



# CONTEMPLATIVE LEADERSHIP

*Reflecting with the Heart of Christ*



**Dr. Merylann “Mimi” J. Schuttloffel**



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# PURPOSE

***Contemplative Leadership: Reflecting With the Heart of Christ*** is a video series by Dr. Merylann “Mimi” J. Schuttloffel as an approach to Catholic leadership by which leaders integrate their Catholic faith into their vision and decision-making. By participating in this series, the Catholic leader will:

- Be convicted of the need to be a contemplative leader
- Understand how their personal identity, worldview, and culture impact the institution they lead
- Learn and integrate various reflective practices to frame their thinking and aim toward continuous improvement
- Understand how a faith internship is a model for strengthening the school’s identity, culture, and worldview
- Infuse into the Church’s mission of Catholic education, sound faith formation, and challenging academics

In this video series, Dr. Mimi is joined with some of her former students. They lend their insights and experience to highlight the effectiveness of Contemplative Leadership.



*“The objective of the Catholic school goes beyond college and career success, straight to the gates of heaven.”*

*—Dr. Merylann J. Schuttloffel*

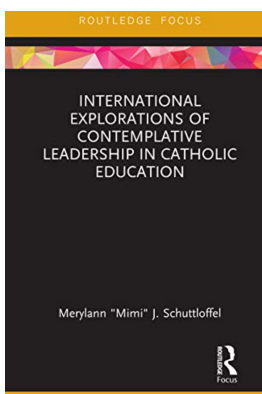
# MEET DR. MERYLANN “MIMI” J. SCHUTTLOFFEL

**Merylann “Mimi” J. Schuttloffel**, PhD is Professor Emerita at The Catholic University of America, Washington, DC. She received her undergraduate degree from the College of St. Teresa majoring in French and K-12 education. She received her MA in School Counseling from the University of Tulsa. Her PhD in Educational Administration and Research is also from the University of Tulsa where she specialized in leadership and policy studies. Her dissertation was entitled, *The Technology Integrated Classroom: The Changing Role of the Teacher and Implications for Teacher Evaluation*.



At the Catholic University of America, Professor Schuttloffel directed the Catholic leadership programs, including the doctoral program in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies (CELPs) for principal and superintendent preparation (1996-2018). She served as Chair of the Department of Education from 2006-2016. She is also Founding Director of the Institute for Catholic School Leadership at the Saint Paul Seminary School of Divinity/University of St. Thomas (MN).

Schuttloffel’s most recent publication is *International Explorations of Contemplative Leadership in Catholic Education* (2019, Routledge). She is the author of four NCEA publications: *Character and the Contemplative Principal* (1999), *Report on the Future of Catholic School Leadership* (2003), *Contemplative Leadership That Creates a Culture of Continuous Improvement* (2008), and *Report on Catholic School Leadership: Ten Years Later* (2014). She also co-authored *Weathering the Storm: Moving Catholic Schools Forward* (2009). She has numerous international publications including chapters in *Communicating the Faith* (2011), *The Culture of Catholicism in the United States* (2012) and in the *International Handbook of Catholic Education* (2007). She was a contributing author to the two volumes of *Catholic Schools in the United States: An Encyclopedia* (2004).



Professor Schuttloffel has written extensively on contemplative leadership practice including how Catholic identity formation and cultural influences impact leadership. She has presented at numerous national and international educational conferences. Her international research on Catholic schools includes Australia, Belgium, Chile, Netherlands, Poland, Singapore, Thailand, and the United Kingdom.

In 2018 Schuttloffel received the C. Albert Koob Award from the National Catholic Educational Association for her contribution to leadership preparation and research. Schuttloffel was also the recipient of the College of St. Teresa Alumnae Award for her contributions to educational leadership and her demonstration of Teresan values.

Dr. Schuttloffel has more than fifty years of experience as an educator in Catholic and government schools located in rural, urban, and suburban settings. Dr. Schuttloffel’s career includes time as a teacher, a school counselor, and an elementary school (Pre-K–8) Catholic school principal.

Dr. Mimi, her familiar title, lives with Marvin, her husband of fifty years, in Silver Spring, Maryland. Their family includes two sons, two daughters-in-law, and eight grandchildren. Dr. Mimi is an avid sports fan, particularly baseball. She also enjoys travel and has visited forty-eight states and thirty-seven countries.



*A recent discussion about Catholic education with Sister John Dominic Rasmussen, OP*

**Contemplative Leadership series:**  
<https://openlightmedia.com/courses/contemplative-leadership/>



# VOICES FROM THE FIELD

## MEET DR. MIMI'S STUDENTS



**Cristiana Ritchie-Bonomo**, PhD, earned her doctorate in Catholic Educational Leadership at the Catholic University of America. At CUA, she was grateful to be mentored by Dr. Mimi Schutloff and learned the power of contemplative practice. Dr. Ritchie-Bonomo currently serves as the Director of Educational Services for the Edmund Rice Christian Brothers and is an adjunct professor for the Center for Catholic School Leadership at Fordham University. She also consults with the Diocese of Brooklyn and creates lessons and ideas for integrating Catholic Social Teaching into the curriculum. Previously, she served as the Associate Director for the Center for Catholic School Leadership at Fordham University, Director of Catholic Education, Associate Superintendent, Principal, and teacher for the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. In addition, she is a proud wife, mom, stepmom, and Mimi to two beautiful granddaughters.



**Robert Bridges**, PhD, is the President of Cathedral High School in Indianapolis. He's held that position since 2016, becoming the sixth president of the four-time National Blue Ribbon School.

Before landing the job at Cathedral, Bridges was the Head of School at Muskegon Catholic Central and a former teacher/coach at the American School of Rio de Janeiro. Bridges is also a former Peace Corps volunteer. He earned his PhD from The Catholic University of America in 2018. The title of his abstract was *The Influence of Vouchers on the Catholic Identity of Catholic Elementary Schools*.

Dr. Bridges and his wife Marcia have four children. His son, Robbie Bridges, is a 2021 graduate of Holy Cross College. Robbie earned his Master's in 2022 from the University of Notre Dame. Bridges' youngest son, Sammy Bridges, will be a freshman at Holy Cross in the fall.

# VOICES FROM THE FIELD

## MEET DR. MIMI'S STUDENTS— CONTINUED



**Erick Chittle**, PhD, was named President of Pope John Paul II Preparatory School in Hendersonville, Tennessee, in March 2023. Pope Prep opened in 2002 and serves students in grades 6–12. Pope Prep offers a range of innovative programs that are setting a vision for the future of Catholic college preparatory schools. With just over 735 students, it is Nashville's largest private prep school.

Erick has been an educator since 1997 and served as principal of Saint Francis High School in Traverse City, Michigan. Additional roles in Catholic education include interim superintendent of Catholic schools for the Diocese of Gaylord in Michigan. His work as an educator began as an English teacher with the Franciscans in inner city Chicago and rural Louisiana. After his early work with the Franciscans, Erick spent two years in Guatemala as part of the Volunteer Missionary Movement.

Erick earned his PhD from the Catholic University of America in 2017. His area of study was Contemplative Leadership with a dissertation entitled *Contemplative Leadership in Catholic Schools: Employed by Principals, Experienced by Teachers, and Its Impact on Teachers' Care for the Spiritual Lives of Students*.

Erick and his wife, Kimberly, have nine children—Adam, Abigail, Mary, Emilianna, Isabella, Gabriella, Tobias, and Ignatius, all who attend Catholic schools.



**Dr. Jim King**, PhD, is currently the Associate Superintendent of Catholic Schools for the Diocese of Youngstown, Ohio. During his career, he has been a Catholic school teacher and principal in the Dioceses of Orlando, Florida and Cleveland, Ohio, was the Superintendent of Schools for the Diocese of Portland, Maine, and has served as a director for the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA). He holds a master's in educational leadership in Catholic Schools from Seton Hall University, earned his doctorate in Catholic Educational Leadership and Policy from the Catholic University in Washington DC, and holds multiple awards for his work in teaching, instructional design, and writing. During his work at NCEA, he researched and presented his work on outstanding Catholic school pastors which was also printed as *Priestly Leadership in Catholic Schools*. Dr. King's primary work, research, and several new initiatives focus on building the Catholic culture of schools.

# VOICES FROM THE FIELD

## MEET DR. MIMI'S STUDENTS—CONTINUED



**Phyllis Crotty Morrison**, PhD, currently serves as the Chair of the Theology Department at Ursuline Academy, an all-girls Catholic school sponsored by the Ursuline Sisters, in Dedham, Massachusetts. As chair, she articulates and communicates the department's strategies in achieving the mission and goals of the school and sets departmental objectives, assessments, and policies in collaboration with the members of the department.

Previously, she was the Associate Head of School (2017–2023) at the Academy of the Holy Names sponsored by the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary (SNJM) in Albany, New York. Dr. Morrison began her career in Alberta, Canada, as a high school theology teacher and department chair. She has a Bachelor of Education degree in Secondary Education from the University of Alberta, a Master's of Religious Education from Boston College, and a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Catholic Educational Leadership and Policy Studies from the Catholic University of America, Washington, DC.

In addition to her love of lifelong learning, she is an avid fan of walking, swimming, reading, and spending time at the ocean. What she treasures most is spending time with her family and friends—the true blessings in her life!

# WHAT MAKES YOU WHO YOU ARE?

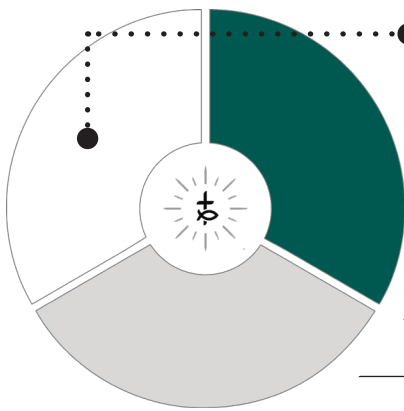
*As a Catholic leader, who you are as an individual matters. In fact, as you watch the lectures and reflect upon different aspects of contemplative leadership practices, it will be evident that your Catholic identity has a direct correlation to the identity of the whole community. Identity is not the only dimension: it also impacts the culture and worldview that should function as a synergy. If one area is lacking, the whole is weakened. –Dr. Mimi*

Your identity—who you are as a Person—powerfully impacts who you are as a Catholic leader. Moreover, who you are as a Catholic leader shapes the community you lead—not only the identity of your community but also the worldview and culture of your community.

As you journey through this series, you will learn how identity, culture, and worldview are synergetic. If the leader’s Christ-believing Identity is strengthened, so is their personal culture and worldview. Conversely, if one area is lacking, the whole is weakened.

**YOUR IDENTITY, CULTURE, AND WORLDVIEW  
DIRECTLY IMPACT THE COMMUNITY YOU LEAD.**

▶ Use this space to reflect upon each dimension.



● **IDENTITY** WHO AM I?

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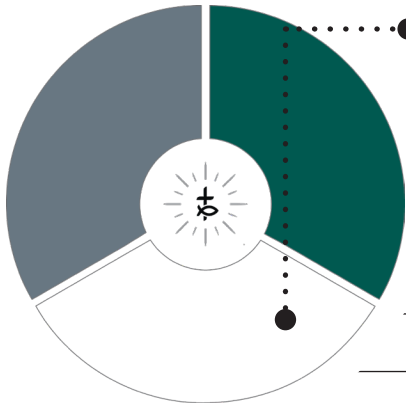
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**WORLDVIEW** DO I HAVE A CATHOLIC CHRISTIAN LENS?

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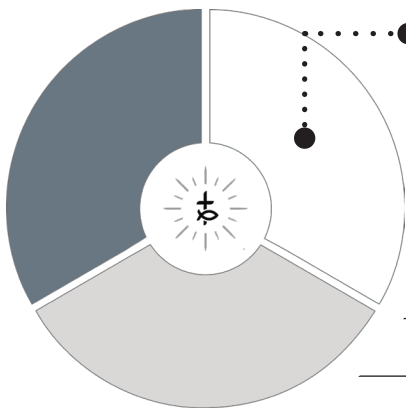
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**CULTURE** DESCRIBE MY LIFESTYLE— ENVIRONMENT

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**LEADER**

**SCHOOL**

# Identity, Culture, and Worldview

## LECTURE 1

### PART 1



WATCH VIDEO **Lecture 1, Part 1**

8:41 MINUTES

*The hinge in the entire educational endeavor is the availability of committed Catholic teachers and leaders. . . . The quality of the Catholic educational experience within today's Catholic school must be more defined, more distinctive, and more explicit than ever before. What religious women and men could accomplish by their mere presence must now be planned for, and worked at, to maintain the Catholic identity of Catholic schooling.*

—*Contemplative Leadership That Creates a Culture for Continuous Improvement*, Schuttloffel p. 3.

What is the history of your school?

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Is it a parochial school, one owned by a religious community, or privately owned?

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At some point, did a religious community administrate or teach at the school? If so, how did the charism of the community and its members shape the identity of the school?

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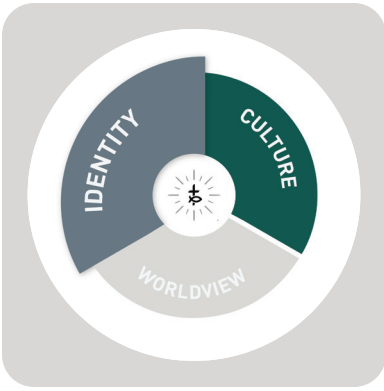
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### *Elements of Identity*

If you do not know about the religious community, take time to research their history. As Catholics, we believe in the communion of saints, and the religious brothers or sisters who once walked the halls and taught in the school are interceding for us today.

Learning more about the school’s history is one way to strengthen the Catholic identity and culture. Consider the following:

Does the school have rituals or traditions? If so, explain.

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Symbols speak to the identity and culture of the school. Have these been incorporated into the logo or the coat of arms? How does the symbol reflect the mission and purpose of the school?

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The school community may have holy men and women who are a part of the history. Do you know their life story or are you familiar with local saints? Shrines?

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The history of your school or diocese may include holy men and women. Is your school community aware of how they witnessed being a disciple of Christ?

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### Action item

As you reflect upon leading your school community, it is critical to understand all customs or traditions or “how things have been done around here.” Some faculty and staff members may have been employed for an extended period and can provide valuable institutional knowledge and insight.

**With a docile heart, schedule a time to meet and listen to their experience. Write down what you learned in your meeting.**

TRADITIONS

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CUSTOMS

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HISTORY

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### Action item

Imagine yourself walking into your school building for the first time for a school tour. Complete this chart to assess what your experience was like.

DESCRIBE WHAT YOU WOULD EXPERIENCE TODAY:	AREA OF IMPROVEMENT
<b>FRONT ENTRANCE</b>	<b>FRONT ENTRANCE</b>
<b>FOYER</b>	<b>FOYER</b>
<b>WHO GREETES YOU?</b>	<b>WHO GREETES YOU?</b>
<b>STUDENTS</b>	<b>STUDENTS</b>
<b>COLLATERAL MATERIAL</b>	<b>COLLATERAL MATERIAL</b>

# ● Identity, Culture, and Worldview

Are there any areas that need strengthening? Do they align with the vision and mission of the school?

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Review your worksheet about the school community's identity, culture, and worldview. What is your understanding of the phrase "to think like a Catholic"?

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Is there any area that needs to be strengthened in order to align more fully with the mission? Do the members of the faculty and staff "think like a Catholic"?

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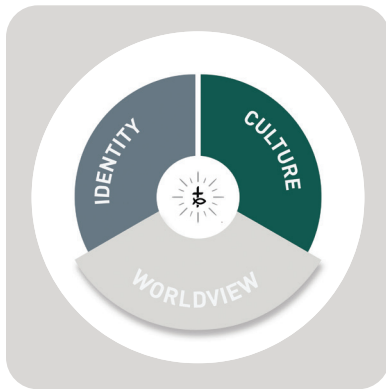
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In the table below, write down concrete ways and brainstorm ideas on how you can be more intentional in teaching the students, faculty, staff, and parents "to think like a Catholic."

	STUDENTS	FACULTY AND STAFF	PARENTS
CONCRETE WAYS			
BRAINSTORM IDEAS			



*Contemplative practice engages scholarship rooted in the Catholic educational tradition. Specifically the contemplative principal presents a distinctive meta-cognitive process that includes an understanding of Catholic theology, Church documents, and a powerful tradition of social justice based in Gospel values. Why Catholic educational leaders make the decisions they make is what defines a Catholic school. –Contemplative Leadership That Creates a Culture for Continuous Improvement, Schuttloffel p. 4.*



## *Elements of Worldview*

### THE FIVE THEOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF A CATHOLIC WORLDVIEW

- A Positive Anthropology of the Person
- A Sacramentality of Life
- A Communal Emphasis
- A Commitment to Tradition
- An Appreciation of Rationality and Learning

#### 1. Positive Anthropology of the Human Person

Christian anthropology looks at the human person through a Christian lens, particularly what it means to be created in the image and likeness of God. It also seeks to explain the human person in light of their relationship to God, which divinely helps them to grow in charity as the ultimate human act.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, §1700–1877, is dedicated to the dignity of the human person. This section can serve as a point of reference when instructing your school community about the Catholic worldview of the human person.

# ● *Identity, Culture, and Worldview*

How does your school intentionally teach a Christian anthropology of the human person?

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What concrete ways can this be woven into the school day and curriculum?

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How can the lives of the saints expose the student body to the beauty of diversity in cultures around the world?

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## 2. Sacramentality of Life

*The sacraments are efficacious signs of grace instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us. The visible rites by which the sacraments are celebrated signify and make present the graces proper to each sacrament. They bear fruit in those who receive them with the required dispositions. –CCC 1131*

Reflect upon your school community. Is there an understanding of what it means to live a rich sacramental life? Among your key constituents—parents, faculty, staff, and students—is it a priority to attend Sunday Mass? Does the cycle of the liturgical year give meaning to the worldview of your school community? Your culture?

In what ways does a desire to live in a state of habitual grace—that is, participating in God’s life—shape the worldview of your school community?

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Is there an implicit understanding of seeing the world from a divine perspective? How can you demonstrate a sacramental way of life to your school community?

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*The fruit of sacramental life is both personal and ecclesial. For every one of the faithful on the one hand, this fruit is life for God in Christ Jesus; for the Church, on the other, it is an increase in charity and in her mission of witness. –CCC 1134*

# ● *Identity, Culture, and Worldview*

## 3. Communal Emphasis

The two commandments taught to us by Jesus are, “You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind” and “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:37-39); each provide the framework for the communal emphasis in a Catholic school.

How are both dimensions (love of God and love of neighbor) lived in your school community?

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In every Catholic school, a crucifix is a visible reminder of God’s love for each of us. The Medieval Carthusian motto, “The Cross of Christ is still while the world turns” brings the two commandments into focus. A cross has two bars symbolizing Jesus’ two great commandments—the vertical bar, love of God, and the horizontal bar, love of self and others. If one bar is missing, the cross does not exist. Living at the intersection of the cross allows us to be grounded in the present and see God’s presence in those we meet each day.

In what ways do you assist your school community in understanding the reality of this sacramental presence in every classroom?

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While it may serve as a visible “sign” of the school’s Catholic identity, most importantly, it should give meaning to the worldview of every person in the school. How does the crucifix strengthen our worldview?

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### Reflection

Without faith we have no center and no heart. All Christians believe through the prism of the cross, the image that defines us, points us to the mystery of God’s love and the tragedy of personal and collective sin —*Faith Formation of the Laity in Catholic Schools*, Sister Patricia Helene Earl.

“The prism of the cross” is the lens of our Catholic worldview as it is truly the mystery of God’s love, which gives meaning to our life as we live from God’s love and in service to others in our local community. Charity enables us to transcend the weaknesses and sins of those we encounter and strive to bring them into communion with God—the source of love.

How can this understanding increase your charity and ability to approach the challenges, disappointments, and hardships from this worldview?

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#### 4. Commitment to Tradition

In the United States of America, Catholic education was influenced by many heroic men and women. Here is a sampling of educators who have started Catholic schools.



St. Katherine Drexel



St. Elizabeth Ann Seton



St. Frances Cabrini



St. John Neumann



St. Théodore Guérin

A common thread inspired them to respond to God’s call for Catholic education: charism, love of God and neighbor, the dignity of the human person, and passion for learning. Describe how each of the following aspects form your Catholic worldview.

Charism

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Love of God

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# ● *Identity, Culture, and Worldview*

Love of Neighbor

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Dignity of the Human Person

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## **5. Rationality and Passion for Learning**

Do your teachers have a Catholic worldview? If so, how do your teachers approach curriculum from this perspective?

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Why is a challenging academic curriculum as equally important as the catechetical instruction and faith formation of students?

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What are practical ways you can integrate this perspective into your role as a Catholic school leader?

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### *Reflection*

Is there tension within the faculty and staff as to what should be a priority between catechesis and academic subjects?

# Tasks and Relational—Summary

## LECTURE 2

### PART 1



WATCH VIDEO **Lecture 2, Part 1**

10:21 MINUTES

*Contemplative practice provides the rationale for decision making by reminding principals of their Catholic scholastic heritage. Contemplative practice integrates the four leadership elements and influences why and how the principal makes decisions that shape a school's culture. –Contemplative Leadership That Creates a Culture for Continuous Improvement, Schuttloffel p. 8.*

**A CONTEMPLATIVE LEADER HAS TWO  
PRIMARY OBJECTIVES THAT ARE TASKS  
AND RELATIONAL.**



Reflect upon your responsibilities as leader and categorize them as either tasks or relational.

TASKS	RELATIONAL

How would you describe yourself?

more task-oriented

more relational-oriented

How does this impact your daily schedule?

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As a leader, you set the tone for the culture of the school community. Describe ways you can cultivate an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect.


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 **TASK OBJECTIVES**

 Consider tasks and relational objectives and identify examples that apply to each.

<b>HOLISTIC (INTEGRAL) DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>FORMAL CURRICULUM</b>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
	<b>INFORMAL CURRICULUM</b>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
	<b>FAITH FORMATION</b>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
	<b>ACADEMIC SUCCESS</b>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
	<b>SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

 **RELATIONAL OBJECTIVE**

**Credibility of the Leader**

 List ways you establish credibility and mutual trust with the following:

Faculty and Staff

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Parents

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Students

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Parish Community

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Local Community

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**COMMUNICATION:** Do you have a communication plan? How do you communicate with your stakeholders?

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 **COMMUNITY BUILDING:** Describe how you build a sense of community with the following:

Teachers

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Students

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Parents

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# ● *Tasks and Relational–Summary*

Parishioners

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Larger Society

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## *Reflection*

The community of the school begins with the tone of the leader and trickles down into the culture. Reflect upon the balance between tasks and relational objectives.

How does your time and demeanor impact the school culture?

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Are there ways you can adjust these areas for improvement? If so, how?

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Do you have a balance between tasks and relational objectives? For example, if are you more task-oriented, participate in activities which develop your relational skills.

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# ● *Problems and Dilemmas*

## LECTURE 2

### PART 2



WATCH VIDEO **Lecture 2, Part 2**

26:06 MINUTES

*While this leadership responsibility might appear on the surface to be a relatively straightforward endeavor—one of putting into practice the faith that is the school’s reason for existence—Catholic educational leadership is, in reality, a much more complex phenomenon. In any setting—public or nonpublic—leading a school is more akin to a juggling act than it is to following a recipe, where the individual charged with the responsibility for the enterprise must quickly learn to balance an array of stresses and conflicts. —Character and the Contemplative Principal, Schuttlöffel p. 2.*

**A problem** is normally objective and can be resolved with resources or by dedicating time and attention to a solution.

**A dilemma** requires more time as well as mental and emotional energy and is not a “textbook”-driven solution. As a Catholic leader, you need a “thick skin,” as it is essential to develop a method to approach dilemmas proactively. If you try to “push them under the carpet,” they will reappear.

In your experience as a Catholic leader, recall situations that have arisen (past or present) and classify them as either a problem or a dilemma.

**PROBLEM**

**DILEMMA**

## OPTIONAL CONSIDERATION

### Problem Solving from a Still Point of Grace



**Step 1:** Follow the Neurosequential Model (Regulate, Relate, Reason), of *Raised in Grace: Made for Wholeness—The Beauty of Gradualness*

Every day, a school setting brings varying problems and dilemmas. Each person sees the situation from their own perspective, and their emotions and personal interest will factor into the dynamics.

An administrator needs to assess the situation considering all parties' viewpoints objectively. Therefore the first step in effective problem-solving is for the administration to rest in their "Still Point of Grace." From this point, they will be able to lead the other parties and hopefully evaluate the dilemma or problem to a place of reason. In order to move them to this place, an administrator should work through an analysis of the problem and identify possible solutions.

How do I personally arrive at my Still Point of Grace?

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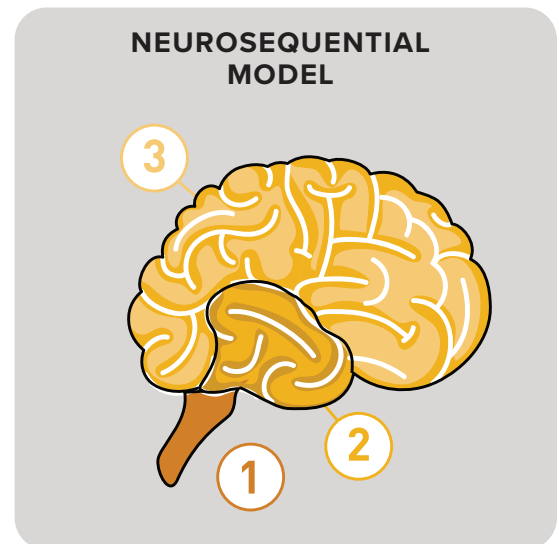
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## THE NEUROSEQUENTIAL MODEL AND STILL POINT OF GRACE

The neurosequential model is an outline of how the brain develops, how the brain processes information, how we learn optimally, and what are effective ways to shape behavior (Perry & Winfrey, 2020). This model for regulating, relating, and reasoning is the bottom portion of our developmental timeline because it draws on this order of engagement with children. Basically, in order to get to the higher cortical reasoning of a child, a parent or teacher needs to



## OPTIONAL CONSIDERATION (continued)

### STILL POINT OF GRACE



3 REASON



2 RELATE



1 REGULATE

be relationally connected to them in some way, and they need to assess whether a child is regulated or whether the stress response system is overly activated. The fundamental principle is that we all need to follow this rule of the biological organization of the brain if we are going to be successful in parenting or teaching. The brain is organized in a hierarchical fashion in which brain structures for regulation (e.g., brainstem survival mechanisms, assessing for safety, belonging, or threat) develop first and centers for relationship and attachment (e.g., limbic system mechanisms for regulating emotion and relationship) and higher cortical reasoning (e.g., the cortex structures for language, memory, logic, and planning) develop second and third, respectively. All incoming information that a child processes first arrives at the brainstem centers and then the limbic system centers to assess for threats to safety and well-being, especially threats to attachment and belonging. When a child has a well-regulated and normative stress response and is securely attached to the adults in their life, their cortex can then be effectively open and accessible for learning. On the other hand, if a child has a chronically activated stress response and is highly activated (fight-or-flight) or is deeply shut down (freeze), their cortex will be less accessible, and it will be difficult to successfully engage them and their higher order reasoning abilities in their growth and learning. This hierarchical organization and model for engagement is why the theological virtues (e.g., faith, hope, and love) and the “holding environment” that they create (e.g., safe, seen, soothed, and secure) as well as the social-emotional learning strategy of co-regulation are the bedrock and root system of all childhood development and growth.



Still Point of Grace: <https://openlightmedia.com/courses/still-point-of-grace/>

▶ **Step 2: From a Still Point of Grace**

Use the worksheet to analyze the problem or dilemma.

#### PROBLEM OR DILEMMA

Identify the issue.

Would you describe the issue as a problem or dilemma?

What are (or is) the root cause(s) of the issue?



Symptoms are often the behaviors of the related parties that can serve as a distraction.

Search for multiple solutions.

Develop an action list of items or ideas that are working toward the solution.

Test and evaluate the solution by considering various scenarios.  
(If I do this \_\_\_\_\_, then \_\_\_\_\_ might happen.)

If I do this

Then this may happen:


Choose the best solution: Which approach will have the most positive impact? Review the Parts of a Prudential Act (see p. 34).

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Develop an action plan: Lay out the details step by step.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Implement the Plan: Tell the stakeholders

Evaluate (criteria or metric of success).

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Create a file of documents to review for future problems or dilemmas.

### Step 3: Assessing Impact

How does my decision impact each of the stakeholders?

Family

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Parents

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Students

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Local Community

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### Cardinal Virtue of Prudence in Action

Parts of a Prudential Act: Prudence enables one to reason and to act rightly in any given situation—"right reason in action."

<b>GOOD COUNSEL</b>	Seeking advice from reasonable and trustworthy persons
<b>GOOD JUDGMENT</b>	Thinking rightly about a decision, carefully considering all the circumstances, and praying about what the Lord would have you do
<b>COMMAND</b>	Acting upon a sound decision made after thoughtful deliberation



*Learn the Virtues:* <https://openlightmedia.com/courses/learn-the-virtues-video-series/>



### *Reflection*

Spend time reflecting upon your own strengths and weaknesses as a Catholic leader. Is there someone who could serve as a mentor that complements your areas of growth? How can he or she assist your professional and spiritual growth?

Every administrator needs a trusted colleague and mentor to assist in decision-making and navigating problems and dilemmas. These individuals need to be self-possessed and able to offer honest, constructive feedback.

The following is a list of reflective questions to prayerfully contemplate when choosing a Catholic leader as a mentor.

- Do they show a commitment to forming their own personal prayer and sacramental life?
- Is there a dedication to continued study and improvement?
- Will they be honest with you and provide constructive feedback?
- Is Christ the center of their life?
- Does a Christian anthropology of the person shape their worldview? That is, will they help you make decisions objectively from this perspective?
- Do they have experience in Catholic education?
- Do they possess a knowledge of and gratitude for the history of the institution they lead?
- Does their life manifest Christian maturity, prayerfulness, integrity, and wisdom in their decisions?






Schedule a meeting with an individual who could be a trusted mentor.

*The merging of reflective practice and moral leadership sets the stage . . . to engage in decision making as a Catholic educational leader. The interactive nature of the levels of reflection and the elements of moral leadership provide insight into how truly complex this role is. –Character and the Contemplative Principal, Schuttlöffel, p. 35.*

Building from Lecture 2, when you learned the difference between problems and dilemmas, Lecture 3 draws you deeper into contemplative practice to guide you through challenging situations. Contemplative practice will help you carefully reflect on your decisions and honestly assess your handling of them.

In this section, we'll take the initial steps of integrating Sergiovanni's Leadership Model and Van Manen's practices by recalling the following:

	HEART 	HEAD 	HAND 
Sergiovanni	<p><b>VALUES AND BELIEFS</b></p> <p>What are your own values?</p>	<p><b>MINDSCAPE</b></p> <p>How you see the world</p>	<p><b>DECISIONS, BEHAVIOR, ACTIONS</b></p> <p>Mindful decision-making</p>
Van Manen	<p><b>THREE THEORIES OF REFLECTION:</b></p>		
	<p><b>CRITICAL</b></p> <p>Why is this decision being made?</p>	<p><b>INTERPRETIVE</b></p> <p>What meaning does the decision create? What messages does the decision send?</p>	<p><b>TECHNICAL</b></p> <p>How is the decision implemented?</p>



Using the integration of Sergiovanni and Van Manen as a framework, analyze a goal or decision that is/has been important to your community. Use this model to analyze a decision that had a successful outcome. Then, analyze a decision that had an unsuccessful outcome.

Why was this decision made or goal decided upon? How does it resonate with the vision and mission of the community you lead? Who helped to make this decision?



**Critical**

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What message does this decision (or goal) send to the community you lead? What message does it send to individual stakeholders?



**Interpretive**

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How is the decision being implemented? Who should be involved in implementation?



**Technical**

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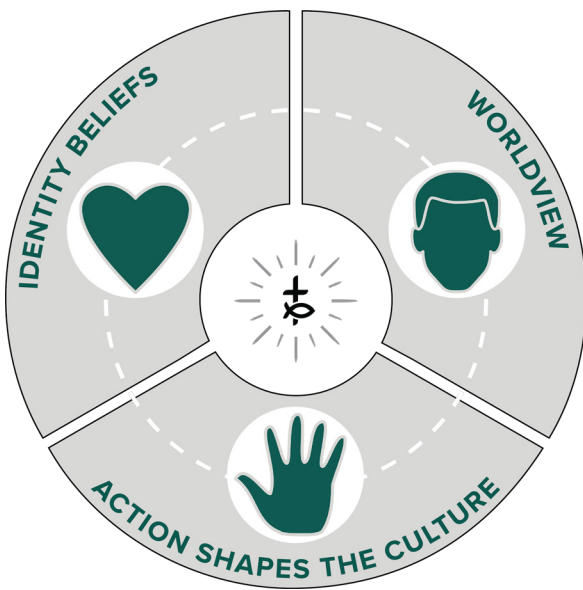
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***Reflection***

If, upon reflection using these models, you see decision-making as an area you need to improve, talk this over with your mentor or trusted colleague.

*For Catholic educational leaders, the intersection of the heart, head, and hand evidences itself in one's character, the lifestyle each has chosen to give witness to the moral and intellectual virtues which Catholic educational leaders value. It is this virtuous character that inspires others to make these virtues a focal part of their own lives. —Character and the Contemplative Principal, Schuttloffel p. 3.*



**Identity:**

Belief of Catholic leader



**Worldview:**

How Catholic leaders view the world



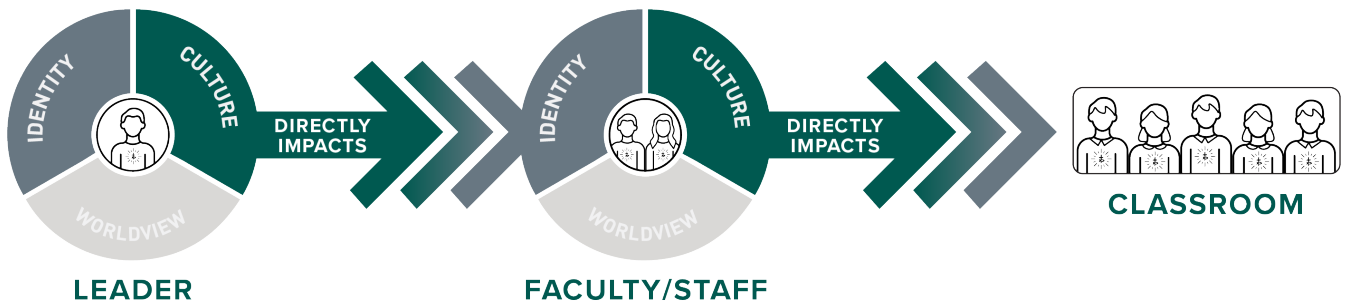
**Culture:**

How action shapes the culture of the school

In this fourth lecture, Dr. Mimi draws upon the leadership theories of Robert Nash, who teaches the impact of character. Nash emphasizes the importance of integrating virtue into everything the leader does. The Catholic leader is called to cultivate virtue in the identity, culture, and worldview of the community they lead. The symbol at the center of the diagram represents Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ must be at the center of the Catholic institution. Moreover, the Catholic leader must have Christ at the center of their life.

St. Anthony of Padua wrote, “The man who is filled with the Holy Spirit speaks in different languages. These different languages are different ways of witnessing to Christ.” St. Anthony describes humility, poverty, patience, and obedience as some of the languages the Christian witness speaks. “Actions speak louder than words,” he wrote. “Let your words teach and your actions speak.”

Contemplative practice permits you to draw near to the Person of Jesus Christ, the perfectly virtuous man. By abiding in Him, which is abiding in a state of habitual grace, His life becomes your life. The supernatural reality of living in God's grace shapes your identity and worldview as an individual and as a Catholic leader. From this, you will establish a culture where the community you lead can thrive and experience the joy of living life with Jesus Christ at the center.



Dr. Mimi introduced an uncommon term, *satisficing*, which is a decision-making strategy that aims, not for the optimal solution, but for a satisfactory or adequate outcome. In any given situation, the decision-making process may not align with your ideal solution. Can you describe a time that has happened to you? What virtue would you need to practice in situations of satisficing?

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How would you respond to the scenarios described by Dr. King?

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Specifically to Catholic school administrators and principals, Dr. Chittle asserted, “What is most important is how the teachers see you.” Reflect upon his experience and the wisdom of this proposal. What virtues will help you be a leader who lives from the conviction of God’s love? How do these virtues impact your relationship with others? How does your confidence in a loving God impact how you lead others?

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Throughout the course, the importance of community has been emphasized. What communities have shaped you? In what ways have those communities shaped you?

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Why are character and virtue essential to being a Catholic leader?

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# ● *Character and Virtue*

How might a mentor assist you in your role as Catholic leader? If you have chosen a mentor and are working with them already, how have you grown under their mentorship? In what areas would you like to see personal growth?

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It is essential that a Catholic leader is open to the Holy Spirit. By what means do you nourish your prayer life and relationship with God? What are the barriers between you and a deeper prayer life and relationship with God? What can you do to mitigate the barriers?

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Dr. Mimi wraps up her lecture on character and virtue by highlighting the virtue of fortitude. How is fortitude necessary for those of us in the “saint-making business”? How has fortitude served you in your role as Catholic leader?

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## *Reflection*

A contemplative leader is one who has “been with Jesus” (Acts 4:13). Spend time reflecting upon the ways God invites you to nourish your relationship with Him.

# VIRTUE STRENGTHS SURVEY

*It is true that all the virtues are bound together, and it is impossible to have one without having them all. But I give them in different ways so that one virtue might be, as it were, the source of all the others. —Dialogues of St. Catherine of Siena*

As a Catholic leader, how you witness to fully living the Christian life is “louder than your words.” St. Gregory of Nyssa stated, “The goal of the virtuous life is to become like God.” This “becoming like God” is found in daily conversion and forming interior habits or dispositions toward goodness that enable one to give the best of oneself (see CCC 1803).

In sum, the virtues are what it “looks like” and “sounds like” to be a disciple of Jesus Christ, who has all the virtues. The *Virtue Strength Survey* is a means to discover your virtue strengths that provide the self-knowledge you need to be an effective leader.

The vision for the *Virtue Strengths Survey* project has been driven by one overarching question: “How can we help adolescents make a virtue-based character the foundation of their identity and integrate the pursuit of a virtuous life into all their actions?” Teens are deeply engaged in the discovery and formation of their identity, and character education is integral to the success of this process. The *Virtue Strengths Survey* is an interactive, online tool for teens first to discover what is uniquely good in themselves and appreciate it, then deepen it through practice. At the same time, it seeks to equip educators with the tools to create a culture where virtue is celebrated and striven for within their classroom and school community.

The survey will be a validated online survey that will give the survey-taker immediate results on how they practice the virtues. It also provides accompanying online materials that help teens discover the virtues and give educators materials to guide them. These resources will enable teens to know and value what is best in themselves, equip them to cultivate these strengths, and shift the basis of culture toward the unique and highest value of the individual: their moral character.



You can take an adult survey here if you want to discover your own virtue strengths.

You will need to write down your return code. You can write it down here.

After taking the survey, spend time reflecting upon the results. The following questions may help you process your results.

What is your reaction to your top three virtue strengths? Do you recognize “the real you” as your highest virtues?

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# VIRTUE STRENGTHS SURVEY

What surprised you most about the results?

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When you consider your successes, what virtues were operating? How did each of your top strengths come into play?

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Consider your relationships and tasks at work, at home, at your parish, with family, with friends, in leadership, in service. Each section requires different virtues. What do those differences look like?

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Think about a situation when you were anxious or stressed. What virtues did you rely on to help you through? What virtues would help you retreat to a Still Point of Grace?

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How might some of your virtue strengths help you build up some of your virtue weaknesses?

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Do your top virtues align with the virtues most necessary for you as a contemplative leader? If not, which virtues do you need to cultivate to grow in contemplative leadership?

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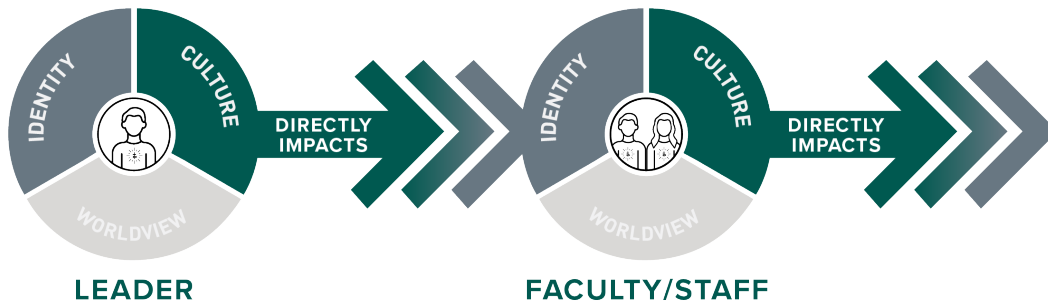
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From the first moment that a student sets foot in a Catholic school, he or she ought to have the impression of entering a new environment, one illumined by the light of faith, and having its own unique characteristics . . . an environment permeated with the Gospel spirit of love and freedom. —The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School, Guidelines for Reflection and Renewal (25), Vatican City

FIVE ESSENTIAL BENCHMARKS OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

- 1. Inspired by supernatural vision
  - 2. Founded on a Christian anthropology
  - 3. Animated by communion and community
  - 4. Imbued with a Catholic worldview throughout its curriculum
  - 5. Sustained by Gospel witness
- Archbishop J. Michael Miller, CSB



PRINCIPAL IS THE TEACHER OF TEACHERS

1. Inspired by supernatural vision

How is the mission of your Catholic school different from a public school?

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In what ways do you preserve the necessity of having a supernatural vision?

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How can a deeper understanding of the theological virtues (faith, hope, charity) and grace shape the worldview of your school? (For more information on virtues, watch the *Learn the Virtues* and/or *Uplifted* video series on Openlight Media Plus.)

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## 2. Founded on a Christian Anthropology

*The Catholic school is committed thus to the development of the whole man, since in Christ, the perfect man, all human values find their fulfillment and unity. Herein lies the specifically Catholic character of the school. Its duty to cultivate human values in their own legitimate right in accordance with its particular mission to serve all men has its origin in the figure of Christ. He is the one who ennobles man, gives meaning to human life, and is the model which the Catholic school offers to its pupils. —The Holy See's Teaching on Catholic Schools, Archbishop J. Michael Miller, CSB, p. 25.*

How does the Gospel of Jesus Christ and His very Person inspire every dimension of your school?

Curriculum

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Community

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Selection of Teachers

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Physical Environment

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### *Reflection*

Reflect back to the graphic of identity, culture, and worldview. How are these dimensions informed?

How does the Christian's understanding of the human person measure a school's Catholicity?

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**3. Animated by communion and community**

A Catholic school is not an institution; it is a community that is rooted in the Church and the social nature of the human person.

Describe the culture of your school. Do you find it to be a warm and welcoming culture that is imbued with a familial spirit?

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Identify the corporate structure of your school. How does your school manifest collaboration between parents, lay faculty and staff, board members, and religious (if applicable)?

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What are concrete ways you can strengthen the relationships among the various constituents? If this is an area of improvement, you may wish to treat this as a dilemma.

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**4. Imbued with a Catholic Worldview Throughout its Curriculum**

Having a Catholic worldview is perhaps one of the primary challenges today in sustaining the identity and culture of a Catholic school.

Catholic school leaders face the challenge of finding certified teachers who can imbue a Christian worldview or the opposite of hiring teachers with a theology degree but no training in content and methodology or classroom management.

Use the template (pp. 28-29) for solving a dilemma to analyze the following situations related to a Catholic worldview.

## 1ST SCENARIO

An individual applies for a teaching position with the following qualifications and state certification:

1. Education degree at a secular university
2. Experience in public school teaching
3. Practicing Catholic
4. Catechetical formation is limited to sacramental preparation for First Holy Communion and Confirmation

## 2ND SCENARIO

An individual applies for a teaching position with the following qualifications:

1. Degree from a Catholic University
2. Deep knowledge and love of the Catholic faith
3. No experience in content, methodology, and classroom management
4. Is not certified but has experience working at camp and teaching religious education

## 5. Sustained by Gospel Witness

As a Catholic leader, how do you nurture the faith life of your faculty and staff?

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In what ways do you model the importance of being a contemplative leader?

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*The outcome of contemplative leadership is the faith internship community. This faith internship community provides the water, light and good soil for students, teachers, parents and all those associated with the school to grow in their faith life. The objective of the Catholic school goes beyond college and career success, straight to the gates of heaven. —International Explorations of Contemplative Leadership in Catholic Education, Merylann “Mimi” J. Schuttloffel, p 5.*

Dr. Mimi presents many thought-provoking questions in this lecture. The synergy of identity, culture, and worldview form the concept of the faith internship that she proposed as essential to a school community.

What does this look like in your school?

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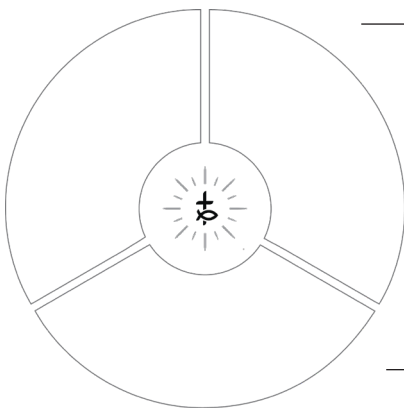
WATCH VIDEO **Lecture 6**

14:41 MINUTES

*Institutional Catholic identity cannot exist without teachers and staff who embrace their roles as evangelizers (Jacobs, 1996). However, the goal of Catholic schooling is not merely maintaining institutional Catholic identity, but also supporting students to develop their own personal Catholic identity—to become people of faith. A faith internship community is a Catholic school where students experience a loving community of faith-witnessing adults who provide the students with opportunities to explore and grow toward a mature-faith life. —International Explorations of Contemplative Leadership in Catholic Education, Merylann “Mimi” J. Schuttloffel, pp 13-14.*

In this lecture, Dr. Mimi discusses faith internships and the importance of continuous improvement at a Catholic school. A contemplative leader recognizes how the synergy of identity, worldview, and culture is the essential vibrancy of the school community (*International Exploration of Contemplative Leadership in Catholic Education*, Merylann “Mimi” J. Schuttloffel, p. 19).

The faith internship community is equivalent to the culture of the school. Return to the diagram at the beginning of this book and examine each dimension of identity, worldview, and culture more closely. To maintain a vibrant, evangelizing Catholic school, why is an attitude of continuous improvement so important?



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## FOUR ELEMENTS OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

1. Communication
2. Credibility

3. Curriculum
4. Community Builder

Throughout the lectures, the importance of a mentor has been emphasized. As a contemplative leader open to continuous improvement, this person will serve an important role in assisting you in your professional development and maturity.



Spend time in prayer and assess your needs. Seek out a mentor who can help you grow as a contemplative leader.

### 1. Communication

No school leader should operate in isolation. An effective leader is able to work collaboratively with all the constituents in a school community. What are some goals you can set to do this more effectively?

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### SELF ASSESSMENT FOR COMMUNICATION:

1. Am I a good, active listener?
2. Are there ways I can be more collaborative?
3. Do I communicate decisions effectively?
4. Could I delegate better?
5. Should I spend more time outside my office?
6. How do I communicate the vision and mission of the school?
7. Do my decisions reflect the vision and mission of the school?

# ● *Continuous Improvement*

How do you bring everyone in the community together to live the mission of the school?

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What is my communication to each group of stakeholders?

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Faculty/Staff

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School Families

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Parish Community

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Students

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Local Community

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## 2. Curriculum

What do the adults need to learn to improve the culture of the school?

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# Continuous Improvement

Change is always difficult. Therefore, how you introduce new ideas or curriculum adjustments needs to be done thoughtfully.

What are practical tips you can apply to realistically implement your goals for curriculum or more faith development?

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## 3. Credibility

*Trust is essential in creating a culture of continuous improvement.* —Contemplative Leadership That Creates a Culture of Continuous Improvement, Merylan J. Schuttloffel, PhD, p 25.

As a Catholic leader, your identity, rooted in virtuous character, forms your ability to lead a school community. Without credibility and mutual trust, you will always be swimming upstream. Use this self-examination to identify areas of growth:

- Am I forward-thinking in my planning and decisions?
- Do I follow through with decisions and implement plans?
- For high expectations, do I provide support for those involved?
- Am I magnanimous in acknowledging the gifts of others? Or do I only acknowledge my own gifts?
- When necessary, do I provide counsel and direction?
- Do I lead with sincerity? Or am I pretentious?
- Am I genuine?
- Do I work from a Catholic worldview?
- Am I moderate and measured in taking risks?
- Am I temperate in implementing new initiatives or ideas?
- Am I level-headed and willing to analyze all the possible causes or solutions?
- Am I a fair problem-solver?
- Do I have strong convictions yet am not stubborn?
- Am I docile and willing to listen to opposing views?
- Do I withhold judgment until I understand the position of the other party?
- Do I keep information confidential?
- Am I flexible and willing to change course if a better one is presented?
- Do I have a sense of humor?
- Will others recognize that my leadership flows from my deep faith and a place of contemplation?

## 4. Community Building

*Catholicism is a communal faith that emphasizes the vertical dimension with respect to God and the horizontal dynamic with our neighbor. —Contemplative Leadership That Creates a Culture of Continuous Improvement, Merylann J. Schuttloffel, PhD, p 38.*

A sense of community is essential to maintaining the culture of the school. The members' identity as a believing Catholic Christian and worldview play a critical role in establishing a unity of coherence. As a Catholic leader, you are essential to this unity and the ability to work collectively with people.

Describe the spirit of collegiality in your school community. Identify areas of improvement.

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As a Catholic leader, one of your greatest challenges will be leading the collaboration and collegiality of the school community. Without mutual trust and credibility, it will collapse. Communicating the governance of the school community to all the stakeholders is essential to establishing trust and credibility. Without this knowledge and the parameters, collaboration quickly become chaos.

What is the governance of your school?

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Identify the groups in your school community. What is the organization chart for your school?

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How do the leaders of each group communicate with you? Who holds them accountable?

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# ● *Continuous Improvement*

How do they communicate concerns or feedback to you?

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## ***Reflection***

If a culture of continuous improvement is lacking in your school community, what prevents this process from taking place?

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Is your demeanor interfering with these necessary changes? For example, are you too rigid, inflexible, unable to let go, and stuck in how things are done? Are you too chaotic, unorganized, or not emotionally capable of navigating the necessary changes?

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## OPTIONAL CONSIDERATION

Understanding how we react to stress is essential. Knowledge about the Polyvagal Theory (see *Raised in Grace*, pp. 86-89) may assist you in recognizing how you respond with the goal of leading from a Still Point of Grace. Furthermore, there may also be areas of conversion that need to take place to be a Christlike leader. The *Educator's Guide* offers an overview of the seven capital sins and how these are manifested in our lives. With our eyes toward our own "continuous improvement," particular virtues are suggested as a means to conversion.



Openlight Media has produced several resources that may benefit you as a Catholic school leader. You will find references mentioned throughout the guidebook.

### ***Disciple of Christ, Education in Virtue®***

- *An Educator's Guide to Living a Virtuous Life*
- *Learn the Virtues* Video Series
- *Virtue Field Guide*
- *Virtue Strength Survey*

### ***Raised in Grace: Made for Wholeness***

- *Raised in Grace: Made for Wholeness—the Beauty of Gradualness*
- *Raised in Grace: Made for Wholeness* video series

Schuttloffel, M.J. (2008). *Contemplative Leadership That Creates a Culture for Continuous Improvement*. Washington, DC: National Catholic Educational Association.

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Schuttloffel, M. J. (2019). *International Explorations of Contemplative Leadership in Catholic Education*. New York, NY: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group. 1st edition.