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REVIEW OF RESEARCH

LEADERSHIP ROLE EXPECTATIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS OF PRINCIPALS AND PASTORS IN CATHOLIC PAROCHIAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS: PART 1

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Parish elementary schools in the United States have a governance structure that often precipitates conflict. The principal is the designated leader of the school, the educational administrator, and the supervisor of the faculty and students. By canon law, however, the pastor of the parish remains ultimately responsible for the spiritual and temporal welfare of the entire parish.

This review addresses the relationships of pastors and principals in parish schools. After a brief review of general governance in the Catholic Church, the review analyzes the roles of pastor and principal respectively, and concludes with some preliminary advice about role expectations.

Recently, a lay principal with a 19-year career at the same Catholic parochial elementary school was terminated by the pastor (Coday, 2003a). Three weeks later, after a significant number of parents protested this seemingly unjust termination and the services of a professional mediator were employed, the principal was reinstated to his position. Although it is unclear why the principal was terminated in the first place, according to parents who had spoken with the pastor, “the only reason the pastor gave for the firing was ‘philosophical differences’” (Coday, 2003b, p. 10).

Conflicts between pastors and their elementary parochial school principals are not uncommon. Such conflicts not only create stress for the pastor and the principal, but also place a great deal of stress on the school community. These conflicts can affect the pastor’s and principal’s working relationship. They can also affect the faculty and staff, the children and their parents, and even the larger parish community. This review of literature sets the stage for a more in-depth analysis of the leadership role expectations of principals and pastors in Catholic schools by summarizing recent research on Catholic elementary school governance in the United States, their place within the

Catholic Church, the role of the pastor, and the role of the principal.

THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

There are three major types of Catholic elementary schools in the United States: diocesan, parochial, and private. Diocesan schools are operated and supported by a diocese; parochial elementary schools are operated and supported by one or more parishes; and private schools are established and supported either by a religious congregation or an independent group of lay parents. This review focuses on pastors and principals of elementary parochial schools.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH STRUCTURE

Although the Catholic Church is described as a community of believers, it is an organization much like other organizations (National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1972). It is composed of leaders and followers. The Catholic Church is a hierarchical, top-down organization led by ordained clerics. Even though the Second Vatican Council stressed the communal aspect of Church, the formal Church structures divide its members between the ordained and the laity. "It is clear who does what and who makes specific decisions. There are administrative personnel guiding the decisions" (Ristau, 1991, p. 10).

Ristau (1991) pointed out that the Catholic Church is an organization, but it is also a belief system; as a result, this belief system actually creates an aspect of authority and power which are greater than that found in other organizations:

The belief system allows some individuals to be more important than others within the organization and gives them a legitimate right to perform certain duties and hold exclusive offices. Even though church documents state otherwise, in actuality, some people belong in the front of the church, others in the back pew. (pp. 10-11)

The Roman Catholic Church is a very complex, hierarchical, clerical, international organization (Canon Law Society of Great Britain and Ireland, 1983, p. xiii). It is governed by the Pope, the Bishop of Rome, and the other bishops according to a Code of Canon Law that facilitates "an orderly development in the life both of the ecclesial society and the individual persons who belong to it" (p. xiii). The Pope, the Supreme Pontiff, appoints the other Bishops or confirms those who are elected bishop. "Bishops to whom the care of a given diocese is entrusted are called diocesan Bishops, the others are called titular Bishops" (p. 66).

The Roman Catholic Church is divided into territories or dioceses. The diocesan bishop is the shepherd or head of the diocese. All responsibility and authority within a diocese are held by the bishop who shares it with the ordained clergy (Canon Law Society, 1983).

The diocese is divided into parishes. “A parish is a certain community of Christ’s faithful stably established within a particular Church, whose pastoral care, under the authority of the diocesan Bishop, is entrusted to a parish priest as its proper pastor” (Canon Law Society, 1983, p. 92). The pastor is responsible for providing the educational, spiritual, and sacramental needs of the parishioners, as well as for administering all of the parish goods in accordance with the law. The pastor also determines how this will be accomplished in his parish. As a result, each parish may actually participate in a number of different ministries. One of those ministries may be an elementary school. A Catholic parochial elementary school is one ministry that some parish communities provide for the parishioners:

A Catholic school is understood to be one which is under the control of the competent ecclesiastical authority or of a public ecclesiastical juridical person, or one which in a written document is acknowledged as Catholic by the ecclesiastical authority. (Canon Law Society, 1983, p. 146)

Canon 796 encourages parish communities to consider establishing Catholic schools: “Among the means of advancing education, Christ’s faithful are to consider schools as of great importance, since they are the principal means of helping parents fulfill their role in education.” Canon 798 exhorts parents to send their children to a Catholic school: “Parents are to send their children to those schools which will provide for their Catholic education.”

During the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore in 1884, it was decreed that “wherever possible, there was to be a parochial school near every church; priests who did not cooperate were to be removed” (Buetow, 1985, p. 32). The council was very clear regarding their desire to see Catholic parochial schools established throughout the United States; by the mid-1960s, “the number of individual parishes with schools approached 60%” (Kealey, 1989, p. 279).

THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL STRUCTURE

McDonald (2001) reports, “The existence of Catholic schools in the United States can be traced back to French and Spanish settlements that continued into the colonial era of this nation’s history ” (p. 1). Kealey (1989) states,

As soon as the first Europeans landed in what was to become the United States, a Catholic school was opened. The Franciscans conducted a school in St.

Augustine, Florida, from 1606 to 1753 in order to “teach the children Christian doctrine, reading and writing.” (p. 278)

Kealey further explains why some early Catholic schools were opened, how they were financed, and the role of the pastor in these very early schools:

In 1640 the Jesuits started a school in Newton, Maryland, which was financed by an endowment of the local Catholics....In 1782 the first Catholic school in Philadelphia was opened, this had a board of managers presided over by the pastor who had absolute veto power....The early Catholic schools in the United States began because parents requested their establishment, lay boards approved and financed their creation, and many times laymen and laywomen were the first teachers. (p. 278)

McDonald (2001) reports, “The increased immigration of Catholic populations in the 19th century produced an expansion of Catholic schooling” (p. 1). However, McDonald explains that this alone does not account for the growth of Catholic schools during this time period:

In the 1830’s, the public, “common” school movement was begun to serve distinct national social and political goals: a common body of knowledge was to be transmitted in a common schoolhouse in order to decrease political and social conflict and shape the culture of the new nation. However, by the 1840s, public education and the inculcation of religious values were bound together in a concept of non-denominational Christianity. Catholics began to resist attempts to teach “common Christianity” and were embroiled in conflicts charged with religious, ethnic, and class animosities over the control of the schools. (p. 1)

According to Kealey (1989), during this period,

Some Bishops and priests sought to influence the public school boards to allow the teaching of the Catholic religion and the reading of the Catholic bible in the public schools. While some temporary successes were achieved, no such program lasted more than several years. (p. 278)

Finally, in 1884 the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore took place. During this Council the Bishops of the United States required that Catholic schools be built in every parish. Buetow (1985) states,

The council decreed that, wherever possible, there was to be a parochial school near every church; priests who did not cooperate were to be removed; laity who did not cooperate were to be reprimanded by the bishop; and unless other provisions for the religious education of their children were possible, Catholic parents were to send their children to Catholic schools. The council also voted to

increase the number of high schools and to raise the standards of all Catholic schools. (pp. 32-33)

Despite this decree, however, Kealey (1989) indicates that “the number of parishes with Catholic schools only approached 60% in the mid-1960’s” (p. 279). McDonald (2001) adds, “Before the Civil War, there were approximately 200 Catholic schools in the United States, and that number increased to more than 1,300 within the decade and to 5,000 by the turn of the century” (p. 1).

The Catholic schools experienced dramatic changes during the 20th century. Kealey (1989) explains,

Their quality of education became recognized as far superior to many public schools. Catholic schools went from having Catholic textbooks in each subject back to using secular textbooks. Parents pressured the federal and state governments to sponsor programs for students deficient in basic skills and in need of psychological services. In 1964, over six million students attended Catholic school. (p. 279)

McDonald (2001) adds that in 2000-2001 approximately 2,647,301 students were enrolled in Catholic elementary and secondary schools throughout the United States. Table 1 indicates the enrollment trends from 1920 to 2000-2001.

Table 1

Enrollment History

Enrollment	Elementary	Secondary	Total
1920	1,795,000	130,000	1,925,000
1940	2,035,000	361,000	2,396,000
1960	4,373,000	880,000	5,253,000
1980	2,293,000	846,000	3,139,000
2001	2,004,037	643,264	2,647,301

Notes: Data from McDonald (2001).

In addition to the enrollment changes in Catholic schools throughout the 20th century, Catholic schools in the United States also saw significant changes regarding their staffing. McDonald (2001) explains,

During the last quarter of the 20th century, dramatic changes have taken place

in the staffing of Catholic schools. The data show a shift from an almost entirely religious staff (sisters, brothers, priests) of 90.1% at mid-century (1950) to 48.4% in the 1970s to an almost complete inverse where laity constitute 93% of the staff at the end of the same century. In general, the changes have been attributed to the decline in the number of women religious and men entering religious orders, the large numbers of religious who left their orders and the change of ministry directions for many congregations from schools to other forms of social and pastoral ministries. (p. 3)

Table 2 displays a history of Catholic school staffing in the United States from 1920 to 2001.

Table 2

Total School Staffing History

Year	Religious		Lay		Total
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
1920	45,563	92.0%	3,942	8.0%	49,505
1940	73,960	91.2%	7,097	8.8%	81,057
1960	112,029	73.8%	39,873	26.2%	151,902
1980	42,732	29.0%	104,562	71.0%	147,294
2001	10,495	6.5%	150,237	93.5%	161,496

Notes: Data from McDonald (2001).

Catholic schools operate within two separate sets of law, civil law and Church law, also referred to as canon law. Civil laws differ from state to state; canon law provides a common frame of reference for all Catholic schools as such church law is binding in all church institutions. *The Code of Canon Law* (Canon Law Society, 1983) consists of a set of rules and regulations that primarily establish a framework for the hierarchical governance of the Catholic Church (O'Brien, 1990). Canon 795 challenges education to form the whole child:

Education must pay regard to the formation of the whole person, so that all may attain their eternal destiny and at the same time promote the common good of society. Children and young persons are therefore to be cared for in such a way that their physical, moral, and intellectual talents may develop in a harmonious manner, so that they may attain a greater sense of responsibility and a right use of freedom, and be formed to take an active part in social life. (Canon Law Society, 1983)

Canon 796 states, "Among the means of advancing education, Christ's faithful are to consider schools as of great importance, since they are the

principal means of helping parents to fulfill their role in education” (Canon Law Society, 1983). Canon 800 continues, “The Church has the right to establish and to direct schools for any field of study or any kind and grade.” Canon 803 defines a Catholic school as follows:

A Catholic school is understood to be one which is under the control of the competent ecclesiastical authority or of a public ecclesiastical juridical person, or one which in a written document is acknowledged as Catholic by the ecclesiastical authority.

No school, even if it is in fact Catholic, may bear the title “Catholic” except by the consent of the competent ecclesiastical authority.

Canon 806 clarifies that the local bishop has ultimate responsibility for the Catholic schools within his diocese:

The diocesan Bishop has the right to watch over and inspect the Catholic schools situated in his territory, even those established or directed by members of religious institutes. He has the right to issue directives concerning the general regulation of Catholic schools; these directives apply also to schools conducted by members of a religious institute, although they retain their autonomy in the internal management of their schools. (Canon Law Society, 1983)

O’Brien (1990) states, “*The Code of Canon Law* describes the authority of the diocesan bishop as legislative, judicial and executive in nature. The authority must be exercised by the Bishop himself or by someone with vicarious or delegated power” (p. 9).

The superintendent of schools in a Catholic diocese is appointed by the bishop of the diocese and acts on behalf of the bishop regarding the Catholic schools within the diocese (Canon Law Society, 1983; Thomas, 1996). The superintendent of schools is one of the persons who assists the diocesan bishop with his responsibilities and tasks pertaining to Catholic schools (Canon Law Society, 1983). The superintendent of schools cannot act apart from the will of the diocesan bishop and can be removed from appointed office by the bishop, or when the office of the diocesan bishop is suspended.

According to Thomas (1996), the superintendent who is a trained and experienced educator “first, serves as the bishop’s chief advisor on matters regarding the schools of the diocese” (pp. 129-130). The superintendent also is to be an advisor to the pastor; should help the pastor find and select a qualified principal; and work directly with the principal in administering the school. Furthermore, “the superintendent can be of crucial assistance to the pastor and the school in such areas as federal and state guidelines, finance issues, legal concerns, expedient political action, curriculum, and research practices for schools” (p. 132).

THE ROLE OF THE PASTOR

A pastor is usually an ordained priest who is assigned by the local Bishop to care for the people of a parish. According to Canon 515, "A parish is a certain community of Christ's faithful stably established within a particular Church, whose pastoral care, under the authority of the diocesan Bishop, is entrusted to a parish priest as its proper pastor" (Canon Law Society, 1983). Therefore,

The parish priest is the proper pastor of the parish entrusted to him. He exercises the pastoral care of the community entrusted to him under the authority of the diocesan Bishop, whose ministry of Christ he is called to share, so that for this community he may carry out the offices of teaching, sanctifying and ruling with the cooperation of other priests or deacons and with the assistance of lay members of Christ's faithful, in accordance with law. (Canon Law Society, 1983)

The pastor has many responsibilities within his parish community that include, but are not limited to, presiding at Mass, administering the sacraments, leading prayer, visiting the sick, conducting funerals, and bringing the gospel to those who no longer practice the faith (Canon Law Society, 1983). Furthermore, "He is to have a special care for the Catholic education of the children and young people" (p. 95). In addition, "In all juridical matters, the parish priest acts in the person of the parish, in accordance with the law. He is to ensure that the parish goods are administered in accordance with canon 1281-1288" (p. 96).

O'Brien (1990) states, "Just as American Society includes both individuals and corporations which are established under civil law, so the Church includes individuals and corporations established under Canon Law. The term 'juridic person' is the term given to the Church corporation" (p. 13). All juridic persons have administrators, and it is the pastor who is the administrator then of the juridic person of the parish. When a school is one of the ministries of the parish, the administrator of the juridic person of the parish also becomes the canonical administrator of the school and, therefore, has ultimate authority within the school.

However, this is not as simple and clear as it seems. The Taskforce on Church Governance of the Canon Law Society developed some basic principles for Church governance. These principles were adapted by O'Brien (1990) to include: (a) Shared Mission, (b) Participation, (c) Discernment of Shared Vision, (d) Collaboration, (e) Pastoral Planning, (f) Justice, (g) Formal and Informal Relationships, (h) Subsidiarity, and (i) Accountability.

Shared Mission refers to "a shared understanding of the Church's mission" (O'Brien, 1990, p. 17). "Effective governance requires a consensus about the purpose of governance in relation to the mission of the Church" (p. 17).

Participation by all members of the community is an important component of Church governance. “The organizations, structures, and methods of effective governance should include clergy, religious, and laity in participation appropriate to the issues involved and the rights and duties of the persons affected” (O’Brien, 1990, p. 17).

Catholic schools need the advocacy of pastors, parish staff, parish leaders, and total parish membership. As all ministries in the Church, Catholic schools depend upon the vocal and active support of Church leaders. Parish leaders must be unequivocal about the school’s religious purposes in service to the community. The school must be a vital part of total parish life. (Ohio Catholic Bishops, 1990, p. 7)

The discernment of a shared vision is crucial for effective governance. Each member of the community possesses the wisdom of the Holy Spirit within. Prayer and reflection become an important part of the governance process.

Collaboration is essential. “The development of an effective educational ministry depends on the ability of persons individually and in association to collaborate” (O’Brien, 1990, p. 18). Sofield (1987) states “Collaboration occurs as a result of a deliberate choice” (p. 47). Collaborative ministry “calls forth the vision and gifts of others” (Gramick, 2001, p. 20). It “invites others to contribute their abilities and talents, which are seen as different from, as opposed to superior to, those of others” (p. 20). “Collaboration depends upon appropriate knowledge of relational and organizational behavior, a personal identity secure enough to deal objectively with divisive issues and situations, and interpersonal and managerial skills” (O’Brien, p. 18).

Adequate pastoral planning is also an important element of effective Church governance:

Organizational structures and processes should be designed to insure adequate participation of representatives and experts from the laity, religious and clergy in the following tasks: identification of needs; study of possible responses; adoption of a shared understanding of mission; formulation of concrete goals, objectives, and mission statements; development of programs and structures to which human and financial resources can be committed; and ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of such decisions and actions. (O’Brien, 1990, pp. 18-19)

Justice must also be a central principle upon which all Church governance is based, and due process procedures should be made available so that members’ rights are protected. “Just treatment is a fundamental human right” (p. 19).

The concept of formal and informal relationships refers to accountabili-

ty and authority. There are clear formal relationships within the governance structure, and there are informal relationships. The relationship between the pastor and the principal is an example of a formal relationship, while the relationship between the students and the other members of the parish community is an example of an informal relationship. Both kinds of relationships are present within effective Church governance (O'Brien, 1990).

The principle of subsidiarity is defined by O'Brien (1990) as "What can be accomplished by initiative and industry at one level is not assigned to or assumed by a higher organization or authority" (p. 20). This is a primary principle of governance within the Church. Finally, accountability is an important principle of operation. The establishment of goals and assessment procedures are present within effective Church governance.

ROLE OF THE PASTOR IN THE CATHOLIC PAROCHIAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The term parochial is defined by *Webster's Dictionary and Thesaurus* (1995) as "of or relating to a parish" (p. 435). Parochial schools are, therefore, parish schools. It is the pastor then who has ultimate authority within the parochial school:

Each is the responsibility of the pastor of the parish and is subject to the same Church laws that govern the parishes. These state that the pastor has exclusive right to act on behalf of the parish in all juridic affairs, is responsible for the administration of all parish goods, and within the limits of the law has the ultimate authority in the parish and therefore the parish school. (Ciriello, 1994, p. 137)

The pastor possesses both the responsibility and the authority within the parish for the establishment and operation of the parochial school. The pastor also possesses the canonical authority to hire a principal, teachers, and staff to operate the school. The pastor clearly is not only the pastor of the parish, but also the pastor of the school. "In the present structure of the church a pastor may not abdicate or give up responsibility for the parish school, because it is an integral part of the mission of any parish" (Geelan, 2000, p. 6).

However, according to Gilbert (1983), when a pastor hires a principal to be the administrator of the school, he should permit the principal to become the leader of the school. The pastor is then responsible to support the principal in this leadership role. The pastor should attempt to be available to the principal and be willing to help the principal with any reasonable requests that the principal may have of him, depending on his specific talents and gifts.

There are many possible ways in which a pastor might be helpful to the principal, but Gilbert (1983) felt that "there simply is no one mold for all

pastors, there is no one ‘job description’ that fits every parish priest” (p. 8). Gilbert believes that the pastor and the principal should jointly formulate a clear pastoral job description which clarifies each other’s responsibilities and effectively taps the specific talents and gifts that each possess.

Geelan (2000) believes that “one of the most important roles of the pastor in respect to the school and its governance, beyond what is spiritual and sacramental, is being involved in policy making” (p. 9). In most cases, local parish school boards are advisory or consultative boards. As a result, when it comes to policy development, the boards formulate policy; but the policy is enacted or made legal by the pastor. It is the board’s responsibility to formulate the policy and recommend it to the pastor; it is the pastor’s responsibility to enact the policy; and it is the principal’s responsibility to implement the policy (Sheehan, 1990).

Drahmann (1985) considers the pastor’s role in the school primarily to be focused on spiritual leadership and overseeing financial matters. Both are essential if Catholic schools are to continue to function effectively into the future. Barrett (1996) also emphasizes the pastor’s role in regard to the finances of the school. In addition, he stresses the importance of the pastor’s presence during school events; his willingness to make certain that the school is integrated into parish life; his desire to ensure that the school has established both short- and long-term plans; and his willingness to share his experience in both life and ministry, as well as provide his insights regarding the parish community’s expectations for the school.

As observed by Geelan (2000), although the pastor’s role in the Catholic parochial elementary school is certainly central, different pastors have different attitudes about the school and their leadership role within the school. Geelan states,

Some believe schools are unnecessary and a waste of resources that should be used elsewhere. Some pastors hold such a tight reign on the school that the board and principal may be heard complaining that they cannot get anything done. The pastor wants to make all the decisions and shows little respect for the expertise and judgments of the board and the administration, especially in the areas of finance and catechesis. Unlike the control man, some pastors are simply indifferent. They show no interest in the school. (pp. 5-6)

Geelan also admits that some pastors “really wrestle with who we are and what we are today both professionally and personally” (p. 7).

THE ROLE OF THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Schmieder and Cairns (1998) surveyed 206 superintendents and 450 principals to determine the most important administrative skills required for

successful school leadership. The 10 most popularly identified skills include the following:

1. Have a vision along with an understanding of the steps needed to achieve relevant goals.
 2. Demonstrate a desire to make a significant difference in the lives of staff and students.
 3. Know how to evaluate staff.
 4. Understand that change is ongoing and that it results in a fluid vision of school leadership.
 5. Be aware of your biases, strengths, and weaknesses.
 6. Know how to facilitate and conduct group meetings, large and small.
 7. Portray a sense of self-confidence on the job.
 8. Know how to assess job responsibilities in terms of 'real' roles.
 9. Know how to encourage involvement by all parties in the educational community.
 10. Know where the ethical limits exist within the district or building and balance that knowledge with your own professional values.
- (pp. 28-29)

Hoyle, English, and Steffy (1998) also identified a list of skills that are commonly found in an effective school leader: (a) visionary leadership, (b) policy and governance, (c) communication and community relations, (d) organizational management, (e) curriculum planning and development, (f) instructional management, (g) staff evaluation and personnel management, (h) staff development, and (i) educational research, evaluation, and planning. Similarly, Sergiovanni (1987) claims,

Descriptive-research accounts suggest that principals see themselves in a variety of ways: the instructional leader of the school, the maintainer of a rapidly changing institution, the disciplinarian, the supply clerk, the protector of teachers from the parents, the conduit of the community to the school, the philosopher king, the benevolent dictator, and so on. All principals seem to be granted the right to play the role as they see fit. (p. 286)

The Catholic school principal is a trained educational administrator, hired by the pastor, who leads the daily operation of the school. The role of the Catholic school principal is most often divided into three general areas of responsibility: spiritual leader, educational leader, and managerial leader (Ciriello, 1996b). In regard to the principal's role as spiritual leader, Gilbert (1983) refers to the principal as the "pastor" of the school. Catholic school principals are responsible for the faith development of the faculty and the

students; for building Christian community within the school; for providing for the moral and ethical development of the students; and for knowing the history of Catholic schools and formulating a clear Catholic school mission statement and philosophy for their schools (Ciriello, 1996b).

Cardinal Bernardin (1989) claimed that Catholic school principals must be visionary leaders who “believe in and are able to articulate in clear and emphatic terms the mission, the purpose of Catholic education” (p. 213). A Catholic school principal is responsible to provide for the faith development of the teachers and the students. “When principals facilitate the faith development of the school community, they are fostering mission-oriented central identity for the school” (Ciriello, 1996a, p. 2).

The Catholic school principal is also responsible for the building up of a Christian community within the school. In the document entitled, *The Catholic School*, the Vatican stated that Catholic schools are more than just academic institutions, but are in fact Christian communities (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977, p. 17). In the document, *Sharing the Light of Faith*, the United States Catholic bishops stated that “Principals foster community among faculty and students” (United States Catholic Conference, 1979, p. 131). Shaping the culture and forming Christian community within the Catholic school is at the heart of the Catholic school principal’s role.

Catholic school principals are responsible for the facilitation of the moral and ethical development of the students (Ciriello, 1996a). The integration of Catholic Christian values into the total school curriculum is an essential responsibility of the Catholic school principal. The Congregation for Catholic Education (1988) in a document entitled, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, stated, “The Catholic school finds its true justification in the mission of the Church; it is based on an educational philosophy in which faith, culture, and life are brought into harmony” (p. 16).

Catholic school principals are the educational leaders of their schools. During a 1999 forum on educational leadership conducted by the United States Department of Education, “most participants agreed that the number one characteristic of an effective leader is the ability to provide instructional leadership” (United States Department of Education, 1999, p. 4). According to these same participants, instructional leadership has to do with the principal’s ability and willingness to devote a significant amount of his or her time and talent “to improving the quality of teaching and learning:”

Leaders in these districts have a deep understanding of teaching and learning, including new teaching methods that emphasize problem solving and student construction of knowledge. Good instructional leaders have a strong commitment to success for all students, and are especially committed to improving instruction for groups of students who are not learning now. (p. 4)

The instructional leader is one who can help the teachers more effectively help the students to learn.

“The principal of the Catholic school shares with the public school administrator the responsibility to be the educational leader of the school, but there are definite differences in the nuances of this role” (Ciriello, 1996a, p. viii). Catholic school principals demonstrate leadership skills in developing a Catholic school culture, identify needed changes, supervise instruction, provide for the individual needs of the students, and exhibit leadership in curriculum development.

According to Robinson, O’Leary, and Ciriello (1993) the Catholic school principal, as the educational leader of the school, is expected to demonstrate symbolic and cultural leadership skills in developing a school climate reflective of its Catholic identity, apply a Catholic educational vision to the daily activities of the school, promote healthy staff morale, recognize and foster leadership ability among the staff, interpret and use research to guide action plans, identify and effect needed change, and attend to his or her personal and professional development. In addition, the Catholic school principal must demonstrate a knowledge of the content and the methods of religious education, know and understand the developmental stages of children, recognize and provide for cultural and religious differences within the school, provide leadership in curriculum development, recognize and provide for the special learning needs of each child, demonstrate a variety of educational and pedagogical skills, effectively supervise instruction, demonstrate an understanding of appropriate student assessment techniques, and be capable of evaluating the overall effectiveness of the school program.

Similarly Perri (1993) claims that effective Catholic school educational leaders are visionaries, decision-makers, models, and coaches. “A Catholic school needs a principal who is intimately involved in the school’s instructional program at all levels” (p. 46).

The Catholic school principal is also the managerial leader of the school. In this role, the principal is responsible for the selection and evaluation of all school personnel; the management of the school environment; and the financial management of the school (Ciriello, 1996a). The managerial leader of the Catholic school is responsible for personnel management, institutional management, and the management of finances and development (Ciriello, 1994). As personnel manager the principal must recruit, interview, select, and provide an orientation for school staff; understand and apply principles of adult learning and motivation; know and apply organizational management, delegation of responsibilities, and communication skills; effectively use group process skills; manage conflict effectively; and evaluate staff. As the institutional manager, the principal is required to provide for an orderly school environment, understand Catholic school governance structures;

recognize the importance of the relationship between the school and the diocesan office; recognize the importance of the school's relationship with the religious congregation(s); understand civil and canon law in relationship to Catholic schools; be familiar with state requirements and government-funded programs; and be able to make use of current technologies.

Finally, as finance manager the principal is expected to be able to demonstrate skills in planning and managing the school's financial resources; understand the basic strategies of long-range planning; provide an effective public relations and school marketing program; and seek resources and support beyond the school and parish (Ciriello, 1994). This managerial role is so complex, that it could easily overshadow the other two roles: principal as spiritual leader and principal as instructional leader (United States Department of Education, 1999). The effective Catholic school principal must keep all three primary roles in focus.

In conclusion, the principal is generally recognized as a primary leader and decision-maker in both public and private schools. However, since the Catholic parochial school is a ministry of the parish, the pastor, along with the principal, is also designated as a primary leader and decision-maker within the Catholic parochial elementary school. If the principal and pastor do not have a clear understanding of their own role and the role of the other in the school, then a positive working relationship between these two leaders may be affected; as a result, the education and the formation of the children may also be negatively affected.

Future articles will offer further analysis of the relationships of principals and pastors in Catholic parochial elementary schools, their conflicting role expectations, and their views of authority, leadership, and power, and will make recommendations for governance, policy, and future study.

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