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Religious Education after Vatican II

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At the beginning of the 1960s the Catholic Church began a transformation that was almost unimaginable for an institution of its size and age. The Church's leaders sought to direct the change in orderly fashion, preserving continuity with the past while listening to the "signs of the times." Part of what was unimaginable was how traumatic and far-reaching the changes would be. Unaware of the complexity of the task, many enthusiasts of the time supposed that in a few years, or perhaps a decade at the most, the renewed Catholic Church would settle down and go on with its usual work.

Three decades after Vatican II the one thing clear is that a process of renewal will take many more decades and that the shape of the Church is still emerging. One of the main keys to the process is education: the education of all members of the Church and the education of the Church in relation to the non-church world. So far, interest in educational questions still seems confined to a small band of writers and to some hard-working but overburdened parish staffs and a small number of diocesan personnel.

Not everyone in the 1960s naively expected quick success. A group of dedicated Catholic leaders, both lay and clerical, had been struggling with the problems of education throughout the 1940s and 1950s. The North American Liturgical Conference was a gathering place for many of these people, although their interests were not exclusively liturgical. As was true earlier in Europe, liturgical reform was usually associated with biblical, catechetical, and ecumenical

movements. All of these concerns continue in the 1990s to be part of an educational transformation needed within the Catholic Church.

I often imagine the Catholic Church making the precarious journey from pre-Vatican II to post-Vatican II on the backs of a few dozen of these people. They had been formed by the best elements in the old Church which they loved, but they were ready for whatever was to come in a new Church. I refer to people such as Mary Perkins Ryan, Robert Hovda, Mary Reed Newland, Godfrey Diekmann, and Gerard Sloyan. Because of his position in the 1960s at The Catholic University of America, Gerard Sloyan had a special place in the bridge between pre-conciliar and post-conciliar eras. Through his direction of the Department of Religious Education, he provided a distinctive spirit to a generation of religious educators.

What follows in this essay is inspired by the work of Gerard Sloyan and those other bridge builders referred to above. I am primarily interested in the Catholic Church, but one of the things that has changed since the 1960s is that Catholic religious education cannot be understood in isolation from the rest of religious education. The term "religious education" is problematic within the Catholic Church and elsewhere. But I know of no other term in the English language that has a chance of succeeding both in gathering educational efforts within the Catholic Church and in stimulating discussion with other religious and educational agencies.

Vatican II did not address the topic of religious education. I am aware of only one place in the council's documents where the term is used. The council did publish a document entitled *A Declaration on Christian Education*. That sounds at least close to my topic here. However, I think there was widespread agreement at the time, and there is no reason today to change the belief, that *A Declaration on Christian Education* was one of the weaker documents of Vatican II. After some introductory paragraphs, the document is mostly a plea for Catholic schools. The title of the document is therefore misleading. One should not promise a discussion of Christian education and come out with a small slice of the problem. The Catholic school, in one form or another, can be a valuable part of Christian or religious education but it needs a context.

From one point of view, therefore, religious education is absent from the council's deliberations. But if one looks at the council with a richer possible meaning of religious education, the concern is as wide as the council itself. Vatican II as a whole was an exercise in Christian or religious education. It began an educational reshaping of the Catholic Church, and it fundamentally altered the relation of Roman Catholicism to the rest of the world.

In this context, the most important council documents on religious education were those that changed authority and worship patterns within the Church. Especially important were *The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* and *The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*. In addition, several other documents suggested a change in the Catholic Church's relation to a divine plan of salvation. *The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation* and *The Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions* pointed the way to a new meaning of "religious" in religious education. Each of these four documents, whatever its limitations, did the essential thing in breaking open new possibilities. I fear that history will be kinder to the authors of these documents than it will be to the generation after the council for failing to maintain the openness, creativity, and scholarly efforts of the first half of the 1960s.

The Dual Nature of Religious Education

In the latter part of this essay, I describe the Catholic Church's internal language of religious education. But that language needs the context of a full meaning of religious education. There are two very distinct parts, or what I will call "faces," to religious education. The two faces are related, but one must first distinguish before uniting. A clear and consistent unity forbids a premature synthesis.

The first face of religious education is the fairly familiar one of a religious group trying to form new members who will carry on the practices and mission of the group. The experienced and devoted members show the learners how to perform the rituals and practices of the group. This work of education can be called formation, initiation, or induction. If a group is to function as a community that provides affection, support, and identity to the individual, then the group needs a boundary which distinguishes inside and outside. This boundary, however, need not create an epistemological dichotomy between uncritical conformist on the inside and objective observer on the outside. One can be a devout and loyal Roman Catholic and still take the view of outsider on occasion. In fact, that ability is the basis for the other face of religious education.

The second face of religious education is the providing of an understanding of religion. Whereas the first face is to shape the way people behave, this second is mostly a matter of the mind. Can we step back from our immediate involvement and try to understand? The object to be understood is religion, which includes one's own religion.

An openness to understand is the alternative to the tendency to attack, belittle, condemn, or dismiss. If what other people practice as

religion seems bizarre or absurd, it is likely that we have not yet understood. Understanding presupposes a sympathetic readiness to listen attentively, reflect calmly, and judge fairly. An understanding of religion will find an outlet in social, political, and religious activity. But the person has to discover the link between understanding and external activity for himself or herself. The connection may take a long time to emerge and may never be obvious to other people.

A complete contrast between these two faces of religious education would include describing who, what, how, where, and why. I will concentrate on who are the recipients of religious education.

In the first kind of religious education, the recipients are inquirers or initiands of a religious body. The focus is very particular: this group of people wish to learn the practices of this religious community. With reference to age, most religions have traditionally concentrated on children. That statement hides an ambiguity because the term "children" is not as clear-cut as is often assumed. Some religious groups, adopting the premises of modern education, speak of education as if it began at age five or six. While supposedly concentrating on the children, they neglect the most formative time in children's lives. In a religious community, five or six years of age is rather late for learning the important attitudes and rituals of a religious life.

Those who believe that a person's religious formation has to continue throughout life are sometimes accused of neglecting children or even opposing the education of children. But children are not the enemy of lifelong education. An education that deserves the name "lifelong" would necessarily start at birth—at the latest.

Christian, Jewish, and Muslim emphasis upon the education of children was not misplaced. However, what has become increasingly clear in the twentieth century is the need for a shift of emphasis. Some of the shift is from later to earlier childhood; that would involve, of course, special concern for the parents of young children. In addition, a religious group has to recognize that the attitude of inquirer or initiand can continue throughout life. The patterns of church life continue to educate or miseducate every day. How the liturgy is performed, how men and women interact in the Church, how the old are respected, constitute a continuing education.

I said that the learners are already members of the community or seriously considering entrance. The individual is asking for immersion into and experience of the life of the community. A language is spoken within the group that expresses the intimate life of the community. A stranger wandering into a liturgical ceremony should find it alien. Some minimum preparation is necessary for appreciating the meaning

of the community's prayer. The young child's absorption of the language is largely through parents and siblings.

In the second face of religious education, the ages of the audience can be from young child to older adult. But the capacity to understand religion takes many years to develop. Undoubtedly, three-year-olds can ask difficult questions about religion. Similar to children's questions about sex, questions of religion demand simple, honest answers without elaborate explanations. Young children have neither the ability nor the need to study religion. By age five or six children have begun to develop the thinking capacity presupposed in the understanding of religion. Many more years are needed before they can exercise critical judgments about their own religion in relation to the religion of others. Thus, the concentration of so much religious education in the years of elementary school lacks any clear logic. Those years are rather late for the first kind of religious education and rather early for the second kind.

As to the religious composition of the second audience for religious education, a manageable diversity is desirable. Some degree of otherness, some basis of comparison, is necessary for understanding anything. "Religion" as used in the modern world is plural in meaning; it was invented to describe the plurality found by explorers, anthropologists, and archeologists. Many Catholic leaders wish to have Catholics understand their own religion first before encountering others. One can sympathize with that desire but understanding still involves comparison. Often in the past, the comparison was to a straw man, an unintelligible alternative to the one, true, and (almost) perfect Catholic Church. The Catholic high school graduate who went to a secular university sometimes had the feeling of stepping off a cliff upon discovering that the comparisons were not that simple.

That problem is not so common as it was forty years ago. Catholic schools do a better job of teaching religion. These days there are better comparisons between a somewhat messy Catholic Church and alternatives that one can understand to some degree. When Catholic students understand Judaism, they do not convert to Judaism; the usual effect is that they understand their Catholicism better. Unfortunately, well-taught religion lessons still reach only a minority of Catholics. We still need a better distribution of resources within the Catholic Church.

It should be noted that the Catholic Church need not be the only sponsor of well-taught religion lessons to Catholics. Many of the students who have attended Catholic schools are ready to study with a more diverse group in the university. We need other experiences beyond the university with some mixing of religion for the purpose of understanding religion. Such study can be sponsored by a single religious

community, several different religious bodies, or a nonreligious organization. Having a mixed religion group to study religion is still thought to be the exotic exception, rather than a common occurrence. A group of Catholics can understand Judaism, to a degree, and Judaism's relation to the Church. It is nonetheless a surer road to understanding if Jews are articulating the Jewish position.

The distinction I have drawn between the two faces of religious education does not locate people in separate compartments. Each individual at some time in life needs access to each kind of religious education. Both kinds may operate simultaneously, although at some moments of life one of them is likely to dominate. I suggested that in the first few years of life the formation into the religious group necessarily takes precedence. I suspect that in late adolescence or young adulthood, there is often a severe tension. As one's academic ability to understand reaches maturity, one may have resistance to the other kind of education, that is, formation within the community. If that stage can be negotiated without too much storminess, the older adult can hold in a calm and fruitful tension the two kinds of religious education.

A legitimate question that might be asked is why these two distinct realities need to have the same name. Could not "religious education" serve for one or the other of the two? The answer is that "religious education" already serves for both realities in different parts of the world. Instead of introducing ambiguity, I am calling attention to it. I am also suggesting that there is a good reason for it.

In the late twentieth century the world needs both faces of religious education. The comprehensive use of the term advocated here would open a fruitful dialogue between the two of them. Not every religious educator has to do both kinds of education. But while concentrating on one kind, the educator has to be aware of another aspect to the work. If there is a linguistic bridge, then the individual's passage from one side to the other would not be a jarring reversal.

Religious education is an idea born in the twentieth century. The widespread assumption in the nineteenth century that religion and education are opposites, that education would slowly eliminate religion, was countered at the turn of the century by the premise of the religious education movement. This premise was that religion and education are not only compatible but are beneficial to one another.

On one side of the relation, religious people were encouraged to become educated: to be intelligently and freely formed in the practices of their religious life and to understand that way of life in relation to a set of practices called "religion." Devout involvement in religious practice does not preclude understanding religion; it can be a helpful basis for a realistic assessment of religion.

In the other direction, scholars who would explain religion need a feel for religious practice. Someone is not cut off from all understanding of religion by reason of not belonging to a clearly defined religious community. But such a person needs sympathy not antipathy for the actual practice of a religious life. In the past a lot of the explaining of religion in secular universities turned out to be an explaining away of religion. Presuming that something should not exist is not an effective way of understanding it.

If the term "religious education" covers both the formation of life within a community and an intellectual understanding, which in principle goes beyond the community, the need for a respectful and sympathetic dialogue is highlighted. Academic instructors in religion ought not to be subject to tests of orthodoxy. But such teachers regularly have to examine what motivates their teaching and what is their relation to the religious practices they are trying to illuminate.

A religious education that does embrace these contrasting activities—formation into one religious community and an understanding of religion(s)—is threatened by opposite dangers. On one side an academic examination of religion can take over the term, leaving church, synagogue, and mosque without a link between their internal activities and the rest of the world's educational efforts in religion. This problem does not exist in the United States, but it is found in countries influenced by a British way of speaking about education. In these places, religious education usually means the name of a subject taught in state schools. This usage not only limits religious education to the school but encapsulates it as one course in the curriculum of the state school.

The way people speak is often not entirely logical, and outsiders should not be quick to criticize. But the strange evolution of "religious education" in British English has the effect of excluding church, synagogue, and mosque. The British borrowed the term from the United States before giving it a legal meaning in the 1940s. At that time, the term encompassed academic study and worship. When strong doubts arose about a common worship service in government schools, "religious education" tended to become equivalent only to an academic subject. This way of speaking has been in place for only about thirty years and, as educational debates in the late 1980s showed, it is not an entirely clear way of speaking.¹

The United States presents not the preferable alternative but the opposite danger. Whatever religious education means in the United States, it does *not* mean a subject taught in state schools. Its common use in the United States is for an activity proper to church or synagogue but illegitimate in the public school.² "Religious education" was invented as a term to bridge the educational work of religious

bodies and the public school. But hardly had the Religious Education Association been founded when the more conservative parts of Catholicism, Judaism, and Protestantism shied away from the term.

The recent effort to start or re-start a Catholic-Protestant-Jewish dialogue on education is admirable. However, it may obscure the fact that their original partner in dialogue was to be public education. When a group of people in the 1970s decided to address the question of religion in the public school, they felt it necessary to withdraw from the Religious Education Association and start an organization that came to be known as the National Council of Religion and Public Education. The split was an unfortunate one, and neither organization has flourished. Both groups may run interesting conferences and publish journals, but they have not been able to initiate on any national scale the badly needed discussion of religion and education: Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and other religious groups on one side of that relation; religiously affiliated schools, private schools, state schools, and other educational agencies on the other side. This relation, so central to the United States, does not have a framework for discussion.

The renewal of the term "religious education" since the 1960s was largely fueled by Catholic enthusiasm. From being slightly suspect and culturally alien until 1960, the Catholic Church found itself to be a major player in control of educational language. Today no individual institution has the power of the Catholic Church in determining the meaning of "religious education" in the United States. The drawback is that public schools (and even Protestant Christians) can be scared off by a term that Catholics wield as their own. It is incumbent on Catholics that in using the term "religious education" they are careful not to speak as if they were the owners of the term.

The Internal Language of Catholicism

This last point brings me into the second part of this essay: the Catholic Church's internal or intramural language of religious education. The direct reference is to the first face of religious education but with implications for the second face. The Catholic Church has the right and the duty to preserve its own internal language. What can be called religious education in that language are practices which, while formative of church membership, maintain a tension with a universal calling.

When the Catholic Church forgets that it shares in, rather than owns, religious education, a strange inversion of language can occur: Catholic religious education becomes a small and segregated part of

the Church's work. To this day many people use "religious education" as interchangeable with "CCD." Even Andrew Greeley's writings after Vatican II have described a conflict of Catholic school versus religious education/CCD.³ I do not argue with Greeley's data or his case for the Catholic school. I would think one good reason for supporting Catholic schools is that they provide religious education. I do not understand why Greeley accepts and affirms a language that cuts off the possibility of educational discussion within the Catholic Church and the Church's alliance with other educational bodies.

Catholic education since Vatican II has revolved around the term "catechetics" and its cognates "catechist," "catechize," "catechesis" and "catechism." All but the last of these words was unknown to most Catholics before 1960. After the council catechetical language quickly swept the field, but there were and are ambiguities. We are still early in the game of developing a language that will lead to cooperation rather than fragmentation in the Catholic Church's educational efforts.

After Vatican II the way to describe church activity has been with the idea of ministry. The council did not emphasize this term but the experience of Vatican II clearly inspired its reentry. Before the council Catholics either did not use the term "ministry" or used it to refer to the clergy. Some people still use the term to mean nothing but the clergy; an unhelpful reaction by other people is to use ministry for everyone's work in the Church except the clergy's. Overall, there has been progress in the Catholic reappropriation of the term to refer to the five, six, eight, or some small number of areas that define the essential work of the Church. It is no small progress that the Catholic Church now has names for certain people doing certain tasks that are crucial to church life.

Within the Catholic Church there would be general agreement that catechizing can be called a ministry. Unfortunately, most Protestant Churches resist catechetical language, even though it can be found in early Protestant history. This fact does not invalidate its usage as a language of intimacy within Catholicism. Although it is largely a post-conciliar phenomenon, catechetical language has roots in the New Testament and the early Church.

It is important while preserving this language that it be kept in tension with language that transcends the Catholic Church. For example, I have often heard it said that "a catechist is not a mere teacher." This denial is an unwise acceptance of a dichotomy. "Catechist" needs some of the connotations of "teacher," and the modern secular meaning of "teacher" needs challenge by the activity of such people as catechists. Jaroslav Pelikan begins his book on the images of Jesus with the image of teacher, which, according to Pelikan, was the most universal

and least controversial title of Jesus in the first century. Losing hold of that title is a devastating loss for Christians.⁴

When people say a catechist is not a teacher, I think they mean to distance themselves from the image and connotations of *school teacher*. There could be a helpful distinction here if made without disparagement to either side. The contrast is not between catechist and teacher but instead between different kinds of teaching.

The Catholic Church needs a kind of teaching that is not burdened with the assumptions of the classroom. Likewise, academic instruction should not be burdened with the role of catechizing. Teaching that is appropriate from the pulpit or in preparing a person for sacramental initiation may be inappropriate in the classroom. I find it frustrating that many statements from chanceries and the Vatican seem to have no suspicion of this distinction. Most people who work in classrooms every day discover the difference very quickly.

Catechizing is a form of teaching in which words predominate (in contrast to most teaching where words are secondary). In this respect, it is similar to school teaching. However, school teachers work in the context of classrooms and an academic curriculum; catechists work in the context of sacramental life. School teachers teach religion; catechists teach the Gospel and Christian doctrine. The catechetical venture is firmly within the framework of forming people to lead a Christian life. Catechesis is one of the ministries of the Catholic Church wherein the Gospel is announced, to be followed by an explanation of Christian doctrine.

This description of the catechetical as a small but important aspect of Catholic religious education runs counter to a strong tendency of recent decades. People who take to any important task have a natural tendency to expand the conception of what they do beyond the boundaries that history, logic, and other people have determined. The catechetical aspect of the Catholic Church tends to overreach its place within the ministries of the Church. Some clear distinctions would avoid bruised feelings and stimulate cooperation. What, for example, is the relation between liturgy and catechetics? People whose main interest is liturgy tend to speak as if liturgy includes catechetics. People who promote catechetics sometimes speak as if liturgy were part of catechetics. Both positions are intelligible depending on where one's interests lie; neither assumption is helpful to cooperation. For the present context, catechetics needs the help of liturgy, but liturgy is not a part of catechetics. Liturgy is crucial in the formation of Christian life. By being itself, liturgy is formative and educational; it is not an instrument of anything else.

The *National Catechetical Directory* says that the tasks of the catechist are "to proclaim Christ's message, to participate in efforts to de-

velop community, to lead people to worship and prayer, and to motivate them to serve others."⁵ Only the first of these four tasks—proclaiming Christ's message—is clearly the work of the catechist. Of course, a case can be made that the first supports the other three or that it is implied by the other three. Certainly catechists hope that both the context of their work and the result of the work involve community, worship, and service. However, the likely reading of this sentence in the *National Catechetical Directory* is that catechetics is composed of four elements: message, community, worship, and service. A survey of written materials and annual conferences would, I think, indicate that to be the widespread assumption.

From an historical and etymological point of view, such a meaning is not well supported. Message, community, worship, and service are what church ministry is for. All four are part of the Catholic Church's internal language of religious education. From a practical point of view, the expansion of catechetical work places an excessive burden on some church ministers and obstructs cooperation between ministries.

Catechesis, understood to be one of the Church's educational ministries, provides a realistic context for situating a catechism. The new "universal catechism" can be no more than a compendium of Christian doctrine. Like similar projects, the process of writing the document may be more important than the finished product. I would have liked a much simpler book that could have been a useful manual. At best, the book will be a guide for one aspect of church life; at worst, it will be one more book that does not sell or, if bought for appearance's sake, sits on the shelf.

The writers of the catechism wisely avoided trying to describe other religions. To restrict a catechism's considerations to Catholic doctrine can be a way of respecting the autonomy of other religions and of leaving the door open to other times, other places, and other books.

No book today can supply the answers of religious education—within the Catholic Church as well as beyond. But there are questions within catechetical ministry that do have answers, or least a range of possible answers. Those who exercise this ministry need some preparation. They cannot be expected to be expert in every ministry. They need to study the Bible, church history, and evolution of Christian doctrine. That is where a catechism could be useful if it summarized biblical, theological, and historical scholarship.

The catechist also needs a cooperative setting in which to catechize. With the help of other church ministers, many Catholics can participate in catechetical work. Lest catechetics become encapsulated in its own linguistic world, it needs the context of other languages

within the Church as well as language of encounter between church and non-church world. In 1970 I wrote an essay which a journal misleadingly titled "Catechetics R.I.P."⁶ What the essay actually says is that in the 1960s the catechetical movement was amazingly successful. Now we needed other educational language that would complement the catechetical. A quarter century later I would assert the same statement even more strongly. Liturgists, theologians, parents, school teachers, parish administrators all have a part in the Church's educational mission and provide a context for catechizing.

The educational formation of a Catholic rests first not on catechetics but on worship and service. No educational reform within the Church can be successful if it is concentrated on catechisms, CCD, and textbooks. One learns to be a Catholic by participating in the liturgical life of the community. Perhaps the most successful educational model that has been developed since the council is the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. Here the role of the catechist is clearly situated in relation to sacramental life. The best renewals of parish life have carried that spirit into other formats. Educational programs based on the liturgy do not have to be elaborate and complex, suitable only for experts. All parishioners ought to be invited to take some part.

A service element can never be absent from programs of Catholic formation. Unlike liturgy and catechetics, service knows no church boundary. The language of feeding the hungry and bandaging the wounded is intelligible without any theological preparation. When liturgy is genuinely drawing people toward a center, it also impels them outward to serve those in need within the Church community and beyond.

The chief religious education that the Catholic Church provides to the rest of the world is in struggles against injustice, in the willingness of individuals and communities to protest against all forms of violence. When such witness is evident, then church explanations of what it stands for are intelligible to all and persuasive to some. If the witness is missing, then almost anything said by church spokespersons is suspect. The Church's books and pronouncements cannot educate if the words are not heard.

Two Testing Points

I would finally like to mention two litmus tests of how religious education is faring *within* the Catholic Church three decades after the council. Also important for my purposes is the question: How is religious education faring in relation to the Catholic Church? The first litmus test

is graduate programs of religious education at Catholic universities; the second is the Director of Religious Education movement.

Immediately after the council a number of M.A. programs in religious education sprang up across the United States. Many of them were small and had little backing; they tended to wither quickly. Other programs were well planned and the universities invested resources to allow development; some of these programs prospered and turned out hundreds of graduates, to the benefit of parishes and Catholic schools.

For more than a decade there has been a drift away from the term "religious education" to describe these programs. A common alternative is "pastoral ministry" which may start out as a parallel program and then gradually absorb the religious education degree. Although this shift of names may be realistic and helpful for individuals concerned with jobs, I suspect that something is lost in this transition.

Universities have a responsibility to consider this issue carefully. I understand why a seminary would call its degree program "pastoral ministry"; the seminary is an ecclesiastical institution whose purpose is to train ecclesiastical ministers. The same is not true of a university, even one with a religious affiliation. The Catholic university's mission is to maintain a healthy tension between church and non-church worlds. A major part of its mission is to pose a challenge to the secular assumption that education excludes religion. The existence of a religious education program in a Catholic university ought to be a prod to every school of education in the country: Why is religion neglected when every school teacher in the country has to deal with it?

I am not suggesting that the Catholic university simply try to hold on to the population and program it had for a decade or two after the council. The programs were nearly always weak on the educational side: family education, counseling, administrative skills, as well as academic curriculum. The language of ministry as part of the context of religious education is appropriate in a university that is Catholic. But in a Catholic institution that is a university, religious education ought to be an integral part of a school of arts and sciences and/or a professional school for the preparation of educators.

Within the Church, the university ought to be challenging the diocesan and parochial structures to come up with jobs that have intellectual substance and professional standing. The university ought not to accept whatever ecclesiastical language seems fashionable. A master's degree should do more than prepare a person to be a general assistant to the pastor. Specific educational jobs should be available within parishes, in religiously affiliated schools, and in other schools for which a religious education degree would be preparation. Such jobs will not be there unless the university stands behind religious

education as a legitimate and important venture for the future. The Catholic university should not have to carry the project alone, but the project will not be sustained without leadership from Catholic universities.

The second litmus test is one of the jobs to which the M.A. in religious education has led. Immediately after the council an educational reform movement was launched in the Twin Cities diocese of Minnesota. The movement took a decade to acquire a fairly standard name: Director of Religious Education.⁷ The name has never reached universal acceptance, but the title of Director of Religious Education is found throughout the United States and encompasses many thousands of people. Although the title was consciously chosen to link it to an earlier Protestant movement, the Catholic movement far surpasses all other churches. And while there may be similar movements in other countries, the U.S. case is clearly the most dramatic one.

As in most reform movements, there is a moment when creativity is demanded by the exigencies of the time. As Catholic schools disappeared and teaching staffs shrunk in size, the Church was faced with either simply shrinking its educational work or trying new forms. In some places, the D.R.E. movement may have been interpreted as the cutting of the teaching staff from eight to one. In other places, it meant the parish would examine itself and start using its resources differently. I wrote in a book in 1970 that if you are being hired as D.R.E. it is probably for the best of reasons or for the worst of reasons; and it would be advisable to know which it is before being hired.⁸ I believed at the time that the movement could not have the luxury of being a modest success. I still believe that to survive at all it has to be the forerunner of a rethinking of the Church's education.

Directors of Religious Education are among the most intelligent, loyal, and hard-working people in the Catholic Church. But they remain too isolated to accomplish the great claim of their title: the directing of religious education in the Catholic Church. The isolation is mostly not of their own making. However, they have not helped their own cause by talking about Directors of Religious Education as constituting "a profession." Although any group can claim to be a profession, the claim gets you nowhere unless there is a sufficient base of knowledge and an institutional support to make the claim credible. Otherwise, creating your own profession simply has the effect of isolating the group.⁹

The choice for most people who wish to have the respect professionals claim is to get help from one or more existing professions. Directors of Religious Education need help from church ministers and professional educators; they need support from within their own

Church and from outside the Church. Directing religious education in the Catholic Church means marshalling resources internal to the Church. It also means being aware of the fact that the Catholic Church turns a face toward the rest of the world.

Internal to the Church, there is a need to link the formative work of many ministries. The pastor does that in one way but there is room for another person doing it with explicit educational intent. The D.R.E. has to link message, worship, community, and service by inviting every parishioner to be involved in education. The tricky part is to end up the director of the program rather than the program itself.

The Director of Religious Education also stands at the intersection of the Church and non-church world of education. On one side, the D.R.E. is usually closer to ordinary parish life than are Catholic school teachers. On the other side, the D.R.E. usually has more contact with secular education than does the pastor and other church ministers. Thus, the D.R.E. embodies the two faces of religious education, sometimes acting against church policy for the sake of a better educated Church. The position is precarious, especially if your livelihood depends on a local pastor or parish council.

The U.S. Catholic Church's need to direct its religious education cannot be solved by a single, parochial position. Even the number of parishes that can hire a person (or persons) at a living wage and provide professional resources is likely to remain a minority. The D.R.E. movement has raised up the promise of the Catholic Church evolving into a truly educational Church, transformative of its own members and a force for justice in the world at large. But the Church still has a long way to go in developing institutional support not only for parish directors of religious education but for the hundreds of thousands of catechists, the millions of Catholic parents, and the tens of millions of actual or potential learners.

NOTES

1. For a summary of British history on the point, see Gabriel Moran, *Religious Education as a Second Language* (Birmingham: Religious Education Press, 1989) chapter 4; John Hull, *New Directions in Religious Education* (London: Falmer, 1982).
2. *Religion in the Curriculum* (Washington, D.C.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1987).
3. Andrew Greeley and Peter Rossi, *The Education of Catholic Americans* (Chicago: Aldine, 1966); Andrew Greeley and William McCready, *Catholic Schools in a Declining Church* (Mission, Kans.: Sheed, Andrews and McMeel,

1976); Andrew Greeley, "Letter to the Editor," *National Catholic Reporter* (June 30, 1989).

4. Jaroslav Pelikan, *Jesus through the Centuries* (New Haven: Yale University, 1985) chapter 1.

5. *Sharing the Light of Faith* (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1978) #213

6. "Catechetics R.I.P.," *Commonweal* (December 18, 1970) 299-302.

7. See Maria Harris, *The DRE Book* (New York: Paulist, 1976); Thomas Walters, *National Profile of Professional Directors of Religious Education* (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1983); Thomas Walters, "The DRE: A Progressive Study," *PACE* (December 1990) 92-5.

8. Gabriel Moran, *Design for Religion* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1970).

9. The classic study on this point is Harold Wilensky, "The Professionalization of Everyone," *American Journal of Sociology* 70 (1964) 137-58.

the Reality of Vatican II Appendix Doctrinal Development on Religious Liberty. A funny thing about Vatican II is that they say a funny thing happened on the way to the forum, and that's certainly true of the fate of the documents of the Second Vatican Council on their way to the larger forum of the Church in which they were implemented. This situation calls to mind the tendentious collection of essays by forty Catholic scholars published about 20 years ago under the title of *Modern Catholicism: Vatican II and After*. In a 1991 review, Piers Paul Read notes the unfailingly Modernist trajectory of the contributors, culminating in this: Most revealing is a section by F. J. Laishley, head of the department of Christian Doctrine at Heythrop College, on the Council's "Unfinished Business". The Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, commonly known as the Second Vatican Council or Vatican II, addressed relations between the Catholic Church and the modern world. The council, through the Holy See, was formally opened under the pontificate of Pope John XXIII on 11 October 1962 and was closed under Pope Paul VI on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception on 8 December 1965.

Vatican II-- book review: legal education and religious perspective, By REVEREND RAYMOND C. O'BRIEN. Anthony J. Scanlon*. As a result of Vatican II every Catholic institution has had to re-define itself. Some Catholic educators, in the years immediately after Vatican II, saw a need to radically alter the legal structure of Catholic education, along the lines of Jacqueline Grennan's reform of Webster College in St. Louis." Others wanted to re-main Catholic in the juridical sense, but with much less introspective apologetics and far more involvement in the secular community.