

EDUCATION

SCRIPTURE

“He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone”.(Lk. 4:14)

Also cfr. Mt. 7:29; Mk. 1:22; Lk. 4:32; Mk. 4:33-34; Dt. 11:19

OPENING PRAYER

Jesus, our loving teacher, you taught with authority because you were filled with the Holy Spirit. We pray that You send your spirit upon all those who are involved in the teaching ministry so that they may impart the knowledge to the young minds to grow in wisdom, as you grew. Help our education institutions to become powerful agents of evangelization, spreading the good news to all. May they become agents of social change and transformation in the Archdiocese of Calcutta. Bless our efforts in developing the Pastoral Plan for our educational ministry so that we may bring glory to Your Father, and our Father who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

INTRODUCTION

Education, in a very special way, is a major concern of the Church and the society. The quality of life, the dignity of the human person, the development of humankind depend largely upon the kind of education we impart to young minds. The Church has played a vital role in this field. 25% of all educational services in India is rendered by the Catholic Church alone. Despite the efforts of the Government, the Christian Churches and other organizations “education for all” is still an unrealized dream. In spite of all our collective endeavours, illiteracy in our country amounts to 27%. Child labour is on the increase. Numerous dropout children have forfeited their opportunity to education. It is in this context, the Archdiocesan Pastoral Plan hopes to respond to the ever emerging challenges in the field of education.

PART 1: TEACHINGS OF THE CHURCH

Catholic schools of the 21st century are called into being to form hearts, build minds and transform lives for future generations.

"The education of children and young people is such an important task in forming them as free and responsible human beings. It affirms their dignity as an inalienable gift that flows from our original creation as children made in the image and likeness of God. And because education truly forms human beings, it is especially the duty and responsibility of the Church, who is called to serve mankind from the heart of God and in such a way that no other institution can." -

Pope Francis

1.1 Contribution of the Catholic school towards the Salvific Mission of the Church

The Catholic school forms part of the saving mission of the Church, especially for education in the faith. Remembering that "the simultaneous development of man's psychological and moral consciousness is demanded by Christ almost as a pre-condition for the reception of the befitting divine gifts of truth and grace"(PAUL VI, *Encyclical Letter "Ecclesiam suam"*, 15), the Church fulfills her obligation to foster in

her children a full awareness of their rebirth to a new life (cf. Vat. II, *Declaration on Christian Education "Gravissimum Educationis"*, 3). It is precisely in the Gospel of Christ, taking root in the minds and lives of the faithful, that the Catholic school finds its definition as it comes to terms with the cultural conditions of the times.

The Church upholds the principle of a plurality of school systems in order to safeguard her objectives in the face of cultural pluralism. In other words, she encourages the co-existence and, if possible, the cooperation of diverse educational institutions which will allow young people to be formed by value judgments based on a specific view of the world and to be trained to take an active part in the construction of a community through which the building of society itself is promoted.

Thus, while policies and opportunities differ from place to place, the Catholic school has its place in any national school system. By offering such an alternative the Church wishes to respond to the obvious need for cooperation in a society characterized by cultural pluralism. Moreover, in this way she helps to promote that freedom of teaching which champions and guarantees freedom of conscience and the parental right to choose the school best suited to parents' educational purpose. (cf. Vat. II, *Declaration on Christian Education "Gravissimum Educationis"* 8)

Finally, the Church is absolutely convinced that the educational aims of the Catholic school in the world of today perform an essential and unique service for the Church herself. It is, in fact, through the school that she participates in the dialogue of culture with her own positive contribution to the cause of the total formation of man. The absence of the Catholic school would be a great loss (Cf. PAUL VI, *Allocution to the Ninth Congress of the O.I.E.C.*, in "L'Osservatore Romano", June 9th, 1974.) for civilization and for the natural and supernatural destiny of man.

1.2 The School as a Centre of Human Formation

1.2.1. The general purpose of a school

A close examination of the various definitions of school and of new educational trends at every level, leads one to formulate the concept of school as a place of integral formation by means of a systematic and critical assimilation of culture. A school is, therefore, a privileged place in which, through a living encounter with a cultural inheritance, integral formation occurs.

This vital approach takes place in the school in the form of personal contacts and commitments which consider absolute values in a life-context and seek to insert them into a life-framework. Indeed, culture is only educational when young people can relate their study to real-life situations with which they are familiar. The school must stimulate the pupil to exercise his intelligence through the dynamics of understanding to attain clarity and inventiveness. It must help him spell out the meaning of his experiences and their truths. Any school which neglects this duty and which offers merely pre-cast conclusions hinders the personal development of its pupils.

1.2.2. School and attitudes of life

From this it is clear that the school has to review its entire programme of formation, both its content and the methods used, in the light of that vision of the reality from which it draws its inspiration and on which it depends.

Either implicit or explicit reference to a determined attitude to life (*Weltanschauung*) is unavoidable in education because it comes into every decision that is made. It is, therefore, essential, if for no other reason than for a unity in teaching, that each member of the school community, albeit with differing degrees of awareness, adopts a common vision, a common outlook on life, based on adherence to a scale of values in which he believes. This is what gives teachers and adults authority to educate. It must never be forgotten that the purpose of instruction at school is education, that is, the development of man from within, freeing him from that conditioning which would prevent him from becoming a, fully integrated human being. The school must begin from the principle that its educational programme is intentionally directed to the growth of the whole person.

It is one of the formal tasks of a school, as an institution for education, to draw out the ethical dimension for the precise purpose of arousing the individual's inner spiritual dynamism and to aid his achieving that moral freedom which complements the psychological. Behind this moral freedom, however, stand those absolute values which alone give meaning and value to human life. This has to be said because the tendency to adopt present-day values as a yardstick is not absent even in the educational world. The danger is always to react to passing, superficial ideas and to lose sight of the much deeper needs of the contemporary world.

1.2.3. The school in today's society

Precisely because the school endeavours to answer the needs of a society characterized by depersonalization and a mass production mentality which so easily result from scientific and technological developments, it must develop into an authentically formational school, reducing such risks to a minimum. It must develop persons who are responsible and inner-directed, capable of choosing freely in conformity with their conscience. This is simply another way of saying that the school is an institution where young people gradually learn to open themselves up to life as it is, and to create in themselves a definite attitude to life as it should be.

When seen in this light, a school is not only a place where one is given a choice of intellectual values, but a place where one has presented an array of values which are actively lived. The school must be a community whose values are communicated through the interpersonal and sincere relationships of its members and through both individual and corporative adherence to the outlook on life that permeates the school.

1.3 The Educational Work of the Catholic School

1.3.1. Specific character of the Catholic school

Having stated the characteristics of the Catholic school from the point of view of "school" we can now examine its Catholic quality, namely its reference to a Christian concept of life centered on Jesus Christ.

Christ is the foundation of the whole educational enterprise in a Catholic school. His revelation gives new meaning to life and helps man to direct his thought, action and will according to the Gospel, making the beatitudes his norm of life. The fact that in their own individual ways all members of the school community share this Christian vision makes the school "Catholic"; principles of the Gospel in this manner become the

educational norms since the school then has them as its internal motivation and final goal.

The Catholic school is committed thus to the development of the whole man, since in Christ, the Perfect Man, all human values find their fulfillment and unity. Herein lies the specifically Catholic character of the school. Its duty to cultivate human values in their own legitimate right in accordance with its particular mission to serve all men has its origin in the figure of Christ. He is the One Who ennobles man, gives meaning to human life, and is the Model which the Catholic school offers to its pupils.

If, like every other school, the Catholic school has as its aim the critical communication of human culture and the total formation of the individual, it works towards this goal guided by its Christian vision of reality "through which our cultural heritage acquires its special place in the total vocational life of man"(Vat. II, *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World "Gaudium et Spes"*, 57). Mindful of the fact that man has been redeemed by Christ, the Catholic school aims at forming in the Christian those particular virtues which will enable him to live a new life in Christ and help him to play faithfully his part in building up the Kingdom of God (Cf. Vat. II, *Declaration on Christian Education, "Gravissimum Educationis"*, 2.).

These premises indicate the duties and the content of the Catholic school. Its task is fundamentally a synthesis of culture and faith, and a synthesis of faith and life: the first is reached by integrating all the different aspects of human knowledge through the subjects taught, in the light of the Gospel; the second in the growth of the virtues characteristic of the Christian.

1.3.2. Integration of faith and culture

In helping pupils to achieve through the medium of its teaching an integration of faith and culture, the Catholic school sets out with a deep awareness of the value of knowledge as such. Under no circumstances does it wish to divert the imparting of knowledge from its rightful objective.

Individual subjects must be taught according to their own particular methods. It would be wrong to consider subjects as mere adjuncts to faith or as a useful means of teaching apologetics. They enable the pupil to assimilate skills, knowledge, intellectual methods and moral and social attitudes, all of which help to develop his personality and lead him to take his place as an active member of the community of man. Their aim is not merely the attainment of knowledge but the acquisition of values and the discovery of truth.

Since the educative mission of the Catholic school is so wide, the teacher is in an excellent position to guide the pupil to a deepening of his faith and to enrich and enlighten his human knowledge with the data of the faith. While there are many occasions in teaching when pupils can be stimulated by insights of faith, a Christian education acknowledges the valid contribution which can be made by academic subjects towards the development of a mature Christian. The teacher can form the mind and heart of his pupils and guide them to develop a total commitment to Christ, with their whole personality enriched by human culture.

The school considers human knowledge as a truth to be discovered. In the measure in which subjects are taught by someone who knowingly and without restraint seeks the truth, they are to that extent Christian. Discovery and awareness of truth leads man to

the discovery of Truth itself. A teacher who is full of Christian wisdom, well prepared in his own subject, does more than convey the sense of what he is teaching to his pupils. Over and above what he says, he guides his pupils beyond his mere words to the heart of total Truth.

The cultural heritage of mankind includes other values apart from the specific ambient of truth. When the Christian teacher helps a pupil to grasp, appreciate and assimilate these values, he is guiding him towards eternal realities. This movement towards the Uncreated Source of all knowledge highlights the importance of teaching for the growth of faith.

The achievement of this specific aim of the Catholic school depends not so much on subject matter or methodology as on the people who work there. The extent to which the Christian message is transmitted through education depends to a very great extent on the teachers. The integration of culture and faith is mediated by the other integration of faith and life in the person of the teacher. The nobility of the task to which teachers are called demands that, in imitation of Christ, the only Teacher, they reveal the Christian message not only by word but also by every gesture of their behaviour. This is what makes the difference between a school whose education is permeated by the Christian spirit and one in which religion is only regarded as an academic subject like any other.

1.3.3. Integration of faith and life

The fundamental aim of teaching is the assimilation of objective values, and, when this is undertaken for an apostolic purpose, it does not stop at an integration of faith and culture but leads the pupil on to a personal integration of faith and life.

The Catholic school has as its specific duty the complete Christian formation of its pupils, and this task is of special significance today because of the inadequacy of the family and society. It knows that this integration of faith and life is part of a life-long process of conversion until the pupil becomes what God wishes him to be. Young people have to be taught to share their personal lives with God. They are to overcome their individualism and discover, in the light of faith, their specific vocation to live responsibly in a community with others. The very pattern of the Christian life draws them to commit themselves to serve God in their brethren and to make the world a better place for man to live in.

The Catholic school should teach its pupils to discern in the voice of the universe the Creator Whom it reveals and, in the conquests of science, to know God and man better. In the daily life of the school, the pupil should learn that he is called to be a living witness to God's love for men by the way he acts, and that he is part of that salvation history which has Christ, the Saviour of the world, as its goal.

Being aware that Baptism by itself does not make a Christian - living and acting in conformity with the Gospel is necessary - the Catholic school tries to create within its walls a climate (Cf. Vat. II, *Declaration on Christian Education*, " *Gravissimum Educationis* ", 8) in which the pupil's faith will gradually mature and enable him to assume the responsibility placed on him by Baptism. It will give pride of place in the education it provides through Christian Doctrine to the gradual formation of conscience in fundamental, permanent virtues - above all the theological virtues, and charity in particular, which is, so to speak, the life-giving spirit which transforms a man of virtue into a man of Christ. Christ, therefore, is the teaching-centre, the Model on Whom the Christian shapes his life. In Him the Catholic school differs from all others which limit themselves to forming men. Its task is to form Christian men, and, by its teaching and

witness, show non-Christians something of the mystery of Christ Who surpasses all human understanding (Cf. *Eph.* 3, 18-19).

The Catholic school will work closely with other Christian bodies (the family, the parish and Christian community, youth associations, etc.). But one must not overlook many other spheres of activity in society which are sources of information and in their various ways have an educational influence. Alongside this so-called "parallel school", the school proper is an active force through the systematic formation of the pupils' critical faculties to bring them to a measure of self-control (17) and the ability to choose freely and conscientiously in the face of what is offered by the organs of social communication. They must be taught to subject these things to a critical and personal analysis (18), take what is good, and integrate it into their Christian human culture.

1.3.4. Religious teaching

The specific mission of the school, then, is a critical, systematic transmission of culture in the light of faith and the bringing forth of the power of Christian virtue by the integration of culture with faith and of faith with living.

Consequently, the Catholic school is aware of the importance of the Gospel-teaching as transmitted through the Catholic Church. It is, indeed, the fundamental element in the educative process as it helps the pupil towards his conscious choice of living a responsible and coherent way of life.

Without entering into the whole problem of teaching religion in schools, it must be emphasized that, while such teaching is not merely confined to "religious classes" within the school curriculum, it must, nevertheless, also be imparted explicitly and in a systematic manner to prevent a distortion in the child's mind between general and religious culture. The fundamental difference between religious and other forms of education is that its aim is not simply intellectual assent to religious truths but also a total commitment of one's whole being to the Person of Christ.

It is recognized that the proper place for catechesis is the family helped by other Christian communities, especially the local parish. But the importance and need for catechetical instruction in Catholic schools cannot be sufficiently emphasized. Here young people are helped to grow towards maturity in faith.

The Catholic school must be alert at all times to developments in the fields of child psychology, pedagogy and particularly catechetics, and should especially keep abreast of directives from competent ecclesiastical authorities. The school must do everything in its power to aid the Church to fulfill its catechetical mission and so must have the best possible qualified teachers of religion.

1.3.5. The Catholic school as the centre of the educative Christian community

For all these reasons, Catholic schools must be seen as "meeting places for those who wish to express Christian values in education"(19). The Catholic school, far more than any other, must be a community whose aim is the transmission of values for living. Its work is seen as promoting a faith-relationship with Christ in whom all values find fulfillment. But faith is principally assimilated through contact with people whose daily life bears witness to it. Christian faith, in fact, is born and grows inside a community.

The community aspect of the Catholic school is necessary because of the nature of the faith and not simply because of the nature of man and the nature of the educational process which is common to every school. No Catholic school can adequately fulfill its educational role on its own. It must continually be fed and stimulated by its Source of life, the Saving Word of Christ as it is expressed in Sacred Scripture, in Tradition, especially liturgical and sacramental tradition, and in the lives of people, past and present, who bear witness to that Word.

The Catholic school loses its purpose without constant reference to the Gospel and a frequent encounter with Christ. It derives all the energy necessary for its educational work from Him and thus "creates in the school community an atmosphere permeated with the Gospel spirit of freedom and love"(20). In this setting the pupil experiences his dignity as a person before he knows its definition. Faithful, therefore, to the claims of man and of God, the Catholic school makes its own contribution towards man's liberation, making him, in other words, what his destiny implies, one who talks consciously with God, one who is there for God to love.

"This simple religious doctrine is the cornerstone of the existential, Christian metaphysic"(21). This is the basis of a Catholic school's educational work. Education is not given for the purpose of gaining power but as an aid towards a fuller understanding of, and communion with man, events and things. Knowledge is not to be considered as a means of material prosperity and success, but as a call to serve and to be responsible for others.

1.3.6. Other aspects of the educational process in Catholic schools

Whether or not the Catholic community forms its young people in the faith by means of a Catholic school, a Catholic school in itself is far from being divisive or presumptuous. It does not exacerbate differences, but rather aids cooperation and contact with others. It opens itself to others and respects their way of thinking and of living. It wants to share their anxieties and their hopes as it, indeed, shares their present and future lot in this world.

Since it is motivated by the Christian ideal, the Catholic school is particularly sensitive to the call from every part of the world for a more just society, and it tries to make its own contribution towards it. It does not stop at the courageous teaching of the demands of justice even in the face of local opposition, but tries to put these demands into practice in its own community in the daily life of the school. In some countries, because of local laws and economic conditions, the Catholic school runs the risk of giving counter-witness by admitting a majority of children from wealthier families. Schools may have done this because of their need to be financially self-supporting. This situation is of great concern to those responsible for Catholic education, because first and foremost the Church offers its educational service to "the poor or those who are deprived of family help and affection or those who are far from the faith "(22). Since education is an important means of improving the social and economic condition of the individual and of peoples, if the Catholic school were to turn its attention exclusively or predominantly to those from the wealthier social classes, it could be contributing towards maintaining their privileged position, and could thereby continue to favour a society which is unjust.

It is obvious that in such a demanding educational policy all participants must be committed to it freely. It cannot be imposed, but is offered as a possibility, as good

news, and as such can be refused. However, in order to bring it into being and to maintain it, the school must be able to

1.3.7. *The Catholic school as a service to the Church and to society*

The Catholic school community, therefore, is an irreplaceable source of service, not only to the pupils and its Other members, but also to society. Today especially one sees a world which clamours for solidarity and yet experiences the rise of new forms of individualism. Society can take note from the Catholic school that it is possible to create true communities out of a common effort for the common good. In the pluralistic society of today the Catholic school, moreover, by maintaining an institutional Christian presence in the academic world, proclaims by its very existence the enriching power of the faith as the answer to the enormous problems which afflict mankind. Above all, it is called to render a humble loving service to the Church by ensuring that she is present in the scholastic field for the benefit of the human family.

In this way the Catholic school performs "an authentic apostolate"(23). To work, therefore, in this apostolate means "apostolate performing a unique and invaluable work for the Church"(24).

1.4 The Responsibility of the Catholic School Today

The real problem facing the Catholic school is to identify and lay down the conditions necessary for it to fulfill its mission. It is, therefore, a problem requiring clear and positive thinking, courage, perseverance and cooperation to tackle the necessary measures without being overawed by the size of the difficulties from within and without, nor "by persistent and outdated slogans"(25), which in the last analysis aim to abolish Catholic schools(26). To give into them would be suicidal. To favour in a more or less radical form a merely non-institutional presence of the Church in the scholastic field, is a dangerous illusion(27).

At great cost and sacrifice our forebears were inspired by the teaching of the Church to establish schools which enriched mankind and responded to the needs of time and place. While it recognizes its own inadequacies, the Catholic school is conscious of its responsibility to continue this service. Today, as in the past, some scholastic institutions which bear the name Catholic do not appear to correspond fully to the principles of education which should be their distinguishing feature and, therefore, do not fulfill the duties which the Church and the society has every right to expect of them. Without pretending to make an exhaustive enquiry into the factors which may explain the difficulties under which the Catholic school labours, here are a few points in the hope of encouraging some thought as a stimulus to courageous reform.

Often what is perhaps fundamentally lacking among Catholics who work in a school is a clear realization of the identity of a Catholic school and the courage to follow all the consequences of its uniqueness. One must recognize that, more than ever before, a Catholic school's job is infinitely more difficult, more complex, since this is a time when Christianity demands to be clothed in fresh garments, when all manner of changes have been introduced in the Church and in secular life, and, particularly, when a pluralist mentality dominates and the Christian Gospel is increasingly pushed to the side-lines.

It is because of this that loyalty to the educational aims of the Catholic school demands constant self-criticism and return to basic principles, to the motives which inspire the Church's involvement in education. They do not provide a quick answer to contemporary problems, but they give a direction which can begin to solve them.

Account has to be taken of new pedagogical insights and collaboration with others, irrespective of religious allegiance, who work honestly for the true development of mankind - first and foremost with schools of other Christians - in the interests, even in this field, of Christian unity but also with State schools. In addition to meetings of teachers and mutual research, this collaboration can be extended to the pupils themselves and their families.

In conclusion it is only right to repeat what has been said above(28) about the considerable difficulties arising from legal and economic systems operating in different countries which hinder the activities of the Catholic school, difficulties which prevent them from extending their service to all social and economic classes and compel them to give the false impression of providing schools simply for the rich.

1.5 CBCI POLICY ON EDUCATION

The goal of education is to teach the students to live, to discover the deeper meaning of life and of transcendence, to learn to interact with others, love creation, think freely and critically, find fulfillment in work, plan their future, or in one word, to learn 'to be'. It is in and through education that one can hope for a more human and humane future and a more harmonious society. Cf. Consecrated Persons and their Mission in Schools, 2002, 82, 84.

"Special efforts should be made to enable students: (1) to think for themselves independently and critically; (2) to seek, extend and apply knowledge to the solution of human problems; (3) to continually strive after excellence in every field; (4) to become mature, spiritually aware men and women of character; (5) to value and judiciously use their freedom, combining with it a full sense of responsibility for actions; (6) to be clear and firm on principles and courageous in action; (7) to be unselfish in the service of their fellowmen and concerned for the welfare of the poor and socially oppressed; and (8) to become agents of needed social change in their own situations". Cf. AIACHE Declaration of Purposes, 1982.

Education, by its very nature is a transformative process, namely, changing human persons, and through them, society and its structures. This activity of transformation is a spiritual, *humanizing and liberating activity* and constitutes the core mission of education. In the knowledge society that is emerging, 'quality education' serves as the gateway to the socio-cultural and economic development of persons and of the country. "Education has an acculturating role. It refines sensitivities and perceptions that contribute to national cohesion, a scientific temper and independence of mind and spirit – thus furthering the goals of socialism, secularism and democracy enshrined in our Constitution". (National Policy on Education, 1986, **2.2**).

PART 2: LIGHT AND SHADOW SITUATION

2.1 Light Situation:

- ❖ There are 97 schools including Higher Secondary/ISC/ Secondary/ICSE/and Primary Schools in Archdiocese of Calcutta. Two TTC institutes and Two B.Ed Colleges.
- ❖ In the recent years almost 95% Catholic students are coming out successful in the board exams.
- ❖ In most of the Catholic schools, First Friday Masses are regularly held.
- ❖ Most of the schools organize annual Retreats.

- ❖ Advent Mass, crowning of our Lady, YCS,CLC activities are held in schools
- ❖ Some schools have home visits of catholic students to know them and guide them.
- ❖ Regular meetings of Catholic/Christian Principals are held in the Archdiocese.
- ❖ Catholic schools are giving admissions to the children of the Parish at the entry level.
- ❖ In other higher levels catholic students are given lower cut off marks for admission to Class XI and college.
- ❖ Schools are providing economic assistance to deserving children in the form of sponsorships, concession, books, uniform and in some cases midday meals.
- ❖ Academically weak students in most schools are given remedial classes and promotion to the next class is considered.
- ❖ Drop out percentage of Catholic students have considerably reduced from our schools. Some of catholic student dropouts from other schools are admitted to Missionary schools and they are passing the Board exams.
- ❖ Parents find the education and discipline of our schools good.
- ❖ Wherever there are boarding facilities in our schools, catholic children are given preference in admissions.
- ❖ Most of the Missionary schools teachers are counseling children with problems, with special attention to Catholics. Catholic parents are also guided in their problems by these schools.
- ❖ Some of the Missionary schools are taking the help of parents and other experts to guide their students in choosing their career.
- ❖ Our Missionary schools are sensitive to the Indian culture. The National festivals are celebrated appropriately in the schools to give awareness to the children about the diversity of our cultural heritage.
- ❖ Special programmes like, Mothers' Day, Grandparents' Day, Family Day for catholic children, Anglo Indian Day are celebrated to educate the children.
- ❖ Catholic teachers and other Support Staff are given preference in our Catholic Institutes.
- ❖ Other poor and needy students also receive concession in our schools.
- ❖ Our schools promote national integration, as students form different cultural backgrounds and religious traditions are helped to grow together as Indian citizens.
- ❖ Many of our schools impart value education.
- ❖ By and large, our Catholic schools are looked upon with great respect and regard for their quality education.
- ❖ Our Catholic schools have groomed some outstanding men and women, who have contributed enormously to nation building.

2.2 Shadow Situation

- ❖ Schools being academic centers are not able to given much attention to the spiritual formation of the staff and students.
- ❖ With the work load and the present trend of competitions Principals become more administrators and at times the pastoral concern is not shown.
- ❖ Some of the Catholics are unable to get admission in some of the schools due to huge fee structure.
- ❖ Parents have a fascination to admit their children in some select and preferential schools but are unable to get admission.
- ❖ With both parents working, the catholic child does not get enough attention and motivation in their homes in matters educational.

- ❖ Lack of parental support in insisting and encouraging daily study habits and attendance in school/college has resulted in poor performance of catholic students in their class.
- ❖ Some of the Catholic children do not take full advantage of the education in our schools.
- ❖ Still a number of catholic children are given “Transfer Certificates” when they cannot make the grade. The number of catholic students in the Middle and Senior School are less than the number in the Primary.
- ❖ There is a lack of proper relationship between parents and the school administration.
- ❖ Some of the Catholic teachers are not motivated to support and guide the catholic children in their schools. Some Teachers do not want to do anything beyond their working hour/schedule.
- ❖ There is no proper follow-up programme for drop outs for further education or skill based learning.
- ❖ Catholics are unable to get Government scholarship to pursue higher education due to lack of awareness or help from the Church.
- ❖ Boarding facilities are few and some of the catholic institutions are closing the Hostel facilities.
- ❖ There are only two Catholic and two Christian colleges in the Archdiocese which is not sufficient. Due to limited seats and inadequate performance the choice of subjects/streams the Catholic students are not admitted in these colleges.
- ❖ Lack of seminars/camps during major vacations. (Summer/Puja). Non-cooperation of the parents in the programmes.
- ❖ There is no proper counseling given to the children due to lack of trained/qualified personnel in some schools and centres in the Diocese.
- ❖ Some schools provide opportunities for career counseling. Majority of the schools and the church are unable to extend this service to the children and their parents..
- ❖ In spite of having some of the best schools and colleges in the city, there are very few Catholics who pursue academic courses in higher education that make them qualified to teach in colleges and universities.
- ❖ Our Catholic schools have not become agents of evangelization.
- ❖ There are many parents who are fascinated by some of our elite schools and seek admission for their children not realizing the implications of such a move.
- ❖ The inability of some to obtain admission in a school of their choice forces some of our Catholic parents to seek admission in other Christian/non-Christian schools thereby endangering the faith formation of their children.

PART 3: SETTING GOALS

- ❖ Catholic Schools to be agents of social change and transformation
- ❖ To ensure that every Catholic child and, most especially the Catholics, receive a minimum education up to class XII.
- ❖ To ensure that our Catholic schools impart holistic and all-encompassing education.
- ❖ To make our Catholic schools cradles for promoting vocations to priesthood and religious life.
- ❖ To ensure our schools are at the service o society, at large, and the Catholic community, in particular.
- ❖ To establish a college in each Deanery.

PART 4: ACTION PLAN

- ❖ All Catholic schools will be made aware about provisions/guide lines of the All India Catholic Education Policy 2007 and the Kolkata Archdiocese Pastoral Plan through talks and seminars.
- ❖ Seminar on Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 should be organized for all the Principals and teachers of our schools.
- ❖ All Catholic schools and colleges to ensure that no catholic child is refused admission.
- ❖ Each school should organize to raise funds to help the poor children to pursue their studies.
- ❖ Motivate teachers, especially Catholic teachers to participate in the Education Policy of the school and the Catholic Church and the church activities.
- ❖ Get-together of Catholic parents and students once a year.
- ❖ Orientation programmes will be organized for the teachers in collaboration with the Catholic Teachers Guild, to motivate them to guide the academically weak children in their studies.
- ❖ Teachers will be encouraged through their schools to participate in the various church activities.
- ❖ Organize seminars, workshops through the Catholic Teachers' Guild to sensitize and motivate teachers to contribute towards the development of the children, school and the Church.
- ❖ Seminars for new teachers to be conducted in the schools within 6 months to inculcate in them the ethos of the Founder Body.
- ❖ Award students and teachers for their excellent performance and contribution in school and the Church. Diocesan level.
- ❖ Organize one day career guidance programme for the Catholic students of Class X and XII every year.
- ❖ Organize leadership camps, retreats, career counseling seminars other activities for all Catholic children in schools and parishes in collaboration with the Youth Commission.
- ❖ Guide and motivate academically weak children to work hard and take advantage of the facilities provided to them in their schools.
- ❖ Provide financial/ material assistance to the deserving and meritorious children.
- ❖ organize parenting sessions in schools and Parishes in collaboration with the Family and Laity Commissions.
- ❖ Involve Catholic parents in the various feedback and question-answer sessions in parishes in the context of their children's education, involvement in church activities and career.
- ❖ Set up Central office for Career and psychological Guidance, Information and Grievance cell preferably with the Inspector of Catholic Schools. Diocese Deanery and Parish level.
- ❖ Common Policies in all the schools like Pay Structure. Recruitment procedures, etc.
- ❖ To make policies regarding child protection and gender policy in all our Catholic schools.

PART 5: QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- ❖ Should the Schools take the full responsibility of spiritual formation of the students in the schools or share the responsibility with the parishes?

- ❖ Should the Schools established by various religious congregations and the Diocese have lay Principal's, give your reasons for and against?
- ❖ Why do most of the Catholic parents lack responsibility and interest in the formation of Catholic faith of their children?
- ❖ What needs to be done when some of the Catholics are unable to get admission in some of the schools due to huge fee structure?
- ❖ Why do some of the Catholic children not take full advantage of the education in our schools?

CONCLUSION

The Archdiocese has progressed considerably in the field of education. Various congregations have established a number of schools to ensure that the Catholic child is not deprived of education. There seems to be a gradual growth in the number of Catholic children completing at least matriculation and going on for different vocational courses. However, in the field of higher education, the Catholic child is unable to match wits with their peers and hence, do not succeed in various competitive examinations. There is a clarion call to address this issue..

CONCLUDING PRAYER

Mary our mother, with faith and love we come to seek your blessings for you are our example and guide. You were inspired by God to visit your cousin Elizabeth and share with her the good news of Jesus. Help us so that we too through the power of the Holy Spirit make known Jesus and His compassion through the ministry of education in the archdiocese of Kolkata. Be our source of courage and strength to participate in the mission of the church in proclaiming your Son and the values he taught us thus bringing the reign of God in our world. This we ask in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

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CBCI Policy on Education