



Catholic Social Responsibility

Contemporary Challenges Facing Catholic Schools

Cultural Challenges

Overview of Challenges for Catholic Schools

While contemporary society often exalts individualism, the Catholic tradition teaches that human beings achieve fulfillment in community and that culture should be subordinated to the integral perfection of the human person. Catholic schools preach the truth of the Gospel and promote a culture of peace often in opposition to the greater culture. We believe that every human being, from conception until natural death, is created in the image of God, redeemed by Jesus Christ, and intrinsically worthy of respect. In asserting the dignity of the human person, Catholic educators strive to inspire students to work for social justice and human solidarity. Essential to this effort are educational programs and experiences that help students to reflect on cultural challenges in light of the Gospel. Catholic schools are uniquely positioned to develop students' global awareness, foster their desire for social and cultural engagement, and challenge students to use their gifts to benefit society. Catholic schools educate the whole student by effectively integrating faith, culture, and life.

B. Racism Challenges

Overview of Challenges for Catholic Schools

Our Church teaches that racism is a sin that divides the human family and violates the fundamental human dignity of the Children of God. The existence of racism in our world requires Catholic schools to respond with action and with love for our neighbor. As all human life is sacred and created in the image of God, Catholics reject racist ideas, personal acts of racism, and systemic racism found in social structures that perpetuate injustice. Thus, Catholic schools provide a safe and loving environment rich in resources for helping students understand and appreciate their own inherent dignity and that of all people. As students encounter Jesus, they learn to love as Jesus loves. Catholic educators teach and model the essence of Catholic social action: love for God and neighbor.

C. Challenge of Civic Participation for the Common Good

Overview of Challenges for Catholic Schools

Contemporary political dialogue has become more contentious and polarized. This divisive approach to political discourse has influenced all aspects of society, including Catholic Schools. The Catholic Church's role in guiding its faithful into active political life is to instruct and illuminate the consciences of the faithful, so that their actions may promote the dignity of all human persons and enhance the common good. Catholic schools are called to equip our students with the knowledge, understanding, and skills to interpret and respond to contemporary social circumstances in light of the Gospel and the truth of our Catholic Church and Tradition. Catholic schools, while respecting the human dignity of every person, realize that not all points of view are equally valid, and therefore place a high value on the development of conscience, positive communication skills, reflection, negotiation and problem solving in the context of a Catholic faith. Catholic schools form faithful citizens who act with courage to build common ground and make peace even in deeply fractured communities.

D. Economic Challenges

Overview of Challenges for Catholic Schools

The dignity of the human person, realized in community with others, is the criterion against which all aspects of economic life is measured. The Church teaches that we all are responsible to one another, to our families, and to society at large and instructs us to put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first. If all persons are to be recognized as members of the human community, then the community has an obligation to help fulfill those basic needs. As we are meant to love God with our whole being, which overflows into love of neighbor, Catholic schools should be accessible to students of all backgrounds, abilities, and academic goals. Catholic education shall reflect the Church's preferential engagement with Christ, found always dwelling with society's poor and underserved.