible. As Bishop Ricken of Green Bay so aptly summarized in one of his responses to the interview questions, “We have raised now two – maybe three – generations of people who have not been well catechized, because we go off track a bit – everybody with the best of intentions – but it didn’t help these young people.”

The researcher’s hope is that all Catholic school leaders across the country will reverse this trend by authentically revitalizing the Catholic identity of their educational institutions in the way the Second Vatican Council intended. As the Vatican II documents stated, the Eucharist is the “Source and Summit of the Christian Life;” therefore, Our Lord’s True Presence in the Holy Eucharist should be the focus of all endeavors in a Catholic school. Similarly, the Vatican documents spoke highly of encouraging devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Who is the Mother of God, the Spiritual Mother of all mankind, and the Mother of the Church. Because of this, all

schools should seek to instill in the hearts of their students a tender devotion to Our Blessed Mother Mary.

Suggestions for Further Research

In terms of suggestions for further research, the researcher would like to offer the following recommendations:

1. Conducting of a longitudinal study on the effectiveness of implementation of the above mentioned suggestions with students - Is there a correlation between the implementation of these strategies implemented in schools and increase in Sunday Mass attendance and vocations to the priesthood and religious life?
2. Conducting of a more expansive qualitative study which incorporates interview data from Ecclesial Leaders and Superintendents all across the country regarding their thoughts on how to best revitalize the Catholic identity of schools and reform catechesis
3. Conducting of a quantitative study which analyzes the degree of catechetical knowledge, based upon the Four Pillars of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, which the last two generations of Catholics acquired after attending Catholic schools during their childhood. This would greatly contribute in helping with the re-catechizing efforts discussed by some of the leaders in this study. By identifying the gaps in catechetical knowledge of former

Catholic school students who are now in their 20's, 30's and 40's, those gaps can be closed by offering them solid catechesis within the context of the Faith formation programs suggested in this study.

Conclusion

As 100% of the interviewed participants of this study stated, the purpose of Catholic schools is to hand on the Catholic Faith to their students. Because of this fact, students in all Catholic educational institutions should have the privilege of learning all of the beautiful Truths of the Catholic Faith - which should not be presented as if they were merely in the realm of the theoretical. No, they should be presented and experienced the way they really are – as living Truths, which lead the youth into a deeper relationship with the Real People they refer to – God, the Father, Jesus Christ (God the Son), God the Holy Spirit, and Our Blessed Mother Mary. No one in the Catholic schools should be deprived of the knowledge of these beautiful Truths faithfully handed down to us - and which schools must now faithfully hand down to future generations. In this way, students will have the opportunity to enter into a deeper communion with God even here on earth through faith, and ultimately, for all eternity in Paradise!

The researcher truly felt honored that, in the Providence of God, she was privileged to conduct this study during the 50th Anniversary of the commencement of Vatican Council II. It is the hope and prayer of the researcher that this humble study will assist in promulgating what the Council truly intended – growth in holiness for all

members of the Catholic Church, as well as the transmitting of this beautiful Message of Salvation won for us by Jesus Christ, and offered in His Church, for each and every single person of the human race. All Catholic school leaders can assist in this lofty and awesome mission through their efforts at revitalizing the Catholic identity of their schools. One way they can accomplish this is by sharing the Truth and Beauty of the Teachings of the Catholic Church with renewed enthusiasm with all of their students and parents. In this way, Catholic schools can greatly assist in helping bring their school families back into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ Himself, especially as He is Truly Present in the Most Holy Eucharist (the “Source and Summit of the Christian life” as the Vatican documents state) through a renewed spreading of devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, the Mother of the Church, and the Spiritual Mother of all mankind. This will then help schools achieve the suggestion offered by Bishop Rice in this study – that of helping students fall in love with Jesus!

Additionally, the researcher believes that it is Providential that it was just in recent years (2010) that the Apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Champion, WI were approved by Bishop David Ricken of the Green Bay Diocese. As mentioned in the literature review of this study, the main request of Our Blessed Mother in these Apparitions was to catechize the young in their prayers and in the basics of the Catholic Faith. The researcher hopes that all Catholic schools will heed Our Lord’s request given in the Great Commission, “Go ye therefore and teach this Gospel to every living creature...,” Our Blessed Mother’s request in Her Apparitions in Green Bay, as well as

the request of all the recent Pontiffs to joyfully share the Truth of the Holy Catholic Faith in all its Beauty with the youth of today and all generations to come. In this way, the Catholic schools will fulfill with integrity the mission that has been entrusted to them – that of bringing all those whom God has placed in their care to the eternal love, joy, and beauty of union with Him in Heaven after their work on earth is completed! There, in the bliss of Paradise, they will sing the eternal “Alleluia” of their Risen Savior, united with their Loving Heavenly Mother, Mary!

Additionally, as Bishop Rice stated in his interview, “I think we need to re-focus on the ‘tried and the true’ of the past.” One can see how, in the Providence of God - fifty years after the commencement of the Vatican Council – and now during the year in which Pope John XXIII and Pope John Paul II will be canonized, that this is indeed the time to usher in the New Evangelization that the recent Pontiffs proposed by re-focusing on the “tried and true” of the past. As Monsignor McCarthy (2012) wrote in a recent article titled, “Appreciating the Gift of the Second Vatican Council” published in the National Catholic Education Association journal, *Momentum*:

The gift of Vatican II lies, I think, in its marvelous fidelity to the deeply Catholic nature of the Church.... In response to the challenge of modernity, the Church responds with its fundamental instinct to integrate the new with the treasures of the past.... The Council, far from being a threat to the life of the Church, in fact, testifies to the ongoing vitality of the Faith. (p. 11)

All Catholic schools should feel privileged to assist in this endeavor; thereby, helping to bring about a new springtime in the Church. May all schools commit themselves to revitalizing the Catholic identity of their institutions in order to lead all

students to their ultimate destiny – union with Our Lord Jesus Christ, through Mary, His Mother, and ultimately to the Heavenly Father - here on earth through faith - and afterwards, in the Beatific Vision in Heaven for all eternity! There, in the eternal bliss of Paradise, where “Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man, what God has prepared for those who love Him,” (1 Cor. 2: 4-5) - united with their Loving Heavenly Mother Mary – they will experience the unfathomable and overflowing love and mercy of their Risen Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for all eternity!

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR BISHOPS

1. What do you believe is the mission of Catholic schools?
2. Has your (Arch)Diocese recently implemented any program to aid in the reform of catechesis and/or the revitalization of the Catholic identity of schools?
3. Do you believe there is a need to revitalize the Catholic identity of our schools across the country?
4. If so, why do you believe this need exists? If not, please discuss.
5. What do you view as the greatest needs in terms of revitalizing the Catholic identity of schools across the country?
6. What strategies would you suggest (or have you already implemented) to meet these needs? Please share one of these stories. What more would you suggest to meet these needs?
7. What do you believe is the role Catholic schools play in the New Evangelization proposed by Blessed John Paul, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, and Pope Francis?
8. What do you believe are the essentials in terms of Catechetical content which need to be focused on when transmitting the Catholic Faith to the young?
9. What do you believe is the role the administration of Sacraments and the use of Sacramentals play in the effective catechesis of the young and the revitalization of the Catholic identity of our schools?

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR (ARCH)DIOCESAN SUPERINTENDENTS

1. What do you believe is the mission of your (Arch)Diocesan schools?
2. What are your aspirations for the students of your schools?
3. What do you see as the greatest challenge our youth experience in current society regarding the living out of their Catholic Faith?
4. Has your (Arch)Diocese implemented any new programs to address the revitalizing of the Catholic identity of your schools over the past two years? If so, please tell the story of one of the new strategies that you implemented.
5. After implementation of the above-mentioned programs, have you noticed any increased commitment from your students regarding the practice of their Catholic Faith? If so, how would you describe the positive change?
6. How would you assess the Catholic identity of your (Arch)Diocesan schools at the present time?
7. What documents did your (Arch)Diocese use/create in order to aid in the revitalizing of the Catholic identity of your schools? How would you assess the success of the programs delineated therein?

APPENDIX C

COOPERATION LETTER TO ECCLESIAL LEADERS

Date

Most Rev. _____

Address

Dear Most Rev. _____,

My name is Linda Ann Andrejek, and I am a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Loyola University Chicago. I am also the Principal of St. Joseph Catholic School in Boyd, WI and the Director of Religious Education at All Saints Catholic Parish, which serves the Catholic Churches in Stanley, Boyd, and Cadott, WI.

I humbly request your Eminence's/Excellency's participation in my research study entitled, "Revitalizing the Catholic Identity of Schools: Ecclesial Leaders of the Catholic Church on Methods of Providing an Outstanding Catholic Formation and Education for Students." This study will consist of interviewing select Ecclesial Leaders and Superintendents of Catholic school systems to receive their views regarding the revitalization of the Catholic identity of schools and the reform of catechesis.

The Institutional Review Board of Loyola University Chicago requires a signed letter of cooperation from participants in the study before approval of my study will be granted. Because of this, I would truly appreciate it if you would send me a letter indicating that you would be willing to be part of this study. Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request to be a part of this important study. May God reward you and your (Arch)Dioceses abundantly for your assistance with this endeavor!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Linda Ann Andrejek
Doctoral Candidate
Loyola University Chicago

APPENDIX D

LETTER OF COOPERATION FOR SUPERINTENDENTS

Date

Superintendent _____

Address

Dear Superintendent _____,

My name is Linda Ann Andrejek, and I am a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Loyola University Chicago. I am also the Principal of St. Joseph Catholic School in Boyd, WI and the Director of Religious Education at All Saints Catholic Parish, which serves the Catholic Churches in Stanley, Boyd, and Cadott, WI.

I would like to humbly request your participation in my research study entitled, "Revitalizing the Catholic Identity of Schools: Ecclesial Leaders of the Catholic Church on Methods of Providing an Outstanding Catholic Formation and Education for Students." This study will consist of interviewing select Ecclesial Leaders and Superintendents of Catholic school systems to receive their views regarding the revitalization of the Catholic identity of schools and the reform of catechesis.

The Institutional Review Board of Loyola University Chicago requires a signed letter of cooperation from participants in the study before approval of my study will be granted. Because of this, I would truly appreciate it if you would send me a letter indicating that you would be willing to be part of this study. Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request to be a part of this important study. May God reward you and your (Arch)Dioceses abundantly for your assistance in this endeavor!

Sincerely in Christ,

Linda Ann Andrejek
Doctoral Candidate
Loyola University Chicago

APPENDIX E
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Project Title: Revitalizing the Catholic Identity of Schools: An Analysis of Qualitative Data Obtained through Interviews with Select Ecclesial Leaders of the Catholic Church on Methods of Providing an Outstanding Catholic Formation and Education for Students

Researcher: Linda Ann Andrejek

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Janis Fine

Introduction

You are being asked to take part in a qualitative research study being conducted by Linda Ann Andrejek for a dissertation under the supervision of Dr. Janis Fine, in the Department of Educational Leadership at Loyola University Chicago.

You are being asked to participate because you are an Ecclesial Leader in the Catholic Church or a Superintendent of a(n) (Arch)Diocesan school system.

Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before deciding whether to participate in this study.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to help in the revitalization of the Catholic identity of schools across the country by means of analyzing data received from interviews with select Ecclesial Leaders of the Catholic Church. By this means, the data can be coded into common themes which can serve as valuable data to share with schools to help revitalize their own Catholic identity.

Procedure

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be interviewed and asked questions regarding your perceptions on how to best reform catechesis and revitalize the Catholic identity of schools. If you agree to participate, you will be interviewed for approximately 45 minutes in your office, or at a different location, mutually agreed upon. Your interview will be audiotaped, and the tapes will be stored in a locked file cabinet in the researcher's home office. In order to increase credibility, member checks will be used in which you will be given a copy of your transcribed interview in order ensure accuracy. To ensure confidentiality, all interview consent Forms will be kept in a locked file cabinet. After the research project is completed, all audiotapes will be destroyed.

Risks/Benefits

There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this research project. In addition, there are no direct benefits to you from participation, however, the results of this study may be helpful in revitalizing the Catholic identity of schools across the country.

Confidentiality

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be interviewed for approximately 45 minutes. Your interview will be audiotaped, and then transcribed. To ensure your confidentiality, all materials will be kept in a locked file cabinet. Signed consent forms will be stored separately.

Voluntary Participation

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you do not want to be in this study, you do not have to participate. Even if you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any question or to withdraw from participation at any time without penalty.

Contacts and Questions

If you have any questions, you may contact the researcher, Linda Andrejek at (708)724-1137 or at landrejek@luc.edu. You may also contact the researcher's faculty advisor, Dr. Janis Fine at Loyola University at (312)915-7022.

Your signature below indicates that you have read and understood the information provided above, have had an opportunity to ask questions, and agree to participate in this research study. Your signature also indicates your consent to the interview, as well as to have the interview audio-taped. You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Participant's Signature

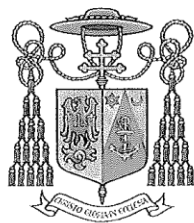
Date

Researcher's Signature

Date

APPENDIX F

SIGNED LETTERS OF COOPERATION FROM PARTICIPANTS



OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO

January 19, 2014

Ms. Linda Andrejek
415 N. Maple Street
Cadott, WI 54727

(also sent by e-mail)

Dear Ms. Andrejek:

I am writing this letter, as you requested, to assure you and the Institutional Review Board of Loyola University Chicago that I have agreed to be interviewed as part of your research study for your dissertation on revitalizing the Catholic identity of schools. I have received the dissertation proposal and the interview questions and look forward to speaking with you. Enclosed you will also find the signed "Informed Consent Form."

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Francis Cardinal George".

Francis Cardinal George, O.M.I.
Archbishop of Chicago

MOST REV. DANIEL R. JENKY, C.S.C.
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP
DIOCESE OF PEORIA



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP
419 N.E. MADISON AVENUE
PEORIA, ILLINOIS 61603
PHONE: 309 671 1550
FAX: 309 671 1576

January 2, 2014

Linda Andrejek
415 N. Maple St.
Cadott, WI 54727

Dear Linda,

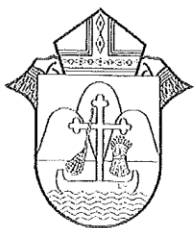
I am happy to be interviewed for your Doctoral Dissertation for Loyola University in Chicago. I would be able to meet with you on Thursday, January 16, 2014, at 2:00 p.m. at my office at the Spalding Pastoral Center in Peoria.

May God bless you in your studies!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel R. Jenky, C.S.C.".

✱Most Reverend Daniel R. Jenky, C.S.C.
BISHOP OF PEORIA



DIocese of LA CROSSE

Office of the Bishop

23 January 2014

Linda Ann Andrejek
415 N. Maple Street
Cadott, WI 54727

Dear Ms. Andrejek,

I have accepted your request to participate in your research study entitled, "Revitalizing the Catholic Identity of Schools" Ecclesial Leaders of the Catholic Church on Methods of Providing an Outstanding Catholic Formation and Education of Students." I submit this to you as my letter of cooperation.

With personal good wishes and prayers, I am,

Very truly yours in Christ,

Most Reverend William Patrick Callahan
Bishop of La Crosse

WPC:dfb



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

DIOCESE OF GREEN BAY
P.O. Box 23825 • Green Bay, WI 54305-3825 • 920-272-8194 • FAX 920-435-1330

February 3, 2014

Miss Linda Andrejek
415 N. Maple St.
Cadott, WI 54727

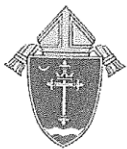
Dear Miss Andreje:

This letter serves to confirm my willingness to be interviewed for your doctoral dissertation entitled, "Revitalizing the Catholic Identity of Schools: Ecclesial Leaders of the Catholic Church on Methods of Providing an Outstanding Catholic Formation and Education to Students." I will be looking forward to meeting with you tomorrow afternoon for this interview.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

The Most Reverend David L. Ricken, DD, JCL
Bishop of Green Bay

ndl



ARCHDIOCESE OF ST. LOUIS
Cardinal Rigali Center
20 Archbishop May Drive
Saint Louis, Missouri 63119

Office of the Auxiliary Bishop
Most Reverend Edward M. Rice
p/ 314.792.7329
f/ 314.792-7422
edwardrice@archstl.org

February 3, 2014

Linda Andrejek, M.Ed.
Doctoral Candidate
Loyola University Chicago
landrejek@allsaintscathcom.com

Dear Ms. Andrejek,

I am happy to participate in the study you are conducting as a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Loyola University Chicago. I look forward to the interview with you at the Catholic Education Center on Friday, February 7, 2014 at 11:00 a.m.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Edward M. Rice".

Most Reverend Edward M. Rice
Auxiliary Bishop of St. Louis

January 27, 2014

Ms. Linda Andrejek
415 N. Maple St.
Cadott, WI 54727

Dear Ms. Andrejek,

This letter serves to confirm the fact that I am willing to participate in your doctoral dissertation study on revitalizing the Catholic identity of schools across the country. I look forward to meeting with you for our upcoming interview regarding this important topic.

Sincerely in Christ,



Rev. John Belmonte, S.J., Ph.D.
Superintendent
Diocese of Joliet, IL



January 31, 2014

The Institutional Review Board of Loyola University Chicago,

This letter shall serve as my permission and willingness to participate in the research study, *Revitalizing the Catholic Identity of Schools: Ecclesial Leaders of the Catholic Church on Methods of Providing an Outstanding Catholic Formation and Education for Students* by Linda Ann Andrejek, Doctoral Candidate.

Sincerely,

Dr. Sharon Weiss

Dr. Sharon Weiss
Superintendent of Schools





ARCHDIOCESE OF ST. LOUIS
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February 3, 2014

Miss Linda Andrejek
415 N. Maple St.
Cadott, WI 54727

Dear Miss Andrejek,

This letter serves to confirm my willingness to be interviewed for your doctoral dissertation entitled, "Revitalizing the Catholic Identity of Schools: Ecclesial Leaders of the Catholic Church on Methods of Providing an Outstanding Catholic Formation and Education to Students."

I look forward to meeting with you for this interview.

Sincerely in Christ

George J. Henry
Superintendent of Catholic Education
Archdiocese of St. Louis



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VITA

Linda Ann Andrejek was born in Chicago in 1961. She attended Illinois State University in Normal, IL and obtained her Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education in 1983. Always feeling called to dedicate herself to Our Lord and the Church, she explored the Religious Life by entering the novitiate of a teaching Order of Carmelite Sisters, followed by a novitiate in a Carmelite Monastery to see if the Religious Life was the vocation to which God was calling her. Discerning that she was called to serve God in the world, however, she began working as a Catholic school teacher at St. Clare of Montefalco Catholic School (now closed) in Chicago, IL from 1996-2001. After her tenure there, she began working as a teacher in the Chicago Public Schools from 2001-2005. Around this time, she was also accepted into the M.Ed. program in Administration and Supervision at Loyola University Chicago, obtaining her degree in 2004.

Miss Andrejek took a position as one of the founding teachers of Chicago International Charter Schools Wrightwood Campus, managed by Civitas Schools, in 2005. Beginning as the writing teacher for all 500+ students in this new school, she was promoted to Intermediate Team Leader in 2006, and then to the position of Associate Director in 2007. In 2008, she was promoted to a central office position as the Director of Family and Community Partnerships.

In 2009, Miss Andrejek came back “home,” as she calls it, and began working as a principal in the Catholic schools of the Archdiocese of Chicago. Around this same time, she was also accepted into the Ed.D. program in Administration and Supervision at Loyola University Chicago. In 2012, she moved to Wisconsin to be closer to her mother who had recently undergone a series of surgeries. While there, she worked as the Director of Religious Education for All Saints Catholic Parish, as well as the Principal for its small Catholic school, St. Joseph School. As the Director of Religious Education, she helped to stabilize two CCD programs for the parishioners of three merged Churches. In addition, she helped to successfully move St. Joseph Catholic School to a more centralized location within the new Parish boundaries. In order to complete her dissertation in a timely manner, however, and since her main work of moving the small school of 25 children was completed, she resigned from her position as principal in January of 2014, while retaining her position as Director of Religious Education. After completing her doctoral studies, she and her mother plan to move back to Illinois to be closer to family.

In terms of her overall vocation, Miss Andrejek is now pursuing the Consecrated Virginitly calling of the Catholic Church. In this way, her desire to consecrate herself completely to Our Lord Jesus Christ and the Church, following the example of Our Blessed Mother Mary, may still become a reality in the midst of working as a lay person in the field of Catholic education!

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

The Dissertation submitted by Linda Ann Andrejek has been read and approved by the following committee:

Janis Fine, Ph.D., Director
Associate Professor, School of Education
Loyola University Chicago

Marla Israel, Ed.D.
Associate Professor, School of Education
Loyola University Chicago

James M. Sinacore, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Department of Public Health Sciences
Loyola University Stritch School of Medicine

Rev. Peter Manickam, Ph.D.
Pastor, Holy Cross Catholic Church
Cornell, Wisconsin