

SPIRITAN SCHOOLS



EDUCATION FOR TRANSFORMATION THROUGH GOSPEL VALUES

Edited by Billy Cleary C.S.Sp.



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Foreword

The Spiritan family traces its origins back over 300 years to a group of students in Paris gathered around their fellow student Claude Poullart des Places who set out on “a pilgrimage of life” guided by the Holy Spirit and committed to following Jesus and announcing the Good News of God’s Kingdom (Spiritan Rule of Life 1).

Since then education has been an essential part of Spiritan Mission. This is especially true in Ireland where our oldest community is Blackrock College and our largest community is the Holy Ghost Missionary College where the Kimmage Development Studies Centre continues a century long tradition of education for mission and development.

The Spiritan approach to education is a wisdom distilled from a reflective listening to Jesus the teacher in the Gospels and forged by the intuitions of our founders Claude Poullart des Places and Francis Libermann. Added to this is the lived experience of Spiritan missionaries and co-workers across the globe who over the years constantly seek to ground our educational works in an ever-changing world while seeking to be faithful to the one Mission under God of working and advocating for justice and building up community and kinship between peoples (Spiritan Rule of Life 18).

In education today we talk about the characteristic spirit of a school. We Spiritans believe that this Spirit should be present and enliven each moment and every part of the school community. It is this living Spirit that we find articulated in the Seven Core Values that are at the heart of each of our educational works and that give our schools their particular ethos.

To the students of each of our schools, and who are the primary agents of your own education and growth in faith, we hope that you find in these values a measure and a guide for the life that you wish to live and for the choices that you will make both now and into the future.

To the teachers and staff who accompany and journey with our students, we hope you will find in this ethos an inspiration and a road map for your teaching and pastoral care.

To the parents who entrust your children to the care of our Spiritan schools, we hope you find in the seven core values the direction and pedagogy that you wish for your children as they learn how to grow in wisdom and maturity to make their way in the world of today.

In a world that is constantly blessed by God but where life can also be fraught by fragmentation and despair we pray that God’s Spirit will constantly guide us on our life journey, confident in the future and attentive to the stirrings of God’s Spirit within us.

Marc Whelan C.S.Sp.
Provincial Leader
Spiritan Province of Ireland



Spiritan Core Values are Gospel Values

It is the Spirit that gives life (John 6.63)

Openness to the Spirit

Love one another (John 15.17)

A Sense of Community

Give to the poor (Matthew 19.21)

Option for the Poor

Not to be served, but to serve (Matthew 20.28)

Commitment to Service

That they may all be one (John 17.21)

Global Vision

Be perfect (Matthew 5.48)

High Educational Standards

Have life abundantly (John 10.10)

Personal and Faith Development



Preface

The Education Act, 1998 provides a statutory framework for the Irish education system at first and second levels. The Act sets out broad objectives and principles underpinning the education system and clarifies the roles and the responsibilities for all parties involved in the education process. It offers a framework for the development of a supportive and dynamic working environment which is collaborative and inclusive of all stakeholders.

The Act sets out the rights and responsibilities of the Trustees / Patron and in 1999 the Irish Spiritans set up the Spiritan Education Trust (the DEA) as the Patron and Trustee Body for Spiritan Schools and gave the Trust the mission of oversight and direction of Spiritan schools into the future. While the Department of Education and Skills sets out the framework for learning and teaching, the Trust Body has rights and responsibilities for areas of governance, especially property and finance as well as the critical area of the “Founding Intention”, Characteristic Spirit or Ethos.

Since its foundation the Trust together with the ten schools which make up the community of Spiritan Schools, have journeyed together, sometimes amidst rather turbulent waters, to ensure that the Spiritan Educational Mission responds appropriately to challenges facing each school as well as the changing situations of Irish society, while at the same time being faithful to the vision and mission of the Spiritans. This has been a collaborative mission based on mutual respect, while open to the challenges of faithfulness to the “faith mission” entrusted to us. In the Christian tradition we know from our forebears in the faith, “that if we wish to go to a place we have never been, we have to travel by a road that we do not know”.

While our pilgrimage continues as an education community, we have established pathways of good practice, accountability, listening and trust that enable us to work collaboratively in our service of Spiritan education. The Ethos and Faith Development Appraisal is an example of one of the fruits of that learning journey and the methodology applied in the appraisal offers a valuable expression of how we can work well together to achieve our common mission. It offers pathways of goals and objectives to be achieved as well as models of good practice operative among our constituent schools. Our thanks go to all who participated in the appraisal, to the team who facilitated that process and to the Ethos Committee who directed the project through all its stages.

I wish to acknowledge all in the school communities who have worked and continue to work to ensure that their particular school is a living example of the Spiritan tradition and mission today. While the responsibility for Faith and Ethos rests with all stakeholders and needs full school and cross curricular participation if to be truly effective, I wish to acknowledge the work of Senior School Management, Pastoral Care & Chaplaincy personnel as well as those involved in the ever challenging role of faith formation and catechesis.

I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank all these who have worked on the Board of the Spiritan Education Trust over the past fifteen years giving freely and generously of their time and expertise. I wish to acknowledge those who established the Trust including Spiritans, Hugh Boyle C.S.Sp., Tom Farrelly C.S.Sp. and Seamus Galvin C.S.Sp. as well as the late Fr. Martin Clarke who was the first Chair of the Trust Body and Daithi Kenneally C.S.Sp. To those who have worked for the DEA and for those who continue to work for the DEA our thanks and appreciation.

As Christian Community and as Church we live in challenging times. Catholic education in Ireland needs to respond creatively to the complexities facing us today. As schools in the Spiritan tradition we share a rich legacy of over 150 years of Christian fidelity responding creatively to what has been asked of us and forming those entrusted to us in the ways of Christian discipleship. As *Education for Transformation through Gospel Values* shows, much great work has been done on incarnating the Spiritan Charism in our Spiritan schools, and many possibilities offer themselves for actualizing that ethos and mission as we work together in the future; may we be blessed in our common task and service.

Peter Conaty C.S.Sp.
Chair, Spiritan Education Trust.

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Introduction

The Holy Ghost Missionary Congregation (The Spiritans) is involved in Irish education since coming to Ireland in 1859. The first French Spiritans brought with them a distinctive type of education formed by their missionary vocation and culture. There have been many developments since then and now Six Secondary Schools along with three Primary Schools form a community of Spiritan education for over four thousand Irish families. Each school has its own particular history and story to tell. Yet, a common source, purpose and organisation ensure a shared vision and ethos that are distinctively Spiritan. Spiritan schools offer a faith-based values education originating in their founding intention and elaborated through the living tradition and mission of the Spiritan Congregation.

With the establishment of the Spiritan Education Trust (*Des Places Educational Association, DEA*) in 1999 as school patron, the Spiritan mission in education was expressed in seven core values. It is to these seven core values that we turn when asked, “*What is Spiritan Ethos?*” “*How is Spiritan Education associated with Spiritan mission?*” “*What is distinctive about Spiritan Schools?*”

The present publication, **Education for Transformation through Gospel Values**, originated with an appraisal conducted by the Patron in January and February 2015 in collaboration with the stakeholders of the six Spiritan secondary schools. The appraisal focused on the expression of the seven core values in each school, their importance in the life of the schools and how they can develop in the future. It could not have proceeded without the assistance of the DEA Education Officer, Vivienne Dunne, who joined me in visiting the schools. The enthusiastic collaboration of Principals and Deputy Principals, Boards of Management, Middle Management, Staff, Parents, Students and Past Pupils of each school made the appraisal a truly collaborative process.

The members of the Ethos Committee of the DEA who oversaw the appraisal and authored its report warrant particular thanks for giving so generously of their time and expertise. They are: Ronan Barry





(Faith and Mission Office, DEA), Valerie Coveney (Director, DEA), James Docherty (Deputy Principal, Willow Park Junior School), Eddie Guilmartin (Deputy Principal, Templeogue College) Rory Halpin (Director, DEA), Myles Healy C.S.Sp. (Member, Blackrock Community), Noel McConnell (Chaplain, Holy Family Community School), and Paddy Reilly (Lecturer, KDSC).

The valuable assistance provided by Brian O'Toole C.S.Sp., *Director, Spiritan Mission Resource and Heritage Centre* and the other members of a working group, including Peter Conaty C.S.Sp., Richard Olin C.S.Sp. and Marc Whelan C.S.Sp., ensured a clear reading of Spiritan Identity and Mission.

Education for Transformation through Gospel Values is a celebration of the flourishing of Spiritan education and an invitation to further reflection. The core values of Spiritan education are grounded in the lives of the Spiritan founders and current directions in Spiritan mission. Their expression in the life and management of Spiritan schools today is noted through indicators which are elaborated upon and summarised in twenty-four sentences. These describe Spiritan education as presently experienced in the schools and concretely expressed by one hundred and forty two quotations selected from the individual school reports. The quotations chosen in equal number from the six schools are representative not only of the individual school but of all the schools.

Education for Transformation through Gospel Values is intended for practitioners of Spiritan education, whether employed or voluntary, parent or pupil, lay or religious. All interested in the rich heritage and profound potential of these schools as catalysts for Catholic education in the Spiritan tradition are invited to engage with these pages. Reflective material for each value is offered for use either by individuals or groups. The attractive layout of the material is due to the dedicated professionalism of Mark Daniel of CRM Design and Print. His unfailing courtesy and patience throughout the production is truly appreciated. My gratitude also goes to Peter O'Mahony for proof reading the final draft.

I acknowledge the gracious collaboration of so many practitioners of Spiritan education in bringing this project to conclusion. It is my hope that each one will recognise his or her school in what is presented here. These pages are surely unequal to the challenge of adequately capturing the length, breadth, height, and depth of creativity, commitment and energy that sustains each school community. While this study provides a helpful base line to consider further the identity and mission of Irish Spiritan schools it is recognised that, after all has been said, there is more that could be said. It is important that the conversation would continue among Spiritans, the Spiritan Trust and the Spiritan School Communities.

Billy Cleary C.S.Sp.
Ethos Office, DEA.

The Seven Core Values of Spiritan Education



Spiritan Schools are open to God's Holy Spirit as they

1. have their own founders and traditions which combine to tell a unique story of education in a particular place over a span of time;
2. have a focal point for their spiritual heritage in the form of a chapel or an oratory;
3. are welcoming and hospitable with a distinctive atmosphere at work giving a "lived in" experience of a "warm and caring" school community;
4. are about Students and Staff working together in collaboration with Management, Parents, Past Pupils, Trustees and Spiritan Congregation;
5. are places where faith is respected and a well resourced Chaplaincy Team empowers students in the way of faith and peer ministry.

Spiritan Schools communicate a "sense of community" as they

6. understand themselves as communities of teaching and learning that are guided by Gospel Values expressed in a strong Spiritan tradition;
7. are organised to build community and care for every student through delegated responsibility;
8. follow a team approach to pastoral care that includes Management and Staff supported by a committed Guidance Counselling Service;
9. recognise parents as the first educators; collaborate with a Parents Association and foster relations with and between past pupils;
10. share a common origin, participate in Spiritan Mission, and collaborate with each other.

Spiritan Schools share in the Spiritan Option for the Poor as they

11. are mixed ability schools that evangelise through an option for the poor and a solidarity involving the whole school community;
12. educate for social justice by responding to real need in their midst and through engagement with the poor;
13. are managed as economically as possible to empower as many as possible with as much Christian compassion as possible.





Spiritan Schools are committed to a model of Christian Service as they

- 14. are places of employment promoting collaboration between Management and Staff in a spirit of voluntary commitment;
- 15. educate in the way of Christian Service both within the school community and in the world;
- 16. welcome the support of Parents and of Past Pupils in the life of the school with the expectation that Past Pupils are active agents for good in the world.

Spiritan Schools value a “global vision” of the world that is loved by God as they

- 17. inculcate a sense of global citizenship through experiential learning in general and a Development Education Programme in particular;
- 18. have a missionary vision expressed in practical ways that are grounded in care for others and the earth.

Spiritan Schools operate to the highest educational standards as they

- 19. offer a faith-based education and serious academic endeavour in a growth-inducing learning environment;
- 20. maintain high academic standards and offer strong support for students to achieve according to their potential;
- 21. offer a wide range of learning opportunities with systems in place to accompany each student’s personal development and participation in school life.

Spiritan Schools promote the personal and faith development of students as they

- 22. model a style of Christian Discipleship that promotes human development through constructive relationships;
- 23. recognise the challenges to faith development and respond with a dedicated Chaplaincy Team that lives and celebrates Christian Discipleship;
- 24. nurture spiritual growth through the academic study of Religion to facilitate an age appropriate understanding of faith.



Five Colleges, Ten Schools, One Spiritan Trust



BLACKROCK COLLEGE, A SPIRITAN SCHOOL

The Blackrock College website describes this school's location as four miles from the city centre and set in 56 acres of rolling parkland on the broad sweep of Dublin Bay. It is the first foundation in Ireland of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit (*The Holy Ghost Fathers*) and the first of five Colleges. Known originally as the French College, this school was founded in 1860 by Spiritan Jules Leman and his French companions. They came to Ireland to recruit English speaking personnel for missionary service in territories confided to the Congregation of the Holy Spirit by the Holy See. This was achieved through the provision of Catholic education to Irish boys. A Spiritan religious community is at the heart of the campus and a boarding school with ninety boarding students is located in 'The Castle', an impressive stand alone structure acquired by the Spiritans in 1875. What began on 5 September 1860 as a school with eight students (2 boarders, and six day) is now a large, attractive and well maintained campus providing a place of work and learning for some two thousand people.



WILLOW PARK FIRST YEAR, A SPIRITAN SCHOOL

The words of welcome given by the Principal on the school's attractive website summarises well the location, mission and community that is Willow Park First Year School. He writes, 'Set in beautiful parkland Willow Park First Year is a thriving community. It provides the surroundings and facilities to make a wonderful educational experience for our pupils. The transfer from Primary to Secondary education can be a challenging process for many boys. Willow Park First Year provides pupils with a unique opportunity to adapt to new subjects and multiple teachers in an environment which is fully focused on the particular needs of this age group. A Principal, Deputy Principal and specialist first year teachers contribute to a unique milieu in Irish Education.'



ROCKWELL COLLEGE, A SPIRITAN SCHOOL

The Rockwell College website welcomes visitors by saying: 'Rockwell College is a Catholic co-educational secondary school, following the Spiritan tradition, in Co. Tipperary, Ireland'. Tradition is strong on this campus as teaching and learning has been going on here for over 150 years. Dr. O'Donnell's recent history of Rockwell concludes, 'Rockwell has in the past one hundred and fifty years adapted to changes in society, at times dramatic, while at the same time adhering to the principles of its founder and patron the Irish Spiritan Congregation'. The Rockwell motto is '*Inter Mutanda Constantia*' translated as 'constancy amidst that which must change'. The constant education project taking place on a large campus with lake, golf course and extensive playing fields is located on the N8 between Cashel and Cahir. A seminary was here, so also a catering school and an agricultural college. From being a predominantly all boys boarding school Rockwell is now a successful co-educational day school with a boarding facility for boys in the former Agricultural College renamed the Bishop Shanahan Hall of Residence.



ST. MARY'S COLLEGE, A SPIRITAN SCHOOL

The St. Mary's College campus with Senior and Junior Schools is located between Cathal Brugha Barracks on its Southern boundary and Lissenfield Apartments to its North. One playing field and avenue with rising gradient from Lower Rathmines Road leads to the impressive sight of red bricked college chapel with tower and community residence. Tucked away behind this edifice is a school yard in front of the Fr. Barry sports and multi-purpose hall (completed in 2003) used by both the Junior and Senior Schools. It is here that the work of Spiritan education began in 1890 with the intention of providing a local school for the "moral and intellectual education of boys from the ages of 12 to 18 with due attention to their physical well-being", and, apart from a break between 1916 and 1926 when the school was exclusively used as a seminary for young Spiritans, this work has continued with many changes in buildings (the present Senior School being built in 1942) and personnel (the first lay principal was appointed in 1988 and the first Board of Management established in 2004).



ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE, A SPIRITAN SCHOOL

St. Michael's College is accessed from Nutley Lane and is part of Merrion Road Parish. This fourteen acres property has provided a tranquil location for Spiritan education since 1944. What began as a "feeder school" to Blackrock College has developed into both a Junior School (from Junior Infants to Sixth Class) and an independent Secondary School with the First leaving Certificate Class in 1976. A Spiritan Religious Community lived in the Residence (originally the school) on Ailesbury Road up to 2011. The residence presently provides accommodation for students of the Spiritan University of Duquesne, Pittsburgh USA attending undergraduate modules at UCD. St. Michael's is a unique educational campus providing for Spiritan education from Primary (with a pre-school crèche) to third level.



TEMPLEOGUE COLLEGE, A SPIRITAN SCHOOL

This school, soon to celebrate its Golden Jubilee, opened its doors in September 1966 with fifty First Year students and three teachers, all Spiritans. The school currently has 696 students and an academic staff of almost 50 teachers. The adjoining Spiritan community continues to provide a sacramental service with Morning Mass held in the College Oratory at 8.10am from Monday to Friday. The noticeable ethnic and religious mix of the student population reflects the College's inclusive enrolment policy. The property was originally part of the Kimmage Manor Farm and the College grounds and buildings were developed to provide a Catholic secondary school for the education of boys living in Templeogue and the surrounding areas. The first Leaving Certificate examinations were held in 1971 and since then close to 5000 students will have passed through and graduated from the College by the end of its 49th academic year.





HOLY FAMILY COMMUNITY SCHOOL, RATHCOOLE

The DEA is joint patron of Holy Family Community School with the Presentation Sisters and the Co. Dublin and Dun Laoghaire ETB. There is a joint trustee agreement in place and currently the ETB is the link trustee with the school. The Spiritans have been associated with this school since it opened in 1981. A strong Catholic ethos pervades this community school with 850 students and an intake each year of 175 students. An extensive building programme is planned to accommodate a growing school roll. The DEA maintains links with this school through its Trustee Nominee. Its Chaplain is a member of the DEA Ethos Committee, and some Staff members have participated in in-service workshops offered by the DEA. It is not a Spiritan school in that its founding intention and characteristic spirit are different to the schools committed to the seven core values of Spiritan Education.



MISSION STATEMENT

**The Holy Family Community School
Mission Statement:**

**HFCS is a community of students, staff,
parents and Board of Management.**

- We are committed to the development of a community of learners concerned for each individual in our care;
- We believe that education provides opportunity for all;
- We strive for excellence in all areas;
- We nurture the well-being of all so that they may grow in knowledge, integrity and compassion.



THE SPIRITAN JUNIOR SCHOOLS

Willow Park Junior School, St. Mary's Junior School and St. Michael's Junior School offer primary education for boys preparing to enter Blackrock College, St. Mary's College and St. Michael's College respectively. A Spiritan Ethos and Religious Education Evaluation was conducted for these schools in 2013 in conjunction with their Independent External School Evaluation. This collaborative exercise between school and patron affirmed that:

- The children were aware of their privileged position in attending a private Spiritan school;
- Each school community has created a very happy learning environment for the children;
- The children's pastoral needs are identified and supported within the school;
- A strong spirit of social awareness is being inculcated in the children;
- Celebrations of the Liturgical year are incorporated in the school calendar;
- Faith development in each school is supported by a Sacramental Chaplain;
- Teachers' commitment and thorough preparation of the children for the sacraments was laudable in all schools;
- The Principals and many staff members supported the teachers of Second and sixth classes in preparing their students for the celebration of the Sacraments;
- A strong leadership in each school is committed to developing the core values of Spiritan education and welcomes support in this development from the DEA.

First Core Value

Openness to the Spirit

Claude Poullart des Places, a student, dedicated his community of students to the Holy Spirit. The five Spiritan Colleges in Ireland are also dedicated to the Holy Spirit. This is reflected in the representation of the Holy Spirit as a dove on each of the five College crests.



Francis Libermann encourages Spiritans to be attentive to the Spirit of God at work in their lives and to seek the true freedom that only the Spirit can bring. He regarded openness to the Spirit as the guiding principle of his life. The Spirit for him is inventive and imaginative bringing to maturity all that is human. It prompts adaptability to change, and respect for each person's uniqueness.



The Spirit of the Risen Lord, working in the Church and in the world, gives life and direction to our entire apostolic life (SRL 8).

The Spiritan charism is a gift that shines through the lives of our founders and other Spiritans, a gift which touches and enriches us. It challenges us to be faithful in an age when the call to authenticity is one of the signs of the times.'

General Chapter 2004, page 31,
Torre d'Aguilha, Portugal.



Spiritans schools today are respectful of each individual's personality and talents. They cultivate an environment whereby prayer, both personal and shared, and discernment in decision-making are brought into the life-changing encounter with the Holy Spirit. They are open to new initiatives in service of their mission that respond to the needs of the times. As Spiritan teachers and students we strive to be guided by the Holy Spirit in our relationships, choices, behaviours and decisions.



Openness to the Spirit

O Divine Spirit,
I want to be
before you like a
light feather, so
that your breath
may carry me
where it will and
that I may not
offer the least
resistance to it.

Francis Libermann



The Spiritan school is a focus for relationship with God, with one another, with the world in which we live.

The indicators for Openness to the Spirit are:

(1) Heritage (2) Sacred Space (3) Atmosphere (4) Relationships (5) Liturgy and Prayer

HERITAGE

Each Spiritan College has its own founders and traditions which combine to tell a unique story of education in a particular place over a span of time. There is a strong sense in each school that the present generation of staff and students follows in a tradition that is well established. Schools express and value their own traditions in different ways.

The present Blackrock College Crest (1936), shared by all the schools on this campus, has the dove with seven golden rays emanating from it typifying the Holy Spirit and the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. The school's prayer (found on the opening page of the students' homework diary) invokes the Holy Spirit 'to fill the hearts of the faithful'. This school is clearly grounded in a long tradition of faith and fortitude. This is Blackrock's 15th academic year. The 2009 WSE noted that 'Blackrock College is very effective in upholding the objectives of its founders'. The spirit of the College founders – Leman, Schiffmacher, Ebenrecht, Botrel and Reffé – lives on through the dedicated and professional lay educators who uphold the founding intention and maintain the characteristic spirit of the college. They are supported greatly by the presence and involvement of an ageing Spiritan religious community and a core group of committed past students through the College's PPU. They look to the Spiritan Congregation in Ireland for guidance as they seek to play their part in Spiritan mission today.



The ethos and values of Willow Park Senior School are evident in the attractive and calm main reception area/concourse (which acts as the entrance for Willow Park Junior School as well) through permanent uncluttered displays on either side that tell the story of this campus and the school's heritage. The "badges" or crests of the Spiritans and of Blackrock hold pride of place. The Seven Core Values of Spiritan Education are written up.



A contemporary interpretation to the Rockwell motto commits Rockwell to 'the retention of real values in a world which, paradoxically, must change. We endeavour to foster values such as respect, honesty and commitment in our pupils during their time with us.' The College website also states that 'Our pupils attend as day-boarders and boarders and we are committed to guiding all our pupils towards the development of their full potential'. What is articulated on the website can be read as a current translation of the Spiritan understanding of 'openness to the Spirit' as that of being guided in our relationships, choices, behaviours and decisions by the Holy Spirit.



There is much to be admired in a Mary's Spiritan Education with the motto, '*Fidelitas in Arduis*' (faithful in hard times), provided in cheerful spirit and generous collaboration by management, staff, students and parents taking great pride not only in an illustrious heritage but in a shared commitment to building on that heritage. The Board of Management looks forward to close collaboration with the patron body and the congregation in plotting a future course for Spiritan education at St. Mary's and in Ireland. The St. Mary's Parents Association is very supportive of the school's Catholic and Spiritan ethos.



The beautifully designed oratory at the heart of St. Michael's College and the photographic display along its corridor of members of the St. Michael's Spiritan community who have served the school in the past bears testimony to this being a Catholic school in the Spiritan tradition. This is explained by the Ethos Committee working on the '*Believe, Belong, Become*' project as a recognition of 'the fantastic work of the Spiritan Community, by dedicating a corridor beside the chapel to photographs of the priests who have served the school so well over the decades'.



Templeogue College celebrates its Golden Jubilee in 2016 as its doors were opened in September 1966 with fifty First Year students and three teachers, all Spiritans. Since then some forty-eight Spiritans have worked in Templeogue College (most for brief periods) and the College has developed into a large academic school with an annual intake of one hundred and twenty students into first year.

The College motto, '*In Virtute Scientia*' is translated as '*Education Rooted in Values*'. There is evident pride among the College stakeholders that this founding intention is being adhered to. Being in the free scheme the school enrolment provides equality of access for boys from the local community. In addition to the resources and funding provided by the DES a Voluntary Contribution is received from families in a position to contribute.

SACRED SPACE

Spiritan Schools have a focal point for their spiritual heritage in the form of a chapel or an oratory. These are the religious centres that are well maintained and regularly used for school liturgies and prayer. This highly visible centre-piece and the display of religious art and symbols throughout each school help maintain an awareness of the spiritual dimension to the life of the school.



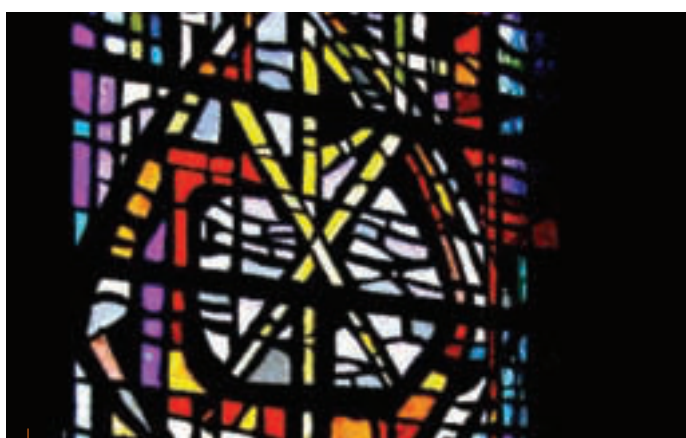
- **Blackrock College Chapel**, described as a 'very gem of Romanesque architecture in the Gothic type' was dedicated to Our Lady of Victories, and consecrated by Cardinal Paul Cullen on 20 March, 1868. It is identified as the 'spiritual heart' of the College.



- **Rockwell's St. Patrick's Chapel**, of Pugin design, was completed in 1898 and, to this day, is the spiritual centre of this extensive property.



- **St. Mary's College Chapel** was built in the 1950's and since then serves as the spiritual centre of the school.



- **Templeogue College** Spiritan community continues to provide a sacramental service with Morning Mass held in the College Oratory at 8.10am from Monday to Friday.



- **St. Michael's College** is a Catholic school in the Spiritan tradition. The beautifully designed oratory at the heart of the school bears testimony to this.



- **Willow Park Chapel** is used by both the First Year School and Willow Park Junior School. Given the Sacramental programme of the Junior School the chapel is more frequently used by that school. Some Sixth Year students attend the start of year Mass as Eucharistic Ministers.

ATMOSPHERE

Spiritan schools are expected to be happy places where students like to come and teachers like to teach. These are valued places of learning that are well resourced and well maintained. The presence of a positive, affirming atmosphere reflecting the school as 'alive in the Spirit' is noted in each school with a sense of belonging and ownership expressed many times by management, staff, students and parents. This Spirit filled atmosphere is expressed in a welcome to all who visit and an outreach to people in need.

Spiritan Schools are welcoming and hospitable

St. Mary's promotes a sense of community for those who belong and a sense of hospitality and welcome for those who visit. Hospitality and welcome are important values in St. Mary's Senior School.

There "is a different kind of feel" to coming into a school than to any other public place. People "need to know I am listening" the **Willow School** Receptionist commented. The School's Pastoral Care and School Guidance Policy puts it well, "The Holy Spirit inspires us with love for all those we encounter and for all those placed in our care".

with a distinctive atmosphere at work

Templeogue College is a welcoming school from the point of entry at Reception to the Principal's Office. One Board of Management member referred to "a feel about a place" and spoke of being "hugely impressed by the atmosphere permeating through every single aspect of the school". Students demonstrate a sense of ownership and "being at home" on the corridors as they make their way to class.

The presence of religious art and symbols throughout **Blackrock College** and the Church's liturgical cycle included in the school calendar contribute significantly to the creation of an environment which nurtures faith.

giving a "lived in" experience of a "warm and caring" school community.

One parent said she chose **Rockwell** for her daughter's secondary education because on a visit during Open Day she "felt that this school wanted my child". The school is "observant of every child". Girls and boys are equally cherished. A teacher spoke of "the twelve hour scenario" and commented that "students have to try extra hard to get along as they are in the school all day".

St. Michael's is a "lived in" school offering a great range of activities to engage all students in extra-curricular activities. Mutual respect (politeness, caring for each other) and a strong sense of belonging and being proud to belong to St. Michael's are easily noticed. "Good relationships between students and staff have existed in St. Michael's since Fr. Maguire's time" [first leader of the school] and it is recognised that the tradition established by a succession of Spiritans continues to be carried on by lay people and is still alive and well. The fact that a number of staff are past pupils helps in the carrying on of this tradition.

RELATIONSHIPS

Education, as most human pursuits, has relationships at its centre. Good human relationships between colleagues, among students, between students and staff and management and between school and home are vital to the well being and development of the educational enterprise. The school's relationship to the local community and the wider society is taken seriously. This is expected all the more of a Spiritan school where 'we are guided by the Holy Spirit in our relationships'.

Spiritan Schools are about Students

Templeogue maintains a strong record of academic achievement through recognising the importance of "each student performing to the best of his ability". This is in keeping with the school's understanding that each student who comes into our community is 'a gift that will call and lead us to a deep respect of the unknown'. Management speaks of students being 100% responsible for their actions and that a "negotiating culture" operates in the school with management and staff working collaboratively with students. Here there is recognition of God's Spirit at work in the network of relationships through the Deans, Chaplaincy Team, Tutors, Mentors, Counsellor, Learning Support, Class Teachers and all the Staff that make up the school community.

Sport has a high profile in **St Mary's** and is seen as a means to an end in educating students about the importance of teamwork, self-discipline, personal fitness and responsibility. In collaboration with the Junior School a 'Rugby for All' policy is in place. This is an inclusive programme involving some thirty four coaches and up to 80% of students with A, B and C squads across the age groups. Participation in the programme not only helps develop rugby skills but also strengthens character with the technical aspect second to the personal formation aspect.

and Staff working together

The Chaplaincy Team provides the 'planning, organising and leadership' for 'the formal and informal expression of a Christian, Spiritan ethos and worship at **St. Michael's** and to support the spiritual life of the school community. 'Students recognise that the school has "a strong chaplaincy team" which has the key responsibility of 'fostering, contributing to and supporting the vision of the Founding Fathers of the Spiritan Congregation'.

The relationship between teacher and student is at the heart of the **Blackrock** educational enterprise. The very good work of teachers is acknowledged by Management, Parents and Students. While the decline in the presence of priests is regretted there is a recognition that the lay staff has "stepped up to the plate" in providing a "well rounded" education for this generation of students. While "everything is based on student care" the provision of that care by a committed staff is acknowledged by all.

In collaboration with Management, Parents, Past Pupils, Trustees and Spiritan Congregation

The **Rockwell** Principal's address on Prize Day 2013 included the sentiment, "none of us is stronger on our own, all of us are better when supported by others. So it is with Rockwell, which will continue to be strong, not on the basis of an individual's efforts but with the collective and mutual support of parents, staff, the Board of Management, Trustees, Congregation and Past Pupils. So it has been and so it will continue to be."

Parents play an important role in the life of the school through the Parents Association. "The successful school is where parents are in partnership." Parents see themselves as guardians of the school's ethos. They are recognised as an integral part of the **Willow Park School** community, providing positive home affirmation of the Willow ethos. The purpose of the WPA is to enable an effective alliance between home and school.

LITURGY AND PRAYER

The celebration of liturgy and prayer is central to the life of a Spiritan school. All schools value the services of priests for school celebrations of the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Other liturgical celebrations and opportunities for prayer and meditation are also conducted by lay chaplains and teachers. This may increasingly be the case with the decreasing availability of priests. Every school has competent and dedicated personnel in their religion departments and on their chaplaincy teams to ensure the provision of quality celebrations of the liturgical year and the faith development of the school community.

Spiritan Schools are places where faith is respected

Blackrock's Religion teachers acknowledged that a general atmosphere of faith in the school supports the work of religious instruction in the classroom. This is in line with the school's mission statement which commits the school to the creation of 'an environment which nurtures faith'. The presence of religious art and symbols throughout the school and the Church's liturgical cycle included in the school calendar contribute significantly to the creation of an environment which nurtures faith.

Rockwell's Family Masses held in the evenings and School masses held on Holy Days, during Lent and at the beginning and end of the School Year help form a community of faith and good works not only with students and staff but with families as well. A Christmas Carol Service and Christmas Eve Mass to which families are invited are also celebrated.

and a well resourced chaplaincy Team

The **Michael's** Chaplaincy team takes its role of maintaining the Spiritan ethos seriously. The members of this team are clearly committed to finding creative and "user friendly" ways to promote the seven core values of Spiritan education among students and staff. The many activities facilitated by the team are coordinated through its weekly meeting attended by management. Many charitable activities organised by the team in collaboration with year heads (with each year group adopting a particular charity) are remarkable. The increasing focus on the educational aspect of fund raising activities is to be encouraged.

Templeogue's Religion Department provides a chaplaincy service with initiatives such as "Friendship Week" (an effective week long school campaign to heighten awareness about bullying). The continued religious and Spiritan ethos of the school would be unsustainable without the continued involvement of staff with the support of management.

empowers Students in the way of faith and peer ministry.

St. Mary's Peer-ministry programme is seen as a key strategy in promoting faith development as well as training young people of faith for evangelisation. Over the last five years two student programmes, Faith Friends and Spiritan Ember Leadership, have developed to good effect. The former is in collaboration with the Junior School where Senior Students accompany Junior Students as they prepare for their Confirmation. The latter is a mentoring programme within the school with Senior Students introducing the First Year Students to life in the school and providing "a friendly face" for them.

Reflecting on Openness to the Spirit

Claude Poullart des Places dedicated his community to the Holy Spirit. Francis Libermann regarded *Openness to the Spirit* as the guiding principle of his life and his Congregation. Two examples of *Openness to the Spirit* are their response to the most pressing educational needs of the people of their times and their respect for each person's uniqueness, personality and talents as manifestations of the Spirit's guidance.



**How are we guided
by the Holy Spirit
in our relationships,
choices, behaviours
and decisions?**



Spiritan Core Values in Education

Openness to the Spirit

Spiritan Schools: Communities lived in the Spirit

OPENING PRAYER WITH LIGHTING OF CANDLE

Good and gracious God, at the beginning of our time together we light this candle to remind us of your abiding presence in our midst.

Empower us with your Spirit to be open to your loving plan for all that you have created. Guide us in the path of Spiritan mission shown us by those who have gone before us. Keep alive in us the openness to your will shown forth so well in the lives of Poullart des Places and Francis Libermann.

SCRIPTURE READING



This, then, is what I pray, kneeling before the Father, from whom every family, whether spiritual or natural, takes its name.

Out of his infinite glory, may he give you the power through his Spirit for your hidden self to grow strong, so that Christ may live in your hearts through faith, and then, planted in love and built on love, you will with all the saints have strength to grasp the breadth and the length, the height and the depth; until, knowing the love of Christ, which is beyond all knowledge, you are filled with the utter fullness of God.

Glory be to him whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine; glory be to him from generation to generation in the Church and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever. Amen.

Paul's Letter to the Ephesians, 3: 14 – 21.



**FRANCIS LIBERMANN
(1802 –1852)**

Francis Libermann's father, a Jewish Rabbi, cursed his son for becoming a Catholic, but Francis recognised that he was sustained through this terrible ordeal through God manifesting his blessing to him. He gave him exceptional mystical graces. A little after being disowned by his father, Francis suffered a number of epileptic attacks which delayed his training for the priesthood. During this time Francis lived in a kind of ecstasy, in a continual presence before God for some five years.

He revealed this much later to a friend in a letter dated 3rd August 1846. (On the condition that "you speak of this to nobody") The letter reads:

It was God who gave me everything. He dragged me along without asking my permission, and with a strength that I have never observed in any other person so far. The Lord helped me to stand up to my father, who wanted me to renounce my faith, but I renounced him rather than the faith. After that, the good Lord came uninvited to draw me out of myself and held all my faculties captive for about five years. During these years I never gave a thought to cultivating one virtue or another, but I just wanted to be with Him, which was a very easy thing to do. Throughout that time, I knew almost nothing about the things of the spirit.

PS. You must burn this letter three days after you receive it.

Spiritan Anthology pages 72-73.

**PSALM 5:
A PSALM OF TRUST IN GOD**

Hear my words, my groans,
my cries for help,
O God my king.

I pray to you, Lord,
my prayer rises with the sun.
At dawn I plead my case and wait.

You never welcome evil, God,
never let it stay.
You hate arrogance
and abhor scoundrels,
you detest violence
and destroy the traitor.

But by your great mercy
I enter your house
and bend low in awe
within your holy temple.

In the face of my enemies
clear the way,
bring me your justice.

Their charges are groundless,
they breathe destruction;
their tongues are smooth,
their throat an open grave.

God, pronounce them guilty,
catch them in their own plots,
expel them for their sins;
they have betrayed you.



It is the Spirit of Christ who “comes to help us in our weakness” (Romans 8.26), who leads us along missionary paths and who prays in the depth of our hearts.

In prayer we are guided by the Holy Spirit. It is the gift of God’s dwelling within us that becomes in us a source of human and spiritual maturity that makes our lives fruitful in every way.

Spiritan Rule of Life (adapted) 85, 86.

PRAYER

(inspired by the Spiritan Rule of Life 57, 60, 76, 78)

1. Through baptism, Lord, you have consecrated us by your Holy Spirit.

All: We commit ourselves to living lives according to the dignity of that consecration.

2. By our profession as teachers, Lord, we are privileged to share in the parenting of the young ones entrusted to our care.

All: We seek the divine assistance needed to do whatever the Holy Spirit would have us do to pass on the torch of faith to our young.

3. With the law of love imprinted on our hearts, You encourage us to think of others before ourselves.

All: May we be open to discerning your will in all things even when you are leading us in ways we rather not go.

4. We place our trust in your faithfulness, O God.

All: May we confidently proceed in the work of Spiritan education knowing that it has its beginnings in the obedience given to your will by Poullart des Places and Francis Libermann and continues under their protection.

Other intentions followed by ‘Our Father’



CONCLUDING PRAYER
(together)

We pray that the Spirit of God will enter our hearts and ignite in us the flame of his love, so that we may be open to all that is good and turn away from all that does harm. As Spiritan educators we are called to take the actions necessary so that our schools can become communities where all feel welcome, protected and loved. We ask that we will be liberated from the fear that prevents us being who God calls us to be. We believe that, with the help of God’s spirit of power and love working in us, we can be ordinary people, doing extraordinary things. We ask God’s blessing on us both as leaders and as servants to all those in need. Amen.

Second Core Value

A Sense of Community

The motto of the Spiritan congregation is, ‘*One Heart and One Soul*’ (‘*Cor Unum et Anima Una*’). This motto calls to mind the spirit of the first Christian community in Jerusalem as expressed in the Acts of the Apostles, ‘The faithful all lived together and owned everything in common; they sold their goods and possessions and shared out the proceeds among themselves according to what each one needed’ (Acts 2.44-45).



The style of community over which Poullart des Places presided is significantly different to anything we might expect to find in eighteenth century Paris. Although himself a student he was its sole provider and presided over a community of poor students. He does not “lord it over the students” and among the rules of the house he wrote ‘to ensure greater uniformity nothing more will be served to the superior than all others’. He doesn’t attempt to import the merchant class life style of his home in Brittany, but rather, wants students and teachers to form one community that is simple, devout and apostolic.

Life in community has long been identified as the means by which Spiritan mission is fulfilled (Spiritan Rule of 1849).



Simplicity and a welcoming hospitality are two traditional qualities of our Spiritan family (SRL 40).



Libermann wrote: ‘It seems to me, it has always seemed to me that in God’s plan we do things together and that we allow ourselves be guided by the one Spirit of God, the Spirit of prudence and wisdom. For this to happen our union should be perfect and that united in

this way and being of one mind and one heart – animated and guided by the Spirit of light and charity – we, in our turn can guide the world towards what God intends’.



Consequently, in Spiritan schools a *Sense of Community* is nurtured through the quality of relationships between all the members that underpins acceptance of one another and good collaboration between management, staff, students and parents. This sense of community permeates relationships between Spiritan schools. It also requires a reaching out to each school’s local community in service of the local church and society.



A Sense of Community

*Cor Unum et
Anima Una*



*One Heart
and
One Soul*



Spiritan schools understand themselves as communities of teaching and learning for life.

The indicators for A Sense of Community are:

- (1) School's self-understanding
- (2) Promotion of community through school organisation
- (3) Pastoral Care
- (4) Parents and Past Pupils
- (5) The School is part of something bigger – The Spiritan Family.



Blackrock College manages a Boarding School in *The Castle* and has a Boarders Mass during the week in the Castle Oratory (seen here) as well as Sunday Mass celebrated with the Community in the College Chapel.

SCHOOL'S SELF-UNDERSTANDING

A Sense of Community was the core value most frequently recognised by management and staff, students and parents as giving expression to their experience of the school to which they belong. Spiritan schools are more than “9.00am to 4.00pm” operations as they play a large part in the life of students and staff and, often times, their families as well. There is a strong social aspect to a Spiritan education that supports families in times of difficulty and is nurturing of students through their schooling years and beyond. Schools are also aware of the wider community in which they are located.

Spiritan Schools understand themselves as Communities of teaching and learning

St. Michael's promotes a collaborative approach to teaching and learning incorporating parents (the primary educators), teachers and students. This approach creates a very positive synergy among all the stakeholders, a fact that has been acknowledged in numerous evaluations carried out by the Department of Education and Science.

St. Mary's is a small school “where everybody knows everybody else” Teachers speak of their students as “top notch” and teachers are recognised by their students as “fun to be with” and “we learn a lot from them”. The First Years spoke of ‘Mary's people’ as “nice people” and the school as “a nice community to be in”. Sixth Year students interviewed spoke of “St. Mary's hold(ing) their students to a higher standard”.

that are guided by Gospel Values

Blackrock is organised according to the principle of community that promotes a strong sense of belonging and accountability among students. The school's operating ethos is summarised well, *‘be caring; be there; be truthful’*.

In 2009, as the Spiritans were celebrating 150 years in Ireland, **Templeogue** committed itself to ‘generating a community climate that is permeated by the Gospel spirit of freedom and love’. This school is a good place to work and a good place to learn where ‘all will be treated equally and respected for their individuality and diversity’.

expressed in a strong Spiritan tradition

Most interviewees when asked which Spiritan Core Value of Education they would associate with **Rockwell** opted for ‘a sense of community’. This core value is born out of the motto of the Spiritan Congregation, *‘Cor Unum et Anima Una’* (‘One Heart and One Soul’) which calls to mind the spirit of the first Christian community in Jerusalem.

Willow's present roll is 207 students with over 50% of these coming from Sixth Class in the Junior School. The school “caters for a wide range of students”. There seems to be a seamless transition for these students already formed in the Spiritan way in the Junior School. Good attention is given to those coming from other schools through a 5th Class ‘Introduction Day’ held each year.

SCHOOL ORGANISATION

A *Sense of Community* does not just happen it has to be planned and provided for. A Spiritan school builds community among students at class, year and whole school community levels that interact with each other. Teachers play a key role in this formal community building as Tutors, Deans/Year Heads, Deputy Principal and Principal. There is much informal community building that also takes place inspired by the overall formal community building to which the school commits itself. This community building takes place in the classroom, on the playing fields, at the extra-curricular activities and involves staff as subject teachers, coaches and mentors. Parents and Past Pupils also play a part through voluntary involvement in school activities.

Spiritan Schools are organised to build community

Rockwell operates to a twelve hour daily programme with students both beginning and ending their day (8.40am and 8.15pm) in their designated study hall. In between they follow their academic timetable, take meals, study and participate in games and other extra-curricular activities. A teacher spoke of “the twelve hour scenario” and commented that “students have to try extra hard to get along as they are in the school all day”.

The transition from **Willow School** to Second Year in Blackrock College is a significant one in the lives of the students. While the two schools are distinct yet they are profoundly related. Teachers of both schools meet together for formal departmental meetings twice a year. In addition to this there are many informal meetings between the staff of both schools. Some Sixth Year students attend the start of year Mass as Eucharistic Ministers and “boys from the College come down telling us what is in store”.

and care for every student

The transition from primary school to **Templeogue** is well provided with an Open Day and guided tours where prospective parents and students are invited to visit the school during a normal school day. This event is followed by an incoming parents’ night. “Rugby induction is coached by teachers and students” and takes place before the academic programme starts.

The seamless pastoral care for students in **Mary’s** is a key factor in building a Christian community in this school. Formal conversations about the progress of students between management, year dean and subject teacher are an everyday occurrence with a good flow of communication working for the well being of individual students and the common good. Deans describe their role as “multi-dimensional” with emphasis on pastoral care as they attend to the emotional as well as the academic lives of their students. Being present for students and parents is important.

through delegated responsibility.

Blackrock is described as a federation of five schools with each year having its own locker and assembly area and classrooms. Leadership for each year is delegated to a Dean and Committees of Parents and Students. The Year Committees provide for parents to meet with the Dean to discuss matters relating to their children’s education and development and for students to be involved in the organisation of activities in their year community and the school community as well.

The **Michael’s** Board directs the Principal and has delegated responsibility to him and his team to enact the shared vision of the staff, parents and students of the school. The Board has established a Year Head Team responsible for Pastoral Care promotion throughout the school led by the Principal; a Care team, with specific responsibility for students who suffer emotional and mental stress and require specific professional support; a Learning Support Team to assist students with specific learning needs and who require additional academic support; a Chaplaincy Team, responsible for Faith formation and the liturgical life of the school.

PASTORAL CARE

Spiritan schools have a strong pastoral care programme that highlights the importance of each individual student. This programme is approved by the school's Board of Management which ensures that the Pastoral Care Team is adequately resourced. Good communication with parents, among staff and management enables early detection of problems and their treatment.

Spiritan Schools follow a team approach to pastoral care

Willow's Pastoral Care Team has as its goal the creation of 'an atmosphere that implements the Ethos – The Spiritan Way – The Lived Life – to encourage academic achievement, caring, co-operation and participation'. It has an impressive range of activities such as Orientation Day, Zoo Day, French Day and Sports Day to 'encourage the assimilation into the school, social participation, leadership development and general well being'.

The **Rockwell** Hall of Residence accommodates some 70 Irish and 60 International students. This is an important community living "full time" in the school. A Sub Committee of the Board of Management has responsibility for this aspect of College life with the Residence Director accountable to it. The Team of Director and Staff make this residence "a home away from home" with the students enjoying good facilities (games room, television room in cinema style and kitchenette). There is a sense that the residents enjoy "a measured freedom".

that includes Management and Staff

Michael's Year Head Team recognises that "respect between staff and students" is "the biggest thing" and the team is keen to maintain that good spirit. The role of the Year Head is primarily a pastoral one. They recognise that young people today have "different types of problems" they attend to in their role as year head. They do this often in collaboration with other staff, management, the care team, the learning support team and the chaplaincy team. There is good communication in the school to address student issues as they arise.

Blackrock operates a 'House System' whereby each student is assigned to one of six houses named after distinguished past students. This system strengthens the sense of community within the student body and promotes student representation and leadership with House Captains being elected each year to represent their fellow students. Each house is represented on the Student Council which meets fortnightly with the Principal, Deputy Principal and Academic Administrator in attendance. Other Staff Members attend meetings when needed. The Blackrock Year Dean meets each student individually both at morning and after lunch "checkins". The Year Counsellors maintain a confidential relationship with students meetings them a number of times in the course of the year to monitor academic progress and provide pastoral care.

supported by a committed Guidance Counselling Service.

The **Templeogue** School Guidance Counsellor is also 1st Year Dean allowing her to get to know each of the students and their families to initiate a helping relationship to span the full length of time that the student is in the school. The Deans "work closely together" and have a timetabled meeting with the Principal and Deputy Principal each week. It is recognised that the weekly meeting's focus is primarily pastoral.

Mary's Guidance Counsellor plays a key role in guiding students through their many transitions in secondary school and beyond. He has in place a series of well thought out programmes to support parents, students and staff in welcoming students into First Year, in addressing personal, emotional and relationships issues for all year groups, in optimising choices and in arranging careers programmes.

PARENTS AND PAST PUPILS

Parents are important stakeholders in Spiritan education. They have chosen a Spiritan education for their children and it is in response to that choice that Spiritan schools continue to operate. Each Spiritan school has a Past Pupils Union in place to continue the sense of belonging and community among its past students. The Spiritan School benefits greatly from the moral, professional, and financial support from parents and past pupils.

Spiritan Schools recognise parents as the first educators;

St. Mary's sees itself in collaboration with parents who seek a religious, faith based education for their sons. There is awareness that a certain cachet is associated with St. Mary's as a fee charging school. But parents do not send their children to St. Mary's for this, but rather for an education that equips their sons for a long journey, the journey of life. As one parent put it, "It is harder to bring up children today".

Willow School recognises that "the successful school is where parents are in partnership with management and teachers". Parents see themselves as guardians of the school's ethos. They are recognised as an integral part of the Willow Park School community, providing positive home affirmation of the Willow ethos.

collaborate with a Parents Association

The **Michael's** Parents Association meets regularly with the school's senior management. This emphasises the fact that Michael's parents are "dynamic" and "willing and able to support" the school. They choose a Spiritan education at St. Michael's for their sons as it is a values rich and "a faith based school". They appreciate the "community aspect" of life in St. Michael's and the evident "sense of belonging" expressed by a strong "camaraderie among the boys".

Templeogue Parents Association has an active committee of some sixteen members which meets monthly and is supportive of the school through fund raising and general engagement in the life of the school. The collaboration of management with the Association is particularly valued. Parents "feel part of the school" and appreciated the introduction in Christmas 2014 of a Carols Service for all parents.

and foster relations with and between Past Pupils.

The **Rockwell** Past Pupils Union was founded in 1925 and has a current database of more than 7,000 past students. It seeks to maintain and develop the association between the school and former students. There are a number of past students on the College Staff.

Blackrock is evidently much more than a school. It is a community not only of teachers and boys, but of parents and past pupils. Some 18 teachers are past pupils. The PPU has a well equipped and staffed office in the school and is very much engaged in the extra-curricular life of the school providing many services and supports.

THE SPIRITAN FAMILY

All who belong to a particular Spiritan School are, by that fact, also part of the bigger reality of the Spiritan family in Ireland and worldwide. This belonging is valued by each school. In the course of this appraisal those interviewed could not foresee their particular school continuing as anything other than a Spiritan School.

The immediate Spiritan relationship for each school is the Spiritan network of schools in Ireland to which it belongs. This network is sustained by the Spiritan Education Trust operating as Patron to each of the schools. Common projects in faith development, mission outreach and development education have been co-ordinated by the trust which continues to seek out ways to build a sense of community between the schools.

Spiritan Schools share a common origin,

Templeogue Religion Department has created a First Year Workbook, *Identification of the Spiritan Community: 'Our Roots Run Deep'*. This workbook is used to welcome new students to 'The Spiritan Community' and introduces them to the Spiritan Congregation, its founders and its mission. Students learn the mission statement of the school and its association with other Spiritan Colleges in Ireland. The special relationship between the school and Kimmage Manor is highlighted as well as the school being part of an international missionary congregation.

Rockwell Students come to know more about their school's missionary tradition through engagement in the archives as part of their Transition Year programme. They come to know about Bishop Joseph Shanahan, a famous Spiritan Missionary and Apostle to South Eastern Nigeria. Rockwell has many missionary connections, both past and present which have been commemorated in the sesquicentenary celebrations and can continue to be celebrated. A number of classes are given in First Year Religion on the history of Rockwell and the Spiritan Congregation. There is a significant heritage to be passed on and cherished by the present generation of staff and students.

participate in Spiritan Mission,

The Ghana immersion experience has a high profile in St. Mary's. This helps students, staff and parents to buy into this strategy that maintains the Spiritan tradition of crossing boundaries to identify with others different to ourselves. The Board of Management values the fact that St. Mary's as a Spiritan school is part of an international global family of Spiritans and looks forward to the strengthening of links in that family.

The Willow Wheelers Club of students, staff and parents on the **Blackrock** campus have, since 1989, raised funds for Spiritan missions with approximately €1.5 million distributed to mission projects in Sierra Leone, The Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Ethiopia, Tanzania, South Sudan, Uganda, Nigeria, Brazil, Vietnam and South Africa in that time. The PPU Mission Fund also supports Spiritan missionaries around the world. The PPU has in recent times considered a bursary project to open the gates to a Blackrock education for those who want it but cannot afford the fees.

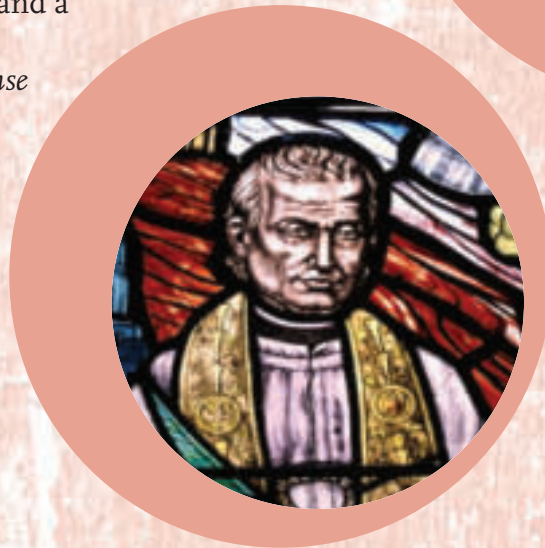
and collaborate with each other.

There is a strong awareness that **Willow Park First Year** is not only part of a bigger education campus of Blackrock but also part of a Community of Spiritan schools in Ireland and of a Spiritan mission worldwide. This school community seeks ways by which it can play its part in Spiritan mission which 'works for the empowerment of peoples and their liberation from injustice and poverty'.

There is an appreciation that **St. Michael's** is part of the Spiritan community of schools in Ireland as well as being part of the world-wide Spiritan family. The DEA's initiatives such as Spiritan Youth Day, the induction of first year students in Kimmage as well the shared experiences of Spiritans invited in by the Chaplaincy Team to prepare and assist students engaging in the immersion projects have all contributed to this sense of belonging.

Reflecting on A Sense of Community

Claude Poullart des Places and Francis Libermann expressed their sense of community living with shared prayers, meals, work and a simple lifestyle. In Spiritan schools a *Sense of Community* is nourished and nurtured in all of our relationships and activities among the whole school community, thus creating a family spirit and an acceptance of each other.



**What do I bring
to my school
community
today?**



Spiritan Core Values in Education

A Sense of Community

Spiritan Schools: Building Community

OPENING PRAYER WITH LIGHTING OF CANDLE

*The traditional **Act of Consecration to the Holy Spirit** used in the Spiritan Congregation (adapted):*

'Holy Spirit, divine Spirit of light and love, to you we consecrate our minds, hearts and wills.

May we be ever attentive to your inspirations and to your teaching. Set us free from all selfishness that we may live these days in good relationship with one another. May we build together a learning community schooled in the ways of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to whom, with the Father and you, Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever. Amen.



A READING FROM THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES (4.32-35)

Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold and it was distributed to each as any had need.'

The Word of the Lord.

Response: Thanks be to God.



FRANCIS LIBERMANN writes

Libermann sent a message of encouragement in January 1844 to his small missionary group in Cape Palmas, Liberia experiencing much hardship, sickness and death:

My very dear Brothers, love one another. What will you ever achieve without peace and unity in your community? Therefore show that the spirit of Jesus Christ is really among you by your perfect union and mutual affection. Bear with each other's faults of character and imperfections. Be for your brothers a source of consolation in the love of Jesus Christ. All your sufferings will seem as nothing, if the love of Jesus unites you. Do not judge or oppose one another. Why should you cause pain to the Heart of Jesus, who wishes to be the body of unity among you? Allow your brothers to act as seems right and proper to them in the sight of God. For your part, act according to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in your souls. Be considerate and show affection to all. Console one another, as you would Jesus Christ himself, who is your Master. Be joyful together in the midst of your works, pains and afflictions, for you are the servants, and the apostles of Jesus Christ.

A Spiritan Anthology 2011, pp. 150-154.



A FUTURE NOT OUR OWN

**Blessed Oscar Romero of El Salvador
(1917-1980)**

Beatified on 25 May, 2015

It helps now and then to step back and take a long view.

The Kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is beyond our vision.

We accomplish in our lifetime only a fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work. Nothing we do is complete, which is another way of saying that the kingdom always lies beyond us.

No statement says all that could be said. No prayer fully expresses our faith. No confession brings perfection, no pastoral visit brings wholeness. No program accomplishes the Church's mission.

No set of goals and objectives include everything. This is what we are about. We plant the seeds that one day will grow. We water the seeds already planted knowing that they hold future promise. We lay foundations that will need further development. We provide yeast that produces effects far beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing this. This enables us to do something, and to do it very well. It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker. We are workers, not master builders, ministers, not messiahs. We are prophets of a future not our own.

**Written by Bishop Ken Untener, Saginaw USA,
in tribute to Archbishop Romero.**



We have been called in Christ to live out our Spiritan calling in community. "To bring the apostolic life – for which Spiritan life is intended – to its perfection, to assure the continuance and the development of the works in which it engages and to foster the holiness of its members, the Congregation has adopted life in community as its founding principle." (Rule of 1849; N.D.X, 454)

Spiritan Rule of Life 27.

PRAYER

1. Lord, may your Spirit be at work within each one of us and among us
All: So that we can build a community of justice and peace together.
2. Lord, may our working and living together be marked by good relationship grounded in mutual respect
All: So that we can bear witness to the possibility of true human community.
3. Lord, may we be open to new ideas and include others in all that we do
All: So that all who share in our work will find hospitality and welcome.
4. Lord, always keep our minds fixed on the "bigger picture" and see that education is for living life to its fullest in co-operation with others
All: So that all who experience a Spiritan education in this school will appreciate the good things in life.

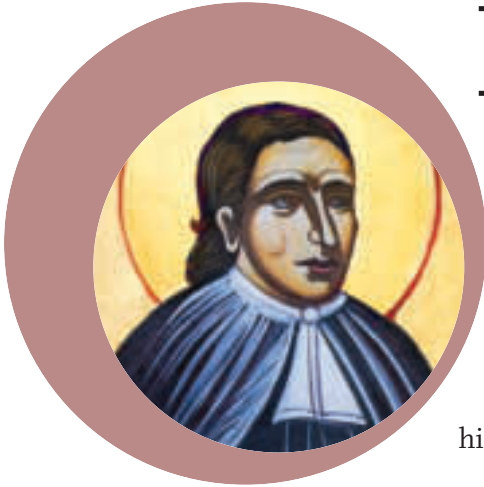
Other intentions may be made and summed up by saying together, 'Our Father'

CONCLUDING PRAYER (together)

God of all life and goodness open our minds and hearts to see the good that is in each one of us. Put your co-operating Spirit to work among us that we can have respect for one another and show forth the possibility of human community where problems can be solved and all are included in the life we share together. Amen.

Third Core Value

Option for the Poor



Poullart des Places' family atmosphere was pious and charitable towards the poor. There is little evidence that on coming to Paris he considered doing anything other than study for the priesthood. His encounter with poor scholars transformed him from being a seminarian fully occupied with his own studies and advancement to one who cared for others less well off than himself. His response was not to open a hostel, but to begin a community where he would live on an equal footing with those he was supporting. He entered into the world of the poor, becoming one with them. He identified with them. Little by little, their way of life became his, their concerns were his.

Francis Libermann, with others, felt called by God to help the liberated slaves in the French colonies. Libermann wrote to his missionaries: 'Be with them as servants to their masters, to their masters' ways, style and customs, and that in order to bring them up from their humiliation and make of them little by little, at length, a people of God. This is what St. Paul calls making oneself all things to all people, to gain all to Jesus Christ.' The Rule of 1849 commits Spiritans to being 'the advocates, the supporters and the defenders of the weak and the little ones against all who oppress them'.



The Congregation continues the mission of its founders. 'We count the following as constitutive parts of our mission of evangelisation: the "integral liberation" of people, action for justice and peace, and participation in development' (Spiritan Rule of Life, 14). Spiritan schools in Ireland understand that education is an effective means of bringing about a more just world through the pedagogical programme they offer.



A Spiritan Spirituality of Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation can form the inspiration for the development in Spiritan schools of a learning experience leading participants on pilgrimage into the world of the poor; challenging them to be present there in service, and to live lives in solidarity with people in need. A more informed understanding of the reality of an unequal world where resources are unevenly distributed is best achieved through entering into the world of the poor. This concern cannot be aspiration only; it must be realistic and practical. It is an invitation and a challenge made to us. In creating "fairness for all" we are guided by the value whereby each is responsible for the well-being of another. We look to the biblical symbol of human flourishing; that of a surging river that waters dry land and restores to health.



Option for the Poor

We live in an unequal world where resources are unevenly distributed. From our position of privilege we are called to recognise our role in working together to create a just world.

Arena 4, Core Value,
Chapter 2012



Spiritan schools strive to be advocates for social justice through social inclusion, outreach to the poor and prioritisation of social justice issues.

The indicators for Option for the Poor are:

- (1) Responding to the Gospel Imperative
- (2) Social Justice and Social Outreach
- (3) Social Inclusion

‘We consider the following to be specially important tasks for our time: – youth apostolate, because the present situation of young people is crying out more than ever for social and educational works; – work with refugees, with migrants and with those on the margins of society.’

SRL 18.1.



RESPONDING TO THE GOSPEL IMPERATIVE

Spiritan School Communities recognise their economic and educational privilege and that this privilege carries a responsibility towards those less well off. The Gospel challenge to respond to 'the cry of the poor' is highlighted and acted upon in different ways in each school. Schools generously support local charities such as the St. Vincent de Paul particularly at Christmas time and respond to such challenges as the Trocaire Lenten Campaign.

Spiritan Schools are mixed ability schools that evangelise

The **Mary's** Community clearly identifies its mission as attending to the evangelisation of youth in Ireland today. There are many kinds of poverty. Spiritual poverty is one of them. At a time when traditional Catholic values are under scrutiny the school provides a supportive environment for the inculcation of gospel values. The chaplain asks, "In the Ireland of the twenty-first century, where is religion?" The school sees itself in collaboration with parents who seek a religious, faith based education for their sons. Through its Life in the Spirit programme the school seeks to provide a positive religious experience for the whole spectrum of religious adherence, from the cynical to the committed.

How does a school show today that it is promoting Gospel values? One example of effective pedagogical practice in **Rockwell** is the 'Food and Toy Christmas Collection' organised last year by a Third Year Religion Class. This class was doing a Junior Cert Religion 'project on a community of faith that reaches out' and as a result saw the need to take action. Consequently the class organised daily appeals and collections from the various study halls. This project is seen by teachers as a great way of "getting students to be practically involved" in helping the poor and so living out their faith.

through an option for the poor

Templeogue articulates the Spiritan option for the poor by saying that 'Built into our sense of who we are is a concern for the poor'. The school reaches out to those in need in Irish society. Each year, before Christmas, a TY group organises the sale of trees in aid of the local Conference of St. Vincent De Paul and there is a school-wide collection of food stuffs to prepare Christmas hampers for the residents of St. Bricin's, a ninety unit Sheltered Community in Arbour Hill.

Privilege brings obligation and **Willow parents** see the importance of nurturing a sense of social justice in their children. It is important for them "to see how hard life is" for many in Irish society today and in the world. The school supports many Blackrock campus fund raising programmes such as the various campaigns for St. Vincent de Paul. Students themselves collect for hampers at Christmas, pack them and deliver them to people in need.

and a solidarity involving the whole school community.

A 'Happy Hamper Appeal' goes out to all **Michael's** families at Christmas-time to provide for over 150 families in need. An innovative project 'On Your Bike' succeeded in providing 25 unneeded bicycles in good condition for Asylum Seekers in SPIRASI's care. The potential for such activities is recognised not only as a means of providing support to those in need but also as a means of cultivating the social conscience of students.

Blackrock reaches out to those in need both in Ireland and in other countries. Extensive year long fund-raising activities in the school contributed €105,000.00 in 2014 to the College's St. Vincent de Paul Conference. Up to 60% of this amount was utilised in providing targeted education support for third level students from the disadvantaged areas in West Tallaght. Seventeen third level students are helped by this fund as are the 6th Year Study Programme in Killinarden Community School, and the Dyslexia Programme in St. Aidan's School in Brookfield.

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND SOCIAL OUTREACH

Each school gives considerable attention in its curriculum to social justice issues, particularly in their Religious Education and TY programmes. A well organised social outreach programme ought to be a constitutive part of Transition Year. This involves the placement of students over a period of time in a community service role with such groups as disadvantaged youth, elderly people, and homeless people. An important part of these programmes is the preparation of students and the follow up reflection.

Spiritan Schools educate for social justice

Mary's Students become aware of social justice through exposure to the reality of disadvantage and need in Ireland by participation in the TY nine week Community service module which brings students to Donnybrook Hospital and St. Michael's House, and other placements. Students also enter into the world of the Asylum Seeker in Ireland through engagement with SPIRASI.

The embedding of Development Education in the curriculum and life of the school is well advanced in **Willow Park First Year**. Students listed a number of DE topics that interest them. These included the Eight Millennium Goals, Education in the Developing Countries and the need for water, "making a difference on the ground" and the importance of education about the developing world and the poverty found there.

by responding to real need in their midst

Michael's Parents point out that many families make large sacrifices in order to provide a Spiritan education at St. Michael's for their sons. Inclusivity, in terms of the enrolment of children with a disability or other special educational need is a given and students with special needs receive good peer support.

Templeogue College is the only non fee paying Spiritan secondary school in Ireland. It is distinguished from its sister schools by its reliance on state funding and voluntary contributions. Due to financial difficulties some families are not in a position to provide text books, uniforms, sporting gear and other necessities. A fund supported by the Parents Association and managed by the School Bursar assists families finding it difficult to cope. Students are aware of the financial difficulties being faced by some families and recognise that "the school doesn't emphasise money".

and through engagement with the poor.

The Rockwell education experience includes a significant TY Social Outreach Programme with students interacting with young people with intellectual and physical disabilities through placement in local special needs schools. Groups of Rockwell students also visit the Nagle Centre for the elderly in Cashel and organise group activities for the residents. A local Primary School for Students with Special Needs, *Scoil Aonghusa*, has use of the Rockwell swimming pool with TY students trained as life savers to assist the children.

The Blackrock TY Pastoral Programme involves all students on a two week placement in a variety of centres where they engage with people in need – the elderly or people with physical or intellectual disabilities. An induction precedes the placement and students present a written report at the end of their placement. A City Centre soup run coordinated by the Sixth Year Chaplain involves four different TY Students and different Staff members each week.

SOCIAL INCLUSION

'Option for the Poor' is central to the Spiritan calling. School Boards and Parent groups acknowledge this and point out that many families make sacrifices to provide a Spiritan education for their children through the payment of fees. School Boards have begun to consider possible ways to make their schools as inclusive as possible.

The tension between the option for the poor and fee-charging schools is acknowledged. Management and Staff of these schools point out that their ministry to youth through Catholic education in Ireland is their key purpose and is now more critical than ever. Parents of each school voiced strong support for the values communicated to their children through a Spiritan education and are willing to make the financial sacrifice involved in providing it.

Spiritan Schools are managed as economically as possible

The **St. Mary's Board** recognises its duty of careful financial management to keep fees as low as possible by "making do with less". The Board of Management is initiating a social inclusion programme to include bursaries for students from other socio-economic groups. This is in direct response to the school's identification with Spiritan mission as 'action for justice and peace, and participation in development' (Spiritan Rule of Life, 14).

Efficient financial management in **Willow** should include a concern to keep fees as low as possible while not compromising the excellent service already in place. While remaining a fee charging school, this would make a Spiritan education at Willow Park First Year as accessible as possible. Further to this, some parents expressed their support for a bursary system (not based on academic achievement) to allow students who seek a Spiritan education but cannot afford it. Management also supports this suggestion and recognises the need for great care with the introduction of such a scheme.

to empower as many as possible

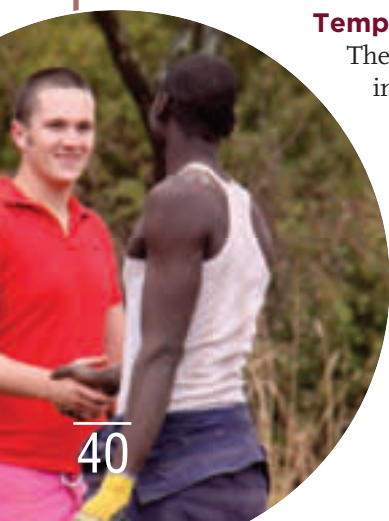
Fee paying schools in south Dublin are sometimes perceived as exclusive and "posh". This is a challenge **St. Michael's** is seeking to meet by opening its facilities to local organisations catering to adults and children who previously would not have had access to the campus. It would also be a way of marrying the objectives of the College with the needs of the local community and removing the exclusive image that the school has in some quarters.

Rockwell today maintains its tradition as a boarding school and thus ensures that a Spiritan education is accessible to students from all parts of Ireland and from other countries. Making accommodation in the Bishop Shanahan Hall of Residence and the planned new Residence for Girls as affordable as possible gives access to the broad Rockwell educational experience for as many as possible.

with as much Christian compassion as possible.

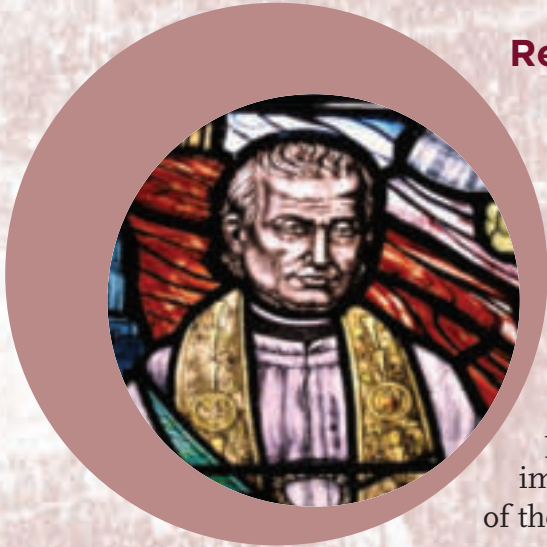
The **Blackrock** educational enterprise recognises its first objective as bringing all who participate in it to a greater awareness that 'their role in society is one of service at a global, national and local level, and that they reach out to the poor and powerless'.

Templeogue in 2014-2015 had 696 students and an academic staff of almost 50 teachers. The noticeable ethnic and religious mix of the student population reflects the College's inclusive enrolment policy. The College benefits from significant good will in the greater Templeogue area with Fund Raising events well supported by the local community.



Among the “new poor” are young people in difficulty, migrants, people who are discriminated against and oppressed, and those marginalised by the phenomenon of globalisation.

General Chapter 2012, Bagamoyo, Tanzania, 1.3.



Reflecting on Spiritan Option for the Poor

Francis Libermann wrote “To bring the good news to the poor, that is our general aim.”

Option for the poor is at the heart of the mission of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit. Education is a hugely effective means of translating that option into action. It also includes an awareness of the unjust social and political structures in our world today that keep the poor impoverished and that we can contribute to the elimination of these structures.

**What can I do
to participate
in the Spiritan
option for the
poor?**



Spiritan Core Values in Education

Option for the Poor

Spiritan Schools: Advocates for Social Justice

OPENING PRAYER WITH LIGHTING OF CANDLE

God of all people, poor and rich, in your Son you have shown your compassion to people struggling to survive. Give us compassion towards those in poverty. Your wish is for all of your children to live with dignity, with adequate food, shelter, health care and education. Help us take up your work as a community of faith and guide us as we seek just solutions to the poverty of our world. Amen.



A READING FROM THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW (5.1-10)

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for there's is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.
Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.
Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake,
for there's is the kingdom of heaven.'

The Word of the Lord.

Response: Thanks be to God



HOW I WISH FOR A CHURCH THAT IS POOR AND FOR THE POOR

The meaning and context of the above words, spoken by Pope Francis during his first papal audience, are explained by the words that preceded them. 'And so the name came to my heart: Francis of Assisi. For me he is the man of poverty, the man of peace, the man who loves and safeguards Creation. In this moment when our relationship with Creation is not so good he is the man who gives us this spirit of peace, the poor man.'

A homily given in August 2012, by the then Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio said, '*Justice is that which gladdens the heart: when there is something for everyone; when one sees that there is equality ...that there is enough for all.*'

Concern for Justice and Peace was again clearly stated when Pope Francis ended his first Easter Sunday homily in the Vatican by calling for '*peace in the whole*

world, still divided by greed looking for easy gain, wounded by the selfishness which threatens human life and the family, selfishness that continues in human trafficking, the most extensive form of slavery in this 21st century. Peace to the whole world, torn apart by violence linked to drug trafficking and by the iniquitous exploitation of natural resources.'

By highlighting the injustice of greed, selfishness and violence as well as some of the forms in which these evils are manifest in our world, Pope Francis has focused on the Church's mission to bring the Gospel to all people and also to make the justice it implies a reality in our own lives, in our work and in the world.

(From SMA Justice Briefing No. 20)



PRAYER TO SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI

*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
and where there is sadness, joy.*

*O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved as to love.*

*For it is in giving that we receive;
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.*

Amen.



The evangelisation of the “poor” is our purpose. Therefore we go especially to peoples, groups and individuals who have not yet heard the message of the Gospel or who have scarcely heard it, to those whose needs are the greatest, and to the oppressed. We also willingly accept tasks for which the Church has difficulty in finding workers.

Spiritan Rule of Life 4.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

We thank you, Lord, for all the people who throughout the world work for human rights, justice and peace and equality for all.

We thank you for the missionaries who for centuries have witnessed to your love throughout the world.

We thank you for the many volunteers working in developing countries who share so generously of their time and talents in the effort to create a more just and caring world.

We thank you for all the national and international bodies committed to and working for a more just world.

We thank you for all the kindness and generosity evident in our society in response to the many needs of the poor and abandoned in our own country and in countries much poorer than our own.

We are all children of the One God, and so, as Brothers and Sisters to one another, we pray,
Our Father

O God, our Creator and Sustainer of all Life, we pray to you to empower us to recognise the hunger, poverty and disease that destroys life and help us play our part in overcoming the injustices that confine the good things of creation to the few, leaving the many to go hungry. Amen.

Fourth Core Value

Commitment to Service



Poullart des Places was motivated and empowered by a strong sense of a faith that does service. This is evident by his commitment to the education and motivation of his fellow seminarians who relied on him for the roof over their heads, the food they had to eat and the instruction they received. Des Places gave himself totally to providing for the first Spiritan community of students and teachers. Worn out by his efforts to provide for the community during the early months of an extremely cold winter he succumbed to the plague and died on 2 October 1709 to be buried in an unmarked grave.

Similarly, Francis Libermann, regardless of his weak health, gave himself totally to the growth of Spiritan missions where there was great need in many parts of the world. His last recorded words include: *fervour .. charity .. union in Jesus Christ .. the spirit of sacrifice*. He died on 2 February 1852.



The concept of service is at the heart of Spiritan identity. 'Giving of oneself to the service of our brother and sister, assuming the attitude of a servant, admitting to weakness and failure (a kind of martyrdom) creates in us patience, respect, fidelity and compassion' (Spiritan General Chapter, 1998, Maynooth, Ireland, p.54). Service and power are at two opposite extremes with the strength to serve others coming from God's Spirit. In our service to others we respond to the command of Jesus that 'we love one another'. In this we use our creative imaginations to find and design ways of answering different needs in our school community and in our local situations at home and in our parishes. In our service we value adaptability. We can draw inspiration from the Spiritan value of respect for each other and service to each other as expressed in the Spiritan Rule of Life that, 'What is given to each one to do is important not only for each one's own fulfilment, but also for the wellbeing of the community and the spread of the gospel' (SRL 43.1).



The various co-curricular and extra-curricular programmes of each school are maintained through the voluntary participation by staff, students, parents and former students. Spiritan schools provide an educational service greatly valued by the local Church as acknowledged by Archbishop Diarmuid Martin at the St. Michael's College Junior School celebration of Confirmation in Merrion Road Church on 25 March 2015. 'In local churches the following are our principal activities: – fostering Christian communities and the education of a committed and responsible laity' SRL 18.



Commitment to Service

What is given to each one to do is important not only for each one's own fulfilment, but also for the wellbeing of the community.

SRL 18.



The esprit de corps among staff is recognised as a vital force for the effective delivery of each school's many services.

The indicators for Commitment to Service are:

- (1) Collaboration of Management and Staff
- (2) The Empowerment of Students
- (3) The Support of Parents and Past Pupils



COLLABORATION OF MANAGEMENT AND STAFF

Professional and personal relationships where colleagues become companions are a noticeable aspect of Spiritan Schools. Each school has devised ways to promote inclusivity for all employees of the school. The esprit de corps among staff is recognised as a vital force for the effective delivery of the many services each school offers its students. Management acknowledged high levels of commitment by staff in pastoral care, chaplaincy services and TY programmes. This involvement is also evident in each school's sports and extra-curricular activities.

Spiritan Schools are places of employment

The administrative and support staff in **Blackrock** speak of great loyalty to the Spiritans and Blackrock's traditions and ethos. The College is a significant employer not only of teachers but also of people in administration, catering, grounds, household and property maintenance, as well as in the medical and residential facilities.

A condition of employment in **St. Michael's** would seem to include a personal commitment to engage in one or other school activity. The wide range of activities offered to students can only take place when there are interested and committed staff involved.

promoting collaboration between Management and Staff

Rockwell management maintains a whole-team approach. There have been recent challenges in the face of the move to the fee-charging sector. These challenges were met by staff in all sectors of the College, reflecting a shared desire to serve and protect the College. A member of the Rockwell Board remarked, "we are carriers of a very special treasure". It recognises a communal "emotional tie" to the school community and sees staff members as "not just colleagues but as companions". The Board of Management, itself a voluntary body, oversees this large community and property with numerous buildings through a number of sub-committees for Finance, the Residence, Maintenance, Strategy and Development.

St. Mary's has many examples of collaboration between staff and management that go 'above and beyond the call of duty'. Career guidance provides a comprehensive service of care in the school. The Year Deans, TY Co-ordinator, Chaplain, Subject teachers, and the 34 Coaches of Rugby and Staff and Parents involved in coaching other sports all contribute to a Mary's Spiritan education. As in so many voluntary secondary schools, many teachers are involved in the life of the school additional to teaching hours. Parents appreciate that "teachers go out of their way to help".

in a spirit of voluntary commitment.

Templeogue Board members expressed strong regard for the teachers who "do extra hours" in teaching and giving support to students that brings "benefit to the whole school without any remuneration".

The 'Administration Team' in **Willow School** speaks highly of the school and see that "people spend a lot of time here" as it is "a happy place to work".

THE EMPOWERMENT OF STUDENTS

Students imitate the behaviour modelled for them by the management and staff of the school. Senior students in turn model good civic behaviour to junior students. Each school encourages students to take responsibility for the well being of others in the school community through mentoring younger students, or taking up prefecting roles or becoming members of the SRC. Some schools have commissioned students as Eucharistic Ministers. This experiential learning is designed to instil civic spirit, and, it is hoped, will result in students assuming roles of service in the future. Each school can identify former students now giving service in the Church, Irish society and the international community.

Spiritan Schools educate in the way of Christian Service

Willow Park Students learn to analyse, synthesise, and evaluate information and acquire the skills to effectively communicate their findings. They engage in collaborative learning so as to become capable leaders in the future with the creativity and vision to think big and the drive and attention to detail to see projects through to their completion. Students are given the message “never be afraid to try something”.

St. Mary's Students are encouraged to understand their roles as peer leaders in terms of service, rather than as enforcers of school discipline. They imitate what they see and take up important services within the school community such as School Captain, Class Captains, the Sixth Year Leadership Team, Cheer Leaders, Faith Friends and First Year Mentors (Ember Programme).

both within the school community

Rockwell Students are involved in serving the school community. The SRC and School Prefecting System operate effectively and there is an induction programme for both. The SRC members are voted by the student body of the Senior School, that is, from 4th to 6th year. They are seen as representing students and make student views known to the Board of Management through the Principal.

St. Michael's Students are encouraged to serve within the school community (e.g. the mentoring programme for First Year students) and the wider community through TY activities. A flagship of the school's commitment to Spiritan ethos is the TY Immersion Programme which in 2015 travelled to Brazil from 26 March to 7 April to participate in the life of a Spiritan Mission in São Paulo.

and in the world.

Templeogue Students support development projects and the alleviation of poverty overseas through participation in the annual *Trocaire Lenten Campaign* and *Concern* campaigns. A Sixth Year Student initiated a school-wide collection through a 'Non Uniform Day' for Pieta House which was well supported by other students, Staff and Management.

Blackrock Students have the opportunity to travel with GOAL to India, with the Dublin Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes, to Tanzania with the Willow Wheelers, to Kenya with the College's Kenya Outreach. The outreach consists of assisting in the building of a Spiritan boarding School in Sultan Hamud, Machakos, Kenya. Each summer since 2012 the Leaving Cert. class with a number of parents has travelled to Sultan Hamud for two weeks to assist in the building of this school.

THE SUPPORT OF PARENTS AND PAST PUPILS

'The work of staff in maintaining the wide range of sports and extra-curricular activities offered by each school is supported by parents and past pupils. The number of staff and parents who are past pupils helps ensure the continuity of this commitment into the future. It can be noted that a considerable number of past pupils, former staff members and parents give voluntary service as trustee representatives on Boards of Management and on the DEA Board.'

Spiritan Schools welcome the Support of Parents

There is a considerable social aspect to a **Blackrock education** with a number of parents, past pupils and retired staff involved in the social outreach and mission projects of the school. "Parents play such a big role" in the life of the school. It is a busy campus with Willow Wheelers, Outreach to Kenya, Camino Pilgrimage, St. Vincent de Paul Conference, Parents Choir, Spiritan Community outings and many more interests pursued by groups of students, staff, parents and past pupils.

One of the objectives of **Willow's Parents Association** is to 'Understand and embody the ethos and Catholic influence of the School, to develop a spirit of co-operation and mutual support for the benefit of all'. The school's Guidance Policy adopts a whole school approach to pastoral care and guidance. This includes the parents of the school. The policy notes that 'Parents have by far the most influence directly or indirectly on the choices made by their sons'.

and of Past Pupils in the life of the school

The Templeogue School Band, the sports, chaplaincy and extra-curricular programmes only happen because of voluntary involvement of Staff, Past Pupils and Parents. Students remark on how important it is for recent past students to be coaching them in their sport. They act as valuable role models.

The Rockwell Union provides students with support in career guidance and employment placement. Past pupils have, over the years, provided support consistently to the College. The Union has also been tireless in its fundraising for the planned Fr. Aidan Lehane C.S.Sp. Pavilion.

with the expectation that Past Pupils are active agents for good in the world.

It is recognised that many of **St. Mary's past pupils** are engaged in public service not in a "brash" way but as genuinely committed to the well-being of others. This is well expressed by the charitable work undertaken by the PPU and its support for the College. The Union also coordinates a network to assist former members of the College community who have fallen on difficult times.

The **St. Michael's** 'Believe, Belong, Become' project includes a visual display of the wide range of career choices made by past pupils with portraits of a selection of past pupils pursuing a wide range of careers and life choices. The purpose of this display is to create 'awareness among present students of the hugely diverse paths available to them'.





Reflecting on Commitment to Service

Claude Poullart des Places wrote, “Lord, may I serve you during my pilgrimage of life in a way which is agreeable to you.” At the heart of our Spiritan schools a spirit of *Commitment to Service* is promoted and pursued by all members of the school community. We are encouraged to become involved in organisations and projects committed to building a better world.

Prayer for those who would serve

God alone can give faith,
But you can be God’s witness.
God alone can give hope,
But you can give confidence to your brothers
and sisters.
God alone can give love,
But you can teach others how to love.
God alone can give peace,
But you can sow the seeds of unity.
God alone can give strength,
But you can help the weak.
God alone is the Way,
But you can show it to others.
God alone is Light,
But you can make it shine in the eyes of all.
God alone is Life,
But you can share your desire to live.
God alone can do the impossible,
But you can do all that is possible.
God alone is enough,
But God prefers to count on your help.

[Brazilian Prayer]

**What
service can
I offer to
others?**



Spiritan Core Values in Education

Commitment to Service

Spiritan Schools: Communities of Service

OPENING PRAYER WITH LIGHTING OF CANDLE

Loving God, as we gather to reflect on the Christian calling to be servants to one another we light this candle. As it flickers into life we ask you to quicken in us the Spirit of Jesus who lived his life in service of others. May we find in his self-giving the model to imitate and the message to live by so that we might be united with you and with one another by living according to the spirit of the Christian Gospel. Amen.



SCRIPTURE READING

"It was before the festival of the Passover, and Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to pass from this world to the Father. He had always loved those who were his in the world, but now he showed how perfect his love was.

They were at supper... and he got up from table and removed his outer garment and taking a towel, wrapped it round his waist, he then poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel he was wearing... When he had washed their feet and put on his clothes again he went back to the table. 'Do you understand' he said 'what I have done to you'? You call me Master and lord, and rightly; so I am. If I, then, the Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you should wash each other's feet. I have given you an example so that you may copy what I have done to you."

John 13: 1-5, 12-15.



REFLECTION – GOD IN AN APRON

Supper was special that night.
There was both a heaviness and a holiness hanging in the air.
We couldn't explain the mood.
It was sacred, yet sorrowful.
Gathered around that table
eating that solemn holy meal
we had ever sat down to eat.
We were dwelling in the heart of mystery.
Though dark the night,
hope felt right as if something evil was about to be conquered. And then suddenly
The One we loved startled us all.
He got up from the table
and put on an apron.
Can you imagine how we felt?
God in an apron!
Tenderness encircled us as he bowed before us.
He knelt and said
"I choose to wash your feet because I love you."

God in an apron, kneeling, I couldn't believe my eyes.
I was embarrassed until his eyes met mine.
I sensed my value then.
He touched my feet.
He held them in his strong, brown hands.
He washed them.
I can still feel the water.

I can still feel that touch of his hands
 I can still see the look in his eyes.
 Then he handed me the towel and said
 "As I have done so you must do".
 Learn to bow, Learn to kneel.
 Let your tenderness encircle everyone you meet.
 Wash their feet not because you have to.
 Because you want to.

It seems I've stood two thousand years holding the
 towel in my hands.
"As I have done so you must do" keeps echoing in my heart.
"There are so many feet to wash" I keep saying
"no" I hear God's voice resounding through the years,
"there are only my feet – what you do for them you do for
me."

Macrina Wiederkehr

A PSALM OF SERVICE THROUGH PARTNERSHIP

We are partners in the search for the mystery of life.
 Partners in the mystery of healing,
 Partners in the way of the cross.

Pause

We are partners in the ministry of service,
 Partners in the ministry of justice and peace
 Partners in the liturgy of church and life,
 Partners in healing and hope.

Pause

Ours is the gift of good company on days when
 there is nobody there beside us.
 Ours is the gift of affirming the ways of God
 Who is working within us.

Pause

Blessed is the partnership rooted in love that spills over,
 Spreads over, covers over everything negative and
 uninspiring.

Blessed is the fellowship shared with the circle of our
 partners in our schools.

Pause

God of relationship, bless this circle of Spiritan
 educators,
 Strengthen this circle, deepen our work together.
 Let it be a symbol of Your presence
 And sign of Your ways.

Pause

God of companionship, may we be supportive,
 May we be effective,
 Bringing to life all that is best in one another,
 So that we may help others to recognise their value
 and worth.
 And build up a community of schools in the spirit of
 service to God and one another.



**Relying on the faithful God who is always with us,
 Each day, In imitation of Jesus, the Servant,
 We make afresh the gift of ourselves to God and
 to one another.**

**We take up again the service of leadership,
 showing respect to all and nurturing collaboration
 among colleagues.**

Spiritan Rule of Life (adapted) 54, 55.

PRAYER

1. O God you have blessed us with understanding,
 imagination and memory;
All: May we learn from the past, be realistic about the
 present and plan wisely for the future of Spiritan
 education in our community of schools.
2. Time is your gift to us, O God; let us not take it for
 granted, particularly during our time together.
All: May we use this time efficiently, creatively and well.
3. God of wisdom and love;
All: May all of us engaged in the work of a Catholic
 education in the Spiritan tradition always value and
 nourish the wisdom and goodness of all who work
 with us.
4. Spirit of God, joy is among your gifts to us;
All: Bless each of us as we open our hearts to your
 Spirit and fill the world with beauty and light.

Other intentions:

Our Father...

CONCLUDING PRAYER (together)

God, our Father, empower us with your Spirit, the spirit
 that animates Spiritan mission throughout the world.

Help us to make our schools places of hospitality and
 welcome.

May all that we do create a family spirit among us
 so that we can bear witness to the love your Son has
 shown for all through the washing of feet of those who
 are poor. Amen.

Fifth Core Value

Global Vision

Claude Poullart des Places saw beyond his own needs to the needs of others poorer and much different to himself. He reached out to help and his life was changed.



Francis Libermann brought that 'reaching out' beyond the boundaries of France to many mission countries.



Spiritans today are on mission on five continents and present in some fifty-five countries. By taking discipleship seriously, by identifying with Jesus Christ, we become aware of our social obligations

based on justice not charity.

We respond by working with others in building world-wide community. This is the work of the 'New Evangelisation' which, in the words of Pope Francis, is to replace a 'globalisation of indifference' with a 'globalisation of tenderness'.

Spiritans schools in Ireland are part of the global community founded by Des Places and Libermann. This missionary outlook inspires hope for the realisation of one world, united in peace and justice, in the Kingdom of God. A Spiritan education is grounded in a global vision enabling all who experience it a realisation that our local, national and global relationships have implications for and are intrinsically related to each other. We are called to be increasingly aware that we are members of one entire human family under God where there is 'neither Jew nor Greek, neither Slave nor Free.....' (1 Corinthians 12.13).





Global Vision

A Spiritan education is grounded in a global vision enabling all who experience it a realisation that our local, national and global relationships have implications for and are intrinsically related to each other

Appraisal Report p. 23.



DEA Policy: The Promotion of Development Education in Schools to embed Spiritan Mission and Identity.

The indicators for Global Vision are:

- (1) Delivery of an Education that Transforms
- (2) Participation in Spiritan Mission



DELIVERY OF AN EDUCATION THAT TRANSFORMS

Each school has interesting and creative initiatives in place to promote Human Rights issues, Social Justice and the Development Education (DE) agenda. Many of these are addressed through the curriculum in SPHE, Religion and to a lesser extent in other subjects. TY modules, projects and programmes are the main co-curricular forum for an exploration of such issues. All of the schools are members of the Spiritan School Network for Development Education and affiliated to World Wise Global Schools (WWGS), the education body of Irish Aid. Each school presented a DE Project at the Spiritan DE Showcase Event held in Kimmage Development Studies Centre on 24 April 2015.

Spiritan Schools inculcate a sense of global citizenship

A sense of global citizenship is promoted in **St. Mary's**. Students are made aware of issues of human rights and social justice. A seed is sown to mature into a conscious commitment to the empowerment of people and their liberation from injustice, poverty and ignorance. Parents recognise that “the world is not equal – we can do something”.

Michael's Students demonstrate a clear sensitivity to situations of need in the world that are presented to them through guest speakers such as John O'Shea and Spiritan missionaries who visit the school and speak to the students. School management expressed commitment to the promotion of social justice and a sense of global citizenship.

through experiential learning in general

The **Blackrock** education programme is underpinned by a realisation that learning comes through experience. Opportunities for leadership, service, entering into the world of the poor are provided and appreciated by students and parents. One parent said that Blackrock boys “develop a set of social and moral standards through being exposed to the other side of life”.

The **Templeogue** ‘Development Week’ was introduced into the TY programme in 2011. This was on foot of an immersion experience by 12 students and 3 adults to The Gambia, West Africa. This is an activities based week which includes interactive learning with Groups such as SPIRASI, LASC (Latin America Solidarity Centre) *Wassa Wassa* Workshops (for African drumming and dancing), Gorta, and The Glencree Reconciliation Centre coming to the school to deliver workshops and engage students in what they do.

and a Development Education Programme in particular.

Willow School is working on a plan for the mainstreaming and embedding of Development Education (DE) in the school. It invites speakers in DE and the Staff is collaborating in identifying a school DE theme to be tied in to every subject scheme. The leadership group consists of 16 student representatives (2 from each of the 8 classes). The school has secured the WWGS global passport.

Rockwell offers a Development Education module in Transition Year with each class group taking on a DE project. One group in 2015 followed the understanding of education as a human right and looked at the link between education and development. Another group examined the relationship between hunger and poverty following the question, “what causes poverty?”



PARTICIPATION IN SPIRITAN MISSION

Spiritan Schools recognise their missionary heritage and wish to actively participate in Spiritan Mission in Ireland and throughout the world. All schools are acquainted with and give support to the work of SPIRASI in Ireland and a number of Spiritan missions overseas. Some schools have regular immersion experiences in developing countries and maintain ongoing mutual relationships with people in these locations. Such association is recognised as a valuable learning experience not only for the students, staff and parents directly involved but also for the whole school community which supports the projects. In a real sense the immersion experience has the potential of connecting the whole school with Spiritan mission that prompts a greater appreciation of different cultures and life experience from what were traditionally known as “mission countries”. There is recognition that Ireland now is a place for mission and we have much to learn from those to whom we are connected through the shared Spiritan story.

Spiritan Schools have a missionary vision

The high profile of the Ghana immersion experience in **St. Mary's** helps students, staff and parents to buy into maintaining the Spiritan tradition of crossing boundaries to identify with others different to ourselves. The Board of Management values the fact that St. Mary's as a Spiritan school is part of an international global family of Spiritans and looks forward to the strengthening of links in that family.

The embedding of Development Education in the curriculum and life of **Willow Park** school is well advanced. Students listed a number of DE topics that interest them. These included: the Eight Millennium Goals; Education and the need for water in the Developing Countries; how to “make a difference on the ground” in poor places; and the importance of education about the developing world.

expressed in practical ways

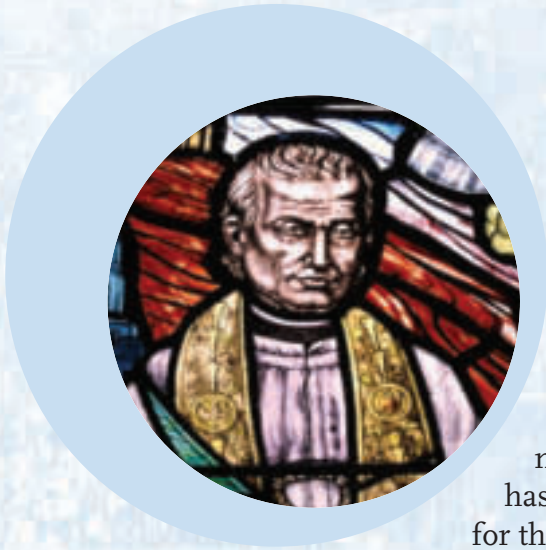
The **Blackrock** Kenya Outreach Programme is now in its fifth year. It is a programme of the whole College community led to a large extent by parents and past pupils. The students going to Machakos this year are past students as they have already taken their Leaving Certificate Examination. This post Leaving Certificate programme of outreach began in 2004 with house building in South Africa. The Kolkata experience is organised by GOAL; the travel to Tanzania is with the Willow Wheelers and students travel to Lourdes with the Diocesan pilgrimage.

Fifteen **Rockwell** students and two teachers travelled to Kolkata during the February mid-term break 2015 with the Hope Foundation. This programme has grown and expanded over the years and involves an increasing number of staff and students. The students who travelled this year spoke of the challenge to first of all raise the funds needed for the journey and of the experience itself. A parent interviewed mentioned that his daughter, a past student, and now studying in University, went on this Kolkata journey when she was in Transition Year. She returned to Kolkata for the Summer of 2015 as a volunteer. Her travel was supported by fund raising in the school.

and grounded in care for others and the earth.

The planned effect of the **Templeogue** Development Week and the DE Module in TY is to heighten awareness of the issues around development, social justice and human rights. The learning effect of personal engagement with practitioners in these areas provides a very valuable learning experience for students. It was particularly noted that the personal stories shared by survivors of torture seeking asylum in Ireland (presently assisted by SPIRASI) make a deep impression on students.

St. Michael's has undertaken an ambitious ecology project with twelve teachers (Subject Co-ordinators) and a team of students involved. Food empathy is a key theme of their work. Adopting a whole school approach, an area in the school has been identified to grow apple trees and develop an ecological space in the school. The Development Education teachers acknowledge the encouragement and support of the Board of Management for this project.



Reflecting on Global Vision

Francis Libermann wrote, “My heart is yours; my heart is for the Africans, I am Jesus’ servant. He wants me to love everyone as he loves everyone.” The missionary outlook of the Spiritan Congregation has given it a *Global Vision* which inspires hope for the realisation of one world, united in peace and justice, in the Kingdom of God.

**How does my
global vision
manifest itself
through my
daily works
and actions?**



What is Development Education?

There is a certain uncertainty surrounding the term 'Development Education' (DE), and this is most clearly evidenced by the abundance of diverse definitions of the term. Indeed there are so many definitions of DE out there that you could get lost trying to figure out what it is. In the face of an array of complex and confusing definitions, it is perhaps best to recall Albert Einstein's warning that "if you can't explain it to a six year old, you don't understand it yourself," and focus on the simplest. And the simplest definition of DE – "a quality education with a global perspective" – has a surprising depth and richness to it.

The global perspective means that it is an education that doesn't focus narrowly on our own context, our own needs, our own futures, but one that increases our awareness and understanding of the rapidly changing,

interdependent and unequal world in which we live. It is an education that focuses on social justice, moving away from the 'charity model' to one of active global citizenship where students engage with social justice issues on their own terms.

But perhaps we can get too tied down arguing out precise meanings. When it comes to DE, the way we do it is just as important as what we mean by it. And we do DE in creative, participatory ways. It is a move away from the static, formal regime of the classroom to a more active, experiential learning in a wider range of settings. There is a certain blurring of the lines between student and teacher so that students become teachers and teachers become learners – students take responsibility for their own learning and end up teaching each other, and teachers end up learning from the creative approaches adopted by students.

Research consistently demonstrates that such learning processes are more likely to be transformative and empowering for learners, to build the critical thinking skills of all involved, and ultimately lead to a commitment to positive change within society.

And hopefully that is what all of us will have experienced, to a greater or lesser extent, from our involvement in DE activities this year. The challenge now is how will I process this experience and this learning to commit myself to social justice in the years ahead?

Ronan White,
DE Consultant for Spiritan Schools,
2014-2015.





Spiritan Core Values in Education

Global Vision

Spiritan Schools: Communities of the World

OPENING PRAYER WITH LIGHTING OF CANDLE

God, Our Father, you have made all things and hold all things in being. We ask you to open our minds to the world in which we live and our hearts to the needs of the peoples in our world.

Help us build a human community where the inequalities that separate rich from poor are overcome and all can know justice and live in peace. Quicken in us the Spirit that builds unity so that the world may know a peace that does justice. Amen.



SCRIPTURE READING

A Reading from the Prophet Micah (6.6-8, 7.7)

How shall I come before the Lord and pray before my God?

Shall I come with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old?

Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousand? Shall I give my firstborn for my wrong-doing? The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? God has shown me what is good and what is required from me. I am to act justly, I am to love tenderly, I am to walk humbly before the Lord.

I shall pray before my God; I will wait for the Lord of my salvation; my God will hear me.

The Word of the Lord.

Response: Thanks be to God.



FRANCIS LIBERMANN WRITES

At a time of Revolution and the introduction of universal suffrage in France, March 1848:

'You ask me what I think about our revolution. I think it is an act of divine justice enacted against the fallen dynasty which looked only to its own interests rather than those of the people confided to its care.... Looking at the situation through the eyes of faith and using the same sort of language as Jesus did. ... Justice and humanity would be ignored by practically every government if their own interests are threatened ... They are strong with the weak and weak with the strong; they pitilessly sacrifice the one and pander to the other... We must not remain stuck in the ideas of the past. The world has changed, while we cling on to what has gone before. Wanting to cling onto the old days and sticking to the customs and spirit of bygone times will make all our efforts worthless. So let us welcome the new ways with openness and simplicity, bringing to them the spirit of the Gospel.'

A Spiritan Anthology 2011, pp. 150-154.

REFLECTION

O God, we remember at this time all those in our world who are suffering from injustice:

We think of those who are discriminated against because of their race, colour or religion
(*an example:.....*);

We think of those imprisoned because of their work for the relief of oppression (*an example:;*

We think of those tempted to violence as a cry against overwhelming hardship (*an example:;*

We think of those deprived of reasonable health and education (*an example:;*

We think of those suffering from hunger and famine
(*an example:;*

We think of those too weak to help themselves and who have no one else to help them (*an example:;*

(*add other groups*)

We remember at this time anyone of our acquaintance who is personally affected by injustice.

Forgive us, Lord, if we unwittingly share in the conditions or in a system that perpetuates injustice.

Show us how we can serve your children and make your love practical by washing their feet.



We count the following as constitutive parts of our mission of evangelisation; the “integral liberation” of people, action for justice and peace, and participation in development. It follows that we must make ourselves “the advocates, the supporters and the defenders of the weak and the little ones against all who oppress them.” (Rule of 1849; N.D.X, 517)

Spiritan Rule of Life 14.

PRAYER FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE THAT BRINGS UNITY AMONG PEOPLES

Our world is too small. Our lives are too small. Our vision is too restricted.

May the people of various countries, various cultures, tribes and families all come together to make one world.

All: *Bring us together, Lord, into the family of your love.*

Our attitudes are too narrow, our assumptions too simplistic, our behaviour too predictable.

May the strong take care of those that are weak, may minorities of any kind – of race, class, or gender – be included in the circle of life.

All: *Bring us together, Lord, into the family of your love.*

Our understanding of God is too small and our understanding of life too exclusive.

May people of various religions and cultures, whose names for God are different from our own, find inclusion in our world and our love.

All: *Bring us together, Lord, into the family of your love.*

God of all cultures, God of all people, help us not to label anyone as second-class.

May we overcome our attitudes of superiority and oppression.

All: *Bring us together, Lord, into the family of your love.*

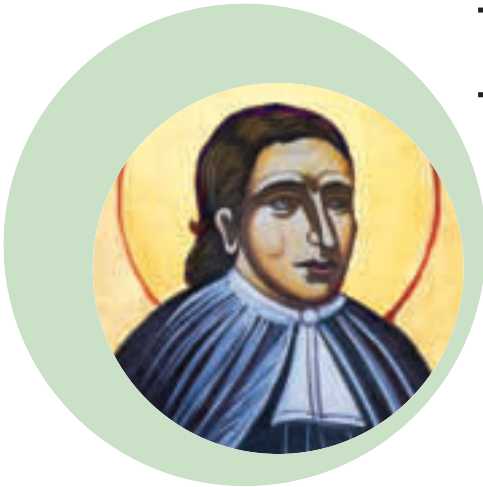
As a chain is as strong as its weakest link may we value society's efforts at caring for its most vulnerable members.

May we have a desire to work for a world united against injustice and for peace, now and always.

All: *Bring us together, Lord, into the family of your love.*

Sixth Core Value

High Educational Standards



Poullart des Places became involved with poor chimney – sweeps in Paris and taught them the catechism. He concerned himself with poor “scholars” who wished to become priests and set about planning a programme of training with them that the Church might have humble workers to bring the gospel message to the poor.



Spiritans continue this mission in education today and are ‘participating within the Church in the

mission of Christ,

in communion with him and all people, proclaiming a salvation that is a gift from God, liberation from all that oppresses people, joy in knowing the Lord and being known by him’ (SRL 11). The most recent Spiritan General Chapter reiterated the importance of education as a Spiritan work when it said, ‘... we renew once more our focus on education as a way to the integral liberation of individuals and peoples to whom we are sent’ (Bagamoyo, Tanzania, 2012, I.4). The Spiritan Rule of Life offers guidelines for Spiritan Mission today carried out ‘in communion with the Church as it is in our time’ (SRL 13).



Francis Libermann came to recognise that it was through education that a good moral, intellectual and physical formation would lead to the emancipation of the poor.

These guidelines are followed in Spiritan Schools through their commitment to the high educational standards of preparing their students for citizenship in a global world; forming them in the spiritual and moral values of the God’s Kingdom; preparing them for service of society; fostering in them a respect for people of other religions and cultures and empowering them through dialogue to appreciate the richness of difference in God’s world. ‘Schools are privileged places for intercultural dialogue’ with the worthy educational goal to stimulate critical thinking (Congregation for Catholic Education, *Education to Intercultural Dialogue in Catholic Schools: Living in Harmony for a Civilisation of Love*, Vatican City 2013, 13). This begins with a serious foundation in knowledge and understanding. A strong basis in academic learning affords all participants in Spiritan education the opportunity to become enlightened and dynamic self-directed agents of change.





We renew
once more
our focus on
education as a way
to the integral
liberation of
individuals and
peoples to whom we
are sent.

Bagamoyo Chapter 2012
Appraisal Report p. 24.

High Educational Standards



Spiritan Schools are a nurturing environment for the holistic development of each individual student through engagement and participation.

The indicators for High Educational Standards are:

- (1) A Nurturing Environment
- (2) For the Holistic Development of Each Individual Student
- (3) Through Engagement and Participation

Human beings, while capable of the worst, are also capable of rising above themselves, choosing again what is good, and making a new start, despite their mental and social conditioning. We are able to take an honest look at ourselves, to acknowledge our deep dissatisfaction, and to embark on new paths to authentic freedom. No system can completely suppress our openness to what is good, true and beautiful, or our God-given ability to respond to his grace at work deep in our hearts.

Young people have a new ecological sensitivity and a generous spirit, and some of them are making admirable efforts to protect the environment. At the same time, they have grown up in a milieu of extreme consumerism and affluence which makes it difficult to develop other habits. We are faced with an educational challenge.

Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'* (2015) 205, 209.



A NURTURING ENVIRONMENT

Spiritan Schools offer much, much more than a preparation for high achievement in examinations. They are communities of teaching and learning providing a strong base to which students belong in their formative years and from which they can explore and learn much about how to live and relate with others, about the world they live in and the God that loves them. There is continuity between the values of the home and of the school with strong mutual support directed towards the development of the students.

Spiritan Schools offer a faith-based education

The well rounded, faith based educational experience **Blackrock parents** want for their children is provided by a dedicated Management and Staff who “operate subconsciously” out of Christian values.

St. Mary’s parents see the school’s values as grounded in Gospel values. While there are other excellent schools to choose from, parents choose St. Mary’s because it is a Catholic school in the Spiritan tradition that reflects and reinforces their family values.

and serious academic endeavour

Templeogue Students are encouraged to perform to the best of their ability in all fields of endeavour (academic, sporting, music and in the arts). They are aware of the maxim, “if you put in the work, you will get the results” and greatly appreciate the many awards won by students in individual subjects and the overall academic results of the school both at Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate levels.

“Education is very important” a **Rockwell TY student** noted going on to say that a lot of emphasis is placed on getting homework done and the study facility in the school day “encourages you more”. Christmas and Summer Examinations are held and these are taken very seriously. It was noted by one parent that she finds the Student Homework Journal a good communication between home and school enabling her to keep in touch with her child’s academic progress.

in a growth-inducing learning environment.

St. Michael’s is a mixed ability school striving for the holistic development of each student. Inspired by Christian ideals College Management and Staff strive to create an environment in which all students can work, play and pray in a friendly and caring atmosphere. There is an evident skill at work from a professional staff that identifies individual talent and is committed to nurturing that talent.

The learning environment of **Willow** school is noticeable with many fun ways to impart learning such as the “maths problem of the week” competition. Teachers acknowledge the enthusiasm for learning among their students and tap into that curiosity and selfless natural goodness particular to this age group. It is good “to get them at this age” as they have “loads of initiative”.



FOR A HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT OF EACH INDIVIDUAL STUDENT

Spiritan Schools appreciate the individuality of students entrusted to their care and provide the professional educational expertise that assists in the development of each student as a person with individual aptitudes and talents, opinions and interests. The well-being and progress of each student is carefully monitored with good communication between the home and the school.

Spiritan Schools maintain high academic standards

Templeogue Students speak of their pride in their school. In giving reasons for this pride the “good examination results” are given first place. Students appreciate the focus that is put on academic achievement and the supports provided for them (e.g. study workshops) to perform well. At the same time students are appreciative of the pep talks they receive at year assemblies to take personal responsibility for their actions and recognise that education is about working towards being “well rounded people”.

High academic standards are important for **Rockwell Students** with the expectation that they will progress to third level. Each year the school has a number of scholarships awarded by UCD and TCD. The school also celebrates “the less obvious successes” and the Principal noted the joy there is in “meeting recent past pupils enjoying their College course and settling well into their new lives away from home. It’s always warming to meet these pupils and hear how their lives have turned out.”

and offer strong support for students

The well being and progress of each **Blackrock Student** is carefully monitored by Deans, Year Counsellors, Subject Teachers and Chaplains. A weekly Application Card for each student administered by their Year Dean records the student’s application each week. A monthly Progress Card also administered by the Year Dean in collaboration with the Subject Teachers records academic progress. There are full-scale examinations at the end of the Christmas and Easter terms.

The unique educational milieu that is **Willow School** provides a supportive transition from primary to secondary school. While students are in the first year of secondary school they are not yet subject to the “little fish in a big bowl” phenomenon. They are cushioned from the busy and sometimes disorienting atmosphere of a large school. The transition takes place after this important developmental stage when they are more mature and better prepared. Care for the academic progress of each student is very good.

to achieve according to their potential.

While **St. Michael’s** records strong Leaving Certificate results it is clear that the chief concern of Management and Staff is that all students achieve according to their ability. The Learning Support Team seeks out students who are in need of additional educational supports and applies early intervention to assist such students to interact fully with the prescribed curriculum.

Academic success is defined in **St. Mary’s** not so much by results obtained but by the efforts made in obtaining those results. It is about each student trying his best. Results achieved in State examinations are very high, with typically 90% of students studying for degree courses after school. The academic progress of each student is carefully monitored.

THROUGH ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION

A Spiritan School provides a wide academic, co-curricular and extra-curricular educational experience to engage students in what interests them. Students are given increasing responsibility for the good of the school and their own educational progress. Individual initiatives and achievements are encouraged and celebrated.

Spiritan Schools offer a wide range of learning opportunities

Michael's is a "lived in" school offering a great range of activities to engage all students in extra-curricular activities. There are many school events in place promoting this good spirit. Management, Year Heads, Chaplaincy and Care teams interact well in promoting the good of students and of colleagues. Mutual respect (politeness, caring for each other) and a strong sense of belonging and being proud to belong to St. Michael's are easily noticed.

The **Blackrock** education enterprise offers a wide range of Sporting activities (from Athletics to Water Polo) and Music appreciation in a school with four choirs, an orchestra and a whole range of individual talent taking the stage in the Leman Concert held each year in the National Concert Hall. The Performing Arts and Debating have a high profile in the school and students achieve to a high standard.

with systems in place to accompany each student's personal development

Templeogue Guidance Department offers comprehensive support for students from 1st to 6th Year. This was recognised by the WSE-MLL 2012 Report which states that 'Collaboratively planned systems are in place to provide a high level of care and support for students, which is delivered in an integrated manner' and that these 'student supports are well developed and operate effectively'.

Mary's Parents have ready access to their sons' Dean and to teachers who will advise about students' needs. Knowledge of some emotional upheaval in a student's life that affects his academic work is flagged to teachers. St. Mary's is an intimate community of learning supportive of the full spectrum of student ability and achievement.

and participation in school life.

Willow Students are encouraged to engage at their level in some sport. No boy is required to play rugby but each one "must do something". Seven teams are regularly coached with good affirmation for the "lower teams". It was commented that "as much effort goes into the coaching of these teams as the higher performing ones". A good spirit is nurtured by this participation which gives both a sense of achievement to each boy and of loyalty to one another. "If boys are happy they will fulfil their potential." This school is about students being happily involved as this is not a school of "just go to class and go home".

Rockwell Students are involved in serving the school community. The SRC and School Prefecting System operate effectively and there is an induction programme for both. The SRC members are voted by the student body of the Senior School, that is, from 4th to 6th year. The Prefects are Sixth Year Students chosen by teachers and management. There is a boy and a girl prefect for each year 1st to 5th and one for overseas students. The prefect has a pastoral role being present in the year study at assembly time and arranging meetings of their year in small groups "to monitor the well being of students".



Reflecting on High Educational Standards

Claude Poullart des Places had a commitment to fostering the full potential of every student. Spiritan schools provide a curriculum that has breadth and depth. This facilitates every student as they gain a complete spectrum of knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes that are relevant to their life experiences, while engaging them in a dialogue between faith, culture and life.

**Am I seizing the
opportunity to
reach my full
potential as a
human being
today?**



Spiritan Core Values in Education

High Educational Standards

Spiritan Schools: An Education that Transforms

OPENING PRAYER WITH LIGHTING OF CANDLE

Lord, we thank you for this time of reflection. May all that we share speak of you, so that we may recognise you in our words, and that nothing be said without being heard; nothing thought about without being considered. Send your Spirit to open our minds and heal our hearts that we may be transformed into the likeness of all who know and do what is right and good. May this encounter with your Holy Spirit renew in us that quest for truth and wisdom that will lead us into fullness of life. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING

A Reading from the Book of Tobit (4.5-19)

Tobit gives instructions to His Son

Revere the Lord all your days, my son, and refuse to sin or to transgress his commandments. Live uprightly all the days of your life, and do not walk in the ways of wrongdoing, for those who act in accordance with truth will prosper in all their activities. Do not turn your face away from anyone who is poor, and the face of God will not be turned away from you. In pride there is ruin and great confusion. And in idleness there is loss. Watch yourself, my son, in everything you do, and discipline yourself in all your conduct. And what you hate, do not do to anyone. Do not drink wine to excess or let drunkenness go with you on your way. Seek advice from every wise person and do not despise any useful counsel. At all times bless the Lord God, and ask him that your ways may be made straight and that all your paths and plans may prosper.

The Word of the Lord.

Response: Thanks be to God.



POPE FRANCIS MEETING WITH TEACHERS AND STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ECUADOR, 7 JULY 2015, HAD THIS TO SAY:

Our academic institutions are seedbeds, places full of possibility, fertile soil to be cared for, cultivated and protected. Fertile soil thirsting for life.

My question to you, as educators, is this: do you watch over your students, helping them to develop a critical sense, an open mind capable of caring for today's world? A spirit capable of seeking new answers to the varied challenges that society sets before humanity today? Are you able to encourage them not to disregard the world around them, what is happening all over? Their minds need to leave the classroom, their hearts must go out of the classroom. Does our life, with its uncertainties, its mysteries and its questions, find a place in the curriculum or different academic activities? Do we enable and support a constructive debate which fosters dialogue in the pursuit of a more humane world? Dialogue, that bridge word, that word which builds bridges.

Dear students, you are the seedbed of your society's future growth. Do you realise that this time of study is not only a right, but also a privilege which you have? To what extent do our studies help us and bring us to feel solidarity with others?

May the Holy Spirit inspire and accompany us, for he has summoned us, invited us, given us the opportunity and the duty to offer the best of ourselves. He is the same Spirit who on the first day of creation moved over the waters, ready to transform them, ready to bestow life. He is the same Spirit who gave the disciples the power of Pentecost. The Spirit does not abandon us. He becomes one with us, so that we can encounter paths of new life. May he, the Spirit, always be our companion and our teacher along the way.



PSALM 19

May the Lord answer in time of trial;
May the name of Jacob's God protect you.

May he send you help from his shrine
And give you support from Sion.
May he remember all your offerings
And receive your sacrifice with favour.

May he give you your heart's desire
And fulfil every one of your plans.
May we ring out our joy at your victory
And rejoice in the name of our God.
May the Lord grant all your prayers.

Some trust in chariots or horses,
But we in the name of the Lord.
They will collapse and fall,
But we shall hold and stand firm.

Give victory to the king, O Lord,
Give answer on the day we call.



In local Churches the following are our principal activities:

- **Fostering Christian communities and the education and training of a committed and responsible laity;**
- **Vocations' ministry; training for ministries and for the missionary and the religious life;**
- **Engaging in social and education work in line with our Spiritan calling;**
- **Awakening an understanding of the universal mission, of justice, and of kinship between peoples.**

Spiritan Rule of Life 18.

1. Lord, open our lips.

All: And our mouth shall declare your praise.

2. Lord open our eyes.

All: And our seeing shall behold your glory.

3. Lord, open our hearts.

All: And our feelings shall know your love.

4. Lord, open our minds.

All: And our thinking shall discover your wonders.

5. Lord, open our hands.

All: And our giving shall show your generosity.

6. Lord, open our lives.

All: And our living shall declare your Presence.

(pause)

All: O God, You who watch over us and are ever with us.

Be with us as we strive to maintain a high standard of education in all that we do.

Sustain us on our pilgrim way.

Open our ears to hear you speaking to us.

Empower us with your Spirit so that we can

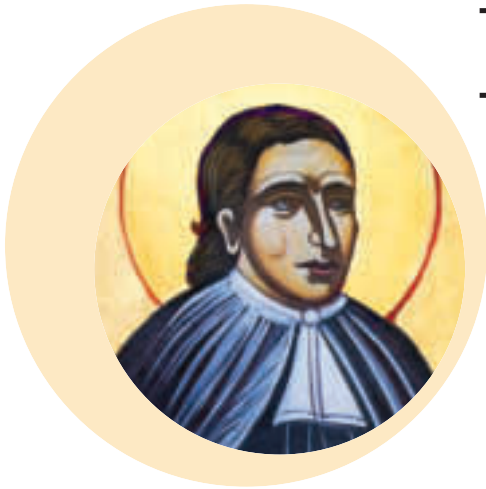
work together in the way marked out by

Poullart des Places and Francis Libermann.

Amen.

Seventh Core Value

Personal and Faith Development



Poullart des Places chose to become a priest and an educator of poor scholars for the priesthood rather than follow a promising career as a lawyer. He found personal fulfilment through faith in God and service of others.



Francis Libermann moved from the familiar world of traditional Judaism to become a Catholic priest and part of a missionary movement in the nineteenth century that saw beyond the limits of European civilisation to the values of other peoples and other cultures.

Both founders travelled a journey of faith that led them beyond the familiar into new ways of being and living in the world.



The successors of Des Places and Libermann today continue this journey of faith through Spiritan mission experienced in many different ways.

One way is through the service of an education that liberates people from selfishness and opens their minds to the dignity of others, especially those different to us. The teaching of character is valued and built on an intimate life-changing encounter with Jesus Christ. The giftedness of each person contributes to the building up of the body of Christ (Paul's Letter to the Ephesians 4:11 ff). A character formation that is 'taught' and 'caught' passes on values not only to distinguish between right and wrong but develops people of faith, courage, patience and prayer. It encourages a personal development that promotes self-discipline and self-sacrifice as inherent to 'human flourishing'.

Spiritan Schools, as participants in Spiritan mission are part of the great unfolding of God's plan for the building together of a more just world where the rights and dignity of each person are of paramount importance. They participate in this mission through providing for the moral, spiritual, intellectual, physical, social and cultural development of students, staff, families, and all associated with them.





Personal and Faith Development

The Spirit calls us to continual conversion, shapes our personal and community lives, makes us partakers in the death and resurrection mystery of Jesus...'

SRL 10.
Appraisal Report p. 26.



The Chaplaincy Teams and Religion Departments are key players in leading the spiritual life of the school community.

The indicators for Personal and Faith Development are:

- (1) A Faith Environment
- (2) A Chaplaincy Service
- (3) A Religious Education Programme



A FAITH ENVIRONMENT

The educational enterprise of a Spiritan School is shaped by the environment of faith in which it is located and from which it draws life. Staff and Management commit to maintaining this faith-based, values-rich educational environment. It is this atmosphere in which 'faith is caught, not taught' that sustains the explicit religious formation provided by Chaplaincy Teams and Religious Education departments.

Spiritan Schools model a style of Christian Discipleship

The objective of a **Blackrock education** was expressed by the School Principal in 2009: "We want our boys to be happy and well-disciplined, to be adaptable, responsible, caring and concerned for the welfare of others. We wish them to be capable of critical thinking and to have a sense of perspective, a love of humanity, a faith in God, an understanding of gospel values and a deep spirituality. And in all of this, we wish them to be a voice for the oppressed and the suffering, both locally and globally. We wish them to lead their lives with passion and compassion, to make a difference.'

The objective of a **Rockwell education** was recently summarised by the School Principal: "to turn out pupils we can be proud of". The school relies heavily on the family background in the collaborative work between school and family on the faith development of its students. There is an atmosphere at work in this school that affirms faith and the expression of faith. Morning assemblies usually begin with a prayer. All students have an opportunity to attend Mass during Lent.

that promotes human development

Templeogue Students are regularly encouraged "to reflect on every situation they find themselves in and to understand "the implications of the decisions they make". One example of the school's commitment to the personal development of its students is the recently introduced School Mentoring system.

Various faith development projects involve **St. Mary's Students** in projects that are transformative. Other on-going activities such as sports and a range of co-curricular activities that are not explicitly about faith development also contribute greatly to building up an environment of educational transformation for all.

through constructive relationships.

It is often proposed that the most important lessons in life are 'caught not taught'. A 'friendly and caring atmosphere' in **St. Michael's** nurtures the growth of self reliant, communicative and reliable young men. The school's Literacy Policy puts it well when it 'acknowledge(s) that it is through our relationships with others that we grow to our full potential'.

In **Willow** students are organised into eight classes with each class given a saint's name. This practice ensures an integration of students from the Junior School and from other schools into their new school community. A Tutor is assigned to every class. The role of Tutor is understood as one of "surrogate parenting" which occurs through "developing relationships with the students" rather than maintaining a disciplinarian role. The tutor team feels and appreciates the support of management "in our role as part of the stewardship of the school".

A CHAPLAINCY SERVICE

Along with the Religion Department the Chaplaincy team is recognised as a key player in leading the spiritual life of the school community and companioning members in their individual faith journeys. The Chaplaincy Team typically consists of lay and sacramental chaplains with their distinctive and complementary roles. Good collaboration with the Religion Team, School Management and Staff ensures effective whole school celebrations of the liturgical year. Major feasts and particularly the commemorations of the Spiritan Founders, Poullart des Places (2 October) and Francis Libermann (2 February) are celebrated.

Spiritan Schools recognise the challenges to faith development

Willow Religion Teachers recognise that the uptake on religious practice is becoming less. “Large numbers are not practicing” (attendance at Sunday Mass) one teacher suggested. This is not surprising as it reflects the growing secular nature of society and a different relationship with the Church than in the past. What is important is the school’s creative response to this reality as it strives to remain a Catholic school in the Spiritan tradition.

Blackrock Religious Education Policy states that students ‘participate in the Religious Education Programme on an intellectual, affective and spiritual level with opportunities to engage actively in works of charity, social justice, and prayer’. Religion teachers note that while students do “not oppose the faith” there is, among some, a “passive acceptance of the faith”. There is a challenge to be creative in responding to the needs of the time and in resourcing a programme that engages students not only at the intellectual but also the affective and spiritual levels.

and respond with a dedicated Chaplaincy Team

The **Mary’s Chaplain** is a Spiritan from Nigeria, with five and a half years experience as a school chaplain in Ireland. He understands his role primarily as a faith presence to young people and being there for them in times of difficulty. The work is “tough but challenging”. He enjoys his work and finds it rewarding. The Chaplain champions the Faith Friends and Ember Programmes in the school. He ensures a student led prayer service at every school assembly. Sacraments are celebrated in collaboration with the Religion Department of which he is a member.

The **Templeogue Religion Department** provides a chaplaincy service with celebrations of the Church’s liturgical year, a Carol Service in Advent, the celebration of Christmas Eve Mass and liturgies marking the beginning and ending of the school year including the Graduation Mass held in Kimmage Manor. The Religion Department also organises an annual retreat for each class in each year and the co-operation of the teaching staff in providing additional supervision for this to happen is acknowledged.

that lives and celebrates Christian Discipleship.

The **Michael’s Chaplaincy Team** operates an “events based” approach to ethos promotion and faith development that is grounded in the celebration of the Liturgical year. There are a number of occasions for the celebration of the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation, creative and participative prayer sessions, retreats, spiritual journeys and meditation exercises. All these activities contribute significantly to the building up of a positive attitude to religious practice.

The **Rockwell Chaplaincy Team** has responsibility for all school, year and class liturgies (with the Music Teacher and other members of Staff also involved); organises year retreats and talks for different year groups; co-ordinates charitable fund raising campaigns; promotes the liturgical seasons; offers individual counselling times for all students. The Chaplaincy Team collaborates closely with the Pastoral Care Team.

A RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Spiritan schools resource and support the teaching of religion. Students in Spiritan Schools follow the Junior Certificate Religion Programme from 1st to 3rd Years. Some Religion Departments deliver a module in first year on the school's Spiritan heritage, identity and ethos. Transition Year provides an opportunity for the Religion Department and Religion Teachers to create modules that meet particular concerns and areas of interest for the students. There are also opportunities for meditation and a more discursive approach leading to a spiritual deepening and faith development among students. All Schools offer the Leaving Certificate Religion Course with different levels of take up reported. The non-examination classes are brought through a catechetical programme devised by teachers and agreed by the Religion Department.

Spiritan Schools nurture spiritual growth

The **Templeogue Religious Education Department** sets as its primary aim 'to offer a wide and varied course for our students. It is a course that seeks to challenge and encourage personal growth and development, and to emphasise the practical dynamic essence of the Christian message'. Opportunities are provided for meditation and self-reflection to students for their faith development.

Willow school's Religious Education Policy states that 'It is the aim of the RE Programme to deepen students' understanding of what it means to be Christian, Catholic, Spiritan'. The RE Programme 'focuses on the related objectives and key concepts of the Religious Education Junior Certificate Syllabus in this regard'. Active student participation in RE is a highlight of the programme with teachers developing responsibility in the boys. The teacher's role was described as moving "from being the sage on the stage to being the guide on the side".

through the academic study of Religion

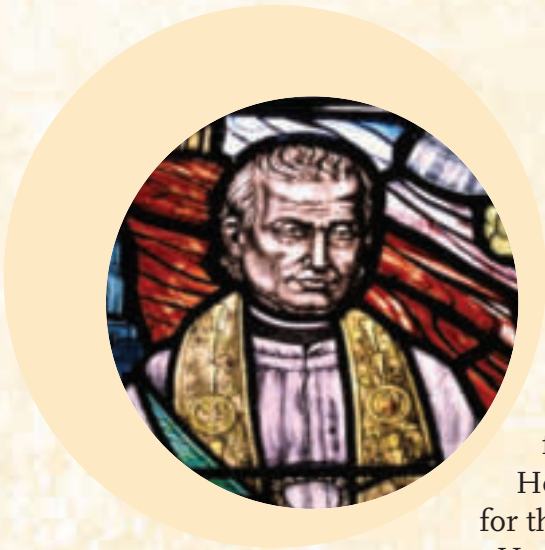
The Blackrock College Religion Policy states that 'Formal religious education is placed at the heart of the school's programme of instruction'. The RE teachers are appreciative of management's recognition of Religion as a core subject and timetabled accordingly. All students in 2nd and 3rd years follow the Junior Certificate syllabus. This provides for a study of the Spiritan Congregation, its Founders and Mission. The syllabus also includes a connection with the Church's calendar celebrating the liturgical seasons and feasts.

St. Michael's Management resource and give priority to Religion as a subject when it comes to time-tabling and provision for retreats, speakers and other events organised by the Religion Department. Senior students have three periods of Religion each week following a programme with a range of topics agreed between teachers with material sourced by them. The forty students taking Leaving Certificate Religion in 2015 had an additional two periods a week to prepare them for the examination.

to facilitate an age appropriate understanding of faith.

In **Rockwell** all students from First to Third Year take the Junior Certificate Course in Religious Education. 'The aim of Junior Cycle Religious Education is to provide students with a framework for encountering and engaging with the variety of religious traditions in Ireland and elsewhere. The syllabus for the Junior Certificate, in common with the range of subjects offered at this level, invites the students to reflect on their own experiences. The students' own experience of religion and their commitment to a particular religious tradition, and/or to a continuing search for meaning, will therefore be encouraged and supported' (Junior Certificate Religious Education Syllabus page 4). When choosing another community of faith, along with the Christian community the Religion Department has decided to choose Judaism from which Christianity emerged.

The **St. Mary's** senior non-examination classes are concerned with the faith formation of the students. A wide range of topics of interest touching on philosophy and morality is agreed between class and teacher. The teacher is often in the role of facilitating a "faith seeking understanding" and is comfortable in witnessing to his personal faith. Religion teachers speak of good support from management, other members of staff and from parents. Students generally have little problem with saying a prayer at the beginning of class, although this gets less easy as the students get older. It was said that "faith levels are dropping" among the young. If this is the case then perhaps the challenge is not so much giving understanding to faith but rather bringing faith to the secular understanding of life and world evident among the young.



Reflecting on Personal and Faith Development

Francis Libermann wrote, “Let everything be natural in you and come from the Holy Spirit.” The Congregation of the Holy Spirit inherited from its Founders a respect for the Holy Spirit guiding each *person’s development*, as He guided Jesus our teacher and model. Having an openness to faith, working towards a deeper spiritual and religious commitment together with a higher standard of morality is central to the whole-school approach to education in Spiritan schools.

**Am I
working to
become a
better
person?**



Spiritan Core Values in Education

Personal & Faith Development

Spiritan Schools: An Education for Life

OPENING PRAYER WITH LIGHTING OF CANDLE

God of wisdom and insight, we thank you for bringing us together. Gathered in your name we pray you to open our minds and hearts to the truth of your love. As we reflect on who we are and what we are called to be we pray that your gracious Spirit will be at work among us and within us. May we each reflect on our individual and unique path to living well and so discover the way that leads to fullness of life. Amen.



SCRIPTURE READING

A Reading from the Gospel of Matthew (6.19-21)

'Do not store up treasures for yourselves on earth, where moth and woodworm destroy them and thieves can break in and steal.

But store up treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor woodworm destroys them and thieves cannot break in and steal. For wherever your treasure is, there will your heart be too.'

The Word of the Lord.

Response: Thanks be to God.



BEING HUMAN AFTER THE HEART OF GOD

In 17th century France an idea grew up of 'the honest man' who would be seen to be courteous, cultivated and humble. Claude Poullart des Places grew up in this middle class culture, in the city of Rennes. He does not reject his culture nor even the social conventions of the time. He wants to take his place in society in an honourable way. For Claude, being human was to be honest. But his experience was one of a good birth and education, an influential place in society, a good reputation and belonging to a well known family.

It was a great grace that led Claude to understand, at the age of 22 when he was 'seeking to convert', that the ideal human which made up the 'honest man' was simply living, and not living as if God had no place in his life: 'You wish, O God, that I would be human, and that I would be human according to your heart.'

This statement shows that Claude is conscious of the dignity of being human, of what it is to be human. But it also shows the loving challenge of the heart of God. It is God who can give to the ideal human his true life through the personal vocation which allows one to find happiness while living in the desire of God.

In order to appreciate the human dimension in all that it has to offer one should always have enough humanity so that virtue would not be too ferocious. Many of

Claude's attitudes are shared by young people today such as their participation in good and lively liturgy and times of adoration. There is a spiritual quest today that is leading many people to seek out quiet places or become volunteers at home or abroad. This is all part of taking seriously our call to solidarity with men and women in the Gospel call to follow Jesus.

From: Jean Savoie, 15 Days Prayer with Claude Poullart des Places, (2009) pp 37-41.



PSALM 90

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High
And abides in the shade of the Almighty
Says to the lord: 'My refuge,
My stronghold, my God in whom I trust!'

It is he who will free you from the snare
Of the fowler who seeks to destroy you;
He will conceal you with his pinions
And under his wings you will find refuge.

You will not fear the terror of the night
Nor the arrow that flies by day,
Nor the plague that prowls in the darkness
Nor the scourge that lays waste at noon.

Upon you no evil shall fall,
No plague approach where you dwell,
For you has he commanded his angels,
To keep you in all your ways.

I shall let him see my saving power.



The Spirit pours the Father's love into our hearts (Romans 5.5). It is this love that produces apostolic zeal in us, shown by a powerful desire to see the same love established in the hearts of all people.

Spiritan Rule of Life 9

'Hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

Paul's Letter to the Romans (5.5)

WITH THE HELP OF GOD

In the midst of hunger and war

- We believe in the promise of plenty and peace.

In the midst of oppression, tyranny and abuse

- We believe in the promise of service and freedom.

In the midst of doubt and despair

- We believe in the promise of faith and hope.

In the midst of hatred and death

- We believe in the promise of love and life.

In the midst of sin and decay

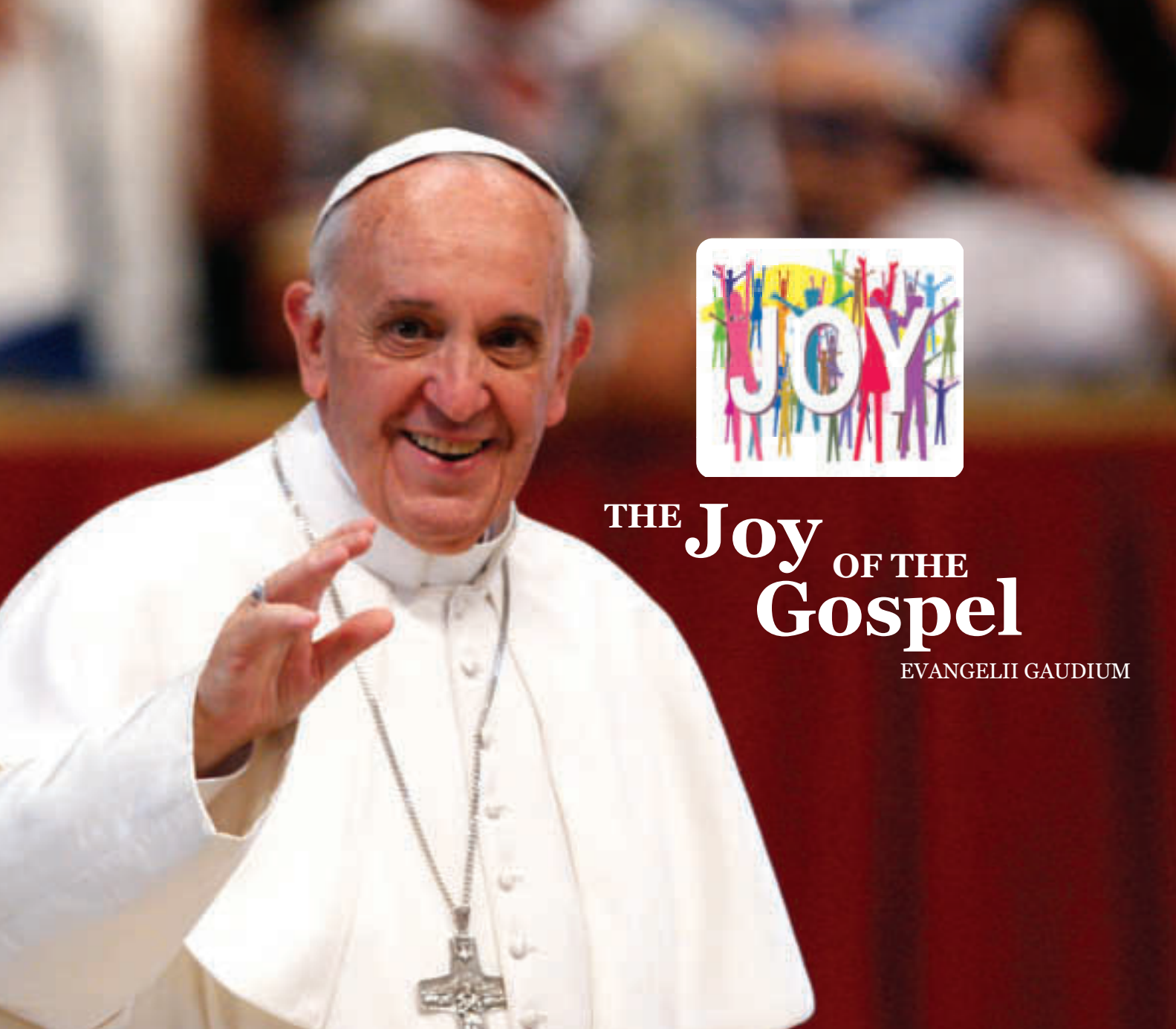
- We believe in the promise of salvation and renewal.

In the midst of disappointment and failure

- We believe in the promise of the living Christ, ever with us.

Lord, we believe in your personal love for each one of us.

In these times in which we are called to live, our eyes do not always see clearly. Our ears can be closed to your Word and our mouths speak shyly of your goodness to us. Open our eyes to see the beauty of your creation and our ears to hear the wisdom that leads to fullness of life. May our mouths always speak words of encouragement to others, Amen.



THE Joy OF THE Gospel

EVANGELII GAUDIUM

Archbishop Diarmuid Martin, in the keynote address to the National Religious Education Congress in 2013 proposes the concept that religious education is not routine; religious education is not a fixed given; religious education is a lifelong project. While this concept of lifelong development dates back many years, Archbishop Martin renews the challenge to all Catholic schools to give each student the skills of faith-reflection so that they can dialogue with the realities they face in today's world. This essential challenge calls on all educators to help students reflect through the eyes of faith in order to help them respond to the real challenges of modern life in Ireland and beyond. Personal and Faith development helps all students to live the realities of their faith in a mature way in a changing society and to contribute to that society in a meaningful manner.

Pope Francis's publication, *Joy of the Gospel*, calls on all faith based communities to go beyond mere administration in an effort to advance pastoral development. He recognises that young people in particular have blazed new ways with activism and volunteerism and have advanced new directions for humanity. In recognising this gift of leadership within young people today, all educators should engage this core value of Personal and Faith development to support the development of leadership into the future.

Personal and Faith Development is at the core of Education within Spiritan Schools. Personal and Faith development is not a target to be reached for the sake of strategic planning. This value should be a catalyst not alone for the enhancement of the individual student and the school community but for community beyond the boundaries of the school. Personal and Faith development instils in us all a constant sense of the lifelong mission of Jesus; I came so they can have real and eternal life, more and better life than they ever dreamed of.

Ronan Barry, Faith and Mission Desk, DEA.



Immersion Trips to the Developing World and Faith Development

Educating people to be agents for change in the world, particularly the developing world, is part of the Catholic educational purpose, particularly in Spiritan schools. In *Evangelii Gaudium* Pope Francis says: 'Catholic schools, which always strive to join their work of education with the explicit proclamation of the Gospel, are a most valuable resource for the evangelization of culture' (2013, 134).

Immersion trips to the developing world, which occur in Irish Spiritan Schools have the potential to help students grow as leaders through expanding their own worldview; having their identities developed and beliefs changed and shaped. Our schools send students on successful immersion trips to Africa, Asia and South America. Participants have been involved in building programmes, teaching programmes, water projects or as observers of such programmes. These "out of class" learning experiences can help develop servant leaders through discovering that personal happiness can be achieved by being selfless and through caring for others. They have learnt to be grateful for what they have in life, and express a deep respect for those who work as missionaries or with NGOs in Developing Countries.

The service learning experience afforded by participation in an immersion experience can also have a powerful effect on faith development. When well planned and executed it truly can be transformative for young people mirroring the words of *Evangelii Gaudium* 'life is attained and matures in the measure that it is offered up in order to give life to others. This is certainly what mission means'. (2013, 10)

While it goes without saying that great care is needed when planning, executing and de-briefing such trips, the impact on religious faith should also be considered. Regardless of whether the experience is designed to develop faith or not, students, with a religious background, will have their faith impacted by a visit to the developing world. The real possibility that students are more likely to seriously question, if not entirely lose, traditional religious faith, following an immersion trip, than to develop their religious faith, presents a real challenge.

I recently surveyed students who had returned from an immersion trip. Those who described themselves as religious, and those who admitted to being not quite so, all experienced challenges to their faith centred on the relationship between human suffering and Christian faith. It became clear to me that in order to develop faith, an in-depth follow-up is necessary, engaging critically with the question of Christian faith and human suffering. It is important for Spiritan educators to explore the inherent potential in an immersion experience for personal and faith development. Adequate spiritual preparation and de-briefing informed by Gospel values will help students make a stronger link between their own personal faith development and their immersion trip experience.

Terry O'Reilly,
Head of R.E. Department,
Blackrock College C.S.Sp.

The concept of loving service is central to the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth. From the synagogue in Nazareth, where he began his public ministry with a proclamation of the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth (Lk. 4:16-30), to his teaching on the Last Judgement (Matt. 25:31-46), Jesus consistently challenged his followers to serve the poor, the sick and all those on the margins of civil and religious life. Both Claude Poullart des Places and Francis Libermann responded to Jesus' challenge and lived lives marked by a strong sense of service. As a result, it is vital that Spiritan schools foster this *Commitment to Loving Service* in the educational programmes offered to their students.

In August 2014, I was appointed co-ordinator of a Transition Year programme called 'Pastoral Placement'. After a week of preparation within RE class, students are 'sent out' for two weeks to befriend clients and support staff in a number of day care facilities, special needs schools and long stay homes. While on placement, many of the young men encounter a range of intellectual, physical, emotional and sensory disabilities for the first time.

When the TY students returned to class at the end of the first placement in September 2014, I encountered a joy, a depth of response and an animation within and among the participants that was really exciting. In twenty-six years of working in the field of religious education, I had seldom encountered such fervour and positivity towards a catechetical programme. This response led me to study the impact of the Pastoral Placement service experience on the lives and outlook of one TY class group.

The word cloud below, summarises the main service activities undertaken on placement by the students.



Many of the verbs and most of the dominant nouns provide plenty of evidence of active engagement between the students and the clients. Participants also reported that Pastoral Placement had led to both a change in their attitudes and a greater awareness of an issue.

- *'I have a greater understanding of the difficulties that a lot of old people face in their lives and this has helped me to be more aware of their needs.'* (Student 11)
- *'A person is not their disability. I did not view it like this before my placement.'* (Student 15)
- *'I would say that I will never forget my time on pastoral placement and that coming into contact with these genuine, intelligent people who are now crippled by illness has made me realise the value of life and changed my outlook for good.'* (Student 18)

In January 2015, Pope Francis told a gathering of young people in the Philippines that the most important subject that they will learn at school or university is 'how to love'. He explained that this lesson will be learned when the 'three languages' of the mind, heart and hands; of thinking, feeling and doing come together as one. *'To think. To feel. To do. And all in harmony.'* (Vatican Radio 2015)

In my study of Pastoral Placement, I have discovered that in offering young people the opportunity for Christian service in the community, Spiritan schools can help students learn 'how to love' in a very powerful manner that may have a long-term impact on their lives. A Christian service learning programme can truly engage a young person's head, heart and hands in a harmony that can lead them to having life and having it to the full. (John 10:10)

Q: What would you say was the greatest single impact that the pastoral placement had on you?

Apart from the very lasting and fond memories, it would definitely be how much more open minded and how much more thinking I am. Whenever I see someone (in need) I am thinking about them...I wonder if they are OK or if they need a hand... like if you see someone in the street and they seem to be having a difficulty... Yeah, I have done the cliché helping an old woman across the road a few times... that's definitely like becoming second nature...it's in the head, I don't even have to think about it.

Q: And that's definitely new?

Yeah...big time...it's strange you know...only ten days and I have that!

(Student 7)

**Tom Ryan,
Director Pastoral Programme,
Blackrock College C.S.Sp.**

The Spiritan Core Values of Education are about Believing, Belonging and Becoming



CALLED TO BELIEVE

- Openness to the Holy Spirit
- A Sense of Community

CALLED TO BELONG

- Option for the Poor
- Commitment to Service
- Global Vision

CALLED TO BECOME

- High Educational Standards
- Personal and Faith Development

Continuing the Spiritan Story



Claude Poullart des Places (1679-1709)

Claude Poullart des Places was born in Brittany, France in 1679. In 1703, while studying for the priesthood, he founded the seminary of the congregation of the Holy Spirit to support destitute seminarians and prepare them for the ministry among the most neglected of the population. He was ordained a priest in 1707. He died on 2nd October 1709 at the age of 30.

- 1679** Born in Rennes, Brittany, France, the son of a rich merchant
- 1701** Graduated in Law at Nantes
- 1702** While a seminarian at the Jesuit College of Louis le Grand he recognised the plight of poor seminarians without a place to stay or enough food to eat
- 1703** Founded a community of destitute seminarians which was dedicated to the Holy Spirit on Pentecost Day 1703
- 1707** He was ordained a priest. Among his close friends were John Baptist De La Salle, and Grignon De Montfort
- 1709** He died on the 2nd October at the age of 30.



Francis Libermann (1802-1852)

Jacob Libermann was born into a Jewish family at Saverne, France in 1802. At the age of 24 he was baptised a Catholic in Paris and took the Christian names Francis Mary Paul. In 1841 he was ordained a priest and founded the Society of the Holy Heart of Mary to minister to the black population in the French colonies and in particular to liberate slaves. In 1847 his Society fused with the Congregation of the Holy Spirit. Francis died in Paris on 2nd February 1852. In 1910 Pope Saint Pius X declared him Venerable.

- 1802** Born into a Jewish family at Saverne, Alsace, France, the son of a Jewish Rabbi
- 1826** Was baptised a Catholic in Paris
- 1841** Ordained priest and founded the society of the Holy Heart of Mary
- 1842** Sent out first missionaries to Guinea, West Africa
- 1847** His society merges with the Holy Spirit Congregation
- 1848** 11th Superior General of Holy Spirit Congregation
- 1852** Died at Rue Lhomond in Paris on February 2nd
- 1910** Declared Venerable by Pope Saint Pius X.

The Spiritan Story of Education



Poullart des Places

The roots of the Spiritan tree go back to the early 18th century when a young French law student decided to gather a few companions to open a seminary for poor students. His dream was to form priests who would be close to the people they worked with, especially the poor, and who could respond with generosity and creativity to the emerging needs of the Church. This young man's name is Claude Poullart des Places and he is considered the founder of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit which took on the mission of the Seminary of the Holy Spirit and much more besides.

The early years of the Congregation are marked by the development of its work in the education of clergy, especially in France, but also an opening up of its mission to the emerging colonies of North America, Asia and Africa. From the very beginning of the Spiritan Story this global vision has been at the heart of its mission.



Francis Libermann

In 1848 Francis Libermann brought his newly founded missionary congregation into the Spiritan family to form the Congregation that we know today. Libermann is considered as the second founder of the Spiritans because of the new energy and dynamism that he brought with him. Libermann was born a Jew and had been destined to become a Rabbi like his father. During his student days he began to broaden his education from the strict confines of the Jewish tradition of his time. It was through the reading of contemporary classics, especially Jean-Jacques Rousseau, that he embarked on a faith journey through agnosticism to discovering the person of Jesus Christ.

Many of the Spiritan Missionaries, working on all five continents, used their talents and their minds to learning the local language and discovering the new cultures that they were working in. A number of the first grammars and dictionaries of African languages were written by Spiritans. Spiritan priests and brothers were pioneers in education setting up village schools, high schools, agricultural colleges, teacher training colleges and seminaries.

This is part of the Christian Wisdom tradition which seeks to develop the capacities of the human person and to share the skills needed to develop one's potential. Through the learning journey we also engage on our own quest to discover who God is for me and what part he has in my life. For Spiritans, academics, life learning and faith have always formed an integrated approach to education.



Fr. Jules Leman

This educational work has been continued in Ireland when the first Spiritans came to our shores to seek English speaking personnel for Mission work. The Ireland of the mid 19th century was still reeling from the catastrophe of the famine. Fr. Jules Leman immediately saw education as a priority for Catholics who had hardly any access to schools or universities. In the founding of Blackrock College he brought the French tradition of liberal education to Ireland. Soon other schools followed.



Fr. Peter Huvetys

Rockwell was founded from Blackrock with Fr. Peter Huvetys its first leader. Other Colleges followed: St. Mary's (1890), St. Michael's (1944) and Templeogue (1966). Philosophy and Theology Faculties were created in Kimmage Manor. Today the Kimmage Development Studies Centre is acknowledged as one of Europe's leading centres for Development Studies and attracts students from all over the world.

As the many Irish Spiritan missionaries fanned out through the world (many of whom were past students of Spiritan schools) they also developed and engaged in educational works – both formal and non-formal. Today in most countries it is the state which has taken on responsibility for education often building on the structures already in



place and set up by Spiritans and other missionary groups. The work of Spiritans today is to foster partnerships with educators, parents and students so that education might be a response to Jesus' invitation to read the signs of the times and so contribute to building up God's Reign of Justice and Peace.

In the years gone by, the Spiritan schools in Ireland have given many missionary priests and brothers who have worked in developing nations. This tradition of mission and service continues in other ways today through outreach programmes and developing awareness of development issues and justice. Spiritan schools in Ireland are places of privilege. Our educational tradition respects the faith of all but encourages those who participate in its mission to be people who respect the dignity of the human person, make the gospel option for the poor and become advocates for a more just and equitable world.



A gradual transition to lay leadership has occurred in Spiritan schools with the appointment of the first lay Principal and lay Chaplain to Spiritan secondary schools in 1977 and 1996 respectively. The establishment of the Spiritan Education Trust (The DEA) in 1999 was followed by the setting up of Boards of Management. The continuation of Spiritan education is sustained by significant collaboration between Management and Staff at the individual school level. This requires recognition and commitment at local level that 'the founding vision of the voluntary school is a key responsibility of the board of management and the principal' (Catholic Schools Partnership, *Catholic Education at Second-Level in the Republic of Ireland – Looking to the Future*, 2014 page 30).

The DEA has the clear role of promoting the ethos and vision of the Congregation in education. It fulfils this role through resourcing each school to truly articulate its self-understanding as a Spiritan school. The Spiritan Congregation recognises the DEA as the schools' patron and collaborates appropriately with it. The relationships are clearly laid out in the Education Act (1998) and the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the DEA (1999).

The torch is passed on

Current principals and deputies are committed to delivering Spiritan education in their schools and many are former teachers and in some cases, former students of Spiritan schools. They experienced at close



quarters the working of Spiritans in positions they now hold. They benefited greatly from an apprenticeship that resulted in them, along with other senior members of staff, becoming, to parody the phrase *‘Níos Gaelaí ná na Gaeil iad féin’* ‘more Spiritan than the Spiritans themselves’. The evidence provided in the appraisal suggests that they are not only continuing what they inherited but are developing it. This is particularly noticeable in the provision made for faith development and religious education, the large number of community service projects, the promotion of Development Education in collaboration with the Kimmage Development Studies Centre (KDSC), and support for Spiritan Missions in Ireland (SPIRASI) and overseas, particularly in Kenya, Ghana and Brazil.

Schools look for the continued involvement of Spiritan personnel to help ensure this and welcome the provision of induction programmes and ongoing animation in Spiritan heritage and spirituality. Facilitation from the DEA and support from the Province are required for the Spiritan ethos and vision to continue and develop in Spiritan schools.

Carrying on the work of Spiritan Education in Ireland



Spiritan Schools – The Torch has been passed on!



FOUNDATION

Fr. Jules Leman (1860)



TODAY

Mr. Alan MacGinty



Fr. Peter Huvetys (1864)



Ms Audrey O’Byrne



Fr. Thomas Fogarty (1890)



Mr. Denis Murphy



Fr. Thomas Maguire (1944)



Mr. Tim Kelleher



Fr. John Horgan (1966)



Ms Aoife O’Donnell



Spiritan Asylum Services Initiative (SPIRASI), was established in 1999 to work for the benefit and welfare of refugees and asylum seekers, especially in Ireland. In partnership with others, SPIRASI enables access to specialist services to promote the well-being of the human person, and encourages self-reliance and integration into Ireland.



President Michael D. Higgins lights a memorial candle on International Day in Support of Victims of Torture (26 June) assisted by Greg Straton, Director, SPIRASI.

Spirasi



Kimmage Development Studies Centre, Class of 2015

For over 40 years, Kimmage DSC has offered education and training for development practitioners working internationally and in Ireland, within a rich intercultural and experience-based learning environment. The ethos of Kimmage DSC is embodied in a teaching approach based on participatory learning and critical thinking which seeks to empower course participants with skills and knowledge essential for a vision of development that is enshrined by principles of equality, respect and justice. This is done through facilitating the learning of individuals and groups working for social, economic and political change in society: locally, nationally, and globally.





Remembering

Claude Poullart des Places C.S.Sp.

1679-1709

We begin by recalling the life of Claude Poullart des Places

Claude Poullart des Places was born in 1679 into a wealthy merchant family in Rennes, Brittany. His father's hope for Claude was that he would help secure a place in French nobility for the family through an illustrious legal career. He studied law at the University of Nantes and his academic achievement and skill in debating pointed to this. But Claude had other ideas. He wanted to serve God and Neighbour by being a priest.

To this end he travelled to Paris at the age of twenty-two and enrolled in the Jesuit College of Louis le Grand. There he was disturbed by the awful poverty in the Paris of this time and became involved with others in the care of young chimney sweeps. He also saw among his fellow students the evidence of much hardship. Unlike him their families could not meet the cost of their education and they had to find work wherever they could and to beg for food to eat. Claude took on with collecting the left-overs from the tables of the well-off students to give to these 'poor scholars'.

But he wanted to do more. He rented lodgings on the Rue des Cordiers to live with a number of these poor students and provide for them from his own means. Together they formed a Community dedicated to the Holy Spirit on Pentecost Sunday, 1703. The care and education of those in need became Claude's life's work which continues to this day and for which he is still remembered and honoured. He was ordained priest in 1707 and his community grew from a small group into the Seminary of the Holy Spirit that would survive him after his death and burial in a common grave on 2 October 1709.

Select a Song or a Piece of Music

Reading: Luke 4:16-21

Jesus came to Nazara, where he had been brought up, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day as he usually did. He stood up to read, and they handed him the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. Unrolling the scroll he found the place where it is written:

*The spirit of the Lord has been given to me,
For he has anointed me.
He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor,
To proclaim liberty to captives
And to the blind new sight,
To set the downtrodden free,
To proclaim the Lord's year of favour.*

He then rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the assistant, and sat down. And all eyes in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to speak to them, 'This text is being fulfilled today even as you listen'.



Reflection from Poullart des Places

Poullart des Places, being both ambitious and talented, experienced in his young life a great turmoil in living his life in service of God and others. He felt drawn to a career that would bring him fame and all that the world had to offer. In Retreat Notes that he wrote in 1701 he shares feelings of the struggle to change for the better with which we can identify today:

I am passionate about glory, for everything which can lift one above others by merit, full of jealousy and of despair at the success of others, without however, letting my own unworthy passion be seen...

You sought me, Lord, and I fled you. You gave me the gift of reason yet I did not want to use it. I wanted to blur my relationship with you but you would not allow it... I have not come here to defend myself, I have come to let myself be conquered. Speak to my heart, O God, I am ready to obey you.

[A Spiritan Anthology (2011) p. 32,37]

Towards the end of his 1701 Retreat Poullart made this prayer that can be our prayer today:

O God, who guides all those who trust in you to the heavenly Jerusalem, I come in need of your Divine Providence and I abandon myself completely to it. May you make known to me what you wish me to do so that, in fulfilling here on earth the life to which you have destined me, I may serve you throughout my pilgrimage in a way that would be agreeable to you and where you can give me in abundance the graces I need to give glory for ever to your Divine Majesty.

[A Spiritan Anthology (2011) p. 35]



Prayer of Intercession

Participants can compose their own prayers of intercession.

Leader: The response to the intercessions is:
God of Truth, Hear our prayer

That God will continue to watch over all who seek to build a Kingdom of Justice and Peace in the world,

We pray to the Lord...

That good will always triumph over evil, love over hate, truth over lies and compassion over hardness of heart,

We pray to the Lord...

That we may experience the working of God's Holy Spirit in our lives,

We pray to the Lord...

That we can witness to the goodness of God to others,

We pray to the Lord...

That the memory and mission of Poullart des Places may continue to bring hope to people in need,

We pray to the Lord...

Leader: For what else shall we pray (*invite spontaneous petitions*)

Concluding Prayer

May you find praise, Lord, in all that we think and do and say.

Empower us with your Spirit to sing a new song unto you,

A song of justice that brings peace, a song of love that overcomes fear and a song that opens the heart to your presence.

May we who keep the memory of Poullart des Places seek always to discern the way you would have us take in service of your kingdom;

You who are Lord forever and ever,
 AMEN.

Final Song







Remembering

Francis Libermann C.S.Sp.

1802-1852

We begin by recalling the life of Francis Libermann

Francis Mary Paul Libermann was born in 1802 of Jewish family and was expected to become a rabbi like his father. But during his youth he became a Catholic and choose to become a priest. For this reason he was rejected by his father. Perhaps because of this rejection he developed epilepsy and his ordination was delayed by 10 years.

In the seminary he had two friends. Eugene Tisserant was from Haiti in the Caribbean and Frederic Le Vasseur was from Reunion island in the Indian Ocean. These friends spoke to Libermann of the plight of the newly freed slaves in their countries. Libermann was so moved by this story that he and his two friends spent the rest of their lives not only in service of the freed slaves from Africa but also of African people everywhere on the continent.

In 1848 Libermann joined his society to the Congregation of the Holy Spirit and so he is considered as the second founder of the Spiritans (Holy Ghost Missionaries). On the 2nd February 1852, Libermann died after a life-time of service to the Mission of the Church. Today over 3000 Spiritans work in international communities spread across the globe in the Mission of building up God's reign of justice and peace in the world.

Select a Song or a Piece of Music

Reading: 1 Samuel 3:1-9

This reading is taken from the Old Testament or, as it is often called today, the New Testament or the Hebrew Scriptures. Growing up as a Jewish boy, Libermann would have been very familiar with this story of God calling the young man Samuel to be his prophet. A prophet is someone who is able to read the events of the time and to see where God is calling his people.

In those days, when the boy Samuel was serving the LORD under the direction of Eli, there were very few messages from the LORD, and visions from him were quite rare. One night Eli, who was now almost blind, was sleeping in his own room; Samuel was sleeping in the place containing the Sacred Covenant. Before dawn, while the lamp was still burning, the LORD called Samuel. He answered, "Yes, sir!" and ran to Eli and said, "You called me, and here I am." But Eli answered, "I didn't call you; go back to bed." So Samuel went back to bed.

The LORD called Samuel again. The boy did not know that it was the LORD, because the LORD had never spoken to him before. So he got up, went to Eli, and said, "You called me, and here I am." But Eli answered, "My son, I didn't call you; go back to bed." The LORD called Samuel a third time; he got up, went to Eli, and said, "You called me, and here I am." Then Eli realized that it was the LORD who was calling the boy, so he said to him, "Go back to bed; and if he calls you again, say, 'Speak, LORD, your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went back to bed.

The LORD came and stood there, and called as he had before, "Samuel! Samuel!" Samuel answered, "Speak; your servant is listening."

Silence

Questions for reflection:

1. How can I be open to hearing the Lord speaking in my life?
2. How can I go beyond my present way of thinking and acting to live my life in service of all the children of God?

Select a Psalm

Reflection from Fr. Libermann

Francis Libermann was a man of his time and a missionary for all times. His advice to missionaries undertaking a new task is as useful today as it was when first given on 8 June 1845:

Be balanced in the way you scrutinise any plans for an undertaking, neither being too slow, nor letting things drag on and on. It is wrong to be reckless, but it is sometimes even worse to remain uncertain and timid when you make a decision. Spend a reasonable amount of time examining what to do, judging the “for and against” in the presence of God, and acting calmly with the sole desire of pleasing God and bringing your decision without fear and act with great confidence in God.

[A Spiritan Anthology (2011) p.267]

Libermann lived in France during a period of great social upheaval. In 1848 he witnessed the revolution that finally abolished the monarchy in France. His Sermon to Priests in Paris on 13 February 1849 offers advice appropriate for the times we are living in. It shows us that like the young Samuel, Libermann saw God’s presence in the world of his time and lived as a prophet embracing life and change.

Today new needs are making themselves felt. Each priest, without actually having the job assigned to him, should study these needs, identify the wounds of society and take every opportunity offered him in his situation to bring relief to those needs, remedy to these wounds.

[ND,XI. 356]

Prayer of Intercession

Participants can compose their own prayers of intercession.

Leader: Please respond: God of Truth, Hear Our Prayer

For a world of justice and respect for all people,

We pray to the Lord...

For the transformation of heart and mind that God call us to,

We pray to the Lord...

For the truth and wisdom God offers in abundance,

We pray to the Lord...

For new ways of seeing, hearing and responding to others,

We pray to the Lord...

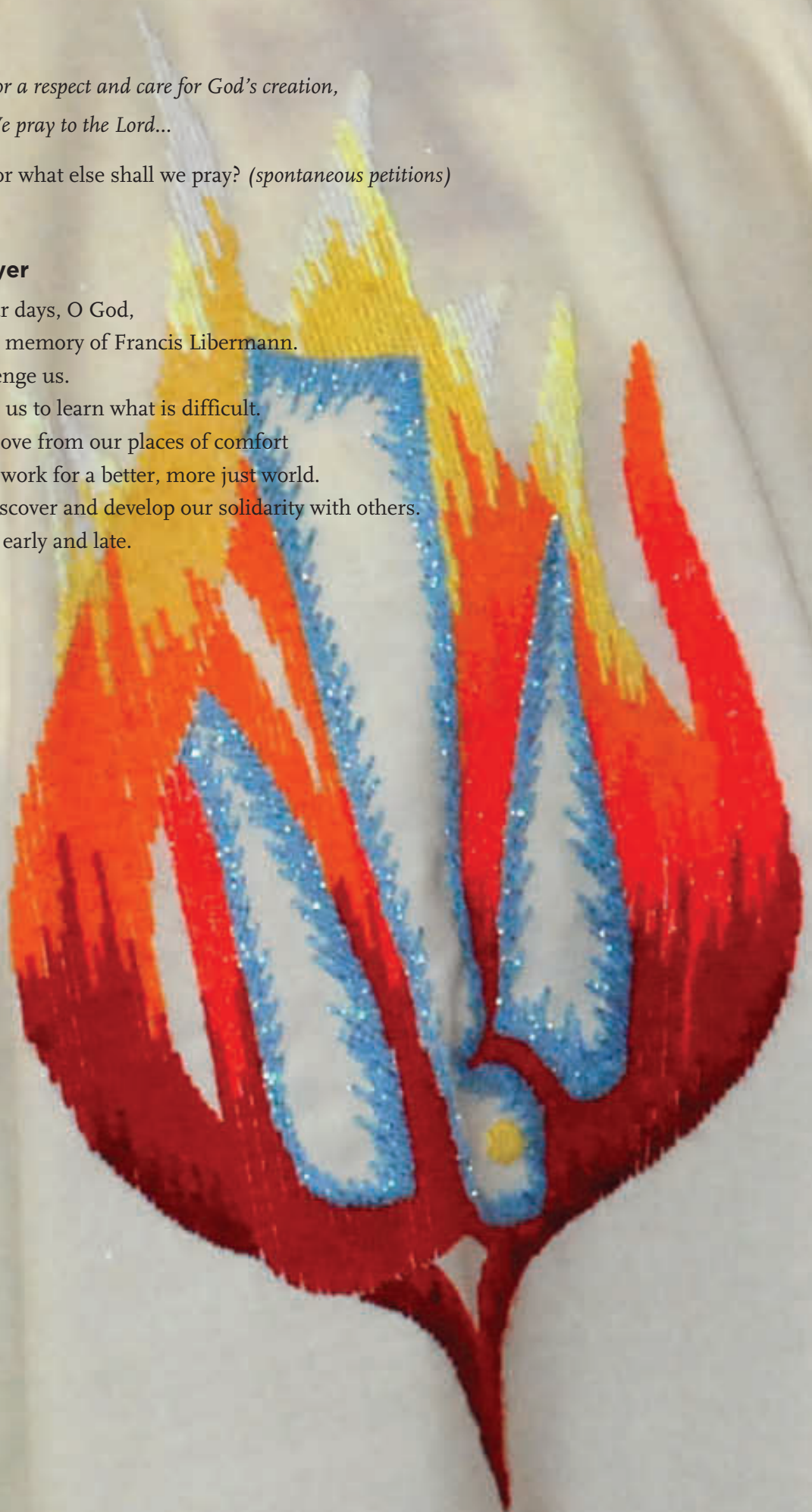
*For a respect and care for God's creation,
We pray to the Lord...*

For what else shall we pray? (spontaneous petitions)

Concluding Prayer

Be with us in all our days, O God,
As we celebrate the memory of Francis Libermann.
Be with us to challenge us.
Be with us to guide us to learn what is difficult.
Be with us as we move from our places of comfort
to be challenged to work for a better, more just world.
Be with us as we discover and develop our solidarity with others.
Be with us, O God, early and late.

Final Song





A PRAYER FOR ALL YOUNG PEOPLE

We pray, O Lord, for young people,
For the youth of our land.
For the youth of our Church.
It is you who help them grow
in body, mind, and spirit.
We know they can do nothing without you.
Please, bring these youth into your manhood.
We nag them continuously.
We constantly find something wrong with them.
And yet they are no worse than we were!
You are the true leader of youth.
You know exactly what they need.
They do not need our musty moralizing.
They do not need our “I know better”.
They need your commandments and your grace.
Give the youth of the world patience,
obedience, humility, energy and joy.
Give them a heart full of gladness.
Let them be happy and not negative like we adults are.
Let them do better than we did!
Train them to be the future leaders of our land.
Amen.

– A Prayer from Ghana, collected by Tony Gittins, C.S.Sp.



Sources

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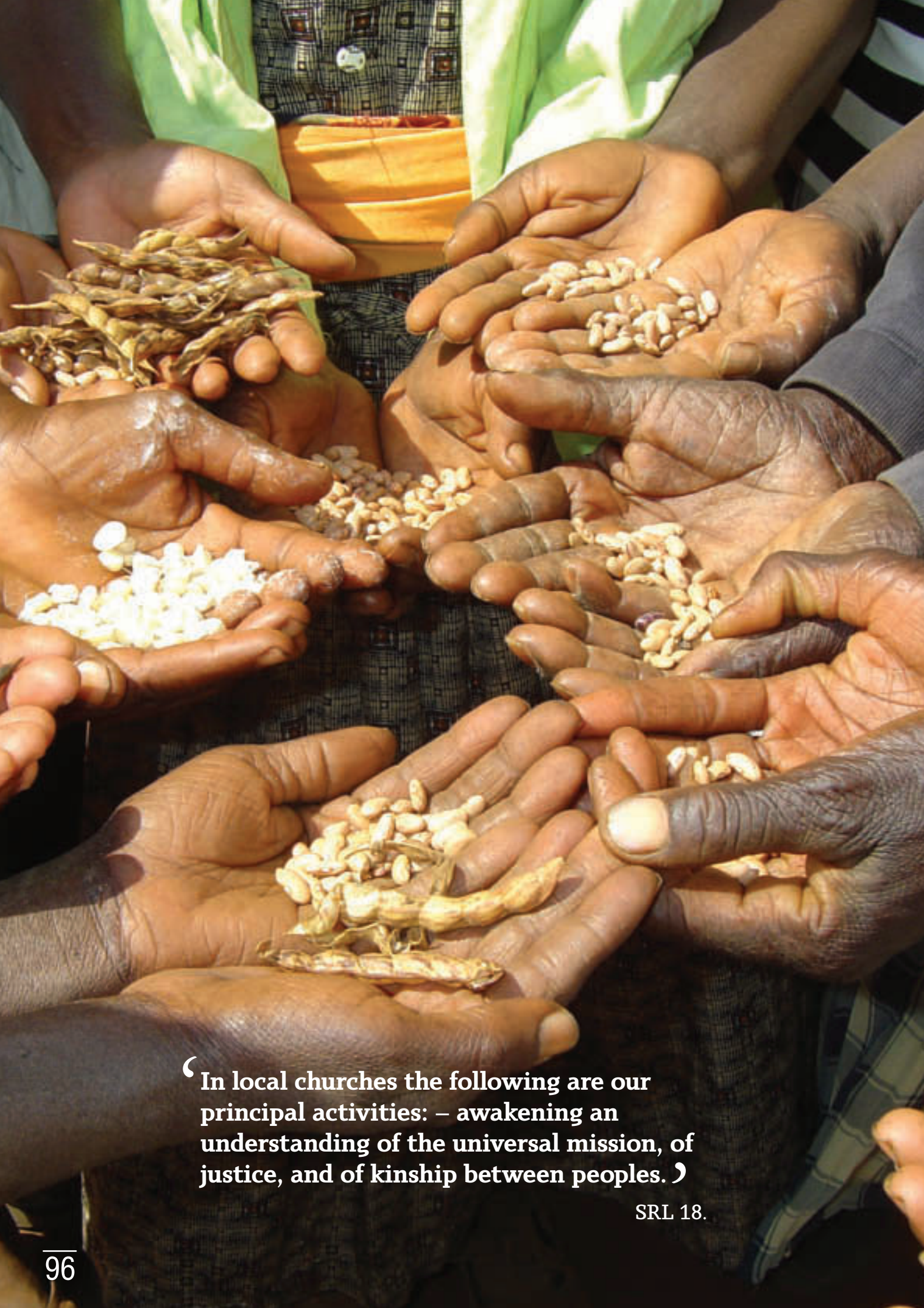
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The Spiritan Writings Collection at Duquesne University makes accessible in one place many of the primary and secondary writings of the Spiritan Congregation. Online Spiritan Collection at <http://digital.library.duq.edu/cdm-spiritan/>.

To The Ends of The Earth

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‘In local churches the following are our principal activities: – awakening an understanding of the universal mission, of justice, and of kinship between peoples.’

SRL 18.