



DIVERSITY:

The other way to be Catholic

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS: THE ORIGINAL CONTEXT

- ❖ *From Protestant Repression to Freedom of Religion*
- ❖ *From Public education to Private schools*

THE PRESENT CONTEXT

- *The Protestant threat to Catholicism does not exist.*
- *The Present Context? Our rational for existence is often tied up with the parish.*
- *Post 9/11 - A nation in turmoil*
- *The struggle with Diversity*
- *The City of Dayton: An Experiment with diversity.*
- *Not everyone sees diversity as a virtue.*
- *This is true also of Catholic schools.*

THE CHURCH & RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

- *Prior to Vat II: Syllabus of Errors (1864): "[It is an error to say that] Every man is free to embrace and profess that religion which, guided by the light of reason, he shall consider true" (15); "[It is an error to say that] In the present day it is no longer expedient that the Catholic religion should be held as the only religion of the State, to the exclusion of all other forms of worship" (77); "[It is an error to say that] Hence it has been wisely decided by law, in some Catholic countries, that persons coming to reside therein shall enjoy the public exercise of their own peculiar worship" (78).*
- *II Vatican Council was an eye opener to the church.*
- *II Vatican Council declares that the human person has a right to religious freedom. This freedom means that all men are to be immune from coercion on the part of individuals or of social groups and of any human power, in such wise that no one is to be forced to act in a manner contrary to his own beliefs, whether privately or publicly, whether alone or in association with others, within due limits.*
- *But then she went further. "The Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in the[se] religions. She regards with sincere reverence those ways of conduct and of life, those precepts and teachings which, though differing in many aspects from the ones she holds and sets forth, nonetheless often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men." (NA, 2)*
- *Consequently, strides have been made in inter-faith dialogue. From exclusivism, to fulfilment, to pluralism, to accepting the possibility of 'salvations.'*

FIFTY YEARS AFTER...

- *The globalized world.*
 - *Cultures are compelled to contend with each other.*
 - *The key in all of this: How we balance both diversity and particularity?*
 - *This remains a contentious issues globally and particularly for our Catholic Schools.*
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- *Diversity in Dayton...*
 - *“The truth that enlightens all people....” In Dayton, to say it best Catholic schools have been slow in embracing diversity.*
 - *Diversity was thrust upon us... The ed-choice vouchers*
 - *“Lighting the Way”*
 - *Intentionality with regard to diversity*

CHALLENGES TO DIVERSITY

- *Age old thinking regarding religious, racial and class structures*
- *Diversity not considered a value but as a threat.*
- *Perhaps we do not have the resources to deal with the implications of diversity.*
- *Perhaps we do not understand diversity and its implications to it fullest possible degree.*
- *At least in one conversation on Catholic identity there was the thought that diversity ends up diluting the Catholic identity in our schools.*
- *To be authentically Catholic... Uniformity or Diversity*
- *Have we forgotten where we have come from and our history of oppression?*

THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR DIVERSITY

- *Trinitarian God: “Diversity mirrors the plenitude of God.”*
- *Jesus and diversity... “Do Unto Others...” (Mt 7:21)*
- *Embracing a theology of dialogue.*

WHAT CAN WE DO?

- *Embrace the theology of pluralism put forward by Vat II.*
- *New Evangelization in the context of diversity means that we become the best representation of the good news of Jesus.*
- *On the other hand evangelization also means that we allow the conditions within which each person, immaterial of their faith and cultural tradition, becomes the best person he or she can be.*
- *Getting beyond “tolerating” diversity ...*
- *Proactively “celebrate diversity” in a systematic and academic manner. By this I mean intentionality.*
- *Define Catholic Identity broadly and clearly.*
- *My experience in India.*
- *Example” Mother Teresa Catholic School in London, Ontario. Principal Ana Paula Fernandez: “The Muslim youths are “members of our school community” and the school “wants to ensure that all our students feel welcome, that they feel that they belong”.*