

July 3, 2015



EDUCATION - The Executive Director of Schools in the Archdiocese of Sydney –Dr Dan White, launched a book entitled –Will Catholic Schools Be Catholic in 2030 ? In his launch address, Dr White reflected “ I couldn’t help thinking as I delved into the various readings and reflections, that this book was especially written for me as a system leader”

The book was co-authored by long-term Catholic educators and former Congregational Leaders, Ursuline Sister, Leone Pallisier and Patrician Brother, Aengus Kavanagh. The 325, A-4, page publication explores issues that are of the essence in the unfolding of the story of Catholic schools and of church in Australia. Tribute is paid to the generations of Religious -the unsalaried workforce, that sustained and expanded Catholic school education in the decades when not a penny or cent of government money was received. A photo or image is included of the Founder of each of the Religious Congregations whose main ministry was Catholic education. The notion of charism is explored with an invitation to current generations of leaders and teachers to grow the charism.

Because of a variety of reasons , not least of which is the comparative generous funding by governments, Catholic schools are flourishing. The Catholic school presents a positive image of church across a range of suburbs, in regional settings, and in remote rural communities. However, there are many forces at play with potential to erode the primary purpose which justifies the continued existence of Catholic schools as a separate sector, namely to be part of the church’s mission to be Christ’s transforming presence in the world. Increasingly in our highly secularised society, education is viewed as a commodity. Less than 15% of all baptised Catholics in Australia are affiliated with church and so, many emerging leaders and teachers in Catholic schools have had minimal experience of church and are unfamiliar with church traditions and story

In this context, the book is proposed as a resource for system and school leaders and teachers inviting a re-focusing on the things that matter most in assuring the distinctive culture of Catholic schools. The hope is that the book may stimulate grass-roots theologising among Catholic educators at a number of levels

In addition to the work of the co-authors, articles are contributed by others who have played integral roles in developing the Catholic school story. These include Bishop Geoff Robinson, Bro Kelvin Canavan, Bro Tony Whelan, and Dr Anne Benjamin. Parish Priest and Vicar for Evangelisation in the Archdiocese of Sydney -Fr Paul Monkerud, has a challenging article. There are also contributions from 'the last of the tribe', the only two remaining Religious Primary principals in diocesan schools in Sydney metropolitan dioceses –Holy Faith Sister, Brenda Kennedy, and Patrician Brother, Nicholas Harsas

About half of the book is devoted to prayers and reflections as a help to schools wishing to develop staff as a praying community. There is a rich collection of Scripture-based reflections supported in art, music, and poetry comprising a resource that could be very helpful for Community reflection, or for personal prayer. This section has been compiled by Sr Leone who has had a life-long passion for nurturing the soul of Catholic school communities and who continues to lead retreat and reflection sessions for school staffs and for Catholic women.

Already, a number of Dioceses have ordered copies of the book for their school principals and senior consultants. Additionally, quite a few schools have acquired copies for members of their school leadership teams.

The book costs \$40.00, excluding GST and postage.

Copies may be ordered: catholicschools2030@gmail.com

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