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TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE NINE DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS OF
CATHOLIC IDENTITY IN URSULINE SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF THE USA

A Dissertation Presented

To

The Faculty of the School of Education
Catholic Educational Leadership Department

In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

by

Barbara Ann Middendorf

San Francisco

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THE UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

Teachers' Perceptions of the Nine Defining Characteristics of Catholic Identity in
Ursuline Secondary Schools of the USA

Catholic schools are integral to the Catholic Church's mission of evangelization. A Catholic educational institution is a place to encounter the living God who is Jesus Christ. Education is the concern and task of the Church, called to serve humankind from the heart of God.

This study examined the perceptions of teachers working in Roman Union, Ursuline secondary schools of the Central Province of the United States regarding the extent to which the nine defining characteristics of Catholic identity were present in their respective schools and classrooms. For this research, Catholic identity was operationally defined using the seminal Catholic education document, *National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools* (Ozar et al., 2012). Based upon the precipitous decrease of men and women in religious congregations across the US, no longer could the sisters, priests, or brothers provide the "Catholic" element of distinctiveness in schools; now the torch of Catholic identity needs to be borne by lay teachers.

This study utilized quantitative research. The survey, *Defining Characteristics of Catholic Schools*, measured teachers' perceptions of Catholic identity in their schools and their classrooms sited in Roman Union, Ursuline-governed secondary schools of the

Central Province in the United States. Based on survey questions and statistically cumulative data, the teachers' (N= 139) respondents (n=49) yielded a 35% response rate. Accordingly, the data revealed that the teachers of the Roman Union Ursuline secondary schools of the Central Province of the United States "agree" that the defining characteristics of Catholic identity were operative in their schools and classrooms. Additionally, the survey data identified means and statistical variance in two categories: (a) the role and authority of the Bishop in teachers' classrooms; (b) teachers' professional education on the educational mission of the Catholic Church.

As illustrated by this study, teachers in Ursuline schools support, observe, and protect the Catholic identity of their respective schools. The data showed Ursuline secondary school teachers embrace and proclaim the Gospel in their classrooms.

SIGNATURE PAGE

This dissertation, written under the direction of the candidate's dissertation committee and approved by the members of the committee, has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty of the School of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education. The content and research methodologies presented in this work represent the work of the candidate alone.

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DEDICATION

In gratitude for the Ursuline Sisters and
for their sacred and undying dedication to Catholic education.

Saint Angela, watch over the days of our youth,

Saint Ursula, protect our future.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

“Consider the respect you owe your daughters/ students, for the more you respect them the more you will love them, and the more you love them the greater care you will have for them. Then it will be impossible for you not to have them all graven in your hearts night and day, each one individually, for true love acts in this way” (Introduction to the Counsels).

Saint Angela’s words spoken to her leaders and teachers centuries ago are still alive in Catholic education today. I am deeply thankful for the women and men in my life that I call “teacher”. Thank you to all my USF teachers who modeled loving instruction in the classroom and lively discussion in the hallways. Much gratitude to Dr. Jane Bleasdale for pressing on with me through the thick and thin of life and for offering brilliant, scholarly insights for the enhancement of my research.

Many thanks to the teachers of Ursuline Academy of Dallas and to its administrators, Ms. Gretchen Kane, Dr. Andrea Shurley, and Ms. Elizabeth Smith. All the times I needed research data, collegial scholarship, and guidance; everyone always lent a helping hand. In gratitude for the true love, I have received while working on this dissertation.

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CHAPTER I
THE RESEARCH PROBLEM
Statement of the Problem

Catholic schools are integral to the Catholic Church's mission of evangelization. A Catholic educational institution is a place to encounter the living God who is Jesus Christ. These statements are strongly supported by numerous authoritative sources including: Benedict XVI, 2008; Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997, 1982, 1988, 1997, 2003, 2007; Francis I, 2012; and John Paul II, 2003, et al. Pope Francis I (2012) further develops the Catholic Church's shared commitment to schools with his emphasis on the spiritual-personal and transcendent qualities of its mission. Education is the formation of persons, and "because it has to do with true, human development, education is the concern and task of the Church, called to serve humankind from the heart of God in line with a Transcendent destiny . . ." (p. 109). The core of this mission, the anthropology of the Transcendent nature of human beings, is a fundamental reality that makes a Catholic school distinctively "Catholic" (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977, 1988, 1997; Cook, 2001; Groome, 1996; Pope Benedict, 2008; Pope Francis I, 2012a; Pope Francis I, 2012b; Pope Leo XIII, 1885; Pope Paul VI, 1965; Pope Pius XI, 1929). Since Vatican II, five major documents have been published by the Congregation for Catholic Education (CCE); *The Catholic School* (1977); *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith* (1982); *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* (1988); *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium* (1997); and

Consecrated Persons and their Mission in Schools (2002), with each document focusing on the centrality of Catholic schools for maintaining a Catholic identity and spreading the Gospel message:

Christ is the foundation of the whole educational enterprise in a Catholic school. His revelation gives new meaning to life and helps man [and woman] to direct his thought, action, and will according to the Gospel, making the beatitudes his norm of life. The fact that in their own individual ways all members of the school community share this Christian vision makes the school “Catholic.” (CCE, 1977, para. 34)

While Catholic schools are united by faith in Christ, the message of the Good News, and the teaching authority of the Church, recent statistical research shows changing demographics that affect the Catholic educational community and its Catholic identity. According to the *United States Catholic and Secondary Schools 2018-2019 Annual Statistical Report*, in the years since the Second Vatican Council in 1965, religious congregations have seen a significant decline of men and women entering religious orders. “In the landmark study by Nygren and Ukeritis (1992) of religious congregations present in the United States, the researchers found there had been a 45% decrease of brothers and sisters and a 27% decrease of religious priests prior to the study between 1965 – 1992” (Jenkins, 2011, p. 2). A later study by McDonald and Schultz (2019) revealed dramatic changes between 1950 – 2019 in the staffing of Catholic schools.

The data show the shift from an almost entirely religious staff of 90.1% at midcentury (1950) to 48.4% in the 1970s to a primarily lay staff, 97.2% during the

current 2018-2019 school year. [Thus, there was a decrease from 90.1% religious staff in the 1950s to a 2.8% religious staff in 2019.] In general, the changes in staffing have been attributed to the decline in the number of women and men entering religious orders, or religious who left their orders and changed to other ministries (McDonald and Schultz, 2017, p. 3). The empirical data in Catholic schools regarding religious congregations compels examination into how these changes could shape and influence the future of specific educational ministries and how Catholic identity is lived and defined in secondary schools. This study and research data will focus specifically on the congregation of the Order of Saint Ursula (OSU) and their schools. However, recognizing the contributions of other significant women's orders to the historical background of the United States and to the US Catholic education system will also be explored.

In 1727 before the United States was fashioned into a nation, French Ursuline Sr. Marie-Madeleine Hachard landed in New Orleans, LA with a group of 13 Ursuline sisters. Tasked by France's King Louis XV, the women were to open hospitals for the homeless and schools for French, immigrant girls' education. These sisters were tasked with meeting the needs of their New World with little or no training cultivating a 'pioneer spirit' to meet the daily necessities. As the United States continued to grow, so did the socio-economical, physical, and religious needs of the American society.

From 1727 – 1904 across the US, public health care, education, social services, orphanages, and immigration issues were addressed by the burgeoning presence of women's religious communities. In 1829, Mother Mary Lange, Oblate Sisters of Providence (OSP), founded the all-black, Catholic religious order for women in Baltimore, Maryland. She desired to combat the anti-black, anti-Catholic sentiments pervading Northern society. Under the leadership of Mother Lange, the OSP community

founded public schools for black children. In the South, women religious were serving as nurses on the battlefields of the Civil War. From 1861 – 1865 with little or no training, Sisters of the Holy Cross and Sisters of Mercy operated 28 hospitals providing medical care for the injured and dying soldiers on the fields. Sr. Katherine Drexel, Sister of the Blessed Sacrament, founded and financed the African-American, Xavier University in New Orleans with her inheritance from her father. St. Francis Xavier Cabrini, foundress of the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, dedicated her life and the order to care for Italian immigrants, the poor, children, schools, and hospitals. From 1900 - 1904, the Sisters of Mercy faced the cholera and smallpox epidemics in San Francisco. “The Sisters of Mercy chose to care for the people that others shrank from or dismissed” (2011, *Women and Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America*). The courage, dedication, and strength that these original, pioneering sisters demonstrated through their lives and ministries laid the groundwork for today’s contemporary American women religious.

Throughout America’s history, Catholic schools have been integrated into American society addressing the needs of the time while remaining grounded in Catholic identity and the call to evangelize. The work of Nygren and Ukeritis (1992) quantified the ways in which “religious life . . . in American society is at a crossroads” (p. 270). In the past, religious communities, brothers, sisters, and priests were foundational in providing the Catholic identity in schools. The presence of a religious order in a school or schools founded by religious communities provided the definition of what “made a school Catholic.” Today, however, and to remain relevant and dynamic in the future, the role of religious congregations must be reexamined and redefined.

The work of Caruso (2012) offers a humanizing perspective to the 95 % decline from 1965 - 2011 in the numbers of sisters serving in Catholic schools. According to

Caruso (2012), “for many Americans [from 1945 – 2011], the sisters were the face of Catholicism in Catholic elementary and secondary schools” (p. 1). Their stories of self-sacrifice, charity, and compassion for families, children, and schools cannot be forgotten.

Although sisters had little time for formal training before engaging in their assigned ministries, most Church communities relied on the sisters as “pastoral associates, advocates for the poor, principals, teachers, nurses, and a [heart] of welcome during times of trouble” (p. 52). Those working in schools knew “it was not unusual for [children] to report in school all the delicate issues unfolding at home” (p. 42) and, never it failed, the sisters were on the forefront offering their Catholic faith and helping hands to struggling families.

However, the complex web of changes in women’s religious communities post Vatican II showed significant impact on the sisters’ orders. Caruso (2012) highlighted some effects of the systemic religious orders’ changes resulting in a decrease of religious vocations coupled with additional consequences : (a) an increase in professional opportunities for women outside the religious order; (b) changes in religious lifestyle and dress e.g. religious garb; (c) diminished communal living; (d) fewer unifying ministries resulting in diminished communal identity; (e) fewer vocations fostered by family lifestyles; (f) sisters leaving religious life. For the purpose of this research, the Order of Saint Ursula and their ministries of education will be studied.

Women religious orders, such as the Order of Saint Ursula (Ursulines) founded in 1546, since 1727 have consistently reaffirmed the vital importance of serving the Church in the United States as well as the nation and its communities. The Ursuline sisters of the United States are currently experiencing this “crossroads” phenomenon in the educational

stewardship, sponsorship and ownership of Ursuline secondary schools and their ministries. An actuarial study (2015) of Ursuline ministries indicated that new decisions had to be made regarding the future of the sisters and their finances, properties and ministries. Recognizing that “ministries have been entrusted to [them] for the purpose of spreading the gospel message . . . the Ursulines, with sacred trust, wish to honor and pass on these ministries into the hands of the lay future” (“Stewardship, Sponsorship, and Ownership,” 2015). The lay teachers in Ursuline secondary schools have become the bearers of Catholic identity at this crossroads and for the future.

Earl’s (2017) research recognized that “traditionally, Catholic schools in the USA were staffed exclusively by priests, sisters, and brothers . . . today, however, Catholic schools are staffed by laypersons. This change in teaching staff has inevitably altered, to one degree or another, the essential religious character and culture of Catholic schools” (Earl, 2017, p. 1). McDonald & Schultz’s (2019) nationwide data presented a 97.2% lay teaching staff and a 2.8% religious/clergy teaching staff. Thus, with research and empirical data demonstrating a metamorphosis in Catholic school culture, it is imperative that the Catholic identity of American schools “remain dedicated to the ecclesial mission of education” (Schuttloffel, 2013, p.149) and that the commitment to Catholic identity flourishes in the hearts of the lay educators.

The 10-year retrospective review of Catholic research (Hunt, Frabutt, Nuzzi, Solic, 2008) concluded that “efforts to advance participation of teachers in research can serve both the spiritual and academic trajectories of Catholic institutions” (p. 439). The role of the Catholic school lay teacher is an essential element in carrying forward the Church’s evangelizing mission, bearing the responsibility of Catholic identity, and for the continuing successes of Catholic secondary school ministries.

Background and Need

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB, 2005) issued the pastoral statement *Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools* reiterating and supporting the Catholic Church's mission concerning the value of Catholic schools:

It is the responsibility of the entire Catholic community- bishops, priests, deacons, religious, and laity- to continue to strive towards the goal of making Catholic schools . . . a place where the Gospel message is proclaimed, a community in Christ is experienced, and worship of our God is cultivated (para. 1-2).

Thus, in order to meet this educational goal, the document (2005) of the United States bishops recognized the need for attention to four critical areas in Catholic education: (a) strengthening of the Catholic identity of Catholic elementary and secondary schools; (b) the formation of highly competent, faith-filled Catholic educational leaders and teachers for Catholic schools; (c) the assurance of academic excellence within all Catholic schools; and (d) the effective financing of Catholic schools to enable their accessibility to all families who choose them (Ray-Timoney, 2015, p. 2). For the purpose of this study, the focus will concentrate on two of the U.S. bishops' educational goals: (a) strengthening Catholic identity in schools, and (b) the formation of highly competent and faith-filled teachers in Catholic secondary schools.

The challenges confronting Catholic schools in the 21st century have been well documented. These challenges include the following: (a) shifting student demographics; (b) economic barriers to access; (c) weak leadership; (d) diminished value placed on Catholic schooling; (e) financial pressures on the family, parish, and diocese; (f) increase

in inclusivity of non-Catholic students; (g) decrease in religious teaching-order; (h) clerical sexual abuse scandal; (i) LGBTQ student voices for equity and inclusion; and (j) vocations (Bickett, 2014; Dolan, 2010; DeFiore, Convey, & Schuttloffel, 2009; Schuttloffel, 2007, 2012).

In addition, the *University of Notre Dame Task Force on Catholic Education* (2006) published further challenges that the Catholic school system must directly address. These findings include: (a) school closures; (b) decline in numbers of men and women entering religious communities; (c) overwhelming duties for pastors, administrators and teachers; (d) low faculty salaries; (e) rising tuition costs; (f) declining student enrollment; and (g) rising secularism. According to the task force, these findings contribute to the tremendous pressures currently facing Catholic schools.

In a collaborative endeavor, the National Catholic Educators Association (NCEA) and the Foundation and Donors Interested in Catholic Activities (FADICA), offer in the joint publication (2019), *The Catholic School Choice*, national-level data on parents' perceptions and expectations of Catholic schools (p. 1). The research suggests that there is a "clear opportunity to strengthen the position of Catholic schools in this country, in both long and short term" (p.3). Research findings focus on the following report: (a) parents are well-informed, savvy consumers; (b) Catholic schools are viewed positively by most parents but are not considered the right option for their child; (c) misperceptions about what Catholic schools offer run wide and deep; (d) parents want their children to develop strong morals and good values at an early age; (e) concerns about the affordability of Catholic schools are prevalent; (f) focus on religious instruction alone in external communications and marketing materials will not increase enrollment in

Catholic schools. In addition to the opportunities for growth, the research indicated that parents' willingness to consider Catholic schools focused on three perceptions: (a) schools that offer a good balance between academics and religious teachings; (b) schools that create an environment where everyone is welcome; (c) schools that place an emphasis on community service and volunteerism. Thus, the research suggests that the Catholic school system on the national level has challenges to face and yet promises a future of tremendous possibilities.

Recent statistical data published by the National Catholic Educators Association (NCEA, 2019) has led to additional insights regarding challenges faced by the Catholic school system. Trends revealed in the *Annual Statistical Report on Schools, Enrollment and Staffing: United States Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools 2018-2019* include: (a) decrease in overall enrollment, (b) school closures, (c) increase in nonCatholic enrollment, (d) voucher programs and (e) reversed lay/religious ratio of faculty and staff. Thus, significant challenges for the future of the Catholic educational system as stated in the CCE document, *Catholic Schools on the Threshold of the Third Millennium* (1997), are “maintaining an academically rigorous and doctrinally sound program of education and faith formation . . . allowing schools for the human person to fulfill a critical role in the future life of our Church, our country, and our world” (para. 9). The Catholic Church, Catholic scholars, and research show the Church affirming a tremendous commitment to Catholic elementary and secondary schools although many issues still need to be addressed. Looking to this uniquely grace-filled Catholic future, it is imperative that Catholic identity in schools must be defined, fostered and lived daily.

In the fall of 2008 a group of Catholic scholars, program directors, administrators, clergy, bishops, business experts, and researchers gathered to converse about, confront, and engage more deeply the national issues facing Catholic education. All were from Catholic universities and dedicated to the ecclesial mission of Catholic education. These Carnegie Conversation (2008) sessions and scholastic dialogues generated awareness that Catholic education as a field of academics had shortcomings: “[Academic research in] Catholic education had been slow to accumulate a systematic body of empirical research that would generate new theoretical insights and inform future empirical research studies” (Hallinan, 2008, p. 15). The Carnegie Conversations laid the foundation for new intellectual pursuits, future paths of research, and university partnerships with Catholic elementary and secondary schools, ultimately opening the door for the academic field of Catholic education “to develop its own intellectual base” (Hallinan, 2008, p. 15). Researchers Drs. Lorraine Ozar and Patricia Weitzel-O’Neill answered the academic challenges that emerged from the Carnegie Conversations and pursued Catholic elementary and secondary research.

In 2010, the Center for Catholic School Effectiveness (CCSE) at the School of Education of Loyola University in Chicago, in partnership with the Roche Center at the Lynch School of Education of Boston College, gathered in Chicago as a national task force of Catholic leaders and educators. Included on this task force were “Catholic Higher Education Committee (CHEC) representatives, Catholic scholars, (arch)diocesan superintendents, principals, teachers, (NCEA) directors, and Chief Administrators of Catholic Education (CACE) executive committee members” (Ray-Timoney, 2015, p. 3). Under the leadership of Dr. Lorraine Ozar, director of the CCSE, this committee created a collaborative document, *National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic*

Elementary and Secondary Schools (NSBECS). This publication defines “effectiveness standards and gives the entire Catholic community a common framework of universal characteristics of Catholic identity and agreed upon criteria for Catholic school excellence” (Ozar et al., 2012, p. iii).

The NSBECS document (2012) “contains three types of statements grounded in Church teaching, best practices and proven success of those committed to the future of Catholic elementary and secondary education in the United States” (p. 5). The first portion of the document is dedicated to the Defining Characteristics of Catholic schools: (a) Centered on the Person of Jesus Christ, (b) Contributing to the Evangelizing Mission of the Church, (c) Distinguished by Excellence, (d) Committed to Educate the Whole Child, (e) Steeped in a Catholic Worldview, (f) Sustained by Gospel Witness, (g) Shaped by Communion and Community, (h) Accessible to All Students, and (i) Established by the Expressed Authority of the Bishop. The second section of the document describes the 13 standards necessary for effective Catholic schools. These standards are categorized into four specific domains under which they operate: (a) Mission and Catholic Identity, (b) Governance and Leadership, (c) Academic Excellence, and (d) Operational Vitality. Finally, the third section of the NSBECS is dedicated to 72 benchmarks that flesh out and operationally define each of the 13 standards. The benchmarks provide “observable, measurable descriptors for each Standard” (Ozar et al., 2012, p. 6) allowing schools to self-assess their respective programs, monitor accreditation tools, and enable data-driven decisions. After two revisions and national Catholic approval from CACE, NCEA, US Catholic leadership, bishops, educators, experts, and key stakeholders, the NSBECS (2012) provided Catholic research and scholarship a tool with which Catholic identity

and educational programs could measure and build the Catholic education intellectual base.

“NSBECS is designed to provide a powerful template for schools to analyze their practices in order to validate their strengths and identify areas of growth” (Boyle, 2014, p. 6). Thus, the pivotal research of school Catholic identity, as defined by the NSBECS, provides the academic platform for investigating the nine defining characteristics of Catholic identity as perceived by teachers in Ursuline secondary schools.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the perceptions of teachers working in Roman Union Ursuline secondary schools of the Central Province of the United States regarding the extent to which the nine defining characteristics of Catholic identity (NSBECS, 2012) are present in their respective schools and classrooms. The Ursuline secondary schools of the Central Province are all-girl academies. For the purpose of this research, the scholar is investigating Catholic identity in secondary schools and not exploring the all-girl environment variable. The all-girl environment would be a distinct and separate field of study from Catholic identity. In this quantitative study, a researcherconstructed survey was created to investigate Catholic identity, operationally defined as the nine defining characteristics of Catholic schools (Ozar et al., 2012): (a) centered in the person of Jesus Christ, (b) contributing to the evangelizing mission of the Church, (c) distinguished by excellence, (d) committed to educate the whole child, (e) steeped in a Catholic worldview, (f) sustained by Gospel witness, (g) shaped by communion and community, (h) accessible to all students, (i) established by the expressed authority of the bishop.

Originating in the works of Archbishop J. Michael Miller (2006), the nine characteristics define the deep Catholic identity of Catholic schools and serve as the platform upon which the standards and benchmarks rest (p. 7).

Conceptual Framework

This study proposes that academic research into Catholic identity in Catholic secondary schools of the U.S. is necessary. A Catholic school's Catholic identity stems from ecclesial documents, canon law, the American bishops, and the office of the Holy See (Benedict XVI, 2008; Code of Canon Law, 1983; CCE 1977, 1982, 1988, 1997; John Paul II, 2003; Miller, 2006; NCCB, 1972, USCCB, 2005, 2008; Vatican, 1965). Catholic elementary and secondary school systems currently find themselves at a unique moment in history. According to Catholic educational research (DeFiore, Convey, and Schuttloffel, 2009; Earl, 2017; Heft, 2004; Kennedy, 2010; McDonald and Schultz, 2017; Miller, 2006; Nygren and Ukeritis, 1992; , 2007, 2012), the defining of Catholic identity in elementary and secondary schools is at a crossroads with studies showing a precipitous decrease in the religious congregations providing the "Catholic" element of distinctiveness in schools; now the torch of Catholic identity is being passed to the lay teachers.

The conceptual framework for this study employed an understanding of Catholic identity in elementary and secondary schools as defined and supported by the following bodies of work: (a) Archbishop J. Michael Miller's (2006) book, *The Holy See's Teaching on Catholic Schools*; (b) statements by Pope Benedict XVI; (c) American bishops' documents; (d) *National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools*.

“Papal interventions and Roman documents repeatedly emphasize that certain characteristics must be present for a school to be considered authentically Catholic” (Miller, 2006, p. 17). The Holy See has recognized five essential marks identifying a school as Catholic: (a) inspired by a supernatural vision; (b) founded on a Christian anthropology; (c) animated by communion and community; (d) imbued with a Catholic worldview; and (e) sustained by Gospel witness. According to Miller (2006), these measurable benchmarks form the backbone and inspire the mission of every Catholic school.

In addition to these five marks, Pope Benedict XVI (2008) addressed the U.S. bishops during an “ad limina” visit to America calling on the Christian commitment to learning and education. The Church in America needs to cultivate “a mindset, an intellectual culture which is genuinely Catholic . . . a culture solidly grounded in the liberating truth of Christ” (Pope Benedict XVI, 2008). The task of Catholic schools, as conferred by the Church, is the evangelization of society. While visiting the United Nations in 2012, Pope Benedict XVI referred to Catholic schools as “outstanding apostolates of hope” providing all children the right to an opportunity to an education in faith. The Catholic identity of these schools is dependent upon “the evangelizing mission of the Church to serve society . . . developing a society that recognizes the human person’s dignity” (Pope Benedict XVI, 2008). The American bishops, also, have a tradition of intellectual contributions to the role of Catholic identity in Catholic schools.

The Committee on Catholic Education (CCE), a subcommittee of the USCCB, has authored five American documents applying to Catholic elementary and secondary schools: (a) *The Catholic School* (1977); (b) *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith*

(1982); (c) *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* (1988); (d) *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium* (1997); (e) *Consecrated Persons and their Mission in Schools* (2002). These five documents flesh out the lived Catholic identity in schools and will be addressed in greater depth in the review of the literature.

Building upon the wisdom and Catholic scholarship of the Vatican, the bishops, and Miller, Dr. Lorraine Ozar, Director of the Center for Catholic School Effectiveness of the School of Education, Loyola University Chicago; and Dr. Patricia Weitzel-O'Neill, Executive Director of the Barbara and Patrick Roche Center for Catholic Education, Lynch School of Education, Boston College, assembled a group of experts in Catholic leadership and education. In the fall of 2008, scholars, religious, clergy, laity, teachers, principals, superintendents, and stakeholders gathered at Loyola University Chicago: Recognizing the imperative that Catholic schools must provide an excellent academic program within a faith-filled environment, the National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools were produced to provide a national articulation of defining characteristics . . . that will enable all sponsors of Catholic elementary and secondary schools to assess, strengthen, and sustain their operations. (Ozar et al., 2012, p. 5)

Under the leadership of Ozar and Weitzel-O'Neill and after many productive conversations, seminars, and conference meetings, a “national vision . . . came together as a [document] that collectively endorsed national standards supported and advocated by the [American] Bishops “

(Ozar et al., 2012, p.4):

The National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools [NSBECS], is intended to describe how the most mission driven, program effective, well managed, and responsibly governed Catholic schools operate. They are offered as school effectiveness standards rather than curriculum content standards. Catholic schools and sponsors are encouraged to commit to the defining characteristics of the NSBECS (Ozar et al., 2012, p. 5). The *Defining Characteristics of Catholic Schools* articulates the nine defining characteristics of authentic Catholic identity in schools: (a) Centered in the person of Jesus Christ, (b) Contributing to the evangelizing mission of the Church, (c) Distinguished by excellence, (d) Committed to educate the whole child, (e) Steeped in a Catholic worldview, (f) Sustained by Gospel witness, (g) Shaped by communion and community, (h) Accessible to all students, and (i) Established by the expressed authority of the bishop. A brief description of each of the nine defining characteristics follows.

The first defining characteristic of Catholic schools as stated in the NSBECS (Ozar et al., 2012) is “centered in the person of Jesus Christ”:

- Catholic education is rooted in the conviction that Jesus Christ provides the most comprehensive and compelling example of the realization of full human potential (*The Catholic School*, para. 34, para. 35).
- In every aspect of programs, life, and activities, Catholic schools should foster personal relationship with Jesus Christ and communal witness to the Gospel message of love of God and neighbor and service to the world, especially the poor and marginalized (Miller, 2006, pp. 25–26).

The second defining characteristic of Catholic schools as stated in the NSBECS

(Ozar et al., 2012) is “contributing to the evangelizing mission of the Church”:

- Catholic schools participate directly and in a privileged way in the evangelizing mission of the Church (*The Catholic School*, para. 9; *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, para. 5, para. 11; *The Religious Dimensions of Education in a Catholic School*, para. 33).
- Catholic schools are ecclesial entity where faith, culture, and life are brought into harmony, the Catholic school should be a place of real and specified pastoral ministry in communion with the local Bishop. (*The Catholic School*, para.44; *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, para. 14; *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, para. 34;)
- The environment in Catholic schools should express the signs of Catholic culture, physically and visibly (*The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*; Miller, 2006, p. 40).

The third defining characteristic of Catholic schools as stated in the NSBECS (Ozar et al., 2012) is “distinguished by excellence”:

- Church documents and Church practices supported by canon law establish that first and foremost a Catholic school is characterized by excellence.
- Consistent with the defining characteristics, Catholic schools should implement on-going processes and structures and gather evidence to ensure excellence in every aspect of its programs, life, and activities (*Gravissimum Educationis para. 8, para. 9; Code of Canon Law, Canon 806 #2*).

The fourth defining characteristic of Catholic schools as stated in the NSBECS

(Ozar et al., 2012) is “committed to educate the whole child”:

- Catholic school education is rooted in the conviction that human beings have a transcendent destiny, and that education for the whole person must form the spiritual, intellectual, physical, psychological, social, moral, aesthetic and religious capacities of each child.
- Catholic schools should develop and implement academic, co-curricular, faith-formation, and service/ministry programs to educate the whole child in all these dimensions (*The Catholic School*, para.29).

The fifth defining characteristic of Catholic schools as stated in the NSBECS (Ozar et al., 2012) is “steeped in a Catholic worldview”:

- Catholic education aims at the integral formation of the human person, which includes “preparation for professional life, formation of ethical and social awareness, developing awareness of the transcendental, and religious education” (*The Catholic School*, 31).
- All curriculum and instruction in a Catholic school should foster: the desire to seek wisdom and truth, the preference for social justice, the discipline to become self-learners, the capacity to recognize ethical and moral grounding for behavior, and the responsibility to transform and enrich the world with Gospel values.
- The Catholic school should avoid the error that its distinctiveness rests solely on its religious education program (Miller, 2006, pp. 43–45, 52). The sixth defining characteristic of Catholic schools as stated in the NSBECS (Ozar et al., 2012) is “sustained by Gospel witness”:

- Catholic schools pay attention to the vocation of teachers and their participation in the Church’s evangelizing mission. (*The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, 19; *Lay Catholics in Schools*, 37)
- A Catholic educator is a role model for students and gives testimony by his or her life and commitment to mission (Benedict XVI, June 2005; Miller, 2006, p. 53).
- As much as possible, Catholic schools should recruit teachers who are practicing Catholics, who can understand and accept the teachings of the Catholic Church and the moral demands of the Gospel, and who can contribute to the achievement of the school’s Catholic identity and apostolic goals . . . (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *National Directory for Catechesis*, para. 231).

The seventh defining characteristic of Catholic schools as stated in the NSBECS (Ozar et al., 2012) is “shaped by communion and community”:

- Catholic school education places an emphasis on the school as community—an educational community of persons and a genuine community of faith (*Lay Catholics in Schools*, para. 22, para. 41).
- Catholic schools should do everything they can to promote genuine trust and collaboration among teachers, with parents as the primary educators of their children, and with governing body members to foster appreciation of different gifts that build up a learning and faith community and strengthen academic excellence (*Lay Catholics in Schools*, para. 78).
- The Catholic school should pay especially close attention to the quality of interpersonal relations between teachers and students, ensuring that the

student is seen as a person whose intellectual growth is harmonized with spiritual, religious, emotional, and social growth (*The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, para.18).

The eighth defining characteristic of Catholic schools as stated in the NSBECS (Ozar et al., 2012) is “accessible to all students”:

- Catholic schools should be available to all people who desire a Catholic school education for their children (*Gravissimum Educationis*, para.6; *Code of Canon Law*, Canons 793 #2; *Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium*, Introduction).
- Catholic schools in concert with the Catholic community should do everything in their power to manage available resources and seek innovative options to ensure that Catholic school education is geographically, programmatically, physically, and financially accessible.

The ninth and final defining characteristic of Catholic schools as stated in the NSBECS (Ozar et al., 2012) is “established by the expressed authority of the bishop”:

- Canon Law states “Pastors of souls have the duty of making all possible arrangements so that all the faithful may avail themselves of a Catholic education” (*Code of Canon Law*, Canon 794).
- Bishops need to put forward the mission of Catholic schools, support and enhance the work of Catholic schools, and see that the education in the schools is based on principles of Catholic doctrine (John Paul II, *Pastores Gregis*, para. 52).
- Catholic schools have a formal and defined relationship with the Bishop guided by a spirituality of ecclesial communion, and should work to establish

a relationship marked by mutual trust, close cooperation, continuing dialogue, and respect for the Bishop's legitimate authority (*Code of Canon Law*, Canon 803 #1 and #3; Miller, 2006, p. 33).

Research Questions

This study will address the following research questions:

1. To what extent do teachers in Ursuline secondary schools in the United States perceive the nine defining characteristics of Catholic identity to be present in their schools?
2. To what extent do teachers in Ursuline secondary schools in the United States perceive the nine defining characteristics of Catholic identity to be present in their classrooms?
3. To what extent do teachers in Ursuline secondary schools in the United States perceive professional instruction regarding Catholic identity to be present in their schools?
4. To what extent do teachers in Ursuline secondary schools in the United States perceive community life regarding Catholic identity to be present in their classrooms?

Significance

The fruits of the Carnegie Foundation dialogue (2008) suggested that the future of Catholic education lies in strengthening the field of academic, Catholic educational research. Schulman (2008) proposed three opportunities of academic focus for Catholic experts: (a) forming teachers and leaders for Catholic schools, (b) expanding scholarship to improve educational quality of Catholic schools, and (c) accessibility of Catholic school for students today and tomorrow. Catholic scholarship must become a robust field of scholarship and practice.

The body of this research could contribute “to the national, Catholic educational community research-based scholarship for the common vision of an effective 21st century Catholic school” (Ozar et al., 2012, p. 6), adding vital statistics to the NCEA body of knowledge, specifically to the secondary school data. Moreover, according to Catholic scholars (Boyle, 2014; Marzano, 2000; Miller, 2006; Nuzzi, 2008; Ozar et al., 2012), having nationally agreed- upon criteria holds Catholic secondary schools accountable to their mission and identity; furthermore, defined characteristics provide the framework for accountability expectations. In this way Catholic school communities are enabled by quantifiable data to address each individual community’s needs, thus personalizing the essential question posed by Archbishop Miller (2006): “Are we doing what we say we are doing?” This data could contribute to a future nationwide Catholic secondary accreditation process. Finally, this body of work could contribute to the continued professional development of Catholic school secondary teachers (Convey, 2008; Cook, 2008; Durka, 2002; Earl, 2013; Nuzzi, 2017; Palmer, 1998, 2007; Reilly, 2017; Schoenig 2017).

The work of McDonald and Schultz (2017) shows that data indicates a reversal from an almost entirely religious staff of 90.1% at mid-century (1950) to 48.4% in the 1970s to a 97.4% lay staff during the current 2018-2019 academic year (a decrease from 90.1% religious staff in the 1950s to a 2.6% religious staff in 2018). No longer can Catholic schools rely on the clergy or religious brothers and sisters to provide the “Catholic “culture or religious character which makes a school Catholic. According to Nuzzi (2008), “. . . in high school communities, the relationship between Catholic identity and the formation of teachers is significant” (p. 37). Now is the time in Catholic

secondary education to focus on the faith formation of Catholic, non-Catholic, and non-Christian lay teachers, as well as professional development opportunities that help teachers integrate Catholic values and teachings across the curriculum” (Croghan, 2008; Earl, 2003; Groome, 1996; O’Keefe, 2008; Fleming, 2015; Martin, 2013; National Catholic Educators Association, 2015). This research is in keeping with and continuing a key mission stated by Archbishop Miller (2006):

The primary responsibility for creating a Catholic, Christian school climate is the vital witness of its teachers and administrators. Therefore, there is considerable attention paid to the vocation of educator. Teachers are called to be imitators of Christ; they reveal the Christian message not only by word but also by every gesture of their behavior. (p. 53)

Definition of Terms

The following terms are associated with the Roman Catholic Church, Catholic identity, Catholic education, and Catholic religious communities:

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Canon Law | The code of ecclesiastical laws governing the Roman Catholic Church. |
| Catholic Identity | Nine defining characteristics of Catholic schools as defined by ecclesial documents authored by the Holy See and the American bishops, as well as the <i>National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools</i> (2012). |

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Committee on Catholic Education | Roman Catholic Church committee that supports the proclamation of the Gospel through primary and secondary Catholic Schools, Catholic higher education, campus ministry, certification for ecclesial ministry, and support of children and parents through advocacy and public policy in our Nation's Capital. The committee provides guidance for the educational mission of the Church in the United States in all its institutional settings. |
| Ecclesial | Having to do with the Church in general or the life of the Church. |
| Evangelization | In the Roman Catholic Church evangelization means bringing the Good News of Jesus into every human situation and seeking to convert individuals and society by the divine power of the Gospel itself. At its essence are the proclamation of salvation in Jesus Christ and the response of a person in faith, which are both works of the Spirit of God. |
| Lay person/Laity | A member of the Catholic Church who is not ordained and/or a member of religious life. |
| Order of St. Ursula (Ursulines) | A religious order for women founded in 16 th century Italy by Saint Angela Merici. Canonically chartered by the Roman Catholic Church, this company of women is dedicated to poverty, chastity, obedience and service. Motto: <i>Serviam</i> (I will serve). |

| | |
|--|--|
| Papal encyclical | Roman Catholic Church document authored by the Pope addressing Catholic doctrine. The document is usually addressed to bishops and pastors who teach about and defend the Catholic faith. The document is used to teach a better understanding of how to apply Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition to particular issues. |
| Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education | Pontifical department of the Catholic Church that ensures the authenticity of the Catholic Church's educational institutions. |
| Secondary school | A school intermediate between elementary school and college and usually offering general, technical, vocational, or collegepreparatory courses. |
| Second Vatican Council | An ecumenical council, the 21 st of its kind, inclusive of all the bishops of the Roman Catholic Church throughout the world, convened at Vatican City from 1962 through 1965, to discuss and settle matters of Church doctrine and practice. Also referred to as Vatican II. |
| United States Conference of Catholic Bishops | Civil corporation and executive agency of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. An association composed of all active and retired bishops of the United States. |

Summary

Chapter I has addressed the statement of the problem, its background and need, the study's purpose, its conceptual framework, the research questions, research significance, and the definition of terms in relation to the perceptions of teachers working in Ursuline secondary schools of the United States regarding the extent to which the nine defining characteristics of Catholic identity are present in their respective schools and classrooms. Chapter II will address the review of the literature regarding Catholic identity as seen through the lenses of Vatican documents, American bishops school documents, Catholic school experts, history of the Ursuline sisters and the role of the lay teacher according to the Church.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Restatement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to investigate the perceptions of teachers working in Ursuline secondary schools of the United States regarding the extent to which the nine defining characteristics of Catholic identity (NSBECS, 2012) are present in their respective schools and classrooms. In order to approach these objectives, it is necessary to explore thoroughly the wisdom of Roman Catholic Church educational documents, American bishop Catholic church educational documents, and the work of Catholic research experts. Specifically, understanding how “Catholic identity” is defined in secondary schools and how teachers in Ursuline secondary schools perceive and live that identity daily. It is imperative that the American schools “remain dedicated to the ecclesial mission of education” (Schuttloffel, 2013, p.149) and that the commitment to Catholic identity flourish in the hearts of the lay educators.

Overview

The review of literature is divided into three thematic sections: (a) Catholic identity, (b) Order of Saint Ursula, and (c) role of the lay teacher in Catholic schools. Section One on Catholic identity is subdivided into five subsections: (a) examination of Catholic Church papal education documents; (b) Sacred Congregation of Catholic Bishops [SCCE], Committee on Catholic Education[CCE], and Roman Congregation documents; (c) United States Conference of Catholic Bishops [USCCB], American bishops’ school documents; (d) experts on Catholic education; and (e) empirical research on Catholic education. Section Two examines the history of the Order of Saint Ursula, the Ursuline Sisters. Section Two is divided into two subsections: (a) history of Saint

Angela of Merici, foundress; and (b) the historical background of pedagogy in Ursuline secondary schools. Section Three studies the role of the lay teacher in Catholic schools. Section Three (as in Section One) is subdivided into five subsections: (a) examination of Catholic Church papal education documents; (b) Sacred Congregation of Catholic Bishops [SCCE], Committee on Catholic Education [CCE], and Roman Congregation documents; (c) United States Conference of Catholic Bishops [USCCB], American bishops' school documents; (d) experts on Catholic education; and (e) empirical research on Catholic education.

Catholic Identity

The first section of the literature review, Catholic identity, is divided into five subsections: (a) Catholic Church education documents; (b) SCCE and CCE documents; (c) NCCB and USCCB documents; (d) Catholic school experts; and (e) educational research.

Church Documents

Table 1

Papal Documents on Catholic Education and Related Topics

| Author | Date | Title |
|-------------------|-------------|--|
| Pope Leo XIII | 1885 | <i>On Christian Education</i> |
| Pope Pius XI | 1929 | <i>On Christian Education</i> |
| Pope Paul VI | 1965a | <i>Declaration on Christian Educatio</i> |
| Pope John Paul II | 1999 | <i>The Church in America</i> |
| Archbishop Miller | 2006 | <i>The Holy See's Teaching on Catholic Schools</i> |

“Education is integral to the mission of the Church to proclaim the Good News. Every Catholic educational institution is a place to encounter the Living God who in Jesus Christ reveals his transforming love and truth” (Benedict, 2008, *Address to Catholic Educators*, para. 1). Since 1885, five distinctive and defining papal documents have been published addressing the transformational and sacred role of Catholic identity for Catholic schools. Over the centuries, popes have addressed specific social, cultural, religious, and political trends to their temporal situations in life, yet the oneness of the Church’s educational mission remained the same: true education aims at the formation of the human person in pursuit of salvation and the Kingdom of God (Benedict, 2008; John Paul II, 1999; Leo XIII, 1885; Paul VI, 1965a; Paul VI 1965b; Pius XI, 1929). The following papal documents speak to Catholic identity and education and will be the major focus of this section: (a) *On Christian Education*, 1885; (b) *On Christian Education*, 1929; (c) *Declaration on Christian Education*, 1965a; (d) *The Church in America*, 1999; (e) *The Holy See’s Teaching on Catholic Schools*, 2006; (f) *Address to Catholic Educators*, 2008.

The encyclical of Pope Leo XIII, *On Christian Education* (1885), concentrated on a two-pronged purpose of Catholic education: (a) to form children to a Christian lifestyle, and (b) to instruct students in the elements of knowledge. These tasks were the ‘meritorious work’ of the clergy (para. 2). Sound teaching in faith and morals would secure the future of Catholic youth. Ultimately, the purpose of the Catholic school was

“so that the Catholic faith, our greatest and best inheritance, was preserved whole and entire” (para. 4). A Pope Pius XI encyclical (1929) followed a similar thematic tenor.

Approaching the role of Catholic education in an analogous vein, the Pope Pius XI encyclical *On Christian Education* (1929), offered a very definitive purpose on the role of Catholic education: “First of all, education belongs preeminently to the Church by reason of the double title in the supernatural order, conferred exclusively upon her by God Himself” (para. 15). In forming the true and perfect Christian, souls are first educated by the Church for the sake of the Kingdom and yet, education is also a task whose mission belongs to both the family and the state.

Second, after the Church, “the family comes (next) as instituted by the Creator for a particular purpose” (Pius XI, 1929, para. 32) for educating offspring to be members of the Church and the common welfare of society, an education of citizens. “So admirable is the harmony which she maintains with the Christian family, that the Church and the family may be said to constitute together one and the same temple of Christian education” (Pius XI, 1929, para. 17). Third, the State has a duty to educate and protect the youth for the common good. The education declaration (1965a) issued by Pope Paul VI during the Second Vatican Council further developed the teachings of his predecessors’ encyclicals.

The *Declaration on Christian Education* (1965a) by Pope Paul VI reiterated truths from previous Church documents that the primary right to educate youth belongs to the Church and the parents. This declaration went on to more fully develop these concepts and the Pope stated that “all men of every race, condition, and age, since they enjoy the dignity of a human being, have an inalienable right to an education” (Paul VI,

1965, p. 4-5). All Catholics have a right to a Christian education because with this education comes the knowledge of salvation. Other contemporary education themes were addressed: (a) school choice, (b) public v. private schools, (c) the importance of Catholic schools in society, (d) moral and religious education in schools, (e) different types of Catholic schools, and (f) the role of teachers in Catholic schools.

This pivotal declaration speaks definitively concerning the role of the teacher: Beautiful indeed and of great importance is the vocation of all those who aid parents in fulfilling their duties and who, as representatives of the human community, undertake the task of education in schools. [The teaching] vocation demands special qualities of mind and heart, very careful preparation, and continuing readiness to renew and adapt . . . and the most suitable methods of education and programs of study in forming teachers (para. 20-22).

The importance of the teacher is more fully developed in this document; however, this topic will be significantly addressed by the researcher in the subsection of Chapter II, Role of the Lay Teacher in Catholic Schools, in the literature review.

Pope John Paul II (1999), *The Church in America*, supplies the fourth papal document addressing Catholic education. The apostolic exhortation of Pope John Paul II focuses on primary and secondary schools of North and South America as evangelizing centers of education (para. 71). Embracing today's world in all its diversity, the document introduces the Church's "New Evangelization": bringing all men, woman, and children to encounter the Living Christ and lead them on a path to "conversion, communion and solidarity" (para. 7). The Catholic school is the place where this new

evangelization can persevere and thrive. Schools must clearly preserve their Catholic orientation specifically defined as:

A special effort should be made to strengthen the Catholic identity of schools, whose specific character is based on an educational vision having its origin in the person of Christ and its roots in the teachings of the Gospels. Catholic schools must seek not only to impart a quality education . . . but also and above all provide for the integral formation of the human person (para. 270).

Archbishop Miller's (2006) booklet, *The Holy See's Teaching on Catholic Schools*, reiterates the teachings of the Vatican concerning the indispensable nature of Catholic identity and the role of evangelization in the Church's schools. Although the topic of Catholic identity is "far too vast" (p. ix) to address adequately in a pamphlet, Miller's research offered seminal qualities and characteristics necessary for ensuring the Catholic identity of a school. The foundation for Miller's work is built on the following Committee for Catholic Education (CCE) documents from the American bishops: (a) *The Catholic School*, 1977; (b) *Lay Catholic in School: Witnesses to Faith*, 1982; (c) *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, 1988; (d) *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, 1997; and *Consecrated Persons and Their Mission in Schools: Reflections and Guidelines*, 2002. Additionally, Miller's work incorporated the following resources: (a) *Code of Canon Law*, 1983; (b) *Decree on Christian Education*, 1965.

"Papal interventions and Roman documents repeatedly emphasize that certain characteristics must be present for a school to be considered authentically Catholic" (p. 17). Miller focused on five elements of Catholic identity proposed by the Holy See as

“the measurable benchmarks, forming the backbone and inspiring mission of every Catholic school.” (p. 19) The five essential marks of Catholic schools examined are: (a) inspired by a supernatural vision, (b) founded on a Christian anthropology, (c) animated by communion and community, (d) imbued with a Catholic worldview throughout its curriculum, and (e) sustained by Gospel witness (p. 17).

It is significant to recognize that the NSBECS conceptual framework of the nine defining characteristics of Catholic schools find their source in Archbishop Miller’s five essential marks of Catholic schools. Ozar and Weitzel-O’Neill (2012) noted that the nine defining characteristics:

flow directly from the Holy See’s teaching on Catholic schools as compiled by Archbishop J. Michael Miller, CSB (The Holy See’s Teaching on Catholic Schools, 2006), and from statements by Pope Benedict XVI and the American bishops. The characteristics define the deep Catholic identity of Catholic schools and serve as a platform on which the standards and benchmarks rest. The defining characteristics authenticate the standards and benchmarks, justifying their existence and providing their meaning (Ozar et al., 2012, p. 1).

Archbishop Miller’s (2006) first element, “inspired by supernatural vision” (p. 20), defines the Church’s foundational, transcendental philosophy of education in Catholic schools. The specific purpose of Catholic education can be described as:

the formation of boys and girls who will be good citizens of this world, loving God and neighbor and enriching society with the leaven of the Gospel, and who will also become citizens of the world to come, thus fulfilling their destiny to become saints (p. 20).

Archbishop Miller's (2006) second element, "founded on a Christian anthropology" (p. 22), defines the Church's "Christocentric enterprise in [all] Catholic schools . . . Jesus is the foundation of the whole educational enterprise in a Catholic school" (pp. 26-27). Jesus and his Gospel are at the heart of the school community, thus, defining a Catholic school means that:

A Catholic school cannot be a factory for learning of various skills and competencies designed to fill the echelons of business and industry. Nor is it for "clients" and "consumers" in a competitive marketplace that values academic achievement. Education is not a commodity, even if Catholic schools equip their graduates with enviable skills. Rather, "the Catholic school sets out to be a school for the human person and of human persons" (p. 24).

Archbishop Miller's (2006) third element, "animated by communion and community" (p. 28), refers to "the school as a community of persons, even more to the point, "a genuine community of faith" (p. 28). Due to the social nature of human persons in forming community, the Catholic school is rooted "in the human person and in the reality of the Church." (p. 28) Therefore,

The Holy See describes the Catholic school as a community in four areas: (a) the teamwork among all those involved, (b) the cooperation between educators and bishops, (c) the interaction of students and teachers, and (d) the school's physical environment. (p. 29)

Archbishop Miller's (2006) fourth element, "imbued with a Catholic worldview throughout its curriculum" (p. 4), describes how the Catholic school must "embody genuine

Catholicity even apart from special programs and projects.” (p. 44) Catholicism is a “comprehensive way of life” (p.44) and a school’s Catholic identity should not be limited only to the religious or theological curriculum.

A Catholic school is Catholic because it undertakes to educate the whole child, addressing the requirements of his or her natural and supernatural perfection. It is Catholic because it provides an education in the intellectual and moral values. It is Catholic because it prepares for a fully human life at the service of others and for the life of the world to come. All instruction, therefore, must be authentically Catholic in content and methodology across the entire program of studies. (p. 44)

Archbishop Miller’s (2006) fifth element, “sustained by Gospel witness” (p. 53), emphasizes that “Catholic educators [significant to the school’s Catholic identity] are expected to be models for their students by bearing transparent witness to Christ and to the beauty of the Gospel.” (p. 59) The vocation of the teacher parallels Jesus, the master Teacher, so the life of the lay Catholic teacher should be a transparent window of truth in both word and action. Catholic educators are expected to be models of the Gospel, therefore: If boys and girls are to experience the splendor of the church, the Christian example of teachers and others responsible for their formation is indispensable and no effort should be spared in guaranteeing their presence of such witness in every Catholic school. (p. 59)

Pope Benedict XVI (2008), *Address to Catholic Educators*, vivifies concepts of truth, communal identity, evangelization, and goodness as identifying characteristics of Catholic schools. Pope Benedict XVI poses the challenging questions:

What is particular to our Catholic institutions? How do they contribute to the good of society through the Church’s primary mission of evangelization? To

whom do we belong . . . a Catholic school's Catholic identity is not simply a question of the number of Catholic students. It is a question of conviction--do we really believe that only in the mystery of the Word made flesh does the mystery of man truly become clear? Is faith tangible in our schools? (Benedict, 2008, *Address to Catholic Educators*, para. 7).

Catholic identity is lived through the lens of communal liturgies, acts of service, concern for justice, and respect for God's creation. Pope Benedict XVI further elucidates his concepts of Catholic identity:

Fostering a personal intimacy with Jesus Christ and communal witness to His loving Truth is indispensable in Catholic institutions of learning Catholic identity demands and inspires communities to live within the ecclesial life of faith where God's active presence in human affairs is recognized (Benedict, 2008, para. 8-9).

The document then further conceptualizes the role of the Christian educator, teacher, and administrator in Catholic schools as relating to Catholic identity. For the purpose of this review of literature, these themes will be explored further within the subsection, Role of the Teacher in Catholic Schools.

Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education and Committee for Catholic Education

Table 2

Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education and Congregation for Catholic Education, American Education Documents

| Date | Title |
|-------------|--|
| 1977 | The Catholic School |
| 1982 | Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith |
| 1988 | The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School: Guidelines for Reflection and Renewal |
| 1997 | The Catholic School On the Threshold of the Third Millennium |
| 2014 | Educating Today and Tomorrow: A Renewing Passion |

The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education (SCCE, 1977) published *The Catholic School*, a document aimed at providing Catholic school educators with deeper understanding of the mission, nature and characteristics of identifying a school as “Catholic.” According to the document, when stating that a school is “Catholic” in nature it distinctively affirms a “Catholic school is part of the saving mission of the Catholic Church” (para. 9). Additionally, the document defines other characteristics of a Catholic school: (a) privileged environment for the complete formation of its members (para.

9), (b) service to mankind (para. 16), (c) a place of integral formation directed at growth of the whole person (para. 28), (d) academic excellence integrated with faith, culture, and community life (para. 32), and (e) teachers whose lives build up the Kingdom of God (para. 46). The nature and characteristics of a lay teacher in a Catholic school will be revisited and more fully developed in the third thematic section of this research. *The Catholic School* (SCCE, 1977) develops the basic outline for specifically defining [Catholic] identity and mission in Catholic schools (SCCE, 1988, p.1).

The following document, *Lay Catholics in School: Witnesses to Faith* (1982), emphasizes the vocation and the contributions of lay persons in Catholic schools, who complemented the valuable service offered by the religious congregations in the past. In addition to the role of the laity, the richness and uniqueness of a school's Catholic identity is distinctly described. "The function exercised by the [Catholic] school in society has no substitute" (para. 12). It is most important the families, students, and teachers understand the specific educational mission of the Church. In virtue of its identity, a [Catholic] school must integrate into its educational mission for the sake of its students the following distinctive qualities of Catholic identity:

- (a) Cultivation of the intellect; (b) cultivation of the aesthetic faculties of the human person; (c) develop the ability for correct judgement, will, and affectivity; (d) promotion of values and prudent behavior; (e) preparation for professional life; (f) appreciation for cultural diversity (para. 12).

Following in a similar vein as previous SCCE documents (1977, 1982), *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* (1988) devoted to the formation of youth, published by the former SCCE but currently known as the Congregation for Catholic Education (CCE), focuses on the distinctive attempt by Catholic schools to generate:

A community climate in a school permeated by the Gospel spirit of freedom and love. . . . What makes the Catholic school distinctive is its religious dimension to be found in (a) the educational climate, (b) the personal development of each student, (c) the relationship between culture and gospel, and (d) the illumination of all knowledge with the light of faith (CCE, 1988, para.1).

Catholic identity permeates a school characterized by trusting relationships, safe physical surroundings, and the spiritually rich contentment of a “schoolhome” (para. 29). The ecclesial and educational climate of the Catholic school models that of the church, The People of God (para. 31), as described in the Second Vatican Council document *The Dogmatic Constitution of the Church* (Pope Paul VI, 1964). While prayer, work, and love shape communal life relationships in the school, the document also defines the educational responsibilities in a Catholic school noting that “intellectual life and growth as a Christian go hand in hand” (para. 51). “Human beings are fundamentally free” (para. 63) and, therefore, an authentic Catholic school community must allow all community members to be formed in “the image and likeness of Christ and His gospel” (para. 63).

The previous SCCE (1977, 1982) and CCE (1988) documents provide the underpinnings for the circular letter, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium* (CCE, 1997). This document was published for the purpose of reminding Catholic educators “to focus attention on the nature of distinctive characteristics of a school which presents itself as *Catholic* (para. 4). As described by the letter, certain fundamental characteristics are of great importance if its educational activity is to be effectual in the Church and in society:

- (a) The Catholic school is a place of integral education of the human person through a clear educational project of which Christ is the foundation; (b) its ecclesial and cultural identity should characterize the educating community; (c) its mission of education as a work of love should characterize the educating community; and (d) its service to society should characterize the educating community (CCE, 1997, para. 4).

Due to its ecclesial identity, Catholic schools “set out to be schools for the human person and of human persons” (CCE 1977, 1982, 1988, 1997). The Catholic school is at the heart of the Church and participates in the “evangelizing mission of the educating community” (para. 11) in every way. Thus, the Catholic school “can be of service developing the mission of the People of God” (*The Dogmatic Constitution of the Church*, 1965, p. 28) and building dialogue between the Church and our challenged society.

Educating Today and Tomorrow: A Renewing Passion (2014) grew out of the Congregation for Catholic Education’s Plenary Assembly in celebration of the publication anniversary of two pivotal Vatican documents, *Declaration on Christian Education* (1965) and *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* (1990). Considering the new evangelization and the challenges of today’s society, the CCE sought to ponder and address the educational question, “What should Catholic schools and universities be like?” (CCE, 2014, para. 1). Teaching and learning are living witnesses of the educational apostolate and service to the community. Due to the uniqueness and dignity of every human being, the mission and identity of the Catholic school must be characterized as being “conscientiously dedicated to the truth” (para. 2).

According to the document, schools are comprised of teachers and students. A diverse body of students attend school to learn, constantly and creatively. Teachers are responsible for being “open and professionally knowledgeable when they are leading classes where diversity is recognized, accepted and appreciated” (para. 5). Although cultural contexts of schools may vary, Catholic schools and universities are distinguished by six educational hallmarks: (a) respect for individual dignity and uniqueness; (b) a wealth of opportunities that are offered to young people for them to grow and develop their abilities and talents; (c) a balanced focus on cognitive, affective, social, professional, ethical, spiritual aspects; (d) encouragement for every pupil to develop their talents in a climate of cooperation and solidarity; (e) the promotion of research as a rigorous commitment towards truth, being aware that human knowledge has limits but also with a great openness of mind and heart; and (f) respect of ideas, openness to dialogue, the ability to interact and work together in a spirit of freedom and care (CCE, para. 4).

Educating Today and Tomorrow: A Renewing Passion (2014) holistically addresses the 21st century identity of a Catholic school, a significant theme in Catholic scholarship that the Congregation for Catholic Education has engaged tirelessly (CCE 1977, 1982, 1988, 1997, 2014). Schools should constantly review themselves and their programs measuring whether their community is supported by these three pillars: (a) Gospel tradition, (b) authority, and (c) freedom (p. 7). In addition, being identified as a Catholic school means remembering that “at the heart of Catholic education there is always Jesus Christ: everything that happens in Catholic schools and universities should lead to an encounter with the living Christ” (para. 8).

National Conference of Catholic Bishops and United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Table 3

National Conference of Catholic Bishops and United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

| Date | Title |
|------|---|
| 1972 | <i>To Teach as Jesus Did</i> |
| 1976 | <i>Teach Them</i> |
| 2005 | <i>Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools In the Third Millennium</i> |

To Teach as Jesus Did (1972) is the strongest collective pastoral document issued by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) addressing its “most significant support and commitment to Catholic schools” (Shimabukuro, 2004, p. 131). While the primary contribution of this pastoral message to Catholic education is “theological in nature” (Nuzzi, 2004, p. 663), *To Teach As Jesus Did*, describes the framework for the identity, mission, and purpose of the Catholic school:

The educational purposes of the Church include three interlocking dimensions: (a) the message revealed by God which the Church proclaims, (b) fellowship in the life of the Holy Spirit, and (c) service to the Christian community and the entire human community. In this pastoral message, Catholic education is viewed as a most significant way for the Church to fulfill its dedication to the dignity of the individual and the building of community (NCCB, 1972, para. 13). The first

concept of the framework, teach the message (*didache*) of the Church, is to proclaim through its schools “the revelation of God, foretold in the Scriptures, and fulfilled in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ” (Nuzzi, 2004, p. 663). The second concept of the framework, Catholic school as “community” (*koinonia*), is at the heart of Catholic school education:

Community is at the heart of Christian education not simply as a concept to be taught but as a reality to be lived. Through education, men must be moved to build community in all areas of life; they can do this best if they have learned the meaning of community by experiencing it. Formed by this experience, they are better able to build community in their families, their work places, their neighborhoods, their nation, their world (NCCB, 1972, para. 7).

The third concept of the framework, service (*diakonia*), grows out of *didache* and *koinonia*: The [life of Jesus Christ] and the experience of Christian community lead naturally to service. Christ gives each person gifts for the good of all . . . with a natural, outward embrace responding to the needs of others. Christian service flows from an appropriate education on the message of the Gospel [found in Catholic schools] (NCCB, 1972, para. 28).

Teach Them (1976) is the follow-up document to the pastoral statement, *To Teach As Jesus Did*. “*Teach Them* is specifically concerned with the Church’s educational ministry to children and young people especially in Catholic schools” (USCCB, 1976, p. 1). The document readdresses the identifying themes of Catholic education: to teach doctrine, build community, and serve. Additionally, the bishops’ document offers other educational qualities of Catholic identity found in schools: (a) Catholic schools bear

witness to the importance of religion in our local civic communities; (b) Catholic schools can be examples of dedication, energy and generosity to the community; (c) Catholic schools offer high-quality instruction and Christian formation (USCCB, 1976 p. 2 – 3). Recognizing the challenges and difficulties of preserving Catholic schools for the future, the bishops closed their statement saying, “The first commandment of Jesus’ was to ‘go teach’ . . . our job now is to carry on this apostolic responsibility. We will make a commitment of handing on the faith to the next generation” (p. 7).

Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium (2005) is the statement of the Catholic bishops of the United States reaffirming with conviction that “the entire ecclesial community (of the Catholic Church) is called to value ever more deeply this task and mission of the Church’s educational (obligation)” (USCCB, 2005, p. 1). With this reconfirmed dedication, the U.S. bishops offered the distinguishing qualities of the unique identity describing Catholic schools. We must provide young people with: (a) academically rigorous program of education; (b) doctrinally sound faith formation; (c) collaboration among teachers, parents, and administration to form kids; (d) sound church teaching through a broad-base curriculum; (e) education rooted in the Gospel message; and (f) cherished Traditions and liturgical practices (USCCB, 2005, p. 3).

In addition to acknowledging Catholic school identity hallmarks, the bishops also acknowledged that “much has changed in our Church and in our nation in these past years” (p. 2). Therefore, the bishops recognized the need to face additional issues of Catholic schools and must effectively respond. Thus, addressing the growing needs of the people and continuing “the Catholic identity and evangelizing efforts of Catholic

schools” (p. 8), additional educational challenges needed to be faced by Catholic schools: (a) education for the poor and disadvantaged, (b) education for immigrant children, (c) education for non-Catholic children, and (e) education for the growing Hispanic/Latino population (USCCB, 2005).

During the 2011 Catholic Higher Education Collaborative (CHEC) hosted by The Catholic University of America and St. John’s University of New York, the American bishops distinctly stated the definition of Catholic identity:

Catholic schools are dedicated to the ecclesial mission of the [Catholic Church]. Catholic identity provides the *raison d’etre* for Catholic education. According to Church doctrine, the purpose of a Catholic school is to assist parents in their transmission of the faith--to help form identity that is Catholic within the child. Catholic identity development is at the heart of our role as Catholic educators (Schuttloffel, 2012, p.149).

With their CHEC statement, the United States bishops made a definitive dedication to the mission and foundational principles of Catholic K-12 educational institutions identity. “Catholic schools’ educational purpose is evangelization” (p. 149).

Catholic School Experts Concerning Catholic Identity

In the subject area of school experts, the bodies of work of four researchers address Catholic identity in Catholic schools: (a) Groome, 1996; (b) Cook, 2008, 2011, 2015; (c) Earl, 2013; and (d) Nuzzi, 2017.

“Historically, religious orders have shaped the character and identity of the Catholic school they sponsor” (Bryk, 1984, p. 32). As research shows (McDonald and Schultz, 2017), the data describes a dramatic shift in Catholic school faculty and staff. In 1920 the religious comprised 92% teaching staff and 8% lay staff. In 2019, the religious comprised 2.8 % teaching staff and 97.2 % lay staff. With this transformation of Catholic school faculty ratio, the Catholic identity and its distinctive features of Catholic secondary schools need to be studied with a commitment to Catholic tradition, academic excellence and spiritual values.

Groome’s work (1996) has comprehensively focused on the concept of Catholic identity and has brought the research to the forefront of Catholic scholarship: That the distinctiveness of Catholic education is prompted by the distinguishing characteristics of Catholicism, itself, and these characteristics should be referenced in the whole curriculum of Catholic schools . . . [curriculum defined as] content taught, the process of teaching and the environment of the school” (p. 107).

Groome builds his work on the foundations of Catholic theologian, Richard P. McBrien (1980), and Baptist theologian, Langdon Gilkey (1975). According to McBrien (1980):

It is difficult to specify what gives Catholicism its distinctive character . . . apart from the Petrine doctrine. Various characteristics of Catholicism are shared with other

Christian traditions . . . yet within Catholicism the combination and configuration [of these characteristics] constitutes its uniqueness--its 'Catholicity' (p. 1172).

From his Protestant perspective, Gilkey (1975) proposes "his four distinguishing features in the unique 'configuration' of Catholicism: (a) Catholicism's commitment to tradition, (b) Catholicism's positive anthropology, (c) Catholicism's sense of sacramentality, and (d) Catholicism's commitment to rationality" (Gilkey, 1975, pp. 1722).

Merging the theology of McBrien (1980) and Gilkey (1975), Groome proposes his five particular and distinguishing *theological characteristics* of Catholicism:

- (a) its positive anthropology of the person; (b) its sacramentality of life; (c) its communal emphasis regarding human and Christian existence; (d) its commitment to tradition as a source of its Story and Vision; and (e) its appreciation of rationality and learning, epitomized in its commitment to education (p. 106).

Additionally, Groome offers his three *cardinal characteristics* in that "they are the hinges of the five theological virtues" (p. 106). These three *cardinal characteristics* are:

- (a) Catholicism's commitment to people's "personhood," to who they become and their ethic of life—an ontological concern; (b) Catholicism's commitment to 'basic justice'—a sociological concern; (c) Catholicism's commitment to 'catholicity'—a universal concern. . . the collage of these *theological* and *cardinal characteristics* constitute education that is 'Catholic' (p. 108).

Groome's (1996) first distinguishing theological characteristic of Catholic education, "Positive anthropology of the person" originates in the biblical creation stories of Genesis where man and woman are created in God's own image and likeness (GN 1:

27). Obligations to a positive anthropology call for:

An understanding of our human condition before God. . . it calls for the whole curriculum of Catholic education to reflect and promise at least three commitments: (a) to affirm students' basic goodness, to promote dignity, to honor their fundamental rights, and to develop their gifts to the fullest--as God's reflection; (b) to educate people to live responsibly, with God's help, for the fullness of life that God wills for self and others--as responsible partners; and (c) to convince and mold people to live as if their lives are worthwhile and have historical significance, that their every good effort advances the well-being of all--as history makers (p. 109).

The entire culture and politics of a Catholic school should be permeated with "life affirming anthropology . . . that promotes the ancient conviction of St. Irenaeus, that 'the glory of God is the human person fully alive'" (p. 109).

Groome's (1996) second distinguishing theological characteristic of Catholic education is "The sacramentality of life" or "To see God in all things" (p. 109). This principle reflects "the central Catholic conviction that God mediates Godself to us and we encounter God's presence and grace coming to meet us through the ordinary life" (p. 110). Thus, for Catholic education, engaging the imagination of the student is not "throwing a rosary into the middle of Math class" (p.110) but

Seeing God in all things with the intention of forming students in a sacramental consciousness permeating the whole curriculum of a Catholic school. . . It means encouraging students regardless of what they are studying, to employ critical and

creative powers of their minds (reason, memory, imagination) to look at life so intensely they begin to look ‘through’ it (p. 111).

Teachers need to practice sacramental consciousness themselves enabling them to bring their vision to the classroom.

Groome’s (1996) third distinguishing theological characteristic of Catholic education emphasizes “Community: Made for each other” (p. 111).

For Catholic education, this communal characteristic of Catholicism should permeate the content and process of the schools’ pedagogy and it is clearly most significant for the life of the school itself. . . The environment of a Catholic school needs to reflect community not simply as an ideal taught but as a value realized (p. 113).

Groome’s work advises schools to focus on unifying communal characteristics such as an atmosphere of openness, profound care among parents and teachers, right relationships among teachers and students, and love for one another. Found within its ecclesial roots, Catholicism “has strong emphasis on the ‘communal’ nature of human existence; that we find our identity and true selves in relationship with others (p.111) and therefore, the nature of the Catholic school.

Groome’s (1996) fourth distinguishing theological characteristic of Catholic education is “Tradition: To share story and vision” (p. 114). “As Vatican II stated, the tradition which comes from the Apostles develops in the Church with the help of the Holy Spirit . . . there is growth in this understanding of the tradition, realities, and these words that have been handed down over time” (p. 115). Understanding of the traditions takes time for which the Catholic Church’s ‘story’ unfolds throughout history. The Story

of the [Catholic] Christian faith then includes: its scriptures, and liturgies; its creeds, dogmas, doctrines, and theologies; its sacraments, rituals, symbols, myths, and gestures; . . . its spirituality, values, laws and expected lifestyles. Any of these symbols reflect and carry a historical reality of the Catholic faith thus, reveal an aspect of the [Catholic] Christian story (p. 115).

“Ultimately, this [Catholic] Christian Vision is the reign of God in human history” (p. 115). God’s Kingdom of heaven coming into perfection and reigning with peace and justice here on earth. It is the vision of Catholic education to “inform, form, and transform [students’] identities, so that they know who they are and how they are to live” (p. 115). The tasks of teaching and carrying on the Catholic education tradition, story and vision does not solely belong in the religious studies classrooms but should permeate the entire curriculum of a Catholic school.

Groome’s (1996) fifth distinguishing theological characteristic of Catholic education is “Rationality: Faith seeking understanding” (p. 116). “Catholicism sees reason as a gift from God that is to bring [people] to both understanding and moral responsibility” (p. 117). Catholic education should teach students, parents, educators, and administrators not what to think but train them to think for themselves. Catholic anthropology should engage people to think critically with a heart formed for personal responsibility and social justice.

Groome’s (1996) first cardinal, or ‘hinge’, characteristic of Catholic education is “Catholicism’s commitment to people’s ‘personhood’, to who they become and their ethic of life- an *ontological concern*” (p.108). Catholic education counter-culturally focuses not solely on the “facts” of educational knowledge. It aims to focus on the “very being” (p. 118)

of students coupled with being in right relationship with God, self, and others. Catholic education is “anthropological in nature, engaging the whole ‘being’ of people, and empowering them to become the glory of God fully alive” (p. 119). Qualities of sacramentality, community, tradition, and rationality exemplify this ontological characteristic.

Groome’s (1996) second cardinal characteristic of Catholic education is “Catholicism’s commitment to ‘basic justice’ - a *sociological concern*” (p. 108). Catholic education, teachers and students, have a responsibility to live out peace and justice recognizing “that faithfulness to the Gospel calls for a community embracing the ‘fundamental option for the poor’” (p. 119). Basic justice in Catholic schools: (a) promotes an integrated school curriculum; (b) models social justice action; (c) encourages right relationships and dignity within the school community; and (d) acts justly in a global community.

Groome’s (1996) third cardinal characteristic of Catholic education is “Catholicism’s commitment to ‘catholicity’ – a *universal concern*” (p. 108). Having a Catholic identity means “embracing the whole” (p. 120), a community committed to openness and inclusion. Jesus’ ministry modeled inclusion, compassion, outreach, and truth. Thus, Catholic school communities should be open and welcoming for all members who seek its values. As a community of care and right relationships, a Catholic community endorses: (a) inclusive policy practices and structures; (b) dialogue among administrators, teachers, parents, and students; (c) nurtures the spiritual formation of students; and (d) instructs students about their faith.

Cook (2008, 2011, 2015) focuses on Catholic identity as being defined by relationships. Cook's body of work emphasizes that "the *raison d'être* of Catholic schools in the 21st century is to build relationships" (Cook, 2015, p. 7). In the global society of public, private, and charter school educational choices, what makes Catholic schools attractive are "the life-giving relationships that are at the heart of the Catholic school's mission" (Cook, 2011, p. 321). With relationship building as its source of identity, Cook (2008) suggests a four-point framework for defining and ensuring schools' Catholic identity: (a) Gospel-message oriented, (b) cultivating a Catholic ethos and culture, (c) intentional hiring of teachers for mission, and (d) focus on the universal Catholic Church.

Relationships are at the heart of what it means to be Catholic (Cook, 2001). Founded in the Scriptures, "a person need not look any further than our belief in the Trinity to grasp the centrality of relationship in Christian theology. Scripture tells us that our God is a God of relationship in his very Being" (Cook, 2011, p. 321). Cook's work is validated by the USCCB document, *To Teach As Jesus Did*, which states "one of the aims of Catholic schools is to form persons-in-community" (USCCB, 1972, para. 13).

Cultivating a school's Catholic ethos and culture is greater than defining itself as a "private school with a cross on top" (Cook, 2008, p. 9). Schools must create structures within their communities that intertwine the everyday functions of the school with its life-giving, religious foundations. A "synthesis of culture and faith" (CCE, 1998, para. 14) (e.g., service programs, code of conduct, educational programs, charism lesson plans, faculty discussions) helps students, teachers, and administrators live their educational mission and religious identity as a community every day.

Cook (2008, 2011) suggests that relationship building and a school's Catholic identity encompass the quality of teachers hired in Catholic schools. "School leaders cannot ensure Catholic identity themselves. Teachers are the key" (Cook, 2008, p. 10). Teachers play a key role in helping students develop their relationships with God, themselves, and others. Thus, the necessity that administrators hire teachers who "get it" and support the Catholic identity of the school. "Leaders must be more intentional about hiring for mission . . . and design teacher evaluation instruments and processes that include mission-related items" (p. 11). The job of the teacher is pivotal "in setting the tone in both the school and the classroom" (CCE, 1998; USCCB, 1972) because that is where the sacred student-teacher relationship is cultivated. As leaders, Catholic educators play an important role guiding each student as they walk through their spiritual journey of human self-discovery (CCE, 1988, 1998, 2002; John Paul II, 1979; Simonds, 2006).

Key to its identity, the Catholic Church is defined as a universal church. Her very nature is global and international. Cook writes (2008), "If we want to fulfill a need in our [American] country, and really find our niche, American Catholic schools should promote global awareness and solidarity, multicultural perspectives, and international relationships" (p. 12). It is incumbent of Catholic school communities, by their very nature, to cultivate a culture of relationships with all members of the universal Church.

The work of Earl (2013) focuses on the practical and spiritual lived experiences of administrators, teachers and students when creating a description for "Catholic identity" in schools. Earl proposes practical ways that can "demonstrate, recognize, and witness to our Catholic identity" (Earl, 2016, p. 1). The following unique qualities of the rich

Catholic tradition give witness to a school's Catholic identity: (a) one universal Church, (b) atmosphere, (c) tradition, (d) holiness, (e) outreach and service, (f) liturgy, (g) inform and instruct, (h) curriculum, (i) integrate, (j) dedication to mission, (k) example, (l) no one is exempt, (m) teach, (n) image and likeness of God, (o) transform, and (p) youth and you (Earl, 2016, pp.1-5).

Earl refers to 'one universal Church' (p. 1) as "all the things that are external signs of our faith that serve as reminders of why we are Catholic followers of Jesus" (p.1). In the classrooms, a crucifix on the wall, advent wreaths, liturgical symbols, rosaries, bibles, prayer corners, and statues of Mary all serve as physical reminders of the Catholic faith.

Earl refers to 'atmosphere' (p. 1) as "the tone of the school which creates an atmosphere that reminds all of Christ's presence" (p. 1). Atmosphere goes beyond the physical symbols of Catholicism, for it is the way people in the community treat one another. A Catholic atmosphere is present when faculty and staff treat one another with respect and charity. When students and teachers treat each other in a caring fashion, courteously and politely, and virtuously in all dealings, a Christian environment is fostered.

Earl refers to 'tradition' (p. 2) as "the rich history and legacy inherited" (p. 2) by schools from the beginnings of the Roman Catholic Church through the Middle Ages and the religious communities who founded Catholic schools. For example, it is important to understand what the colors of the liturgical calendar mean, who are the saints, and why Catholics pray the rosary. The beauty of Catholic identity is that it is a part of the history of the world.

Earl refers to 'holiness' (p. 2) as that which reminds us "all in the Church whether we belong to the hierarchy or cared for by it, are called to holiness" (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, 1964, para. 39). Sacred Scripture, the sacraments and prayer help students and faculty grow in holiness. "[Teachers and students] have been created by God and through baptism are called to holiness, to become fully the image of God through the practice of this virtue" (Earl, 2008)

Earl refers to 'outreach and service' (p. 2) as an outcome or result of growth in holiness. "Our love for the Lord means that our faith motivates us to reach out to others" (p.2). Jesus cured the sick and ministered to the poor, so therefore ministering to the needs of others is incumbent on teachers and students. Student and teacher participation in acts of kindness, service and generosity make holiness visible. "Caring for the earth, cooking in a soup kitchen, participating in a food and clothing drive show others what makes us Catholic and how it allows us to show by our actions what Jesus and our Catholic faith really mean to us" (p. 2).

Earl refers to 'liturgy' (p. 2) as "celebration of the Mass as our central act of worship in the Catholic Church and wonderful way we teach our students to ask for God's blessings" (p. 2). Time during the school day for Mass does not "shortchange the curriculum" (p. 2) but blesses the school day with graces. Liturgy is an opportunity for the students, faculty, and staff to gather together and focusing purposefully "give priority to the Lord" (p. 2).

Earl refers to 'inform and instruct' (p. 3) as parents, teachers, and administrators "united in faith, sharing in sacraments, we need to inform and instruct our students about why we value Catholic education" (p. 3). Educators need to teach the meaning and purpose of actions, respect for others, honesty, and principles for living authentically. In

the classroom, students need to be instructed how to practice their faith, especially when life becomes very difficult. Teachers must teach and model how Gospel values can be meaningful to the students' lives.

Earl refers to 'curriculum and classroom' (p. 3) as 'teaching students to know and love Jesus Christ, while also teaching them about our faith and what we believe' (p. 3). While following a theological curriculum in the classroom, students are also asked to respectfully engage in dialogue with one another. The Gospel-value-based religion curriculum promotes a classroom characterized by charity, hope, gratitude, honesty and a classroom that is faith-filled and tolerant of others.

Earl refers to 'integrate' (p. 3) as "all members of the school need to work together to teach respect and reverence for our faith since this is at the heart of a Catholic school" (p.3). It is imperative that teachers work together to look "for creative ways to integrate the [Catholic faith] into other subjects other than religion" (p. 3). Regardless of a teacher's specific faith tradition, Catholic identity must be expressed in practical ways defining who we are as an educational community".

Earl refers to 'dedication to mission' (p. 3) as "the primary mission to form young people in the faith, to come to know Jesus Christ and to see that all [Catholic] schools are rooted in Christ" (p. 3). The mission sets the pulse of everything that occurs in the school. All persons included in the school community should know the mission. Practical examples of articulating, reminding or informing educators, parents, and students of the mission are: (a) mission statements plaques on classroom walls, (b) mission statements printed on student planners, (c) service projects integrated into the mission, and (d) student diversity integrated into the mission.

Earl refers to ‘example’ (p. 4) as “actions speak louder than words” (p. 4). The greatest teaching tool a teacher or administrators has is to teach by example. Students learn from the manner and example of how community members treat one another. “For example, [teachers] can talk all about respect, but if they do not show respect to one another and to their students, then the words are empty” (p. 3). Pope Francis I (2013) reminds schools, “An evangelizing community gets involved by word and deed in people’s daily lives” (para. 24).

Earl refers to ‘no one is exempt’ (p. 4) as the defining role for teachers. “Catholic identity is not only for the religion teachers but for everyone who is part of the faculty. Together we form the Catholic school community” (p. 4). Whether a faculty member is Catholic or non-Catholic teaching subjects other than Religion, it is important to remember students learn by example. Working in a Catholic school, all members must learn to integrate an appreciation for faith teachings, Gospel values, or personal authenticity into their school or classroom.

Earl refers to ‘teach’ (p. 4) as “teaching the faith” (p. 4). Students need to be taught to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ but first and foremost; teachers need to cultivate a relationship with Christ. Teachers need to teach faith by their lived example and, as a result, grow in modeling Christ to their students.

Earl refers to ‘image and likeness of God’ (p. 4) as “knowing the truths of Genesis that we are made in God’s image and likeness” (p. 4). Students need to learn and know that their greatness comes from God. As God is a Trinity of persons, a loving community, so too must a school reflect a caring and grace-filled community of persons. It is incumbent on all teachers to be aware that students “need our help to see that they are created in God’s [image and likeness] and unconditionally loved by God” (p. 40).

Earl refers to ‘transform’ (p. 5) as “holiness and a spiritual way of life are for everyone” (p. 5). It is the task of teachers to teach students that faith is serious, life is holy, and God is always present in the moments of each day. As ‘transformers’, teachers are conduits of Christ and help transform students hearts (Pope Benedict XVI, 2005).

Earl refers to ‘youth and you’ (p. 5) as “[teachers] understanding the meaning, value, and appreciation of Catholic Identity for ourselves and our own lives . . . for we cannot give what we do not have” (p. 5). It is imperative that Catholic educators continually engage in self-formation. Only then, can educators teach, share, shape, and transform their students in faith.

For Nuzzi (personal communication, April 2017), the Catholic identity of a school is grounded in “a sense of relationship, a communal identity characterized by joy and a sense of being irresistible.” The Pope Paul VI (1965) document, *Declaration on Christian Education* (GE), transitioned the primary model of a Catholic school from institution to a community, a People of God. Nuzzi’s work focuses on the People of God imagery and Trinitarian theology, the Triune nature of the Christian God as three distinct Persons—a God whose essence is a community. Nuzzi suggests 10 defining characteristics of Catholic identity that should be transparently present and active in every Catholic school community: (a) incarnational view of the world; (b) immersion in the paschal mystery; (c) value of relationships as a reflection of the Divine; (d) nuanced view of Scripture; (e) civic engagement; (f) service for the common good; (g) discipline as a faith expectation; (h) centrality of arts, ritual, drama, and music to the life of faith; (i) fullness of the Catholic identity at the heart of the Church; and (j) personal excellence as a spiritual goal. According to Nuzzi (personal communication, April 2017), the sanctity of the human

person, the sacramental view of life, and the mission of evangelization have always been at the heart of Catholic education.

Empirical Educational Research Concerning Catholic Identity

In the subject area of empirical research, three specific bodies of work address the topic of Catholic identity in Catholic schools: (a) *Making God Known, Loved and Served*, (2008); (b) *The National Standards and Benchmarks of Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools*, (2012); and (c) *The Perceptions of Catholic Elementary School Principals in the Archdiocese of Portland, Oregon Concerning the Catholic Identity and Program Effectiveness of their Respective Schools*, (2015).

Catholic schools must be strong in our nation's third century. The pastoral letter of the U.S. bishops, *Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium* (2005), calls for Catholic communities of faith to rededicate themselves to the evangelizing mission and educational vocation of Catholic elementary and secondary schools. These "national treasures" (p. 1) are the responsibility for all Catholic community members and represent the future of the Church. In response to the Bishops' call, in 2005 a national task force of 50 scholars and other professionals convened at the University of Notre Dame to help address the future of Catholic elementary and secondary schools.

Making God Known, Loved and Served (2008) is the research document generated from a yearlong Notre Dame task force initiative. Recognizing many internal and external challenges that currently lie at the heart of Catholic schools (e.g. financial issues,

school closures, staffing, leadership, enrollment decline), the task force focused their combined research animated by three deep-seated, collective convictions:

Catholic schools afford the fullest and best opportunity to realize the fourfold purpose of Christian education, namely, to provide an atmosphere in which the Gospel message is proclaimed, community in Christ is experienced, service to our brothers and sisters is the norm, and thanksgiving and worship of God is cultivated.

The vitality of the Church is inextricably linked to the health of its Catholic schools because they provide the most effective way to evangelize and form holy men and women who make God known, loved, and served.

Catholic schools will continue to play a vital role on American civic life as they exemplify how to prepare citizens for full engagement in democracy and commitment to the common good (Jenkins, 2008, p. 2).

Strengthening the Catholic identity of the Church's elementary and secondary school is the intentional aim and flows out of these faith-driven beliefs. In response to the task force, the University of Notre Dame chose to individually and uniquely respond to the challenges facing Catholic education. Thus, the University created a multidimensional strategic plan to meet the needs of Catholic identity in schools. Notre Dame offers 12 "complementary recommendations" (p. 4) extending its commitment to Catholic schools and embracing the cultivation of schools' Catholic identity : (a) recruit and form a new generation of effective Catholic school teachers; (b) recruit and form effective Catholic school leaders; (c) cultivate a lay apostolic movement in service to Catholic schools; (d) build a national initiative for the academic improvement of Catholic schools; (e) build an initiative to strengthen the Catholic identity of our schools; (f) form

partnerships with other Catholic colleges and universities; (g) develop partnerships with individual Catholic schools--the Magnificat model; (h) use Notre Dame's marketing expertise to attract new families to Catholic schools; (i) attract and support the Latino community through Catholic schools; (j) design and build the ACE Consulting Initiative; (k) develop a national program to form effective parish school leadership teams; and (l) access public funds and resources for Catholic schools and their students (Jenkins, 2008, p. 5). The University recently established the Institute for Educational Initiatives which is dedicated to improving Catholic identity in elementary and secondary schools through continuing research, curriculum and instruction, teacher professional development, and technological advancement.

Drs. Ozar and Weitzel-O'Neill (2012) published, *The National Standards and Benchmarks of Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools*. Ozar and Weitzel-O'Neill spearheaded a task force, operating under the Center for Catholic School Effectiveness (CCSE) at Loyola University Chicago in conjunction with Boston College Roche Center for Catholic Education. Other elements of the task force included other Catholic institutions, superintendents of U.S. Catholic dioceses, NCEA directors, and other Catholic education stakeholders who sought research data to improve Catholic elementary and secondary schools. "Interested in securing a strong future for Catholic elementary and secondary schools for generations to come . . . the document is the result of two years of broad collaboration among Catholic educators across the nation" (Ozar et al., 2012, p. iii). Catholic schools are Gospel-based and according to the U.S. bishops, "schools are foundational to the mission of the Church" (p. 3).

With a national vision of Catholic identity and Catholic schools, the mixed methodology research yielded "national articulations of defining characteristics [of

Catholic identity], performance benchmarks, and [standards] that will enable all sponsors of elementary and secondary schools to assess, strengthen, and sustain their operations” (p. 4). Grounded in Church documents, *The National Standards and Benchmarks of Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools* provide tools for stakeholders “to describe how the most mission-driven, program effective, well managed, and responsibly governed Catholic schools operate. They are offered as school effectiveness standards rather than curriculum content standards” (p. 5). The document offers three measurement categories for pastors, principals, and school communities to use as a means of defining, assessing and improving their schools: (a) Defining Characteristics; (b) Standards; (c) Benchmarks.

The Defining Characteristics of Catholic schools:

flow directly from the Holy See’s teaching on Catholic schools as compiled by Archbishop J. Michael Miller, CSB (*The Holy See’s Teaching on Catholic Schools*, 2006), and from statements by Pope Benedict XVI and the American

Bishops. The Characteristics define the deep Catholic identity of Catholic schools and serve as the platform on which the Standards and Benchmarks rest. The

Defining Characteristics authenticate the Standards and Benchmarks, justifying their existence and providing their meaning (Appendix A) (p. 5).

The second section, The Standards, “describe policies, programs, structures, processes that should be present in a mission-driven, program effective, well-managed, and responsibly governed Catholic school (Appendix A)” (p. 5). The Standards provide parameters for Catholic schools to assist in maintaining Catholic identity and educational mission. Third, The Benchmarks, “provide observable, measurable descriptors for each Standard. . . they provide a solid base for future development of more details

selfassessment and diagnostic instruments (Appendix A) (p. 6). The Benchmarks offer practical applications and examples of Standards implementations. *The National Standards and Benchmarks of Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools* (2012) offers a common framework for Catholic schools nationwide to value, protect, and preserve their Catholic identity.

The work of Ray-Timoney (2015) addressed the issue of Catholic identity in a mixed-methodology dissertation. “The purpose of the study was to examine perceptions of the Catholic elementary principals of the Archdiocese of Portland, Oregon regarding the extent to which Catholic identity and program effectiveness are operative in their respective schools” (Ray-Timoney, 2015, p. 11). After analyzing survey data (N= 33) and correlation analysis of personal interviews (N= 6), Ray-Timoney found significant relationships do exist between participants’ views concerning Catholic identity and program effectiveness. Quantitative data affirmed that the teachings of the Catholic Church on mission and Catholic identity in schools (CCE, 1977, 1982, 1988, 1997; NCCB, 1972, 1976, 1979, 2014; Pius XI, 1929; USCCB, 2005a, 2005b) were integrated, alive and true in their respective communities. Data affirmed the Gospel-focused mission of Catholic schools and suggested that lay teachers have an important role in the school’s faith community.

Ray-Timoney’s (2015) qualitative findings suggest that principals found working with committed, competent teachers and parents aided the mission of their Catholic school community. Factors that principals perceived as challenging their school’s Catholic identity included (a) the absence of formalized diocesan Catholic identity plan, (b) discord among parental understanding of Catholic school’s mission, and (c) teacher turnover rate.

Order of Saint Ursula

Saint Angela of Merici, foundress



Figure 1. Portrait of Saint Angela of Merici

The Order of Saint Ursula

The second section of the literature review, the Order of Saint Ursula (OSU), is divided into two main sections: (a) history of Saint Angela of Merici, foundress, and (b) historical background of pedagogy in Ursuline secondary schools.

History of Saint Angela of Merici

The foundress of the Order of St. Ursula, St. Angela of Merici, was born in 1474 in Desenzano, Italy. She was raised by her parents with three brothers and one sister living on a farm in LeGrezze, Italy, where they tended animals and harvested grains. Their father taught Angela and her brothers and sisters not only the chores of farm life but also how to read. Every night, Giovanni Merici read to his children from the book, *The Lives of the Saints*, and required that each child practice reading, too. It is believed this is how Angela learned of the virtuous virginal martyrdom of St. Ursula and her companions. In the 1480s, girls learning how to read was not the social norm of society,

and thus at an early age began Angela Merici's lifetime of questioning and challenging the rules of the societal establishment.

Sometime in the 1490s, Angela's contented family life was cut short when her mother, her father, and her older sister died. The teenaged Angela describes herself as "a small boat adrift on Lake Garda in a storm, tossed about by loss and confusion. Feeling that I had nothing, no one left in the world . . . so I leaned back on God" (Durkin, 2006, p. 12). Her heavy heart and deepest sadness would not define her life. Angela's angelic vision in the fields of Brudazzo, Italy, would offer her an abiding joy, comfort, and assurance that would last her lifetime and govern her future ministry decisions.



Figure 2. Portrait of St. Angela's vision

According to historical research (Buser, 1990; Durkin, 2005, 2006; Mazzonis, 2007; Reidy and Hoffer, 1961), Angela Merici moved to Northern Italy after the deaths in her family to live with her aunt and uncle. She would continue daily work on their farm and tending the vineyards. Sometime between the ages of 16 and 20, she had a mystical vision awakening and deepening an unfolding vocation:

One day when we had finished eating our noon meal in the groves of Brudazzo, I had settled down for a quiet rest. I was dozing and praying when suddenly I heard music and heavenly voices singing. I opened my eyes, and there among the olive trees, I saw a ladder leading up to heaven. There were angels on the ladder playing instruments, and the young women among them, singing. . . in that moment God showed me that I was to help other women and girls to live here on earth in ways that would lead them heavenward (Durkin, 2005, p.25).

Thus, after her vision around 1500, Angela's life changed again. She said goodbye to her aunt and uncle and moved to Salo, Italy to become a Third Order Franciscan. As a Third Order Franciscan, Angela began her active, public ministry. As a Franciscan, she worked in hospitals and social services taking care of orphans and widows. She made pilgrimages to Jerusalem and Rome. "Pope Clement VII even desired her to stay in Rome and start a Catholic Charities program working with hospitals, religious education and the protection of young girls" (Buser, 1990, p. 6). Not wanting to reject Pope Clement's invitation publicly, Angela escaped from Rome under nightfall journeying back to Brescia, Italy following the call of her heart.

Approximately between 1525 and 1535, Angela's heavenly vision, her personal spirituality, and God's heartfelt invitation came together. At she reached the wise age of 52, Angela's innovative Company of Women began to take shape. At a time in history when women's life choices were limited to marriage or life in the convent, St. Angela's Company offered an alternative and innovative new lifestyle to the conventional life in Italy during the 1500s. "Her idea was to allow spiritual women to live a consecrated life outside of the convent walls in the midst of the secular world" (Mazzonis, 2007, p. xi).

Founded on a lay person model of apostolic life professing charity, poverty, penance, and virginity, the Company permitted women to pursue a single, laywoman's life focused on hospitality, generosity, and spiritual leadership. Women of any social status could live in their own homes or in communion with other lay women following the Rule, Counsels, and Testament of St. Angela as they lived an active life within their communities.

According to the 1985 English translation of the 1536–1546 Trivulsian Codex (Ursulines of Rome, 1985), the purpose of the Rule:

allowed St. Angela to speak to all the members of the Company of Saint Ursula, and point out the paths they should walk in order to become what they are meant to be as true and virginal spouses of the Son of God. (p. vii)

The purpose of the Counsels:

is where Angela speaks directly to a small group of young women of the Company who were leaders (today called local superiors) and carried out the responsibility for formation . . . counseling and leading their younger sisters along the path of the spiritual life (p. vii).

And, the purpose of the Testament, a collection of Legacies:

was given by Angela intended for the Matrons, or noble widows of Brescia, Italy, who had the role of representatives and guarantors of the Company vis-à-vis the ecclesiastic and civic authorities. Angela's intention was to instruct the Matrons regarding their mission on all its importance and dignity (p. vii). Thus, the Rule, Counsels, and Testament of Saint Angela provided the spiritual guidelines and practical structures for these women and their newfound societal and personal independence. In 1535, St. Angela named her company of 28 women the Order

of St. Ursula, in dedication to the 4th century virgin martyr St. Ursula.

The source of St. Angela's spirituality had many fonts. Her life experiences as a single woman, her life as a Third Order Franciscan, her vision in Brudazzo, and her Italian cultural influence continuously cultivated an answer of obedience to God in her heart. For out of that freeing obedience sprung her Rules for the members of the Ursuline Company, "*Siate Piazzevole* – always offer kindness, graciousness, and hospitality. Be like a piazza" (Buser, 2006, p. 8). St. Angela died on January 27, 1540, leaving the Catholic Church 40 years of charitable works, social kindness, services to the poor and social reformation for women. Her Fourth Counsel, uttered on her death bed, offered hope for the future of the Company, "Please tell them I am more alive now than when they saw me in the flesh, and that I see them . . . and want to help them more and that I am continually among them" (Ursulines of the Roman Union, 1932, p. 87). Finally, in 1544, the Company of Saint Ursula, the Ursulines, received its papal approbation from Pope Paul III. Even though St. Angela never specified or assigned what work members of her company should take on, the Ursuline Order after her death has become well-known for their 473-year legacy educating girls.

Historical Background of Ursuline Pedagogy

The history of the evolution of the Company of St. Ursula is complex and diverse (Mazzonis, 2007, p. 197). As the works and the women of the Ursulines began to spread outside of Italy from 1540 to 1650 especially into Paris, France, the spirituality of St. Angela began to take shape in the educational formation of girls. According to Martin (1946), during the 17th century monastic movement when the Catholic Church cloistered the Ursulines in the Papal Bull of Pope Paul V, *Constitutions of the Monastic*

Congregation, they were asked to work for the educational instruction of secular girls. Thus began schools for girls that would eventually have profound future impacts on girls and young women on every continent. In 1652, the *Reglements des Ursulines de Paris* were published for the first time.

The foremost purpose of the first and original publication of the *Reglements* (Martin, 1946) was to constitute a method of education admirably adapted to the Christian formation of the young girl and to the preparation of the future [wife and] mother. This method should remain as the basis of the education given by the Ursulines (p. 57).

The *Reglements* designated the subject matters to be taught and the proper Ursuline methods of instruction. The *Reglements* specifies the original curriculum for young women focused on the Humanities included but not limited to: catechism, Latin, Greek, fine arts, philosophy, elements of science, and history (Martin, 1946; Reidy and Hoffer, 1961). Essential to serious and rigorous studies, an Ursuline education also included the supernatural formation of a girl's will, heart, and soul likened unto the heart of Christ. Her supernatural development and gifts will be the "wondrous fruit of a strong, wholesome and highly intellectual education" (Martin, 1946, p. 191). As the purpose and curriculum of the *Reglements* were specified so were the teaching methods and attitudes of an Ursuline.

Specifically stated by St. Angela in her Sixth Counsel, she asked teachers that 'In all things show yourselves as models to the children: live and behave in such a way that your daughters may see in you a model. And what you want them to do, do it yourselves. Therefore, act in a way that may stir them to virtuous living' (p. 89).

Consequently, if an Ursuline teacher instructed her students rigorously, the teacher must also be mindful and consistent with her own spiritual and educational training. Martin (1946) describes the work of an Ursuline educator as a “representative of God” (p. 9). First and foremost, a teacher teaches out of a “heart full of kindness and devotion . . . giving the gift of oneself” (p. 8). Teachers must be fully aware of their dependence on God and dedicate hours a day to prayer.

Tenderness is at the heart of Angela’s spirituality and writings. Teachers should be tender-hearted. Written in the Introduction to the Counsels (Ursulines of Rome, 1985), the *Colonelli*, leaders responsible for overseeing Company members living together as a colony in their town, were encouraged to live in harmony and shape their students with kindness, love and other warm-hearted qualities:

Consider the respect you owe your daughters/students, for the more you respect them the more you will love them, and the more you love them the greater care you will have for them. Then it will be impossible for you not to have them all graven in your hearts night and day, each one individually, for true love acts in this way (p.67).

According to the Second Counsel (Ursulines of Rome, 1985) a young woman of the Company or teacher should:

be kind and tender with your children . . . You will achieve more with gentleness and kindness than by harsh and cutting rebukes, which must be kept only for cases of necessity, be used at the right time and place, taking account of the persons with whom you have to deal (p. 73).

In the Fourth Counsel, members were to be mindful and “to be careful and vigilant to know and understand the behavior of your daughters and to be aware of their

spiritual and temporal needs” (p. 79). St. Angela elucidates even further in her Eighth Counsel to the women of the Company that their task “is to love their daughters equally, not preferring one more than another because they are all creatures of God” (p. 97).

Finally, in St. Angela’s Last Legacy, she bequeaths the Matrons, the principal mothers who would continue leading Angela’s community after her death, spiritual and pragmatic freedoms to carry on their works. Angela’s Legacies offer guidance for living a radical, new lifestyle for single women dedicating their lives in the service of others always maintaining openness to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit:

If according to times and circumstances, the need arises to make new rules or do something differently, do it prudently and with good advice. And always let your principal recourse be to gather at the feet of Jesus Christ with all your daughters in fervent prayer. For in this way, without a doubt, Jesus will be in your midst and as a true master and teacher he will enlighten you and teach you what you must do. (p. 131)

Summary

The historical background of St. Angela of Merici, foundress of the Order of St. Ursula, and Ursuline pedagogy outlined a new, radical position for women in society, offering service to the outcasts of society, and ultimately focusing on the education of girls. Founded in Italy, the Ursulines began their U.S. ministries in 1727 in New Orleans, Louisiana and today they minister to communities throughout the globe. “According to tradition, the emphasis of Ursuline education is to help each individual person to live life to the full . . . Ursuline schools are alive with St. Angela’s spirit of Joy and Hope” (Wang, 2016, p.14).

The Role of the Lay Teacher in Catholic Schools

The third section of the literature review, the role of the lay Catholic teacher, is divided into six main sections: (a) Catholic Church papal education documents; (b) NCCB; (c) SCCE and CCE, Roman Congregation documents; (d) USCCB, American bishops; (e) experts on Catholic education; and (f) empirical research on Catholic education.

Catholic Church papal education documents

The Pope Pius XI papal encyclical *On Christian Education* (1929) defines the significance of the Catholic lay teacher for schools as one of the utmost value:

[Catholic] schools are the result not so much of good methods as of good teachers, teachers who are thoroughly prepared and well-grounded in the matter they have to teach; who possess the intellectual and moral qualification required by their important office; who cherish a pure and holy love for the youths confided to them, because they love Jesus Christ and His church . . . and who have therefore sincerely at heart the true good of family and country. Indeed, it fills our souls with consolation and gratitude to see towards the divine Goodness to see, side by side, with religious men and women engaged in teaching, such a large number of excellent lay teachers who are worthy . . . of praise and encouragement (para. 88).

Thus, coupled with the responsibility of the state, teachers are to cooperate with parents and the Church forming “true and perfect Christians” (para. 94).

Following in similar fashion, the Pope Paul VI (1965) conciliar document *Declaration on Christian Education* resonated with previous Church declarations

regarding the role of teachers. As established by the Church, the primary rights of educating youth rest in the hands of the Church and parents. Teachers carry the responsibilities of building the Kingdom of God and the task of an apostolate: This same sacred synod, while professing its gratitude to priests, religious men and women, and the laity who by their evangelical self-dedication are devoted to the noble work of education and of schools of every type and level, exhorts them to persevere generously in the work they have undertaken and, imbuing their students with the spirit of Christ, to strive to excel in pedagogy and the pursuit of knowledge in such a way that they not merely advance the internal renewal of the Church but preserve and enhance its beneficent influence upon today's world, especially the intellectual world. But let teachers recognize that the Catholic school depends upon them almost entirely for the accomplishment of its goals and programs (para. 27).

The Church recognizes that Catholic schools depend “almost entirely upon [teachers] for the accomplishment of its goals and programs” (para. 8). Thus, the continuous success of the progress and development of Catholic schools is intricately tied to its teachers.

Therefore [teachers should] be very carefully prepared so that both in secular and religious knowledge they are equipped with suitable qualifications and also with a pedagogical skill that is in keeping with the findings of the contemporary world. Intimately linked in charity to one another and to their students and endowed with an apostolic spirit, may teachers by their life as much as by their instruction bear witness to Christ, the unique Teacher. Let them work as partners with parents and together with them in every phase of education . . . Let them do all they can to stimulate their students to act for themselves and even after graduation to

continue to assist them with advice, friendship and by establishing special associations imbued with the true spirit of the Church (para. Conclusion).

In his apostolic exhortation *Ecclesia in America* (1999), Pope John Paul II declared “Education can play an outstanding role in promoting the inculturation of the Gospel” (*Ecclesia in America*, 1999, para. 71). The apostolic exhortation describes the new evangelization mission of the Church and ways in which this vocation can be lived out by lay persons in American society. One such application for committed lay men and women is to persevere and to take up leadership roles as teachers. Catholic schools provide for the integral formation of human persons and, in light of the new evangelization, “must ensure that education of children is available to all” (para. 276). Teachers carry on the evangelizing effort of the Church as they help young women and men “shape their lives according to God’s will” (para. 44) and carry on the renewal of the Church.

Archbishop J. Michael Miller’s (2005) booklet *The Holy See’s Teaching on Catholic Schools* affirmed the current state of the American Catholic educational system while it also recognized the contemporary needs of the system that must be addressed for the continued systematic success of its future. He named five essential marks of the Catholic school that can be used to judge a school’s Catholic identity: (a) inspired by a supernatural vision, (b) founded on a Christian anthropology, (c) animated by communion and community, (d) imbued with a Catholic worldview throughout its curriculum, and (e) sustained by Gospel witness (p. ix). The vital role of the Catholic school educator is incorporated within the third essential mark, animated by communion and community. As part of being in community, a personal relationship between teacher and student is

encouraged and has always been a “hallmark of the Catholic school” (p. 37). Teachers are models of the Gospel and responsible for cultivating healthy interpersonal relationships characterized by healthy spiritual, mental, and emotional growth. “The Catholic philosophy of education has always paid special attention to the quality of the interpersonal relations between teachers and students” (p. 36), and now it is the responsibility of the laity to carry on this specific formation. “We need teachers with a clear and precise understanding of the specific nature and role of Catholic education” (p.55) because it is necessary to today’s tasks at hand in schools. Miller wrote (2005) that the splendor of the Church and the Christian example of teachers is indispensable [in the Catholic school] and no effort should be spared in guaranteeing the presence of such witnesses.

In his 2008 speech to Catholic educators at the Catholic University of America, *Address to Catholic Educators*, Pope Benedict XVI resonated with Miller’s encouraging wisdom and states clearly that the role of teachers in schools is a duty and privilege. The duties of the teacher include:

Ensuring that students receive instruction in Catholic doctrine and practice . . . it requires that public witness to the way of Christ as found in the Gospel and upheld by the Church’s Magisterium, shapes all aspects of an institution’s life. Divergence from this vision weakens Catholic identity (p. 7).

National Conference of Catholic Bishops

The National Conference of Catholic Bishops [NCCB] of the United States issued three documents which addressed characteristics of Catholic school teachers and major

themes for Catholic education: (a) *To Teach as Jesus Did*, (b) *Teach Them*, and (c) *Sharing the Light of Faith*.

The pastoral message of the NCCB (1972), *To Teach as Jesus Did*, defines somewhat briefly but importantly the characteristics of Catholic school teachers:

If the purpose of Christian education is to be realized, it must be through the [teachers'] commitment to give instruction to their students, to build community among them, and to serve them (para. 144). The integration of religious truths and values with the rest of life is brought about in the Catholic school . . . by the presences of teachers who express an integrated approach to living and learning in their private and professional lives" (para. 104).

The NCCB (1976) then issued a follow-up pastoral document, *Teach Them*. The task of this message was to address the current and future issues facing the Catholic educational system of the United States. In addition to restating the threefold Catholic education themes of "teaching doctrine, building community and service" (Newman Society, 2018, p. 4), emphasis was also placed on the responsibilities of the teacher. Catholic schoolteachers "offer witness daily to the mature faith and Christian living . . . they have a profound impact upon the education and formation of their pupils" (Newman Society, 2018, p. 5).

The NCCB (1979) document, *Sharing the Light*, provided an extensive and in-depth study of the distinctively "American" catechetical needs of the Church in the United States (p. 1). Providing a comprehensive portrait on the Catholic state-of-the-union, the role of the catechist is addressed in the document. The character of the Catholic teacher or catechist is:

to give witness to the gospel . . . the (teacher) or catechist must establish a living, deepening relationship with the Lord. He or she must be a person of prayer, one who frequently reflects on the scriptures and whose Christlike living testifies to deep faith. (para. 207)

Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education and Congregation for Catholic Education

In its formative document *The Catholic School* (1977), the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education (SCCE) first and foremost emphasized “that the Catholic school forms part of the saving mission of the Church, especially for education in the faith” (SCCE, 1977, para. 9). In light of its mission, teachers are called to make thoughtful efforts to construct educational work meaningful to the realities of the contemporary student. The Christian message of salvation through Jesus Christ is “transmitted through education and depends to a very great extent on the teachers” (para. 43). “Teaching is the medium of faith and culture integration” (para. 38) where the teacher can form “the mind and hearts of students and guide them to develop a total commitment to Christ” (para. 40) in the cultural pluralism of today’s society. Consequently, ensuring the distinctive character of the Catholic school “is watched over by the Bishop to ensure orthodoxy . . . [however], an equally important role belongs to the teacher in safeguarding and developing the distinctive mission of the Catholic school” (para. 73).

Following *The Catholic School* (1977), additional documents were issued by the SCCE defining the role of the lay Catholic as educator and delving more deeply into the vocation of teacher. *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith* (1982), emphasized the valued contributions of the laity offered to Catholic schools and stated, “without

hesitation that by witness and behavior, teachers are of the first importance to impart a distinctive character to Catholic schools” (para. 76).

Participation in the educational mission of the Church as a lay, Catholic educator means accepting and assuming “the responsibility for the communication of Truth . . . Him who is the Truth . . . (and involvement) in the integral formation of the human person” (SCCE, 1982, para. 16-17). The foundational Catholic concept respecting the dignity of every human being as a child of God calls the Catholic educator to constantly strive to be more Christ-like. Teachers, integral to the formation of the human person and evangelist of the Gospel to all students, must also “be a source of spiritual inspiration for groups [colleagues, parents, etc.], as well as for each of the scholastic and cultural organizations that the school come into contact within the (community)” (SCCE, 1982, para. 23). According to the document (SCCE, 1982), ideally the lay Catholic educator’s personal and professional conduct is a witness to faith characterized by: (a) solid professional formation, (b) desire to live out an ecclesial vocation, (c) participation in liturgical and sacramental life of the school, (c) mature spiritual personality, (d) commitment to the teaching vocation, and (e) community oriented. The life of a lay Catholic teacher is not “simply an exercise of profession but that a lay Catholic educator should become fully aware of the importance, the richness, and the responsibility of this vocation”. (SCCE, 1982, para. 37)

In its 1988 document, *The Religious Dimensions of Education in a Catholic School*, the Committee for Catholic Education (CCE) describes the distinguishing characteristics of a Catholic school as a “community climate that is permeated by the Gospel spirit of freedom and love” (para. 1). The responsibility for cultivating this Catholic school climate lies in the hands of its administrators, parents, and teachers. “The

prime responsibility for creating this unique Christian school climate lies with the teachers, as individuals and as a community” (para. 26). Within the spirit of human freedom, students should be able “to recognize authentic human qualities in their teachers . . . like Christ, they must also be teachers of what it means to be human” (para. 96). Teachers, also, should love their students. “When students feel loved, they will love in return” (para. 110). Trusting, loving and warm relationships among teachers, students and parents should characterize the school community. Consequently the Church, while reserving ecclesial authority, willingly gives charge “of schools and [the formation of its youth] into the hands of its lay [teachers]” (para. 38).

In the circular letter, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, the CCE (1997) reiterates its words of encouragement and hope from its previous documents (CCE 1977, 1982, 1988) for all persons committed to the apostolate of Catholic education. “The Catholic school is at the heart of the Church” (para. 11) and its educators have a responsibility for cultivating the climate and role of the Church’s educating community. This educating community is constituted by:

interaction and collaboration of its various components: students, parents, teachers, directors, and non-teaching staff. Attention is rightly given to the importance of relations existing between all those who make up the educating community. During adolescence a student needs to experience personal relations with outstanding educators, and what has greater influence on the student’s formation when placed in a context of [student-teacher involvement], genuine reciprocity, coherence of attitudes, lifestyles and day to day behavior (para. 19). The document then describes the moral depth of being a Catholic educator characterized as “one of man’s most excellent and creative activities, for the teacher does not write on inanimate materials, but on the very spirits of human

beings” (para. 19). Hence, the lay Catholic teacher participates in a significant ‘mission of vital importance . . . and is of service to the Church” (para. 21). The role of the teacher is pivotal in setting the tone in both the school and the classroom (para 21).

In 2007 the CCE document, *Educating Together in Catholic Schools*, focused on the role, mission, and identity of lay Catholic educators as described in previous CCE documents (1977, 1982, 1988, 1997). The teachers’ task is:

to be a witness of Jesus Christ and to demonstrate Christian life as bearing light and meaning for everyone. . . . A lay educator is required to exercise a specific mission within the Church by living, in faith, a secular vocation in the communitarian structure of the school” (para. 15).

Professionally, educators must be willing “to learn and develop and be open to the renewal and updating of [teaching] methodologies” (para. 20). Additionally, a Catholic educator has professional responsibilities to: (a) work with families for complete student formation, (b) remain course-content and pedagogically updated, (c) continue cultivation of teaching as a vocation, (d) integrate course subjects in light of the Gospel, and (e) motivate students to live in hope. Teaching in a Catholic school is transmitting the Gospel (CCE 1977, 1982, 1988, 1997, 2007). In this inspiring “ecclesial community and civilization of love” (para. 53), education is carried out in a teacher-student relational context.

Members of the CCE (2014) published the document *Educating Today and Tomorrow: A Renewing Passion*, addressing the fundamental characteristics of Catholic schools, the challenges facing Catholic education, and the Catholic educators’ role in the 21st century context. “At the heart of Catholic education there is always Jesus Christ:

everything that happens in a Catholic school . . . should lead to an encounter with the living Christ” (p. 8). The significance of the teacher as both conduit for this personal encounter and instrument for education is paramount.

The educational community, teachers, parents, administrators, and students, must work together with mutual esteem, trust, respect, and friendliness (p. 7). As a member of the holistic community, it is the duty of the teacher to maintain professional competence, present a life open to God, and offer service to the local community (p. 7). Fulfilling these responsibilities as a Catholic educator requires the following skills: (a) open and professionally knowledgeable, (b) open to all types of diversity, (c) cultivate listening skills, (d) communicate using constructive dialogue, (e) challenge students to lofty goals, (f) respect students’ different intelligences, (g) promote cooperation among students of different religious persuasions, and (h) awareness of students’ needs.

Teaching is not simply a job but a vocation that must be encouraged (CCE 1977, 1982, 1988, 1997, 2005, 2007, 2014). In the 21st century, due to the cultural complexities, pastoral challenges, limited financial recourses, and societal issues facing the contemporary Catholic school it is important “that contemporary educators renew their mission, offering young people an integral education, . . . and not to forget what is indispensable . . . the [teacher]” (p. 6).

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) opened its 2005 document, *Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium*, by stating the following:

All Catholics must join in effort to ensure that Catholic schools have administrators and teachers who are prepared to provide an exceptional educational experience for young people--one that is both truly Catholic and the highest academic quality (p. 10).

“[Ninety-nine] percent of current Catholic school educators are members of the laity” (p. 10), so it remains vital for these educators to participate in ongoing faith formation, a formation of the heart, and professional development programs. In order to grow the Catholic school ministry, lay Catholic school teachers should be grounded in: (a) faith based Catholic culture, (b) strong bonds to Christ and the Church, and (c) witnessing to faith in both words and actions (p.10). “This formation of personnel will allow the Gospel message and living presence of Jesus to permeate the entire school community and thus be faithful to the school’s evangelizing mission.” (p. 10) Therefore, the essential spiritual and professional formation of the teacher is interrelated with the four-fold purposes of Catholic education (USCCB, 2005): (a) provide an atmosphere in which the Gospel message is proclaimed, (b) community in Christ is experienced, (c) service to our sisters and brothers is the norm, and (d) thanksgiving and worship of our God is cultivated.

School Experts Concerning the Role of the Lay Teacher

Palmer (1998, 2007) focuses on the “inner landscape” of the teacher and the transformation of the human heart. The “inner landscape” refers to the place where spirituality is at the heart of all human beings. He addresses teaching as “an engagement of the soul” (p. 9) where good teaching is not just a practice of good techniques but the investment of oneself as if

“holding a mirror up to the soul” (p. 3). For Palmer, the necessary characteristics of a teacher include: (a) authentically present in the classroom; (b) deeply connected with students and the subject matter; (c) connected intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually with students; and (d) helps students weave their own life-giving web. Relational trust, integrity, care, and love between teacher and student are vital for growth and learning in the classroom and throughout the student’s life. Palmer’s work attests to the significance of the teacher in a school community and in the classroom.

Adding to Palmer’s work, Catholic experts Reilly (2017) and Schoenig (2017) attest that teachers are integral to the character and sanctity of a Catholic school. In support of the Church’s documents (1885, 1929, 1965a, 1977, 1982, 1988, 1997, 1999, 2002, 2006, 2008, 2014) and the U.S. bishops’ statements on Catholic education (1972, 1976, 2005), here are Reilly’s reflections on the role of teachers:

The character of a school is determined largely by its [lay] teachers. If Catholic education is to genuinely form young people to be fully human, it requires teachers who witness to the faith and morals, both inside and outside the classroom (p. 2).

Researchers’ (Reilly, 2018; Schoenig, 2017; Durka, 2002) theological understanding of a Catholic school teacher’s character is the foundation of their work. According to Reilly (2018), the character of a school is determined largely by its teachers. If Catholic education is to genuinely form young people to be fully human, it requires teachers who witness to faith and morals, both inside and outside the classroom. The Catholic Church has made firm its conviction and commitment that every child is made in the image and likeness of God and that education is an integral part of

sanctification . . . and we know teachers have been granted a sacred trust in helping form future saints (Reilly, 2018, p. 1).

Teaching is a vocation “making claims upon a teacher’s soul” (Durka, 2002, p. 3) where educating children comes from a teacher’s inner life. In addition to curriculum planning and instruction, teachers are also responsible for: (a) designing physical classroom space, (b) cultivating openness for communication, (c) constructing boundaries for learning, (d) classroom hospitality for a welcoming environment, and (e) growing a classroom safe from vulnerability. Teachers seek to make “their students’ lives better because of their teaching” (p. 56) and therefore, faithful teachers remain crucial to Catholic schools. Schoenig’s (2017) faith vision for teachers blends Reilly (2018) and Durka (2002).

God has entrusted teachers with the task of guiding young people along a path of sanctity (Pope John Paul II, para. 6). According to Schoenig (2017), it is incumbent on all Catholic educators:

to make firm their conviction and commitment that every child is made in the image and likeness of God and that education is an integral part of sanctification . . . and we know teachers have been granted a sacred trust in helping form future saints (p. 15).

Cook and Simonds (2011) found that teachers “capture the essence of Catholic education” (p. 1). Educators help students learn to cultivate relationships with God, self, and others. “The teacher’s individual care for each student epitomizes Catholic education and is the foundation for good teaching” (p. 4). Cook and Simonds (2011) supported Groome (1998) in saying that the teacher is responsible for fostering the Catholic educational community and making

lifegiving relationships the priority for all school programs. Relationships are recognized as the glue that holds all people together in every Catholic school (CCE, 2007; Sergiovanni and Starrat, 2007; Slater, 2004; Wolk, 2003).

Shimabukuro (1998) and Stabile (2000) focus on the theological and spiritual vocation of teachers. Shimabukuro (1998) studied an “ideal type” of the Catholic school teacher identity after careful analysis of conciliar and contemporary Church documents (1965, 1972, 1976, 1977, 1979, 1982, 1988, 1990). “They typify the teacher as being committed to: (a) community building, (b) lifelong spiritual growth, (c) lifelong professional development, (d) students’ spiritual formation, and (e) students’ human development” (p. 1). Gospel-driven education affirming the dignity of each student characterizes the Catholic teacher’s vocation. “Teaching in a Catholic school is a ministry of hope and light and the strength of any Catholic school lies in its teachers” (Stabile, 2000, p. 9).

American Catholic education experts (Cook, 2008; Croghan, 2008; Earl, 2008; Hackett, 2008; Lapsley, 2008; Martin, 2008; Nuzzi, 2008; Ozar, 2008; Ristau, 2008; Convey, 2008) participating in the seminal “Carnegie Conversations” (2007) gathered to discuss major topics of Catholic education. The central question of conversation, “Why is it important to strengthen the field of Catholic education and research?” (p. 7), offered subsequent conversations placing emphasis on the role of teachers’ faith formation and their significances to Catholic education. Hackett (2008) stressed that “teachers are our most valuable assets” (p. 35) and Nuzzi (2008) stated:

recognizing a staffing reality that teachers no longer arrive to work with Catholic theological literacy [should then be addressed as] part of the formation of future teachers. It would seem that [teacher professional

development] must include a strong formational component, fashioned on the core conviction of Catholicism” (p. 32).

Accordingly, the research of Earl (2008) resonates with fellow researchers (Croghan, 2008; Hackett, 2008; Martin, 2008; Nuzzi, 2008). Earl suggests, “I am convinced that it is vitally important to form teachers . . . not only on their content area and best practices . . . but also in their own faith formation” (p. 34.) The work of many Catholic school researchers reaffirms the significance of the teacher in Catholic education and, also, highlights the importance of “the relationship between Catholic identity and [faith] formation of the Catholic school teacher” (p. 37).

Empirical Educational Research Concerning the Role of the Teacher

In the area of empirical research, renewed interest in Catholic schooling is evidenced by the growth of Catholic school dissertations (Nuzzi, 1996) yet, much more empirical research is needed in order to build a substantive deposit of Catholic academic research (Shimabukuro, 2004).

Ginott (1972), a child psychologist and educational researcher, offered a parallel relationship between secular educational research and the role of Catholic lay teachers. Ginott’s extensive 20 years of qualitative research focused on interviewing parents, teachers, and children regarding the role of emotions and affective learning styles shared between students and teachers every day in the classroom. He acknowledges that in the school “there will always be crises . . . new learning environments, new means of instruction. However, one function will always remain with the teacher: to create the emotional climate for learning” (Ginott, 1972, p. 16). His research showed that it is the job of the teacher to

become an affective and effective learning expert to shape human beings. Ginott's work echoes the teachings of the Church's documents (1929; 1965a; 1999; 2006; 2008; 2014; NCCB,1972; 1976; 1979; SCCE,1977; 1982; CCE, 1988; 1997; 2007; 2014; USCCB, 2005) on the sacred identity and pivotal role of the Catholic secondary school teacher:

I have come to the frightening conclusion. I, [the Teacher], am the decisive element in the classroom. It is my personal approach that creates the climate. It is my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher I possess tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal. In all situations it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated, a child humanized or dehumanized (Ginott, 1972, pp. 15-16).

Shimabukuro's (1993) dissertation research employed quantitative content analysis methodology to analyze Catholic Church documents regarding the ideal Catholic schoolteacher. Shimabukuro's research questions explored:

- (a) What are the distinguishing characteristics of the Catholic school teacher, as specified by the Second Vatican Council and post-conciliar Roman and American directives for Catholic schools; and (b) Based on document analysis, what is the emergent typology of the contemporary Catholic schoolteacher? (p. 20).

After careful hand-coded data analysis, examination, and synthesis of the documents, the researcher determined the five major distinguishing characteristics of the ideal Catholic teacher were: (a) people who form the humanity of students,

(b) people who form the Christian spirituality of students, (c) people who are professionally prepared, (d) people who are vocationally prepared, and (e) people who are builders of community (p. 169-170). Shimabukuro emphasized the need for future empirical research concerning the identity of the Catholic school teacher due to the “scant empirical research” on the topic (p. 125).

Shimabukuro’s research on the distinctive role of the Catholic school teacher suggests two major areas of concern which recommends the need for future research: (a) Empirical research is warranted which determines the extent to which Catholic school teachers are actualizing their distinctive roles in the classroom. (b) Research is needed to determine the nature and design of the teacher’s preparation that would best serve the Catholic sector (Shimabukuro, 2004, p. 141).

Convey’s (2013) research, *Perceptions of Catholic Identity: Catholic School Administrators and Teachers*, studied K-12 school administrators and K12 teachers nationwide about their perceptions of the term “Catholic identity”. Employing an online, mixed-methodology survey, Catholic school administrators and teachers were asked questions that focused on the inquiry, “Describe what the Catholic identity of a school means to you.” The participants’ responses revealed “that the most important component of the school’s Catholic identity was its identity as a faith community. Over 90% of the teachers . . . saw the faith community as essential to the school’s Catholic identity” (Convey, 2013, p. 208).

An additional finding, the research suggested there was a relationship between the length of time a teacher worked in a Catholic school and the importance they held for the development of the Catholic school’s communal

Catholic identity. “The longer the teacher worked in a Catholic school, the higher the rating they gave of the essential nature of the school as a faith community” (Convey, 2013, p. 208). Hobbie, (2010), Convey (2010), and Schuttloffel (2010) had similar results with previous research correlating years teaching in a Catholic school and the significance of Catholic school identity. Teachers value Catholic schools for their cultural role as a faith community.

Convey’s research suggests that the teachers and administrators are the community members responsible for cultivating the Catholic identity of a school as a faith community:

A school is Catholic not because of its name, or the presence of crucifixes on the wall, or because it has religion courses, or by the percentage of Catholic students. . . but rather by its Catholic ethos, its faith community which is manifested in how [teachers and administrators] relate to one another, what the environment looks like, and what celebrations occur (Convey, 2013, p. 211).

Until a few decades ago, Catholic secondary schools were staffed overwhelmingly by vowed priests and religious women. As the priests and religious women numbers decline, current research has begun concentrating on the role and responsibilities of the Catholic educator as they carry on the legacy of Catholic schools into the future. Blecksmith’s (1996) dissertation results suggested the necessity of teachers needing to receive “adequate in-service on Christian education documents” (Nuzzi, 1998, 102) and that the mission and purpose of Catholic school emphasize academics and faith formation. Barrett Jones (1993) examined the faith factors that “motivated a teacher’s decision to

leave or remain teaching in a Catholic school” (Nuzzi, 1998, 102). Zimmer’s (1994) research focused on the spiritual dimensions of being a Catholic school teacher. The researcher’s work revealed “that a spiritual calling [and characteristic] had a significant relationship to the meaningful, attractive qualities on a teacher’s personal attitude toward a teaching career [in a Catholic school]” (Nuzzi, 1998, 102).

Summary

The role of the Catholic educator explored through the lenses of Church documents, experts in Catholic education, and empirical research in Catholic education suggest that lay teachers are at the heart of Catholic identity in schools. “The dramatic shift from a teaching corps of religious to an overwhelming majority of lay teachers (Convey, 1992; Guerra, 1998; Kushner & Helbing, 1995; Shimabukuro, 1993) has highlighted the need for role definition of teachers, for teacher education about the Catholic faith, and teacher’s perceptions of Catholic identity in schools. Lay teachers’ self-identifying contemporary roles in Catholic school communities are characterized by meaningful, significant relationships where Catholicism is alive and thriving.

Summary of Chapter II

The review of the literature is divided into three main thematic sections: (a) Catholic identity, (b) Order of Saint Ursula, and (c) role of the Catholic school teacher. Catholic identity and the role of the Catholic school teacher were

examined in the following literature: (a) Catholic Church papal documents, (b) SCCE and CCE documents, (c) USCCB documents, (d) experts on Catholic education, and (e) empirical research on Catholic education. The Order of Saint Ursula was examined in the following literature: (a) the history of Saint Angela of Merici, and (b) Ursuline pedagogical methods. The research supports the purpose of this study. It is incumbent upon the researcher to add to the body of Catholic research and offer pragmatic attention to the mission of Catholic identity in schools, the formation of lay Catholic school teachers, and carry on the Ursuline educational heritage.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Restatement of the Purpose

The purpose of this study is to investigate how the perceptions of teachers working in Ursuline secondary schools of the Central Province of the United States (U.S.) on extent to which the nine defining characteristics of Catholic identity in schools (NSBECS, 2012) are present in their respective schools and classrooms. In this quantitative study, a researcher-constructed survey was created to investigate Catholic identity, operationally defined as the nine defining characteristics of Catholic schools (Ozar et al., 2012): (a) centered in the person of Jesus Christ, (b) contributing to the evangelizing mission of the Church, (c) distinguished by excellence, (d) committed to educate the whole child, (e) steeped in a Catholic worldview, (f) sustained by Gospel witness, (g) shaped by communion and community, (h) accessible to all students, and (i) established by the expressed authority of the bishop. Originating in the works of Archbishop J. Michael Miller (2006) and from the statements by Pope Benedict XVI and the American bishops (NSBECS, 2012), the nine characteristics define the deep Catholic identity of Catholic schools and serve as the platform upon which the standards and benchmarks rest (p. 7).

Research Design

A quantitative research approach will allow the researcher to collect complex, broad-reaching data from teachers through their self-reported perceptions of Catholic identity in secondary schools, as well as their perceptions of the teacher's role in U.S. Catholic secondary school research. The identity of a Catholic school currently needs to be examined in Catholic education with the realization that clarifying, strengthening, and

communicating a shared vision of the Catholic school will ensure its survival. This has direct implications for the role of the teacher (Bryk and Holland, 1984; Bryk, Lee and Holland, 1993; Nuzzi, 2004; Shimabukuro, 1993).

The researchers acknowledge that to date there has not been a quantitative study of the defining characteristics of Catholic identity in the Ursuline Sisters' Central Province regarding perceptions by teachers of Catholic identity within their respective schools and classrooms. The Ursuline Central Province secondary schools included in this study operate under the governance structure and leadership team of the Ursuline Sisters of the Roman Union. In addition, this chosen methodology was based on the researcher's desire to gather quantitative data from Ursuline secondary teachers throughout the Ursuline Central Province that include these U.S. regions: Northeastern, Midwestern, and Southern.

According to Rosann Whiting (2018), President of the Ursuline Educators Network,

the current leadership goals of the Ursuline Central Province are as follows: (a) to ensure and preserve the Catholic identity in Ursuline schools, especially at this time of tremendous changes in the Catholic educational future; (b) to promote Catholic identity in all aspects of school curriculum. Thus, this data will enable Ursuline educational leadership to make statistically informed decisions regarding the future of Ursuline schools throughout the U.S.

As quantitative research, this study will survey the perceptions of part-time and full-time faculty members teaching in Roman Union, Ursuline-governed secondary schools of the Central Province in the United States. After reviewing the existing *Catholic Identity Defining Characteristics* school survey (NSBECS, 2012), a five-point

Likert scale staff survey instrument, it became evident that the 17-question survey would not supply sufficiently comprehensive data to support the scope of this work. “When students are unable to find existing instruments that are suitable for their specific research problems and needs, it is necessary for students to construct their own instrument for research requirements” (Orcher, 2007, p. 59).

Therefore, the researcher constructed a five-point, Likert scale survey comprised of 52 questions based on the NSBECS (2012) operationalized definitions of the nine defining characteristics of Catholic schools. After creating the survey, the researcher proceeded with the process of survey validation and reliability analysis.

Research Setting

The setting of this study will be the Roman Union, Central Province Ursuline secondary schools of the US: Ursuline Academy of New Orleans, LA; Ursuline Academy of Dedham, MA; and the Ursuline Academy of St. Louis, MO. Although Ursuline Academy of Dallas is also a Roman Union secondary school in the Central Province, the site will be used for measuring the test-retest reliability coefficient of the survey instrument. The researcher is a faculty member at Ursuline Academy of Dallas and according to experts (Creswell, 2012; Fowler, 2009; Salkind, 2011) employing “backyard research,” with a researcher studying their own organization or workplace, could possibly yield biased data and unobjective findings (i.e., investigator bias). Table 4 displays listings of school names, school locations, foundation dates, number of secondary students, and number of faculty members.

Table 4

Roman-Union, Ursuline secondary schools of the Central Province in the United States by School Name, Founding Date, Number of Students, and Number of Faculty

| | | | |
|-------------------|------|-----|----|
| Ursuline Academy* | 1874 | 819 | 82 |
| Dallas, TX | | | |
| Ursuline Academy | 1946 | 400 | 71 |
| Dedham, MA | | | |
| Ursuline Academy | 1727 | 319 | 29 |
| New Orleans, LA | | | |
| Ursuline Academy | 1848 | 494 | 39 |
| St. Louis, MO | | | |

Note. The asterisk (*) denotes the pilot school participant for survey reliability only.

Ursuline Academy of Dedham, Massachusetts, is a 28-acre campus that includes a 20-classroom school building including a library, art studio, science wing with state-of-the-art laboratories, athletic fields, tennis courts, and a fitness center. Campus facilities continue to grow, including the recent addition of the Reynolds Family Athletic & Convocation Center (Ursuline Academy of Dedham, 2019). A college-preparatory school with a commitment to scholarship, the school offers 15 Advanced Placement courses. The town of Dedham is in the Boston metroplex.

According to Sr. Castillon, OSU (personal conversation, November 6, 2019), “Ursuline Academy of Dedham is experiencing a period of physical, building growth and *Serviam* (I Will Serve) mission vibrancy under the leadership of President Kathleen Levesque and Principal Mary-Kate Tracy”. Ursuline Dedham joined the Ursuline Central

Province of the United States governance in 2014. Currently, two Ursuline sisters are members of the Board of Trustees. No Ursuline sisters are employed on the teaching staff of 71.

Ursuline Academy of New Orleans, Louisiana, is located in a diverse inner-city community with an inspiring heritage. Founded in 1727 by the Sisters of the Order of Saint Ursula, Ursuline Academy of New Orleans enjoys the distinction of being both the oldest, continuously operating school for girls and the oldest Catholic school in the United States. “An Ursuline education is rooted in a tradition of formation and innovation” (<https://www.uanola.org/>). The Ursuline sisters of New Orleans opened a school for girls with the belief that the education of women was a necessity for a civilized society. Dedicated to the *Serviam* (I Will Serve) mission, spiritual formation, academic excellence, and 21st century learning skills, Ursuline New Orleans embodies the long-lasting traditions of an Ursuline education.

Ursuline New Orleans is experiencing some challenges. Trying to maintain the rich heritage and history of the school, the school has struggled to maintain an effective leadership team and enrollment stability during the past decade. Currently, under the leadership team of President Dr. Tracy Bonday and Principal Dr. Karen McNay enrollment has declined. At this time, enrollment sustainability and community inclusivity are areas of leadership focus. Currently, two Ursuline sisters are members of the Board of Trustees. No Ursuline sisters are employed on the secondary teaching staff of 29.

Ursuline Academy of St. Louis, Missouri, is a suburban campus founded in 1848. Sited on 28 acres, Ursuline Academy is a college preparatory high school for young women. It offers a 1:1 computer laptop program as well as Advanced Placement courses and college

credit courses. Additionally, it fosters a Global Education program partnering with Ursuline sister schools around the world (Ursuline Academy of St. Louis, 2019).

The Academy is a nationally recognized Blue Ribbon school of excellence.

Presently, Ursuline St. Louis operates under the strong leadership team of President Peggy Slater and Principal Dr. Mark Michalski. During the administration's 10 years of leadership, the school has grown adding the following new programs: (a) global education program in Asia; (b) Office of Mission and Heritage; (c) STEAM model of education; (d) global education *Serviam* program; (e) 21st century learning skills curriculum; (f) commitment to peacemaking. Although the school retains a flourishing educational community, enrollment sustainability is a struggle due to the many choices of Catholic, all-girl secondary schools in St. Louis. Currently, two Ursuline sisters are members of the Board of Trustees. Two Ursuline sisters are employed on the teaching staff of 39.

All Ursuline Academies of the Central Province, as listed in Table 6, are members of the Ursuline Educational Network (UEN), "a collaborative effort of Ursuline congregations to foster education based on Gospel values and promote the preservation and development of the Ursuline charism and mission" (<https://ursuline-education.com/>). All Academies sponsored by the Central Province, also, participate in the "Ursuline Identity Assessment". The assessment is coordinated by the Director of Sponsorship for the Central Province Ursulines of the Roman Union ensuring that Ursuline identity and mission is protected and lived in each school.

Population and Sample

The sample population will consist of all part-time and full-time faculty members

(N = 139) teaching in the Roman Union, Central Province Ursuline secondary schools: Ursuline Academy of New Orleans, LA; Ursuline Academy of Dedham, MA; and Ursuline Academy of St. Louis, MO. Although Ursuline Academy of Dallas is also a Roman Union secondary school in the Central Province, it will be used solely for the survey instrument reliability testing.

The researcher asked permission to study the Ursuline Central Province from Sr. Lois Castillon, OSU, Director of Mission and Heritage at Ursuline Academy, Dallas. Sr. Castillon, OSU, gave the researcher permission to approach Sr. Madonna O'Hara, OSU, the Director for the Office of Sponsorship for the Roman Union, Central Province. In the spring of 2014, the researcher was permitted a personal conversation with Sr. O'Hara at Ursuline Academy of Dallas. During this conversation, Sr. O'Hara granted the researcher verbal permission to study the Central Province of the Ursuline educational system (Appendix E). She also gave verbal consent for the researcher to approach the Presidents and Principals of the Ursuline secondary schools in Dedham, MA, St. Louis, MO, and New Orleans, LA asking for participation in the study. Sr. O'Hara will retire from the Office of Sponsorship in fall, 2019. She has asked the researcher, as a courtesy, to reaffirm research approval with Sr. Diane Fulgenczi, OSU, who will be the forthcoming Ursuline Director of Sponsorship.

Instrumentation

The study will employ a 60-item researcher-constructed survey that has undergone test-retest reliability and validity testing. The instrument, entitled *Teacher's Perceptions of the Defining Characteristics of Catholic Schools*, consists of two distinct parts. Questions 2 through 52 address the nine defining characteristics of Catholic

schools (Appendix D), and Questions 53 through 61 will yield the respondent's selfreport demographic information. The survey will be administered online in the fall of 2019 using SurveyMonkey[®], an online survey development company. The sample of the study (N= 139) will be the teachers at three Roman-Union Ursuline secondary schools: Ursuline Academy of Dedham, MA; Ursuline Academy of New Orleans, LA; and Ursuline Academy of St. Louis, MO. According to power analysis (Creswell, 2012; Fowler, 2009), to ensure a 95% confidence interval and establishing an alpha of .05, (n = 75) participants are needed for an appropriate sample size. This researcher hopes to secure (n = 75) participation to warrant data generalizability.

The instrument begins with an opening page introducing the researcher, the University of San Francisco School of Education, and the purpose of this study. The introductory narrative then describes the confidentiality of participants' responses and offers the contact information of the researcher should a participant need assistance or clarification.

The survey is divided into ten sections. The researcher will present the survey item numbers as they correlate to the Ozar, L.A. & Weitzel-O'Neill, P. (2012) *Defining Characteristic of Catholic Schools* operationalized definitions. In the first nine domains, each individual domain correlates to a specific *Defining Characteristic of Catholic Schools* theme as demonstrated in Table 5. The nine defining characteristics of Catholic identity are defined directly from the "Holy See's teaching on Catholic schools as compiled by Archbishop J. Michael Miller . . . and from statements by Pope Benedict XVI and the American bishops" (Ozar et al., 2012, p. 7) as demonstrated in Table 8. The formatting of Sections One through Nine comprised of 52 questions is a five-point Likert scale,

with five possible choices for each question: (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) agree, (4) strongly agree, and (5) don't know. Questions focus on teachers' perceptions of the presence of the nine defining characteristics of Catholic identity in their school and respective classrooms. Section 10 of the survey focuses on nine information questions used in gathering additional data. The demographic questions encompassed various topics including teachers': (a) gender; (b) religious preference; (c) race; (d) knowledge of Catholic educational mission; (e) years of employment at an Ursuline school. Formatting for Section 10 is comprised of nine closed ended questions with a final additional option for personal commentary should a participant wish to comment.

The researcher made email and phone call attempts in the fall of 2016 and in the spring of 2017 to speak with experts Ozar and Weitzel-O'Neill concerning the usage of their scholarship and work for this dissertation. Due to their busy schedules, direct contact was never made with either researcher. In St. Louis, MO, at the April 2017 National Catholic Educators Association (NCEA) convention, the researcher did meet Ozar and Weitzel-O'Neill during a conference breakout session after they had completed their presentation. They were informed of the researcher's desire to add to the body of Catholic education scholarship as a doctoral student at the University of San Francisco. The researcher shared with the experts that a new researcher-constructed survey had been developed and that this instrument focuses solely on the *Defining Characteristics* of the NSBECS. Ozar and Weitzel-O'Neill offered assistance and asked the researcher to set up a conference phone call for the next month (May, 2017). Despite multiple attempts by the researcher to reach Ozar and Weitzel-O'Neill, organizing a conference phone call was not successful.

Table 5

Survey Domain Item Numbers as Related to Each Defining Characteristic of Catholic Schools

| Nine Defining Characteristics of a Catholic School | Item Numbers |
|---|--------------|
| 1. Centered in the Person of Jesus Christ | 2-6 |
| 2. Contributing to the Evangelizing Mission of the Church | 7-9 |
| 3. Distinguished by Excellence | 10-17 |
| 4. Sustained by Gospel Witness | 18-22 |
| 5. Shaped by Communion and Community | 23-27 |
| 6. Accessible to All Students | 28-29 |
| 7. Committed to Educate the Whole Child | 30-35 |
| 8. Steeped in a Catholic Worldview | 36-46 |
| 9. Established by the Expressed Authority of the Bishop | 47-52 |

Table 6

Survey Domain as Related to Catholic Church Defining Characteristics of Catholic Schools Documents

| Nine Defining Characteristics of Catholic Schools | Catholic Schools Documents |
|---|---|
| 1. Centered in the Person of Jesus Christ | The Catholic School, (1977); <i>The Holy See's Teaching on Catholic Schools</i> , (2006). |
| 2. Contributing to the Evangelizing Mission of the Church | The Catholic School, (1977); The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, (1997); The Religious Dimensions of Education in a Catholic School, (1988); <i>The Holy See's Teaching on Catholic Schools</i> , (2006). |
| 3. Distinguished by Excellence | <i>Gravissimum Educationis</i> , (1965); Code of Canon Law, (1983). |
| 4. Sustained by Gospel Witness | The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, (1997); Lay Catholics in Schools, (1982); Benedict XVI, (2005); <i>Holy See's Teaching on Catholic Schools</i> , (2006); National Directory for Catechesis, (1971). |
| 5. Shaped by Communion and Community | Lay Catholics in Schools, (1982); The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, (1997). |
| 6. Accessible to All Students | <i>Gravissimum Educationis</i> , (1965); Code of Canon Law, (1983); <i>Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium</i> , (2005). |
| 7. Committed to Educate the Whole Child | The Catholic School, (1977). |

| | |
|---|---|
| 8. Steeped in a Catholic Worldview | The Catholic School, (1977); <i>Holy See's Teaching on Catholic Schools</i> , (2006). |
| 9. Established by the Expressed Authority of the Bishop | Code of Canon Law, (1983); <i>Holy See's Teaching on Catholic Schools</i> , (2006). |

Validity

To establish the validity of the researcher-constructed instrument, *Teacher's Perceptions of the Defining Characteristics of Catholic Schools*, a validity panel of 18 experts was asked to complete the survey and offer comments for instrument improvement. In order to gather current data, experts were invited via email to participate in validity testing based on their professional experiences as leaders in Catholic education (Table 7). After acceptance, the panelists were asked to complete the online survey and offer insights for the development of the instrument and its face, content, and construct validity (Price, Jhangiani and Chiang, 2019; Creswell, 2012). The survey was launched on Survey Monkey and available for completion from Wednesday, March 22 through April 5, 2017. Once the validity survey closed, the researcher considered all feedback and made necessary adjustments to the instrument to strengthen face, content, construct and internal structure validity (Appendix C). Once validity had been authenticated, the survey was ready for reliability testing.

Table 7

Validity Panel Experts

- A. Secondary Catholic school teacher
- B. Secondary Catholic school leadership
- C. Statistics background
- D. Catholic educational research background

E. Catholic school leadership background

F. Technology background

| Name/ Position | A. | B. | C. | D. | E. | F. |
|--|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1. Dr. Carrie Schroeder, Director of Campus Ministry, Mercy High School, San Francisco, California | X | X | | X | X | |
| 2. Dr. Veronica Alonzo, Associate Superintendent of Catholic Schools, Dallas, Texas | X | X | | X | X | |
| 3. Ms. Gretchen Kane, President, Ursuline Academy, Dallas, Texas | X | X | | | X | |
| 4. Dr. Andrea Shurley, Principal, Ursuline Academy, Dallas, Texas | X | X | | X | X | |
| 5. Sr. Ann Barrett, O.S.U., Ursuline Provincial Councilor, St. Louis, Missouri | | X | | | X | |
| 6. Fr. Paul McCormick, Headmaster, Cistercian, Dallas, Texas | X | X | | | X | |
| 7. Fr. Ronald Nuzzi, Director, Mary Ann Remick Leadership Program, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana | | X | | X | X | |
| 8. Ms. Darbie Safford, Principal, St. Paul the Apostle School, Dallas, Texas | | X | | X | X | |
| 9. Mrs. Susan Bauer, Director of Educational Technology, Ursuline Academy, Dallas, Texas | X | X | X | | X | X |
| 10. Dr. Rick Martin, Director of Campus Ministry, Marist High School, Eugene, Oregon | X | X | | X | X | |
| 11. Dr. Matthew Verecke, Superintendent of Catholic Schools, Dallas, Texas | | X | | X | X | |
| 12. Dr. John James, Director of the Institute of Catholic Education, Saint Louis University, St. Louis | | X | | X | X | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|---|---|---|
| 13. Ms. Boreta Singleton, Director of Faculty Faith Formation, St. Peter's Preparatory, Jersey City, New Jersey | X | | | X | X | |
| 14. Mr. Patrick O'Sullivan, Principal, Christ the King, Dallas, Texas | | X | | X | X | |
| 15. Mr. Mike Earsing, President, Jesuit College Preparatory, Dallas, Texas | | X | | | X | |
| 16. Mr. Randal Bakos, Instructional Technologist, Ursuline Academy, Dallas, Texas | X | | | | | X |
| 17. Dr. Christian Dallavis, Senior Director Mary Ann Remick Leadership Program, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana | | X | | X | X | |
| 18. Dr. Mark Kineze, Director of Student Life, Jesuit College Preparatory, Dallas, Texas | | X | | X | X | |

Reliability

To establish a survey's reliability, statistical research shows that an instrument must undergo statistical testing for consistent information over time (Creswell, 2012; Fink, 2013; Fowler, 2009; Salkind, 2011). The researcher must demonstrate information concerning reliability by testing the survey for internal-consistency and for test-retest reliability. Permission to test the survey, *Teacher's Perceptions of the Defining Characteristics of Catholic Schools*, at Ursuline Academy of Dallas was granted by the Director of the Ursuline Sponsorship Office, Sr. Madonna O'Hara, OSU (Appendix E). Dr. Andrea Shurley, Principal of Ursuline Academy of Dallas (Appendix D), also granted permission for the researcher to use the Academy faculty members for the reliability sample population.

Founded in 1874 by the Ursuline Sisters of the Roman Union, Ursuline Academy of Dallas is an all-girl, secondary school owned and operated by the Ursulines of the Central Province. Given that the researcher is a teacher at this school, Ursuline Academy of Dallas will not be included in the sample to prevent the possibility of experimenter bias. However, the school provides the same research variables and population necessary for reliability testing.

Employing a combination of convenience sampling and simple random sampling (Creswell, 2012; Fink, 2013; Fowler, 2009; Salkind, 2011), each of the Ursuline teachers ($N=82$) were assigned a number. A correlated name-numbered list was then entered into the Research Randomizer website (<http://www.randomizer.org>) generating a list of ($n=30$) participants. Utilizing the generated list ($n= 30$) as supported by research scholarship as the normal size in educational research (Creswell, 2012; Fowler, 2009; Maas & Hox, 2005), the 30 chosen faculty members were sent an online invitation to participate in the pilot study for reliability testing of the survey, *Teacher's Perceptions of the Defining Characteristics of Catholic Schools*. Ursuline Academy of Dallas provides all faculty members with a laptop and unlimited access to wireless Internet on the school's campus. Technological specifications should not adversely impact the launching or the completion of the survey pilot. Three days before the intended launch, each teacher received an email via the school's Microsoft Outlook program. The email explained the nature of the researcher's work, as well as the purpose of the internal consistency reliability testing for the survey and requested the faculty member's participation. The researcher reaffirmed survey response confidentiality.

As the preliminary phase for generating the test-retest reliability coefficient (Creswell, 2012), the survey's initial test (T_0) was launched Monday, March 25, 2019 via

SurveyMonkey to the sample population ($n= 30$). A reminder email was sent Monday, April 1, 2019 and on Monday, April 8, 2019, the survey access was closed. Thirty-two days after the initial launching, the re-test (T_1) was launched on Friday, May 10, 2019. Following the structure and format of T_0 , an email was sent to the faculty via Microsoft Outlook repeating the invitation to complete the *Teacher's Perceptions of the Defining Characteristic of Catholic Schools* survey for the re-test (T_1) on SurveyMonkey®. Eight days later, a reminder email was sent on Friday, May 17, 2019, and on Tuesday, May 28, 2019, the survey was closed. Due to Ursuline Academy's graduation weekend and the Memorial Day holiday, four additional days were granted to teachers for survey completion.

Utilizing Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) computer software, Cronbach's α statistical analysis was used on the quantitative survey data. Internal consistency and reliability for thematic domains for each survey section are presented in Table 8.

Table 8

Internal Consistency Reliability for Catholic Identity Defining Characteristics

| Theme | Survey Question Numbers | Cronbach's α (T_0) $n= 20$ | Cronbach's α (T_1) $n= 16$ |
|--|-------------------------|--|--|
| Centered in the Person of Jesus Christ | 2-5 | .517 | .770 |
| Contributing to the Evangelizing Mission of the Church | 6-8 | .396 | .560 |

| | | | |
|--|-------|------|------|
| Distinguished by Excellence | 9-16 | .811 | .768 |
| Sustained by Gospel Witness | 17-21 | .805 | .711 |
| Shaped by Communion and Community | 22-26 | .802 | .646 |
| Accessible to All Students | 27-28 | .047 | .684 |
| Committed to Educate the Whole Child | 29-34 | .860 | .786 |
| Steeped in a Catholic Worldview | 35-45 | .901 | .779 |
| Established by the Expressed Authority of the Bishop | 46-52 | .846 | .901 |

According to the work of George and Mallery (2003), “the following rules of thumb of Cronbach's α apply: $> .9$ Excellent, $.8 - .9$ Good, $> .7 - .8$ Acceptable. Cronbach's α between $.6$ and $.7$ is not a statistical problem” (George & Mallery, 2003). After reviewing the T_0 data in Table 8, the researcher observed that six of the survey domains yielded results between the $.9$ to $.8$ range. The researcher also observed in Table 8, three survey domains had unsatisfactory statistical Cronbach's α results: Centered in the Person of Jesus Christ, Contributing to the Evangelizing Mission of the Church, and Accessible to All Students.

The researcher then launched T₁, collected the data, and conducted the Cronbach's α computations. The researcher was considering question adjustments to the three domains Centered in the Person of Jesus Christ, Contributing to the Evangelizing Mission of the Church, and Accessible to All Students based on T₁ results analysis. However, T₁ data yielded statistical improvements for the three domains of concern. (Table 8) The Cronbach's α statistics for each domain indicated internal consistency for all items and the total survey.

The test-retest reliability of the survey instrument was examined using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. Colloquially referred to as Pearson's r . Salkind (2011) provided a working definition, "Pearson's r is a numerical index that reflects the amount of variability that is shared between two variables, the strength of a relationship between two variables and what they might have in common." (p. 78) In the context of the present study, Pearson's r served as a measure of the consistency of a response for questions administered at two time points (i.e. T₀ and T₁). The findings are presented in Tables 9 and Table 10.

Table 9

Test-Retest Reliabilities for Teacher's Perceptions of the Defining Characteristic of Catholic Schools Survey Questions (n = 6)

| Question | Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson's r) |
|----------|---|
| 2 | 1.000 |
| 3 | .707 |
| 4 | .945 |
| 5 | .000 |
| 6 | -.775 |

| | |
|----|-------|
| 7 | .343 |
| 8 | 1.000 |
| 9 | -.175 |
| 10 | .632 |
| 11 | .944 |
| 12 | 1.000 |
| 13 | .000 |
| 14 | .000 |
| 15 | .707 |
| 16 | .250 |
| 17 | .632 |
| 18 | .315 |
| 19 | .632 |
| 20 | .333 |
| 21 | .843 |
| 22 | .447 |
| 23 | .632 |
| 24 | 1.000 |
| 25 | .707 |
| 26 | .050 |
| 27 | 1.000 |
| 28 | .707 |
| 29 | -.342 |
| 30 | -.316 |

| | |
|----|-------|
| 31 | .500 |
| 32 | -.463 |
| 33 | .000 |
| 34 | -.316 |
| 35 | .707 |
| 36 | .542 |
| 37 | .632 |
| 38 | .270 |
| 39 | .171 |
| 40 | .243 |
| 41 | .857 |
| 42 | 1.000 |
| 43 | .250 |
| 44 | .447 |
| 45 | .887 |
| 46 | .793 |
| 47 | .594 |
| 48 | .794 |
| 49 | .878 |
| 50 | .274 |
| 51 | .542 |
| 52 | .867 |

Note. The (n = 6) group contains the respondents who took both T₀ and T₁

Table 10

Test-Retest Reliabilities for Teacher's Perceptions of the Defining Characteristic of Catholic Schools Survey Questions (n = 9)

| Question | Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson's <i>r</i>) |
|----------|--|
| 2 | .756 |
| 3 | .883 |
| 4 | .883 |
| 5 | .800 |
| 6 | .570 |
| 7 | .395 |
| 8 | .870 |
| 9 | .442 |
| 10 | .500 |
| 11 | .558 |
| 12 | .316 |
| 13 | .060 |
| 14 | .000 |
| 15 | .791 |
| 16 | .550 |
| 17 | .661 |
| 18 | .419 |
| 19 | .833 |
| 20 | .550 |
| 21 | .746 |

| | |
|----|-------|
| 22 | .000 |
| 23 | .500 |
| 24 | 1.000 |
| 25 | .538 |
| 26 | .000 |
| 27 | .756 |
| 28 | .500 |
| 29 | -.411 |
| 30 | .000 |
| 31 | .158 |
| 32 | -.254 |
| 33 | -.258 |
| 34 | .472 |
| 35 | .756 |
| 36 | .500 |
| 37 | .700 |
| 38 | .311 |
| 39 | .718 |
| 40 | .755 |
| 41 | .907 |
| 42 | 1.000 |
| 43 | .600 |
| 44 | .091 |
| 45 | .884 |

| | |
|----|------|
| 46 | .778 |
| 47 | .503 |
| 48 | .538 |
| 49 | .492 |
| 50 | .331 |
| 51 | .649 |
| 52 | .780 |

Note. The ($n = 9$) group contains the respondents who took both T_0 and T_1 but answered partially.

By definition, the Pearson's r correlation coefficient examines the strength and magnitude of the relationship between two variables, so only the questions to which responses were provided at T_0 and T_1 could be included in analysis. After the survey was administered at T_0 and T_1 , it became evident that only a subset of participants ($n = 6$) submitted a completed survey at T_0 and T_1 with the remainder ($n = 3$) submitting partially complete surveys. The reasons for partial survey completion cannot be accounted for by the researcher for the purpose of respecting the participants confidentiality. Scenarios for partial completion may include irresponsibility, lack of interest, time constraints, or technical difficulties. The ($n = 9$) group contains all the respondents who completed either T_0 or T_1 as demonstrated by Table 11. It was decided to restrict the calculation of test-retest reliability using the participants ($n = 6$) who submitted completed surveys at T_0 and T_1 . Table 10 lists the Pearson's r values for the six participants who took the survey at the two time points and completed all questions. Table 11 lists the Pearson's r values including previously mentioned six participants and the three participants who attempted both surveys but did not complete them.

Data Collection

After gaining permission and required authorization from the University of San Francisco's Institutional Review Board (IRB) in fall 2019 (Appendix G), the researcher will pursue research data collection. The researcher will contact the Principals and Presidents of the Ursuline Academies of the Central Province via electronic mail asking permission for teacher research participation. Each Principal and President will receive a letter explaining the confidentiality and anonymity of the research, purpose of this research, how data will be collected, and how data will be employed. The SurveyMonkey platform survey, *Teacher's Perceptions of the Defining Characteristics of Catholic Schools* (Appendix F), will be attached to the letter allowing leadership to read and review the contents. Should an administrator and their community voluntarily choose not to participate, the researcher will reinforce the guaranteed right of confidentiality and anonymity and thank them for their consideration. Should an administrator and their community voluntarily choose to participate, an electronic mail letter will be sent confirming their commitment.

One week after receiving participation confirmations, the survey, *Teacher's Perceptions of the Defining Characteristics of Catholic Schools*, will be launched to all part-time and full-time faculty members of each school ($N = 139$). When participants launch the survey instrument, the opening page will include: (a) greeting, (b) identity of the researcher, (c) confidentiality and anonymity of each participant's responses, (d) purpose of the study, (e) consent of voluntary participation, and (f) time commitment. If the teacher chooses to participate, they will choose the "Yes" survey button and proceed

to the survey. If a teacher does not choose to participate, they will click the “No” survey button and be directed to a closing page.

In the fall 2019, seven days after the initial survey launching, the researcher will send the first electronic mail reminder. Ten days after the first survey reminder, a second electronic email reminder will be sent to those participants who had not completed the survey. Seven days later, a final reminder regarding their contribution to the study will be issued. Seven days later, the survey will close on SurveyMonkey.

For this study, a response rate of 60% will be considered acceptable. Fowler (2009) suggested, “There is no agreed upon standard for a minimum acceptable response rate” (p. 23) for survey research. Sue and Ritter (2007), however, stated that Web-based surveys have a response rate of approximately 30% but also noted that there have been a limited number of studies to report this statistic. Kittleson’s (1997) research on Webbased surveys suggested that a response rate of 50% is adequate, a 60% response rate is good, and a 70% response rate is very good. Therefore, based on expert research and the University of San Francisco School of Education statistical standards, the researcher’s goal is a 60% survey response rate.

Data Analysis

This study will explore the perceptions of teachers in Ursuline secondary schools of the Central Province of the U.S. regarding the nine defining characteristics of Catholic identity as present in their schools and their classrooms. The quantitative data from the online survey will be analyzed using a computer program, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Preliminary data analysis will involve descriptive statistics, (e.g., frequency distribution, mean score analysis, and standard deviations). Inferential

statistics will also be employed to measure the statistical relationship among research questions 1– 4. Tables, graphs, and figures will demonstrate statistical results visually illustrating statistical evidence.

The data analysis of the survey will be organized based on these research questions:

Question 1: To what extent do teachers in Ursuline secondary schools in the United States perceive the nine defining characteristics of Catholic identity to be present in their schools? This research question will be studied based on the statistical results of survey questions.

Question 2: To what extent do teachers in Ursuline secondary schools in the United States perceive the nine defining characteristics of Catholic identity to be present in their classrooms? This research question will be studied based on the statistical results of survey questions.

Question 3: To what extent do teachers in Ursuline secondary schools in the United States perceive professional instruction regarding Catholic identity to be present in their schools?

This research question will be studied based on the statistical results of survey questions

Question 4: To what extent do teachers in Ursuline secondary schools in the United States perceive community life regarding Catholic identity to be present in their classrooms?

This research question will be studied based on the statistical results of survey questions.

Ethical Considerations

To maintain research integrity, the researcher will follow the appropriate protocol at the University of San Francisco for receiving permission to use human subjects for research data information. According to the University of San Francisco School of Education (2008), “the mandate of the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRBPHS), is to safeguard the rights and welfare of human subjects participating in research activities under the authority of the University of San Francisco” (IRBPHS Mandate, p. 6). Participant confidentiality will be ensured, and all information collected as part of this research will remain confidential and not disclosed to anyone outside the scope of this research. Thus, the application for human subject research authorization will be submitted after the researcher’s proposal defense has been approved by the University and after the researcher’s doctoral advisor grants consent (Appendix to follow).

Limitations

The generalizability of this study is limited in scope, selection of the sample population, and by the researcher. The scope of this research is limited solely to Catholic identity and the characteristics of Catholic identity in Catholic secondary schools. The content of the academic research was taken from Catholic Church documents and the NSBECS (Ozar et al., 2012). Participants may have no knowledge of Catholic education documents, possibly due to the teacher’s own educational training, or the teacher may be of another faith tradition.

Due to the voluntary nature of survey research, the teachers' self-reporting responses to survey questions may be affected by the stressful times of the school calendar year, personal disposition, and personal history with the Ursuline Sisters. Respondents may also be influenced by the desire to present overly positive perceptions of their school community and classrooms.

Conclusively, the researcher focused the study solely on secondary schools sponsored by the Ursuline Sisters of the Central Province of the United States. The Ursuline Sisters sponsor additional elementary schools and colleges throughout the United States and globally, thus additional data may exist that could shed light on the focus of Catholic identity in schools.

Background of researcher

The scholar is a product of Catholic education, attending Catholic schools from first grade through doctoral studies. She graduated with a B.A. from the University of Notre Dame in American Studies. During her junior year at Notre Dame, she studied at Tantur Ecumenical Institute in Jerusalem, Israel. Observing the global influences of religion, education, and politics in the human experiences of everyday life, the researcher chose to commit her career to Catholic education. After graduation, she devoted a year of volunteer service to the Holy Cross Associate program and was assigned to teach high school.

The researcher graduated with an M.A. from Saint Louis University in Theology. Currently she has been teaching Freshman and Senior Theology for 25 years at Ursuline Academy of Dallas. The researcher hopes this work contributes to the hope-filled future of Catholic education.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Overview

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of teachers working in Ursuline secondary schools of the Central Province of the United States (US) on the extent to which the nine defining characteristics of Catholic identity in schools (NSBECS, 2012) were present in their respective schools and classrooms. In this quantitative study, a researcher-constructed survey was created to investigate Catholic identity, operationally defined as the nine defining characteristics of Catholic schools (Ozar et al., 2012): (a) centered in the person of Jesus Christ, (b) contributing to the evangelizing mission of the Church, (c) distinguished by excellence, (d) committed to educate the whole child, (e) steeped in a Catholic worldview, (f) sustained by Gospel witness, (g) shaped by communion and community, (h) accessible to all students, and (i) established by the expressed authority of the bishop. Originating in the works of Archbishop J. Michael Miller (2006) and from the statements by Pope Benedict XVI and the American bishops (NSBECS, 2012), the nine characteristics define the deep Catholic identity of Catholic schools and serve as the platform upon which the standards and benchmarks rest (p. 7). This research also examined: (a) teachers' professional education instruction regarding Catholic identity, and (b) teachers' perceptions of community life regarding Catholic identity to be present in their classrooms.

In this chapter, the researcher provides a narrative description of the demographic data of the survey respondents. Secondly, the researcher will report the findings for each

of the four research questions summarized. Thirdly, a summary of the overall research statistical findings is presented.

Demographics

The *Defining Characteristics of Catholic Schools Survey* was administered using the online platform SurveyMonkey. With the permission of the Ursuline secondary school principals (Appendix H), the survey was launched to the full-time and part-time teachers (N=139) working in the three Ursuline Academy, Central Province of the US, secondary schools of the Roman-Union: Ursuline Academy of Dedham, MA; Ursuline Academy of New Orleans, LA; and Ursuline Academy of St. Louis, MO. Of those teachers (N= 139) invited to complete the survey, 49 respondents completed the survey yielding a 35% response rate. Lindemann's (August, 2019) research suggests that "the nationwide average for survey response rate is 33% and the nationwide average for email survey response rate is 30%" (<https://surveyanyplace.com/>). Sue and Ritter (2007) findings concluded that Web-based surveys have a response rate of approximately 30%. A summation of gender, religious preference, and ethnicity follows.

According to the respondents (n = 49) self-reported demographics, 79% of the survey respondents were female, 17% of respondents were male. Four percent of the respondents chose not to specify their gender. Most or 76% of the respondents self-reported religious preference were Roman Catholic followed by 12% Protestant, 2% Jewish, 2% other, and 7% reported not religious. Relative to ethnicity, the majority or 91% respondents were white, 2% black or African American, and 7% self-reported being two races or more. As suggested by the summative demographics, teachers in Ursuline secondary schools of the Roman-Union, Central Province reported: (a) the majority of teachers, 79% respondents, are female; (b) three-fourths teachers, 76%, identify as being

Catholic; and, (c) over 90% of teachers identify their race as white. These respondents reveal a homogeneous teacher population found in categories of race, religion, and gender. Faculty hiring practices should be reviewed in Ursuline secondary schools, thus, throwing a wider net welcoming men, non-Catholics, and people of color into their communities. The Catholic Church unconditionally welcomes all persons and school hiring practices should reflect a universal community.

Table 11 presents demographic survey data relative to respondent's age.

Table 11

Age of Teachers in Ursuline Schools' Summative Population as Percentages (n=42)

| Teacher Age | Teacher Population |
|-------------|--------------------|
| 20 - 24 | 4.76 |
| 25 - 34 | 28.57 |
| 35 - 44 | 16.67 |
| 45 - 54 | 19.05 |
| 55 - 64 | 23.81 |
| 65+ | 7.14 |

As can be seen in Table 11, teachers in the category of 20 - 24 years of age comprise 4.76 % of the teacher population and represent the least number of educators in the Ursuline educator population. At 7.14 %, teachers in the 65+ years of age group comprise the second lowest number of faculty members in the Ursuline educator population. Teachers in the 25 – 34 years of age category comprise 28.57%, the highest percentage of educators in the Ursuline educator population. Following, teachers in the

55 - 64 age group comprise 23.81 % of the Ursuline educator population and rank the second highest population.

Table 12 presents demographic survey data relative to three variables: (a) years of teaching in the Catholic school system; (b) years of teaching at the educators' current Ursuline school; (c) in general years of teaching experience.

Table 12

Teachers in Catholic School System, Teachers in Ursuline School, and General Teaching Experience as Percentages of Years Teaching (n = 42)

| Years of Teaching | Catholic School System | Ursuline School | General Teaching Experience |
|-------------------|------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 – 10 | 59.52 | 76.19 | 40.48 |
| 11 – 20 | 21.43 | 14.29 | 23.81 |
| 21 – 30 | 11.90 | 4.76 | 21.43 |
| 31 – 40 | 4.76 | 4.76 | 11.90 |
| 41 - 50 | 2.38 | | |
| 50 | | | 2.38 |

Table 12 presents demographics regarding teachers' professional years of teaching experience. In the Catholic school system, teachers in the 1 – 10 years of teaching experience comprise most of the population with 59.52% of teachers. Teachers in the 11 – 20 years of Catholic school teaching comprise 21.43% of the population as the next largest category. Teachers in the 41 – 50 years of teaching in the Catholic school system consists of 2.38% of the educator population while no respondents self-reported 50 years or more of teaching experience in the Catholic school system.

As can be seen in Table 12, teachers' professional years of experience in Ursuline schools in the 1 – 10 years comprises most of the population with 76.19% of educators. The Ursuline school teaching 11 – 20 years of experience consists of 14.29% of the teachers. No respondents reported 40 years or more of teaching in an Ursuline school. In General Teaching experience, most or 40.48% of teachers comprised the 1 – 10 years group of the educator population followed by the teachers in the 11 – 20 years of experience consisting of 23.81% of educators. Teachers in the 41 – 50 or more years of teaching experience consisted of 2.38% of the educator population.

As suggested by the data in Tables 11 and 12, Table 11 presents teachers employed in Ursuline secondary schools of the Roman-Union, Central Province leaving the teaching profession around the ages of 34 or 35. However, teachers return to the teaching profession around the age of 55. Table 12 presents teachers' cumulative years of teaching experience leaving the profession after approximately 10 years of service. The 10-year exodus was presented across the board including the Catholic school system in general, Ursuline schools, and general teaching experience. Nationwide, the Catholic educational system needs to review why highly educated, spiritually committed, faith filled, service-oriented, and youthful teachers leave the teaching profession. According to the data, after 10 years approximately 38% of faculty member in the Catholic school system leave pursuing another career. The data showed approximately 61% of faculty members in the Ursuline secondary-school system of the Central Province leave to pursue another career. Those numbers reflect a need for future, deeper research for the departure from faith-filled professionals. The ministry of education is a vocation. Challenges to this vocation may be more than a teacher can bear after 10 years: (a) lower

salary than public system; (b) limited benefits and retirement contributions; (c) limited health insurance choices; (d) Catholic Church politics; (e) limited potential for career advancement; (f) family responsibilities; (g) lack of support by school administration; (h) disagree with local Bishop; (i) limited professional development funds. The leaders of the Catholic educational system need to use their collective wisdom and address these issues. The Church needs to assist its teachers who are carrying forth the Church's evangelizing, educational mission.

Research Question 1

To what extent do teachers in Ursuline secondary schools in the United States perceive the nine defining characteristics of Catholic identity to be present in their schools?

Addressing Research Question 1, respondents completed the *Defining Characteristics of Catholic Schools Survey* (Appendix F). Participants reported their perceptions employing a five-point Likert scale which measured their understanding regarding the presence of the defining characteristics of Catholic identity in their schools. The five-point Likert scale consists of five categories: (a) 1 = Strongly Disagree; (b) 2 = Disagree; (c) 3 = Agree; (d) 4 = Strongly Agree; (e) 5 = Don't Know. Table 15 summarizes the mean scores and standard deviations from the participants' survey responses.

Table 13

Summary of Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of the Survey Defining Characteristics of Catholic Schools: Teachers (n = 49)

| Defining Characteristics | M | SD |
|---|------|------|
| 1. Centered on the Person of Jesus Christ | 3.45 | .53 |
| 2. Contributing to the Evangelizing Mission of the Church | 3.54 | .64 |
| 3. Distinguished by Excellence | 3.22 | .57 |
| 4. Sustained by Gospel Witness | 3.47 | .71 |
| 5. Shaped by Communion and Community | 3.66 | .50 |
| 6. Accessible to all Students | 3.59 | .85 |
| 7. Committed to Educate the Whole Child | 3.62 | .53 |
| 8. Steeped in a Catholic Worldview | 3.33 | .65 |
| 9. Established by the Expressed Authority of the Bishop | 3.88 | 1.13 |

Note. Survey responses scoring: 5=Don't know, 4= Strongly agree, 3= Agree, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly disagree

As seen in Table 13, the means and standard deviations for the defining characteristics of Catholic schools survey results indicate teachers “agree” that all nine defining characteristics of Catholic identity were present in their Ursuline schools of the US. Characteristic 9, Established by the Expressed Authority of the Bishop, received the highest mean score (3.88) and the standard deviation (1.13), indicating variance among the perceptions of faculty. Characteristic 3, Distinguished by Excellence, received the lowest mean score (3.22).

As suggested by the data, Characteristic 9, Established by the Expressed

Authority of the Bishop, presented the greatest mean score and the greatest standard deviation. The mean proposed that teachers in Ursuline secondary schools of the Central Province understand the school's relationship with the Catholic Church. Teachers "agree" that Ursuline schools operate under the authority of the Catholic Church and the local Bishop is the Roman-hierarchical leader that represents the Catholic Church. As part of a world-wide educational ministry, Ursuline schools operate under the local bishop's behest. However, the standard deviation (1.13) presented a disconnect between recognizing the bishop's authority over Ursuline schools and how that relationship is defined.

The role of the Bishops in Ursuline secondary schools of the Central Province requires deeper examination by the Bishops, respective Diocesan offices, and Ursuline school administrators. Additional areas of further study include: (a) the relationship between the Bishops and the classroom; (b) development of personal relationships between Bishops and school communities; (c) relationships characterized by cooperation, trust, and shared ministry between Bishops and school communities; (d) Bishops' personal involvement in teacher training education coursework concerning the Catholic Church; (e) Bishops' greater presence on school campuses. Schools specifically faculty hunger for more education concerning the Bishops' relationship with Ursuline schools. Teachers desire a more trusting, shared professional relationship with the Bishop. The teacher-bishop school community relationships would blossom as the issues are addressed and the Catholic Church's educational ministry for youth would truly benefit.

Research Question 2

To what extent do teachers in Ursuline secondary schools in the United States perceive the nine defining characteristics of Catholic identity to be present in their classrooms?

Addressing Research Question 2, statistical analysis included calculating the mean scores and standard deviations of specific questions on the survey, *Defining Characteristics of Catholic Schools*, as related to teachers' perceptions of the defining characteristics of Catholic identity in teachers' classrooms. Table 14 presents the results.

Table 14

Summary of Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of the Defining Characteristics of Catholic Schools Present in School Classrooms: Teachers (n=49)

| Defining Characteristic Survey Item | M | SD |
|--|------|-----|
| 6. Teachers' classrooms at our school foster the ability for students to cultivate a relationship with Jesus Christ. | 3.45 | .99 |
| 9. Teachers' classrooms share in the Church's Gospel-centered mission. | 3.27 | .88 |
| 17. My classroom culture operates in the traditions of upholding standards of excellence. | 3.83 | .59 |
| 21. Teacher's in our school support the Catholic schools commitment to evangelization. | 3.34 | .93 |
| 27. My classroom fosters collaborative interpersonal relationships. | 3.80 | .50 |
| 35. My classroom is focused on educating the whole child. | 3.66 | .52 |

| | | |
|--|------|------|
| 46. A central focus of my classroom is the integral formation of the human person. | 3.61 | .65 |
| 52. My classroom recognizes the legitimate authority of the Bishop. | 3.77 | 1.12 |

Note. Survey responses scoring: 5=Don't know, 4= Strongly agree, 3= Agree, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly disagree

As shown in Table 14 the means and standard deviations for the defining characteristics of Catholic schools survey results indicate teachers “agree” that the defining characteristics of Catholic identity were present in their classrooms. Question 17, “My classroom culture upholds standards of excellence,” received the highest mean score (3.83). Question 27, “My classroom fosters collaborative interpersonal relationships,” followed with the second highest mean score (3.80). Question 52, “My classroom recognizes the legitimate authority of the Bishop,” received the mean score (3.77) and the standard deviation (1.12) indicating variance among the perceptions of faculty members. Question 9, “Teachers’ classrooms share in the Church’s Gospel-centered mission,” received the lowest mean score (3.27).

Research Question 3

To what extent do teachers in Ursuline secondary schools in the United States perceive professional instruction regarding Catholic identity to be present in their schools?

Addressing Research Question 3, statistical analysis included calculating the mean scores and standard deviations of specific questions on the survey, *Defining Characteristics of Catholic Schools*, as related to teachers’ perceptions regarding professional instruction focusing on Catholic identity in their schools. Table 15 presents the results.

Table 15

Summary of Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of the Defining Characteristics of Catholic Schools: Professional Instruction Regarding Catholic Identity Present in Schools, Teachers (n=49)

| Defining Characteristic Survey Item: Professional Instruction Catholic Identity | M | SD |
|--|------|------|
| 7. Our school's mission recognizes the centrality of the Church's Gospel-centered mission. | 3.35 | .67 |
| 11. The academic standards in our school are stated in our mission core values. | 3.73 | .49 |
| 14. Our school participates in on-going assessments to ensure academic excellence | 3.84 | .51 |
| 15. Our academic standards embrace 21 st century learning skills. | 3.61 | .66 |
| 43. In our school community, it is the sole responsibility of the religious education program to foster the religious development of students. | 2.56 | .84 |
| 47. Our educational mission is supported by the local Bishop. | 3.88 | 1.04 |
| 49. Our school and local Bishop have an established relationship characterized by close cooperation. | 4.00 | 1.38 |
| 56. The Catholic Church's educational mission included in teacher training education coursework. | 1.48 | .50 |

Note. Survey responses scoring: 5=*Don't know*, 4=*Strongly agree*, 3=*Agree*, 2=*Disagree*, 1=*Strongly disagree*

Relative to Table 15, the means and standard deviations indicate that teachers “strongly agree” or “agree” that professional instruction regarding Catholic identity was present in their schools. Question 49, “Our school and local Bishop have an established relationship characterized by close cooperation,” received the highest mean score (4.00) and standard deviation (1.38) indicating variance among teachers’ perceptions. Question

47, “Our educational mission is supported by the local Bishop,” mean score (3.88) and standard deviation (1.04), indicating variance among the perceptions of teachers.

Question 56, “Catholic Church’s educational mission included in teacher training educational coursework,” received the lowest mean score (1.48) indicating teachers’ perceptions as “strongly disagree” and standard deviation (.50).

Research Question 4

To what extent do teachers in Ursuline secondary schools in the United States perceive community life regarding Catholic identity to be present in their classrooms?

Addressing Research Question 4, statistical analysis included calculating the mean scores and standard deviations of specific questions on the survey, *Defining Characteristics of Catholic Schools*, as related to teachers’ perceptions of community life regarding Catholic identity in their classrooms. Table 16 presents the results.

Table 16

Summary of Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of the Defining Characteristics of Catholic Schools: Community Life Present in School Classrooms, Teachers (n=49)

| Defining Characteristic Survey Item: Community Life | M | SD |
|--|------|-----|
| 5. Our school community witnesses to Christ’s example of personal, loving relationships with one another and service to the world. | 3.53 | .54 |
| 9. Teachers’ classrooms share in the Church’s Gospel-centered mission. | 3.27 | .88 |
| 18. Teachers of all disciplines in our school model Gospel values to students. | 3.36 | .77 |

| | | |
|--|------|------|
| 19. Teachers of all religious backgrounds, including non-Catholic and non-Christian teachers, model Gospel values to students. | 3.45 | .75 |
| 20. Teachers in our school support the Catholic school's commitment to social justice. | 3.68 | .59 |
| 24. Our school community emphasizes teacher-student relationships characterized by trust. | 3.68 | .47 |
| 27. My classroom fosters collaborative interpersonal relationships. | 3.80 | .50 |
| 34. Teachers in our community are committed to the holistic development of the student. | 3.64 | .57 |
| 46. A central focus of my classroom is the integral formation of the human person. | 3.61 | .65 |
| 52. My classroom recognizes the legitimate authority of the Bishop. | 3.77 | 1.12 |

Note. Survey responses scoring: 5=*Don't know*, 4= *Strongly agree*, 3= *Agree*, 2=*Disagree*, 1=*Strongly disagree*

As can be seen in Table 16, the means and standard deviations indicate teachers “agree” that community life characterized by Catholic identity and Gospel-living was present in their Ursuline classrooms. Question 27, “My classroom fosters collaborative interpersonal relationships,” received the highest mean score (3.80). Question 52, “My classroom recognizes legitimate authority of the Bishop,” received the second highest mean score (3.77) and standard deviation (1.12) indicating variance among faculty perceptions. Question 9, “Teachers’ classrooms share in the Church’s Gospel-centered

mission,” received the lowest mean score (3.22) and standard deviation (.88) indicating variance among faculty perceptions.

Summary of Survey Research Findings

In summation, the *Defining Characteristics of Catholic Schools Survey*, was electronically disseminated to secondary school teachers in three Ursuline Academies of the Central Province, US. Demographic information (i.e. gender, religious preferences, age, teaching experiences) was collected to assist in discovering trends and patterns in teachers’ responses (n=42). Based on survey questions and data, the means and standard deviations were statistically calculated and the teachers’ (n=49) cumulative results yielded “agree” results. The teachers of the Roman Union Ursuline secondary schools of the Central Province of the United States “agree” that the defining characteristics of Catholic identity were operative in their schools and classrooms.

Data presented by Tables 13 and 14 suggested that teachers perceived a strong, healthy Catholic identity in their schools and classrooms. Therefore, continuing and strengthening these promising trends would require further teacher education and professional development. Constantly cultivating themselves personally, professionally, and spiritually, Catholic teachers must continue their academic growth and personal formation. Teachers cannot give what they do not have within their developed skill sets. For richer and deeper growth, suggested learning opportunities for faculty members include: (a) on campus professional learning communities discussing USCCB, papal and Roman Catholic education documents; (b) Ursuline sponsored teacher in-service discussing USCCB, papal and Roman Catholic education documents; (c) weekend or

evening courses diocesan courses discussing USCCB, papal and Roman Catholic education documents; (d) Ursuline community sponsored teacher in-service studying, *National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools*; (e) diocesan weekend or evening course studying *National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools*; (f) Ursuline teachers on campus intentional faith formation groups; (g) diocesan wide teachers' intentional faith formation groups; (h) on campus and diocesan wide, 'Questions and Answers', in-service with the Bishop.

Data presented by Table 15 suggested that teachers perceived an effective school environment where professional instruction regarding Catholic identity was present. Table 15 displayed the strongest "agree" mean score of the research (4.00) in regard to teachers' perceptions that "schools have an established relationship with the local Bishop". Correlated with the previous mentioned "agree" mean score, teachers' perceptions yielded the standard deviation (1.38) producing "strongly disagree" results. As already noted in Tables 13 and 14, Ursuline teachers recognize and take pride in the Catholic identity of their respective schools. Ursuline teachers are aware that their local bishop represents the Vatican's Roman church leadership in their diocese. However, the data displays a disconnect between teachers' positive perceptions of their local bishop and his exact relationship with Ursuline schools and Ursuline classrooms. Addressing this disconnect, cultivating formative relationships between bishops and teachers would enrich the Church's educational mission. Building transparent communication channels would allow for Catholic bishops, teachers, and schools to foster personal, spiritual, and professional relationships of cooperation and trust. Once authentic communication has

been established among all communities involved, formal and informal learning opportunities for faculty members could address the disconnect. Professional development opportunities offered by Ursuline secondary schools and diocesan offices include: (a) on campus professional learning communities discussing USCCB, papal and Roman Catholic education documents; (b) Ursuline sponsored teacher in-service discussing USCCB, papal and Roman Catholic education documents; (c) weekend or evening courses diocesan courses discussing USCCB, papal and Roman Catholic education documents; (d) Ursuline community sponsored teacher in-service studying, *National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools*; (e) diocesan weekend or evening course studying *National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools*; (f) Ursuline teachers on campus intentional faith formation groups; (g) diocesan wide teachers' intentional faith formation groups; (h) on campus and diocesan wide, 'Questions and Answers', in-service with the Bishop.

Additionally, the data of Table 15 received the lowest mean score (1.48) revealing that, "The Catholic Church's educational mission in teacher training education coursework", was not a requirement of many teachers' educational background or training. This educational coursework would have included topics such as hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church, spirituality of the educator, faith formation, and the relationship between Bishops and Catholic schools. Teachers in Ursuline secondary schools of the Central Province are hired from all over the globe. The most talented of men and women educators are hired from Morocco, Palestine, Mexico, and Africa where nations' educational systems have different degree requirements. In the United States,

too, education programs at universities have different degree requirements. An additional layer, not all Ursuline teachers attended Catholic universities with many attending public institutions worldwide. According to the data, not all Ursuline secondary teachers of the Central Province are Catholic, either. Many Catholic and non-Catholic teachers alike have not had the coursework, faith formation, or training in the evangelizing mission of Catholic schools.

To be prepared for new opportunities, teachers must be equipped with additional educational skills and information necessary for successful teaching in a Catholic, Ursuline secondary school of the Roman Union, Central Province. For enriching growth, suggested learning opportunities for faculty members include: (a) on campus professional learning communities discussing USCCB, papal and Roman Catholic education documents; (b) Ursuline sponsored teacher in-service discussing USCCB, papal and Roman Catholic education documents; (c) weekend or evening courses diocesan courses discussing USCCB, papal and Roman Catholic education documents; (d) Ursuline community sponsored teacher in-service studying, *National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools*; (e) diocesan weekend or evening course studying *National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools*; (f) Ursuline teachers' on campus intentional faith formation groups; (g) diocesan wide teachers' intentional faith formation groups; (h) on campus and diocesan wide, 'Questions and Answers', in-service with the Bishop; (i) coursework on basic Catholic doctrine; (j) coursework on basic Catholic spirituality.

The data of Tables 13 – 16 echoed teachers' desires for greater understanding of the role of the Bishop and Ursuline schools. Understanding the personal and spiritual

relationship a bishop has with Catholic schools resonates with Pope Francis I call to priests and bishops. During Pope Frances' celebration of the 2013 Chrism Mass at St. Peter's Basilica he urged, "[Priests and bishops] be shepherds with the smell of your sheep. Be in the midst of your people like Jesus, the Good Shepherd". Ursuline secondary teachers of all genders, races, ages, and religions and their Ursuline schools would benefit from a close, loving relationship with an authentic good shepherd leading them.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of the Study

Catholic schools are integral to the Catholic Church’s mission of evangelization. A Catholic educational institution is a place to encounter the living God who is Jesus Christ. These statements are strongly supported by numerous authoritative sources including: Benedict XVI, 2008; Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997, 1982, 1988, 1997, 2003, 2007; Francis I, 2012; and John Paul II, 2003, et al. Pope Francis I (2012) further develops the Catholic Church’s shared commitment to schools with his emphasis on the spiritual-personal and transcendent qualities of its mission.

Vatican Council II’s *Declaration on Christian Education* (Pope Paul VI, 1965) stated that the education of youth is one of the foundational ministries of the Church. The Catholic Church is “under an obligation to provide for its youth an education inspired by the spirit of Christ [that stays with them for their whole lives]” (p. 730). The NCCB formative document *To Teach as Jesus Did* (1971) defined the three-fold educational mission of Catholic schools: (a) to proclaim the Gospel; (b) to build community; and (c) to serve our brothers and sisters. Thus, by its very nature, Catholic education is community oriented, relational, and transformative shaping youth for a lifetime through the cultivation of relationships with Christ, self, and others.

Since Vatican Council II, five major documents have been published by the CCE: *The Catholic School* (1977); *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witness to Faith* (1982); *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* (1988); *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium* (1997); and *Consecrated Persons and their*

Mission in Schools (2002), with each document focusing on the distinctiveness of Catholic schools. Educators are tasked with a two-fold imperative: (a) maintaining a Catholic identity in schools; and, (b) spreading the Gospel message. At this time, while Catholic schools remain united with Christ and share the message of the Good News, Catholic schools must also address the challenges of this pivotal moment in their history.

Statistical research shows changing demographics that affect the Catholic educational community and its Catholic identity. The data show the shift from an almost entirely religious staff of 90.1% at mid-century (1950) to 48.4% in the 1970s to a primarily lay staff, 97.2%, during the current 2018-2019 school year. Data shows a decrease from a religious staff in the 1950s to a 2.8% religious staff in 2019 (Jenkins, 2011; McDonald and Schultz, 2019; Nygren and Ukeritis, 1992). The staffing demographics change affected both male and female religious communities. In addition to shifting demographics, Catholic schools of the US face additional 21st century challenges related to economics, finances, enrollment, and faith issues: (a) high cost of tuition; (b) increased options for parental choice educational choices for their children; (c) the ongoing rise of secularism; (d) the changing role of religion on the lives of American Catholics; (e) weak leadership; (f) perceived diminished value of Catholic education; and, (g) LGBTQ+ inclusivity. (Bickett, 2014; Dolan, 2010; DeFiore, Convey & Schuttloffel, 2009; Notre Dame Task Force, 2006). Recognizing the impact that these challenges imposed on Catholic schools, this study chose to focus on Catholic identity in Catholic secondary schools. Specifically, this research concentrated on Catholic identity as lived in Ursuline secondary schools.

The US has a rich history of women's religious communities. These women,

Dominican Sister, Sisters of the Holy Cross, Daughters of Charity, and Oblate Sisters of Providence to name a few, addressed the social issues, educational needs, and health care problems throughout the United States' past, present, and, hopefully, into the future. One of the earliest arriving communities to the US was the Order of Saint Ursula (Ursulines). The Ursulines were founded in 1546 by Saint Angela of Merici in Italy focusing on hospital ministries, care for the poor, and schools for young women. In 1727 at the behest of Pope Pius III and Louis XV of France, the Ursuline sisters began serving the United States communities in New Orleans, Louisiana. Focusing laboriously on issues such as social justice, the needs of women and children, and the education of young girls, the Ursuline sisters have been serving the US for almost 300 years.

In the past, “religious communities, brothers, sisters, and priests were the foundation for providing Catholic identity in schools. The presence of a religious order in a school founded by a religious community provided the definition of what made a school Catholic” (Nygren and Ukeritis, 1992, p. 270). Today, due to 21st century demographic and educational challenges, the Ursuline communities of the US are faced with important decisions regarding their educational stewardship, sponsorship, and ownership of Ursuline secondary schools and maintaining the Catholic identity of their ministries. According to Rosann Whiting (2018), President of the Ursuline Educators Network, the current leadership goals of the Ursuline Central Province are as follows: (a) to ensure and preserve the Catholic identity in Ursuline schools, especially at this time of tremendous changes in the Catholic educational future; (b) to promote Catholic identity in all aspects of school curriculum. Currently, most of the faculty in the Central Province secondary schools, 97.22%, are lay teachers and the least number of teachers, 2.78%, are Ursuline sisters. In addition, this research focused on the Catholic identity of Ursuline secondary

schools, Ursuline secondary schools' classrooms, and the role of the Catholic school lay educator (Hunt, Frabutt, Nuzzi, Solic, 2008).

Recognizing the crossroads phenomenon of today's Catholic schools, the USCCB (2005) issued the pastoral statement, *Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools*, reiterating a three-fold task of Catholic schools: (a) a place where the Gospel is proclaimed; (b) a community where Christ is experienced; (c) where God is worshipped. University scholars, researchers, and experts took this mantle upon themselves answering USCCB's call.

Following the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops statement (2005), Catholic scholars, program directors, administrators, clergy, business experts, and researchers began establishing local and national Catholic education conferences that offered opportunities for fruitful conversations regarding Catholic identity in schools. The following Catholic conferences and task forces were vital in calling for "generating a new systematic body of empirical Catholic research" (Hallinan, 2008, p. 15). These conferences (i.e., Carnegie Conference, Notre Dame Task Force, NCEA, and CHEC) provided the foundation for the seminal Catholic education research at Loyola University of Chicago led by Drs. Lorraine Ozar and Patricia Weitzel-O'Neill.

In 2012 after a two-year collaborative effort lead by Drs. Ozar and Weitzel-O'Neill, a team of Catholic experts, scholars, administrators, bishops, and stakeholders collectively created a most significant document, *National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools* (NSBECS). The purpose of the NSBECS provided the entire Catholic community a common framework of universal

characteristics of Catholic identity and agreed upon criteria for Catholic school excellence. With this framework, [Catholic educators] can and must hold ourselves accountable for the excellence and rigor, faith and nurturance that has been the hallmark of Catholic education, which we must now guarantee for future generations. (Ozar et al., 2012, p. iii).

The NSBECS offer a practical framework for Catholic school educators and education to remain founded in Gospel values and based on the collective wisdom of Church documents (Benedict XVI, 2005, 200; Code of Canon Law, 1983; CCE, 1977, 1982, 1988, 1997; John Paul II, 2003; Miller, 2006; NCCB, 1972; USCCB, 2005a, 2005b; and Vatican II, 1965).

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of teachers working in Roman Union Ursuline secondary schools of the Central Province of the United States regarding the extent to which the nine defining characteristics of Catholic identity (NSBECS, 2012) were present in their respective schools and classrooms. The NSBECS (2012) provided the deep Catholic identity of Catholic schools and served as the [framework] upon which [the researcher's work] rested (p. 7).

In this quantitative study, a researcher-constructed survey was created to investigate Catholic identity, operationally defined as the nine defining characteristics of Catholic schools (Ozar et al., 2012): (a) centered in the person of Jesus Christ, (b) contributing to the evangelizing mission of the Church, (c) distinguished by excellence, (d) committed to educate the whole child, (e) steeped in a Catholic worldview, (f) sustained by Gospel witness, (g) shaped by communion and community, (h) accessible to all students, (i) established by the expressed authority of the bishop. A brief description of each of the nine defining characteristics and the conceptual framework for the survey

(see Appendix A). After completing the validity and reliability statistical testing, a 60-item survey, including nine demographic items, was finalized. The document, *Defining Characteristics of Catholic Schools Survey*, was created and implemented for collecting research data.

The survey, *Defining Characteristics of Catholic Schools Survey* (see Appendix F), was launched via SurveyMonkey to the full-time and part-time teachers (N=139) working in the three Roman Union Ursuline secondary schools of the Central Province of the US: Ursuline Academy of Dedham, MA; Ursuline Academy of New Orleans, LA; and Ursuline Academy of St. Louis, MO. Of those teachers (N= 139) invited to complete the survey, 49 respondents completed the survey yielding a 35% response rate. Statistical research suggests that for web-based surveys, the national response rate average is 30% - 33% (Lindemann, 2019; Sue and Ritter, 2007). The 35% response rate allowed for generalizability within universal Catholic identity and education research.

Demographic information regarding the self-reported respondents (n = 49) was collected and reported. A summation of gender, religious preference, and ethnicity follows. According to the respondents (n = 49) self-reported demographics, 79% of the survey respondents were female, 17% of respondents were male. Four percent of the respondents chose not to specify their gender. Most or 76% of the respondents self-reported religious preference were Roman Catholic followed by 12% Protestant, 2% Jewish, 2% other, and 7% reported not religious. Relative to ethnicity, the majority or 91% respondents were white, 2% black or African-American, and 7% self-reported being two races or more.

The data findings relative to the four research questions of this study on Catholic identity are summarized as follows.

Research Question 1

To what extent do teachers in Ursuline secondary schools in the United States perceive the nine defining characteristics of Catholic identity to be present in their schools?

The data collected, the means and standard deviations for the defining characteristics of Catholic schools' survey results, indicate teachers (n = 49) "agree" that all nine defining characteristics of Catholic identity were present in their Ursuline schools of the US. Characteristic 9, Established by the Expressed Authority of the Bishop, received the highest mean score (3.88) and the standard deviation (1.13), indicating variance among the perceptions of faculty. Characteristic 3, Distinguished by Excellence, received the lowest mean score (3.22). These findings suggest that faculty members are aware that the Bishop of their respective diocese has a relationship with their schools, yet teachers do not agree as to how the relationship is defined or what the role of the Bishop's authority is in Catholic schools.

Research Question 2

To what extent do teachers in Ursuline secondary schools in the United States perceive the nine defining characteristics of Catholic identity to be present in their classrooms?

The data collected, the means and standard deviations for the defining characteristics of Catholic schools' survey indicate, teachers (n = 49) "agree" that the defining characteristics of Catholic identity were present in their respective classrooms. Question 17, "My classroom culture upholds standards of excellence," received the

highest mean score (3.83). Question 27, “My classroom fosters collaborative interpersonal relationships,” followed with the second highest mean score (3.80). Question 52, “My classroom recognizes the legitimate authority of the Bishop,” received the mean score (3.77) and the standard deviation (1.12) indicating variance among the perceptions of faculty members. These findings suggest that faculty members are aware of the defining characteristics of Catholic identity and that they are operational in their respective classrooms. Additionally, this data suggests that teachers are aware that the Bishop of their respective diocese has a relationship with their schools, yet teachers do not agree as to how the relationship is defined or what the role of the Bishop’s authority is in Catholic schools.

Research Question 3

To what extent do teachers in Ursuline secondary schools in the United States perceive professional instruction regarding Catholic identity to be present in their schools?

The data collected, the means and standard deviations for the defining characteristics of Catholic schools’ survey indicate, teachers (n = 49) “strongly agree” or “agree” that professional instruction regarding Catholic identity was present in their schools. Question 49, “Our school and local Bishop have an established relationship characterized by close cooperation,” received the highest mean score (4.00) and standard deviation (1.38) indicating variance among teachers’ perceptions. Question 47, “Our educational mission is supported by the local Bishop,” mean score (3.88) and standard deviation (1.04), indicating variance among the perceptions of teachers. Question 56, “Catholic Church’s educational mission included in teacher training educational coursework,” received the lowest mean score (1.48) indicating teachers’ perceptions as

“strongly disagree” and standard deviation (.50). These findings suggest that faculty members were cognizant that professional instruction regarding Catholic identity was operative in their respective schools. Additionally, this data suggests that teachers are aware that the Bishop of their respective diocese have an established close relationship with their schools, yet teachers do not agree as to how the relationship is defined or what the role of the Bishop’s authority is in the Catholic school educational mission. Lastly, this data suggests that teachers’ general training and professional education did not include coursework regarding the Catholic Church’s educational mission and ministry.

Research Question 4

To what extent do teachers in Ursuline secondary schools in the United States perceive community life regarding Catholic identity to be present in their classrooms?

The data collected, the means and standard deviations for the defining characteristics of Catholic schools’ survey indicate, teachers (n = 49) indicate teachers “agree” that community life characterized by Catholic identity and Gospel-living was present in their Ursuline classrooms. Question 27, “My classroom fosters collaborative interpersonal relationships,” received the highest mean score (3.80). Question 52, “My classroom recognizes legitimate authority of the Bishop,” received the second highest mean score (3.77) and standard deviation (1.12) indicating variance among faculty perceptions. Question 9, “Teachers’ classrooms share in the Church’s Gospel-centered mission,” received the lowest mean score (3.22) and standard deviation (.88) indicating variance among faculty perceptions.

These findings suggest that faculty members were cognizant that community life characterized by Catholic identity and Gospel-living was operative in their respective schools. Additionally, this data suggested that teachers are aware that the Bishop of their

diocese has an authoritative relationship with their schools, yet teachers do not agree as to how the relationship is defined or what role the Bishop's authority operates in their respective classrooms. Lastly, this data suggested teachers' classrooms share in the Church's Gospel-centered environment, yet teachers' perceptions of how a Gospel-centered classroom is operationalized demonstrated variance.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the results of this research, the following recommendations are offered for future research in the areas of Catholic identity in schools of the US, Catholic identity in Ursuline educational ministries of the US, and for faith formation of the laity in Catholic schools.

1. Conduct qualitative research interviewing *teachers* working in Roman-Union, Ursuline secondary schools of the Central Province of the United States regarding the extent to which the defining characteristics of Catholic identity are present in their schools and classrooms.
2. Conduct research to study the perceptions of *administrators* working in Roman-Union, Ursuline secondary schools of the Central Province of the United States regarding the extent to which the defining characteristics of Catholic identity are present in their schools and classrooms.
3. Conduct research to study the perceptions of *students* in Roman Union, Ursuline secondary schools of the Central Province of the United States regarding the extent to which the defining characteristics of Catholic identity are present in their schools and classrooms.

4. Conduct research to study the perceptions of the *parents of students* in Roman Union, Ursuline secondary schools of the Central Province of the United States regarding the extent to which the defining characteristics of Catholic identity are present in their schools and classrooms.
5. Conduct research to study the perceptions of the *Board of Trustees* in Roman Union, Ursuline secondary schools of the Central Province of the United States regarding the extent to which the defining characteristics of Catholic identity are present in their schools and classrooms.
6. Conduct research to study the perceptions of *teachers* working in Roman Union, Ursuline secondary schools of the Eastern Province of the United States regarding the extent to which the defining characteristics of Catholic identity are present in their schools and classrooms.
8. Conduct research to study the *age of teachers* in Roman Union, Ursuline secondary schools of the Central Province of the United States regarding the difference of teachers' ages as correlated with years of teaching.
9. Conduct research to study the *cumulative teaching years of teachers* in the Catholic school system regarding the decline of teachers remaining in a teaching career.
10. Conduct research to study the *teaching years of Ursuline teachers* in Ursuline schools regarding the decline of teachers remaining in a teaching career.
11. Conduct research to study the *general years of teaching experience* for teachers' careers cumulatively. The data suggests an evident decline of teachers remaining in a teaching career.
12. Conduct research to study the *formation of lay teachers* in Catholic education.

Recommendations for Future Practice

Based on the results of this research, the following recommendations are offered for future practices in the areas of Catholic identity in schools of the US, Catholic identity in Ursuline educational ministries of the US, Catholic identity in Ursuline educational ministries globally, and for faith formation of the laity in Catholic schools.

1. Ongoing, professional development for veteran and new teachers regarding the *National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools* (Ozar & Weitzel-O'Neill, 2012).
2. Ongoing, professional development for veteran and new teachers regarding the Catholic Church's Roman and papal documents on the Church's educational mission (Archbishop Miller, 2006; Pope Benedict XVI, 2008).
3. Ongoing, professional development for veteran and new teachers regarding the US Bishops' documents on the Church's educational mission (CCE 1977, 1982, 1988, 1997, 2002, 2007, 2009, 2014; NCCB 1972, 1976, 1979).
4. Ongoing, intentional faith formation of the laity through faculty retreats, virtue seminars, community learning groups, community service, and faculty spirituality groups (Earl, 2008; Groome, 1998, 2014).
5. Professional development and instruction by respective Diocesan Offices for veteran and new teachers regarding the Bishop's authority, role, and relationship with Catholic schools and in the diocese.
6. Professional development and teacher training regarding Catholic identity in Catholic secondary schools with the assistance of the local Catholic colleges and

universities in St. Louis, MO; New Orleans, LA; Boston, MA; and other respective cities where Ursuline ministries may be present.

Closing Remarks

As attested to by enduring Catholic church documents, Pope Benedict XVI, Pope Francis I, Catholic school experts, and the lives of the Catholic faithful, Catholic schools are the “educational churches” of the Catholic faith (Benedict XVI, 2008; Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997, 1982, 1988, 1997, 2003, 2007; Francis I, 2012; and John Paul II, 2003, et al). Foremost, a culture solidly grounded in the liberating truth of Christ (Pope Benedict XVI, 2008) must characterize these “educational churches”. The tasks of Catholic schools, as conferred by the Church, is the evangelization of society, bringing forth the Kingdom of God, and recognizing the dignity of humanity. As Catholic schools carry these truths, schools must also embrace the “maturity opportunities” (Pope Francis I, 2014) presented to them and be open to examining new possibilities for the future.

As illustrated by this study, teachers in Ursuline schools support, observe, and protect the Catholic identity of their respective schools. The data showed Ursuline secondary school teachers embrace and proclaim the Gospel in their classrooms. The findings showed Ursuline teachers lovingly accept their call as builders of community characterized by social justice, trusting student-teacher relationships, and welcoming all faith traditions. The study results strongly supported that teachers live daily the Catholic Church’s mission to serve one another. The Ursuline motto, *Serviam* (I will serve), underlies every element of an Ursuline secondary school providing an additional layer of an Ursuline school committed to Gospel-centered community service. The deep truths

and the educational foundation of teachers in Ursuline schools as presented by the data filled the researcher with much delight, confidence, and hope for the future of Catholic identity in Ursuline schools.

On a final note, it is important to recognize that schools are not Catholic by osmosis because Ursuline sisters are present in schools, own the building, or teach in their secondary schools. The data showed that most of the classroom teachers ($n = 139$) were laity, 98.56%, and only two Ursuline sisters, 1.44%, in the entirety of the Ursuline Central Province were in the classrooms. The faith formation of the laity and the education of teachers regarding the Catholic Church's educational mission needs to be welcomed as "maturity opportunities" (Pope Francis I, 2014) for the future of Ursuline educational ministries and US Catholic school ministries. A Catholic school education is an enduring gift. It is time lay teachers intentionally equip themselves with the educational mission of the Catholic Church and prepare to hold the profound future of Catholic schools in their hands.

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Appendix A:

National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary
Schools: Defining Characteristics of Catholic Schools
(NSBECS, Ozar & Weitzel-O'Neill, 2012)

Defining Characteristics of Catholic Schools

The Defining Characteristics flow directly from the Holy See's teaching on Catholic schools as compiled by Archbishop J. Michael Miller, CSB (*The Holy See's Teaching on Catholic Schools*, 2006), and from statements by Pope Benedict XVI and the American bishops. The characteristics define the deep Catholic identity of Catholic schools and serve as the platform on which the standards and benchmarks rest. The defining characteristics authenticate the standards and benchmarks, justifying their existence and providing their meaning.

Centered in the Person of Jesus Christ

Catholic education is rooted in the conviction that Jesus Christ provides the most comprehensive and compelling example of the realization of full human potential. (*The Catholic School*, 34, 35) In every aspect of programs, life, and activities, Catholic schools should foster personal relationship with Jesus Christ and communal witness to the Gospel message of love of God and neighbor and service to the world, especially the poor and marginalized. (Miller, 2006, pp. 25–26)

Contributing to the Evangelizing Mission of the Church

By reason of its educational activity, Catholic schools participate directly and in a privileged way in the evangelizing mission of the church (*The Catholic School*, 9; *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, 5, 11; *The Religious Dimensions of Education in a Catholic School*, 33). As an ecclesial entity where faith, culture, and life are brought into harmony, the Catholic school should be a place of real and specified pastoral ministry in communion with the local Bishop. (*The Catholic School*, 44; *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, 14; *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, 34;) The environment in Catholic schools should express the signs of Catholic culture, physically, and visibly (*The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*; Miller, 2006, p. 40).

Distinguished by Excellence

Church documents, history, and practices, supported by Canon Law, establish that first and foremost a Catholic school is characterized by excellence. Consistent with the defining characteristics, Catholic schools should implement on-going processes and structures and gather evidence to ensure excellence in every aspect of its programs, life, and activities (*Gravissimum Educationis* 8 and 9; Code of Canon Law, Canon 806 #2).

Committed to Educate the Whole Child

Catholic school education is rooted in the conviction that human beings have a transcendent destiny, and that education for the whole person must form the spiritual, intellectual, physical, psychological, social, moral, aesthetic and religious capacities of each child. Catholic schools should develop and implement academic, co-curricular, faith-formation, and service/ministry programs to educate the whole child in all these dimensions (*The Catholic School*, 29).

Steeped in a Catholic Worldview

Catholic education aims at the integral formation of the human person, which includes “preparation for professional life, formation of ethical and social awareness, developing awareness of the transcendental, and religious education” (*The Catholic School*, 31). All

curriculum and instruction in a Catholic school should foster: the desire to seek wisdom and truth, the preference for social justice, the discipline to become self-learners, the capacity to recognize ethical and moral grounding for behavior, and the responsibility to transform and enrich the world with Gospel values. The Catholic school should avoid the error that its distinctiveness rests solely on its religious education program (Miller, 2006, pp. 43–45, 52).

Sustained by Gospel Witness

Catholic schools pay attention to the vocation of teachers and their participation in the Church's evangelizing mission. (The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, 19; Lay Catholics in Schools, 37) A Catholic educator is a role model for students and gives testimony by his or her life and commitment to mission (Benedict XVI, June, 2005; Miller, 2006, p. 53). As much as possible, Catholic schools should recruit teachers who are practicing Catholics, who can understand and accept the teachings of the Catholic Church and the moral demands of the Gospel, and who can contribute to the achievement of the school's Catholic identity and apostolic goals, including participation in the school's commitment to social justice and evangelization.

(United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, National Directory for Catechesis, 231)

Shaped by Communion and Community

Catholic school education places an emphasis on the school as community—an educational community of persons and a genuine community of faith. (Lay Catholics in Schools, 22, 41) Catholic schools should do everything they can to promote genuine trust and collaboration among teachers, with parents as the primary educators of their children, and with governing body members to foster appreciation of different gifts that build up a learning and faith community and strengthen academic excellence (Lay Catholics in Schools, 78). The Catholic school should pay especially close attention to the quality of interpersonal relations between teachers and students, ensuring that the student is seen as a person whose intellectual growth is harmonized with spiritual, religious, emotional, and social growth (The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, 18).

Accessible to All Students

By reason of their evangelizing mission, Catholic schools should be available to all people who desire a Catholic school education for their children (Gravissimum Educationis, 6; Code of Canon Law, Canons 793 #2; Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium, Introduction). Catholic schools in concert with the Catholic community should do everything in their power to manage available resources and seek innovative options to ensure that Catholic school education is geographically, programmatically, physically, and financially accessible.

Established by the Expressed Authority of the Bishop

Canon Law states, "Pastors of souls have the duty of making all possible arrangements so that all the faithful may avail themselves of a Catholic education" (Code of Canon Law, Canon 794). Bishops need to put forward the mission of Catholic schools, support and enhance the work of Catholic schools, and see that the education in the schools is based on principles of Catholic doctrine (John Paul II, Pastores Gregis, 52). Catholic schools have a formal and defined relationship with the Bishop guided by a spirituality of ecclesial communion, and should work to establish a relationship marked by mutual trust, close cooperation, continuing dialogue, and respect for the Bishop's legitimate authority (Code of Canon Law, Canon 803 #1 and #3; Miller, 2006, p. 33).

Appendix B:

Validity Panel Experts

Validity Panel Experts

A. Secondary, Catholic school teacher

B. Secondary, Catholic school leadership

Statistics background

Catholic educational research background

Catholic school leadership background

Technology background

| Name/ Position | A. | B. | C. | D. | E. | F. |
|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 19. Dr. Carrie Schroeder, Director of Campus Ministry, Mercy High School, San Francisco, California | X | X | | X | X | |
| 20. Dr. Veronica Alonzo, Associate Superintendent of Catholic Schools, Dallas, Texas | X | X | | X | X | |
| 21. Ms. Gretchen Kane, President, Ursuline Academy, Dallas, Texas | X | X | | | X | |
| 22. Dr. Andrea Shurley, Principal, Ursuline Academy, Dallas, Texas | X | X | | X | X | |
| 23. Sr. Ann Barrett, O.S.U., Ursuline provincial councilor, St. Louis, Missouri | | X | | | X | |
| 24. Fr. Paul McCormick, Headmaster, Cistercian, Dallas, Texas | X | X | | | X | |
| 25. Fr. Ronald Nuzzi, Director, Mary Ann Remick Leadership Program, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana | | X | | X | X | |
| 26. Ms. Darbie Safford, Principal, St. Paul the Apostle School, Dallas, Texas | | X | | X | X | |
| 27. Mrs. Susan Bauer, Director of Educational Technology, Ursuline Academy, Dallas, Texas | X | X | X | | X | X |
| 28. Dr. Rick Martin, Director of Campus Ministry, Marist High School, Eugene, Oregon | X | X | | X | X | |
| 29. Dr. Matthew Vereecke, Superintendent of Catholic Schools, Dallas, Texas | | X | | X | X | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|---|---|---|
| 30. Dr. John James, Director of the Institute of Catholic Education, St. Louis University, St. Louis | | X | | X | X | |
| 31. Ms. Boretta Singleton, Director of Faculty Faith Formation, St. Peter's Preparatory, Jersey City, New Jersey | X | | | X | X | |
| 32. Mr. Patrick O'Sullivan, Principal, Christ the King, Dallas, Texas | | X | | X | X | |
| 33. Mr. Mike Earsing, President, Jesuit College Preparatory, Dallas, Texas | | X | | | X | |
| 34. Mr. Randal Bakos, Instructional Technologist, Ursuline Academy, Dallas, Texas | X | | | | | X |
| 35. Dr. Christian Dallavis, Senior Director Mary Ann Remick Leadership Program, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana | | X | | X | X | |
| 36. Dr. Mark Kineze, Director of Student Life, Jesuit College Preparatory, Dallas, Texas | | X | | X | X | |

Appendix C:

Validity Panel Responses

Validity Panel Responses for Survey: Teacher's Perceptions of the Defining Characteristics of Catholic Schools

Validity Panel Narrative Comments

After reviewing the validity panel (n = 18) response rate results (.83), the open-ended question responses were addressed for instrument formatting, face validity, content validity and, construct validity improvement.

Face and content validity

Does the "Welcome Page" give a clear explanation of the purpose of the survey? Expert responses: 15/18 responded, "Yes".

Does the instrument's purpose align with the study's purpose?

Expert responses: 15/ 18 responded, "Yes".

Does the instrument address current Catholic education scholarship content? Expert responses: 15/18 responded, "Yes".

Formatting

Does the "Welcome Page" give a clear explanation of participant anonymity and confidentiality for participation in this study?

Expert responses: 15/18 responded, "Yes".

Approximately how long did it take you to complete the survey? Expert responses: 18 – 30 minutes.

Does the 5-point, Likert scale formatting allow for acceptable answer choices that reflect participants perceptions?

Expert responses: 15/18 responded, "Yes".

Construct validity

7. Expert comment: "The survey language is too direct and not nuanced enough".

Researcher response: For the sake of ensuring content and construct validity of the researcher-constructed survey, the researcher used the language, the vocabulary, and the conceptual constructs of the NSBECS (2012):

The Defining Characteristics of Catholic School flow directly from the Holy See's teaching on Catholic schools as compiled by Archbishop J.

Michael Miller, CSB and from statements by Pope Benedict XVI and the American bishops. The characteristics define the deep Catholic identity of Catholic schools . . . (and provide the foundation of Catholic schools).

(Ozar & Weitzel-O'Neill, NSBECS, p. 7 – 10.)

The researcher constructed instrument is founded upon the established research, current documentation, and the language of both the Catholic Church and Catholic schools as published in the NSBECS (2012).

Open ended responses

Please offer any additional comments or suggestions that would improve the instrument's validity.

1. Expert comment: "The survey language is too direct and not nuanced enough".

Researcher response: For the sake of ensuring content and construct validity of the researcher-constructed survey, the researcher used the language, the vocabulary, and the conceptual constructs of the NSBECS (2012):

The Defining Characteristics of Catholic School flow directly from the Holy See's teaching on Catholic schools as compiled by Archbishop J.

Michael Miller, CSB and from statements by Pope Benedict XVI and the American bishops. The characteristics define the deep Catholic identity of Catholic schools . . . (and provide the foundation of Catholic schools).

(Ozar and Weitzel-O'Neill, NSBECS, p. 7 – 10.)

The researcher constructed instrument is founded upon the established research, current documentation, and the language of both the Catholic Church and Catholic schools as published in NSBECS (2012).

2. Expert comment: "What does it mean to evangelize?" "What does evangelization mean?"

Researcher response: Two-fold response: (a) For the sake of ensuring content and construct validity of the researcher-constructed survey, the researcher used the language, the vocabulary, and the conceptual constructs of the NSBECS (2012):

The Defining Characteristics of Catholic School flow directly from the Holy See's teaching on Catholic schools as compiled by Archbishop J.

Michael Miller, CSB and from statements by Pope Benedict XVI and the American bishops. The characteristics define the deep Catholic identity of Catholic schools . . . (and provide the foundation of Catholic schools).

(Ozar and Weitzel-O'Neill, NSBECS, p. 7 – 10.)

The researcher constructed instrument is founded upon the established research, current documentation, and the daily language of both the Catholic Church and Catholic schools as published in NSBCES. After discussion with researcher's dissertation director, Dr. Jane Bleasdale, it was decided that: (b) for the sake of defining survey terms more clearly and using more inclusive language. Question 9, using the word "evangelization", was changed to use the term "Gospel- centered" (Creswell, 2012; Fink, 2013).

3. Expert comment: "Reword questions 28 & 29."

Researcher response: Two-fold response: (a) For the sake of ensuring content and construct validity of the researcher-constructed survey, the researcher used the language, the vocabulary, and the conceptual constructs of the NSBECS (2012):

The Defining Characteristics of Catholic School flow directly from the Holy See's teaching on Catholic schools as compiled by Archbishop J.

Michael Miller, CSB and from statements by Pope Benedict XVI and the American bishops. The characteristics define the deep Catholic identity of Catholic schools . . . (and provide the foundation of Catholic schools).

(Ozar and Weitzel-O'Neill, NSBECS, p. 7 – 10.)

The researcher constructed instrument is founded upon the established research, current documentation, and the daily language of both the Catholic Church and Catholic schools as published in NSBCES. After discussion with researcher's dissertation director, Dr. Jane Bleasdale, it was decided that: (b) for the sake of defining survey terms more clearly and using more inclusive language. Questions 28 & 29, using the word "evangelization" or "evangelizing", was changed to use the term "Gospel- centered" (Creswell, 2012; Fink, 2013).

Expert comment: "Cancel open-ended questions. Too vague. Clarity needed."

Researcher response: After discussion with doctoral advisor, Dr. Jane Bleasdale, the open-ended questions were removed from the survey. The instrument would focus solely on quantitative data. Qualitative research can build upon this body of work in the future.

Expert comment: "Why do some questions have an asterisk and others do not?"

Researcher response: The researcher was seeking the greatest amount of data possible and did not want questions to be skipped by respondents. Asterisks were placed by questions purposefully for data content. However, after conferring with doctoral advisor, Dr. Jane Bleasdale, all asterisks were removed.

Expert comment: "Why are questions on the Bishop's authority of schools necessary?"

Researcher response: Researcher response: For the sake of ensuring content and construct validity of the researcher-constructed survey, the researcher used the language, the vocabulary, and the conceptual constructs of the NSBECS (2012):

The Defining Characteristics of Catholic School flow directly from the Holy See's teaching on Catholic schools as compiled by Archbishop J.

Michael Miller, CSB and from statements by Pope Benedict XVI and the American bishops. The characteristics define the deep Catholic identity of Catholic schools . . . (and provide the foundation of Catholic schools).

(Ozar and Weitzel-O'Neill, NSBECS, p. 7 – 10.)

The researcher constructed instrument is founded upon the established research, current documentation, and the language of both the Catholic Church and Catholic schools as published in NSBECS (2012).

Appendix D:

Letter of Permission for Survey Reliability Testing – Dr. Andrea Shurley

March 22, 2019
 Dr. Andrea Shurley
 Principal, Ursuline Academy of Dallas
 4900 Walnut Hill Lane
 Dallas, TX 75229

Dear Dr. Shurley,

My name is Ann Middendorf, and I am currently a teacher in the Theology Department at Ursuline Academy of Dallas. I am a doctoral candidate at the Jesuit University of San Francisco in the Institute of Catholic Educational Leadership. Presently, I am researching and writing my dissertation on teachers' perceptions of Catholic identity in Ursuline secondary school of the United States. I am writing to ask for your permission for assistance with my research.

I would like to invite teachers of Ursuline Academy of Dallas to be participants in the doctoral survey research. The teachers would be involved in the survey instrument reliability testing. The survey would be disseminated on Survey Monkey. Employing a Test-Retest reliability statistical model, the first launch of the survey would be Monday, March 25, 2019. The second launch of the instrument would be April 15, 2019.

I have asked Sr. Madonna O'Hara, O.S.U., Director of Ursuline Sponsorship, permission to approach you and ask to include Ursuline Academy of Dallas in this process. My doctoral advisor at USF, Dr. Jane Bleasdale, will also be supervising my doctoral progress. Together, I hope we can develop this research into a significant contribution to Catholic educational research in St. Angela's spirit.

Gratefully,

Ann Middendorf

Doctoral student

University of San Francisco bamiddendorf@dons.usfca.edu

URSULINE
 ACADEMY
 March 22, 2019

Dear Ann,

Thank you for following up on our meeting and your request to include Ursuline Academy of Dallas teachers in your survey reliability test-retest doctoral research. You have my permission to conduct this reliability study in the time frame you reference in your letter (first launch of the survey would be Monday, March 25, 2019, and second launch of the instrument would be April 15, 2016).

I hope the survey administration goes well and helps you generate good data to serve your doctoral research. I look forward to hearing what you learn through your research study on

teachers' perceptions of Catholic identity in Ursuline secondary school of the United States.
It is a highly relevant and important topic.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrea Shurley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Andrea Shurley Ed.D.
Principal, Ursuline Academy of Dallas

Andrea Shurley, Ed.D.

Appendix E:

Letter of Permission for Research - Sr. Madonna O'Hara, O.S.U.

Sr. Madonna O'Hara, OSU
Director of Sponsorship: Roman Union, Central Province Ursuline Schools 341 South
Sappington Rd.
St. Louis, MO 63122

Dear Sr. O'Hara,

My name is Ann Middendorf, and I am currently a teacher in the Theology Department at Ursuline Academy of Dallas. I am a doctoral candidate at the University of San Francisco in the Institute of Catholic Educational Leadership. Presently, I am researching and writing my dissertation on teachers' perceptions of Catholic identity in Ursuline secondary schools of the United States. Following up per our personal conversation, I am writing to ask for your permission for assistance with my research.

I would like to invite the teachers of the Roman Union, Central Province Ursuline secondary schools to participate in my doctoral survey research. The teachers at Ursuline Academy of Dedham, MA, Ursuline Academy of New Orleans, LA and Ursuline Academy of St. Louis, MO would be asked to complete a researcher-constructed survey, *Teacher's Perceptions of the Defining Characteristics of Catholic Schools*. The survey will be disseminated on Survey Monkey during the Fall 2019.

My doctoral advisor at USF, Dr. Jane Bleasdale, will be supervising my doctoral progress. I look forward to your response and together, I hope, we can develop this research data into a significant contribution to Catholic educational research in St. Angela's spirit.

Gratefully,

Ann Middendorf

Doctoral student

University of San Francisco bamiddendorf@dons.usfca.edu

From: Sr. Madonna O'Hara <mohara@osucentral.org>
Sent: Thursday, March 14, 2019 5:34 PM
To: Ann Middendorf <Amiddendorf@ursulinedallas.org>
Subject: Permission letter

Ann, I am so sorry I neglected to respond to your request to do this. I would think of it at times when I could not respond and then would forget. I am fine with saying you can do this. However, I leave this office in June and Sr. Diane and Karen Mortillaro take over. I know you mentioned this to Diane at time of Angela Retreat. I think it would be good to touch base with her before you send it out in the fall. Good luck with all this. You have a lot of work ahead.

Blessings,
Madonna

Appendix F:

Principals' Invitation to the Survey

Dear Dr. _____:

My name is Ann Middendorf and I am a Theology teacher at Ursuline Academy of Dallas. I am also a doctoral student in the Catholic Educational Leadership (CEL) program at the Jesuit University of San Francisco. I have been given permission by Sr. Madonna O'Hara, OSU, Director of the Office of Sponsorship for the Roman Union Central Province (2006 - 2019), and Sr. Diane Fulgenzi, OSU, Director of the Office of Sponsorship for the Roman Union Central Province, to invite you and your teachers to participate in my doctoral research.

The purpose of my doctoral study is to explore how Ursuline secondary teachers perceive the nine defining characteristics of Catholic schools to be present in their schools and operative in their classrooms. The study will employ the *Defining Characteristics of Catholic Schools Survey*, a 60-question survey taking approximately 20 minutes. The survey will be administered via SurveyMonkey. Teacher identity and personal survey responses will be kept confidential and private by the researcher, who will be the sole individual having access to the responses. Participants and results are anonymous. No information on any individual's responses will be reported to anyone. All responses will be transmitted via SurveyMonkey encryption software and stored on SurveyMonkey's secured server.

The study will involve the three Ursuline secondary schools of the Central Province: St. Louis, MO; New Orleans, LA; Dedham, MA. The fourth secondary school, Ursuline Academy of Dallas, is ineligible for participation due to the researcher's employment at the school. Be advised, your participation in this study is strictly voluntary. You are free to decline participation or withdraw your school at any time. If you consent, your schools' and teachers' rights to confidentiality and privacy are guaranteed.

Should you have questions, you may contact me at bamiddendorf@dons.usfca.edu. If you have further questions about the study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRBPHS) at the University of San Francisco. You may reach IRBPHS offices by calling (415) 422 – 6091 or by emailing IRBPHS@usfca.edu.

Thank you for considering participation in this study. Your school's participation in this study could benefit the future of Catholic education and the Ursuline educational mission. If you wish to grant permission or decline for your school's participation, please respond to this email with your reply by Friday, January 31, 2020.

Sincerely,

Ann Middendorf

Appendix G:

IRBPHS Permission

To: Barbara Middendorf
From: Richard Gregory Johnson III, IRB Chair
Subject: Protocol #1339
Date: 01/22/2020

The Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRBPHS) at the University of San Francisco (USF) has reviewed your request for human subjects approval regarding your study.

Your project (IRB Protocol #1339) with the title **Teacher's Perceptions of the Defining Characteristics of Catholic Schools** has been approved by the University of San Francisco IRBPHS as **Exempt** according to 45CFR46.101(b). Your application for exemption has been verified because your project involves minimal risk to subjects as reviewed by the IRB on 01/22/2020.

Please note that changes to your protocol may affect its exempt status. Please submit a modification application within ten working days, indicating any changes to your research. Please include the Protocol number assigned to your application in your correspondence.

On behalf of the IRBPHS committee, I wish you much success in your endeavors.

Sincerely,

Dr. Richard Gregory Johnson III
Professor & Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
University of San Francisco irbphs@usfca.edu
[IRBPHS Website](#)

Appendix H:

Teachers' Perceptions of the Nine Defining Characteristics of Catholic Identity Survey

Teacher's Perceptions of the Defining Characteristics of Catholic Schools

Dear Ursuline Teachers,

Thank you for participating in this project. The purpose of this survey is to find out how Ursuline secondary teachers perceive the nine defining characteristics of Catholic schools to be present in their schools and operative in their classrooms. The results of this survey will add to the future of Catholic scholarship and the Ursuline educational mission.

The survey is comprised of 60 questions and should take approximately 20 minutes. Read each statement and choose the response that most closely matches your perceptions of the defining characteristics of Catholic schools.

Please complete the survey by Monday, February 17, 2020. Thank you so much for your passion, expertise and dedication to the rich future of Catholic education.

**Ann Middendorf
Doctoral Student
Jesuit University of San Francisco**

1. Confidentiality and Privacy

Participants: your participation in this survey is completely voluntary and the responses to this survey are for research purposes only. You may discontinue survey participation at anytime.

Your identity and personal survey responses will be kept confidential and private by the researcher, who will be the sole individual who has access to your responses. Participants and results are anonymous. No information on any individual's responses will be reported to anyone. All responses will be transmitted via SurveyMonkey encryption software and stored on SurveyMonkey's secured server.

Having read this statement of confidentiality and privacy, you are welcome to continue or discontinue working on the survey at any time.

A. Centered in the Person of Jesus Christ

2. Students in our school are encouraged to cultivate a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Don't know

3. Our school witnesses to the Gospel messages of love of God and love of neighbor through community service to the poor and marginalized.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Don't know

4. Christ's centrality to our Catholic identity permeates all school subject areas.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Don't know

5. Our school community witnesses to Christ's example of personal, loving relationships with one another and service to the world.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Don't know

6. Teachers' classrooms at our school foster the ability for students to cultivate a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Don't know

B. Contributing to the Evangelizing Mission of the Church

7. Our school's mission recognizes the centrality of the Church's Gospel-centered mission.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Don't know

8. Our school has physical, visible signs (e.g. crucifixes, chapel, statues, scripture) throughout the institution indicating the Church's evangelizing mission.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Don't know

9. Teachers' classrooms share in the Church's Gospel-centered mission.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Don't know

C. Distinguished by Excellence

10. Our school has the tradition of upholding standards of excellence.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Don't know

11. The academic standards in our school are stated in our mission core values.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Don't know

12. Our school's policies ensure our school's academic excellence.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Don't know

13. Our school offers programs and activities involved in school life to ensure excellence.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Don't know

14. Our school participates in on-going assessments (e.g. accreditation processes) to ensure excellence.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Don't know

15. Our school's academic standards embrace 21st century learning skills.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Don't know

16. Our school's religious education classes are integral to the academic program.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Don't know

17. My classroom culture operates in the traditions of upholding standards of excellence.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Don't know

D. Sustained by Gospel Witness

18. Teachers of all disciplines in our school model Gospel values to students.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Don't know

19. Teachers of all religious backgrounds, including non-Catholic and non-Christian teachers, model Gospel values to students.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Don't know

20. Teachers in our school support the Catholic school's commitment to social justice.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Don't know

21. Teachers in our school support the Catholic school's commitment to evangelization.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Don't know

22. The value of each person's dignity is reflected in the daily life of our school.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Don't know

E. Shaped by Communion and Community

23. Our school celebrates our Catholic, communal faith life with liturgies.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Don't know

24. Our school community emphasizes teacher-student relationships characterized by trust.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Don't know

25. Our school community relationships are characterized by collaboration between teachers and parents.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Don't know

26. Our school community is committed to community service.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Don't know

27. My classroom fosters collaborative interpersonal relationships.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Don't know

F. Accessible to All Students

28. By reason of the Catholic church's evangelizing mission, our school is committed to making it accessible for all students.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Don't know

29. By reason of the Catholic church's Gospel-centered mission, our school is committed to making financial aid resources available to ensure Catholic school accessibility for all students.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Don't know

G. Committed to Educate the Whole Child

30. Our school develops and implements academic programs to educate the whole child.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Don't know

31. Our school develops and implements athletic programs to educate the whole child.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Don't know

32. Our school develops and implements faith-formation programs to educate the whole child.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Don't know

33. Our school develops and implements service/ministry programs to educate the whole child.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Don't know

34. Teachers in our community are committed to the holistic development of the student.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Don't know

35. My classroom is focused on educating the whole child.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Don't know

H. Steeped in a Catholic Worldview

36. In our school, Catholic education aims at the integral formation of the human person.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Don't know

37. In our school, Catholic educational aims are designed to prepare students for their future professional life.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Don't know

38. In our school, Catholic education focuses on the religious formation of our students.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Don't know

39. Our school curriculum fosters the students' desire to seek wisdom.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Don't know

40. Our school curriculum and instruction fosters the students' desire to seek the truth.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Don't know

41. Our school curriculum and instruction fosters the preference for social justice.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Don't know

42. Our school fosters the discipline for students to become autonomous learners.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Don't know

43. In our school community, it is the sole responsibility of the religious education program to foster the religious development of students.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Don't know

44. In our school, Catholic education focuses on the students' formation of ethical and moral behavior.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Don't know

45. In our school, curriculum and instruction fosters Gospel values.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Don't know

46. A central focus of my classroom is the integral formation of the human person.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Don't know

I. Established by the Expressed Authority of the Bishop

47. Our school's educational mission is supported by the local Bishop.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Don't know

48. Our students and local Bishop have an established relationship characterized by mutual trust.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Don't know

49. Our school and local Bishop have an established relationship characterized by close cooperation.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Don't know

50. Our school recognizes the local Bishop's legitimate authority.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Don't know

51. Our school respects the local Bishop's legitimate authority.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Don't know

52. My classroom recognizes the legitimate authority of the Bishop.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Don't know

Demographic Responses

* 53. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Other/ Prefer not to specify

* 54. Do you have a religious preference?

- Roman Catholic
- Protestant Christian
- Eastern Orthodox
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Buddhist
- Hindu
- Follower of another religion
- Not religious

* 55. What is your ethnicity?

- White
- Black or African-American
- Asian or Native Hawaiian
- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Hispanic or Latino
- Two or more races

* 56. In your education and teacher training courses, did you receive any instruction on the Catholic Church's education mission?

Yes

No

Please comment on your education and teacher training background:

* 57. Years employed at current school

Less than 1 year

1 - 4 years

5 - 10 years

More than 10 years

More than 20 years

More than 30 years

More than 40 years

More than 50 years

* 58. How many years have you been teaching in general?

Less than 1 year

1 - 4 years

5 - 10 years

More than 10 years

More than 20 years

More than 30 years

More than 40 years

More than 50 years

* 59. What is your age?

- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65+

* 60. What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?

- Bachelor's degree (e.g. BA, BS)
- Master's degree (e.g. MA, MS, MEd, MDiv)
- Doctorate (e.g. PhD, EdD)

* 61. How many years have you taught in the Catholic school system?

- 1 - 10 years
- 11 - 20 years
- 21 - 30 years
- 31 - 40 years
- 41-50 years
- 50+ years

*