

# CATHOLIC EDUCATION AND PRINCIPLES OF OPENNESS

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## Abstract

As I have argued elsewhere (Grace 2016<sup>b</sup>) the ‘aggiornamento thinking’<sup>1</sup> about Catholic education made itself apparent in The Catholic School (CS) publication of 1977 from the Congregation for Catholic Education in Rome. This document powerfully expressed a new spirit which it was hoped would characterise Catholic education internationally in the era of late modernity. Influenced by the Second Vatican Council’s call for more openness to the wider world, The Catholic School proclamation may be seen as the foundation chapter or universal mission statement for Catholic schooling in the modern age. It articulated principles of openness and inclusion in educational practice in contrast to principles of closure and exclusion which had been a feature of some Catholic schooling pre-Vatican II<sup>2</sup>.

This paper will attempt to clarify the nature of these principles of openness at a theoretical level. It will then discuss the extent to which subsequent research attempts to monitor the translation of these principles in actual educational practice.

Keywords: The Catholic School (1977); Principles of Openness; Other Faiths; The Poor; Pedagogy; Research; Students.

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<sup>1</sup> See my chapter, ‘Vatican II and New Thinking about Catholic Education: Aggiornamento Thinking and Principles into Practice’ in S. Whittle (Ed). *New Thinking about Catholic Education*: 2016 forthcoming. I follow the definition of ‘aggiornamento’ used by Father Joseph Ratzinger ie ‘bringing up to date’ (1966. P. ix.).

<sup>2</sup> Principles of closure and exclusion were particularly apparent in the past for Catholic schools located in predominantly Protestant countries, eg. UK, USA, Canada and Australia. Catholic schools in these locations were regarded as faith bastions against the potentially corrupting effects of Protestant culture in society.

## **Part 1 . The Catholic school and principles of openness; a theoretical analysis**

### **Openness to other Faiths**

The most radical statement of ‘being open to others’ can be found in paragraph 85 of the 1977 mission statement:-

‘In the certainty that the Spirit is at work in every person, the Catholic school offers itself to all, non-Christians included, with all its distinctive aims and means, acknowledging, preserving and promoting the spiritual and moral qualities, the social and cultural values which characterise different civilisations’.

This form of openness had only been present in Catholic schools in ‘mission territories’ in the Middle East, Africa, India and parts of Asia but the principle was now extended to apply to all Catholic schools internationally. The Catholic school was now declared to be a resource for the common good of the communities and societies in which it was located and not simply for the private good of the local Catholic community<sup>3</sup>.

Such ‘openness to others’ marked a dramatic move from previous concepts of what could be called, the ‘ghetto Catholic school’ to the ‘faith school at the service of the community’. From one perspective, this was an example of the inspirational *aggiornamento* thinking emanating from the Second Vatican Council. From another perspective, it was a development that was likely to provoke many logistical and policy issues as well as cultural and theological concerns in later practice. These concerns will be examined later in this analysis in Part 2.

### **Openness to ‘the poor’**

It may seem paradoxical to suggest that openness to the poor was a ‘new’ principle of the CS document, given that Catholic schooling, especially in those forms provided by Religious Congregations, had been available especially for the poor for many centuries. Clearly, the principle has been long established in Catholic educational practice internationally. What was new in the 1977 mission statement was a warning to the Church that the historical openness

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<sup>3</sup> The unfortunate use of official descriptions in some societies of Catholic schools as ‘private schools’ reinforced the idea that such schools were not at the service of the whole community. The *Catholic School* 1977 document sought to counter this image by constant reference to the role of Catholic schools in contributing to the common good of society. See CS. paras. 60, 62.

to the poor was in jeopardy. This situation had arisen because Religious Congregations had been unable to maintain the strategic subsidy of resources<sup>4</sup> to maintain the mission for the poor and many national states were unwilling to provide any financial or other subsidy. What the Congregation for Catholic Education observed in the late 1970s was that access to Catholic schooling was increasingly mediated by parental ability to pay annually increasing fees. 'Being open to others' was becoming problematic if those others were economically poor.

This necessary warning to all Catholic educational authorities and providers is given in two places in the CS document. In paragraph 21, under the explicit heading, 'Class Distinction'<sup>5</sup>, it states:-

'In some countries Catholic schools have been obliged to restrict their educational activities to wealthier social classes, thus giving an impression of social and economic discrimination in education'.

In paragraph 58, under the heading 'A Thirst for Justice' it states:-

'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...'

Here again is an inspirational call to find ways of returning to the foundational principles of the Catholic educational mission but, at the same time, it is a call that presents many challenges including constitutional, economic, political and ideological questions.

## **Openness in Educational Practice**

One of the strongest criticisms of Catholic schools in the past (and the present) is that they are not centres for true education but rather centres for the indoctrination of the young into

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<sup>4</sup> The strategic subsidy of Religious congregations, especially for the education of the poor, can be defined as, 'providing the physical plant, the personnel, the cultural, spiritual and financial capital to facilitate the mission'.

<sup>5</sup> Concepts of 'social justice' and of 'class divisions', did not enter Catholic Social Teaching until the much quoted encyclical, *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931) of Pope Pius XI. The Second Vatican Council's *Declaration on Christian Education* (*Gravissimum Educationis*) of 1965 made no reference to either social justice or to class divisions in Catholic education. The use in the *Catholic School* document of 1977 of concepts of 'class distinction' in the provision of Catholic education marked a return to the more radical and explicit language of Pius XI.

the doctrines and practices of the Roman Catholic faith<sup>6</sup>. Their purpose is proselytism rather than cultivation of a critical and open intelligence, is what many secularists assert.

The 1977 mission statement sought to argue that these claims would no longer be valid because Catholic schools, post-Vatican II would be ‘truly educative’<sup>7</sup> in these ways:-

‘Christian education can sometimes run into the danger of so-called proselytism, of imparting a one-sided outlook. This can only happen when Christian educators misunderstand the nature and methods of Christian education’ para. 19.

‘The Catholic school must develop persons who are responsible and inner-directed, capable of choosing freely in conformity with their conscience’<sup>8</sup>. Para. 31.

For post-Vatican II Catholic education the ideal, as stated by the Congregation in Rome, was a move from the pedagogy of the catechism (a closed pedagogy<sup>9</sup>) to a pedagogy of dialogue and encounter (an open pedagogy). Such a changed classroom culture would have clear implications for ‘being open to others’. It would mean, if dialogical teaching became a feature of Religious Education lessons, especially in secondary schools, that Catholic teachers would face greater challenges in their encounters with adolescent students. This context of learning in pluralistic, multi-faith and even non-faith classrooms would result inevitably in being open to those of other faiths and also to the sceptical questioning of those students who had rejected religious faith of any kind<sup>10</sup>. ‘Being open to others’ in this sense required considerable skill in what can be called ‘the new Apologetics’ in responding to questions derived from students’ reading of the work of ‘the new Atheists’<sup>11</sup>. While the principle of a more open and dialogic pedagogy could be expected to bring Catholic schools more in line with modern educational practice, the transition itself would require in-depth

<sup>6</sup> The writings of Professor Michael Hand in the UK provide one example of this line of argument. See Hand (2003:2004).

<sup>7</sup> The full phrase in the CS document is, ‘The need for a truly educative school’ para. 31.

<sup>8</sup> Father Joseph Ratzinger when acting as theological advisor to the Second Vatican Council made a strong statement about ‘the sacredness of conscience’ in these terms:-

‘Over the Pope as expression of the binding claim of ecclesiastical authority, there stands one’s own conscience, which must be obeyed before all else, even if necessary against the requirements of ecclesiastical authority’ Vorgrimler (1967. P134).

<sup>9</sup> *The Baltimore Catechism No. 3*. (1921) consisted of 1,400 questions (and correct answers) to be used in Religious Instruction. *The Catechism of Catholic Doctrine*, approved by Archbishops and Bishops of Ireland in 1951 contained 443 questions (and correct answers).

<sup>10</sup> The serious impact of secularisation and secularism on modern youth was noted in a later publication of the Congregation for Catholic Education ie. *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* (1988) in these terms:-

‘Many young people find themselves in a condition of radical instability... They live in a one-dimensional universe in which the only criterion is practical utility and the only value is economic and technological progress....’ (pp. 8-10).

<sup>11</sup> ‘The New Atheists’ refers to the widely read publications of Richard Dawkins, Chris Hitchens A. C. Grayling and Daniel Dennett.

continuing professional development for the teachers faced with 'being open to others' classrooms, a more complex environment.

### **The Experience of a Catholic education: being open to the voice of students**

Under a striking sub-heading entitled 'Constant self-criticism and cooperation', the *Catholic School* mission statement argued that:-

'loyalty to the educational aims of the Catholic school demands constant self-criticism and return to basic principles...',

suggesting that:-

'Account has to be taken of new pedagogical insights and collaboration with others, irrespective of religious allegiance'...

'In addition to meetings of teachers and mutual research this collaboration can be extended to the pupils themselves...' para 67.

It can be argued that the conjunction of 'self-criticism'<sup>12</sup> and of collaboration of 'the pupils themselves' implied that post-Vatican II schools should be 'open to others', in this case to self-evaluation research and to the voice of the students as part of the process of self-criticism.

With this advice the authors of the *Catholic school* document were in advance of mainstream secular educational research in which the 'voice of the students' had not yet featured as a serious focus for enquiry<sup>13</sup>.

Similarly, the advocacy of 'collaboration with others' proclaimed a degree of openness towards many other constituencies including external educational researchers, the leaders of other Catholic schools and the leaders of other faith schools of the Protestant Christian, Jewish and Muslim communities.

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<sup>12</sup> What the Catholic School document called 'self-criticism' is now referred to in mainstream education as 'self-evaluation'. All contemporary schools are recommended to undertake such analysis.

<sup>13</sup> See Ruddock and Flutter (2000) for an argument that educational research has been impoverished by lack of serious attention to the views and experiences of students.

This particular example of ‘being open to others’ was radically counter-cultural both to past traditions of Catholic schooling and also to new imperatives affecting many countries that schools should operate on an individualistic success strategy of ‘playing the market’, proposed by the ideologists of the New Right<sup>14</sup>. Consulting the students broke with a long tradition in which ‘pupils’ had the lowest place in hierarchical Catholic power relations.

‘Collaboration with others’, which could also be called Catholic values of community and solidarity, confronted a growing global ideology of marketisation, competition and individual success survival applied to educational practice.

In recent writing, (Grace 2016<sup>a</sup>), I have argued that understanding the views and experiences of students is crucial for all faith-based schools in these terms:-

‘If mission integrity should be a central concept for the evaluation of faith-based schooling, then it follows that students in faith schools are crucial participants and evaluators of that concept in practice. Faith-based schooling (and all forms of schooling) must be open to the critical evaluation of the students in the system.’ (p100).

This theoretical analysis of the principle of ‘being open to others’ has demonstrated that it represents authentic *aggiornamento* thinking applied to Catholic education. At the same time, such thinking which involves major religious, cultural, pedagogical and organisational changes raises complex policy and practice issues which will need systematic evaluation and research inquiry. These questions will be examined in Part 2 of this paper.

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<sup>14</sup> See Gamble (1988) for an analysis of the ideology of the New Right and its social consequences. In effect, New Right ideologists claim that individual competition is always more effective than group collaboration.

## Part 2

### **‘Open’ principles into practice: policy and research issues: a review**

While the *Catholic School* proclamation of 1977 was inspirational in advocating new principles of openness for Catholic education, it had little to say about how the considerable cultural and organisational changes it recommended were to be achieved in practice. In other words, it was strong on aggiornamento thinking but relatively weak on implementation issues<sup>15</sup>. As indicated in Part 1, what the Congregation for Catholic Education was proposing amounted to a radical set of changes for the Catholic educational mission in terms of greater openness to the wider world. If implemented, these changes would make it analytically possible to compare the cultures and practices of post-Vatican II schools with an earlier period ie. pre-Vatican II schools<sup>16</sup>. The transformation of educational practice suggested in the 1997 mission statement raised complex issues of a religious, spiritual, cultural, organisational, financial and even political nature. Some attempt will now be made to examine, what can be called, ‘the challenges of implementation’ in the project of ‘being open to others’.

### **A new relation with other Faiths**

For many centuries the theological position of the Catholic Church expressed in the form, ‘extra ecclesiam salus non est’ (outside the Church there is no salvation) determined that relationships with other Faiths existed only in denunciatory forms or in actual persecutions. The modification of this absolute and inflexible position, resulting from the development of ecumenical thinking in the 20<sup>th</sup> century had allowed Catholic schools in ‘mission territories’ to admit students of other Faiths. However the *Catholic School* document had advocated a ‘service to the whole community ethic’ for Catholic schools internationally. Such schools (subject to available spaces) should be open to the admission of ‘non-Christian’ students, a more radical form of ecumenical outreach. The implementation issues generated by this new form of openness were considerable and various. Among these issues the most profound was the question, ‘what impact will the admission of students of other Faiths have upon the ethos and Catholicity of Catholic schools?’ School ethos had long been part of a claim by Catholic schools that their schools possessed distinctive religious and spiritual cultural environment,

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<sup>15</sup> In fairness it must be noted that 6 pages of the document, under the heading of ‘Practical Directions’ were assigned to cover issues such as ‘involvement of Religious in the School Apostolate’: the Catholic School in Mission Countries’: ‘Pastoral Care of Teachers’ and ‘Economic Situation of Catholic Schools’. However restrictions of space resulted in brief statements.

<sup>16</sup> For a research comparison of pre-Vatican II schools with post-Vatican II schools, see Grace (2002), Chapter 3 and 4

manifested, among other things by Gospel values affecting the social relationships in the schools (teacher-student relations and student-student relations), a strong sense of Catholic Christian Community.

In his important book, *Catholic Education: Distinctive **and** Inclusive* (2007), John Sullivan has examined the tensions which can arise in this area of challenge. On the one hand, distinctiveness, in a strong form, may cause schools to be ‘inwards-looking, over-concerned with boundaries and being blind to pluralism’ (p159). On the other hand, ‘an excess of openness and modification of tradition in order to meet the needs and priorities of each new age might dissolve the distinctiveness of the Catholic identity and undermine the mission of Church schools’ (p167). The intention of Sullivan’s writing is however to argue that it is possible and desirable for Catholic schools to be distinctive **and** inclusive.

From another perspective, Christopher Jamison OSB (2013) in a thoughtful discussion of the much used concept of ‘Catholic school ethos’ points to the difficulties in specifying what this actually means, perhaps because relatively few teachers have actually read the documents from the Congregation for Catholic Education which would help more detailed understanding of what some have called, ‘an elusive concept’. For Jamison, ‘the Catholic school is a school of communion, where all teachers are responsible for the faith formation of the students’ (p12).

While both of these writers have assisted us in thinking about the consequences of ‘being open to others – of other Faiths’, especially in relation to Catholic school ethos, they have at the same time provoked further questions for discussion and ultimately for research enquiry. From Sullivan, arises the question, what would be ‘an excess of openness’ in a school situation?<sup>17</sup> From Jamison, arises the questions, what type of ‘communion’ is possible in a multi-faith school? – and how can teachers in a multi-faith school assist in the faith formation of students?’ It has to be recognised that there are many research questions which need to be investigated as we begin to try to find answers to the profound question, ‘what impact will the admission of students of other Faiths have upon the ethos and Catholicity of Catholic schools?’

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<sup>17</sup> School leaders, (certainly in England) mainly took the view that if non-Catholic students constituted more than (say) 50% of the school population this would be regarded as an example of ‘excess of openness’.



One obvious direction for future research would be to interview Catholic school leaders (of some years of experience) of schools which have, over time, become more open to students of other Faiths, for a variety of reasons. Such school leaders would be in a strategic position to comment upon perceived changes in school ethos. One such study has been reported by Fr. François Mifsud, OP. in an article entitled, 'Other faith students in Maltese Catholic schools: responses of school leaders' (2010). Mifsud's research examined a variety of responses 'to the growing number of African students of 'other faiths' who are arriving in the island' (p50). His inquiry has demonstrated in practice the dilemmas for Catholic school leaders as they attempt to maintain the Catholic ethos of the schools, while showing openness and hospitality to those of 'other faiths'.<sup>18</sup>

We need more research studies of this type if we are to begin to understand how 'openness to others' actually affects Catholic school ethos in different locations.

### **A renewed openness to the Poor**

Catholic schools were originally founded in many countries with a mission to be open to the poor but the authors of the *Catholic School* document noted that by the 20<sup>th</sup> century a serious 'mission drift' had occurred:-

'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' para 58. As openness to the poor was becoming increasingly difficult, the 1977 authors, under the heading 'Practical Directions' called upon those responsible for Catholic school systems to negotiate with governments to 'enter into agreements, conventions, contracts etc'....(to obtain).... 'an economic and juridical status similar to State schools' para 81.

In effect the authors were urging Catholic education authorities to seek more financial support for schools (as was the case in the UK, Australia, Belgium, Germany, The Netherlands, Canada and Ireland) in order to meet the mission commitment that 'First and foremost the Church offers its educational service to the poor...' para 58. However, this wish

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<sup>18</sup> It should be noted that Mifsud's research for an MA dissertation involved interviews with only 6 headteachers in Malta and data was collected in 2007. Nevertheless, this is a study of great interest and relevance for current developments, and could serve as a model for further research.

for greater openness for the poor faced many difficulties. In some locations these were constitutional (France, USA), in others ideological and political, where Catholic schools were associated with previous forms of colonialism (Africa, India, parts of Asia and South America).

In 2007 a major world survey of existing research on Catholic schools in 35 countries across the world was attempted to monitor (among other things) to what extent openness to the poor had been facilitated by financial support from governments. While examples of greater financial support were found in some contexts, it was also the case that many barriers remained which prevented easy access of poor students to Catholic schools. 'Being open to poor students' was a mission statement that was far from being realised internationally. In Spain, for instance, Dr. Maria del Mar Grier reported that although government funds were now available in support of Catholic schools, this had not seriously affected the student demography in those schools which remained dominated by middle and upper class young people (Grier, 2008, pp304-306).

A similar situation was reported for Portugal by Joaquim Azevedo et al, where again, despite the help of some government funding for Catholic schools, the Catholic Bishops were still observing that the level of funding did not make it possible for Catholic schools to truly be 'inclusive and comprehensive' (p324).

Many of the research studies reported in the *International Handbook of Catholic Education*, 2 Vols, 2007 show that the option for the poor in Catholic education is a long way from realisation. Brian Croke reporting from Australia (often seen as a progressive context for Catholic schooling) noted the remarks of Bishop Anthony Fisher that:-

'our under-representation amongst the poor is a real problem' (p825). Similar reports were received relating to situations of the poor in Argentina, Brazil and Peru and in parts of Africa.<sup>19</sup>

A combination of ideological, economic and political factors; of the introduction of market forces into educational provision<sup>20</sup>; and of the strategic ability of 'wealthy families' to defend

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<sup>19</sup> See, for instance, the chapter for Zambia (No. 28) by Brendan Carmody, SJ and for South Africa and Lesotho (No. 29.) by Potterton and Johnson.

their own interests in education means that the Catholic Church faces a formidable challenge in attempting to make its education more open in access for the poor. However, the fact that many Conferences of Catholic Bishops are aware of the present contradictions between Catholic education theory and the reality of present practice gives hope that in the longer term, 'being open to poor students' will be achieved internationally as governments increase subsidies, in recognition of the contribution of such schools to the common good.

At this present juncture we have the benefit of the leadership of Pope Francis on these issues.

In the Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013) the Pope teaches:-

It is essential to draw near to new forms of poverty and vulnerability, in which we are called to recognise the suffering of Christ. .... I exhort all countries to a generous openness which, rather than fearing the loss of local identity, will prove capable of creating new forms of cultural synthesis' (p164). While these words have particular relevance to a present need to be open to migrants, it is clear that they apply also to the cultures of Catholic schools and of their response to the needs of poor students in terms of their access to the spiritual and educational benefits of Catholic education.

### **Openness in Pedagogy and Research**

As I argued in Part 1 of this paper the recommended move from a closed pedagogy of catechism to an open pedagogy of dialogue and encounter would create open classroom environments in which teachers would be expected to be questioned by adolescent students. 'Being open to others' in these situations might involve dealing with challenging questions from Catholic students and those of other Faiths, but also questions from senior students who had in fact rejected the teaching of the Catholic Faith. I also argued that these extremely demanding classroom situations would require teachers to undergo continuing professional development courses to be able to respond adequately to these challenges. If such a challenge was successfully accomplished Catholic pedagogy could no longer be accused of being 'a form of indoctrination' because, in fact, it would be a truly educative experience for the teacher and the students.

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<sup>20</sup> Bonal (2003) and Rambla (2003) have undertaken research in Spain that demonstrates the existence of an 'informal educational market' for Catholic schools which results in such schools having a large proportion of students from middle class and upper class social backgrounds. In Spain, public/state schools are more open to the poor than are Catholic schools is the conclusion of these researchers.

The question this generates is, ‘to what extent do classrooms, especially in Catholic secondary schools, demonstrate the actual use of a more open and dialogic pedagogy?’ It has to be admitted that systematic studies involving observations of classroom teaching in Catholic schools are not extensive.

The classic research study by Anthony Bryk et al (1993) which did report classroom observations in Catholic high schools in the USA noted that there was ‘a high level of student engagement’ (p93) in the lessons which they observed. Their overall conclusions:-

‘From this perspective Catholic education represents an invitation to students both to reflect on a systematic body of thought and to immerse themselves in a communal life that seeks to live out its basic principles’ (p335) suggests that the pedagogy being used in these American schools was a long way from anything which could be called ‘indoctrination’. Whether classrooms in Catholic schools in other contexts display a similar open pedagogy is a matter requiring much more research attention from education researchers internationally. To command the attention and respect of mainstream educational research it will be necessary for classroom research to be conducted also by observers external to the Catholic community. In this situation ‘being open to others’ will require Catholic schools to be open for investigation by those who will view the data with an objective and (it is hoped) impartial perspective).

### **Being open to the voice of students**

In my research study, *Catholic Schools: Mission, Markets and Morality* (2002), I interviewed 60 Catholic headteachers in three major cities in the UK (London, Birmingham, Liverpool). I also interviewed 50 students in 5 Catholic secondary schools in London. My intention here was ‘triangulation’ of data ie. having obtained accounts from the headteachers at the top of the school hierarchy, I needed to balance these with the perspectives of students lower in the hierarchy. In the section of the book entitled ‘Mission Principles: the perspectives of students’ (pp 231-234) I reported the views and experiences of 5 model students (informally called ‘the saints’) and 5 troublesome school resisters (informally called ‘the sinners’)<sup>21</sup>. Overall there was more positive endorsement than negative comment that the schools were living out the principles of their mission statements, but, at the same time, there was evidence

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<sup>21</sup> The students involved were unaware of these informal labels.

of a gap between theory and practice in the experience of some students. Some of the students made thoughtful (and provocative) suggestions such as:-

- ‘We should have more gathered Masses for the whole school to reflect and pray’.
- ‘I think what would make a better school is if all the teachers were Catholic and went to Mass more’ (p234).

Given the small sample used in this research, no strong conclusions can be generalised from it. However, I think that it does indicate that Catholic schools would benefit in ‘being open to the voice of their students’ both ‘the saints’ and those who are labelled ‘the sinners’. The latter group had a strong consciousness that while ‘forgiveness’ might appear in the schools mission statement<sup>22</sup>, it had not occurred in their experience, eg:-

- ‘There is no justice. People get blamed for a lot of things they didn’t do. I don’t feel as if teachers have faith in me’.
- ‘Once the school knows something about you, they will put you down – they will make your life, hell’ (p232).

Although this group represented a minority view, schools can learn from their student critics.

## Conclusion

The 1977 mission statement for post-Vatican II Catholic schools made ‘being open to others’ a dominant theme for Catholic education in the future. This is apparent in its advocacy for openness to those of other Faiths, for openness to pedagogic practice, for openness in constant ‘self-criticism’, self-evaluation and research inquiry<sup>23</sup> and in a willingness to hear the ‘voice’ of the students.

In relation to ‘being more open to the poor’, the Catholic School document urged schools to find ways to prevent a fee-based admission system in many countries blocking access to Catholic education<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>22</sup> All students were given a copy of the schools mission statement as the basis for the focus group discussion. Many commented that they had not seen the document before. Perhaps mission statement documents ought to be more open to the students.

<sup>23</sup> Archbishop Michael Miller, CSB, Secretary for the Congregation for Catholic Education in 2007 strongly endorsed the need for more research in Catholic education. See Miller (2007, pp. 477-478).

<sup>24</sup> For a more recent research study of this in practice see:-

Guzman, Palacios and Deliyannedes (2012) regarding access to Catholic schools in the USA.

These forms of openness, if actually practised, will not only result in a more authentic, effective and comprehensive provision of educational opportunities for more people<sup>25</sup> but they will also create a Catholic educational system which can refute the polemical claims brought against it by secularists and atheists, thereby meeting ideological assertions with evidence based arguments.

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<sup>25</sup> Pope Francis emphasised this point in his recent address to the Rome Congress on Catholic Education in November 2015 in this way:-  
 'We must seek to educate humanly and with open, not closed horizons. Any sort of 'closure' does not serve education, that is, confining it to those most able or most able to pay, and not bothering so much with the others'. I am grateful to Dr. Brian Croke for providing me with a report of the Pope's comments.

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